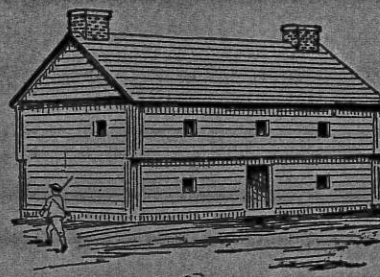


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THE  
COLONIAL GARRISONS  
OF  
NEW HAMPSHIRE



PUBLISHED BY  
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SOCIETY  
OF  
THE COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA

## FOREWORD

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The Society of Colonial Dames of New Hampshire has supplied a valuable record in this list of garrison houses and sites in the state. Fifty years ago a considerable number still remained, if not in their original form, many at least still recognizable for what they once had been. Today few survive, and these few so disfigured by changes in outer shell as to be difficult to identify. Fire, removal to make room for modern buildings, abandonment and dilapidation have worked as agencies in their destruction.

Quite different were these local strongholds from the corn-cob cabins reared with notched logs, found west of the Hudson, which have become fixed in the popular mind as the type of log houses of the early settlers. Ours were built of squared timbers, hewn or sawn, from six to eight inches thick, laid flat one upon another, closely fitted at the corners. Strong beams across the tops of the walls, projecting beyond the outer surface of the lower story, gave support to the attic, or to the second story, where there was one. This second story usually took the form of a framed box larger than the structure on which it rested. A space of several inches was thus left open between the outer surface of the lower story and the inner surface of the upper that gave opportunity to meet attacks, whether of fire or weapons, at close quarters. The windows were usually small squared openings in the timbers, closed with heavy shutters. Practicable loop-holes were left in proper places. The garrison was often surrounded by a palisade — sometimes equipped with "flankarts" — and in some cases lined on the inside with compartments which could be used by fugitive families. The stout palisade itself, surrounding a house or houses, is sometimes called a garrison. A well would be included, if possible, within the enclosure: there are records which mention one in the cellar, and others from which it appears that the well lay completely outside the defenses, or that water must be brought at peril from a nearby spring or brook.

In the Gilman Garrison at Exeter, built about 1655, can still be studied the form of construction of the typical garrison. At the corners were erected white oak posts, into which the wall timbers are mortised. The second story, suspended on the ends of transverse beams, shows the two forms of juncture in use, halving and dovetailing. The single window aperture remaining from the primitive time

is a rectangular opening, eighteen inches wide by twelve high, cut in the log. The massive front door was studded with nails to hamper the enemy's axe. In addition a heavy wooden grating, which went by the name of portcullis because it closed from above, could be let down as protection when the door stood open.

A garrison of one story represented a protected family home, probably at a distance from other houses. The two-story building was a community stronghold, owned and occupied as a residence by a prominent man, but assigned to certain families near by as refuge in time of peril. The regular garrisons, when their occupants were not caught off guard, were quite defensible against ordinary attacks by the Indians, who rarely came in large companies or undertook a sustained siege. Garrisons were usually placed on an elevation, with ample cleared space about them. They were not so much forts, as fortified houses.

The importance of garrisons in the defense of the new settlements during the Indian wars can hardly be overestimated. Without them whole districts would have gone back to wilderness. Even with such refuges at hand the wily foe succeeded too often in their strategy of intercepting the men at work outside, or sneaking into the enclosure if the guard relaxed. Their practice was to hide for days in the neighborhood, watching with the patience and invisibility of prowling beasts until a door was left ajar, or a group moved too far from their guns in the field; then they struck without warning or pity. The garrisons were reasonably secure, but food came from outside; cattle and crops must be tended, and immunity from attack for a considerable period often led to some fatal carelessness which resulted in disaster.

After the close of the wars, when all danger from Indians had passed, owners of garrisons proceeded to make them more sightly and comfortable. Windows were cut, clapboards concealed the rough timbers, the inside was plastered and adorned with wainscoting, planed boards took the place of puncheon floors of halved logs. Only the one-story buildings, abandoned to use as shed or storehouse, kept their original form, and these gradually yielded to the destructive effects of time. The only garrison in the state now visible in nearly its original form is the one-story Damme Garrison preserved in the Woodman Institute in Dover. The best example of the roof construction of a building of a single story is to be found in the Frost Garrison at Eliot, Maine, a few miles across the New Hampshire border.

ALBERTUS T. DUDLEY,  
Exeter Historical Society



structing the present (1888) barn. It stood within the limits of modern Dover. (*Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, p. 89.)

