

An Ephraim Barber Tall Clock: “Eyewitness” to a Revolution?

By Damon DiMauro (MA)

If the dramatic events of April 19, 1775, culminating in “the shot heard round the world,”¹ remain etched in the collective consciousness as the start of the American Revolutionary War, the towns of Lexington and Concord, MA, still boast of a critical mass of iconic artifacts—“eyewitnesses,” as it were—to preserve the epic narrative. Most notable among these is the Nathaniel Mulliken Sr. (1722–67) clock that continues to beat and strike at the Concord Museum, the very sounds that would have resonated in the ears of the Lexington militia at Buckman’s Tavern as the dreaded Red Coats approached more than two centuries ago (Figure 1).² The ultimate objective of the British regulars on that fateful day was the cache of military stores that spies had indicated was at Colonel James Barrett’s house in Concord. Barrett, however, had secured those stores by sending them into the countryside just prior to the soldiers’ arrival.³ Just recently a tall clock has come to light, made by Ephraim Barber (1748–1817) of Marlborough, MA, which the chain of provenance and external corroboration reveal may very well have been an eyewitness to the search by the British soldiers of the James Barrett home.

BARBER’S LINEAGE AND EARLY SETTLEMENT IN MARLBOROUGH

Ephraim Barber’s lineage can be traced back to first settler George Barber from Sheffield, England, who arrived in Massachusetts Bay as early as 1638. He was one of the founders of Medfield, where he served as selectman, town clerk, captain of the local militia,



Figure 1. Nathaniel Mulliken Sr. tall clock dial. COURTESY OF THE CONCORD MUSEUM, F2512.

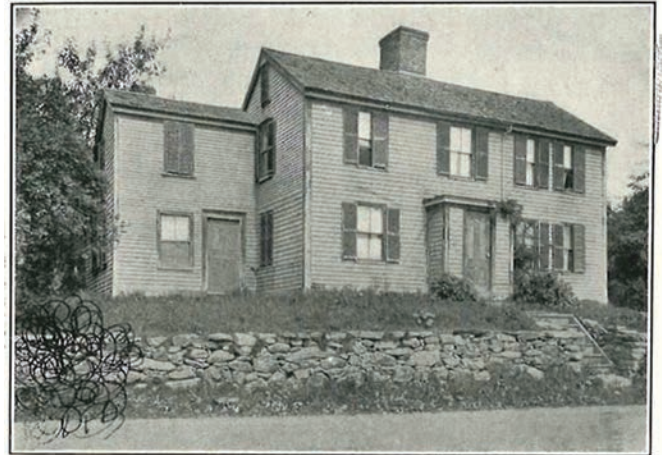
and representative to the General Court.⁴ Barber’s grandfather, Deacon George Barber, also served the town as a selectman as well as its deputy to the General Court.⁵ Ephraim Barber’s father, John, belonged to the fourth generation in Medfield and was described as a “yeoman.”⁶



Figure 2. Note the facial profiles in the Ephraim Barber upper-corner spandrels. COURTESY OF DELANEY CLOCKS.



Figure 3. Note the facial profiles in the Benjamin Willard upper-corner spandrels. COURTESY OF DELANEY CLOCKS.



HOUSE OF LIEUT. EPHRAIM BARBER.

Figure 5. Ephraim Barber's house, ca. 1740, as pictured in Ella A. Bigelow's *Historical Reminiscences* (1910).

He later removed to Sudbury, where he married Hannah Rice in 1735.⁷ John Barber recommends himself to posterity as the duteous "clerk" who chronicled the advance of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's company in William Shirley's 1754 expedition to the Norridgewock country. It was there that Fort Halifax was built to protect the Kennebec River Valley during the French and Indian War.⁸ John Barber also took part in Governor Shirley's ill-fated expedition the following year to Fort Niagara, where he is presumed to have been "killed in a skirmish."⁹

The frontier war soldier not only left behind his widow, Hannah, but eight children, including Ephraim, who was just seven at the time.¹⁰ When Hannah herself expired in 1786, her heirs elected to dispose of the house and four acres of land in Sudbury left to them in her will. As a measure of his siblings' trust in him, Ephraim was chosen to sell the property for their mutual benefit.¹¹

The records are sparse with respect to Barber's early adulthood. He is cited as having paid his Marlborough poll tax in 1770,¹² which proves he had settled in his adopted town at least by that date. Marlborough was mainly agrarian, with little industry well into the 19th century,¹³ so Barber may have chosen to relocate there because he could ply his trade without fear of competition. Barber is specifically denominated a "clockmaker" in a 1772 deed, at which time he acquired a house in addition to land.¹⁴ While there is no tangible evidence to indicate how he learned clockmaking, one



Figure 4. Ephraim Barber's house and shop as they appeared on an 1803 map. COURTESY OF THE MARLBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

clue might come from an engraving motif found on the upper-corner spandrels of his "Concord" tall clock—a facial profile—which is also found on some Benjamin Willard dials (Figures 2 and 3).¹⁵ Given the normal apprenticeship period, from age 14 to 21, Barber would have trained between 1762 and 1769. Benjamin Willard was in Hartford, CT, until about 1766 learning to make wood movements from Benjamin Cheney. Some think Willard learned to make brass movements from Nathaniel Mulliken Sr., whose shop he took over when Mulliken died in 1767.¹⁶ It could be that Barber was an apprentice in the Mulliken shop all along, and he crossed paths with Willard there when the latter finally went to Lexington.

Barber was also known to have repaired firearms, for which his clockmaking training would have stood him in good stead. According to one local source, "Ephraim was a gunsmith in the employ of the government for many years, and a most skilful workman. He was a great hunter, always carrying a rifle of his own manufacture."¹⁷ It is not clear, however, when exactly he served the "government" as an armorer, though certainly his skills would have been much in demand during the Revolutionary War when Committees of Safety called upon local craftsmen to supply the Continental Army.¹⁸

Barber's homestead was in West Marlborough on the northern side of Williams Pond (now known as Lake Williams), on the road leading to Worcester (Figure 4). It was probably chosen because of the fertile farmland on the rising ground of the north shore, as well as the waterfront access and panoramic views of the bluffs in the distance. His saltbox house was reportedly built in 1740, although the exact date remains unknown, yet the center chimney does bespeak antiquity (Figure 5). As Barber's 1798 tax records reveal, the structure was made of wood, covered 700 square feet, stood two stories high, was adorned with 16 windows or 81 square feet of glass. There was a barn on the property 20 feet long by 14 wide, as well as a shop 20 feet long by 10 wide.¹⁹ Other prominent families built farmhouses there in the first decades after the Revolution.

