

Early in the morning of April 19, 1775, the inhabitants of Everett (the the South Precinct of Malden) were awakened by the persistent far-away peal of church bells. Those living along the waterfront heard the urgent clap-clap of horses' hoofs and the muffled, anguished cry, .....

"The Regulars are coming". They threw open their windows, only to see the disappearing form of the crier, mounted on his horse, speeding off in the direction of Medford, the winds echoing his frightening message.

Captain Benjamin Blaney was asleep in his homestead located on what is now Partridge Terrace, on land which ran south across the present Chelsea Street and the now Revere Beach Parkway, down to the water where he owned a wharf. He leaped from his bed, donned his military coat and boots and ran out into the lane. He did not know exactly what the rider's words meant, but he felt it was something dire. He hurried to the grounds of the South Meeting House, the meeting place for all inhabitants, located where Broadway now meets high street. It had been given to the South Precinct by Jonathan Sargeant for the "erection of a meeting house" ... in the Congregational way ...", and had served as such since 1730.

All of Captain Blaney's childhood had been spent in a military atmosphere. He was born in the South Precinct on July 24, 1738, the son of Captain Benjamin Blaney, who had come to this area from Lynn about 1724 and had served in the French and Indian War. The father died in 1750 when the son was only 12 years old but already imbued with knowledge of training bands and militia. Each day he passed by the flag of the first military company of Malden that hung on the wall of the homestead. It was of a deep red background upon which was mounted a sword held by a naked arm. It was a constant reminder of the military heritage of his family, a heritage that he was not long in following. At the age of twenty-seven, in 1765, he was an ensign in the Militia Company of Malden.



Capt. Blaney House, built before 1693 – site of present Partridge Terrace – sold by him in 1818.

At the corner of the lane he met his neighborhood militiaman, Daniel Waters, and at the present Everett Square they were joined by David Bucknam, Ebenezer Paine, Stephen Paine, Jr., and Nehemiah Oakes. Together they traveled to the top of the hill where they were joined by Ezra, Jacob, and Silas Sargeant. At the South Meeting House they waited for Amos Shute who had come from what is now Glendale Square, and soon Naler Hatch, Jr. arrived. He lived where the Woodlawn Cemetery is now locted. Robert Burditt and Benjamin Sprague, Jr. came into sight and, last of all,

young Winslow Sargeant arrived, his drum swinging from side to side as he sped to join the group. By the time they were all assembled, there was a large crowd of women and children standing by; wives, sons and daughters of these militiamen, who felt that no matter what the day held for their husbands and fathers, they wanted to be nearby.

Capt. Blaney assembled them in marching order. Winslow Sargeant slowly commenced to beat the drum, increasing the tempo as the unit stepped forward, their destination the training field in the North Precinct (Malden) near the present square, women and children tagging along. Their hearts were heavy as they marched. They did not know what lay ahead, or whether they would ever return to their homes.

These militiamen were a hardy, determined and brave group of men. They were part of a community (South Precinct) which had fought stubbornly for years for separation from Malden. They had not yet achieved total separation, but they had fostered a precinct and supported it, both financially and politically. They had violently disagreed with location of the new Meeting House in the North Precinct, and now had their own in a convenient location, with their own minister in their own small community. They were, indeed, rugged individualists.



Old Parsonage of South Parish (Everett) – Site; Main Street, just south of Prescott – Built before 1741. Residence of South Parish Revolutionary War minister, Rev. Ehakim Willis, a Harvard graduate.

As they marched along, their thoughts turned to the possible reason for the alarm. They thought of the British quartered just six miles south in Boston. They recalled the debilitating acts Britain had levied against the colonies, and the British men-of-war sent here to back up those acts. They recalled how the taxes had been levied against them, payable in gold and silver, of which they had none, on all legal documents: glass, paint, paper and most of all tea. They remembered the searches of premises without warrants, and how in 1770 Britain sent over 10,000 Regulars, many of them to Boston, and then suspended the Massachusetts Legislature.

