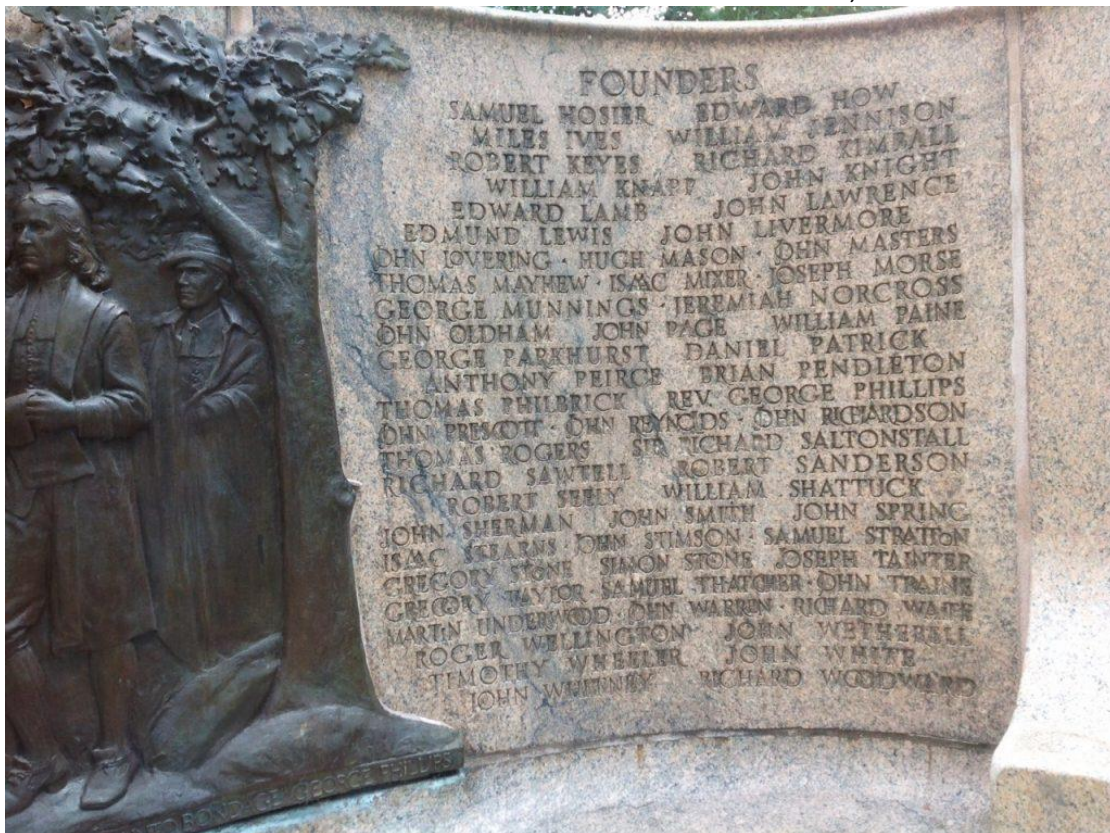


Phineas Smith
A Brief Biograph
By Bill Poole

The first ancestor of **Phineas (Phinehas) Smith** to come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony is thought to have been his **Third Great Grandfather (Great, Great, Great Grandfather), John Smith Sr.**, who arrived in the early 1630s and is considered to be one of the founders of Watertown, MA.



