Skelt of South Shore
Read by A. Hoyt
JOSEPH DIX.

Closely allied to righteousness, which exalteth a nation, and love of country which makes all the people kin, is the care with which the memory of the deeds and achievements of those who wrought those deeds is preserved. A nation is judged by what its people accomplish. The nation which forgets or neglects to preserve a fair record of the deeds of its people to incite coming generations to greater achievements fails in its duty. Our fathers accomplished mighty things in arms, literature and science. In the advance of knowledge, the furious haste of business pursuits, and the accomplishment of great enterprises, by the present generation, credit and honor have been, and are yet accorded to our ancestors who suffered and wrought mightily for their successors. Much has been written of the valuable services of the patriots who gained our independence and liberty, and particularly of the able and devoted men who commanded armies and led regiments in the revolutionary war. It will be a pleasure at this time to separate what has been written that which relates to one, who but a private, bore a brave part faithfully and long in that mighty effort, and afterwards assisted in no small way to make our fair county a fitting place for the homes of its educated and happy people.

Joseph Dix, the subject of this sketch, descended from New England stock, was born in the town of Leicester, Mass, in 1753.
The founder of the family in this country, Edward Dix, embarked from Gravesend, England, in 1635, at the age of nineteen. He settled at Watertown, Massachusetts, and his name appears on the earliest list of proprietors of that town. He was admitted a freeman July 4th, 1635. There was at that day a variety in the spelling given to proper names. His name was variously spelled Bikes, Beeks and Dix. It was doubtless he who subscribed at the church gathering at Charlestown, Massachusetts. If this be the fact he must have come over in the fleet with Governor Winthrop in 1639, and must have returned to England for a wife. This is not improbable, for on the same ship on which he came in 1635, there was Jane Wilkinson whom he married. The names of other persons, residents of Watertown, appear on the Charlestown list with his. He was a selectman in 1650, and had been a constable, for upon the record of the town it appears he was fined by the court, with others, each ten shillings, for not furnishing standard half bushel measures, while constable.

His descendant Joseph Dix, of the fifth generation, enlisted from the town of Sturbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, at the age of twenty-one years, as a private in Captain Timothy Parker's company of minute men, of Colonel Seth Warner's regiment, and marched to Cambridge on April 19th, 1775, immediately after the arrival of the messenger giving the alarm that the British troops had marched for Lexington. His service in this organization was but temporary, and was brief. The regiment was ordered to Roxbury to join Brigadier General Thomas. His service as a "Minute Man" ended
on April 27th, when he enlisted as a private in Captain Adam Martin's Company of Colonel Learned's Regiment. On July 27th, the brigades of which Colonel Learned's regiment was a part, and another under command of Brigadier General Spencer were "ordered to compose the right wing in the army commanded by Major General Ward and to remain at Roxbury and its southern dependencies."

This order was undoubtedly made by Washington, for he had then taken command of the army at Cambridge. It is contained in the "Orderly Book" kept by Colonel William Henshaw who was then Adjutant General. The service of the army to which Captain Dix was attached during this enlistment was doubtless defensive while the "Siege of Boston" continued, which ended March 17th, of the following year (1776), for it was at Cambridge that the Captains drew lots to determine which of them should accompany Arnold on his ill-fated expedition to Quebec. Precisely how long he served in this company upon that enlistment is not definitely known. His name is found on the company's muster roll of October 1775. He himself says in his application for a pension "for the space of eight months". Being at Roxbury, he doubtless was in the battles of Roxbury and Dorchester Heights.

2. Orderly Book, Henshaw, edition of 1877. 54
3. Godman's Arnold's Expedition to Quebec, 29 (Macmillan 1902).
5. Battles of the American Revolution (Carrington) 152. and Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, 579.
Washington was organizing his army and preventing Lord Howe from leaving Boston by inland excursions. It was in this service and in these battles he received the training that prepared him for subsequent long and faithful service.

Then Howe evacuated Boston he retired by sea to Halifax, and there waited for reinforcements. Here his situation was so uncomfortable, and the delays in the arrival of his reinforcements so great that he decided to make an attack with the army he had upon New York. He landed upon Staten Island on the fourth of July, 1776. Washington, immediately after the departure of the British from Boston, marched his army by divisions to New York. The last brigade left headquarters at Cambridge April 4th.

