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A SOLDIER OF THREE WARS

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A SOLDIER OF THREE WARS

NATHAN NOBLE OF NEW BOSTON

[NOW GRAY, MAINE]

THE STORY OF AN ANCESTOR

BY
NATHAN GOOLD

HIS GREAT-GREAT-GRANDSON



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A SOLDIER OF THREE WARS.

NATHAN NOBLE OF NEW BOSTON, NOW GRAY, MAINE.

BY NATHAN GOOLD.

And though the warrior's sun has set,
Its light shall linger round us yet,
Bright, radiant, blest.

TRUTH is stranger than fiction, so are the stories of the lives of the men and women of the days when men's souls were tried more interesting and instructive than the most fascinating novel written by a gifted author. How well those forefathers met the responsibilities of their time and generation will always be an interesting study for their descendants and the historian, as everyone must at some time have some curiosity to know whether his ancestors were worthy men and women.

Those who have passed through a war know what it is for men to leave their comfortable homes, bid their family and friends perhaps a last farewell and battle for their country's existence. It takes a patriot with a stout heart to endure the long marches and the privations and sufferings without complaint, and in so doing those brave men are but repeating history. The story of one man is the story of hundreds, and will always be, so long as a free people love to transmit their freedom to their children.

The story of the life of Nathan Noble of New Boston, now Gray, Maine, answers as an example for others. He was a farmer, but of his private life little is known by his descendants, but the indications are that he was a plain, straightforward man. That he was a man of courage and patriotism there can be no doubt, as he entered the army only in emergencies. Six times he enlisted as a private soldier, and six times he left his home and loved ones, perhaps never to return, and finally when called upon to meet death he exhibited the same resolute courage that he had shown through his life, dying as a grand example of the brave patriots of the American Revolution.

Nathan Noble was born in New Milford, Connecticut, February 24, 1723, and was the son of John Jr., and his second wife Abigail (Buck) Noble of that town. His father was born in Westfield, Massachusetts, February 15, 1685; was a member of the Congregational church, and captain of the train band in 1732. He had three wives, and died in the summer of 1773, aged eighty-eight years. In his will, probated September 7, 1773, he gave his daughter Rachel, as an additional bequest, his "Negro man Robbin," after the decease of his wife. He had thirteen children; but three sons grew to manhood. His oldest son, Thomas, was a successful business man at New Milford, was selectman, representative to the General Assembly, and was a member of the Episcopal church in his later years. He was "a man of unblemished character, universally esteemed by all who knew him." He

had eleven children. Beside Nathan, there was a son John who married and died, aged about forty, at New Milford, and had four children.

Nathan Noble's mother was Abigail, the daughter of Ezekiel and Rachel Buck, and a granddaughter of Emanuel Buck of Wethersfield, Connecticut. She was born in January, 1691, was a member of the church, and died about 1731.

Nathan Noble's paternal grandfather was John Noble, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, March 6, 1662, who had two wives and eleven children. He was the first white settler of New Milford, Connecticut, and founder of that beautiful town, in about 1707. He was a public-spirited and prominent citizen of the town, but died suddenly in the full strength of his manhood, August 17, 1714, aged fifty-two years. He was a member of the Congregational church. Nathan Noble's father was the son of the second wife, Mary Goodman, a daughter of Richard and Mary (Terry) Goodman of Hadley, Massachusetts. She was born November 5, 1665, and married in 1684. Her grandfather was Richard Goodman, who was a deacon at Cambridge in 1632, at Hartford in 1639, and one of the first settlers of Hadley, Massachusetts. His wife Mary was a daughter of Stephen Terry, who probably came in the Mary and John in 1630, removed to Windsor, Connecticut, in 1636, and, about 1657, was a member of the first troop of cavalry established in this country. He removed to Hadley, where he died in September, 1668.

