

John Muzzy, a yeoman farmer, was the second son of Benjamin Muzzy and Patience (maiden name unknown). He was among the second generation of Muzzys to reside in West Farms, the northwestern-most portion of Cambridge before it separated to become the Town of Lexington. The Muzzy family in New England dates back to Robert Muzzy and Bridget Bradstreet of Ipswich, the first generation of their families to live in New England . Their children included Joseph Muzzy of Newbury (Town settled in 1633) who married Ester Jackman. One of their children was Benjamin Muzzy who moved south to reside in West Farms. Joseph’s brother, Benjamin, also moved south from Newbury, and bought land in what is now Lexington’s center. Figure 1 shows the genealogical relationships of the Muzzys.

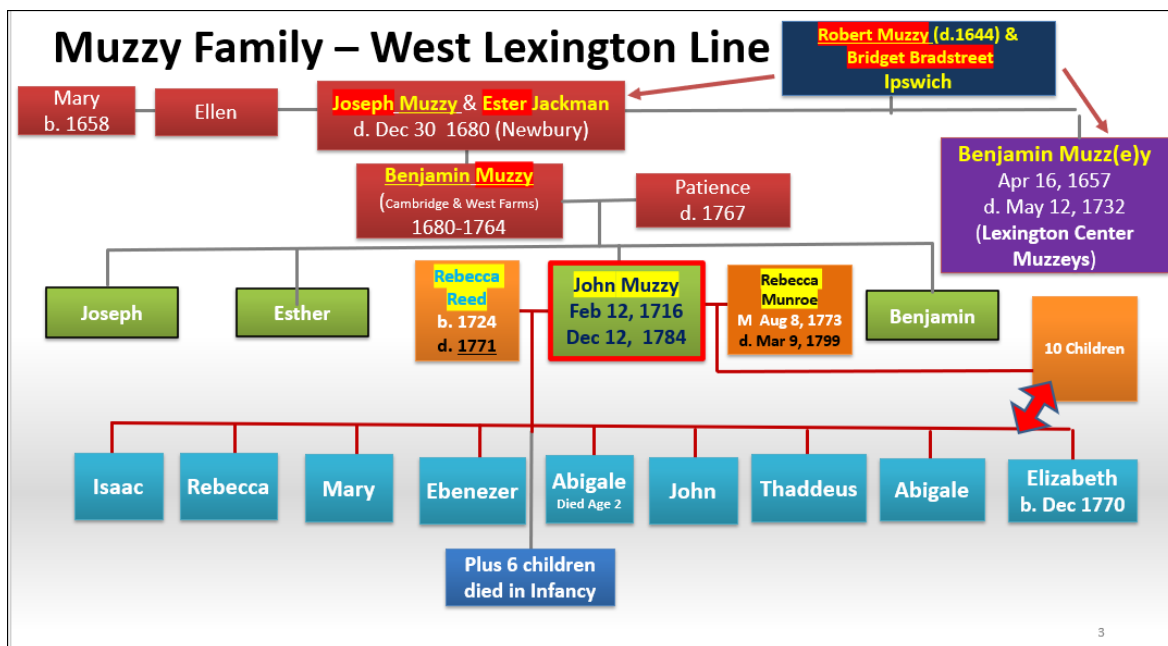


Figure 1 – Muzzy Lineage

The Lexington Muzzy relatives were divided into *two* familial lines that originated from two brothers – Joseph died 1680), the great-grandfather of John Muzzy (born 1716) and Benjamin (born 1657 and died 1732).

**Benjamin - Joseph's son by Ester - moved to Cambridge and then to West Farms, specifically to the western portion of Cambridge Farms near the present day town boundary with Lincoln (which separated from Lexington in 1754).**

**Essential to understanding the Lexington Muzzys is that Joseph's brother, Benjamin, came to West Farms but acquired land near the center of Lexington. – possibly before the Benjamin of Joseph & Ester arrived. With the establishment of West Farms as a separate parish in 1692, it was Benjamin's Muzzy line that eventually sold a portion of their property for what is now the Town Common. Later, they sold additional land for the Common in 1722. Those 'Muzzys who lived "in town" added an 'e' to their name in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, thereby distinguishing themselves from the "western" Muzzys who retained the original spelling of their name. It is the 'in-town' Muzzey's for whom the renovated 'old' high school and downtown street take their name!}**

**~~~**

**John Muzzy was a Private in the Lexington Militia and was on the Common on April 19<sup>th</sup>, along with his eldest son, Isaac. (Surprisingly, none of the 'In-Town' Muzzys' apparently rallied to the Common that day!)**

**So, where did the 'western' Muzzys live? The best research sources (including NPS research from 1962) indicate their homestead was northwest of the current Wood Street shown within the RED circle on the map in Figure 2.**



Figure 2 – Location of the John Muzzy Land and last Residence

The RED STAR indicates the residence of John and his second wife, Rebecca Munroe, from ca. 1777 until John's death in 1784. The residence exists today as the Jacob Whittemore house. The house was acquired by John Muzzy following Jacob's death (ca. 1776) and was where John spent the remaining years of his life. It is likely that John knew Jacob Whittemore, as they were neighbors, both with property in the vicinity of Wood Street.

