

A Portland Revolutionary War Veteran (part 1)

by Doris Sherrow, November 2000

Samuel Cooper was born in 1745, the second of **John** and **Susannah Cooper's** five children. They lived somewhere in the Pacousett area of Marlborough Street — research has not yet determined quite where. When Samuel turned 21, he married **Martha Stow** and set up housekeeping nearby. They had a baby girl, **Olive**, in 1767, and probably a couple more children, and a baby they named **John**, before Samuel was called to service in the early part of the Revolution. He had been an ensign in the **Train Band** (the early National Guard), and departed for Boston as a second lieutenant in the Second Connecticut Regiment in May of 1775.

Three of the letters he wrote to his family survived to be published in the **Connecticut Magazine** of 1906, where they were described as letters from a soldier from Chatham. The creator of the article, **Charles H. McKee**, didn't seem to know much more about Cooper, though he may have been a descendant. His interest was largely in Cooper's character and the obvious affection he expresses for his family:

Roxbury July 18 1775

To my Dear wife & Children

I Received yours [your letter] which I Prize next to your Person ~ the welfare of our family I understand is good ~ you tell me John is fat & Rugged which I Rejoice to hear & Prize above gold ~ the Rest of our Children I Don't mention be Cause I Left them well~I shall give you but a Short Detail of affairs for I Expect this will not arrive ... the State of the army is such that I Cant tell when I Shall Come home but I have In Couragem't of Comeing in about a month but not Certain ~I want you to Send me two Pair of Linen Stockings for I have had two Pair Stole~The Rest are all wore out~I Did not Receive in Your Last Letter to me what I Expected but hope to in the next ~ Dear maddam I Rejoice that I am able to acquaint you that I Enjoy a good State of Health & god be Praised our Company is harty — the Dangers we are to Encounter I no not but it Shall never be Said to my Children your father was a Coward~Let the event be what it will, be not troubled, make your Self Easy~ in Due time I hope to Return home in Peace & Enjoy the pleasures of worthy wife & Loving Children & Subscribe my Self your Loving Husband & father

Samll Cooper

On July 23, 1775, Cooper again wrote from Roxbury:

Dear maddam

My Respects to you & Children ~ hoping they are all well and will Continue So till I Return ~ I wrote to you that I Should Come home this Summer but the General has given orders that no officer Shall Leave the Camps & I would have you be Content for I mean to Comply with orders ~ Let the Event be as it will ~ Send to Shipman & get Some Cloth & Send me a Shirt or two and the Jacoat I wrote for ~ I have sent by Dill [his brother, Deliverance Cooper] to Stop my house Comeing for fear he will forget it I mention it hear [here] I shall but a word ~ Dear wife I am able to acquaint you that I Enjoy my health Exceeding well and hope in Due time to See you again ~ tell our Little Children that Dadde has not forgot them & that they must Learn their books well ~ I have Sent them Some Paper to make them Bonets ~ from your Ever Loving Husband ~ Samll Cooper ~ This I Part with a Kiss

A week and a half later, the tide had turned, and Cooper wrote on August 2,

Loving wife & Child[ren]

I have one moment this morning to write to Let you that we have not had no Battle this night & matters Seem to be a Little more Easy & no firing ~ Some Regulars kild at Cambridge yesterday ~ Dear wife be not Concerned for me but take Special Care of our Children ~ I Cant write no more for want of [time?] this is only to Let you no that things move Easy this morning ~ from your

friend & Husband ~ Sam'l Cooper

I have Sent in toms Letter two Ribbands ~ Do with one as you Please ~ this is olives [his daughter, then 8].

Samuel Cooper stayed with his regiment in the Cambridge area for the next few weeks. Then plans were drawn up for an invasion of the British-held Quebec, and on September 13, 1775, despite the fact that it was late in the year to be heading north, Cooper and several others from Portland became part of the 1100 men who started toward Quebec.