Joshua Simonds A Brief Biography By Bill Mix and Bill Poole

William Simonds, Great Grandfather

The first of the family to come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the great grandfather of Joshua Simonds the subject of this biography, was William Simonds. Based upon four court cases held in Middlesex County, MA between 1658 and 1662, in which his age was stated, he was born in England sometime between 1611 and 1612.¹

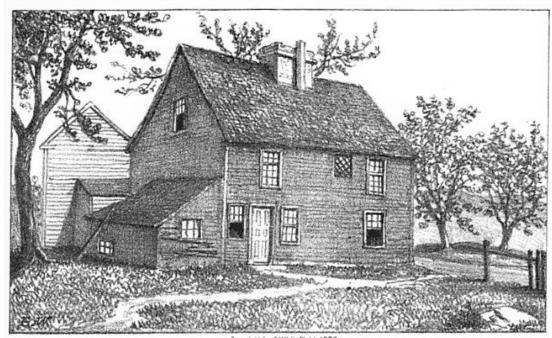
In another case held in April, 1659, he stated that he had been in the Massachusetts Bay Colony since 1630, meaning that he had most likely arrived in one of the eleven ships of the Winthrop Fleet or in one of the eight other ships that arrived that same year. There is a good deal of discussion concerning the early movements of William. There was a William Simonds residing in Charlestown MA in 1639, and Sarah, wife of a William Simonds was buried in Concord, MA on April 3, 1641. It is not known if these records refer to William the great grandfather of Joshua.

What is known, is that William was in Woburn, MA by March 18, 1643, when he married Judith (Phippen) Hayward, widow of James Hayward. She had arrived at Boston as a sixteen year old servant on board the ship *Planter* on June 7, 1635.⁴ William settled in Woburn about 1644 in a place known as Dry Brook⁵ [Location to be determined]. However, there is a good deal more evidence concerning a home that he built about 1670.

William Richard Cutter described it as follows:

Besides the Baldwin mansion, which is admitted to be the oldest house now standing in Woburn, there was another which outlasted nearly all its contemporaries, and has been demolished only recently [about 1908]. This was the Simonds house, built about 1670, known latterly as the Jesse Cutler house, Cummingsville. Fortunately its appearance has been saved by photography. This house was a good specimen of second period architecture in New England. It had a large brick chimney in the centre, was of two stories, and had a gable roof. William Simonds died in 1672, leaving this house and other real estate, his widow Judith (Phippen-Hayward) Simonds occupied for her thirds the west end of the house, the east end of the barn and twenty acres of land adjacent. That the house was new when William Simonds died, seems apparent from his indebtedness to Sergeant John Wyman for seven windows at seven shillings apiece. Benjamin Simonds succeeded his father in the ownership, and the house was used in 1675-6 as a garrison house under Benjamin's name, or during King Phillip's War. Benjamin was succeeded by several Benjamins, until the time of Nathan Simonds, who died in 1827. From Nathan the house descended to his children, the Barnard family; thence to Blanchard (1840) thence to Duren, thence to William Barnard, 1643-44, and lastly to Jesse Cutler in 1844.

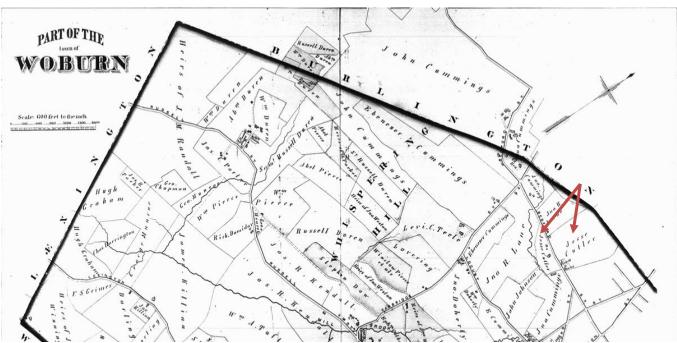
[The widow's third referred to that portion of her deceased husband's estate guaranteed to the widow by law. Cummingsville is an area of Woburn, still identified as such. The Woburn Street Directory for 1908 lists the home of Jesse Cutler, farmer, at 180 Bedford Street in Cummingsville.