The 1771 Census (Figure 3 below) provides insights into what the Muzzy farm comprised – a mixture of pasture, tillage for grain, upland mowing land and fresh meadow *plus* an orchard, not cited in the census, but clearly implied by the barrels of cider in the census and his probated will.

## The Persona of John Muzzy – Character Profile

1771 Census						Summary of Usable Land	
Muzzy, John & Isaac						Useable Land	Acres
Annual Worth of Real Estate £ 17	1 Dwelling	0 Servants for Life				Pasture	20
2 Horses	2 Oxen	10 Cows	4 Swine			Tillage	10
Pasture 20 Ac	No of Cows Pasture will Keep 10	Acres of Tillage 10 ac	Bushels of Grain Prod/Yr. 160	Barrels of Cider Produced/Yr. 25		Upland	14
Acres of English & Upland Mowing Land 14 Ac	Tons of English & Upland Hay per Yr. 8 Tons	Acres of Fresh Meadow 22 Ac	Tons of Fresh Meadow Hay per Yr. 14 Tons			Meadow	22
						Total	66

**Figure 3 – Muzzy Household 1771 Census**

Town Tax was based upon the quantity of cultivated lands, not the total land area. The cultivated land totaled 66 acres, but there was additional wooded land or ‘wood lot,’ necessary for every household to survive. In addition, there was an orchard which produced the 25 barrels of cider cited in the census, and in John’s will.



