



## Guide to the Timothy Bedel Papers, 1763-1787

### Administrative Information

**Title and Dates:**

Timothy Bedel Papers, 1763-1787, bulk 1771-1785

**Repository:**

New Hampshire Historical Society

30 Park Street

Concord, NH 03301

603-228-6688

<http://www.nhhistory.org/>

**Collection Number:**

1880.001

**Author of Finding Aid:**

Unknown; rewritten and formatted by Sandra L. Wheeler

**Creator:**

Timothy Bedel, 1740?-1787

**Language:**

The materials in this collection are in English.

**Extent:**

One box; 12 folders; approximately 250 items

**Abstract:**

The Timothy Bedel Papers contain correspondence, accounts, commissions, deeds and an inventory of his estate. Bedel was active in the Revolutionary War and the bulk of the papers relate to that service, during which he led a NH regiment in an expedition into Canada. They concern military affairs, supplies, pay and muster rolls, etc.

## Access and Use

### **Acquisition Information and Provenance:**

Gift of Mrs. Mary Bedel of Bath, NH in 1880.

### **Processing Information:**

This collection was processed by an unknown person at an unknown date. The finding aid was written by an unknown person at an unknown date but rewritten and formatted by Sandra L. Wheeler in April, 2014. This finding aid follows the standards set-forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

### **Access Restrictions:**

Available for research.

### **Location:**

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

### **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:**

This collection is on paper but has also been microfilmed. A microfilm reader, available in the New Hampshire Historical Society Reading Room, is required to view microfilmed collection.

### **Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:**

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### **Preferred Citation:**

Timothy Bedel Papers, 1880.001. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

## Collection Overview

### **Biographical Information**

Little is known about the origins or youth of Timothy Bedel. Neither the place nor the year of his birth has been definitely established, but the most likely possibility is that he was born around 1740 in either Haverhill, MA, or Salem, NH. If he was born in Haverhill, he moved to Salem sometime during his youth for his name appears on the tax list for that town in 1757 and 1759.

Beginning in 1760, there is a record of Bedel's participation in the French and Indian War. In that year, he took part in the British siege of Montreal and, on his return home, passed through the upper Connecticut River Valley. He settled there a few years later. In 1762, he received a commission as captain in the British colonial forces under

the command of Lord Geoffrey Amherst and, in the same year, traveled with the Royal Provincials to Havana where he participated in the siege of that city.

In 1763, with the war over, Bedel moved his family to Haverhill, NH, founded just two years earlier. At this time, the entire northern portion of the Connecticut River Valley was in its infant stages of settlement. As an early settler in the region, Bedel was a grantee of Haverhill and Bath, NH, as well as Newbury, Haverhill's sister-city across the river in the territory that later became Vermont.

Bedel was active in the civic affairs of the region from the time he arrived. He lived in Haverhill for the first six years, moved to Bath in 1769 where he stayed until 1775, when he returned to Haverhill. He did not achieve more than local prominence until the outbreak of the American Revolution. In 1775, when hostilities erupted, he was a representative from the town of Bath to the Provincial Congress of New Hampshire at Exeter, NH. On June 6, 1775, the provincial Congress commissioned him as a colonel of rangers.

In September 1775, Bedel marched his three companies of rangers to Canada where, under the command of Gen. Montgomery, he participated in the siege of St. John's. After St. John's was taken, Bedel went on to Montreal. However, he did not take part in the attack on Quebec, returning home instead to raise more men. In January 1776, he raised eight companies, received commissions as colonel of a regiment from both the New Hampshire provincial congress and the Continental Congress, and rejoined the Northern Continental Army in Canada. He was given command at the Cedars, a military post forty-three miles above Quebec.