**Wentworth Garrison:** Ezekiel Wentworth's garrison is mentioned March 6, 1710-11, as beyond Ebenezer Varney's corner, on the way from Cocheco to Quampheggan. (*Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, p. 73.)

## DURHAM

Oyster River had been a "famous rendezvous" for the Indians, and they resented the intrusion of colonists. The frequency of murderous attacks over a period of fifty years (1675-1724) accounts for the unusual number of garrisons. In 1694, out of the twelve then in use, five were destroyed during the massacre.

**Beard's Garrison:** In 1675, the Indians "assaulted another house at Oyster River (Durham) the which, although it was garrisoned, yet meeting with a good old man, whose name was Beard, without the garrison, they killed him upon the place and in a barbarous manner cut off his head and set it upon a pole in derision." . . . The man slain was William Beard, whose garrison stood east of Beard's Creek, between the turnpike road and the highway to Dover, a short distance from the corner.

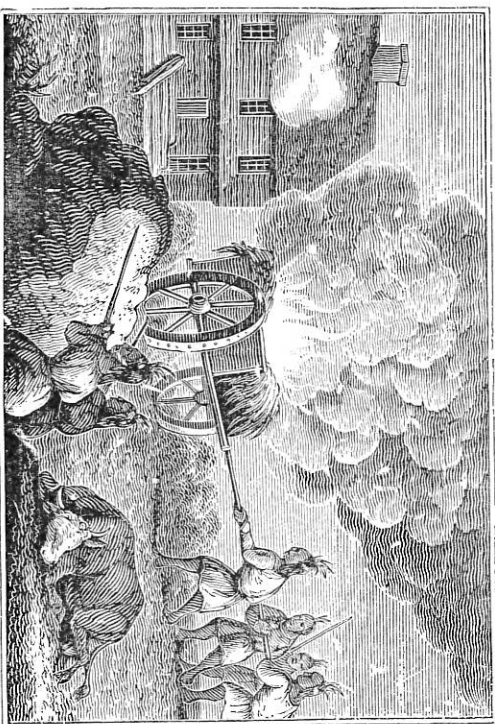
The Chesley families were nearest neighbors to Beard and probably were in his garrison when their houses were burned, for they survived this raid. (*Hist. Durham*, p. 86.)

**James Davis Garrison:** Below Jones's garrison were those of Bunker, Smith and Davis, all of which were successfully defended in the massacre of 1689. Lieut. James Davis sent his family away by water and with the help of his brother, Sergt. Joseph Davis, defended his garrison, extinguishing the fire applied to it. Sergt. Davis was fired upon by three Indians. He stooped and a bullet split a sapling just above his head. He shot an Indian whose bones were found in a swamp soon after. Col. James Davis was born at the garrison house near the mouth of Oyster river, 23 May, 1662, and died at the same place 8 September, 1749. He was the most prominent man of his time in Durham, and few his equal in the Province of New Hampshire. (*Hist. Durham*, pp. 100, 292, 293.)

**Huckins Garrison:** James Huggins (Huckins) of Oyster River was slain, his garrison taken, and 18 persons killed or carried away. James Huckins was a lieutenant; he had a garrison house which stood a few rods south of the house now owned by heirs of the late Andrew E. Meserve, east of the railroad and on the north side of the second road crossed by the railroad as it runs from Durham to Dover. The men slain were at work in the field which lies south-

east of the garrison, beyond Huckins' brook. They were all buried under a mound which still exists in the southeast corner of the field which now belongs to the Coe family. The Indians then attacked the garrison house, defended only by two boys and women and children. They managed to set fire to the roof of the garrison but the boys held out till the Indians promised to spare the lives of all. Yet they killed three or four of the children, and carried away the rest of the inmates, except one of the boys, probably Robert Huckins, who escaped the next day. The garrison house was destroyed. Lieut. Huckins's widow was recovered after a year of captivity at Fort Androscoggin, on Laurel Hill, Auburn, Maine. James Huckins was slain by Indians August, 1689. (p. 87.)

**Adams Garrison:** The garrison house of Charles Adams stood south of the road to Durham Point, and not far from the ruins of the brick house built by Washington Mathes. This garrison was burned and fourteen of the Adams family perished in the Indian massacre of 1694. One daughter, Ursula, was taken to Canada, never to return. The bodies of the fourteen were buried under a little mound close to the tomb on the east side of the Mathes burial ground, a pathetic reminder of the hardships and sufferings of those who prepared this beautiful land for us. (*History of Durham*, 1913, p. 50.)