The Gutter House, Woburn:

This house must be at least 200 years old, but the exact date cannot be ascertained with certainty. In 1759 it was owned by Benj Simmonds, and here the Epicopal Society hold have services It is now owned by Jesse Culler, and is the only old house in which a genuine obthishward diamend paned window is still to be seen.

This engraving appeared in Parker Lindall Converse's Legends of Woburn Series I.⁷



This 1875 map shows land owned by Jesse Cutler indicating the approximate location of the Simonds home.

Samuel Sewell, in his *History of Woburn*, had this to say about the Simonds' home:

Shortly after the individuals above referred to had withdrawn from the worship of the Second Precinct in Woburn to that of the Church of England, they were joined by Benjamin Simonds of the First Parish, who proved a very important man among them. His house is still standing, having its back to the road at the north, but a magnificent elm growing in the yard on the south side in front; and is the same house as that now occupied by Mr. Jesse Cutler on the road from Burlington to Cummingsville. At this house, these professed Episcopalians met on ordinary sabbaths for public worship, when the liturgy of the church of England was read to them, and not improbably a printed sermon likewise, by Mr. Thomas Skelton, Jr., one of their number. But on extra occasions, when an Episcopal clergyman from Cambridge or Boston came to minister to them, they would, as often as the weather allowed, meet in the yard under the shade of the wide-spreading elm, no room in the house being large enough to hold them, and there the minister would preach to them, and celebrate the ordinances.⁸

William was appointed a surveyor for the town in 1649 and again in 1668. In 1666, he was chosen to "watch For Swine and Fences." In April of 1659, William, along with William Locke, was convicted of:

"seditious and contemptuous carriages towards Authority, & of putting in their votes for the choice of Deputy for the General Court, although they were warned to forbear, & also of affronting the Church in their private consultations, this Court doth sentence them to be severely whipt with thirty stripes a piece, or to pay a fine of twenty pounds apiece, and to stand bound with sufficient sureties in 20 £ for their good behavior & appearance at the next Court." In 1660, they humbly petitioned for clemency.

To the much honured Deputy gouornor & the Rest of our honoured magistrats assembled in the County Courte

humbly besecheth

that you wold bee plesed to votesafe [vouchsafe] sume mitygation of that Just Censor which for oure misscarriges against this govorment wee have Rightly incurred, yet shold you bee pleased to grant the Request of such unworthy supplycants and the god of all marcy give your harts so to doe: our poore wifs and children who are now overwhelmed with sorrow seing noe hope of subsistance shold the most bee taken, wold with noe smale rejoysing blesse the lord for you: and for future boath they and wee: wold for ever by your clemency force and submit our selves and our whole estats to this govorment as we are bound in duty: and what ever your answer shall bee wee are the same altho right afflicted with unsupportable poverty: shold it bee taken without delaye & therefore besech that you wold bee plesed not only to give us leave but also to helpe our supplycation to the generall court should you at present deny our formor request: knowing assuredly the harts of kings are in the hands of the lord: to whome wee are ever bound to pray much honoured, that under you wee may live a quiet and a peacable life in all godlyness and honnesty

William Simons William Lock

Their fines were reduced to £15.9

Some have suggested that William Simonds and William Locke had Baptist sympathies — those that rejected infant baptism and declared the sacrament was only for those who could personally declare Jesus as their Lord. It is perhaps more likely that the two were protesting the restrictions on voting, and their rebellion ceased when they were admitted to the suffrage upon becoming "freedmen" of the town. If there was a

religious basis for their protest, both men seemed to have become reconciled with the established church of which William Locke became a Deacon.