Nathan Noble's paternal great-grandfather was Thomas Noble, the emigrant ancestor of the largest family of the name in America, who was born in England as early as 1632. He was at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1653, visited England about 1657, and in 1664, he, with others, erected a sawmill on the west side of the Connecticut River. Being there financially unsuccessful he removed to Westfield, Massachusetts, before 1669, and was one of the early settlers of that town. He was a member of the Westfield church and a prominent man in the town, where he died January 20, 1704, aged at least seventy-two years, leaving a good estate. He had ten children. His wife was Hannah Warriner, married in 1660; she was a daughter of William and Joanna (Scant) Warriner of Springfield. He was made a freeman May 2, 1638, and died June 2, 1676. His wife married, for her second husband, in 1705, Dea. Medad Pomeroy, she being his third wife. They lived at Northampton, Massachusetts, where he was a man of influence and of wealth for those times.

Nathan Noble lived at New Milford until he was twenty-two years of age, when he enlisted in Sir William Pepperrell's Louisburg expedition, in 1745, probably in Gen. Roger Walcott's regiment under Col. Burr, and participated in the siege and surrender of the fortress, June 17, 1745, and was there as late as October 9 of that year. The fortress of Louisburg was the strongest in America, and had cost the French about six millions of dollars, and its capture by the

yeomanry of New England must always be a brilliant fact in the history of those colonies, in which Maine took a prominent part. The soldiers endured almost incredible hardships, suffering for want of food, clothing, severe duty and exposure. It is said the soldiers were half naked, covered with vermin and infected with a disease which they called "a distemper." Nathan Noble returned to his home at the end of his service with his health much impaired, suffering, it was said, with "fever and ague."

On May 2, 1748, Nathan Noble married Mary Gray, a daughter of John and Phebe Gray of Provincetown, Massachusetts, who was born January 13, 1726. They both joined the church at New Milford, November 13, 1748, he being then twenty-five years of age. About 1756, they removed to Cape Elizabeth, Maine, bringing their daughter Phebe, born May 15, 1749, and Reuben, born February 15, 1755, with them. They had had three sons who died in infancy at New Milford. The next year, 1757, they removed to Stroudwater, and his daughter Hannah was born April 9, 1757.

Nathan Noble enlisted, April 12, 1757, with Col. Ezekiel Cushing, and received one pound, sixteen shillings bounty. He joined the Earl of Loudon's expedition to recapture Louisburg, which had been restored, in 1748, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, when the colonists considered that "the fruits of their valor were wrested from them." This expedition consisted of about six thousand regulars and about

five thousand provincial troops, together with a naval armament under Admiral Holburn. They arrived at Halifax, June 30, and on learning that a large French fleet had arrived and that the fortress was strongly garrisoned, the earl, being a faint-hearted man of small ability, abandoned the enterprise and returned home. The following lines were written not long after: —

Lord Loudon, he was a regular general, they say;
 With a great regular army he went on his way,
 Against Louisburg, to make it his prey,
 But returned — without seeing it — for he didn't feel bold that day.

The next year, 1758, Nathan Noble again enlisted. He joined, April 12, Capt. Samuel Glover's company of Col. Williams' regiment, and was in the service over six months that year. A billeting roll, on which appears his autograph, states that they enlisted in the "Intended Expedition against Canada." This expedition was under the command of Gen. James Abercrombie, and in it the colony of Massachusetts had about seven thousand men. In June, the army was gathered at the head of Lake George, preparing to capture Fort Ticonderoga, and then consisted of over fifteen thousand men, of which the provincials numbered over nine thousand. Abercrombie was merely the figure-head of the expedition. Lord Howe was in reality the commander. This young nobleman was but thirty-four years of age, but possessed the qualities necessary for a leader of men. He reformed the army and shared the lot of the common soldier, although a man of rare

accomplishments. He was loved and respected both by the British soldiers and provincials, which was very uncommon in those days when prejudice was so strong against the regulars. General Wolfe said that Abercrombie was a "heavy man," and that Howe was "the best soldier in the British army."