They dwelt, with some pride, on the fact they had ignored these Acts and the Proclamations and that they had personally joined in the boycott of all British manufactured goods. They remembered, with horror, the Boston Massacre of 1770, and with glee, the dumping of British Tea into Boston Harbor. They knew they had supported their Representatives of the South Precinct on the Committee of Correspondence in their effort to encourage Boston to hold out against the British, and they knew these Representatives, Captain Jonathan Oaks (Oakes), David Sargeant, and Amos Shute had helped with the report on this matter, and the militiamen perused over the words of this committee"

*"It is with the utmost satisfaction ... we have observed your endeavors to suppress all appearances of tyranny and oppression and to maintain the just rights and privileges of a distressed people ... that you have not been intimidated ... we give you our thanks for all the salutary measures you have adopted for the common safety.. and may the great yoke of tyranny be entirely broken ..."*

As they neared the appointed meeting place they pondered on the fact that as late as 1773 they had considered themselves loyal subjects of Great Britain and had sought redress of grievances and not independence. But they thought of the Edict issued by the British that closed the Port of Boston, forbade all goods to be carried by water into Boston, and how this had affected their own Penny Ferry, in that it could not carry the lumber and produce to Boston that helped the economy of the South Precinct. They had seen the town meetings restricted and permitted but once a year (the usual was four).

They remembered that they had had but two purposes: the first to help the people of Boston, and the second to prepare for their own defense. They recalled they had helped the people of Boston by sending them two loads of wood, one pair of women's shoes and one ton of hay, and how in defense they had established two lists of military men, the first under Capt. Blaney, and the second consisting of the alarm list which included all others. They had signed an agreement respecting their obedience to officers, and had seen the enrolled militia of the whole town rise to approximately three hundred men.

As they listened to the sound of their own footsteps and to the drum of Winslow Sargeant, they thought of the history of their own militia company and how in February, 1775 they had been called together once a week for military discipline and then twice a week in March. They had seen the military age set first at sixteen to fifty years, and then raised to sixty. They had helped take an inventory of all the weapons and powder in the town, and they had obeyed an order that each one would be required to train one half day every week, for which they were paid one shilling for each muster that lasted three hours.

All these things, and more, the militiamen thought of on their march to the North Precinct. They knew they must put aside the pride they had in their own precinct and in the fact that most of the leaders of the militia, as well as the leaders of the whole town, were inhabitants of the South Precinct. They must join and fuse that pride with the pride of the militiamen of the North Precinct who were presently to join them in a common destiny. As they arrived, and were joined by the North Precinct Militiamen, they were informed that the British Regulars were on their way to Concord to capture stores of ammunition located there. Their Official Orders were:

*"To go to Watertown by order of Col. Gardner and from there to Resist the Ministerial troops, under the command of Capt. Blaney.*

These were the Minutemen of the South Precinct who marched that April day:

- Benjamin Blaney, Capt.
- Nehemiah Oaks, "Serjant"
- Amos Shute, "Serjant"
- Winslow Sargeant, Drummer
- David Bucknam
- Robert Burditt
- Naler Hatch, Jr.
- Ebenezer Paine
- Stephen Paine, Jr.
- Ezra Sargeant
- Jacob Sargeant
- Silas Sargeant

- Benjamin Sprague, Jr.
- Daniel Waters

Seventy-five men marched that day, and it must be remembered that at that time the total unit included men from what is now Everett, Malden, Melrose and that area that was Malden ran to the bounds of Stoneham and Reading.

Col. Gardner took charge of the militia at Kettell's Tavern that was located near the present corner of Salem and Main Streets, in Malden. They marched to Medford and then into Arlington (then Menotomy). By that time the action was finished at Concord and Lexington and the British Troops were returning, the farmers along the road harassing them at every step. Near the then Medford and Lexington roads, the Malden militia came upon a provision train going to the relief of the returning British. They captured the wagon train taking several prisoners. On the way back, the Malden Company crossed the foot of Winter and Prospect Hills.

Most of the Malden Company returned that same night, others the next day. Daniel Waters, David Bucknam and Stephen Paine, Jr. of the South Precinct, went twenty miles, the balance thirty-four. For this they were paid one day's remuneration. They were not paid until February 7, 1777, and then Capt. Blaney received 4 shillings 4p; the sergeants one shilling 8 p; the drummer 6 p.; and the privates one shilling 4 p.

After Lexington and Concord, the area that is Everett became a most important place to the defense of Malden, and northward. Concern for the safety of the inhabitants was great. They did not know whether the British, who had floating batteries roaming in the Mystic River, might cross that river and attempt a landing here. The people became very defense minded, and most of the items in the Town Records dealt with that defense.

The area that is now Everett was separated then as it is now, on the south from Charlestown by the Mystic River, Malden River formed the western boundary; the North Parish (Malden) the northern; and the eastern boundary was formed by Winnisimmet (Chelsea) and the Island End River. There was no land connection between Charlestown and our shore. There was, however, direct access to Charlestown via the Penny Ferry, and this ferry became an important link of communication and transportation during the Revolution.

