Jedediah Munroe A Brief Biography By Bill Poole

Jedediah Munroe was, like all the other Munroes in Lexington, a descendant of the original immigrant, William Munroe. Charles Hudson, in his *History of the Town of* Lexington, devoted more than three pages to the history of the Munroe family, over three times as much introductory space for any other family.¹ [This is the single volume issue, from which some information was left out and other added in the 1912, two volume, edition.]

Hudson traced the family back to Scotland, referring to it as "among the most ancient and honorable families in the north of Scotland."² He made no claim that William was of noble origin, but that he did at least descend from the Munroe clan in Scotland. However, Munroe family tradition asserts that he was "the son of Robert of Aldie, and is the 18th in direct descent from that first Donald who, in the eleventh century, founded the Clan Munro."³ Again, according to tradition, William was one of the Scots captured at the Battle of Worcester and shipped to the American colonies. The were five vessels carrying the prisoners, and it is claimed that William was one of the 271 crowded on board the *John and Sarah* first shipped to London on November 11, 1651 and then to Massachusetts. The list of prisoners has three Munroes, Hugh, John and one other whose first name is obscured, but is thought to be William. The prisoners were to be placed in the custody of Thomas Kemble of Charlestown to be disposed of as directed.

"London this 11th : of November 1651: Capt. Jno GREENE Wee whose names are under written freighters of your shipe the John & Sarah doe Order yow forthwith as winde & weather shall permitt to sett saile for Boston in New England & there deliver our Orders & Servants to Tho : KEMBLE of charles Toune to be disposed of by him according to the orders wee have sent him in that behafe & wee desire yow to Advise with the said KEMBLE about all that may concerne that whole Intended vojage using your Indeavors with the sajd KEMBLE for the speediest lading your shipp from N.E. fit for the West Indies where yow are to deliver them to Mr. Charles RICH to be disposed of by him for the Joinet accout of the freighters & so to be retourned home in a stocke undevided thus desiring your Care & industrie in Dispatch & speed of the vojage wishing you a happy & safe Retourne wee remajne your loving friends⁴

The prisoners were considered indentured servants who were to labor for a specified period of time before being eventually freed. "Some of the Scottish POWs sent to New England were sold as a group to work in the Saugus Iron Works or the saw mills of Berwick Maine. Others went to York as servants. Still others were sold individually."⁵

Whatever William's term of servitude, it was not too lengthy for by 1657 he was already referred to in the Cambridge records. About 1660 he settled in the northeasterly part of Cambridge known as Cambridge Farms," now Lexington. His home was near the Woburn line and for many years the area was called Scotland, undoubtedly in deference to William and his numerous family. He was made a "freeman" in 1690. In 1694 he was a selectman of Cambridge and he continued to hold numerous important offices. William married about 1665, Martha George, daughter of John and Ann Cutler George, born about 1636. They had four children, John, born March 10, 1666, Martha, born November 2, 1667, William, born October 10, 1669 and George, born before 1672. Martha died about the time of George's birth perhaps of complication of the birth. John, George and William would have descendants who participated on April 19, 1775 in the engagement on Lexington Common.⁶ In 1672, William married Mary Ball, a young woman whom William and Martha had taken in. [For a story of seduction, deception, abandonment and redemption, read Mary's story in Chapter 2, "The Rhode Island Runaway," in Diane Rappaports, *The Naked Quaker, True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of New England.*"]⁷

Between 1673 and 1699, Mary and William had ten children of whom only their first, **Daniel**, would have one of his children, **Jedediah**, stand on Lexington Common on April 19, 1775. Mary died in August, 1692 at age just 41. William then married Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson Dwyer, widow of Edward Dwyer and daughter of William and Elizabeth Johnson. She would die on December 14, 1714 at age 79.⁸

William died on January 27, 1717/18 at age 92.⁹ He, Mary and Elizabeth are buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground.¹⁰ I do not know where Martha was buried.



