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Journal of Ensign Nathaniel Morgan, April 21 to Dec. 11, 1775

Nathaniel Morgan

Providence College, normd@providence.edu

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Morgan, Nathaniel, "Journal of Ensign Nathaniel Morgan, April 21 to Dec. 11, 1775" (1879). *Primary Sources*. 18.

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COLLECTIONS

OF THE

Connecticut Historical Society

VOLUME VII



HARTFORD
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1899



JOURNAL

of

ENSIGN NATHANIEL MORGAN

April 21 to Dec. 11, 1775

ITEMS OF THE SIEGE OF BOSTON FROM THE
ROXBURY SIDE

April the 21, 1775. Then I listed and went to Boston the first alarm, and returned the [] of the same, and listed the 7 day of May into the Colony's service for 7 months.

June the 5th day. Then we sot out for Newlondon and returned the 20th day June. Sot out and marched for Boston the 22 day of the same, and arrived there 25th day of June, which was Sunday, and pitched our tents the same day and received 250 guns or more, tho it did no damage except burnt one house and our people fired 2 guns and one of them killed 4 men in the spot.

Main guard one.

June the 30 day. This day there was a man drummed out of camp [for] saying the general was a damned tory.

June the 31. This day there was another man whipt 20 stripes for desertion from Captain Mot's company as he was marching to his station. The man's name that was punished was Thomas Clark.

July the 4 day, 1775. General Washington who is Chief of Connecticut forces arrived here this day. General Nathaniel Spencer who is second general he belongs to East Harford [Haddam].

And upon guard to Brokline.

July the 6. This day there was a man sentenced to be whipped 39 lashes, which is executed, for desertion from Capt. Gale's company.

July the 6 day. Josiah Kory was groggy this day and put under guard, but made a confession and came out [on] paying a fine of 6 shillings.

July the 8. This day there was one man drowned at Cambridge as he went in to wash himself and could not swim and drowned immediately. Last night our people

went to set the guard house on fire where the regulars encamped and was insulted [assaulted] by the regulars. Very warm for some time before break of day but prosecuted our design without receiving any damage at all. This day Bennony Robins was put under guard for talking saucy ["Safy"] to our Capt. and was released on his confession [of] his fault. This day there came a messenger out of Boston to have some relieve for the poor.

July the 9. There is happened this day our Coll. called for all the sergeants in the regiment, and gave orders that every man turn out to divine service or have his name returned to the Coll.

July the 10. This day there was four men listed out of every company in the regiment to go on an expedition for some whale boats to Weymouth, which they found on shore in a grove of timber hid from the regulars, which our people carried to shore and went to an island named Long Island, and there they took 19 prisoners and about 7 oxen and 8 cows and one horse and 4 hogs and a great quantity of housel [household] stuff. Capt. Cleft was the 2^d in command that went. They got upwards of 40 boats and returned the 12th day without receiving any damage.

Brookline guard.

July the 13. This day our people took down the bell from the meeting house and took out the glass and pews for fear of having them burnt.

July the 13. This day there was 2 men called for out of a company to go and intrench against George's tavern, and there was another company went down to fire on the regulars at the same time and did so, and the regulars returned the fire [with] but 2 cannon and

killed one man—he was from Suffield—and hurt no man more.

July the 14. There was 5 men went to Dochester for the rest of the whale boats and I went with them.

And I was a member of a court martial [at] Capt. Spiror[s] [sic] marquee.

July the 18. This day the drums beat to arms about 12 clock, and went to our alarm post where we are to be in the day of battle.

July the 20. This day we went to our alarm post at 2 clock in the morning. This day our people burnt the light house. This day there was a man drowned at Brookline.

July the 21. This day at 5 o'clock there was a man shot through the left side and died soon. It was done through an accident. His name was Stephen Burden of Mendham in this province.

July the 24. This day there was 14 sail of regulars went out somewhere, but where I can't tell yet.

July the 25. This day the regiments waited upon General Ward into town. There was a court martial held at Capt. Cleft's marquee. I was a member. The men was tried for swearing and fined one shilling apiece.

July the 26 day. Yesterday the regulars fired 2 cannon from their breastwork, but did no damage.