Under Howe's direction the whole army embarked July 5, without confusion, and a spectator said, that when they were three miles away the surface of the lake was completely hidden from sight. There were nine hundred bateaux, one hundred and twenty-five whale boats, and a large number of heavy flat boats carrying the artillery. The line was from front to rear six miles long. The day was fair, each corps had its flags and music and the soldiers were in the highest spirits. Parkman says: "The spectacle was superb; the flash of oars and glittering of weapons; the banners, the varied uniforms and the notes of the bugle, trumpet, bagpipe and drum answered and prolonged by a hundred woodland echoes. I never beheld so delightful a prospect, wrote an officer a fortnight after." Such a sight is worth almost a lifetime.

The provincials were uniformed in blue, and in their ranks were Israel Putman and John Stark, whose names, for services after in the Revolutionary war, have become a part of our country's history.

The expedition, headed by Lord Howe and Israel Putnam, with two hundred rangers, landed and proceeded through the dense woods. The next day, July 6, they became bewildered and lost their way in the

forest, when suddenly they came upon the advance guard of the French, when a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the enemy were defeated, but in which Lord Howe was killed. As soon as his death became known all was confusion. The loss of one man was the ruin of the army. The gallantry of the rangers, who fought the fight alone until the rest came back to their senses, saved a panic.

July 8, the army rallied and attacked Fort Ticonderoga, and after a desperate battle in the woods, of four hours, Abercrombie was obliged to raise the siege and the army retired to the head of Lake George. The army returned dejected and in disorder, a marked contrast with the pomp of their advance. Our army had been defeated by Gen. Montcalm with an inferior force, and had lost, in killed, wounded and missing, nineteen hundred and fifty-four men and officers. A gallant army had been sacrificed by an incompetent commander. From this time forth the provincials called their commander "Mrs. Nabbycromby."

August 8, Israel Putnam was captured in a skirmish with the French and Indians, and after he was tied to a stake by the Indians and the fire lighted about him, he was rescued by the French officer Molang and carried to Montreal, where he found Col. Schuyler as a prisoner on parole, and through his efforts Putnam was soon exchanged.

Fort Frontenac, which controlled Lake Ontario, was captured August 27, by about three thousand men, mostly provincials, under Lieut.-Col. Bradstreet. This attempt to capture that important French post was

only consented to by Abercrombie after a council of war, but the news of its capture was cheering tidings to the melancholy camp at Lake George. The provincial troops were probably discharged about the first of November, then returned to their homes, and the balance of the army went into winter quarters.

Nathan Noble's individual services in this campaign will probably never be known, but what he saw and the experiences he must have had fall to the lot of but few men.

Another year came round, and Nathan Noble enlisted, April 2, 1759, from Capt. Nathaniel Jordan's Company of Col. Samuel Waldo Jr.'s regiment, and the enlistment roll states that he served in Canada the year before. On the back of the roll it is stated that he took the oath of fidelity at Falmouth, and that he had had the second and sixth sections of the articles of war read to him. This was certified to by Samuel Waldo Jr., as the colonel of the regiment. He, with his comrades, joined Gen. Jeffrey Amherst's expedition to Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point in 1759. They arrived at Ticonderoga, July 22, and the army prepared for a general attack, but the French, after partially demolishing the fort, abandoned it, and retired to Crown Point, being pursued by the English. The French then abandoned Crown Point, and retired to a small island in the River Sorel, called Aux Noux. Gen. Amherst constructed several vessels, and with his whole army embarked in pursuit, but was delayed by a series of heavy storms, and then the lateness of the season rendered it impracticable to further con-

tinue the undertaking and he returned to Crown Point, where he went into winter quarters.

Nathan Noble has no record of further service in the Seven Years' war. The next important events known in his life were the births of his son, Nathan Jr., February 20, 1761, and his daughter Mary, who was born June 24, 1764. He took up a farm at New Boston Plantation, now Gray, which was deeded to him, May 4, 1767, by "William Shirley Esq., governor of the Bahama Island," by his attorney at Boston, Eliakim Hutchinson Esq., he agreeing to the conditions of the grant. This farm of sixty acres "with the appurtenances thereto belonging," was lot seventy-four, second division, and was situated about a mile southwest of Gray Corner, on the West Gray road. He probably soon after moved his family to this farm, where his youngest child, Anna, was born July 9, 1769.