Founders Monument 20 Riverside Street Watertown, MA



Very little is known about John Sr.'s background. His name appears on a list of the 108 inhabitants of Watertown who received grants of land in what was called "the Plowlands of Beavebroke Plain." This was undoubtedly in the area that is now Waltham, MA where Beaver Brook enters from Lexington. John Smith Sen. received 4 acres of land, but there were other members of the family who received allotments—Francis Smith-8 acres; Thomas Smith-2 acres and John Smith, Junior-1 acre.¹ Some believe that John Sr was the father of John Jr., Thomas, Francis and possibly a Daniel as well.²

The vital records of Watertown do support the idea that Thomas Smith was perhaps a son of John because the birthdates of Thomas's children beginning in 1637 are in line with his being of the next generation from John Jr. The lineage from Thomas to Phineas Smith is clear, and **Thomas was the Second Great Grandfather of Phineas (Great, Great Grandfather).**

Thomas Smith Great, Great Grandfather of Phineas

Thomas married **Mary Knapp**, who was baptized at Warmingford, Essex, England on August 9, 1613, daughter of William and Judith Tue Knapp.³ The date of their marriage has not yet been found. They had nine children, all born in Watertown: 1. **James**, born September 18, 1637, married Hannah Goodnow; 2. **John**, born November 23, 1639, died November 26, 1639 aged three days; 3. **Thomas**, born August 26, 1640; 4. **John**, born December 10, 1641; 5. **Joseph, Great Grandfather of Phineas**, born June 10, 1643; 6. **Mary**, birth date not recorded, but mentioned in her father's will, married John Stratton in Watertown on November 26, 1667; she died in Watertown on November 15, 1695; 7. **Ephraim**, no birth recorded, but being blind became a town charge from 1707 to 1737;" 8. **Jonathan**, born in 1659, married on March 16, 1682/83, Jane Peabody; he died before August 18, 1724; there were no children; 9. **Sarah**, birth not recorded, married Elias Maverick in Boston, February 3, 1695, but died before her father.⁴

Thomas signed a will on March 16, 1687/88 and died on March 10, 1693 aged 92. His property was evaluated on March 20, 1693 and valued at 73 pounds 4 shilling and 3 pence⁵

I give and bequeath to my dear and loving wife Mary Smith my dwelling house ,barn and orchard and movables and all the rest of my effects during here natural life and after her death to be disposed as followeth

I give and bequeath to my grandchild James Smith of piscattaqua forty shillings to be paid to him within one year after my wife's death by my executor.

I give and bequeath after my wife's death to my loving sons Thomas, John, Ephraim and Jonathan my dwelling house barn orchard land and meadow to be equally divided among them all except ten acres which afterward shall be excepted and Joseph Smith my dear son to be equaled to it.

I give and bequeath to my loving son Joseph ten acres of land adjoining to that I gave him formerly which I bought of John Edy.

I give unto my loving daughter Mary and the children of my daughter Sarah all my moveable goods within doors and without to be equally divided between them after my wife's death

I make and constitute my loving wife and my loving son Thomas to be my executors to perform this my last will and testament witness my hand and seal

The mark of
Thoma † S Smith

There is not a record of the death of Mary Knapp Smith in Watertown, and she may have moved to another town to live with one of her children.

Joseph Smith, Great, Grandfather of Phineas

Joseph married at Watertown on December 1, 1674, **Hannah Tidd**, born in Woburn, MA on September 21, 1652, daughter of John and Rebecca Wood Tidd. They had five children, all born in Watertown: 1. **Joseph**, born April 19, 1677, married in Lexington October 14, 1701, Mary Richards, born in Lexington on May 15, 1680, daughter of William and Mary Williams Richards; 2. **John**, born April 5, 1678, married at Watertown on January 15, 1712/13, Jane Barnard born in Watertown on March 17, 1678, daughter of John and Sarah Fleming Barnard; 3. **Daniel, Grandfather of Phineas**, born September 26, 1681; 4. **Hannah**, baptized December 4, 1687; married in Watertown on February 5, 1708, David Mead of Cambridge; and 5. **Rebecca**, baptized December 4, 1687.⁶

Joseph died June 4, 1712, and I have not yet been able to locate his probate records. Hannah may have died in Lexington on December 13, 1732, but another Hannah might have been the one who died on that date.⁷