BARBER'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR SERVICE

With respect to the American Revolution, Barber himself had a highly credentialed résumé:

Sergeant, Capt. Daniel Barns' co., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 7 days; reported

enlisted into the army April 26, 1775; also, Capt. Barns's co., Col. Jonathan Ward's regt.; muster roll dated Aug. 1, 1775; enlisted April 26, 1775; service, 13 weeks 6 days; also, company return [probably Oct., 1775]; also, order for bounty coat or its equivalent in money, dated Marlborough, Dec. 25, 1775; also, 1st Lieutenant, Capt. Robert Cutting's co., Col. McIntosh's regt., Gen. Lovell's brigade; enlisted Aug. 1, 1778; discharged Sept. 13, 1778; service, 1 mo. 16 days, on an alarm at Rhode Island.²⁰

Further information can be added to the Barber military dossier from the testimony of Jonathan Brigham in his application for a pension in 1832. To qualify, a veteran had to state the times and places of his service, in which units and under which officers, as well as the specific engagements in which he had fought. The deposition then had to be sworn to in a court of law and seconded by two or more character witnesses. Jonathan Brigham, testifying in the third person, cites Barber as one of the first and foremost of Marlborough patriots:

In the year 1774 he was residing in the town of Marlborough, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The British troops were then in Boston and their fleet lying off and blockading the harbor. Excitement was high and the moment of actual hostilities constantly anticipated by the inhabitants. Under these circumstances, he, with others of his townsmen, voluntarily formed themselves into a military company...that he and the company to which he belonged equipped themselves and met punctually through the year two days each week for the purpose of military exercise and improvement and, as a minuteman, continued to serve until his regular enlistment in the month of May, 1775, a period of about one year and about one month. Among his first companions in the service he recollects Benjamin Stevens, John Loren, *Ephraim Barber* [italics added], and Moses Roberts, who was afterwards killed at the Battle of White Plains.²¹

When the news reached Marlborough that the British had entered Concord on April 19, 1775, the town rushed four companies, or nearly 200 men, to the scene.²² Jonathan Brigham's narrative is especially pertinent here in that he details the events surrounding the Battles of Concord and Lexington, in which Barber was known to have served as a sergeant.²³

On the nineteenth of April, 1775, declarant, under the same officers as the preceding year, marched to Concord for the protection of the military stores on the first notice of the hostile approach of the British forces. Great efforts were made to keep secret the march and the objects of these troops, but the battle at Lexington roused the country. Declarant heard of the affair at Lexington about nine or ten o'clock in the forenoon and arrived at Concord, a distance of about sixteen miles, at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. When declarant arrived, the British had effected their object and were retreating, when declarant and his company immediately pursued. They could hear, as they advanced, various accounts of the retreating foe. Sometimes they were told they were nearly upon them and would then march upon a run for some distance till other accounts would induce them to believe they could not be overtaken and would then resume their ordinary march. When in pursuit, they saw numbers of dead bodies, as the enemy's retreat was harassed by the yeomanry firing upon them from behind walls, hedges, and buildings.²⁴

Finally, Jonathan Brigham mentions another campaign in which Barber participated, now as a lieutenant, and which had not previously been recorded:

In the beginning of October 1777, when General Burgoyne was advancing from the north and Sir Henry Clinton from the south, threatening a total dismemberment of the states, a call was made for volunteers from Marlborough, where declarant was still residing, to march against Burgoyne. Declarant volunteered in this service, and a company of his townsmen was organized under William Morse as captain, and *Ephraim Barber* [italics added] and Obadiah Bass, lieutenants, and declarant marched with them through Springfield and Northampton, Massachusetts, Brattleborough and Bennington, Vermont, Hoosick and Cambridge to Saratoga, New York, where they arrived two or three days before the surrender of Burgoyne. Declarant's regiment was commanded by Colonel Reade on this occasion. After the surrender of Burgoyne, declarant and his regiment returned, having in their charge the Hessian prisoners in one party and the British prisoners in another, the regiment having divided and taken different routes for that purpose. At Charlestown in Massachusetts the regiment united, but the British prisoners not being willing to go

on in company with the Hessians, that part of the regiment with which declarant was and who had the Hessians in charge remained there until the other party had first advanced, when they proceeded with their prisoners to Winter Hill, near Boston, and then returned to their homes.²⁵

In the remaining war years, Barber may have been in financial straits, for he sold land he had earlier acquired in Marlborough, NH (formerly called Monadnock #5)²⁶ to Jonathan Capron of Groton for £100. He is specifically denominated a "clockmaker" in the deed, dated March 20, 1778.²⁷

Before the end of the war, in October 1781, Lieutenant Barber and Elizabeth Crosby, both said to be of Marlborough, were married in East Sudbury (now Wayland).²⁸ They were to have three children, William, Jonathan, and Elizabeth, born in 1782, 1786, and 1789, respectively.²⁹

BARBER'S CLOCKMAKING LEGACY

It is a matter of some perplexity that few Ephraim Barber clocks have survived into modern times. And yet, throughout the 19th century, he had an unrivalled, almost mythic reputation in his community for his workmanship. He himself reportedly "always insisted that he should return in a thousand years after his death to find his clocks running."³⁰ "One of them," according to a historian writing in 1873, "is patiently ticking away, awaiting his coming, at the house of his grandson, J. A. Barber, of Northfield, Mass. Of this clock marvellous tales are told of supernatural interest in the affairs of the family."³¹ Shortly thereafter, another historian noted in reference to Barber, "Many of his clocks are now, 1879, still keeping good time."³² Yet another historian, at the turn of the 20th century, contended: "No better eight-day clocks were ever manufactured, and even to-day they stand ticking all over the country. Only a short time ago one of Marlborough's citizens journeying abroad stepped into a hostelry of England and much to his surprise and pleasure saw ticking before him an old grandfather's clock made by 'Ephraim Barber, Marlborough, New England.'³³ The hostelry story, unless a former Royalist client had repatriated, seems farfetched and indeed it has been cited as an example of New England folklore.³⁴ Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Barber cornered the local horological market and that his wares enhanced the décor of many a Marlborough home. At the "quarter millennium" anniversary of the town, local versifier



Martha L. Ames spoke of post-Revolution prosperity as if owning a Barber clock were a common status symbol:

The long war ended; then a breathing space
Gave ample time for needed renovations...

The great East room was still its owner's pride:
A "Barber" clock one corner occupied,
A wee bird with an eye that never sleeps,
High on the dial still its vigil keeps.³⁵

Moreover, collector of yesteryear William Whiting Nolen (1860–1923) did not disdain owning a Barber, to go alongside several Willards and Mullikens. It was described thus in an auction catalog: "Deeply molded hood with arched door, enclosing silvered dial engraved with American eagle and 'Eph'm Barber, Marlboro.' Long case with door. On molded pedestal. Height, 80 inches."³⁶ When the lot came up for bidding, the reporter noted that "a bit of native philosophy," found painted on the inside of the waist door, brought guffaws from the thronged auction-goers:

I am old and worn as my face appears
For I've walked on time for a hundred years.
Many have fallen, since I begun.
Many will fall ere my course is run.
I have buried the world with its joys and fears
In my long march of one hundred years.³⁷



▲ **Figure 6.** The Barber house currently. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN LASORSA OF DOMICILE NEW ENGLAND.

◀ **Figure 7.** Plaque in the Barber house. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN LASORSA OF DOMICILE NEW ENGLAND.

The Marlborough Historical Society lists a Barber clock in its database, entered circa 1981. However, a recent visit to the society proved unfruitful, for the clock has gone missing. Currently, the only known extant Barber is the "Concord" clock.