Nathan Noble was living in comfortable circumstances in New Boston, at the beginning of the Revolutionary war. He probably scented the conflict afar off, and many must have been the stories of his experiences in the army that he told those boys. When the news came of the battle of Lexington, and that the war had begun, his oldest son, Reuben, joined Col. Phinney's regiment, determined to do or die. He marched to Cambridge in July and served under generals Heath, Old Put and Washington, returning home about the first of January. In his absence his father must have assisted at Falmouth Neck, but sixteen miles away, because a man of his spirit could not have remained at home during such times of excitement

and alarms as there were in 1775, when soldiers were so much needed.

In 1776, Gen. Washington called for two months' men to assist in driving the British out of Boston, and Nathan Noble enlisted February 2, in Capt. Winthrop Baston's company, although then fifty-three years of age, with a family of six living children. The company elected their officers, and marched the same day towards Cambridge, walking the entire distance of about one hundred and thirty miles. The company was assigned to Col. Jacob French's regiment, and were employed on the fortifications and guarding the powder at Winter Hill. The British evacuated Boston, March 17, retreating towards New York, and Capt. Baston's company was discharged April 1, their time having expired, and Nathan Noble returned home.

Reuben Noble, his oldest son, heard the call for men to reenforce the Northern army at Fort Ticonderoga, in the summer of 1776. He joined Capt. Johnson's company of Col. Wigglesworth's regiment of militia, and marched with them. They arrived at Ticonderoga, August 5, went into camp near the old fort, and at that time were five hundred strong, and in a good state of discipline. They probably served in the fleet on Lake Champlain, as Col. Wigglesworth had the command of the left of the squadron. In November they were dismissed, marched down to Albany, and home by the way of Hadley, Massachusetts.

About the time of the return of Reuben, Congress had decided to enlist an army for three years or the

war and offer a bounty. The war was a serious matter. Independence had been declared but a little over four months, and the new government must be sustained by the colonies. Nathan Noble, although in his fifty-fifth year, volunteered his services, thinking probably as others did, that life without liberty was not worth living, and with the spirit for independence, he enlisted, January 6, 1777, for three years in Capt. John Skillings' company of Col. Ebenezer Francis' regiment, then forming. He was mustered at Falmouth Neck, January 27, by Maj. Daniel Ilsley, who paid him a bounty of twenty-six pounds. They marched to Beverly, the home of the colonel, he leaving Reuben, who had returned from the army, and Nathan Jr., then sixteen, to carry on the farm. His colonel was but thirty-three years of age and a noble Christian man whom the regiment soon learned to love and respect. Col. Francis gathered his men in the village church at Beverly and held a religious service before they started on their march. They arrived at Bennington, Vermont, about February 1, and there, on a travel roll, Nathan Noble was allowed for three hundred and eighty-three miles marching. The regiment proceeded to Skenesborough, New York, and were there April 3, when Capt. John Skillings was killed by a "Jersey Blue," probably accidental. Lieut. Samuel Thomes, of Stroudwater, was then commissioned captain of the company. The regiment served in the garrison at Fort Ticonderoga, and Henry Sewall, who died at Augusta, Maine, in 1845, was there as an officer in the 12th Massachusetts regiment, and in a letter, dated

June 10, 1777, said that Col. Francis' regiment was miserably clothed, and that they were obliged to go on duty and even on scouting parties without shoes.

The garrison was forced to evacuate Ticonderoga in the early morning of July 6, 1777, when they were closely pursued by Gen. Burgoyne's army. This act caused great indignation in the colonies against Gen. St. Clair, the commander. The Americans neglected to fortify Sugar Loaf Hill, which was seven hundred feet higher, and commanded the fort. The British seized the hill, named it Mount Hope and planted a battery on the top. The evacuation was imperative to save the garrison of three thousand men. They left the fort the next night after the discovery of the enemy on the hill, which was bright moonlight, but got under way safely. The retreating soldiers were so closely pressed that they threw away whatever encumbered them, and their regimental baggage was captured in the morning of July 7. This retreat was to Hubbardton, a distance of about twenty-two miles, and Col. Francis was in command of the rear guard, which consisted of his regiment, the 11th Massachusetts, Col. Seth Warner's regiment, and Col. Hale's New Hampshire militia, all amounting to about thirteen hundred men, but they were poorly equipped.