Before the removal of the army Joseph Dix had enlisted as a private in Captain Samuel Curtis' company of the 4th Massachusetts, at that time known as the 3rd Continental Infantry, commanded by Colonel William Shepard. Howe found Washington's army entrenched on Long Island and New York Island. Major General John Sullivan was in command. General James Clinton, brother of the famous Governor of New York, was in command of the New York troops on the opposite side of Long Island Sound, to cut off any attempt that might be made to land troops in Westchester County, or on the upper end of New York Island.

1. Drake's Campaign of Trenton.
The indications were that General Howe would make his first effort on Long Island, and General Sullivan was reinforced. On the 23rd of August, General Howe under the cover of his fleet landed his army, and there were engagements at Flatbush and Valley Grove between August 23rd. and 26th. The Hessians under Generals DeLamater and Guynghausen had arrived. On the 27th occurred the disastrous battle of Brooklyn - sometimes called the battle of New York, by the latter of which names it is designated by Captain Dix in his pension papers, in which General Sullivan was taken prisoner, and Colonel Shepard was among those who were wounded. 1. Washington who was in New York, went over to the camp at Brooklyn during the battle, and it not being possible to retrieve the disaster, withdrew the troops to New York.

Great despondency resulted from this battle and the consequent retreat, the confidence of the army and the people was shaken, and Washington was then, and his course at that time has been severely criticised since. He himself wrote of it, "This misfortune happened in great measure, by two detachments of our people, who were in two roads headed through the woods to intercept the enemy in their march, suffering a surprise and making a precipitate retreat." Marshall, in his life of Washington, says "the army did not contain a single corps of cavalry. Had the general been furnished with a few troops of light horse, to serve merely as vidiets, it is probable that movement so decisive of the fate of the day could not have been made." 2

2. Marshall's Life of Washington, V.1, Chaps 5 A  6
After this battle both armies were active, each striving to gain an advantage. General Howe planned to drive Washington from his position at Fort Washington upon the upper end of the Island, and Fort Lee on the opposite shore in New Jersey. He entrenched a part of his army at McDowens's Hill under Lord Percy, and sent three frigates up the Hudson past the forts, and embarked another part up East River into the Sound and landed at Frog Point, since known as Throgs Neck, in the attempt to get behind Washington's army. Washington strengthened his position at Kingsbridge upon the Harlem River, and sent some of his regiments to Westchester County to intercept the landing of the British there, among them the 4th, Massachusetts. There was a sharp engagement at Frog Point on the 12th of October in which this regiment was engaged, which checked for a time the advance of the Hessians, who made the attempt to land there. Sergeant Lamb, a British officer, in his journal of the late American War, published at Dublin 1809, says on page 135, "On the 12th of October, marched from the advanced posts on New York Island, and embarked in boats, passed up the East River and landed at Throgs Neck & so found the bridge which joined it to the main land broken down by the Americans, who had thrown up some works."

General Howe remained there some days in his fleet waiting for reinforcements, and on the 18th successfully landed his army at Pells Point, about four miles from Frog Point. Here occurred a spirited battle of much importance, sometimes called the Battle of Pells Point, and sometimes the Battle of Pelham Manor. Both
Ihrooga Neck and Pells Point being in the Manor of Pelham, these two engagements have been confounded by many writers. The 4th. Massachusetts was engaged in both. At Pells Point there were four regiments: Colonel Glover's, Colonel Read's Colonel Shepard's and Colonel Baldwin's, a total force of officers and men of 1119--scarcely more than a modern regiment. 1 A recent authoritative account of this battle (Abbott) states that Colonel Shepard was again seriously wounded in this engagement 2 and that the force was under the command of Colonel Glover of the Harlechhead, Massachusetts, who fought the battle with great skill and bravery. Colonel Glover's own regiment had no part in the battle, and Colonel Baldwin's had but a small part. The battle may be said to have been fought by Colonel Read's and Colonel Shepard's regiments, about 400 against ten times their number of disciplined soldiers. The loss of the British proper was three privates killed and twenty wounded. The great loss was among the Hessians. They reported only to their officers in Germany, and it has been difficult to ascertain the exact truth of the extent of their loss. However, it was ascertained with substantial accuracy from deserters, to have been from 900 to 1000, a total equal to twice the number of Americans engaged in the battle. 3