As for Barber's former home, it came to be owned by the Marlborough Historical Society. However, the land on which the house stood was acquired by an insurance company in the 1980s. The insurance agency planned to demolish the structure and erect an office building in its stead. Fortunately, in 1985, a couple from Danville, NH, purchased the saltbox, took it apart, marked all the posts, beams, floorboards, and paneling, so they might be reassembled in their original placement, and had the ensemble towed by flatbed truck to its current location (Figures 6 and 7). Apparently, in the process of

dismantlement and reconstruction, it was learned that there had once been a blaze in the home, as charring was discovered on some of the beams. Obviously, not every original feature could be salvaged, and attempts were made to supply what was missing with period materials.³⁸

BARBER'S STANDING IN THE MARLBOROUGH COMMUNITY

Ephraim and Elizabeth Barber joined the First Congregational Church on August 30, 1783.³⁹ The date of their church admission happened to coincide with—and was undoubtedly prompted by—the birth of their first child, William.⁴⁰ They presented their son Jonathan for baptism on May 30, 1786, and their daughter, Elizabeth, on July 19, 1789.⁴¹ The latent liberal orientation in the westerly sections of Marlborough in matters of religion became more pronounced in the early 1800s and soon issued in Universalism, and eventually in Unitarianism.⁴² Barber was one of the leading signatories in the petition filed with the state legislature in 1807 for the incorporation of a new parish (granted in 1808).⁴³ He was also an early pewholder, paying \$52.50 for the right.⁴⁴ On the other hand, his interest in the breakaway parish might have been out of parochial solidarity, for there is no evidence that he ever signed the church covenant (Figure 8).⁴⁵

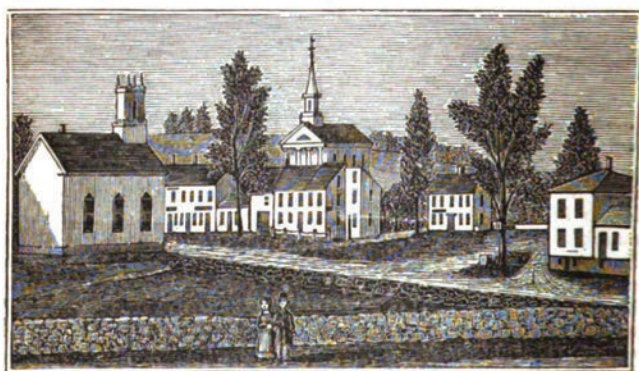
Barber's exemplary Revolutionary War service certainly gave him a certain cachet in Marlborough. As the war

drew to its close, he began to be styled a "gentleman" in deeds.⁴⁶ Moreover, he seems to have grown in stature as a personage of unassailable character among his fellow citizens, for he was thrice called upon to settle estates. He thus served as executor for Deborah How and Mary How, in 1796 and 1801, respectively.⁴⁷ The two "spintress" sisters were distant relations of Barber—aunts to his wife, Elizabeth.⁴⁸ In 1801, he also served as executor of Ephraim How's estate,⁴⁹ although his relation to Barber is not evident.⁵⁰ The task of an executor was onerous, for it involved placing newspaper ads to give fair warning to creditors,⁵¹ as well as frequent trips to probate court in Concord. In each instance, Barber is also titled in court documents a "gentleman."

On the threshold of 60 years, as a kind of apotheosis, Barber was elected to represent Marlborough in the General Court. He served from 1808–11.⁵² He took his seat as a member of the Democratic-Republican party,⁵³ and that at a time when the Federalists were suddenly resurgent in Massachusetts, carrying both legislative houses by a slight majority, due to the unpopularity of Jefferson's Embargo Act.⁵⁴ When a Federalist resolution was introduced to condemn the act as unconstitutional, Barber was one of 171 signatories of a "Republican Protest."⁵⁵ He remained defined by his principles to the end, as several obituaries trumpeted his political proclivities: "a firm Republican and an honest man."⁵⁶

BARBER'S ECCENTRICITIES AND TWILIGHT YEARS

Whether peddling his firearms and timepieces or attending General Court, Barber seems to have had the fortitude equal to his commitments. He was described as "a good pedestrian, making nothing of walking to and from Boston,"⁵⁷ a trek of some 60 miles. The topography of Marlborough is dominated by rolling terrain, the most prominent feature being Sligo Hill, which stands at nearly 600 feet. At one time, the property belonged to a man named Bowker and was called Bowker's Hill. Evidencing a pre-Romantic sensibility worthy of a Rousseau, "When the Bowker land was sold, Lieutenant Ephraim Barber the celebrated clock maker bought a portion of the highest part of the hill and used to say he 'could get as near Heaven as any person on his own land.'"⁵⁸ The following passage is also cited as an example of Yankee folklore, earning Barber a place of honor among the section titled "Local Characters":⁵⁹



South-eastern view of Marlborough.

Figure 8. Image of Marlborough from John Warner Barber's *Massachusetts Historical Collections* (1839).

Eccentric in conversation but most honest and upright. He kept no horse and was one day carried by a friend to a neighboring farmer to buy some rye. "Come, Mr. Barber, come out to the barn to see it measured." "No," was the reply, "rye is measured in Heaven." He once owned a woodlot and arranged with Gilbert Howe, another honest old man, to let the latter cut his firewood from this lot, and as partial return Mr. Howe was to pasture Mr. Barber's cow. After the various dicker accounts between these two men had run on for years, they met one day upon the street. Mr. Barber said, "How do we stand?" "I don't know," said Mr. Howe, "do you?" "No. Have you had what you want?" "Yes. Have you?" "Yes." "Call it square." "Agreed."⁶⁰

Barber's twilight years were marred by sadness. His daughter-in-law, Polly, wife of elder son, William, passed away in 1815 at age 33.⁶¹ The following year his son-in-law, Nathaniel Hapgood, husband of his daughter, Elizabeth, was accidentally killed at age 29 at the hand of a friend, leaving behind his widow and four children.⁶² The macabre details appeared in all the regional newspapers:

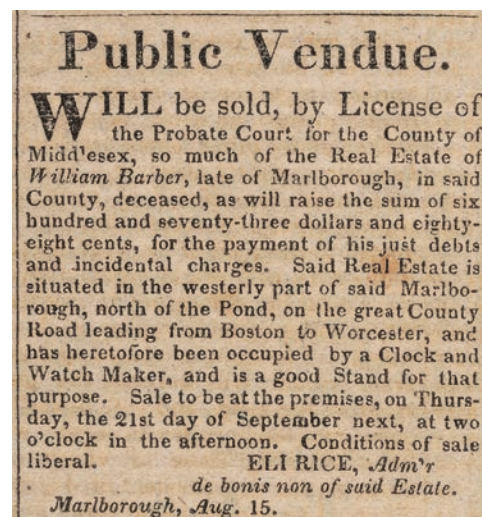
In Boxboro, by the accidental discharge of a fowling-piece, Mr. Hapgood, merchant. A person came into the Store of the deceased to fix the flint in his gun; and while engaged in hammering it, it went off. The ball entered the back part of Mr. H's head, and came out of his forehead.⁶³

The cruel turn of events may have hastened Barber's own demise, which occurred on November 14, 1817, at age 70. His passing was noted in a number of regional papers,⁶⁴ many paying tribute to his wartime record and government service: "an active patriot of the Revolution, and late member of the General Court."⁶⁵ His widow, Elizabeth, moved to Northfield, MA, to live with their younger son, Jonathan.⁶⁶ She died on October 31, 1831, at age 72.