Col. Francis' command camped for the night of July 6, at Hubbardton, the men being much fatigued by their long march. When Gen. Frazer came up with the advance guard of the enemy on the morning of the seventh, Col. Francis ordered his regiments into a

line of battle to engage them. Col. Hale's militia disobeyed orders and fled, being soon after captured, including the colonel. The two remaining regiments, consisting of less than nine hundred men, formed for the conflict. On the approach of Frazer's troops Col. Francis made three terrific charges on their lines, heading his men in person. The British fell back, but immediately received reinforcements, and in the next onslaught Col. Francis was wounded in the right arm, but still led his men until he was shot through the breast, falling on his face, mortally wounded. The exhausted Americans were obliged to fall back, and his regiment retreated to Rutland. In the death of Col. Francis the army lost a brave and conscientious officer. This was one of the most desperate battles of the war, and at the time it was said that the Americans "fought like lions." In one of the assaults Col. Francis' men went into action singing the songs that they sung in their village churches at home. The British account of the battle said that the Americans "fought with the greatest degree of fierceness and obstinacy." Lord Balcarres, the young commander of the English Light Infantry, in writing of the behavior of the Americans at Hubbardton, said, "Circumstanced as the enemy were, as an army very hard pressed in their retreat, they certainly behaved with great gallantry." After the death of Col. Francis, Col. Warner took command of the rear guard. Of the soldiers who fought on the patriots' side in the battle of Hubbardton, about one-quarter part were from the province of Maine.

In the retreat our soldiers endured great privations and suffering. Capt. Moses Greenleaf of the 11th Massachusetts regiment, wrote in his journal July 8, "Our men have no blankets, nothing but the heavens to cover them, and not a mouthful of meat or bread. Thanks be to God, it continues fair weather." The battle was fought on a very warm day and the weather continued mild.

From the timeworn journal of Capt. Greenleaf we can follow the movements of Nathan Noble's regiment, and verify the general accounts of the retreats and the battle. The journal says: —

July 2. — Enemy advances with two frigates of twenty-eight guns and fifty gunboats. Land troops about two miles from us.

Saturday, July 5. — 12 o'clock, spied British troops on the mountain overlooking Ticonderoga. At 9, received the disagreeable news of leaving the ground. At 2 next morning, left Ticonderoga. At 4, Mt. Independence; after a most fatiguing march arrived at Hubbardton, twenty-two miles from Mt. Independence. Supped with Col. Francis. Encamped in the woods, the main body going on about four miles.

Monday, July 7. — Breakfasted with Col. Francis. At 7 he came to me and desired me to parade the regiment, which I did. At 7½ he came in haste to me, told me an express had arrived from Gen. St. Clair informing that we must march with the greatest expedition, or the enemy would be upon us, also that they had taken Skeensborough with all our baggage; ordered me to march the regiment; immediately marched part of it. At twenty minutes past 7 the enemy appeared within gunshot of us; we faced to the right, when the firing began, which lasted till 8¾ A. M. without cessation. Numbers fell on both sides; among ours the brave and ever-to-be-lamented Col. Francis, who fought bravely to the last. He first received a ball through his right arm, but still continued at the head of our troops till he received the fatal wound through his body, entering the right breast; he dropped on his face. Our soldiers

being overpowered by numbers, were obliged to retreat over the mountains, enduring on the march great privations and sufferings.

Soon after the death of Col. Francis, Lieut.-Col. Benjamin Tupper of the Second Massachusetts regiment, was promoted to the command of the regiment, of which four companies were from Maine.

The Americans retired to the Mohawk River, but delayed the progress of Burgoyne by felling trees and burning the bridges after them. They had lost in the retreats a large part of their artillery and a great quantity of stores and provisions. Col. Tupper's regiment was stationed on Van Shaick's Island, at the mouth of the Mohawk, until after September 1, to resist the advance of the British on Albany. They were at Stillwater from September 9 until October 1, and after the surrender marched to Albany, and were there October 25.