In May, while Bedel was away, the Cedars was unnecessarily surrendered to a party of British regulars, Canadians and Indians by his second-in-command, Major Isaac Butterfield. The surrender was something of a Continental disgrace: Benedict Arnold, the leading figure in the Canadian expedition, was enraged and immediately brought charges against Bedel for leaving his post. Even the Continental Congress acknowledged the affair, terming the surrender 'shameful' and attributing the responsibility for it the commanding officer.

Brought before a court martial, Bedel claimed that he had not been aware that Arnold's orders restricted him to the Cedars. He asserted that his orders included instructions to cultivate friendly relations with the Indians of the region. Accordingly, he had left the Cedars, even while suffering from smallpox, in order to meet with a group of Indian chiefs at Caughnawaga that was just a few miles outside Montreal. While there, he received reports that the enemy was advancing on the Cedars. He considered returning immediately but was persuaded by the chiefs to stop at Montreal first to report the results of the conference. The trip to Montreal actually required only several extra hours, but after leaving that city he became too ill to travel and thus did not reach the Cedars before it was surrendered.

At the court martial, Arnold's influence triumphed over Bedel's defense, and Bedel was found guilty of 'quitting his post.' As a result, he was cashiered from the service, along with Isaac Butterfield. The court, however, distinguished between the two men's crimes: Butterfield was officially incapacitated from ever holding a commission again, while Bedel was simply cashiered.

Within a year, Bedel was engaged in correspondence with General Gates, passing along intelligence information that he received from scouts in Canada and agitating for

another Canadian expedition. In the fall of 1777, he participated in the Saratoga campaign as an officer of low rank in a militia regiment raised in his region. In November 1777, he was again commissioned by the Continental Congress and empowered to raise a regiment of volunteers.

The Congress made this appointment in preparation for another invasion of Canada that was scheduled for February 1778. Accordingly, Bedel received orders from General Gates in November instructions him to prepare to raid St. John's the following February. He began the preparations, but the plan for his raid was evidently abandoned, as he received new orders to rendezvous with Colonel Moses Hazen's regiment for a combined drive into Canada. The rendezvous date was set for February 20, but just as Bedel was preparing to march, he received orders from General Conway to remain at Haverhill. After some further confusion, particularly, whether John Stark or the Marquis de Lafayette had command of the expedition, all the invasion plans were abandoned. Lafayette ordered Bedel to keep his regiment at Haverhill and to use it to defend the frontiers of northern New Hampshire.

By June 1778, Bedel had once again become something of a controversial figure. General John Stark, who commanded the Northern Department from Albany, was convinced that Bedel was defrauding the Continental Congress by collecting pay and rations for twice as many men as were actually enlisted in his regiment. Stark complained about Bedel to General Gates and asserted that the only way to ascertain the exact size of Bedel's regiment was to order the entire unit to proceed to Albany where Stark could see it for himself. One hundred of Bedel's men were already at Albany and were extremely unhappy with the terms of their enlistment. Bedel, who was working to have them returned to Haverhill, was unwilling to deliver up the remainder of his regiment to Stark's scrutiny. He claimed, with some justification, that his regiment was needed around Haverhill to protect the upper Connecticut valley settlements from attacks by marauding bands of Tories and Indians. The Committees of Safety from surrounding towns supported his position, and the regiment remained at Coos despite Stark's suspicion.

Bedel's triumph, however, was short-lived: less than a year later, in April 1779, his regiment was disbanded. The decision to disband the regiment was made against Bedel's wishes and he tried, with the help of Moses Hazen, to persuade the Continental Congress to allow him to raise another. Why the decision was made and who was responsible for making it are both unclear. One possibility is that Stark's suspicions were shared by other generals or by members of the Continental Congress. Perhaps of more importance to whoever made the decision was the controversy that was raging over the political control of the territory of Vermont.