Barber's Marlborough homestead and shop were then occupied by his eldest son, William.⁶⁷ He eventually remarried in 1819 to Asenath Holman of Bolton.⁶⁸ William eked out his existence as a watchmaker and engraver, having presumably been trained by his late father. The remnants of a watch paper still exist. The engraving of the seated child, clasping a pocket watch in one hand and reaching for a winged hourglass with the other, with a globe and clock to the side of the child, would be his



◀ **Figure 9.**
William Barber
watch paper.
COURTESY OF
THE AMERICAN
ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.



▶ **Figure 10.** The sale of William Barber's land as advertised in the *Massachusetts Spy*, August 30, 1826. COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

own handiwork (Figure 9). William Barber must have garnered a modicum of respectability in his community, for he was tapped to serve on the school committee in the year of his passing,⁶⁹ in 1825 at age 43.⁷⁰ Son William F. Barber, also listed as an "engraver," served as executor of the estate,⁷¹ although he expired the following year, in 1826, at age 22.⁷² Eli Rice, described as a "gentleman" of Marlborough in the probate record,⁷³ was then appointed to administer the estate, auctioning off what real estate he could to cover the family's debts, noting that it "has heretofore been occupied by a Clock and Watch Maker, and is a good Stand for that purpose" (Figure 10).⁷⁴ And so the homestead passed out of the family.

At the end of the 19th century, Marlborough's city fathers, in belated tribute to their American Revolution soldiers, voted to place a \$3 bronze marker on Lieutenant Barber's tomb in Brigham Cemetery.⁷⁵ However, within a decade, it appears no trace of Barber's burial inscription could be located by local antiquarians.⁷⁶

THE BARBER “CONCORD” CLOCK

An Ephraim Barber tall clock recently came up for auction at Bonhams Skinner (Figure 11). It is the only extant example currently known. It might be dubbed the “Concord” clock because its pedigree can be documented through several generations of Concordians and may even be traced to Colonel James Barrett, as a notice titled “Data of Clock” tacked to the inside of the waist door claims:



Figure 11.
Ephraim
Barber
tall clock.
COURTESY
OF BONHAMS
SKINNER.

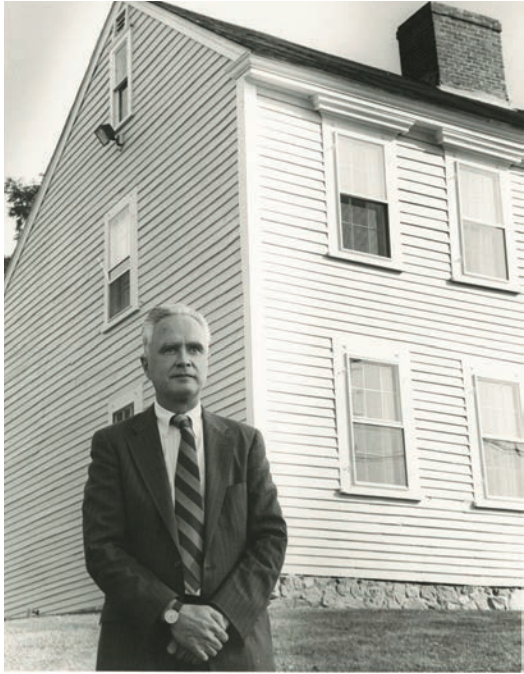
The grandfather clock, a product of Ephraim Barber of Marlboro, stood in the James Barrett house on Barrett’s Mill Road when the British searched the property, the 19th of April 1775. The clock remained there for three generations until James’ grandson Prescott, the son of Peter, bartered with Joe Clark of Lowell Road for the possession of a cow in exchange for the clock.

Thus the Barber clock entered the house on Lowell Road, where it remained for three generations of the Clark family, when it was acquired by Fred Tower, a cousin of the last occupants, and a Clark on his mother’s side. At his death, I was able to keep the clock in the family—and now happily transfer the possession to Richard Spaulding, who lives on land where the worthy cow once grazed, and next door to the house where the clock stood after leaving the Barrett house.

Gladys R. Clark
July 25, 1982

The most recent owner was Richard Spaulding (1935–2017), a real estate developer with a special interest in restoration of historic buildings (Figure 12). He was a longtime trustee of the Concord Museum. Spaulding also had a fascination for antiquarian horology, as he explained while participating in the Concord Oral History Program: “I had always as a hobby restored antique American clocks, and I think that sort of gets ingrained in your mind with the satisfaction of saving some old piece of furniture or a mechanism such as an antique clock.”⁷⁷ It is not hard to deduce why Mrs. Clark handpicked Spaulding to be the next worthy keeper of the family heirloom, whether he personally lent credence to the story of its historic provenance or not.

Gladys R. Clark (1892–1989) was something of a Concord icon in her own right, both as a fount of historical knowledge about the town and a repository of local memorabilia (Figure 13).⁷⁸ She owned a manuscript survey that Henry Thoreau had done for her grandfather Daniel B. Clark (1819–74).⁷⁹ She also possessed her grandfather’s diary in which he records helping his brother James move Thoreau’s Walden cabin across town, using an ox team, to the Clark family farm in 1849,⁸⁰ where it was used for grain storage and eventually fell into disrepair.⁸¹ Daniel B. Clark was the nephew of Joseph Clark (1786–1869), who purportedly had bartered with Prescott Barrett for the Barber clock in exchange for a cow.⁸²



◀ **Figure 12.** Richard Spaulding standing in front of the Barber house. COURTESY OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

As Clark states in her "Data of the Clock," she was able to keep the Barber clock in the family after the demise of Fred A. Tower (1871–1959), who was the grandson of Joseph Clark (Figure 14).⁸³ By profession, Tower was the town "Republican" postmaster, trading duties with a "Democratic" postmaster, whenever the balance of power shifted in Washington.⁸⁴ Tower was also a trustee of the Concord Museum, a local historian,⁸⁵ and an amateur meteorologist, establishing the Weather Bureau's Concord Station in 1890 and sedulously recording daily climatological observations for over 60 years.⁸⁶ In any event, Tower owned the Barber clock for some 70 years and left his own typewritten notice in 1924 inside the waist door detailing its provenance: "The Old Clock. My grandfather, Joseph Clark, got it from Prescott Barrett, in trade for a cow, about the year 1845. It stood in the old Barrett house on Barrett's Mill Road, Concord at the time that house was searched for arms and ammunition by British troops on the morning of April 19, 1775."