The ferry was a scow-type vessel, similar to a barge, equipped with oars, capable of carrying sails. It could accommodate animals and humans, and was utilized to carry soldiers and their equipment. There was a fee to ride the ferry of two pence for a single person and a penny each for more than one person. Transportation of a man and horse cost 7 pence.

The starting point of the ferry on the Charlestown side was at the Neck, approximately where the Schrafft's Center stands. Its landing place on the Everett side was a strip of land called then Ferry Island, which later became White Island. It no longer exists, but was located in the marshland on what is now the westerly side of the present Alford Street. The Penny Ferry House was also in that location, as were mechanical facilities. The ferry and the ferryhouse were reached via a road called appropriately "The Road to the Penny Ferry", which ran approximately where bow street is today except that it bore slightly left in the direction of what is now School Street. The Malden Bridge replaced the ferryways after the Revolution in

1788. It remained the property of Charlestown until the late 1800's when Charlestown was absorbed by Boston.

To the same degree that the Penny Ferry and its ways were important as a link of communication to our settlement from Charlestown and Boston, Beacham's Point became important as our first line of defense. It was the most southerly point in the South Precinct. It early carried the name of Wormwood Point, but at the Revolution was called Beacham's Point for John Beacham, an early settler there.

The road to the Point is that street now called Beacham Street. It was then "two poles wide", and ran easterly from the present Bow Street, straight for a distance, and then took a southerly dip down to the Mystic River where the Island End River joined the Mystic. There was a wharf and landing place there. Much commerce traveled by boat from this wharf to Charlestown, Boston, and beyond. It must be remembered that in 1775 this area was marshland, which has since been filled in and therefore, the bank was further inland than it is now.

To Beachman's Point on the day of the Lexington Alarm, Naler Hatch was sent with a company of men. They dug in and built earthworks and fortifications, with orders on April 24, 1775, not fire unless fired upon, but this order was presently rescinded and he was told to use his own judgment as to firepower. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Hatch was appointed Captain of this company and he and Captain Blaney were two of the persons chosen to appoint suitable men to this company, called the "home guard". This guard consisted of twelve men who were paid \$6.00 per month for their services, and they remained at Beacham's Point for eight months, until the British evacuated Boston. These were the South Precinct men who served there with Captain Naler Hatch:

- Joseph Baldwin
- Nathan Bucknam
- Nathan Burditt
- Samuel Burditt
- John Hatch
- Nathan Hatch, Jr. (fifer)
- Daniel Knower
- James Nichols
- James Paine
- Josiah Paine
- Stephen Paine, Jr.
- Amos Sargeant
- Phineas Sargeant
- Silas Sargeant
- Solomon Sargeant
- Thomas Wheeler
- Joel Whittemore



Beacham Point as it looked in 1775. Mansion called Van Voorhis after 1818. Farm then purchased from Estate of John Beacham for whom Beacham's Point was named.

While Hatch and his company were busy readying the seacoast for defense, the Town of Malden became involved with Winnisimmet (Chelsea) in a common effort to protect the seacoast. Captain Blaney and Ezra Sargeant of the South Precinct were on a committee which initiated a request to the Chief Committee of Safety at Boston for assistance in defending the seacoast of both towns. In response to their request it was decided that all livestock had to be removed from Noodles and Hog Island (East Boston) and Snake Island off the coast of Winthrop, to keep the livestock out

of the hands of the British. Medford, Malden, Chelsea and Lynn were involved in this action, and Captain Blaney's militia company took part in it, along with Captain Samuel Sprague's Company of Chelsea. This resulted in what has been called the "Battle of Chelsea Creek".

The action took place on May 27, 1775. The British fleet was in Boston Harbor, and the army in Boston. Colonel John Stark was sent to Chelsea with three hundred men. His route was across what is now Everett from Medford and into Chelsea via the Old County Road.

Hog Island was inhabited at that time. Six horses, twenty-seven horned cattle and 411 sheep were removed by our forces. In the removal, the forces were fired upon by a British armed schooner which followed them up the Chelsea River into Chelsea Creek together with a sloop and barges. Our troops were stationed "at the mills", now parallel with the Revere Beach Parkway between Chelsea and Revere, and there the British were stopped from landing by water, our men firing from the marshes at the British schooner, which eventually grounded and later was pillaged. General Israel Putnam was sent in with troops to help General Stark, and both generals marched back through Everett with their troops, taking the Penny Ferry across to Charlestown. These were the words recorded by Colonel Nixon who participated in the engagement, *"Left Winnisimmet Ferry about ye middle of ye forenoon and came to Chelsea about two in afternoon. Received orders to march and came to Cambridge by way of Penny Ferry."*



Gen. Israel Putnam

When Captain Blaney's Militia Company returned home after his engagement, and told the story of their encounter with the British, the inhabitants became more aware than ever of the necessity of providing their own defense. On June 8, 1775, it was voted that some part of the town's stock of powder be made up into cartridges for the cannon, to be used "upon necessity" and on June 16<sup>th</sup> (the day before the Battle of Bunker Hill) it was voted that Captain Daniel Waters (of the South Precinct) be advised immediately to prepare the cannon in this town for its use. He was assisted by Ezra Sargeant, also of the South.