INDIANS ATTACKING A GARRISON HOUSE

From an old wood engraving

**Bickford's Garrison:** The garrison that Thomas Bickford successfully defended in 1694 stood near the water at Durham Point, as traces of a cellar indicate. (p. 49.)

After setting fire to the Adams garrison the Indians attacked the garrison of Thomas Bickford at the extremity of the Point. Bickford's defence of his house seems to have been about the only item of special interest in this massacre that the Rev. Cotton Mather thought worthy of being recorded in his *Magnalia Christi Americana*. (p. 94.) He says: "Several persons remarkably escaped this bloody deluge, but none with more bravery than one Thomas Bickford, who had an house, a little pallisaded, by the river side, but no man in it besides himself. He dexterously put his wife and mother and children aboard a canoe, and, sending them down the river, he alone betook himself to the defence of his house, against many Indians that made an assault upon him. They first would have persuaded him with many fair promises, and then terrified him with as many fiery threatenings, to yield himself; but he flouted and fired at them daring 'em to come if they durst. His main strategem was to change his livery as frequently as he could; appearing sometimes in one coat, sometimes in another, sometimes in an hat and sometimes in a cap; which caused his besiegers to mistake this one for many defendants. In fine, the pitiful wretches, despairing to beat him out of his house, e'en left him in it; whereas many that opened unto them upon their solemn engagements of giving them life and good quarter, were barbarously butchered by them." (*Magnalia*, Vol. 2 Appendix, Article XX.)

**Bunker Garrison:** The Bunker garrison house was probably built by James Bunker soon after 1652, when he bought the land on which it stood. The walls, except the gable ends, were of heven hemlock logs, nine inches in thickness. There were loopholes for defence, afterwards enlarged into windows. This was the last remaining garrison of Oyster River that was attacked by the Indians in 1694. The old garrison was allowed to go to ruins beyond restoration. This garrison stood on the hill west of Bunker's Creek. (*History of Durham*, p. 64.) The foundation outline may still (1937) be seen from the road. Of the twenty soldiers sent to guard the Durham garrisons, three were posted at Bunker's. (p. 103.)

**Burnham's Garrison:** The Robert Burnham garrison — probably the house of Ambrose Gibbons — stood on the hilltop, where the old cellar may be plainly seen (1937), as well as the cellar of a smaller house, or out-building near by. (p. 57.)

In the massacre of 1694 "the Burnham garrison, on a hilltop, was easily defended by its situation. Hither fled Moses Davis, who had heard the first shot that killed John Dean. Ezekiel Pitman and family, who lived only a gunshot's distance from Burnham's, were alarmed by shouts. They escaped through one end of the house while the Indians were entering the other, and, protected by the shade of trees, made their way to the Burnham garrison, on which no serious attack seems to have been made. Tradition in the Burnham family says that the yard-gate had been left open that night, and ten Indians were sent to surprise the garrison. They were fatigued and fell asleep on the bank of the river near the house. John Willey, with his family, spent that night at the Burnham garrison. He had been kept awake by toothache and heard the first gun fired. He immediately closed the gate and shouted to the Pitman family. The shot awakened the Indians, who at once made the attack upon the Pitman dwelling." (p. 90.)

Belknap's version is that they "ran to Pitman's defenceless house, and forced the door at the moment that he had burst a way through that end of the house which was next to the garrison." This suggests the less substantial construction of the little dwellings dependent on the garrisons.

**Drew Garrison:** William Drew settled on what became known as Drew's Point before 1648. Doubtless Drew was the first person to live on this Point. The cellar of his garrison house may be plainly seen. The house was burned in 1694. (p. 52.)

Francis Drew surrendered the garrison at Drew's Point, on promise of quarter. He is supposed to have killed an Indian whose bones were found in the house after it was burned. Francis Drew attempted to escape and ran towards the Adams garrison but was overtaken by the Indians, bound and tomahawked. His wife was carried away and was rendered so feeble by hunger that she was left to die in the woods. (p. 93.)

**Durbin Garrison:** William Durbin lived near what is now known as Adams Point "at Durbin's the west side of Mathews his neck." Here was probably the Durbin garrison mentioned in 1695. The ferry landing seems to have been in a little cove at the southeast corner of the field. Adams Point was first called Mathews Neck. (p. 36.)

**Edgerly Garrison:** Thomas Edgerly owned land on both sides of Long, or Mill Creek. His garrison house was evidently north of Long Creek, now Meader's Creek, and was burned by the Indians in 1694. Shortly afterward he petitioned that the neighboring house of John Rand should be made a garrison. (p. 43.)