▲ **Figure 13.** Gladys R. Clark. COURTESY OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

It is not uncommon for legends to arise about a family's "grandfather" clock, usually involving a grandiose or picturesque past. At first blush, the Colonel James Barrett story could well seem like the usual family mythologization. However, the received tradition concerning the Barber clock dates back well into the 19th century. It is also corroborated by Abram English Brown (1846–1909), a prolific writer of New England history.⁸⁷ His was an age of intense interest in documenting and preserving the nation's past, and Brown investigated the state of the ancestral Barrett homestead and its contents:

The Barrett house of to-day is very much the same as in 1775. The end door through which the soldiers of the king passed still swings on the time-honored hinges, and the doorstone is the same as when pressed by the feet of the enemy. . . .



◀ **Figure 14.** Fred A. Tower. COURTESY OF THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

After the death of Colonel James Barrett, this farm went to his son Peter, who was twenty years of age at the time of the invasion. He married Mary Prescott of Danvers, and had seven children. During the years of Peter's possession, the farm was mortgaged; and had it not been for another famous patriot the estate would have been lost to the Barrett family. Roger Sherman, the patriot of Connecticut, whose name appears upon the Declaration of Independence, having married a sister of Peter's wife, came to the rescue, and saved the historic estate.

After the death of Peter, in 1808, his son Prescott came into possession. He was born in 1788, married twice, and had ten children, of whom George is the present owner. He represents the seventh generation of the family. The spinning-wheel and flax-wheel which were kept humming in busy preparations for the soldiers are still in the family possession; the pewter tableware from which the soldiers lunched is scattered throughout the families; while Peter's clock, exchanged for neighbor Joseph Clark's cow, is now owned in that family by Mr. Tower.⁸⁸

The story of the horological heirloom was evidently current among Barrett and Clark descendants in the ancestral neighborhood at the time of Brown's inquiry (1890s), but one could well wonder about its verisimilitude, for to modern eyes the clock-for-a-cow exchange does not seem equal. And yet, according to an 1808 inventory of Peter Barrett's estate, he owned an 8-day clock valued at \$30,⁸⁹ while among his "creatures . . . in his pasture," he owned four cows valued at \$101 or about \$25 per beast, and among his "creatures at home on his farm in Concord," he owned seven cows and three calves valued at \$150 or about \$21 per beast.⁹⁰ Thus, the values were roughly approximate at the time, though Prescott Barrett appears now to posterity as belonging to that category of human beings who sell their birthright for a mess of porridge. Fellow townsman Henry Thoreau would not have shared Prescott Barrett's mercantile sensibilities, for it is uncanny (was Thoreau privy to the local scuttlebutt?) to see him, in the very same journal entry in which he mentions crossing paths with Barrett, muse about the charm of "old furniture":

Getting over the wall . . . the other day, I had gone a few rods in the road when I met Prescott Barrett, who observed, "Well, you take a walk round the square sometimes." So little does he know of my habits. I go across lots over his grounds every three or four weeks, but I do not know that I ever walked round the square in my life.

How much more agreeable to sit in the midst of old furniture like [George Prescott] Minott's clock and secretary and looking-glass, which have come down from other generations, than in [sic] that which was just brought from the cabinet-maker's and smells of varnish, like a coffin. To sit under the face of an old clock that has been ticking one hundred and fifty years, —there is something mortal, not to say

immortal, about it! A clock that began to tick when Massachusetts was a province.⁹¹

In any event, the value at which Prescott Barrett's livestock was appraised—significantly higher than the new timepieces mentioned in his probate—would indicate the comparative value of the Barber clock still later in the 19th century: "Williams heifer," \$20; "Derham heifer," \$23; "Crosseyed heifer," \$25; "old black cow," \$30; "Temple cow," \$20; "Lineback cow," \$25; "old Ayrshire cow," \$23; "Comstock cow," \$28; "Shattuck cow," \$30; "Brindle cow," \$25; "Flanders cow," \$23; etc., in addition to a pair of oxen.⁹² Now if Prescott Barrett appears to have been something of a cattle connoisseur, and indeed he was known to have taken part in "ploughing matches,"⁹³ Joseph Clark was not to be outdone as a bovine aficionado in his own right, for he won a prize for the third-best "milch cow" in another competition.⁹⁴ In short, both men took their livestock seriously and it is not unreasonable to believe that the two neighbors would do business in that commodity (Figure 15).

The further one searches back in time, the more elusive the documentation becomes. Curiously, Colonel James Barrett's probate record mentions neither clock nor watch. After his wife's death, his "House Hold Furniture" was to be divided among his daughters, while his remaining "Buildings and Lands" were to go to his youngest son, Peter Barrett.⁹⁵ Clearly, some of Colonel James Barrett's holdings had been disposed of prior to his will, for he had already provided his three older sons with farms.⁹⁶ These transfers of property to his offspring were not always recorded.⁹⁷ And as scholars have shown, there were sometimes "both accidental and deliberate cases of non-reporting" in estates,⁹⁸ for which the reasons varied. As for Colonel James Barrett's personal effects, some important items also went unmentioned in his will.

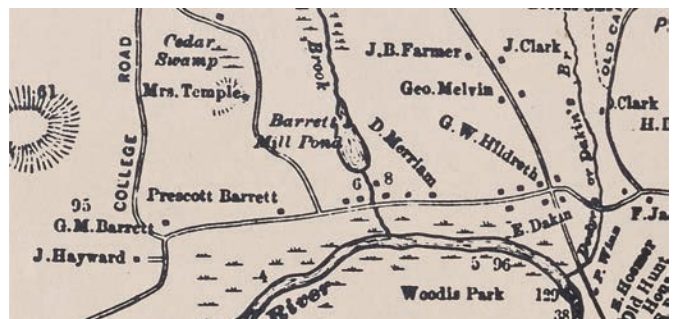


Figure 15. Detail of a map published in 1906 showing locales mentioned by Thoreau in his journals.

For instance, his “broadsword” wound up in the hands of great-great-grandson Edwin S. Barrett (1833–98), who donated it to the Concord Antiquarian Society.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, it is inconceivable that Colonel James Barrett, the veritable “scion of the most prestigious family in town,”¹⁰⁰ did not have a timepiece to regulate his demanding public life as commanding officer of the Third Middlesex Regiment, Concord’s representative to the General Court, and overseer of a 150-acre farm.¹⁰¹ As probate records reveal, a timepiece was *de rigueur* for every other personage of standing in the community at the time.¹⁰²

Concord was a small farming town of some 1,500 souls (or 265 households) on the eve of the Revolution¹⁰³ and did not yet have a clockmaking industry, which only began to flourish in the 1790s.¹⁰⁴ In order to procure a clock movement, Colonel James Barrett could have feasibly turned to the Lexington shop of Nathaniel Mulliken Jr. (1752–76), where, incidentally, Ephraim Barber may have trained. Instead, it appears Barrett looked southward to Marlborough, which was only 15 miles away. There were already well-established trade networks between Concord and Marlborough. In 1755 and 1758, esteemed Concord cabinetmaker Joseph Hosmer (1735–1821) is recorded delivering furniture in Marlborough, where he also fetched himself a spouse.¹⁰⁵ To be sure, Hosmer’s busy shop was the most likely candidate to have made the case for the Barber “Concord” clock in question here, since he was already making cases for the Mullikens.¹⁰⁶ The intrinsic evidence of the clock itself indicates that it was made pre-Revolution. As mentioned earlier, there is a similarity in the facial-profile motif found on the upper-corner spandrels on some Benjamin Willard dials dating to the early 1770s. The most telling feature, however, is the rocking ship in the upper arch that is flying a British Red Ensign, which was widely used on colonial and British merchant ships during the colonial period (Figure 16).¹⁰⁷ Suffice it to say, neither Barber nor Colonel James Barrett—two of the most unassailable of unassailable patriots—would have countenanced British insignia in any form after the Revolution.

