

JOSEPH WARE AND HIS JOURNAL: AN HISTORICAL TREASURE

By

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The original Joseph Ware journal is an important record of the 1775 expedition to take Quebec led by Col. Benedict Arnold. The Ware journal was one of four collaborative journals from the Captain Samuel Ward Company that are virtually identical in their entries.¹ The four collaborative journals contain a very important piece of evidence regarding the attack on Quebec on the night of December 31, 1775, which is a listing of the men who were wounded, killed or taken prisoner from each company in the assault. This list is only found in the collaborative journals and is critical in determining what happened to the men in each of the companies that participated in the assault.

The original manuscript of the Ware journal is located in the manuscript collections of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.² It is a rare and significant manuscript document. Unfortunately, the journal is not in good condition with only half of the first two pages still present and the entire journal being ripped in half. Its condition is so endangered that in order to preserve it from further deterioration the Society no longer allows it to be examined or read. The Library of Congress has a handwritten copy of the Ware journal on microfilm, copied by Peter Force, located in the Peter Force Papers.³

Because the journal is an important record of the expedition to Quebec, it is important to understand who the author was and what we know about his life. Joseph Ware was born in Needham, Massachusetts on October 15, 1753. His father, Josiah, was a farmer and was chosen as a selectman of Needham in 1773. Joseph was also a farmer until the start of the Revolutionary War. Ware enlisted for seven days in a company from Needham that marched to Cambridge on April 19th in response to the Lexington Alarm. He then apparently enlisted in Captain Whitney's Company of Heath's regiment on May 1, 1775, although there is an entry showing that Joseph Ware enlisted in Captain Worthy's Company of Phinney's Regiment on May 8, 1775. There is no explanation of this inconsistency unless there are two men with the same name, which is common in the ranks of Revolutionary War soldiers.

Ware joined Arnold's expedition and served in Captain Samuel Ward's company. There is some indication that he was the clerk of the company. He was captured during the attack on Quebec and was released at the same time as Tolman and the other privates in Arnold's command in August of 1776. Ware then appears on the rolls in Captain Peter Pitts Company as of November 5, 1778. There is a Joseph Ware who was a sergeant in Captain James Tisdale's Company, 3rd Massachusetts Regiment on April 23, 1782. In the History of Wellesley, Mass., it states that the Joseph Ware who authored the journal was an orderly sergeant and recruiting officer during his service in the Revolution. Assuming the name on the muster rolls is the same Joseph Ware, he enlisted right after Lexington and served to 1782. Ware married Esther Smith on June 1, 1780 and they had seven children. There is no record as to Joseph Ware's occupation following the war and there is no record of any participation in any public service. Joseph Ware died on November 12, 1805 at the age of fifty-two and is buried in Needham.⁴

THE WARE AND TOLMAN JOURNALS AND CLAIMS TO ORIGINAL AUTHENTICITY

Competing claims to original authenticity between the Joseph Ware and Ebenezer Tolman journals, which are two of the four collaborative records of the march to Quebec, started in 1852 when the New England Historical and Genealogical Register (NEHGR) first published the complete text of the journal by Joseph Ware.⁵ The transcriber of the journal was William B. Trask, who was given the Ware journal by a grandson of the author, also named Joseph Ware.

When the 1852 issue of the Register containing the Ware journal came out, it was read by John Goodwin Locke, who was a resident member of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, living in Lowell, Massachusetts. At that time, Locke was working on his comprehensive history of the Locke family, which he subsequently published in 1853. Based on his extensive research on the Locke family, of which the Tolman family was a member by marriage, Locke realized the Ware journal was identical to another journal he had been

examining. Ebenezer Tolman, one of Locke's ancestors, wrote this journal. Tolman's son, William Tolman of Watertown, New York, gave the journal to Locke.

Because of his knowledge of the Tolman journal, Locke was convinced that the NEHGR had made a serious mistake. He therefore wrote a letter to William Tolman requesting a copy of the entire Tolman journal so he could compare it to Ware's journal. Locke did a comparison and found them to be identical. At that point, he was even more convinced that the Ware journal was a copy of the Tolman original.

Locke invited both William B. Trask, a long time member of the Society, and John Ward Dean, a former editor of the NEHGR and a well known historical researcher and writer, to visit his office with the Ware manuscript. There the three men examined Locke's copy of the Tolman manuscript and compared it with the Ware journal that Trask had recently transcribed.

Dean's Statement

In a note published in *The American Genealogist* in 1868, John Ward Dean gives the following statement regarding his meeting with Trask and Locke.