**Goddard's Garrison:** John Goddard was one of Capt. John Mason's colonists, who came over in the *Pied Cow* in 1634. He aided in erecting the first saw mill and grist mill run by water in New England, at what is now Great Works, South Berwick, Maine. His house, which was a garrison, stood south of the creek. (p. 33.)

**Hill's Garrison:** Valentine Hill built a house on the north side of Oyster River and lived in it... which house tradition says forms a part of the Frost house on the hill. This, then, must be the oldest house in Durham, and it is doubtful whether there is another so old within the limits of ancient Dover. This house must have been a garrison capable of resisting the Indian attack of 1694. (pp. 69-70.)

**Mathes Garrison:** The Matthews, or Mathes, garrison seems to have resisted the attack (massacre of 1694), and probably sheltered some of the neighbors. All houses between this and the Burnham garrison were doubtless burned. (p. 94.)

**Meader's Garrison:** The neck of land between the mouth of Oyster River and Royall's Cove was acquired by John Meader, in 1660. Here John Meader had a garrison, and here lived several generations of the Meader family, many of whom were Quakers. (p. 62.) The Meader garrison was abandoned and burned in the massacre of 1694. The family escaped by boat. (p. 100.)

The site of this garrison was near the summer home of Harold W. Brown—at what was first known as Hill's Neck.

**Woodman Garrison:** Woodman's garrison was built by Captain John Woodman soon after 1656, when he came to Oyster River. Miss Mary P. Thompson, in *Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, p. 179, thus describes the location of this garrison: "It is beautifully situated on the eastern slope of a hill at the head of Beard's Creek, with brooks and deep ravines on every side of the acclivity, except at the west. It had a fine outlook for an approaching enemy, as well as a charming view in every direction, except in the rear, where the rise of land intercepts the prospect. Durham village which did not exist when this garrison was built, lies at the south in full view, embosomed among trees; and at the east may be traced the windings of Oyster River on its way to the Piscataqua. At the north, through an opening between the hills, can be seen the spot where the Hucks garrison stood, and nearer at hand, but separated from it by a profound ravine, is the field where occurred the massacre of 1689."

Both parties of Indians met at the falls after their raids on the south and north sides of the river and made an

attack on the garrison of Capt. John Woodman, which resisted the attack and remained, with bullets in its timbers, till it burned in 1896.

**Rand's Garrison:** In the southeast corner of a large field of the John Emerson farm, a few rods from the shore, not far from a fine spring of water, is a depression that marks the cellar of the house built by John Ault, given to his son-in-law, John Rand, and used as a garrison of this region, after 1694. (p. 45.)

A petition written the day after the massacre (July, 1694), by Thomas Ederly, Sr., "Whereas it has pleased God to cast affliction upon him and his neighbors by the sudden incursion of the Indian Enemies, etc. . . . Humbly desires your consideration of his Low Condition and that you would graunt him and his Neighbors Liberty to make the house of John Rand a Garrison for the Security and defence of some of the Remaining ffamilies adjacent, and to graunt us supply of six men, and shall always pray for your happiness and Prosperity." (*N. H. State Papers*, Vol. XVIII, p. 640.)

**Jonathan Chesley Garrison:** Jonathan Chesley's old garrison house is the one now standing (1937) on the northerly side of the road to Madbury, a short distance east and on the opposite side of the road from W. S. Meserve's house. The date, 1716, has recently been found on one of the interior timbers, but the house was probably built before that year. Jonathan Chesley bought this land of Joseph Smith who had bought it of Joseph Leathers in 1697. It was formerly a part of the William Beard estate. (*History of Durham*, p. 67.)

**Captain Samuel Chesley Garrison:** The garrison of Capt. Samuel Chesley (brother of Jonathan) stood three or four rods east of the Meserve house. He was an officer who took part in two expeditions to Port Royal. From the last of these he arrived at Portsmouth in the sloop *Sarah and Hannah*, Thursday, August 28, 1707.... Three weeks later (September 17th) he and his brother, James, with six other young men, were slain by Indians while lumbering in the forest not far from Capt. Chesley's house. (*Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, p. 48.)

**Philip Chesley's Garrison:** Philip Chesley's garrison and "the late" Capt. (Samuel) Chesley's garrison are mentioned September 29, 1707. (*N. H. Prov. Papers*, II, 567. *Landmarks*, p. 48.)