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2. Battle of Pells Point, 19
3. Battle of Pells Point 19-30
Those skeleton regiments, although composed of brave men, struggling in the cause of liberty, could not withstand the enemy at this place, assisted by the fleet, so they fell back upon White Plains where an important battle was fought on October 28th. That particular part these regiments took in that battle is now difficult to state. They do not appear in any returns of the losses incurred there that are accessible. From the known fact that the regiments were at Frog Point and Pells Point, and from the further fact that when after the battle of White Plains, Washington crossed the Hudson and retreated into New Jersey, he left only General Lee to watch the operations of the enemy; it appears certain that these men were at White Plains, though perhaps in reserve, and went with Washington after the battle.\footnote{1 Schuyler's history of Westchester Co. V.1, P.454}.

Oppressed by the disasters at Long Island and White Plains, compelled to retreat, the terms of enlistment of many of his soldiers being about to expire, and only saved for an additional six weeks service by the promise of a bounty of ten dollars, the money for which was obtained by the patriot financier, Robert Morris, on his own private credit, Washington was not discouraged. He wrote to Congress, "Could anything be more destructive of the recruiting business, than giving ten dollars bounty for six weeks service in the militia, who come in, you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when, and act, you cannot tell where, who consume your
provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last in a
critical moment." He planned and executed a most brilliant
campaign in the dead of winter that relieved New Jersey and saved
Philadelphia. The remarkable crossing of the Delaware amid snow
and ice, celebrated in literature and art, was made on the night
of Christmas, and the victory at Trenton was early the next day.
There never was a surprise more complete, nor a victory that gave
more encouragement to those who succeded. Not content with this
success, and although his situation was critical, and the diffi-
culty of re-crossing the Delaware so great that he boldly abandoned
the idea of a retreat, marched his army by a circuitous route to
Princeton, where Lord Cornwallis had collected a force, and on
the 3rd of January successfully fought the Battle of Princeton.
Of the effect of these two successful battles, Marshall in his
Life of Washington writes, - "The bold, judicious and unexpected
attacks made at Trenton and Princeton had a much more extensive
influence than would be supposed from a more estimate of the kill-
ed and taken. They saved Philadelphia for the winter, recovered
New Jersey, and what was still more importance, revived the droop-
ing spirits of the people." General Sullivan, who was taken
prisoner at the Battle of Long Island, had been exchanged, and
was in command at this time of that portion of the New England
soldiers of which the regiment in which Captain Dix served was
a part.

After Trenton and Princeton, Washington retired to Morris-town, New Jersey. It was here that Captain Dix enlistment for one year; in Colonel Shepard's regiment expired; and he on March 10th, 1777 again enlisted as corporal in his old company commanded by Captain Adam Martin; but the regiment was then known as the 1st Continental Infantry, afterwards as the 15th Massachusetts, and was commanded by Colonel Timothy Bigelow. Colonel Ebenezer Learned who was Colonel during the previous service of Captain Dix in it; had been promoted to be Brigadier General. Colonel Bigelow had been a major in Arnold's expedition to Quebec, and a comrade of Dix at Cambridge. General Learned's brigade with one other, was sent by Washington under Benedict Arnold to the assistance of the Northern Army; and to report to General Schuyler at Stillwater. Arnold went into camp at Half Moon about the middle of July. When the news came of the battle of Oriskany, General Schuyler saw the necessity of rescuing Fort Stanwix against the assault of St. Leger, who was coming from Oswego to join Burgoyne in his incursion over Lake Champlain and through the valley of the Hudson. He called a council of war, but was opposed by his officers. He exclaimed, "I assume the responsibility; where is the brigadier who will go?" It is said all sat silent save Arnold who impetuously said, "I will go." 1200 Massachusetts men were detached for the service. The expedition started up the valley of the Mohawk.