Here Lyes ye Body of M^rWILLIAM MUNROE; Aged about 92 Years Dec^d Jan^{ry}. 27th 1717/18 HERE LYES Y^E BODY OF MARY MUNROO WIFE TO WILLIAM MUNROO AGED 41 YEARS DIED AUGUST 1692



Here Lyes ye Body of M^{rs} Elizabeth Munroo wife to M^r William Munroo & former wife to Mr EDWARD Wyer of Charlstow^{ne} Age^D 79 years. Dle^D Decemb^r ye 14th 1715 **Daniel Munroe, the father of Jedediah**, was born on August 12, 1653 in what would have been Cambridge Farms, but later Lexington, MA. He married about 1715, Dorothy (spelled Dority), maiden name unknow). Daniel contributed to the purchase of Lexington Common in 1711, and was admitted to the church on February 18, 1728. He and Dorothy had five children, all born in Lexington: 1. **Daniel Jr.**, born January 27, 1717/18; 2. **Jedediah**, born May 20, 1721; 3. **Sarah**, July 14, 1724; 4. **Dorothy (spelled Dority)**, born June 21, 1728; and 5. **John**, born March 31, 1731.¹¹

According to the Lexington Vital Records, Daniel died on February 25, 1733. The inscription on his tombstone has been transcribed as February 1st, but the stone is broken and perhaps unreadable. Daniel died intestate, and his estate entered probate on March 5, 1734 with Dorothy appointed administratrix on March 25, 1733/4.¹²

An accounting was made on April 23, 1734. Daniel was described as a husbandman (farmer). The estate was valued at £764 and 15 shillings, and divided among the heirs as follows.¹³ Pounds Shillings Pence

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254	18	14 to wife Dorothy as her widow's third
169	18	10 to son Daniel as a double share to the eldest son
84	19	3 to son Jedediah
84	19	3 to son John
84	19	3 to daughter Sarah
84	19	3 to daughter Dorothy

Six years following the above accounting, on March 29, 1739, Jedediah at age 18 and still a minor was placed under the guardianship of Joseph Fassett of Lexington. On November 19, 1739, Sarah, age 16, Dorothy, age 11, and John, age 9 were also placed under the guardianship of Joseph Fasset.¹⁴ Guardians were responsible for managing the estate of the minor, arranging for and financing the education of the minor and providing the court with an annual account of the estate until the minor reached his or her majority at age 21.

On April 14, 1740 a reconciliation of Daniel's estate was undertaken to account for accumulated debts and charges. It was revalued at £491, 12 shillings, 08 pence, with a single share valued at £81, 18 shillings, 9 1/3 pence.¹⁵

The portion of land that was Jedediah's single share inheritance is described below

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Lexington vital records do not give a date of death for the widow, Dorothy. She probably died in 1771 since on April 10th of that year, the land that been reserved to her as her third was evaluated at 69 pounds. The sum was divided between her sons, Jedediah and John, with Jedediah receiving £21 and John £48.¹⁶ In such cases, the youngest son often received a greater amount based on the consideration that he had less time to have accumulated wealth.

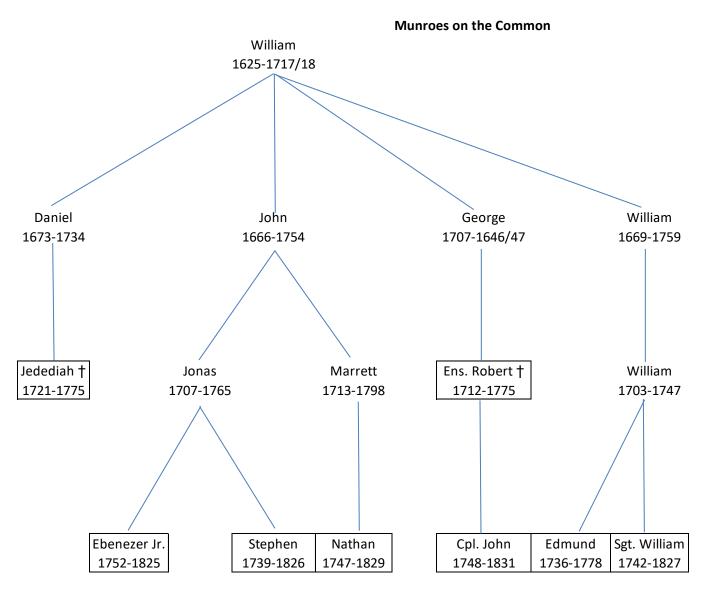
Daniel was buried in Lexington's old Burial Ground, and a photo of his tombstone is below. Dorothy's burial site has not been located.