Meanwhile, preparations for defense of the seacoast of the South Precinct were great. Captain Naler Hatch and his company had been temporarily separated from their Regiment for the defense of their hometown. His Regiment was under the command of Colonel Gardner, and all except Hatch's Company were at Prospect Hill. On the eve of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Hatch and his company were well entrenched at Beacham's Point, also called Beacham's Station, the purpose being to protect the river-bank there from a possible British landing. The soldiers occupied houses already standing on the Point whose owners had turned them over to them and temporarily moved northward to avoid possible danger. One of these homes was that of John Nichols, Jr. Holes were made in these buildings and the cannon mounted. During the cold Spring, one house was torn down for firewood. The inhabitants of the area kept the soldiers supplied with food, and the town kept them supplied with clothing. The storage of cloth by inhabitants was forbidden because it was needed for the soldiers. There are items in the town records indicating offenses were prosecuted.

In June 1775, the British decided it would be advantageous to command the Heights of Charlestown. The Americans heard of this plan and decided to thwart it. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, an American force was sent up on the hill to build fortifications. They worked through the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> and into the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of June. His company was joined by that of Captain Blaney.

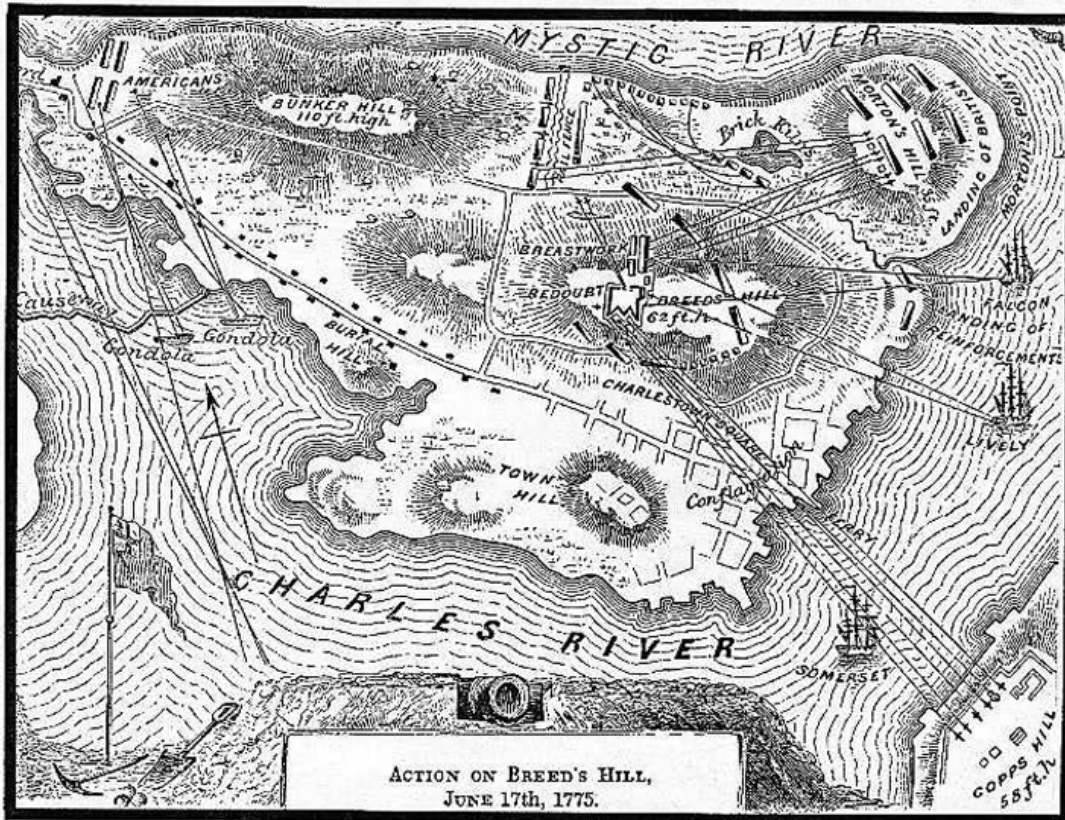
The Militia Company of Captain Blaney hurriedly dug in and built earthworks and fortifications, their explicit job to guard the Penny Ferry Road. Their earthworks were west of Captain Hatch's, near the present westerly corner of Mystic Street. They too occupied houses in the area. One was the Lynde or Sweetser house. Another was the Flagg house, also known as the Sprague house, which had been a house of entertainment to accommodate travelers coming to our shore via the Penny ferry. This house stood next to the Ferry. Captain Blaney also prepared the houses by placing cannon in a spot which his company made for that purpose, quartering his militia in the houses and barns there.