William died intestate in Woburn on June 2, 1672. An inventory of his estate was taken June 12, 1672. The estate included farm animals, cloths, arms, provisions, a house, barn and farm in Woburn and a farm in Cambridge, all of which was valued at about £485. He had debts of about £25.¹⁰ On June 18, 1672, the inventory was presented in court and William's widow, Judith, and sons Caleb and William were appointed administrators. Those sons who were underage chose guardians as was required. Joseph, aged 19 chose John Wyman Sr as guardian, and Benjamin, aged 18, and James, age 15, chose Francis Kendall as guardian of their estates.¹¹

"April 1, 1673. The division of the estate of Wm. Simons Junr was allowed by the court, and a committee appointed to settle the estate of Wm. Simons, Senr. 16 June 1674, the committee made return." 12

William and Judith had thirteen children: 1. Sarah, born July 28, 1644; 2. Judith, born March 3, 1646; 3. Mary, born December 9, 1647; 4. Caleb, born August 16, 1649; 5. William, born April 15, 1651; 6. Joseph, the grandfather of Joshua Simonds, the subject of this biography, born October 18, 1652; 7. Benjamin, born March 18, 1654; 8. Tabitha, born and died August 20, 1655, 9. Joshua, no birth record, but death listed as "Joshua, s.[son] William, July 16, 1657;" 10. James, born November 1, 1658; 11. Bethia, born May 9, 1659; 12. Huldah, born November 20, 1660; and 13. Abigail, no birth record, but born about 1664 and mentioned in probate records.¹³

Joseph Simonds, Grandfather

Joseph, the sixth child and third son of William and Judith, was a carpenter, and in 1679 he deeded to his brother, James, lands he owned in Woburn. In exchange, James deeded to Joseph lands in Cambridge Farms, now Lexington, "upon which Joseph soon settled became the father of the numerous families of his name, which in successive generations have been inhabitants of Lexington." ¹⁴

On March 7, 1681, Joseph married **Mary Tidd**, born November 13, 1656 in Woburn, daughter of **John and Rebecca Wood Tidd**. Sometime after the marriage, both Joseph and his father-in-law moved to Cambridge Farms, which later became Lexington. Four members of the Tidd Family and two of the Simonds would serve together on Lexington Common on the morning of April 19, 1775.

He was one of the largest subscribers to the first meeting-house in 1692. His name is also on the first tax bill in 1693, and was among the eight or ten highest taxpayers on the list. He was appointed one of three care-takers of the ammunition stores in 1700. He was a subscriber to the fund for the public common in 1711, and one of the selectmen in 1712-13, at the first organization under the town charter. In 1695 we find the name of Sergeant Joseph Simonds among the assessors. Ensign in 1712. He also served on the school committee and filled other important offices in the town.¹⁵

Joseph was listed in the 1735 Lexington town tax valuation as owning a slave, one of the 20 individuals in town who did so. 16

Joseph and Mary had eight children, but unfortunately not all their birth or baptismal dates were recorded. However, their names were mentioned in his will. 1. **Rebecca**, born June 11, 1682; 2. **Mary**, born December 15, 1684; 3. **Joshua Sr.**, the father of Joshua, the subject of this essay, born January 23, 1686/87; 4. **Joseph**, born June 8, 1689; 5. **Daniel**, birth date unknown; 6. **Jonathan**, birth date unknown; **Abigail**, birth date unknown; and **Elizabeth**, baptized November 16, 1698.¹⁷

Joseph died August 12, 1733 aged 86, and mary died on January 4, 1732 aged 77. They lie buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground under a single gravestone. 18





Also here lyes ye Body of Mrs Mary Simonds wife to Mr Joseph Simonds who Died Decembr 4th 1732 Aged 77 Years Here lyes Buried ye Body of Mr. Joseph Simonds Who Died Augst ye 12th 1733 Aged 81 Years

Joshua Simons Sr., Father

Joshua Sr. served in a number of offices in Lexington. He was a constable in 1728, on the school committee in 1732, a selectman in 1733 and 1746 and was a tithing man in 1735. Tithing men were responsible for maintaining order and ensuring attendance in church. About 1720 he married **Hannah Poulter**, born in Lexington November 12, 1697, daughter of **John and Hannah Hammond Poulter**. Hannah and Joshua Sr. had seven children, all born in Lexington. 1. **Joshua Jr.**, baptized February 20, 1721, died August 29, 1724; 2. **John**, baptized August 9, 1724, died September 1, 1728; 3. Sarah, born August 11, 1727; 4. **Hannah**, born October 17, 1729; 5. **Betty**, born January 22, 1732; 6. **Joshua, the subject of this biography**, born May 16, 1736; and 7. **Joseph**, born October 1, 1739.