Here lyes ye Body of Mr. DANIEL MUNROE Who Died Feb^{ry} 1st 1734 in ye 57th Year of His Age¹⁷

Jedediah Munroe

Jedediah married **Abigail Loring**, baptized January 7, 1722, died October 31, 1811, aged 89, daughter of Joseph and Lydia (Pike) Loring.¹⁸ At the time of the battle on Lexington Common on April 19, 1775, Jedediah was 54 years old, and not only a married man, but the father of ten children. He joined seven other members of the extensive Munroe family who stood on Lexington Common to assert their right to do so, and most likely to monitor the movements of the British expeditionary force. One can conjecture as to whether they really understood that there might be a confrontation when the Regulars arrived, rather than that they might peacefully pass by. If the latter, then they truly did not understand the mood of the Red coated soldiers on that morning.



The Eight Members of the Munroe Family on Lexington Common on April 19, 1775

During the skirmish, Jedediah was wounded, but we do not know where in his body he received the wound. It is presumed he might have been able to make his way off the common to safety.¹⁹ After the British had shouted their huzzahs and left for Concord, the dazed men of the Lexington militia returned to the common only to find their townsmen lying dead or writhing in agony from their wounds.

The wounded were cared for. The dead were placed in rough-hewn wooden caskets and respectfully placed within the meeting house before being hastily buried at the rear of the Old Burial Ground. There, the common grave was hidden with branches for fear the returning British would desecrate their resting place.¹⁹

Somehow, despite what they had experienced that morning, Captain Parker was able to gather a portion of his company, Jedediah among them, and lead them in pursuit of the Regulars. The men from Lexington were the only militia company that afternoon who had experienced and knew what war was really like. Despite that, they marched off behind Captain Parker, an action that has been called the bravest moment of their day.

Author, Arthur Bernon Tourtellot described it this way:

Later on the morning of April nineteenth, Captain Parker reassembled his Lexington minutemen, to march toward Concord. Some of the wounded, now bandaged, formed in awkward but determined lines. . . . William Diamond beat his drum again. The little company marched off toward Concord, the beat of the drum and the thin music of the fife echoing briefly after them. And this was Lexington's saddest and most triumphant moment of that whole day-the sun now high in the sky, the smell of British gunpowder still in the air, their dead brothers lying on the Common behind, and the company of minutemen, knowing now what they faced, marching off to meet the enemy again.²⁰

That afternoon, at a location in todays' Minuteman National Historical Park that has become known as "Parker's Revenge," the men from Lexington encountered the Regulars returning from Concord. The only primary evidence we have with respect to that event was the statement of Nathan Munroe, a cousin of Jedediah, "About the middle of the forenoon, Captain Parker, having collected part of this company, marched them toward Concord, I being with them. We met the regulars in the bounds of Lincoln, about noon, retreating towards Boston."21

An archeological investigation has revealed the area where the men of Lexington confronted the returning Regulars, exchanged fire, and then were again forced from the field as they had been in the morning. We do not know the effectiveness of the militia fire. It seems quite possible that several British troops might have been wounded. However, Lexington again suffered. Sergeant Francis Brown received a wound to his face and two others were killed, Nathaniel Wyman and Jedediah.

The men from Lexington would engage repeatedly, some claiming to have pursued all the way to Cambridge where the British turned to the East and took refuge in the streets and on the hills of Charlestown. Not quite two month later, Charlestown and those hills would be the site of another grim battle in that grim war that began with the first shots on Lexington Common.

Jedediah's wounding in the morning and death in the afternoon were mentioned in Elias Phinney's History of the Battle of Lexington, and appeared in a list of casualties.²²

> April, and the towns to which they respectively belonged. LEXINGTON. Killed, |Wound. |Missing. Jonas Parker, Robert Munroe, Samuel Hadley, Killed in the Jonathan Harrington, Jun. 7 Morning. Isaac Muzzy, Caleb Harrington, John Brown, Jedidiah Munroe, Killed in the John Raymond, Nathaniel Wyman, 3 Afternoon. John Robbins, Solomon Pierce. John Tidd. Joseph Comie, Wounded in Ebenezer Munroe, Jun. 9 the Morning. Thomas Winship, Nathaniel Farmer Prince Estabrook (colored)

Jedidiah Munroe,

Francis Brown, wounded in the afternoon.