In the meantime, the British informed of the action of the Americans fortifying Charlestown Hill, started their preparations to stop the Americans. Both actions resulted in the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775.

General Gates later wrote of this action: *"Rebels raising a battery on the heights of the peninsula of Charlestown against Boston. Soon six guns were mounted. We made plans to drive them off. We landed on the peninsula opposite under protection of ships of war, armed vessels and boats."*

Between and one o'clock on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, 1775, Captains Naler Hatch and Benjamin Blaney, and their companies watching from the opposite shore, saw the vessels of the British turning the bend in the Mystic River and approaching Charlestown on its northeasterly side. This was part of the total British force that attacked Charlestown on June 17. The day was clear, and they could see a number of boats and barges filled with British Regulars, and on these vessels the scarlet coats of British soldiers shone in the sunlight. At the same time, the troops on our side were horrified to see several inhabitants of this area attempt to cross the Mystic to go to the aid of the American troops in Charlestown. One of these was named Sprague, from the South Precinct, who yelled at others on our shore to follow (there were a great many inhabitants on our shore, including Rev. Peter Thatcher of the North Precinct). Suddenly, there were shots at the people crossing from one of the British barges in the river, one shot landing on our bank.





Our troops watched, with the inhabitants, as the British landed at Moreton's Island, in the Mystic a little east of where Hatch was stationed. One brigade waited on this landing while another joined them from Boston, and they proceeded toward Bunker Hill. Suddenly, pillars of smoke and fire arose from Charlestown – the town had been set on fire! The troops on our bank temporarily lost sight of the happenings, but soon the wind shifted carrying the smoke away, and when it did our men had very little hope that Charlestown could survive since it was a blazing inferno. They watched the British Regulars climb the hill, only to be driven back once in disorder to the landing place at Moreton's, and they observed officers of the British forces running down to them pushing them forward with their swords. The British ship "Falcon" was moored just off Moreton's Point, and other ships and barges were moored along the shores of the Mystic River.

We all know how the battle ended – after a gallant stand, the Americans retreated to Prospect Hill with their dead and their wounded. Imagine the consternation and fright of our soldiers and inhabitants on this side who watched and saw Charlestown practically destroyed. Suddenly, their consternation and fright was changed to concern by another problem that presented itself. While the battle continued, people in droves crossed the Mystic by whatever means were available – boats, rafts, any vessel – some even swam across. They watched with our people, and afterward some remained in our precinct while others went to the North.

The fortification at Beacham's Point and at Penny Ferry remained intact even though British floating batteries in the Mystic fired upon them. A house at Beacham's Point was destroyed by cannon fire from the Charlestown side. Captain Hatch did not



panic, but coolly commanded his company. He felt a great depth of sadness. His own Regiment – the 37<sup>th</sup> under Colonel Gardner – was in the Battle of Bunker Hill. He did not know how they had fared in the battle. He was later to learn that some were killed, including the Commander, Colonel Gardner. This Regiment was then taken over by Lt. Col. William Bond.

After the Battle, the British placed a picket guard at Moulton's Point and one on the old ferry. Several pieces of cannon were brought from Newburyport for our defense. The summer that followed the battle was destined to be a "long, hot, summer" for the men entrenched at Beacham's Point and the Penny Ferry Road, and for our inhabitants who chose to remain in our Precinct and wait it out.

They were very vulnerable during that summer, with a British cannon pointed their way from across the river, and British ships in the Mystic. They were bombarded several times. The greatest danger was from the batteries roaming up and down the Mystic. The refugees became so numerous that they were requested that since they were sheltered by us that they should help our soldiers. Captain Daniel Waters was ordered to prepare cannon for our use, and he and Ezra Sargeant were assigned to procure men to aid with the use of cannon. The English batteries in the river often fired upon the inhabitants and the houses. Captain Solomon Corey, whose farm was in the neighborhood of the present School Street, had a chain shotfound later on his farm, as did Nichols farmstead on Beacham Point, along with several others.