The evidence may be deemed circumstantial, but it does point to the Barber clock standing in the Colonel James Barrett house on April 19, 1775: (1) the clock dates back to the early 1770s; (2) it has a documented northwest-Concord provenance from a time when serious research about the nation’s past was beginning to be conducted; and (3) both Barrett and Clark descendants corroborated,



Figure 16. Arch of the Ephraim Barber tall clock. COURTESY OF BONHAMS SKINNER.



Figure 17. Sketch of the Colonel James House drawn in 1851, when it was occupied by Prescott Barrett, from Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855), 526.

or least did not deny, the published reports of the cow-for-a-clock exchange between Prescott Barrett and Joseph Clark. It is thus permitted to believe that the Barber clock was indeed an “eyewitness” to the dramatic events at the start of the American Revolution (Figure 17). These included the British presenting their orders to Mrs. James Barrett to search her house “from top to bottom,” their subsequent demand to be supplied with refreshments, compensating her by casting coins into her lap, at which she reportedly quipped: “This is the price of blood.” They then began to rough up her son Stephen, denouncing him as a “rebel,” but abruptly withdrew “when the firing at the bridge was heard.”¹⁰⁸

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Bob Frishman, ever the Virgil to his Dante, as well as Erin LaSorsa of Domicile New England, Bob Kane of the Marlborough Historical Society, John A. Delaney of Delaney Clocks, Don N. Hagist, and the Concord Free Public Library for their assistance in composing this article. All infelicities are his own.

Notes and References

1. From Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Concord Hymn" (1837), referring to the initial volley of fire at the Old North Bridge in Concord, where the first British soldiers fell: "By the rude bridge that arched the flood, / Their flag to April's breeze unfurled, / Here once the embattled farmers stood, / And fired the shot heard round the world."
2. On the founding of the Concord Museum, derived from Cummings Davis's 19th-century collection that was focused on associations with local historical events, see Jeanne Schinto, "Into Your Hands," *Maine Antique Digest* 38, no. 7 (July 2010): 18B–19B.
3. Still, musket balls, cartridges, and flints were concealed in casks and covered with feathers in the attic of the Barrett house, and several canons were buried in the rear of the house, yet these were not discovered.
4. *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 79 (October 1925), 339.
5. William S. Tilden, *History of the Town of Medfield, Massachusetts* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1887), 314.
6. *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 79 (October 1925), 339.
7. Hannah Rice and John Barber married on October 20, 1735. See *Vital Records of Sudbury, Massachusetts to the Year 1850, Volume 1 Marriages* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1903), 258.
8. George Sheldon, "Journal of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's Company, Shirley's Expedition, 1754; Letter from John Barber in Shirley's Expedition of 1755; and Muster-Roll of Capt. Paul Brigham's Company, 1775-77," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 27, no. 3 (July 1873), 281–89.
9. As family tradition would have it, for there is no independent evidence. See J. H. Temple and George Sheldon, *The History of Northfield* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1875), 400.
10. Hannah Barber eventually remarried, in 1762, to Deacon Adams Stone (1690–1772) of East Sudbury, now Wayland. See J. Gardner Bartlett, *Simon Stone Genealogy* (Boston: Published for the Stone Family, 1926), 83–84.
11. Sheldon, "Journal of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's Company," 281.
12. See Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Marlborough* (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin & Son, 1862), 254–56.
13. "Marlborough is one of the best agricultural towns in the county." John Warner Barber, *Massachusetts Historical Collections* (Worcester, MA: Dorr, Howland & Co., 1839), 412.
14. See *Middlesex County Register of Deeds*, 73:512–13. Barber bought the property from tanner Francis Dana (1737–1813), who subsequently removed to New Hampshire. See Elizabeth Ellery Dana et al., *The Dana Family in America* (Cambridge, MA: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1956), 228, 249–53.
15. I owe this insight to John A. Delaney.
16. As evidenced by a series of ads appearing in the *Boston Evening Post*: "Benjamin Willard, Clock-Maker of Grafton, Hereby informs the Public, that he has removed to Lexington, to the Shop of Mr. Nath. Mulliken deceased; and Gentlemen that had dependance on him for taking Care of their Clocks, may still have the same Care taken by employing said Willard in Lexington" (October 17, 1768, 3; October 24, 1768, 4; October 31, 1768, 4). See also John Ware Willard, *A History of Simon Willard, Inventor and Clockmaker* (Boston: Printed by E. O. Cockayne, 1911), 77–78 and Paul J. Foley, *Willard's Patent Time Pieces* (Norwell, MA: Roxbury Village Publishing, 2002), 2.
17. Ella A. Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences or the Early Times in Marlborough, Massachusetts* (Marlborough, MA: Times Publishing Co., 1910), 146.
18. See Felicia Johnson Deyrup, *Arms Makers of the Connecticut Valley* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Co., 1948), 36–38; and Arcadi Gluckman and L. D. Satterlee, *American Gun Makers* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Co., 1953).
19. *Particular or Sub-division List of Dwelling Houses... in the Town of Marlborough in the County of Middlesex, Assessment District No. 10 in the Fifth Division of Massachusetts, Owned, Possessed, or Occupied on the 1st Day of October 1798*.
20. *Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Co., 1896), 586. Another document dated from Dorchester, January 5, 1776, and titled "A Return of the Names of the Commissioned Officers in Colonel J. Ward's Regiment in the New Establishment in the Service of the United Colonies" lists Ephraim Barber as an "Ensign."
21. Quoted in John C. Dan, *The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the War for Independence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1–2.
22. Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 180.
23. Sheldon, "Journal of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's Company," 286.
24. Quoted in Dan, *The Revolution Remembered*, 3–4.
25. Quoted in Dan, *The Revolution Remembered*, 6.
26. Beginning in 1761, a number of persons from Westborough and Marlborough, MA, had obtained an interest in the new township. See Charles A. Bemis, *History of the Town of Marlborough, Cheshire County, N.H.* (Boston: Press of George H. Ellis, 1881), 16.
27. Elroy Wilson Titus, *A History of the Titus and Related Families*, vol. 3 (Columbus, OH: Capital City Press, 1984), 1,159.
28. *Vital Records of Wayland, Massachusetts to the Year 1850, Volume 1 Marriages* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1910), 52, 63.
29. See Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Marlborough*, 312. See also *Vital Records of Marlborough, Massachusetts to the Year 1849* (Worcester, MA: Franklin R. Rice, 1908), 17.
30. Sheldon, "Journal of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's Company," 281.
31. Sheldon, "Journal of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's Company," 281. The grandson was Jonathan Augustus Barber (1831–1901), a Northfield "storekeeper and miller" (Temple and Sheldon, *The History of Northfield*, 401). He spent his final days in Louisville, KY, and it is by no means clear what became of the hereditary clock.
32. Cyrus Felton, *A Record of Remarkable Events in Marlborough and Vicinity* (Marlborough, MA: Stillman B. Pratt, 1879), 19.
33. Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 146–47.