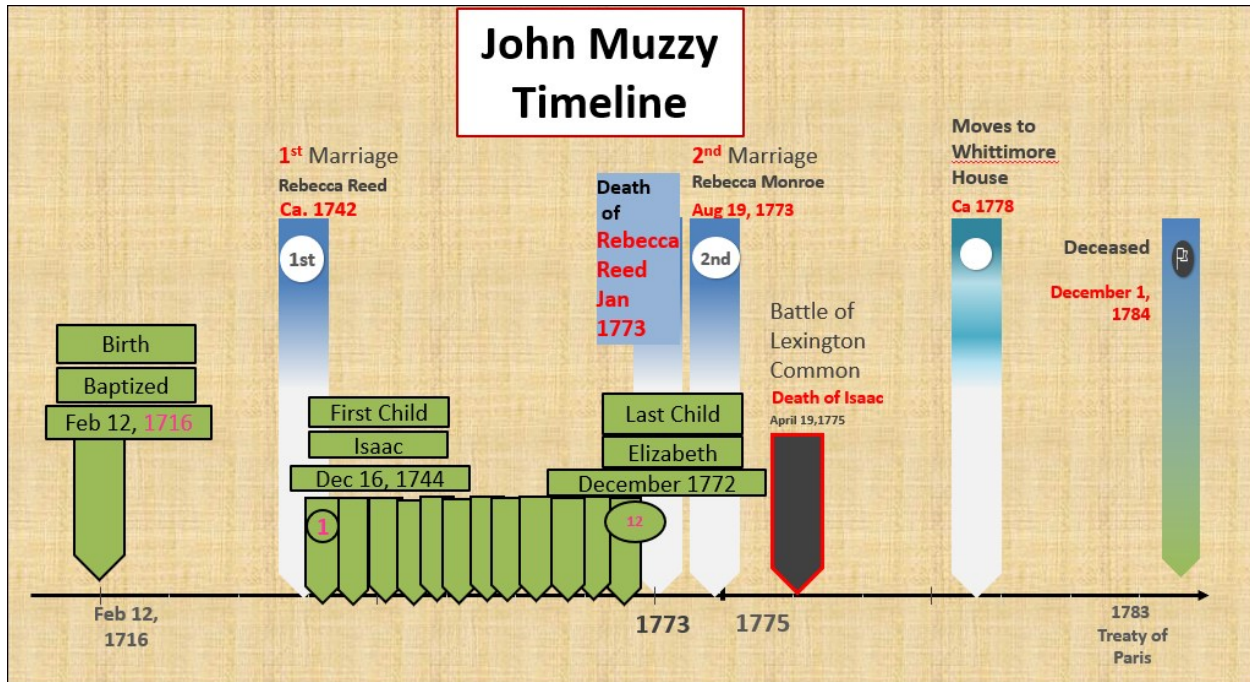


Figure 4 – John Muzzy Timeline

John Muzzy's life can be summarized in a timeline – his first marriage to Rebecca Reed resulted in 15 births, of which 8 survived to adulthood. It is worth noting that his first wife died within one month of birth of the last child, Elizabeth, in December 1772}. John remarried in 1773 to Rebecca Munroe, following the death of her husband Lieutenant Munroe of the Lexington militia.

With the marriage to his second wife, her ten children were added to the household, thereby producing a combined 'household' of 19 children! It is not surprising that John and Rebecca chose to move out of John's house and live in the nearby Bull Tavern on Concord Road! (see below for discussion).

John Muzzy had 'paid service' in the Lexington militia for a total of eight days, as displayed in Figure 5. He may also have served in the Continental Army in the campaign to Bennington, Vermont. However,

sometimes older men could get younger men to serve in their place. At 61, marching to Bennington in 1777 would be a significant challenge for John. (Perhaps further research will confirm the person who served in the campaign.)

John Muzzy as a Militia Member (Private)			
Place	Duration	Timeframe	Age
Lexington	1 Day	1775	59
Cambridge (June 17 & 18, 1775) Roxbury (Mar 4-8, 1776)	7 Days	1776	60
Bennington	Campaign	1777	61

Figure 5 – John Muzzy’s Service in the Lexington Militia

The beginning of his Probated possessions starts with citing “His Book (3 Shillings, 3 cents) and his Armiour (sic) two guns (muskets) (16 shillings)” – see Figure 6. Possessions included a cider mill (3£), three beds, an assortment of chairs, chest with drawers, an hour glass, glassware and personal glasses, a clock and lanterns. Agricultural items included a substantial amount of butter, pork, barrels of cider, as well as English and meadow hay, along with stock (16£). His real estate was appraised at 214£, 10s plus 64£ 11s of personal items for a total estate value of 279£ 1s 3p.

**John Muzzy Probate**

*Executor in the following manner (1783)*  
*his Book 3/ his Armiour two Guns 16/ - £ 0 - 19 - 3*

His Book, 3/3 his Armiour two Guns 16/ £ 0 - 19 - 3 [19 Shillings, 3 pence]

**His fowlers more valuable that his Bible!**

*Cider mill 42/ Grind Stone 8/ Ox Sled 10/ - 1 - 3 - 0 - 0*

Cider mill 42/ Grind Stone 8/ Ox Sled 10/ [3 £ 0 Shillings, 0 pence]  
( 20 Shillings = 1 £ )

42 + 8 + 10 = 60 Shillings or 3 Pounds

Stone Boat

Probate signed by Benjamin Brown, John Parkhurst, Thaddeus Parker 11 May 1785  
(6 months after his death)

Figure 6 - Household – Items from his Probated Will

With the combined households of John's unmarried children and those of his second wife, he chose to move with his wife to the Bull Tavern located a short distance down the Concord Road from what would later become his home after Whittemore's death. In moving to the tavern, John could provide his original home to his children, and possibly several of his wife's children.

Figure 7 – Sketch of the Bull Tavern (later Viles Tavern) in 1828 and a view south along Old Concord Road toward the Whittemore-Muzzy House.



Bull Tavern – Road to Concord



Old Concord Road (Battle Road) - view southeast toward Whittemore House

Viles Tavern 1828  
– formerly Whittemore's  
Bull Tavern



The Bull Tavern existed until the 19<sup>th</sup> century near the current boundary of Lexington and Lincoln, along the Concord Road (Route 2A)

Whittemore-Muzzy House – Lexington, MA



1923



2018  
(ca 1775)



ca. 1880-1890



HABS 1963

Photos – J. Howry and NPS (historic images) and drawing courtesy of HABS



## Figure 8 – The Whittemore-Muzzy House

The images in Figure 8 are of the residence of John Muzzy's from circa 1777 until his death in 1784. It then passed to family members until its sale ca. 1842. The home has evolved over the centuries, but today still retains the central chimney with a full hearth and beehive oven at the rear of the residence, as well as two rooms with fireplaces on the first floor and two bedrooms also with fire places on the second floor. This layout is typical of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial homes. The residence is one of the few remaining 'witness homes' from April 19<sup>th</sup>.