In the year 1852, I examined, with Messrs. Locke and Trask, the two manuscripts of this journal, referred to by Mr. Locke. Mr. Trask thought, as I did, that the manuscripts were in different handwritings. As for myself, I had little doubt of it ... My impression at the time was that Mr. Ware, who was clerk of his company, kept the journal, but that during their mutual captivity, Mr. Tolman copied what Mr. Ware had written, and continued it as his individual journal ... A grandson of Mr. Ware, who was familiar with his writing, asserted that the manuscript, from which the above work [meaning the Ware journal] was printed, was in his grandfather's handwriting, and that he had always heard it spoken of as his grandfather's journal. Mr. Locke asserts that a son of Ebenezer Tolman's is equally sure that his father kept the journal. The authorship must therefore remain in doubt, unless some other evidence is produced.⁶

Locke's Statement

In Appendix H of his book on the Locke family, John Goodwin Locke provides the following information on the Tolman journal.

I have been furnished by Mr. William Tolman, of Watertown, N.Y. with a portion of a Journal, a part having been lost, which he alleges was 'kept' by his father, Ebenezer Tolman, who was a member of the same company to which Mr. Ware belonged. A comparison of this journal with what is called the original of Mr. Ware, establishes the fact that one is a copy of the other, or that both were copies of some other ... two sons and two daughters of Mr. Tolman now living, all unite in saying that they have, time and again, heard their father speak of his journal as one that he 'kept' on the march and while in prison, and that they have no doubt that it is in his handwriting ... Mr. Tolman and Mr. Ware had frequent intercourse after the war, and the former may have furnished the latter with a copy of the journal.⁷

Justin Smith's Conclusions

Arnold expedition historian Justin Smith evaluated both journals on the evidence that he had available and his comments are as follows:

In the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* for 1852, there appeared a journal ... represented as the composition of Joseph Ware, of Needham, Mass.; and it has been so attributed ever since. Just why there was so much confidence about this does not appear, for according to Mr. Winsor's notes it bore no indication of source except the words "Joseph Ware his book". If this is enough to prove authorship, what must be the number of schoolboys wickedly robbed of their copyright dues on Webster's Spelling Book.

The simple fact is that Joseph Ware of Needham cannot have written the journal, for he did not belong to Arnold's army. The Massachusetts archives contain a roll dated Cambridge, October 5, 1775, which reports him

as a corporal in Whiting's company of Heath's regiment that day. There was, however, a Joseph Ware in Ward's company of Arnold's army, for the name is down in both our lists of the prisoners of December 31st. But this is all the information that we have. Although several Joseph Ware's appear on the Massachusetts rolls, no one by that name is reported as 'gone to Quebec,' the usual formula, and we must conclude that this was somebody who enlisted specially for the Canada campaign, and cannot be identified...⁸

Based on the evidence he reviewed, Justin Smith concluded that Tolman was the original author of the journal for two reasons. First, he finds no evidence to support that Joseph Ware of Needham was actually on the expedition. Second, since Ware was not on the expedition, he finds the arguments made by Locke compelling. The most compelling of the arguments for Smith is the statement by Tolman's son, William Tolman of Watertown, NY, that the journal Locke examined in 1852 was the journal kept by his father on the expedition.

WAS JOSEPH WARE ON THE EXPEDITION?

Smith's conclusions regarding Tolman being the original author and Ware not being on the expedition do not hold up under careful scrutiny. There are additional factors supporting Ware being the author of a journal that Smith did not consider. A key argument Smith makes against the Ware journal that merits further examination is his claim that Joseph Ware from Needham, Mass. was not part of the Arnold expedition. To explore this point further, any available documentation that supports Ware being present on the expedition needs to be considered. There are three source documents that should be considered and evaluated regarding Ware's participation. Two sources that are not helpful in this regard are the Ware family genealogies and local histories.⁹

The following sources provide a clear answer to the question of Ware's presence on the expedition.

1. Unit Muster Roll. Smith cited one muster roll from October of 1775 which does list Joseph Ware as a private in the Whiting Company, but that company was not on the Arnold expedition. Smith correctly says that there are others on this roll that have a notation next to their name stating "went to Quebec." However, his conclusion that Ware was not on the expedition because he does not have such a notation is evidence of omission but does not prove his point. It is contradicted by other information presented below that does support Ware being on the expedition. There is no persuasive evidence from the muster rolls that Joseph Ware of Needham was on the Quebec expedition. In fact, the existing muster rolls only add to the confusion about Ware's presence rather than to help resolve it.

2. Pension Applications. There are two relevant pension applications which confirm that Joseph Ware wrote a journal of the Quebec expedition. No such pension applications make the same case for the Tolman journal whose only claim to original authenticity rests with the Tolman family. These two relevant first-hand accounts should put this matter to rest.