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The following is a correct List of the Provincials, who were killed, wounded and missing in the Action of the 19th of

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It is not known what was the disposition of Jedediah's body or where he was buried. He died without a will, and his estate entered probate on May 1, 1782. "Daniel Munroe trader as principal, Jedediah Munroe housewright, as surety, both of Roxbury, in the County of Suffolk and James Munroe of Cambridge in the County of Middlesex, blacksmith, as surety" posted bond for ten thousand pounds, the condition of the obligation being that Daniel was "appointed administrator of the estate of Jedediah Munroe late of Lexington in the County of Middlesex aforesaid, yeoman deceased intestate."²³

On the same date, Daniel, as principal posted bond "and is nominated and allowed to be guardian (at their election) unto Zachariah & Elizabeth both minors above fourteen years of age children of Jedediah Munroe yeoman." Elder brother Daniel was thus assuming guardianship of his two younger siblings.²⁴

The appraisal of Jedediah's estate was completed on October 7, 1782 and showed personal property of 19 pounds 11 shillings and 4 pence. The real estate was valued at 268 pounds and 15 shillings and was composed of 11 acres and 4 rods of orchards and other improved lands with "an old dwelling house thereon," valued at 110 pounds; 24 acres and 36 rods of pasture and woodland "with an old barn thereon," valued at 101 pounds; and 12 ½ acres and five rods valued at 57 pounds and 15 shillings.²⁵

When Abigail's widow's third was set off, the debts exceeded the balance, and creditors were forced to accept a proportion of what they were owed. The creditor included Jedediah's eldest son, Daniel, Benjamin Estabrook, Joseph Munroe, Robert Harrington, widow Abigail, Simon Winship, Daniel Harrington, and Deacon Joshua Brooks. The court instructed "that the sums are in proportion of 14/4 for every 20/ of debts all that the creditors can receive till the death of the widow or until some further estate of the Deceased shall be discovered; and 30/ is left in the hands of the administrator for future charges."²⁶ page 15

Description of Jedediah's Lands²⁷

Lexington October 9th 1782.

By Virtue of a Commission from the Hon^{ble} Judge of Probate for the County of Middlesex to us Directed we have apprized in lawful money all the Real Estate whereof Mr Jedediah Munroe late of Lexington Deceased Intestate, Died Seized and proposed of Lying and being in Lexington in the County aforesaid as follows, Viz

Imp^t To eleven acres & four rods of Orcharding and other Improved Lands with an Old Dwelling House thereon Bounded northeasterly and northwesterly by a Town Road, southeasterly & southwesterly by land of Moses Harrington & Philip Russell; appraisement one hundred and ten pounds. £110-0-0

Item To Twenty four acres and Thirty Six rods of Pasturage & woodland with an old barn thereon bounded Southeasterly by the abovesaid road, Northeasterly by land of the heirs of George Munroe Dec^d, Northwesterly by land of the heirs of Deacon John Cutter Dec^d, and Southwesterly by land of Benjamin Easterbrook, from a Stake and Stones in the Northerly line to a Stake and Stones at the road, apprized at one hundred and one pounds.

£101-0-0

Item To Thirteen acres & half & five rods of woodland Bounded Southerly by land of Philip Russell, Westerly by land of Amos Muzzy, Northwesterly by land of Cap^t W^m Munroe, and Northeasterly y land of the heirs of Deacon John Cutter, and finishing on the Corner of Benjamin Easterbrook's land, apprized at fifty seven pounds fifteen shillings.

> <u>£57-15-0</u> £268-15-0

Abigail did not remarry, and died as Jedediah's widow on October 31, 1811, thirty-six years after his death. At that time, her widow's thirds were apparently subject to sale to pay off the remaining amounts due to creditors that had not been entirely satisfied in 1782. Daniel was executor and dallied about doing so, but Attai Estabrook, son and executor of his father Benjamin, one of the creditors, grew impatient. He addressed a letter to the court dated February 16, 1815, complaining that Daniel "has been often requested by your complainant to finish the said administration yet he wholly neglects and refuses to do so whereupon your complainant (n his said capacity) prays that the said Daniel Munroe may be warned before your Honor to give cause why he has not finished his said administration as by law he ought."²⁸ The description of the land was "ling on the road from Lexington Center to Woburn."