Joshua Sr. was a quite wealthy and large landowner and signed his will on June 29, 1767. He died on November 3, 1768 at the age of 82 and the will was proved on November 22, 1768. He mentioned his wife, Hannah, and children Joshua, Joseph, Sarah, wife of Francis Bowman, Hannah, wife of Joshua Brooks, and Betty, wife of Hammon Reed. Joshua Jr. and Joseph received Joshua Sr.'s property, and the daughters received one full share of the estate and sums of money. He willed to the children of his daughter Sarah Simonds Bowman one hundred and thirty pounds to be divided among them as they reached maturity. The bequest he left to Hannah is unusual for the specific detail, and is indicative of his wealth. Few women at this time would have benefited as well as did Hannah.

I give and bequeath unto Hannah Simonds my Beloved wife the sum of one hundred thirty three pounds Six shillings and Eight pence to be paid her by my executors hereafter named, all my household goods that properly belong to furnishing the house the whole use and improvement of the Easterly Loor (?) room and Bedroom and Westerly Chamber on the front in my own Dwelling House with the kitchen Cellar; and the use of the oven, well, house yard etc. in common as she may have occasion During her Natural life; also my will is & I do order that my Son Joseph Simonds or his heirs find and provide for my wife a good horse, well kept and shod, for her own riding as she shall require, and two good milk cows found & well kept for her, Six bushels of Indian corn, three bushels of Rye, two bushels of wheat, two bushels of malt, fifty pounds of pork, one hundred pounds of beef, two barrels of cyder, three bushels of winter apples, and a sufficiency of suitable sauce, also twelve pounds of flax, & six pounds of sheep's wool, and six cords of good firewood cut for her fire & brought to her door. Each and every of these articles to be found her during her life.²⁰

Hannah died on November 11, 1789 at the age of 92. She and Joshua Sr. are buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground.²¹





Memento mori.

Here lies the Remains of Mr. Joshua Simonds who Departed this Life November 3d 1768 In the 82d year of his age.

Dear friends for me pray do not weep,
I am not dead but here do sleep,
Within this solid lump of clay,
Until the Resurection-day:
And here indeed I must remain,
Till Christ shall raise me up again

My glass is run

In Memory of
Mrs. Hannah Simonds
(wife of
Mr. Joshua Simonds)
who departed this Life
Novr. ye 11th 1789;
In the 94th year of
her age

Lo, in the law JEHOVAH dwells, But Jesus is conceal'd; Whereas the gospel's nothing else, But Jesus Christ reveal'd

Joshua Simonds

In the 1775 Lexington Tax Poll List, Joseph Simonds ranked first in wealth, but his brother, Joshua was not far behind ranked fifth. Joshua "was a large landholder owning real estate not only in Lex. and other towns in Massachusetts, but in Hollis, N.H." Joshua and his brother, Joseph, who was an ensign in the Lexington Militia, both responded to the alarm of April 19, 1775 and stood on Lexington Common. Joshua's son, William, gave an account of his father's experience, written in the first person as if Joshua himself was narrating.

JOSHUA SIMONDS'S STORY. The First Prisoner, and First Trophy of the War.

I was in charge of the town's stock of ammunition on the eventful morning. The magazine was the upper gallery of the meeting-house, and in the discharge of my duties I was there filling the powder-horns of my comrades when the regulars came into the town.

As fast as the horns were filled, their owners made haste down the stairs, and out to the line of the company for action. Of the last two who left the house, one, Caleb Harrington, was detected and killed, while the other, Joseph Comee, running in the midst of a shower of bullets, was struck in the arm, but reached a dwelling-house, and passing through it made a safe retreat.

I was left in the meeting-house with one associate, when, as it appeared, the truth flashed upon the British commander, and he determined to see what was in the house. We heard the order, "Clear that house!" My associate glancing out saw the situation, and said, "We are all surrounded!" He then hid in the opposite gallery.