Daniel Smith, Grandfather of Phineas

Several of the members of the Smith family moved to Lexington, and Daniel was among them. He married in Watertown, **Mary Burrage** of Newton.⁷ Mary and Daniel had seven children all born in Lexington: 1. **Mary**, born March 13, 1709, married on December 30, 1730, James Wyman of Woburn; 2. **Daniel**, born March 10, 1711/12, died March 30, 1715, aged three or four; 3. **Jonathan, father of Phineas**, born October 16, 1713; 4. **Betsey**, born February 11, 1715; 5. **Lydia**, born May 8, 1718; 6. **Sarah**, born July 28, 1723, married first at Woburn on January 14, 1742, Abial Richardson, born November 12, 1720, son of Jonathan and Hannah French Richardson, died at Pepperell, MA on July 19, 1753, married second, January 9, 1755, William Parker of Groton, MA; and 7. **Lucy**, born January 3, 1725/26, married about October 17, 1744 Roger Robbins of Lancaster.⁸

Daniel died on March 5, 1757 in Lexington and no probate papers have been found. Mary's date and place of death are unknown at this time, and she may have accompanied one of her children to another town.⁹

Jonathan Smith, Father of Phineas

Jonathan held the rank of Lieutenant in the Lexington Militia Company in 1770, but would have been over sixty in 1775, and at that age not required to perform military service. He was a Selectman in 1771, and in 1776 was one of 26 of the leading citizens of Lexington to sign the oath of loyalty to the United American Colonies.

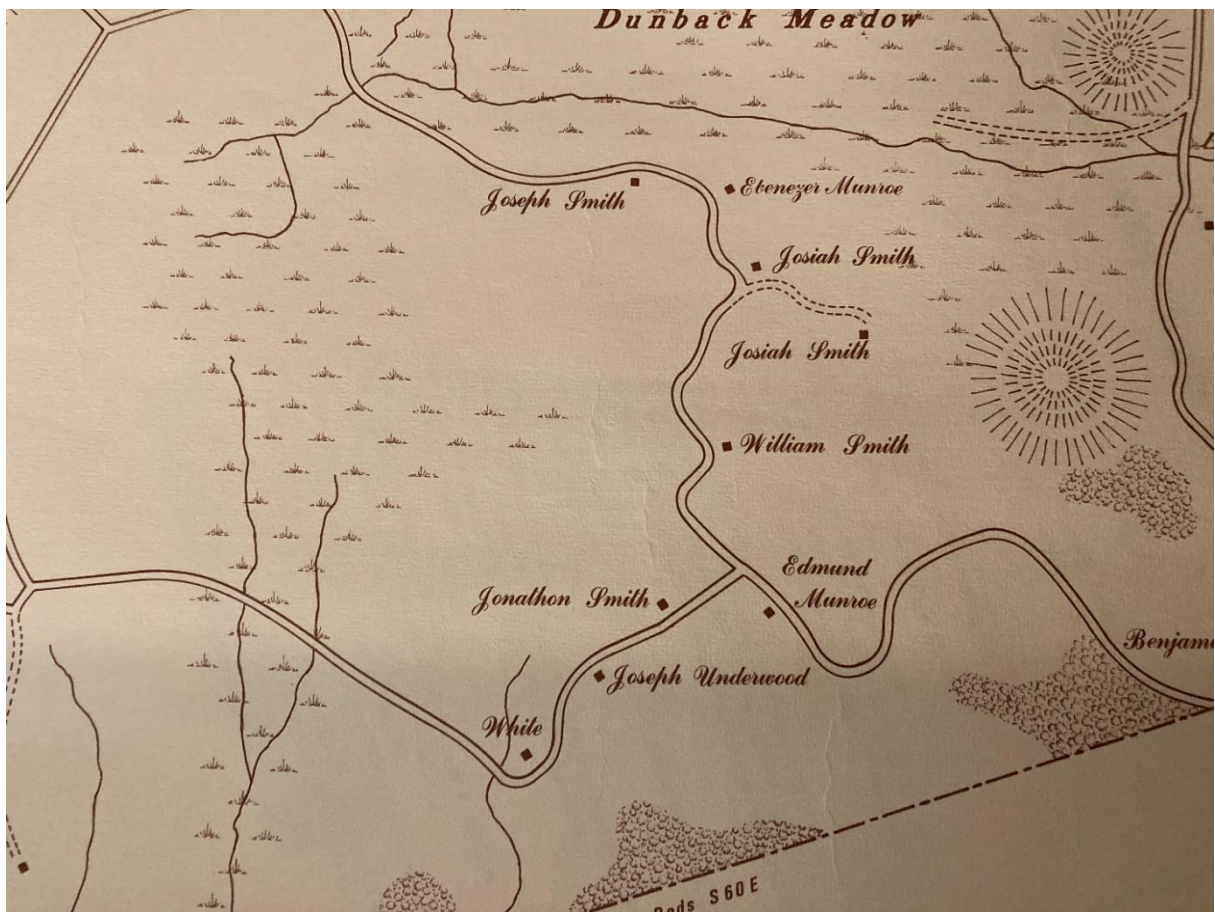
"We, the subscribers do each of us severally for ourselves, profess, testify and declare before God and the world, that we verily believe that the war, resistance and opposition in which the United American Colonies are now engaged against the fleets and armies of Great Britain, is on the part of said Colonies, just and necessary . . . that we will not, during the said war, directly or indirectly, in any way, aid, abet, or assist any of the naval or land forces of the king of Great Britain . . . But, on the contrary according to our best power and abilities will defend by arms the United American Colonies, and every part thereof, against every hostile attempt of the fleets and armies in the service of Great Britain"¹⁰