The original outbuildings were removed, but a barn was constructed to the north of the house. Today, the residence appears as it would have in the mid-1700s. (The restoration was performed by the Minute Man National Historical Park).



Photos – J. Howry

**Figure 9 Whittemore-Muzzy Home – The front door and interior first floor views are *very* typical of central chimney 18<sup>th</sup> century homes.**

**The will of John Muzzy was drafted with the assistance of his third son, also named John, about a week before his father's death.**

**He gave to his wife Rebekah “all the household goods she brought to the marriage, a milk cow and 9 and half cords of wood *plus* “support of 13 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence for year one and half that going forward.”**

**John's will notes that his son Ebenezer (second born son) and daughter Mary (second born daughter) *previously* received their portions of his estate.**

<b>Will – Nov 27, 1784 – John Muzzy (3<sup>rd</sup> Son), Executor</b>
I Give and Bequeath unto <b>Rebekah Muzzy, my beloved wife</b> , all the Household Goods that remains at my Decease which she brought me at our Marriage , and one <b>Milck</b> Cow. I also give her as Dowery out of my Estate, the sum of 13 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence in one year and <b>half</b> after my decease – also <b>9 cords and a half of wood</b> (including some posts & rail timber) due me from Daniel Harrington by agreement....
... bequeath unto my <b>son Ebenezer</b> , 5 shillings only, he have already <b>received his full portion of my estate</b> ... bequeath unto my <b>daughter Mary Fuller</b> , 5 shillings only, she have already received his full portion of my estate ... sons <b>John M. &amp; Thaddeus M.</b> and daughters <b>Rebeka, Eunice, Betty, and Abigale</b> , the remainder of my estate shall be equally divided between them all that remains ...

**Figure 10 – Will of John Muzzy Nov 27, 1784**

**John's final resting place was probably in the Old Burying Ground. Unfortunately, no tombstone remains. However, the graves of family**

members including the headstone of Rebeckah Muzzy, John's first wife who died 1/22/1771, is located in the southeast portion of the OBG, along with the headstones of four other Muzzys. As there are at least two gaps in the Muzzy lot headstones, one next to Rebeckah, it is possible that John could be buried there, and his headstone removed or lost many years ago.



Figure 12 – Muzzy Burial Area

## FINAL REFLECTION

On his deathbed, John's reflections on his life of 68 years might have been as follows:

*"The sunshine in November's deep blue sky belies the gray of the winter to come. Framed by the green curtains of my chamber, I think back to earlier days when all the world and my life had colors so vivid ... the full dark greens, yellows, blues and purples of summer, the bleak whites and grays of winter and the pale greens and deep red of the spring of '75. That was the time that changed my life and that of*



*my family, with happenings too difficult to imagine, much less describe.” – JM November 27, 1784*

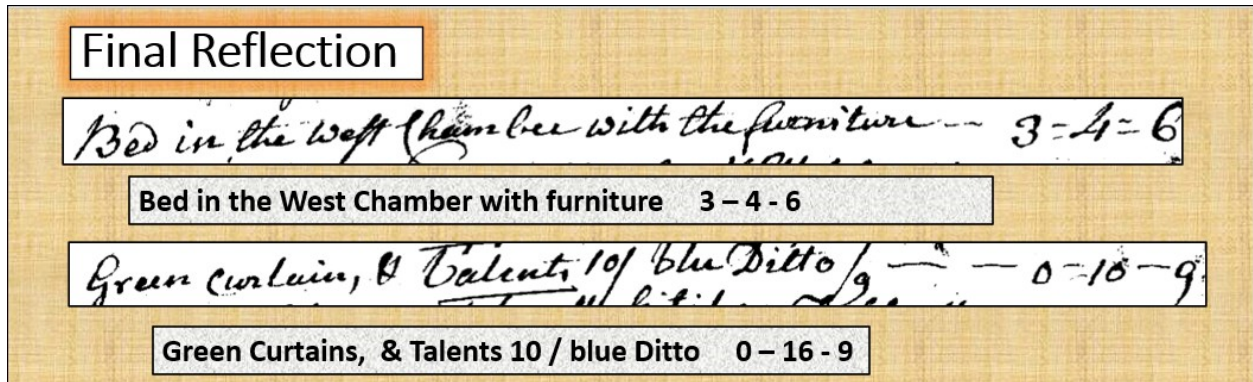


Figure 11 – Final Reflection with probate excerpts

#### References:

Will of John Muzzy, November 27, 1784

Probate of John Muzzy

Others forthcoming