During the balance of June, the British continued to solidify their position on Bunker Hill, and there was only occasional cannon fire. In that month the Town of Malden felt itself in a dangerous position and requested measures be taken by headquarters for its defense. The reply was that the town should make the best use of artillery for its own defense. It was obvious that the Town was on its own.

Also in June, ten companies were raised by other colonies and sent to aid the Americans. General Washington headed toward Massachusetts, and took command of the Army on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, designing a gradual plan of encirclement of the British in Boston, utilizing as part of this encirclement the militiamen of the various adjacent towns who had already been placed in strategic positions.

The eastern or left wing of this encirclement commenced in the Chelsea Hills in what is now Prattville. The wing was located on what we know as Mount Washington, the western slope of which is Everett, and the eastern Chelsea. The hill was variously called Sagamore Hill, and in 1740 Chelsea Hill, and from 1855 Mount Washington in honor of General Washington.

Mr. John Adams, former Librarian, Parlin Memorial Library, contributed a memo containing information given by Major Walter Pratt who lived on this hill:

*"Without doubt General Washington ate or slept or both in one of the farmhouses standing in the vicinity at the time of the Siege of Boston. Barracks were erected here for American soldiers, and beyond, neare Boston, two companies were stationed. These were the troops that took part in the attack on Noodle Island for the purpose of securing British cattle ..."*

This information is confirmed by a plaque presently affixed to the Prattville School on Washington Avenue at the corner of Murray Street in Chelsea (just over the Everett Line).

On the sister hill, Powder Horn Hill in Chelsea, Washington had another outpost, part of the encirclement strategy. An ancient way or Indian trail connected these two hills. The trail was part of the Salem Path that ran over the east end of Mt. Washington along the water at the foot of Powder Horn Hill, and along what is now Washington Avenue in Chelsea and Revere, and still is a boundary line of Everett. The seacoast line ran from the Penny Ferry along the waterfront of Everett to the Ferry at Chelsea, where the Naval Hospital landing place was located. This prevented the British from getting to either South or North Malden, or to Medford. It can therefore, be seen how close Washington and his troops were to what is now Everett. Perhaps he was here – there is no record.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1775, Captain Hatch was still at Beacham Station with one company. Twenty men were on guard each day, and he had a relief of twenty more. He was assisted in the defense of the seacoast by Captain Eleazer Lyndsley who was assigned to the Gerrish Regiment of Winnisimmet (Chelsea). On August 6<sup>th</sup>, two floating batteries came up the Mystic and fired several shots at the Everett side and landed a number of British Regulars. Shots were fired at the Penny Ferry house and it was destroyed. Captain Lyndsley, who was stationed there with Captain Hatch, ran from the Ferry House. He was later court-martialed for this action. The area was immediately “beefed-up” and several shots exchanged.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, two British barges and sailboats, on their way to the floating battery in the Mystic, were bearing near Beacham’s Point. They were fired upon and retreated. As they retreated, they fired upon Americans at Winnisimmet (Chelsea) under Lt. Colonel Baldwin. During the rest of August, the British continued to fire periodically across the Mystic. One shot was a direct hit at Beacham’s Point. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, three British Regulars deserted from Bunker Hill and swam across the river to our side. On the same day, two armed British boats sailed up the Mystic and were driven back by an American fieldpiece. On August 13<sup>th</sup>, two more British Regulars deserted from Bunker Hill, swam the river and were captured, and on August 25<sup>th</sup> three from the floating batteries deserted while another came from the Charlestown shore. Again on September 7<sup>th</sup>, fourteen British Regulars deserted to these shores.

During the fall of 1775, and the winter of 1775-1776, Washington’s plan of encirclement was tightened. He was starving the British at Charlestown and Boston. Local troops continued to watch from the fortifications in the South Precinct, and they saw the river gradually freeze so that it was possible to walk upon it; this made it a likely spot for landing by the British. However, such an attempt never took place.

The local militiamen watched American troops and wagons and supplies cross the land of the South Precinct and head north. They saw part of Benedict Arnold’s detachment march through the area and encamp within the now City of Malden on the way to Quebec. Much damage was done to the area by the wheels of the wagons as deep ruts were cut in the narrow country roads.

Finally, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1776, Washington occupied Dorchester Heights, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> the British evacuated Boston and Charlestown and the Siege was finally over, as was the immediate threat to the South Precinct area. Captain Hatch left Beacham’s Point with his company. Captain Blaney left the Penny Ferry road with his militia. This ended the defense of our South Precinct seacoast, but did not end our participation in the War.