Charles Hudson says of Jonathan that he was "One of Captain Parker's company, 1775, fought at the Battle of Lexington, 19 April, and was a member of the detachment which was called to Cambridge 17 and 18, June 1775." Hudson also stated that "He subscribed £5 for his son Daniel toward the first campaign of eight months, 1775 and subscribed again £19 for 'son Daniel' toward the second campaign of twelve months to New York, 1775."¹¹ [Daniel served throughout 1775 and 1776 along with other men of Lexington in Colonel Loammi Baldwin's 38th and 26th Regiments.]

Abigail and Jonathan had eleven children, all born in Lexington: 1. **Abigail**, b. May 21, 1739; 2. **Unnamed child**, died July 1, 1741; 3. **John**, born August 12, 1743; 4. **Dorcas**, born January 3, 1745-6; married April 4, 1764, John Wood, of Cambridge; 5. **Jonathan**, born October 4, 1748, married June 13, 1771, Mrs. Lydia Reed Muzzey, born June 13, 1745, died November 7, 1785, daughter of Seth and Lydia Cutter Reed, and widow of William Muzzey,

married second, October 16, 1788, Abigail Marrett, born July 4, 1765, died March 30, 1794, daughter of Amos and Abigail Tidd Marrett, married third, March 17, 1795, Ruth Fiske, born April 20, 1758, daughter of Dr. Joseph and Abigail Tidd Fiske; 6., **Phinehas, the subject of this essay**, born February 7, 1751; 7. **Timothy**, born August 11, 1753; 8. **Samuel**, born January 7, 1756, married March 25, 1784, Lydia Pierce; 9. **Daniel**, baptized April 24, 1758, married May 23, 1780, Mary Poole, born December 38, 1756, daughter of Eleazer Flagg and Mary Reed Poole of Woburn; 10. **Amasa**, born May 9, 1762; 11. **Nathan**, baptized March 25, 1764, married April 24, 1794, Katherine Bacon.¹²

Jonathan died in Lexington on March 23, 1801. His will was signed on March 19, 1799 and probated on June 9, 1801. His real property was valued at \$219.33 and his personal property at \$76.33. The map prepared for the bicentennial celebration of the Battle of Lexington shows the locations of Jonathan's homestead and other Smith family members. It appears the properties were along modern day Allen Street that runs from Waltham Street to Blossomcrest Road.