Like most of his neighbors, Bedel opposed the establishment of New Hampshire authority over the towns of the Connecticut Valley. He advocated the creation of a state independent of the three parties that were competing for the territory: New Hampshire, New York, and Massachusetts. At times the controversy became extremely heated, and the relations between the New Hampshire government at Exeter and the towns on the eastern bank of the Connecticut River were seriously strained. The Exeter government was adamant in its demand that these towns remain under its jurisdiction, and many of the inhabitants of these towns were equally adamant that they become part of an

independent state. Violent confrontation over the status of these towns became conceivable.

Within this context, the decision to disband Bedel's regiment could well have been motivated by the desire to reduce the possibility of armed conflict within the ranks of the colonists. Neither the Continental Congress nor the state of New Hampshire wanted to support a regiment which might be used against its own forces. In addition, the British threat from Canada, which had originally necessitated the maintenance of a regiment of the frontier, had been sharply reduced with the defeat of Burgoyne's army two years earlier. To the men in Philadelphia and Exeter, Bedel's regiment might have represented more of a liability than an asset. If these were the case, the decision to disband it was a natural one.

Almost at the end of the war, Bedel retained his interest in the possibility of another Canadian expedition. Although his rationale for advocating another invasion was that Canada had to be conquered before his own region would be secure, the real motivation for his vivid interest seems to have been a desire to acquire tracts of Canadian land. He wrote to Moses Hazen that even without his regiment, he would be ready to assist a Canadian expedition in any he could and added, "I have had intelligence by several Parties who I have sent out to St. Francoise and to the River Masco to view the Lands in those parts who report it is the most excellent land they ever went over." However, the Canadian expedition that he wanted never materialized, and he sat out the remainder of the war in Haverhill, tending his own business interests as well as those of Moses Hazen.

After the war he remained active in the affairs of Haverhill and for a short period entered into a partnership with Moses Hazen evidently for the purpose of speculating in land. Hazen, however, seems to have been the more active partner as he played a role in establishing several new townships in Vermont whereas Bedel restricted his acquisitions to the Haverhill – Bath area. When he died in 1787, Bedel was a prominent citizen of Haverhill and moderately well-to-do; his estate, after the deduction of all debts, was worth more than 7000 Pounds.

### **Collection Scope and Content Note:**

The materials in the Timothy Bedel Papers almost all relate to his activities in the Revolutionary War, during which he lived in northern New Hampshire and raised and led a regiment for an expedition into Canada. He corresponded with Moses Hazen, Brigadier General Jacob Bayley, General George Clinton, General George Washington, General Horatio Gates, Marquis de Lafayette, General John Stark and others. There are accounts for supplies for his regiment, pay and muster rolls, a draft of a speech he gave to the Seven Tribes of Canada and another he gave in his defense when he was under court martial.

The papers include materials having to do with Hazen's interest in acquiring land and other business affairs, his opinions about the political situation in the upper Connecticut River Valley, and the inventory of his estate.

There is no family correspondence. Some letters are Bedel's copies rather than the originals (General James Clinton, General Thomas Conway, General Horatio Gates, marquis de Lafayette, General John Stark). There are also copies of printed correspondence.

## Contents List

### **Box 1**

Folders 1-5: correspondence, arranged chronologically, 1771-1785.