First, is the pension application of Oliver Edward's heirs in 1845, which includes a deposition by Elijah Clark of Brighton, Massachusetts. It states he has "an original manuscript which has ever been known by available witnesses to be the handwriting of Joseph Ware of Needham ... and that I received the same in the form and situation which it now is, of Mrs. Shepard, a daughter of the aforesaid Joseph Ware, and the manuscript commences as follows: 'Joseph Ware his Book. A Journal of a March from Cambridge ...'" The statement goes on to state that the manuscript is "beyond doubt a genuine original true account." The list of prisoners in the Ware journal contains the name of Oliver Edwards, which is why the journal was referred to in the application.¹⁰

Second, and even more significant, is a pension application for Joseph Thomas, a 2nd Lieutenant in Samuel Ward's company, containing a deposition made by Ebenezer Homer of Boston in 1809, which has the following language: "I have in my possession an original written document, entitled 'A Journal of a March from Cambridge on an expedition against Quebec in Colonel Benedict Arnold's Detachment September 13th 1775, kept by Joseph Ware, a private in Captain Samuel Ward's Company in the aforesaid Detachment.' That said journal contains forty four pages, that in said Journal there are lists of Officers and Men, killed, wounded and taken prisoners at Quebec on the 31st of December, 1775 ... I further certify that I have no doubt that the Journal aforesaid is the true and genuine document which it purports to be." This application was even closer in time to the actual event than the other pension application so it must be considered as a credible source.¹¹

3. Quebec Prisoner Lists. There is a relevant prisoner list which is entitled *Return of Rebel Prisoners taken at Quebec, December 31, 1775*. The handwritten cover sheet says that the list was found in Sir Guy Carleton's papers, dated 10th August 1776. This document provides a comprehensive list of the American prisoners who were captured in the attack and were being held in Quebec.¹²

There is a "Joseph Wire" on that Return who is listed as being from Captain Ward's Company. He is 22 years of age and is from Massachusetts. It is easy to see how the spelling of the name Ware could turn into Wire based on the way the name sounded to the person making out the return. Justin Smith agrees with this point. It is also true that there is no member of Captain Ward's company with a name that is similar to Ware. The entry on Quebec prisoner's role is a spelling mistake, hence proof that there was a Joseph Ware being held prisoner in Quebec.

Smith claims that the name on the list of prisoners was another Joseph Ware, but not the one from Needham. However, there is no evidence to support Smith's contention. The comprehensive list of the 1125 men that were on the Arnold expedition, contained in this author's new book¹³, confirms that there was only one Joseph Ware and no Joseph Wire on the expedition. If Smith knew of evidence of another Joseph Ware, he did not share any sources for that information.

CONCLUSION ABOUT THE WARE JOURNAL

Although documentation that Tolman was on the Quebec expedition is clear, there is sufficient documentation to confirm that Ware was also on the expedition and wrote a journal. Justin Smith's contention that Ware did not go to Quebec is incorrect and his contention that Tolman's journal is the original is also wrong. For the reasons stated above, Ware has the better case.

END NOTES

¹ The four journals are written by the following members of the Ward Company: Joseph Ware of Needham, MA, Ebenezer Tolman of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, William Dorr of Roxbury, MA and Ebenezer Wild of Braintree, MA. Because the journals are identical, it is obvious that some of them are copies and that only one could be an original. Wild was not on the expedition and did not write a journal. Dorr has never been identified by anyone as the original author. The question of who wrote the original journal is between Ware and Tolman.

² Mss C 2034

³ Archival Manuscript Material (Collection). Papers and Collection of Peter Force. 0314B FORCE: Series 7E: entry 157.

⁴ The Ware genealogy is found at the end of the Trask article in the NEHGR regarding the Ware journal.

Information on the Ware family is also found in the two town histories cited in End Note # 9.

⁵ NEHGR, Vol. VI. Boston: April, 1852: 129-150.

⁶ William H. Whitmore. *American Genealogist*. Albany: Joel Munsell, 1868, footnote, 84.

⁷ John Goodwin Locke. *Book of Lockes*, 323.

⁸ Justin Smith, 45-48

⁹ The local histories are: George Kuhn Clark. *History of Needham Massachusetts, 1711-1911*. Needham: George K. Clark, 1912: 484-485; Joseph E. Fiske. *History of Wellesley, Mass.* Boston: Pilgrims Press, 1917: 43.

¹⁰ Oliver Edwards Pension Application. National Records and Archives Administration, M804, Record Group 15. Records of the Veterans Administration. See also www.footnote.com.

¹¹ Joseph Thomas Pension Application. See above.

¹² Return of Rebel Prisoners Taken at Quebec, Dec'r 31, 1775. British Archives, Colonial Office, 42/35, 139-143.

¹³ Stephen Darley. *Voices from a Wilderness Expedition: The Journals and Men of Benedict Arnold's Expedition to Quebec in 1775*. Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2011, Appendix II.