In August, Gen. Burgoyne despatched Col. Baum with a force to capture the stores at Bennington, but on the sixteenth he was defeated by Gen. Stark, and Baum was mortally wounded. The loss of the men and the effects of this defeat were extremely disastrous to the British cause.

In September, Burgoyne's army crossed the Hudson River, and encamped on the heights and plains of Saratoga the fourteenth. Gen. Horatio Gates took command of the American army the nineteenth, and marched them from the mouth of the Mohawk River to near Stillwater. The removal of Gen. Schuyler was unjust, as he was a braver and more capable officer, and a nobler man than Gen. Gates.

Now the armies were within about four miles of each other, and the eighteenth Gen. Burgoyne formed his army close in front of the American left, intending to cut his way through to Albany and form a junction with Clinton, but Gen. Gates determined to resist further progress. The Americans had received many reinforcements, so that their numbers greatly exceeded the British, but they were mostly undisciplined militia.

The battle of Stillwater was fought in the afternoon of September 19, 1777. In the morning activity was noticed in the British camp, and about noon the Americans sent out a force to resist any advance, and were soon engaged. Between two and three o'clock there was a lull in the battle, which was only the calm before the storm. At about three o'clock the battle again commenced, and for three hours it raged furiously. Few have been more obstinate and unyielding. The ground was first occupied by one army and then by another, the dead of both being mingled together. At dark the contest ceased. It had been a desperate struggle. Our army retired to their redoubt, the British occupied the battle ground, and both claimed the victory. The Americans were much elated because they had withstood the best regular troops of the English army. This is sometimes called the battle of Freeman's Farm.

The two armies remained near each other until the seventh of October, Gen. Gates strengthening his position and Burgoyne waiting to hear from Clinton. The delay was disastrous to the British, as they had

consumed nearly all their provisions. Burgoyne intended to wait until the twelfth for reenforcements from Clinton, but circumstances obliged him to move previous to that date. Gen. Gates attempted to cut off Burgoyne's communications with Canada, and to recapture the forts Ticonderoga, Independence and George, which was only partially successful, and resulted only in destroying some of Burgoyne's provisions. This forced the British general to make a movement for his own preservation, and October 7 he sent out a small force to forage and reconnoiter. Gen. Arnold drove them back to their camp. Morgan and his rifle-men tried to cut them off, and did get six field-pieces from them. Then the British general, Frazier, attempted to dislodge Morgan, when a general battle commenced along the lines, and Frazier fell, mortally wounded. The first assault was made on the British left, which was repulsed by the British grenadiers. Then our army attacked their center, which prevented the Germans from sending reenforcements to the grenadiers. Then the American left rushed forward and attacked the British right, forcing back the English Light Infantry and the 24th regiment, who were by this movement enabled to assist the grenadiers on their left, and but for this aid they would have been cut to pieces. Gen. Arnold, at about this point in the battle, made his famous assault on the British right, and was repulsed, then broke their center, when their left and center were in complete disorder, and but for the stubborn resistance of the English Light Infantry and the 24th regiment the British army would have been

completely demoralized. Arnold, during one of his mad charges, was carried from the field wounded in the leg, but the Americans kept on.

Toward night, after the battle was won, and as Col. Tupper's regiment was taking possession of the enemy's works, Nathan Noble was struck in the forehead by a musket-ball and mortally wounded. He never spoke afterward. On an original return taken at Valley Forge, January 26, 1778, appear these words after his name, "Slain in battle October 7, 1777."

Far better would it have been that Benedict Arnold, the brave and gallant soldier, the ambitious and unscrupulous man, who in an hour of disappointment turned traitor to his country, had also been slain in that battle while leading the Americans to victory. Then his statue would adorn the vacant niche in the monument erected to commemorate the deeds of valor on that field.

In the battle Gen. Gates' left completely turned the right wing of Burgoyne's army, capturing a large quantity of the munitions of war and many prisoners. A British account said that the Americans "threw themselves with frenzy on the British lines."