**Joseph Chesley Garrison:** In Lubberland on the farm of Peter Smith are Chesley graves, and the garrison built by Joseph Chesley about 1707 was located in this vicinity. (*Hist. of Durham*, p. 244.)

**George Chesley Garrison:** Another Chesley garrison stood immediately in front of the present Christian meeting-house in Durham village. It was built by George Chesley who acquired this land October 16, 1699. According to the family tradition he was killed by Indians near the Durham Point meeting-house, on his way to Crummit's mill. The estate of a George Chesley was administered upon by his widow, Deliverance, and his brother, Joseph, September 5, 1710. (*Landmarks*, p. 48.)

**David Davis Garrison:** Another garrison was built by David Davis (son of the David who built the garrison in 1695 in Lubberland) at Packer's Falls, early in the eighteenth century, where five generations of David Davises have lived. The original garrison stood on a knoll in the center of the field back of its present location, to which it was moved prior to 1790 in order to be on the highway. Additions have been made by later generations so that the garrison of pre-Revolutionary times forms but a part of the present building, occupied by Eben Meserve Davis. (*Hist. Durham*, p. 356.)

**Jabez Davis Garrison:** The Jabez Davis garrison was about a mile from the village. (p. 303.)

**Jones Garrison:** Stephen Jones built a garrison (about 1672) on the upper, or west side of Jones' Creek, not far from the river. It was burned before 1732. The site of the garrison is made known by a depression containing broken bricks, pieces of pottery and of flint. It is about five or six rods north of the road leading to Piscataqua Bridge, and about ten or twelve rods from the Chesley division line, on the plain below the walled burial place of the Jones family. (p. 64.) The farm is now owned by Dr. Alice M. Chesley-Lamprey, of Exeter, a descendant of Stephen Jones. She has marked the site.

In the Jones family the tradition has been preserved that Ensign Stephen Jones in the night heard the barking of dogs and thought wolves were about. He got up and went some distance from the house to take care of swine. Returning he went into a flanker, got on the top of it and sat there with his legs hanging down on the outside. An Indian fired at him; he threw himself back, and the bullet entered the flanker betwixt his legs. A band of Indians from behind a rock a few rods from the garrison kept firing on the house. (p. 98.)

**Pendergast Garrison:** A part of the old Pendergast house still standing near the Newmarket line, Packer's Falls district, is claimed to be the original garrison. The family living in the house in 1935 stated that it was built in 1737.

In *Baptisms* by Rev. Hugh Adams: "1719-20, January 11, James, the infant son of James Tilley, at the garrison, second falls," perhaps now the Pendergast garrison. (*History Newfields*, p. 310.) If the present building was built about 1737, there must have been an earlier garrison on the site, or near by. The Pendergast family are buried in a family cemetery not far from the house.

**Joshua Woodman Garrison:** Another garrison . . . is said to have stood near Wiswall's mill, built by Joshua Woodman. (*Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, p. 49.) This would be in the region of Packer's Falls. (E. K. F.)

## EPHING

**Lawrence Garrison:** The site of David Lawrence's garrison house is near the overhead R. R. bridge and was probably built before 1747 when he was parish clerk of Epping. He was a grandson of David Lawrence of Exeter, who had land granted to him by Exeter in 1674.

**Sanborn Garrison:** The site of the Richard Sanborn garrison house is at the foot of Red Oak Hill. This garrison was also probably built before 1747, when Richard Sanborn was living in Epping and signed the petition relative to building a meeting house.

It is also stated that another garrison house stood where John Waugh lived in 1925. (Sites of these garrisons given by Mrs. Walter P. Sanborn, Epping.)

## EPSOM

**Garrison:** The proprietors built a block house, or garrison, for refuge in case of danger. It was built near Andrew McClary's house. The old foundation was uncovered in 1885 during preparations for erection of a house for Augustus Lord. Mrs. McCoy and family were hastening to and had nearly reached this garrison, when captured by Indians in 1754.

Captain Andrew McClary rendered the colony efficient military service, and was associated with such noted fighters and rangers as Stark, Goffe and Rogers. In 1753 he applied to Governor Wentworth for a company to go in pursuit of the Indians who committed the massacre at Salisbury. At another time he obtained a small company to aid in garrison duty at Epsom, when lurking Indians were seen. (*Hist. Belknap and Merrimack Cos.*, Hurd.)

The monument and bronze tablet at the site of the home of Major Andrew McClary, now on the Lawrence farm at Epsom Center, indicate the near location of the garrison.