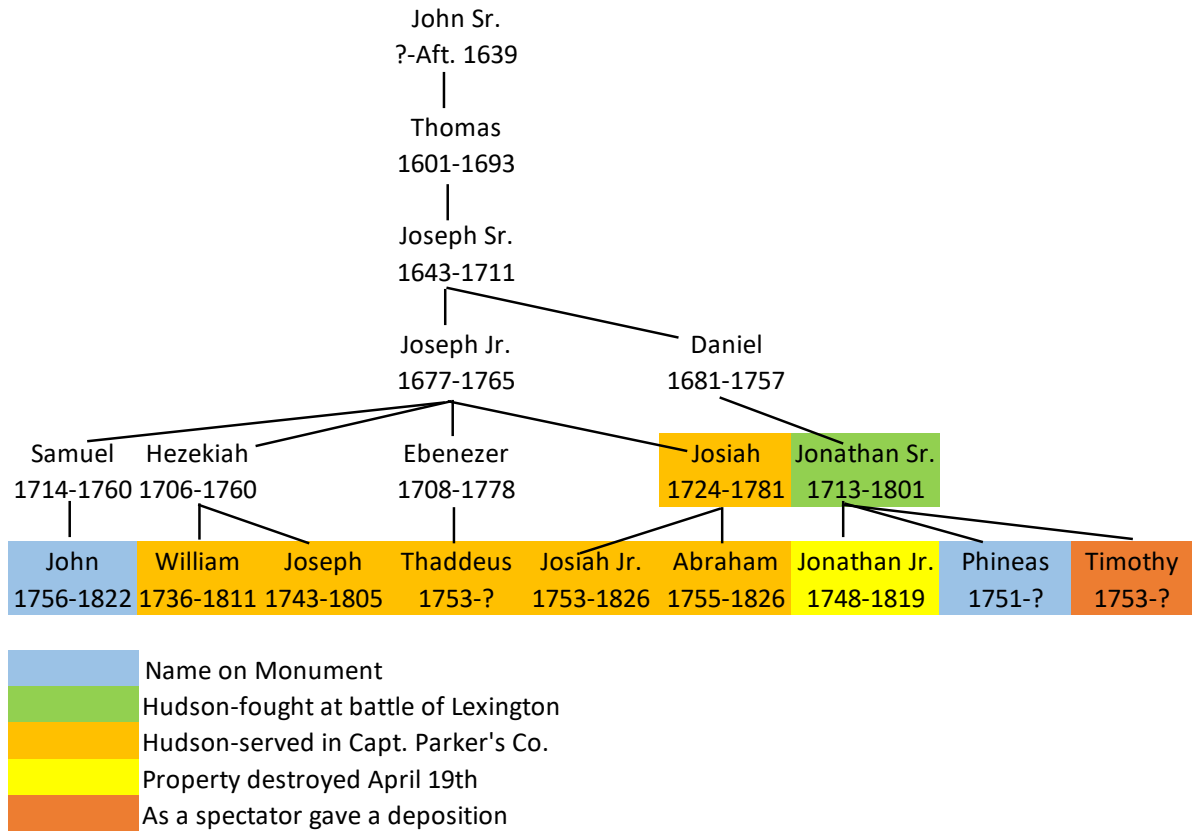


Bicentennial Map Celebrating the Battle of Lexington

The Smith Family and the events of April 19, 1775

Phineas and his Second Cousin, John, are the only members of the Smith family credited with standing on Lexington Common on April 19, 1775 and to have their names inscribed on the Minutemen Monument on the grounds of Buckman Tavern. The list was derived from those who gave depositions in 1775 or 1824/25. Since then, additional evidence has allowed names to be added to the monument. Charles Hudson, in his *History of Lexington*, described participation on April 19th in a number of ways. In some cases he wrote explicitly that someone "stood on the common with Captain Parker." In other cases he wrote "he was a member of Captain Parker's Company," or, "fought at the battle of Lexington." This last statement did not necessarily mean the individual was on the common, but rather that he took part in the day's action.