The danger over, the attention of the inhabitants of the South and north Precincts, acting as one, was directed toward the political aspects of the War. A meeting was called on May 27, 1776 to elect their representative to the General Court, a Town Meeting Moderator, and a Committee to consider whether, if the Congress should recommend independence, the town should go along with that recommendation. Ezra Sargeant of the South Precinct was elected Representative and Town Moderator. Rev. Eliakim Willis, also of the South, was named Chairman of the Committee which rendered a fascinating document which should be preserved for all time. It shows a gradual shift in the attitude of the local inhabitants from loyalty to Great Britain to distrust of it, and finally to the yearning to be free. Historians have said that it was probably written by Rev. Peter Thatcher of the North Precinct, but since Rev. Willis of the South was Chairman of the Committee, there is no question but that the contents reflected the attitude of the inhabitants of the South Precinct.

(ORIGINAL SPELLING & PUNCTUATION)

*"To Mr. Ezra Sargeant*

*Sir:*

*A Resolution of the late Honorable House of Representatives: Calling upon the several towns in this colony to express their minds, with respect to the important question of American independence is the occasion of our now instructing you. The Time was Sir when we loved the King and the People of Great Briton with an affection Truly filial we felt ourselves interested in their Glory; we shared in their Joys and Sorrows we cheerfully powered the fruit of all our Labours into the lap of the mother Country and without reluctance expended our Blood and our Treasure in their Cause.*

*These were our sentiments Toward Grate Britain while she Continued to Act the part of a Parant State we felt ourselves happy in our Conection nor wished to be desolved but our Sentiments are altred it is now the Ardent wish of our Soles America may becom free and Independent States.*

*A sense of unprovoked injuries will arouse the Resentment of most Peacefull. Such Injuries these Colonies have Received from Britain unjustifiable Claims have Ben made by the King and his minions to Tax us without our Consent, these claims have been prosecuted in a manner cruel and unjust to the highest Degree the Frantick Policy of Administration hath induced them to send fleets and armies to*

*America that by depriving us of our trade and cutting the throats of our Brethern they might awe us into submission and Erect a System of Dispotism in America, which would So far Enlarge the Influence of the Crown as to enable it to rivit their Shakles upon the People of Grate Britan.*

*This was brought to a Crises upon the ever memorable Ninteenth of April we remember the fatal Day the Expiring groans of our murdered Countymen yet Vibrate on our Ears! We now behold the flames of their Peasful Dwellings ascending to Heaven we hear their Blood Crying to us from the Ground Vengeance and Charging us as we Value the Peace of their remanes to have no further Conection with a King who can unfeelingly hear of the Slaughter of his subjects and Composedly Sleep with their Blood upon his Soul.*

*The manner in which the war has been Prosecuted hath Confirmed in these Sentiments: Piracy and murder Robery and breach of faith hath been Conspicuous in the Conduct of the Kings troops Defenseless Towns have Been attacked and Destroyed: The Ruins of Charlestown which are daily in our vew Dayly Remind us of this: The Cryes of ye widows and ye orphen Demand our Attention they Demand that ye hand of Pity Shoud wipe ye tear from there Eye and that the Sword of their Country should Avenge their rongs.*

*We long Entertained hpos that the Sperit of the British Nation would once more Induce them to Assert their owun and our Rights and Bring to Conidine Punishment the Elixated Villins who have Trampld upon ye Sacred Rights of men and affronted ye Majesty of the People.*

*We hopd in vain they have lost their love to freedom they have lost their Spirit of Just Resentment we therefore Renounce with Disdain our Connection with a Kingdom of Slaves, we bid a final adue to Britain Could an Accomadation be Now affected we have Reason to think it would be fatal to the libertyes of America we should Soon Catch ye Contagon of Vanality and Disapation, which hath Subjected Britons to lawless Domination, ware we Placed in the Situation ware we in in the year 1773 ware the Powers of*

*appointing to Office and Commanding the militia in the hands of  
Governors our acts Trade and manufactor would be Cramped:*

*Nay more than this the life of every man who has been active in  
the Cause of his Country would be Endangered for these reasons as  
well as many others which might be Produced we are Confirmed in  
ye opposition that the Presant age will be Deficient in their Duty  
to God their Posterity and themselves if they do not Establish an  
American Republick this is ye only form of Government which we  
wish to See Established for we Can never be willingly Subject to  
any other King than He Being Possessed of Infinite wisdom  
Goodness and Rectitude is alone fit to Possess unlimited power:*