Folder 6: copies of printed correspondence, 1775-1779

Folder 7: Undated material and miscellaneous

Folder 8: Pay and muster rolls, 1776-1778

Folder 9: Bedel's commissions, 1762-1777

Folder 10: Bedel's estate inventories, 1787

Folders 11-12: Deeds, 1767-1786

### Detailed Folder List:

#### **Box 1**

- Folder 1 Correspondence, accounts, 1771-1777 Bedel's raising and provisioning men for Canadian expeditions and for protecting the frontier of northern New Hampshire. Intelligence reports from Canada; draft of a speech made to the Seven Tribes of Canada, 1775; draft of defense speech at his court martial, 1776
- Folder 2 Correspondence, accounts, 1778; receipts for provisioning of men in Bedel's regiment; correspondence re supply situation and general security of Coos, prospects of another Canadian expedition, the deployment and activity of Bedel's regiment; intelligence reports from scouting parties in Canada
- Folder 3 Correspondence, 1779 with Brigadier General Jacob Bayley and General George Clinton: handling provisions in Coos, establishing of a commissary, building a store, protecting supplies; with Moses Hazen: Hazen's land interests around Haverhill, the road Hazen's regiment built through Coos and northern Vermont, Continental Congress's attitude toward the dispute over the Vermont territory; with George Washington: informing Bedel that a court of inquiry had been established to investigate the conduct of the quartermaster and commissary in Coos, asking Bedel to be present at the inquiry.
- Folder 4 Correspondence, 1780-1781 with Moses Hazen: military affairs, prospects of another Canadian expedition, social and political situation of towns in the Connecticut Valley, Hazen's business interests around Haverhill, Bedel's involvement in the inquiry into the conduct of the commissary at Coos. Scale of depreciation of continental money between 1777 and 1781
- Folder 5 Correspondence, accounts, 1782-1785. Accounts: Bedel's statements against the United States for money owed him. Correspondence: with Moses Hazen re Hazen's business affairs in Haverhill and affairs of several newly established Vermont towns with which Hazen was involved.

- Folder 6 Copies of printed correspondence, 1775-1779 from *American Archives*, fourth and fifth series, and Saffel's *Records of the Revolutionary War*. Letters relate primarily to the Canadian expedition of 1775 and 1776, the march of Bedel's companies to St. John's, the siege of St. John's, the storming of Quebec and the death of Montgomery.
- Folder 7 Miscellaneous and undated material includes Indian accounts of General Gates, General Washington and Brigadier General Bayley; accounts of Marquis de Lafayette, General Wooster, General Montgomery, General Arnold; accounts for several companies in Bedel's regiment; Bedel letter re a Canadian expedition
- Folder 8 War Rolls, 1776-1778; pay rolls and muster rolls for companies in Bedel's regiment
- Folder 9 Bedel's commissions, 1762-1777
- Folder 10 Inventories, 1787  
Inventory of Estate of Timothy Bedel  
List of claims against the estate  
Memorandum of deeds for land bought or sold by Timothy Bedel
- Folder 11 Deeds, 1767-1785  
Land in Bath, NH, bought or sold by Timothy Bedel
- Folder 12 Deeds, 1763-1786  
Land in Haverhill, NH, bought or sold by Timothy Bedel

**Separated Materials:**

Three military commissions have been removed to Timothy Bedel oversized materials.

**Subject Terms**

**People:**

Bayley, General Jacob  
Bedel, Timothy, 1740?-1787  
Chittenden, Governor Thomas  
Conway, General Thomas  
Clinton, General James  
Cuyler, Cornell  
Everitt, Captain Edward  
Gates, General Horatio  
Hall, Enoch  
Harvey, Alexander  
Hazen, Colonel Moses  
Ladd, Captain Ezekiel  
Lafayette, Marquis de  
Morey, Captain Israel  
Nelson, Captain Charles  
Phelps, Noah  
Richardson, Captain Luther  
Schuyler, General Philip  
Sloan, Captain John

Stark, General John  
Taylor, Captain Joseph  
Thornton, Matthew  
Traversie, Captain Robert  
Troup, Robert  
Washington, General George  
Wheelock, Lt. Colonel John  
Whipple, William  
Winship, Ebenezer  
Young, Captain Samuel

**Organizations:**

United States. Continental Congress  
United States – History – Continental Currency  
United States – History – Revolution, 1775-1783  
United States – History – Revolution – Canadian Expedition  
United States – History – Revolution – Muster Rolls  
United States – History – Revolution - New Hampshire Rangers

**Subjects:**

Border controversy – New Hampshire/Vermont  
Continental currency  
Deeds  
Estate Inventories  
Land speculation – New Hampshire Grants

**Locations:**

Bath, NH  
Coos County, NH  
Haverhill, NH

**Occupations:**

Military