We heard the order, "Right about face!" I then determined to blow up the house and go with it rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. I cocked my gun already loaded, placed the muzzle upon the open cask of powder, and waited for their course to determine their fate and mine as well. With my heart throbbing to bursting, I heard the tramp, tramp, tramp, as the soldiers came up the steps, and the words of the commander, as his head rose above the casement,

"Are there any more rebels in this house?" Tramp, tramp — they came nearer and nearer, then the word, "Halt," brought all to a stand. After an instant's pause, when the regulars, the meeting-house, myself, and comrade, were within a hair's breadth of destruction, the order was given, "Right about, march!" and they left the house.

I looked from the window, and saw the enemy form in line, and start on towards Concor; while there lay on the Common my dead neighbors, but no sign of a living comrade outside.

As soon as practicable we left the house, and in consternation went out upon the field. I soon espied a straggler from the regular army, who seemed to be somewhat indifferent to the whole situation.

He made no attempt to escape, and I took him into my custody. He was an Irishman, fully six feet in height, and manifested but little interest in the morning excursion. To my inquiry as to his delay, I found he had been overcome with liquor, lingered behind, and lost his companions. I took him to a place of safe keeping, away from the possible line of march of the army when they should return. He was thus the first prisoner captured on that day.

His musket, a good specimen of the king's arms, I also took, appropriated to my own use, and at the close of that day turned it over to Captain Parker as public property. I was not able to ascertain the remainder of the man's experience, but the gun is of interest to all.

Captain John Parker died on September 17, 1775 succumbing to the tuberculosis that had ravaged his lungs and would cause the death of many of his family. Following his death, his widow, Lydia Pierce Parker, encountered financial difficulties and Joshua Simonds purchased half of the farm and moved his family onto the homestead. It was there that he found the musket that he had taken from the British soldier.

Joshua's story continues:

The first trophy of the war was held by Captain Parker until his death in the autumn of that year, when it became the property of his son John, the mechanic; and it occupied a position over the door of the dwelling-house of the Parker homestead.

The gun now became in a peculiar manner a piece of common property with the Parker and Simonds families.

At the settlement of the estate of Captain Parker I bought a portion of the homestead, and my family occupied a part of the house. Large families of children had some things in common, one being the old musket.²²

That musket was passed down in the possession of the Parker family until the captain's grandson, Theodore Parker, willed it to the State of Massachusetts and it is now on display in the Senate Chamber of the Massachusetts State Capital next to the musket carried by Captain Parker on April 19, 1775.²³



THE FIRST FIREARM
CAPTURED IN THE
WAR OF INDEPENDENCE



THIS FIREARM WAS USED BY CAPTAIN JOHN PARKER AT THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON APRIL 19, 1775



Following the action of April 19th, Joshua served under Captain John Parker In June, 1775 and under Captain John Bridge in March, 1776. The latter assignment was during the mounting on Dorchester Heights of the cannon brought by Colonel Henry Knox from Fort Ticonderoga that forced the British to evacuate Boston.

SIMONDS, JOSHUA, Lexington. Private; pay roll of a detachment from Lexington militia co. commanded by Capt. John Parker; service, 2 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from June 17 to June 18, 1775, by order of Committee of Safety; *also*, Capt. John Bridge's co., Col. Eleazor Brooks's regt.; service between March 4 and March 8, 1776, 2 days; company stationed at Roxbury.²⁴

Joshua married in Billerica, MA on May 2, 1765 **Martha Bowers**, born August 23, 1742, daughter of **William and Martha Winship Bowers**. They were admitted to the Lexington Church on September 7, 1766, and had eight children all born in Lexington. 1. **Martha**, born October 1, 1766; 2. **Elizabeth**, born May 24, 1768 and probably the child listed as "Joshua's ch.," who died November 9, 1769; 3. **Joshua III**, born January 4, 1770; 4. **Elizabeth**, born July 14, 1772; 5. **William**, born August 18, 1774; 6. **Lucy**, baptized December 15, 1776; 7. **Jonathan**, born February 22, 1779; and 7. **Hannah**, born July 29, 1786.²⁵

Martha bore her children over a period of twenty years. The first child born when Martha was 24 and the last when she was nearly forty four. Joshua died on July 25, 1805 aged 69, and Hannah survived him dying on June 24, 1819. They were buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground.²⁶



Sacred
To the Memory of
MR. JOSHUA SIMONDS
who died
July 23, 1805
Æt. 69.