It effectually defeated the advance of St. Leger, drove back his army and scattered the barbarous savages he had engaged. The Massachusetts men were the brigades of Generals Learned, Gates, Wesson and Jackson. Captain Dix must have been with his regiment at the battle of Fort Stanwix. This must be one of the battles of which Captain Dix in his application for a pension, after mentioning reserved several important ones, modestly classes with "several others of less note." 1

When General Horatio Gates superceded General Schuyler in the command of the Northern Army, it was encamped on the west bank of the Hudson. Burgoyne's Army was some thirty miles up the river on the east bank. There was no especial activity until the battle of Bennington on the 16th of August, when the plans of Burgoyne received a check, nor after that until he crossed the Hudson, and advanced on Saratoga. On the 19th, there were two distinct battles fought, one at Bemus Heights, the other at Freeman's Farm. At Freeman's Farm General Learned's brigade, with others, occupied the fortified plateau to the left. 2 Here, because General Gates removed a portion of Arnold's division, an altercation occurred between them, and Arnold in a passionate outbreak asked leave to go and join Washington. Gates granted the request and General Lincoln who afterwards arrived, was given

1. Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, Vol. 1, pages 41 & 250
2. Battles of the American Revolution, Carrington, 324, 336.
his command. Arnold quickly repented and lingered with the army. He had the sympathy of the officers. General Gates' return of the army which is dated October 16th, contains the reports of the brigades of Generals Poor and Glover. It appears in the second volume of the Clinton papers.

The battle of Saratoga occurred October 7th. Arnold became excited and eager to go into the fight. The brigades of Poor and Learned crossed Mill Creek and marched steadily into the conflict. During the battle the artillery was again and again controlled by the opposing forces. It is said that Arnold lost all self control, burst from the camp, and like a meteor, rode to the front of Learned's brigade which had been in his command, and dashed into the fight. He was cheered as he rode and with Learned's brigade took the lead, and with a single charge cleared the works." Spark says in writing of the event, "It is a curious fact that an officer who really had no command in the army, was the leader of one of the most spirited and important battles of the Revolution." Notwithstanding the subsequent infamy of Benedict Arnold, history must record his brave and valuable service, and his great success in defeating the junction of St. Leger with the Army of Burgoyne, and the destruction of Burgoyne's army when he was under no obligation to engage in the battle of Saratoga. These were great achievements; but for Arnold they might not have been accomplished.

The battle of Saratoga has been classed by historians as one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world that had been fought at its date. It was a distinguished honor to the subject of this sketch that he had a part in it.

After this battle Mr. Dix was in camp, and later reported sick in the hospital at Albany. How long he was in the hospital is not known. His sickness could not have been of long duration, nor serious, for his regiment with the brigades of Generals Learned and Glover early in the winter returned to Washington's Army at Valley Forge and there suffered the terrible hardships of the winter of 1777-1778. These brigades fought also at Monmouth June 28th, 1778 and were a part of a select corps of one thousand men under Brigadier General Wayne, General Lafayette commanding, with orders to take the first opportunity to attack the enemy's rear. After the battle of Monmouth Washington retired to White Plains, where he arrived July 22nd. He dispatched two brigades under Generals Greene and Lafayette to assist General Sullivan in co-operation with Count D'Estaing and the French fleet in preventing the attack of the British fleet upon Newport, Rhode Island, by Lord Howe. The name of Mr. Dix appears in the muster roll of April 1779, dated at Providence, Rhode Island. A violent storm

1. See Map of Camp at Valley Forge, Carrington Battles, P. 402
2. and Lossing's Field Book V. 3, P. 128.
3. Washburn's History of Leicester.
arose in which the French fleet was damaged and was compelled to go to Boston for repairs. There was also a misunderstanding between General Sullivan and Count D'Estate that influenced the departure of the French fleet. General Sullivan, unaided by the French, was unable to repulse the attack of the British, who were in much greater numbers, and after the unsuccessful battle of Butts Hill, he retreated to the north end of the island and the mainland. Had he remained upon the island his whole army would have been lost, for the British were heavily reinforced the next day. The statement by Captain Dix that he was "at Sullivan's Retreat", can have reference to no other occasion. The retreat of the army in Arnold's retreat, after the battle of Quebec, to Crown Point, conducted by General Sullivan, he could not have intended, for he was then serving in another command in Massachusetts. Nor could he have intended to refer to the retreat from Long Island to New York, after the battle of Brooklyn, for General Sullivan was taken prisoner, and that retreat was conducted by General Putnam.