34. Benjamin Albert Botkin, *A Treasury of New England Folklore: Stories, Ballads, and Traditions of the Yankee People* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), 205. For whatever reason, the Ephraim Barber story was jettisoned in later editions of Botkin's compendium.
35. Cited in Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 460. An Ephraim Barber clock was known to still be in the Joseph Brigham homestead in 1910. See Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 46.
36. *The Collection of the Late William Whiting Nolen of Cambridge, Mass.* (New York: The Anderson Galleries, 1923), 127.
37. "Deny Padding Nolen List with Antiques Not His," *Boston Herald*, November 1, 1923, 3. The anonymous poem has been found in a great many tall clocks and has been widely reported. See, for instance, *NAWCC Bulletin*, 39, no. 309 (August 1997): 447. It was first reported inscribed on a centenary clock made by "Tobias & Co., Liverpool and London," *Rochester Daily American*, December 11, 1854, 2.
38. "Architectural elements salvaged from several old dismantled houses in Danville were used where necessary. The window sashes were custom made from old designs by a Vermont artisan, and were glazed with old panes of glass from a tavern in East Haverhill, MA. The siding and shingles are, of course, not original, but old, wide boards were used for the siding, and wide, roughhewn shingles, common to the period, were used for roofing. The brick and stone work, again is not original, but old, narrow bricks salvaged from a dismantled cape 'up the road' were used for the fireplace in the keeping room" ("The Barber-Vlasuk House," *Heritage Commission Articles*, Town of Danville, NH).
39. "Clerk Records 1778–1785," kept by Peter Wood, and consulted through the Congregational Library website, <https://www.congregationallibrary.org>.
40. "Clerk Records 1778–1785."
41. The baptisms of Jonathan and Elizabeth Barber are recorded in "Church Records 1704–1802" and were consulted through the Congregational Library website, <https://www.congregationallibrary.org>.
42. See Edward F. Hayward, *History of the Second Parish Church (Unitarian) Marlborough, Massachusetts* (Marlborough, MA: Printed for the Parish, 1906), 14–15.
43. *Private and Special Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from February 1806 to February 1814*, vol. 4 (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1823), 135.
44. See Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 253.
45. See Hayward, *History of the Second Parish Church (Unitarian) Marlborough*, 28–29.
46. See Barber's land purchase dated March 1783, *Middlesex County Register of Deeds*, 83:507-8. See also *Middlesex County Register of Deeds*, 91.477; 91.478; 204.212–15; 195.370–71. In a 1789 deed, he happens to be dubbed both "clockmaker and gentleman," *Middlesex County Register of Deeds*, 155.173–75.
47. Deborah How, *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1796, 12000: 1–11; Mary How, *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1801, 12079: 1–15.
48. See Daniel Wait Howe, *Howe Genealogies* (Haverhill, MA: Record Publishing Company, 1929), 32.
49. Ephraim How, *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1801, 12017: 1–22.
50. On this figure, see How, *Howe Genealogies*, 143–44.
51. *Independent Chronicle*, August 25, 1796, 3; *Columbian Centinel*, October 3, 1801, 3; *Columbian Centinel*, October 17, 1801, 4.
52. Hudson, *History of the Town of Marlborough*, 284, 312; D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1890), 846. Curiously, both these sources only mention Ephraim Barber's last two years of service. Yet newspaper accounts clearly show he was first elected in 1808 and then reelected in 1809: *New-England Palladium*, May 13, 1808, 1; *Columbian Centinel*, May 6, 1809, 2.
53. See *Norfolk Repository*, June 28, 1808, 267.
54. See Philip J. Lampi, "The Federalist Party Resurgence, 1808–1816: Evidence from the New Nation Votes Database," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 33, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 259.
55. *Independent Chronicle*, June 13, 1808, 1; *Boston Courier*, June 16, 1808, 1; *Republican Watch-Tower*, June 17, 1808, 1; *Democratic Press*, June 18, 1808, 2; *Pittsfield Sun*, August 27, 1808, 1.
56. *The Yankee*, November 28, 1817, 3; *Independent Chronicle & Boston Patriot*, November 29, 1817, 2.
57. Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 146.
58. Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 167.
59. Botkin, *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, 205–6.
60. Botkin's source is Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 146.
61. Franklin P. Rice, *Marlborough, Massachusetts Burial Ground Inscriptions* (Worcester, MA: Franklin P. Rice, 1908), 183.
62. Warren Hapgood, *The Hapgood Family* (Boston: Published by the Compiler, 1896), 219. Elizabeth left a poignant tribute on Nathaniel's gravestone, marked by Christian stoicism: "He's gone and left me here below,/To mourn his loss with grief and woe,/But God is just may I be still,/Since 'tis my heavenly Father's will" (Franklin P. Rice, *Marlborough, Massachusetts Burial Ground Inscriptions*, 106).
63. *New-England Palladium & Commercial Advertiser*, December 3, 1816, 2. See also *Columbian Centinel*, December 4, 1816, 2; *Independent Chronicle*, December 5, 1816, 3; *Newburyport Herald*, December 6, 1816, 3; *Salem Gazette*, December 6, 1816, 3; *Bangor Weekly Register*, December 21, 1816, 3.
64. *New England Galaxy & Masonic Magazine*, November 28, 1817; *Essex Register*, November 29, 1817, 3; *Boston Recorder*, December 2, 1817, 20, 5; *Weekly Messenger*, December 4, 1817.
65. *Boston Daily Advertiser*, November 22, 1817, 2; *The Repertory*, November 22, 1817, 2; *Weekly Messenger*, November 27, 1817, 111.
66. Temple and Sheldon, *The History of Northfield*, 400.
67. Following Ephraim Barber's death, there was a flurry of land transactions among surviving family members: see *Middlesex County Register of Deeds*, 260.93–100.
68. *Vital Records of Bolton, Massachusetts to the end of the year 1849* (Worcester: Franklin P. Rice, 1910), 109, 137. As a young

