

Brigadier General James Brickett, Doctor, Soldier

Brigadier General James Brickett, a doctor and militia commander at the Revolutionary War battles of Bunker Hill and Saratoga, was born on February 16, 1738, in what is now West Newbury at the family's [Brickett Street](#) homestead. According to the Hubleys' [Descendants of Nathaniel Brickett](#), his father James Brickett, Jr. (1711-1770) was a farmer and carpenter who married Susanna Pilsbury (1709-1788) in 1729. Both are buried in West Newbury's Walnut Hill Cemetery.

As the second surviving son, Brickett did not inherit the farm, but rather went to Harvard and became a doctor and pharmacist in Haverhill, where he was also active in the militia. [As early as the 1630's](#), farmers, tradesmen, and all other men except magistrates and clergy in each Massachusetts town were required to possess firearms and train under municipal auspices in the local militia, defending against Indian and other dangers. By the time [Brickett served as a surgeon mate](#) in the regiment of Royal Americans from 1759-1760 (including action at the victorious battle of [Fort Ticonderoga](#) in the French and Indian War), militias had formed both [local and expeditionary forces](#). Only after the Revolution began did the Continental Congress establish a [Continental Army](#) under command of George Washington. This regular army fought alongside the militias.

On October 8, 1759 Brickett married Ednah Merrill (1736-1802) in West Newbury. Between times of active service, Brickett prospered as a physician in Haverhill. He lived with his growing family in a large home with doctor's and apothecary offices on the first floor at 136 Water Street. In the year after Ednah's death, he married Abigail Peaslee (1743-1825).

As revolution broke out in April 1775, Brickett and his militia company marched to the battles of Concord and Lexington. Commissioned a Lieutenant Colonel on May 17, Brickett fought in the battle of Bunker Hill a month later. The [History of Haverhill](#) identifies Brickett among the first Americans wounded. A cannon ball struck close, knocking him over and injuring his foot. This caused a "'rupture,' from which he suffered to the end of his life." Notwithstanding his injury, as the battle continued, Brickett joined other surgeons attending the wounded.

Thanks to his experience and heroic performance, Brickett became a brigadier general in 1776 for Essex, Cumberland, and York Counties (Maine being a Massachusetts tributary at the time). In October 1777, Brickett commanded [1,115 militiamen from Essex County](#) in the Battle of Saratoga—the decisive turning point in the Revolutionary War. He now shares a [monument](#) there with other generals, including West Newbury-born Brigadier General [Jacob Bayley](#).

With victory at Saratoga came a world-class lesson in good news gone awry: the Americans had [nearly 6,000 British, Canadian, and Hessian prisoners of war](#) on their hands at a time when they could barely feed and clothe themselves. [To Brickett befell the task of marching the prisoners to Cambridge](#). He did so with [contributions from citizenry along the way](#) and with expenses paid out of his own pocket. Massachusetts said that the Continental Congress should reimburse him; they declared the state responsible for its militias. Though never repaid, he did emerge with a sprightly ["General Bricket's March."](#)

After the war, Brickett devoted himself to his medical practice and [civic service in Haverhill](#). He served as a selectman, town moderator, a member of various committees, and as the town's representative to the state constitutional convention. In the wake of [Shays' Rebellion](#), in 1786 Brickett chaired the committee to draft Haverhill's response. The resulting document was described as ["breath\[ing\] the purest and loftiest patriotism."](#) It stated in part, "We are sensible there are grievances, we feel them in common with our fellow citizens.... We know of no grievances that cannot be redressed in a constitutional manner.... We are ready, therefore, to join you in a firm and vigorous support of our Constitution, in the redress of grievances and in promoting industry, economy, and every other virtue which can exalt and render a nation respectable."

According to the Hubleys' genealogy, Doctor Brickett was "highly respected by all who knew him as a kind and skillful physician. He was [an] obliging neighbor, a genial companion, a liberal and enterprising citizen and a man of undoubted honor, patriotism, and integrity." Brickett died in Haverhill on December 10, 1818 and is buried there at the Pentucket Cemetery.

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VIEW OF BRICKETT FARM BRICKETT ST., WEST NEWBURY, MASS. CIRCA 1885
THE PROPERTY WAS PURCHASED IN 1715 BY JAMES BRICKETT (1679-1764) FROM SOLOMON HOLMAN. HIS HOUSE STOOD TO THE RIGHT NEAR THE CORNER OF MOULTON ST. AS SHOWN ON THE 1729 MAP OF WEST NEWBURY. THE HOUSE SHOWN HERE WAS BUILT IN 1771 BY HIS GRANDSON, NATHANIEL BRICKETT (1731-1805.) THE PROPERTY CONSISTING OF UPWARDS OF 50 ACRES WAS OWNED BY SIX GENERATIONS OF BRICKETTS UNTIL SOLD IN 1936. (Photo courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Brickett Bailey)

Source: Descendants of Nathaniel Brickett, by Claire & Richard Hubley

General Brickett's March



Book: Elias Howe - Musician's Omnibus Nos. 6 & 7 (Boston, 1880-1882, p. 603)

Source:

http://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:General_Brickett%27s_March



Brickett Home at 136 Water St, Haverhill
Source: Haverhill Library