Our army forced the British to the heights above Stillwater, and at nine o'clock in the night of October 8, during a heavy rain, Gen. Burgoyne commenced his retreat toward Saratoga, leaving behind his sick and wounded, who were well cared for by Gen. Gates. The Americans prevented Burgoyne's attempted retreat toward Fort Edward, and finally, after finding that his several plans for escape must be unsuccessful,

and his provisions being about exhausted, held a council of war October 13, which finally ended in the surrender of October 17, 1777, of his army, of about six thousand men, thirty-five brass field-pieces, and nearly five thousand muskets, besides an immense quantity of other munitions of war. This was a brilliant victory for the Americans, and the most important of the whole war, and without which it is doubtful whether we should have obtained our independence.

These two battles were fought on Bemis Heights, in the town of Stillwater and county of Saratoga, hence their names. The last battle is called the first battle of Saratoga, the second battle of Stillwater, and the battle of Bemis Heights.

Gen. Epaphras Hoyt, the historian, visited the battlefield in 1825, and in speaking of the knoll where Lord Balcarras was posted, in his second position, said :

In the battle of October 7, here toward the close of the day, Arnold, with Poor's and Patterson's brigades, made his desperate attack, and was repulsed. "A more determined perseverance," says the British commander, "than the Americans showed in this attack upon the lines, though they were finally repulsed by the corps under Lord Balcarras, I believe is not in any officer's experience." Had the assailants been less embarrassed with the abattis probably they would have carried the works, though manned with Burgoyne's best troops.

Other historians say it was Glover's brigade instead of Poor's. Col. Tupper's 11th Massachusetts regiment was in Patterson's brigade.

Soon after the surrender a Hessian officer wrote of the appearance of the American soldiers, that they

were slender, sinewy, and averaged four to six inches taller than the men of the German regiments: —

Not a man was regularly equipped. Each one had on the clothes he was accustomed to wear in the field, tavern, the church, and in everyday life. The determination which caused them to grasp the musket and powder-horn can be seen in their faces as well as the fact that they are not to be fooled with, especially in skirmishes in the woods.

Nathan Noble was but one brave soldier in one of the best and bravest regiments in Gen. Gates' army; a regiment who fought gallantly at Hubbardton, Stillwater, and at Bemis Heights, and had followed Arnold in his mad charges on the British lines. In the winter of 1777-78 this regiment drank of the very dregs of despair at Valley Forge, and at the battle of Monmouth, on that hot day of June 28, 1778, they added more to their proud record, ending their service in the march to Danbury, Connecticut, in the fall of 1778, and the operations on the Hudson River. They were an honor to the colony of Massachusetts Bay.

Nathan Noble went through the battles of Hubbardton and Stillwater without injury, but he suffered from exposure and want of proper food and clothing in the retreats. On the morning of October 7, he fully realized what the day might bring forth, for he told his comrades that he should not live through the day. It was a presentiment of his fate. He died as a brave soldier dies, and no doubt his comrades laid his body tenderly in what is now an unknown grave on the field of one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world. He was nearly fifty-five years of age.

Nathan Noble had been twice in expeditions to capture Louisburg, twice he went to Lakes George and Champlain against the French, served during the siege of Boston in 1776, under Washington, and finally in the battles of the Saratoga campaign, where he died as a soldier dies, at a supreme moment in the struggle for independence. He probably never saw the flag of his country, the stars and stripes, as that flag was not unfurled over Gates' army until the surrender, the seventeenth, although a crude affair had been raised at Fort Stanwix a short time before.

The proud boast of the survivors of his regiment through their lives was that they served in the left wing of Gen. Gates' army at Saratoga in 1777, in Col. Tupper's 11th Massachusetts regiment.