*We have freely Spoken our Sentiments upon this Important Subject  
but we mean not to Dictate, we have unbounded Confidence in the  
wisdom and uprightness of the Continantall Congress with Pleasure  
we recollect that this Affair is under their Direction and we now  
Instruct you Sir to give them the Strongest Assurance that if they  
Should Declare America to be free and Independent Republick  
your Constituance will Support and Defend the measure to the Last  
Drop of their Blood and the last farthing of their Treasure."*

In June of 1776, several British vessels remained in the lower harbors in and around Boston. George Washington, after he departed Boston, decided to clear these vessels from the harbor wherever possible, and he ordered troops from the Continental Army to occupy the shores on both sides. So laong as British vessels remained in the harbors, the were a threat to residents along the coast. Consequently, Captain Benjamin Blaney was ordered to Point Shirley, now Winthrop with his militia company to protect the coast and help drive the British vessels away. He arrived at Point Shirley in June with his militia and occupied earthworks there for three days. At a given signal, all of the militia companies opened fire upon the British vessels in the harbor. The British decided it would be safer to put out to sea. With the exception of three vessels, they were driven from the waters there. The three vessels were captured, together with the cargoes they carried, and these stores of ammunition and cannon were added to the American supply.

In the action at Shirley Point were fifty-seven men from the Malden Militia. Of the fifty-seven, the following were from the South Precinct:

Captain Benjamin Blaney, Jr.  
Sarg. Nehemiah Oaks  
Samuel G. Sargeant, Fifer  
Winslow Sargeant, Drummer

Samuel Baldwin

Joseph Perkins

Aaron Bucknam  
Benjamin Bucknam  
Joseph Burditt  
John Nichols  
Robert Oliver  
Ebenezer Paine

David Sargeant  
Jacob Sargeant  
Thomas Sargeant  
Amos Shute  
Ebenezer Shute  
John Tufts

Stephen Paine, Jr.

The actual pursuit of independence shifted at this time from the local area to the other colonies. Many of the men from the South Precinct took great parts in the action as it shifted its focus to other sections of the developing nation.

Before concluding, it is important to summarize biographical information on several of the more prominent local patriots. The South Precinct had at least four "Super" Patriots. They were Captain Benjamin Blaney, Jr., Captain Naler (Nailer) Hatch, Captain Jonathan Oaks and Captain Daniel Waters. The first was a soldier on the ground; the others were, at first, land soldiers and then served on the seas.

**Captain Benjamin Blaney, Jr. – foot soldier**

Captain Blaney was born in what is now Everett on July 24, 1738, the son of Captain Benjamin Blaney and Abigail Bucknam. Sr. He grew up in the South Precinct, his home being located on what is now Partridge Terrace. The homestead remained standing until the 1890's.

Benjamin Blaney, Sr. was a respected man in the South Precinct, having served in the French and Indian War, and later as a trusted magistrate. When Benjamin, Jr. was twelve years old, Benjamin, Sr. was found dead on the road returning from a mission. It was a mysterious death, and has never been solved.

Benjamin, Jr. followed his father's footsteps in the military way; both father and son were members of the Malden Militia. The father was Captain of that unit, and in 1765 the son was an ensign. In 1774, Benjamin, Jr. became captain of that same unit.

It has been shown that during the Revolution, Captain Blaney commanded the entire Malden Minuteman unit which answered the Lexington Alarm; that he erected earthworks and fortifications on the Penny Ferry Road on June 17, 1775; that his company participated in the removal of cattle from the islands in Boston Harbor in 1775, and that he helped drive the British Ships from the waters at Point Shirley in 1776. More than any other patriot, Captain Blaney was responsible for the security and defense of the South Precinct during the Revolution War.

After the Siege of Boston was lifted, Captain Blaney responded to a draft of soldiers in 1776, and with a company of eighty-eight men, marched to Fairfield Connecticut, under Col Thatcher, and from there to New Jersey to join the army of General Washington. 1777-78, Captain Blaney and his company were part of the guard of prisoners who had been captured in the campaign against General Burgoyne and incarcerated at Prospect Hill (now Somerville).

After the war, Captain Blaney took a prominent part in the affairs of the South precinct, and remained in the area until 1818 when he sold his property and removed to Chester, Vermont. He lived there only two years and died on January 19, 1820.

**Captain Naler Hatch – foot soldier and privateer**

No record of Captain Hatch's birth exists in either the South or North Precincts of Malden. Captain Hatch settled in the South Precinct and for a time followed the sea as a mariner

It was erroneously believed that he was the same Naler Hatch who was born in Truro, MA but that Naler Hatch died at sea in 1841.