- girl, Asenath Holman apparently left to posterity two samplers of note, now at the Leominster Public Library; see Ethel Standwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, *American Samplers* (Boston: The Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1921), 174.
69. Cyrus Felton, *A Record of Remarkable Events, in Marlborough and Neighboring Towns*, no. 2 (Marlborough, MA: The Times Publishing Co., 1880), 28.
 70. Death notices mentioned that William Barber was an "engraver": *Massachusetts Spy*, September 14, 1825, 3.
 71. *Independent Chronicle & Boston Patriot*, November 30, 1825, 4.
 72. *Massachusetts Spy*, June 7, 1826, 3.
 73. William Barber, Middlesex County Probate Records, 1826, 1022:10. Eli Rice (1799–1851) served the town in many capacities: a company captain, West Church deacon, Justice of the Peace, and Representative to the General Court; see Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Marlborough*, 440. Rice is also cited among those men of his time who "earnestly sought the best interests of the town" (Bigelow, *Historical Reminiscences*, 188).
 74. See *Massachusetts Spy*, August 30, 1826, 3; *Massachusetts Spy* August 23, 1826, 3; *Massachusetts Spy*, September 9, 1826, 1.
 75. *Eighth Annual Report of the Marlborough City Government for the Year 1898* (Marlborough, MA: Times Publishing Company, 1899), 74.
 76. It is absent from Franklin P. Rice's *Marlborough, Massachusetts Burial Ground Inscriptions*.
 77. See "Richard Spaulding, Spaulding & Co. Offices, Concord Farms, 490 Virginia Road," Concord Oral History Program, Concord [MA] Free Public Library, <https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/oral-history/spaulding>.
 78. Renee Garrelick, *Concord in the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars* (Concord: The Town of Concord, 1985), 6. Several recordings of Gladys Clark can be found in "The Renée Garrelick Oral History Program Collection," see <https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/oral-history/#C>.
 79. See Marcia Moss, *A Catalog of Thoreau's Surveys in the Concord Free Public Library* (Geneseo, NY: The Thoreau Society, 1976), 6. Thoreau also mentions Daniel B. Clark in his journals: *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 10, August 8, 1857–June 29, 1858, ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1906), 41.
 80. A photocopy of the diary containing entries for April 6, 1847, to April 16, 1851, is found at the Concord Free Public Library. It is the entry for September 3, 1849, that records the moving of Thoreau's cabin.
 81. See Walter Harding, *The Days of Thoreau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 224. On the fate of the Walden hut, see also Stephen F. Ells, "Henry Thoreau and the Estabrook Country: A Historic and Personal Landscape," *The Concord Saunterer*, New Series, vol. 4 (Fall 1996): 145–47.
 82. Daniel B. Clark records in his diary plowing for his uncle. See entries for Saturday, October 26 and 27, 1850: "held plow for Uncle Joseph Clark."
 83. Fred A. Tower's parents were Alonzo Tower (1837–1905) and Tryphena Clark (1834–1929).
 84. See Garrelick, *Concord in the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars*, 12.
 85. Tower wrote *A History of Trinity Church 1884–1962*. The work was completed by Marion Blackall Miller and published in 1972. Tower was also an amateur photographer, leaving many early images of the town between 1885 and 1905; see the "Tower Collection of Glass Plate Negative Images of Concord, Mass." at the Concord Free Public Library. On Tower's photographic contribution to Concord's history, see also Sarah Chapin et al., *Concord: Then & Now* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 8.
 86. The records left by Tower consist of some 12 linear feet of material; see https://concordlibrary.org/special-collections/fin_aids/usweatherfredtower. In the devastating hurricane of 1938, Tower reported the last measure of his wind gauge at 125 miles per hour when it was carried away. See Garrelick, *Concord in the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars*, 188.
 87. Among the feathers in Brown's cap are the *History of the Town of Bedford* (1890), *Governor Winthrop's Farm* (1892), *John Hancock, His Book* (1898), and *Faneuil Hall and Faneuil Hall Market* (1900). Brown also served for a time in the Massachusetts legislature. See his obituary in the *Springfield Republican*, February 21, 1909, 12.
 88. Abram English Brown, *Beneath Old Roof Trees* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1896), 116–17.
 89. *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1808, 1256:8.
 90. *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1808, 1256:10.
 91. *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1861, 26987:10.
 92. *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 10 (August 8, 1857–June 29, 1858), 58–59. George Prescott Minott (1783–1861) was a lifelong Concord resident and one of Thoreau's favorite interlocutors. Joseph Clark also makes a brief appearance in Thoreau's journals: see *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 8 (November 1, 1855–August 15, 1856), ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1906), 35.
 93. *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1861, 26987:11.
 94. *The New England Farmer*, November 4, 1825, vol. 4, no. 15, 114; October 22, 1834, vol. 14, no. 15, 117.
 95. *The New England Farmer*, October 14, 1825, vol. 4, no. 12, 92.
 96. *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1779, 1194:17–18. 100. See Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 81.
 97. Colonel James Barrett's gift of a farm to third son Stephen (1750–1824) is not recorded in the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. It is gleaned from the fact that he bought a farm in 1775 three months before Stephen's marriage. As Gross writes, "Such omissions were common (and most annoying for later historians)," *The Minutemen and Their World*, 225.
 98. Anna L. Hawley, "The Meaning of Absence: Household Inventories in Surry County, Virginia, 1690-1715," in *Early American Probate Inventories*, ed. Peter Benes, vol. XII of *Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1989), 24.

99. Hazel E. Cummins, *Handbook: Concord Antiquarian Society* (Portland, ME: The Southworth-Anthoensen Press, 1937), 17. Edwin S. Barret was also a veteran of the Civil War and authored *What I Saw at Bull Run* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1886).
100. See Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 76.
101. See Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 40, 69–70, 81–82.
102. Barrett's brother, Deacon Thomas Barrett (1707–79), gave his son Amos his clock, although the value is not indicated (*Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1273:3); town clerk Ephraim Wood (1733–1814) had an 8-day clock valued at \$30 (*Middlesex County Probate Records*, 25434:16); Dr. Timothy Minot (1726–1801) had an 8-day clock valued at \$45 (*Middlesex County Probate Records*, 15249:10); and Dr. Abel Prescott (1718–1805) had a gold watch valued at \$45 and a clock at \$20 (*Middlesex County Probate Records*, 18041:11–12).
103. See Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 3.
104. Joseph Mulliken (1765–1802) was at work in Concord in 1791, followed by brothers Daniel Munroe Jr. (1775–1859) and Nathaniel Munroe (1777–1861) who were at work in Concord in 1796 and 1798, respectively. See *Clockmakers of Concord, Massachusetts As Gathered at the Concord Antiquarian Museum, 17 April to 25 May 1966, 150th Anniversary of the Girandole* (Concord, MA: Concord Antiquarian Society, 1966), 1.

105. See Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 99–100. See also Josephine Hosmer, "Memoir of Joseph Hosmer," in *The Centennial of the Social Circle in Concord, March 21, 1882* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1882), 114–19.
106. Hosmer is listed as a creditor in Nathaniel Mulliken Sr.'s estate and thus likely made clock cases for him; *Middlesex County Probate Records*, 1767, 15647:18.
107. I owe this insignia information to Don N. Hagist, managing editor of *Journal of the American Revolution*. The initial Skinner's-Bonham condition report of the Ephraim Barber clock cautioned that the rocking ship might be an "add-on." However, the movement was carefully examined by Bob Frishman, who determined that the rocking ship was original and integral to the movement.
108. These recollections are based on Lemuel Shattuck's interview of daughter-in-law Mary Prescott Barrett in 1831: *A History of the Town of Concord* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Co., 1835), 109.

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