The news of the death of Nathan Noble probably did not reach his home at New Boston for perhaps two weeks, without a special effort was made to forward the news. There at his home were his family, attending to the duties about the farm. The family then consisted of his wife Mary, then fifty-one, the oldest son, Reuben, then twenty-two, and his wife Hannah, who had been married but nine months, his daughter Hannah, then twenty, Nathan Jr., aged sixteen, Mary thirteen, and the youngest child Anna, then eight years of age, making a family of seven. His oldest daughter Phebe was married and lived at Windham. During the hours of each day their thoughts must have turned to the head of the family who was battling for his country's freedom. They probably knew of his being in that retreat from Fort

Ticonderoga, also in the fierce assaults at Hubbardton, and in the stubborn battle of Stillwater, and that he had escaped injury. They no doubt hoped and prayed for his safe return, but it was not to be. Sad must have been the news to that family and great their grief at the loss of the husband and father, and their only comfort, as they gathered about their mother, was that he had died bravely while upholding the honor of the colonies, and had laid down his life that they might enjoy the blessings of liberty.

Mary Noble, his wife, lived but eight years after her husband's death, dying October 29, 1785, aged fifty-nine years. The oldest child, Phebe Noble, married, in 1775, a young Quaker at Windham named Benjamin Goold, who had come from Kittery to that town. Their first child, Simeon, was born July 4, 1776, Independence Day. The next child was born the next April after her father was killed, and she named him Nathan, for her father. He became a prominent man in Windham, and was captain of the town company in the war of 1812. Phebe had ten children. William Goold the historian, of Windham, was the son of Nathan, and her grandson. He recollected his grandmother "as a smart old lady in Quaker dress, whose meetings she belonged to, and regularly attended Sunday and Thursday mornings. She always rode a pacing horse, familiarly called 'Knitting Work.'" She died in a lethargy, after sleeping four days, February 19, 1817, aged sixty-seven years.

Nathan Noble's three next children were sons, who died in infancy, and then came Reuben, who married

Hannah Merrill in 1777. He enlisted May 15, 1775, in Capt. Moses Merrill's company in Col. Edmund Phinney's 31st Regiment of Foot, and served until December 31 of that year. He also served in Capt. Samuel Johnson's company in Col. Edward Wigglesworth's regiment, and took part in the campaign at Lake Champlain in the fall of 1776. Reuben lived at Gray, occupying his father's farm until 1778, when he sold it, excepting the buildings and one acre of land, which had been set off to his mother as her dower. He removed to North Yarmouth, and about 1782 to Mt. Desert, where he died October 20, 1818, aged sixty-three years. The next child, Hannah, married Elisha Hayden; they first lived in Hebron, then removed to Bernardstown, now Madison, Maine, where she died June 11, 1801, aged forty-four years.

The next child was Nathan Jr., who married Hannah Hobbs in 1785. He enlisted, at eighteen years of age, in Capt. Nathan Merrill's company in Col. Jonathan Mitchell's regiment, and served in the Bagaduce expedition in the year 1779. He probably lived in his father's house at Gray, his mother living with him until her death. He bought, in 1789, one hundred and twelve acres of land in Rustfield Plantation, now Norway, Maine, and sold his farm and his father's buildings to John Humphrey, March 25, 1790, and was one of the early settlers of Norway, in 1789. His wife's father, Jeremiah Hobbs, had lived there since 1786. He was a prominent citizen in the town, and served eleven years as selectman; had four sons in the war of 1812, and several descendants in the

war of the Rebellion. He died at Norway, January 13, 1827, aged sixty-five years. Next came Mary, who married Malachi Bartlett in 1790. She first lived at Hartford, Maine, then moved to Dead River, Maine, and after a few years to Vassalborough, Maine, where her husband died February 28, 1831, aged seventy-one years. She was alive at Dead River in March, 1853. The youngest child was Anna, who married Nathaniel Fuller in 1797, and lived at Hebron, Maine, where she died August 24, 1861, aged ninety-two years. She left among her descendants the memory of a woman who was social, kind and gentle in her manner, and was beloved by all.

Nathan Noble was my grandfather's grandfather, from whom we inherited our Christian name, and to whom we are indebted for a modest, heroic life, to which it is my pleasure to pay this simple tribute that he may never be forgotten, at least by his descendants.

He left as a heritage to all his posterity the memory of a man who made the greatest sacrifice for his country — his life — and lived to the family motto, "Death rather than dishonor."

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead,
Dear as the blood you gave ;
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your grave ;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where valor proudly sleeps.

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