This flesh and blood I want no more, I stand upon a purer shore; My work is done and I resign That dust which is no longer mine. In memory of
MRS. MARTHA SIMONDS,
Relict of
Mr. Joshua Simonds,
who departed this life
June 24, 1819
Aged 77.

The Simonds family has left its mark on Lexington. Simonds Brook Conservation Area is located off Grove Street near where members of the family had their homes. Simonds Road runs from Burlington Street to Bedford Street. Not far to the north from that intersection is the historic Simonds Tavern operated from 1802 to 1828 by Joshua III., son of Joshua Jr. the subject of this biography. It is thought that Joshua Jr. built the northern end of the tavern about 1795 and Joshua III added the southern end in 1810. Joshua III also built a home on Massachusetts Avenue about 1830 that still survives today.



Simonds Tavern located at 331 Bedford Street in Lexington²⁷

Footnotes

¹Middlesex County Court Records, folio 16 and 21 (1658) and folio 29 (1652) cited in https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Simonds-135

²Massachusetts Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001; Middlesex County Courts Records 1649-1663, vol. 1, p. 175, image 100 of 169 at https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L979-SVX?i=99&cc=2061550&cat=267196

³Wyman, Thomas Bellows. *The Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown*, 2 vols. (D. Clapp and Son, Boston, 1879) p. 866; *Vital Records of Concord, MA, to the End of the Year* 1891 at https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Concord/aDeathsS.shtml

⁴Passenger list of the *Planter* at http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/ships/neng_planter1635.shtml ⁵Sewall, Samuel, *The History of Woburn, Middlesex County, Mass., from the Grant of Its Territory to Charlestown, in 1640, to the Year 1860*, Boston: Wiggin & Lunt, 1868), p. 637.

⁶ William Richard Cutter, A.M., *Historic Homes and Places and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs Relating to the Families of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1908, Volume I, p. xx-xxi.

⁷Converse, Parker Lindall, Legends of Woburn, Series 1, Woburn, Mass., Andrew, Cutler & Co., 1892, p. 58. ⁸Sewell, Samuel, *The History of Woburn, Middlesex County, Mass. from the Grant of Its Territory to Charlestown in 1640, to the Year 1860, by Samuel Sewell M.A., of Burlington, Mass., Sometime Rector of the Church there with a Memorial Ske5tch of the Author by Rev. Charles C. Sewell, Boston, Wiggin and Lunt Publishers, 1863, pp. 500-501.*

⁹Locke, John Goodwin, Book of the Lockes A Genealogical and Historical Record of the Descendants of William Locke, of Woburn with an Appendix Containing a History of the Lockes in England, also of the Family of John Locke, of Hampton, N.H, and Kindred Families and Individuals, Boston and Cambridge, James Munroe and Company, MDCCCLIII, p. 14; and https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~simonds/genealogy/index.htm.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Probate records 1648--1924 (Middlesex County, Massachusetts) v. 4 1672-1677 pp. 154-155.

¹²Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001, pp. 30-31, image 41 of 351 at: https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-9979-S9RP?cc=2061550&wc=Q4DW-FMS%3A353350601%2C353362601%2C1006229301

¹³Sewall, p. 637; *Vital Records of Woburn, MA to the End of the Year 1873* at https://mavitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Woburn/

¹⁴Sewall, p. 638.

¹⁵Hudson, 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. 619.

¹⁶Hudson, 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 I, History, p. 481.

¹⁷Ibid,. p. 620.

¹⁸https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16639706/joseph-simonds

¹⁹Hudson, p. 620.

²⁰Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871, Cases 20,000 – 21999, pages 20437:1-20437:7.

²¹https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2196599/old-burying-ground;

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16639709/joshua-simonds

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16639701/hannah-simonds

²²Brown, Abram English, *Beneath Old Rooftrees*, Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1896, pp. 32-35. ²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Massachusetts 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. 243.

²⁵Hudson, Genealogies, p. 621; Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the End of the Year 181897 at https://mavitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/

²⁶https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16904568/joshua-simonds; https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16904918/martha-simonds

ittps://www.iiiuagrave.com/memoriai/10904910/martiia-s

²⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simonds Tavern