



The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Henry Dearborn journal

1779-1781

MssCol 755

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Summary

Creator: Dearborn, Henry, 1751-1829

Title: Henry Dearborn journal

Date: 1779-1781

Size: .04 linear feet (1 volume)

Source: Donated by John S. Kennedy, 1896, as part of the Emmet collection.

Abstract: Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire was an American army officer and statesman. He fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, attaining the rank of senior Major General in the U.S. Army. Dearborn was U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1793-1797; U.S. Secretary of War, 1801-1809; and U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824. The journal of Continental Army officer Henry Dearborn (1 volume), kept from 1779 October 28 to 1781 December 10, concerns troop movements in New York and New Jersey; war news and rumors; trips to New Hampshire on leave; his appointment as Deputy Quartermaster General in 1781 July; movement of the American army from New York to Yorktown, Virginia; the siege of Yorktown and its surrender 1781 October 19; his illness; quartermaster duties; and arrival at winter quarters in New York in December. There are additional memoranda by Henry Dearborn; the volume was also used by Jeremiah Wakefield of Pittston, Maine for accounts and writing exercises.

Preferred citation: Henry Dearborn journal, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Related Materials:

Forms part of [Emmet collection](#)

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Creator History

Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire was an American army officer and statesman. He fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, attaining the rank of senior Major General in the U.S. Army. Dearborn was U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1793-1797; U.S. Secretary of War, 1801-1809; and U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Henry Dearborn was a practicing physician and captain of a New Hampshire militia company. He fought with the First and Third New Hampshire Regiments of the Continental Army, rising from captain to lieutenant colonel. In July 1781 he was appointed Deputy Quartermaster General and served on Washington's staff in Virginia. Notable events in his military service included the battle of Bunker Hill with the First New Hampshire Regiment, 1775; the expedition to Quebec, 1775, resulting in his capture, imprisonment and exchange; the battles of Saratoga, 1777, and Monmouth, 1778; and Major General John Sullivan's campaign against the Six Nations, 1779. He was with the main army in New York and New Jersey in 1780 and participated in the Yorktown Campaign in 1781. Upon his exchange in 1777, Dearborn served as major and then lieutenant colonel in the Third New Hampshire Regiment, transferring to the First New Hampshire Regiment in early 1781. He commanded the regiment upon the death of Colonel Alexander Scammell at Yorktown in October. Dearborn served at the garrison at Saratoga in the summer and fall of 1782, and received his discharge in June 1783.

In 1784 Dearborn moved to the District of Maine, then part of Massachusetts, settling in Pittston, now Gardiner, in Kennebec County. He became Major General of the Maine militia, was appointed U.S. Marshal for Maine in 1789, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from the District, 1793 to 1797. After serving as Secretary of War during the Jefferson administration, he held the federal appointment of Collector of Customs for the port of Boston from 1809 until he was appointed senior Major General of the U.S. Army in January 1812. Although Dearborn's forces captured York (Toronto) and Fort George in the spring of 1813 during operations against Upper Canada, Dearborn's weakness as a strategic commander and severe illness led to his recall by Secretary of War John Armstrong in July of that year. Dearborn was re-assigned to command the military district of New York City and was honorably discharged in 1815. In 1817 he ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic-Republican candidate for governor of Massachusetts, and in 1818 his work *An account of the battle of Bunker Hill* was published. His final public office was U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

Henry Dearborn was married three times: to Mary Bartlett in 1771, to Dorcas Osgood Marble in 1780, and to Sarah Bowdoin in 1813. Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn (1783-1851) was his son by his second wife. Henry Dearborn died in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Scope and Content Note

The journal of Continental Army officer Henry Dearborn (1 volume), kept from 1779 October 28 to 1781 December 10, concerns troop movements in New York and New Jersey; war news and rumors; trips to New Hampshire on leave; his appointment as Deputy Quartermaster General in 1781 July; movement of the American army from New York to Yorktown, Virginia; the siege of Yorktown and its surrender 1781 October 19; his illness; quartermaster duties; and arrival at winter quarters in New York in December. The last few leaves of the volume contain Dearborn's miscellaneous memoranda and accounts dated 1781 and 1782 May, including two medicinal recipes recorded at Williamsburg, Virginia.

The volume was also used by Jeremiah Wakefield of Pittston, Maine for accounts and writing exercises. Some are dated 1786 and 1789, the later text appearing after Dearborn's 1781 December 10 entry. Beginning from the reverse end, with the volume turned around, are the bulk of Wakefield's writings dating from 1786 (these follow Dearborn's memoranda and appear upside-down in the initial reading of

the volume). Interspersed are a few accounts and notes in Dearborn's hand which are unrelated to the war, dated 1785 and 1786 at Pittston.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Diaries

Geographic Names

Pittston (Me. : Town)

United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Campaigns

United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Personal narratives

Yorktown (Va.) -- History -- Siege, 1781

Occupations

Soldiers

Names

Wakefield, Jeremiah

United States. Continental Army -- Officers -- Diaries