Daniel complied, and on January 10, 1816 was ordered "to pay the principal of the debts with the interest of the former balances for thirty years down to this time."²⁹

Abigail and Jedediah had ten children all born in Lexington. Although some information is available, it has not yet been possible to trace each of the children. There are still living descendants of Jedediah, and perhaps family records may provide additional information concerning his burial and his and Abigail's children.

1. **Danie**l, baptized September 23, 1744 in Lexington, married in Roxbury on September 15, 1774, Abigail Parker, born January 30, 1753 in Roxbury, daughter of Jonathan and Abigail. He served in the Revolution. They had six children born in Roxbury. According to the probate records, Daniel moved from Roxbury to Boston and was described as a "trader." He died in Boston on July 28, 1827, aged 83.³⁰

2. **Abigail**, baptized October 12, 1746 in Lexington, died unmarried in Lexington in November, 1834, aged 87.³¹ 3. **Jedediah Jr.**, baptized July 30, 1749 in Lexington, died February 4, 1812 in Lexington, married in Roxbury on May 30, 1782, Sarah Parker, baptized in Roxbury on December 24, 1758, died?, daughter of Nathaniel and Hannah (Chamberlain) Parker. He served in the Revolution. They had six children two of whom are listed as born in Roxbury, but the others' places of birth are not known. Jedediah was listed as a housewright in the probate papers.³²

4. **Solomon**, baptized April 12, 1752 in Lexington, died December 18, 1824 in Boston, MA, aged 72 "paralytic." He married Ebbitt Barker who died as his widow on August 10, 1833 in Boston. They are buried in Copp's Hill Burying Ground in Boston, Tomb 7, New Ground. His death was noticed in the newspapers as "Munroe, Solomon, Revolutionary Patriot, d. in Boston, Saturday, aged 72 (C.C. Dec. 35, 1824)" ³³

Solomon became a retail grocer offering both food and drink and carried on his business at a number of Boston locations. In 1796 he was in Pearce's or Fitche's Alley; in 1798 in Liberty Square and Ship Street; from 1800 to 1806 in Liberty Square, from 1807-1809 on Batterymarch Street; in 1810 on India Wharf with his residence on India Street; in 1813 he was at 112 Broad Street; in 1813 at 111 Broad Street; and from 1816 to 1821 he was at 113 Broad Street with no occupation listed in 1821.³⁴

5. Luther, baptized in Lexington on March 23, 1755, died in Lexington on November 13, 1774 aged 19.³⁵

6. Joseph, baptized in Lexington on December 4, 1757, died October 22, 1832 (not recorded), married on July 22, 1783, Rhoda Leathe, daughter of Elijah and Mary Richardson Leathe, born May 14, 1764 In Woburn, MA died January 2, 1825 in Lexington, aged 52?, they had seven children³⁶ Although Hudson did not credit Joseph with service in the Revolution, there are several entries in Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors for a Joseph of Lexington, and there are no other of that name who would be of the correct age.³⁶

7. **Dolly**, baptized March 30, 1760 in Lexington, died unmarried.³⁷

8. **Zachariah** (twin), baptized July 1, 1764 in Lexington, but listed in Burlington, MA birth records, married in Boston on January 11, 1789, Nancy Gavet.³⁸

9. **Elizabeth**, (twin) baptized July 1, 1764 in Lexington, but listed in Burlington, MA birth records, died young³⁹ 10. **Elizabeth**, married March 23, 1789 Abel Walker of Woburn, and nothing else has been found⁴⁰

Footnotes

¹Hudson, Charles, *History of the Town of Lexington from First Settlement to 1868 with a Genealogical Register of Lexington Families,* Boston, Wiggin and Lunt, Publishers. 1868, pp. 144-47. ²Ibid. p. 147.