The Smith Family on April 19, 1775



Phineas and his Second cousin John were among those who gave a combined deposition in April, 1775. The other members of the family did not give depositions except for Timothy who did so, but as a spectator. Hudson credits Josiah, Josiah Jr., William, Joseph, Thaddeus and Abraham with being members of captain Parker's Company. Jonathan Sr. was credited with having "fought at the Battle of Lexington," but not necessarily on the Common. This does not mean that some of them might have stood on the common, it is just that we have no evidence of their doing so. Jonathan Jr. supposedly submitted a claim for 13 pounds, 12 shillings and 8 pence for damages done by the Regulars.^{13**}

As a spectator, Timothy gave the following deposition concerning what he had observed on April 19, 1775

Lexington, April 25, 1775.

I, Timothy Smith, of Lexington, in the County Of Middlesex and Colony of Massachusetts-Bay, in New England, being of lawful age, do testify and declare, that on the morning of the nineteenth of April instant, being at Lexington common as a spectator, I saw a large body of Regular Troops marching up towards the Lexington Company, then dispersing, and likewise saw the Regular Troops fire on the Lexington Company, before the latter fired a gun. I immediately ran, and a volley was discharged at me, which put me in imminent danger of losing my life. I soon returned to the common, and saw eight of the Lexington men who were killed, and lay bleeding, at a considerable distance from each other, and several were wounded; and further saith not.

Timothy Smith

Middlesex, ss., April 25, 1775:¹⁴

Phineas was 24 years old and John eighteen on April 19, 1775, and both were among a group of thirty-four participants who signed a combined deposition detailing their experiences.

“We Nathaniel Mulliken, Philip Russell, Mos. Harrington, Sr., Thomas Harrington, Daniel Harrington, William Grimes, William Tidd, Isaac Hastings, Jonas Stone Jr., James Wyman, Thad. Harrington, John Chandler, Joshua Reed, Jr., Joseph Simonds, Phineas Smith, John Chandler, Jr., Reuben Locke, Joel Viles, Nathan Reed, Samuel Tidd, Benjamin Locke, Thomas Winship, Simeon Snow, John Smith, Mos. Harrington, 3d., Joshua Reed, Ebenezer Parker, John Harrington, Enoch Wellington, John Hosmer, Isaac Green, Phineas Stearns, Isaac Durant, Thos. Hadley, Jr. all inhabitants of Lexington in the County of Middlesex, and Colony of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, do testify and declare, that on the nineteenth of April instant, about one or two o’clock in the morning, being informed that several officers of the Regulars had, the evening before, been riding up and down the road, and had detained and insulted the inhabitants passing the same; and also understanding that a body of Regulars were marching from Boston towards Concord, with intent (so it was supposed) to take the stores belonging to the Colony in that Town, we were alarmed; and having met at the place of our company’s parade, were dismissed by our Captain, John Parker, for the present, with orders to be ready to attend at the beat of the drum. We further testify and declare, that about five o’clock in the morning, hearing the drum beat, we proceeded towards the parade, and soon found that a large body of troops were marching towards us. Some of our troops were coming up to the parade, and others had reached it; at which time the Company began to disperse. Whilst our backs were turned on the troops we were fired on by them, and a number of our men were instantly killed and wounded. Not a gun was fired by any person in our Company on the Regulars, to our knowledge, before they fired on us, and they continued firing until we had all made our escape.”¹⁵

Following the engagement on Lexington Common, Phineas was a member of a detachment sent to Cambridge, MA to take part in the initial stage of the siege of Boston. He also served as a guard for canon at Lexington. The following is a copy of the entry in *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailor of the Revolutionary War* detailing Phineas’ service.¹⁶