The British did not evacuate Rhode Island until the autumn of 1779; and it is probable that Captain Dix remained in camp near Providence until October. While here he took the only furlough of he had in his five years of service, which any record is found. He doubtless was at his home in Steeplebridge, for there he was married to Sarah Fisher on May 3rd, 1779. He was then orderly sergeant

of his company. It is not known that he was engaged in any battles, nor what services he performed after the battle of Brandy Hill. He was not discharged until 1780, March 10th, when his last term of enlistment expired. He was not with General Sullivan's command against the Six Nations of Indians. He says in his application for his pension that he "was discharged at the highlands by Colonel Bigelow." There he must have been in winter quarters after his services in Rhode Island. Marshall says, "The season for action in a northern climate being over, the General turned his attention to the distribution of his troops in winter quarters." This is the record of the service of Captain Dix in the Revolutionary War, with but one furlough and one hospital record. He was brave, courageous, enduring, faithful - a participant in its intense hardships and sufferings, and in its greatest battles from Lexington to Saratoga and Monmouth. When discharged he returned to Sturbridge. He did not remain there long. After the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and the war was substantially ended, there was an emigration from Sturbridge and the adjoining towns, to Vermont. Mr. Dix went with those who were seeking homes in that new region, and settled in what became the town of Wardëboro. Precisely when he went is not known. It must have been some time before the organization of the town, March 14th, 1786. On that occasion his name was placed on the jury list of the town. Here he wrought at

2. Childs' Gazetteer of Windham County, Vt. 1724 to 1884, P.304-50
his occupation of carpenter and millwright, and afterwards was the proprietor of a grist mill. He was a man of much importance in his community. The people in those days immediately after the war were enthusiastic upon military matters, and formed themselves into regiments. Mr. Dix, although he held but the rank of orderly sergeant in the war, was elected captain of a company. This is where he obtained the title by which he was familiarly called. He was also one of the committee that erected the Congregational meeting house in Wardsboro.

He had at Wardsboro the confidence and respect of the people, who were sturdy and God-fearing, like himself descended from the Pilgrims and Puritans, who left England for conscience' sake. The climate and soil of Vermont did not satisfy these descendants of pioneers. The reports that came back to them of the wonderful forests of Weymouth pine in the salubrious climate of western New York aroused their desire to go forth and possess the land, and they in turn became pioneers themselves.

Mr. Dix's oldest son, Horatio Dix, was the first of his family to leave Vermont to make a home and competence in the forests of southern Chautauqua. In 1814 Joseph Dix followed his son, and found a home in what has since become the city of Jamestown. James Prendergast had erected a sawmill, and on the arrival of the father and son erected a grist mill where Captain Dix found employment. The wife and mother remained in Vermont, expecting to follow them when a home had been prepared for her. There she

1. Historical Address at 50th Anniversary of Cong. Church at Jamestown, N.Y.
died before that had been accomplished.

Mr. Dix was one of the nine founders of the First Congregational Church of Jamestown, in 1815, and was chosen its first deacon. Because of the difficulty of obtaining better, at the time when he was married, the bride's "setting out" as was the custom in those days, in part consisted of a dinner service of pewter, which was as highly prized as one of Sevres at the present day. At the organization of that church the "pewter platter" that was no insignificant portion of the bride's wedding gifts, was used in the celebration of the sacrament. That pewter platter is yet in existence, a precious heirloom of his descendants. It was exhibited at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of that church.