³Munroe, James Phinney, A Sketch of the Munroe Clan, Also of William Munroe Who, Deported from Scotland, Settled in Lexington, Massachusetts, and Some of His Posterity, Together with A Letter From Sarah Munroe to Mary Mason Descriptive of the Visit of President Washington to Lexington in 1789, Boston, George H. Ellis, 1900, p. 23.

⁴https://www.geni.com/projects/Passengers-of-the-ship-John-and-Sara-Scots-Prisoners-of-War-1651/12051 ⁵ Ibid.

⁶Hudson, Charles, *History of the Town of Lexington from First Settlement to 1868 Revised and Continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society*, in Two Volumes, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912, Volume II, *Genealogies*, p. 449; Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the end of the year 1897 athttps://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/

⁷Rappaport, Diane, *The Naked Quaker, True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of New England*, Commonwealth Limited Editions, Carlisle, MA, 2007, pp. 15-27.

⁸Hudson, Volume I, *Genealogies*, p. 449; Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the end of the year 1897 athttps://ma-

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Brown, Francis H., M.D., *A Copy of Epitaphs in the Old Burying Ground of Lexington, Massachusetts*, The Lexington Historical Society, 1905, pp. 84, 88, 89;

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15839600/william-james-munroe;

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15839629/mary-munroe;

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16639620/elizabeth-munroe

¹¹Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 451

¹²Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871,Volume Middlesex County Cases 14000-15999, pages 15659:1-12659:23 at https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-1871/image?volumeId=14464&pageName=15660:2&rId=38337012

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 15659:2-15659:5

¹⁴lbid., pp.15660:1-15660:5

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 15659:4

¹⁶*Ibid.,* p. 15659:21

¹⁷Brown*, op. cit.,* p. 83

¹⁸Vital Records of Lexington, MA, op. cit.

¹⁹Letter of Elizabeth Clarke, daughter of Reverend Jonas Clarke, written to her niece, Lucy Ware Allen on April
20, 1835, describing the events of April 19, 1775 and the burial of the victims, collection of the Lexington
Historical Society.

²⁰Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, *William Diamond's Drum, The Beginning of the War of the American Revolution*, 1959, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York. P. 143.

²¹Kehoe[,] Vincent J.R., "We Were There April 19, 1775 The American Rebels," Self-Published, January 1, 1975, Deposition of Nathan Munroe, p. 247

²²Phinney, Elias, *History of the Battle of Lexington On the Morning of 19th April, 1775*, Boston, Printed by Phelps and Farnham, 1825, pp. 21 and 27.

²³Middlesex County Probate Records, op. cit., pp. 15682:1-15682:35 at

https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-

1871/image?volumeId=14464&pageName=15682:1&rld=38337358.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 15683:1-15683:2

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 15683:34

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 15683:15

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15683:34

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 15683:16

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 15683:20

³⁰Hudson, *Genealogy*, Volume II, p. 457; Vital Records of Roxbury, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849; Vital Records of Lexington, MA, *op. cit.*; U.S. Newspaper Extractions from the Northeast, 1704-1930 for Daniel Munroe athttps://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/50015/images/40699_2221301230_7204-00630?pld=418684

³¹Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 457.

³²Vital Records of Lexington, MA and Roxbury, MA, op. cit.

³³Find a Grave at: https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/640795/copp's-hill-burying-ground; Vital Records of Lexington, MA, *op. cit.*; U.S. Newspaper Extractions from the Northeast, 1704-1930 for Solomon Munroe; Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988 for Solomon Munroe, at

https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2495/images/40400_274790-00505?pld=43742246 ³⁴U.K. and U.S. Directories 1680-1830, Boston Directories Published by John West, various years at Ancestry.com;

³⁵Vital Records of Lexington, MA, op. cit.

³⁶Ibid.; Massachusetts 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 11, pp. 211 and 218

³⁷Vital Records of Lexington, MA, op. cit.

³⁸Vital Records, Lexington, MA, *op. cit.*; Vital Records of Burlington, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Burlington/aBirthsM.shtml; Boston, Massachusetts, U.S., Marriages, 1700-1809 at https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/18854:5208?ftm=1;

³⁹Vital Records, Lexington, MA, *op. cit.*; Vital Records of Burlington, MA, *op. cit.*