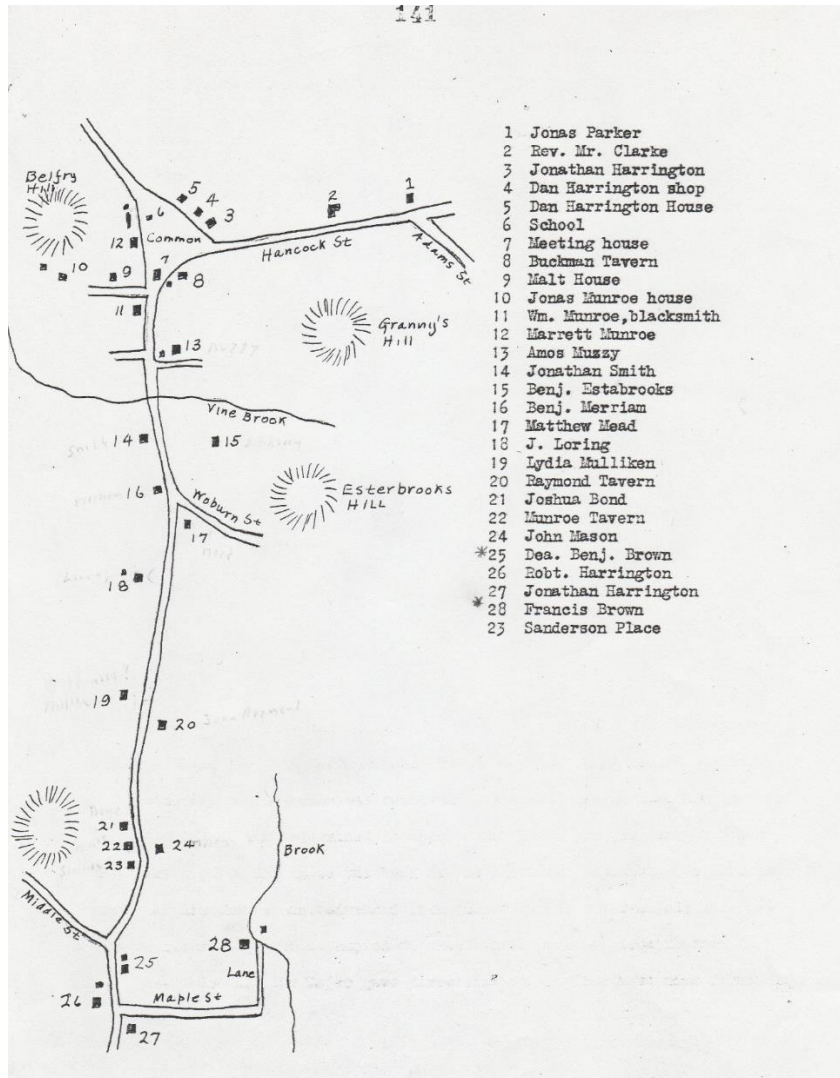
SMITH, PHINEAS, Lexington. Private, in a detachment from Lexington militia co. commanded by Capt. John Parker; service, 5 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from May 6 to May 10, 1775, by order of Committee of Safety; also, list of men who guarded the cannon at Lexington and thence to Cambridge; warrant for pay allowed in Council April 26, 1776.

Following this entry, there is very little information that is certain concerning Phineas. He was alive in 1801, when his father Jonathan Sr. died and willed him £7 and 10 shillings.¹⁷ Charles Hudson states only that he died in Charlestown. A Phineas Smith did die in Charlestown in 1818 and left a will that mentions his wife, Elizabeth, and also daughter, Elizabeth. His will was written on March 31, 1818 and probated on April 29, 1818. He was moderately wealthy and styled “a gentleman,” with an estate valued at \$3,887.06 which would be about \$103,000 today.¹⁸ A Phineas Smith did marry in Boston on April 10, 1696, Elizabeth Carnes.¹⁹ This may not be Phineas from Lexington at all. Finding a grave marker might help, if the birthdate coincides, but one has not been found so far.