In person Mr. Dix is stated to have been a man of medium height and weight, of robust frame, and capable of great endurance. He was skillful in all matters of handicraft. He built many mills and churches. He was well educated in the learning of his day, as the ancient letters written by him, yet preserved, attest. The New England people placed great store on education, both religious and secular. It may be affirmed that he was as familiar with the Bible, the shorter catechism and the distinctive theological doctrines accepted and taught in the New England churches, as with his arithmetic and grammar. The parish ministers in New England at the time of the youth of Captain Dix, had as much authority in town affairs as had the selectmen.
He was a musician of no small ability. From him his descendants inherited a love of music, especially of Church psalmody.

After the decease of his wife he married Phoebe Finch, the widow of Samuel Pickett, of the town of Gerry, and went there to reside. While living in that town he made an application for a pension, under the Act of Congress approved June 13, 1818, and to it, as was then required, he attached an inventory of all his property. He first enumerates several small debts due him from neighbors amounting to $60.50, and continues as follows:

"1 Iron kettle, $3. 1 Iron teakettle, $1. 1 Spider, 50c. 1 Skillet, 50c. 1 Pewter platter, 4/4 Plates and two bowles, $1. 1 Glass bottle, 1 Glass tumbler, 50c. 1 Pine chest, $2. 1 Churn, $1. 1 Axe, $1. 1 hoe, .75; 1 old sheep's bell, $1. 4 knives and forks, $1. 1 meat tub, .75; 1 pickle tub, .75; 1 small hog, $1.50."

This schedule he testifies contained a list of all his property and of the debts due him.

It is difficult to forbear quoting in full the conclusion of his affidavit to his pension application. It is pathetic, and clearly records his pitiable situation: "I owe several of my neighbors and friends small sums for provisions and other necessaries, which I have purchased in anticipation of my pension money, of which debts I have a regular inventory, the whole amounting to $134.34. I occupy a small log hut belonging to John Pickett, one of my sons-in-law, who lets me have the use of four or five acres of land contiguous to the house, on which I raise my vegetables and many of the necessaries of life. I
could not support myself if it was not for this indulgence, nor could I well have supported myself till this time had I not been relieved by my last year's pension. I am infirm and unable to labor much. What little I do is in my son-in-law's garden above mentioned. Our situation would be miserable indeed were it not for the assistance of our children who reside near us and frequently help us."

The exposures of camp life, the stress of many battles, the sufferings of Valley Forge, the privations and struggles of pioneer life, weakened his stalwart frame and his powers of endurance. He returned from Genny to the home of his daughter in that part of Carroll which is now Kiantone, and there peace-fully departed into rest in 1822, before he had reached three score and ten. Associates of his youth who had no part in the great conflict, by reason of strength attained forescore. Many of his descendents lived to great age. He was buried in a solitary grave upon the farm of his daughter, whence, upon the establishment of Lake View Cemetery, in Jamestown, loving hands tenderly removed his remains to the plot set apart in that cemetery for the burial place of Revolutionary soldiers. There he rests with his friends, comrades and kindred.

No more fitting tribute to the memory of Captain-Deacon Dix can be said, than was said of him by one of his associates in the organization of the First Congregational Church of Jamestown, at the semi-centennial anniversary of that church in 1866, who had known him from his youth. He said:
"Of Deacon Dix, or Captain Dix, as I used to hear him called, very little is known by those who hear me. He passed away many years ago, and of the present members of the church, only myself and one other ever knew him. He settled in my native town in Vermont, immediately after the revolutionary war, and was for many years a carpenter. Having served his country in the struggle for independence, he was soon made captain of the militia. As he advanced in years he became the possessor of a mill, and many times in my boyhood have I been sent to his mill. He was always cheerful, and particularly attentive and pleasant to the boys who resorted there. They all loved Captain Dix, and took kindly any admonitions that came from him. I have seldom known a man who could press home an unwelcome truth in a more acceptable manner. He had the rare faculty of introducing serious subjects to the most careless and indifferent, without giving offense, and in a manner calculated to make a lasting impression. He was so artless, so kind, and at the same time so earnest, that all listened to his words and felt their force. When quite an old man he followed his son to this place. When I came a little afterwards, I found him at his post in the grist mill, and also at his post as a Christian." 1

1. Historical Address at 50th Anniversary of Congregational Church at Jamestown, N.Y., 65.
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