The Jonathan Smith Jr. Home**

“William Muzzey died in 1770, and in a few months his widow conveyed the place to Jonathan Smith, a tanner, and soon after married him. Jonathan Smith carried on his trade of tanner here for years. His tan pits reached down to vine brook. When the British came by on the retreat, they entered his house and did some damage.”²⁰

Jonathan Smith's home, labeled number 14 on the map below, was the first home below Vine Brook on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue in today's downtown Lexington.



From the M. J. Canavan Papers, page 141

**The account of the things I lost by the British troops, on the 19th of April, 1775

Three silver spoons	.	.	.	.	.	£0 12 0
One pair of silver buckles	.	.	.	.	.	0 18 0
One pair of sleeve buttons	.	.	.	.	.	0 6 0
One satin bonnet and cloak	.	.	.	.	.	3 12 0
One hat and one pair of shoes	.	.	.	.	.	1 10 0
Two pewter porringers	.	.	.	.	.	0 2 0
One block-tin tea pot	.	.	.	.	.	0 12 0
One blanket	.	.	.	.	.	0 18 0
To a number of other articles	.	.	.	.	.	2 2 0
Damage done to the house	.	.	.	.	.	<u>3 0 0</u>
						£13 12 8

Jonathan Smith, Jr.²¹

Footnotes

¹Francis, Convers, *Historical Sketch of Watertown, in Massachusetts, from the First Settlement of the Town to the Close of Its Second century*, Cambridge, E.W. Metcalf and Company, 1830, pp. 131-2.

²Bond, Henry, *Genealogies of the Families and Descendants of the Early Settlers of Watertown, Massachusetts, Waltham, Weston; to Which is Appended the Early History of the Town With Illustrations, Maps and Notes*, Second Edition, Boston, Published by the Historic-Genealogical Society, 1860, p. 433.

³<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~waughp/genealogy/mine/p785.htm>

⁴Vital Records of Watertown, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Watertown/>; Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths 1630-1699, page 224 at <https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/boston-ma-births-baptisms-marriages-and-deaths-1630-1699/image?volumeld=30233&pageName=224&rid=52536477>

⁵Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871, Volume Middlesex Cases 20000-21999, pp. 20769:1-20769:4 at <https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-1871/image?volumeld=14467&pageName=20769:1&rid=38396590>

⁶Vital Records of Watertown, *op. cit.*; Hudson, Charles, *Bi-centenary Edition History of the Town of Lexington Massachusetts in Two Volumes*, Volume I, *History*, Lexington Historical Society, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, 1913, p. 633.

⁷Vital Records of Watertown, MA, *op. cit.*

⁸*ibid.*

⁹ Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the End of the Year 1897 at <https://mavitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/>

¹⁰Hudson, Charles, *Bi-centenary Edition History of the Town of Lexington Massachusetts in Two Volumes*, Volume I, *History*, Lexington Historical Society, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, 1913, pp. 228-9; Hudson, Volume II, *Genealogies*, pp. 635-6.

¹¹Hudson, *Genealogies*, *op. cit.* p. 636.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 636.

¹³*ibid.*, p. 640.

¹⁴ Kehoe, Vincent J.R., "We Were There April 19, 1775 The American Rebels," Self-Published, January 1, 1975, Part Six, "The American Accounts," p. 93.

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁶Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War, A compilation from the Archives Prepared and Published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Accordance with Chapter 100, Resolves of 1891, Boston, Wright & Potter, 1896-1908, Volume 14, p. 519.

¹⁷Middlesex County, MA Probate File Papers, *op. cit.* pages 20745:1-20745:22 at <https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-1871/image?volumeld=14467&pageName=20745:1&rid=38396411>

¹⁸

¹⁹Boston, MA: Marriages, 1700-1809, p. 139 at <https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/boston-ma-marriages-1700-1809/image?rid=248660305&volumeld=7455&pageName=139&filterQuery=>

²⁰M. J. Canavan Papers, Cary Memorial Library, Lexington, MA, p. 124.

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²¹Kehoe, *op. cit.*, p. 219.