July the 27 day, 1775. A rainy day. I was upon the main guard and there was a ragers [regular] did run away last night from the regular comtous [sic] which inform us that there is 6000 men in Boston.

July the 30. This day there was 4 men called out a company for some private expedition. The men that

went was Thomas Kegwin, Bennony Robins, Benjamin Irish, Samuel Thompson. Capt. Cleft went 2[d] commander and they expect to be gone 3 days.

July the 31. This day the men came back from the private expedition all safe but one man that was shot. Our men took and killed 52 prisoners* and plund[er]ed the house and then sot it on fire and burnt it with several more buildings but was insulted [assaulted] warmly for some time and sot a man of war's tender on fire and barges.

Willoam Gale was confined and was tried with a court martial† and was found guilty [of] defaming the adjutant much. Sentenced to make a confession at the head of the regiment, then to be discharged from the army the 7 day of August.

August the 1 day, 1775. This day the floating battery sot out and come up against the breastwork, and she fired upon the breastwork and our men returned the fires upon them several times and she returned back, did no damage, and then our men fired from the fort 3 times 24 pound, and the first they fired went into the town and the next went to where they was intrenched and the next went into their barrack, and they fired one and stopped, and they have fired a great deal upon one another at Camebridge.

August the 2 day. I was upon teage [fatigue], and the 6 day I was upon the main guard and very still time now.

August the 8 day. This day we hear there is 10 men of war or transports came into Newlondon the 6 day.

* That is, killed and captured 52 men.

† See *ante*, pp. 84, 89.

* August the 4 day at night Timothy Sha and Jeorg Poller deserted.

Roxbury, August the 10 day, 1775, at night I was upon the meeting house picket, the 11 day I was took sick, and the 16 day I sot out for home, the sun about an hour high at night, and I got home the 18 day at night.

[The entries of the siege from his departure to his return are written in a different hand and with much less illiteracy.]

Roxbury, August 15, 1775. Col. Douglas came into Roxbury the 12 instant. Daniel Hopkins went home this day.

August the 18. The regulars fired several times, they have not killed nor wounded any this day. As the main guard was relieving the regulars shot four times and wounded one of the riflemen. Yesterday William Hopkins went to the hospital.

August the 28. Phinchas Stewart got a furlough and went home. The regulars has been firing at Cambridge yesterday and this day and killed two men and that is all.

Timothy Shay and George Poller was punished for desertion, to go three weeks on fatigue and the[n] restored to their duty.

[The following entry is written on the inside of the cover leaf, in his own hand and style.]

August the 30 day, A.D. 1775. There was Captain Walles sailed to Long Pint in Stoingtown with his ship and four tenders, and begun to fire in the morn-

* Dates so transposed in the journal, one of several indications that the entries were not all made on their date, but jotted down from memory at considerable intervals.

ing upon the town, and fired almost all day, and twas judged that there was about six hundred guns fired at the town. Killed nobody, but wounded one man in his neck and damaged the houses some, and the tenders come up most to the wharf and took three or four vessel, and one of them was loaded with sugar and molasses, and they say it belong to Providence, and our men fired upon them when they was sighting the vessels and killed some of them. And the day before Capt. Eathen Clark was going to Blocks Island and a hundred men with him, and Walles came across him and chased him up to the point and he but just escaped.

[In the new hand.]

September 11, 1775. This day our people took five prisoners from the regulars. Informs that the regulars will be called home soon. The way that these regulars came away was one of them sot out to run away and he took a canoe and intended to land on Dochester, and when the enemy discovered the man going away there was four men and a sergeant took a boat and went after the man, and the wind and tide being with them so strong that they could not go back and so became an easy prey to our people, and now they are confined.

[His own hand resumed.]

September the 11 day I sot out for Boston and arrived there the 12 day.

September the 15 day, A.D. 1775. Last night there was a regular come out of Boston.

September the 16 day. Last night regular came out of Boston and they fired upon us two bomb and six cannon, and they fired one cannon from our lower fort.

September the 17, A.D. 1775. The regulars fired 2 bombs and six cannon, did no damage, and we gave them 8 or 10 and killed one regular and wound[ed] five more.

September the 18. This day they fired 52 cannon and bombs upon our men to work upon the Neck where they was building breastworks.

September the 19 day. I was upon works and they fired 12 cannon upon us and they come close to us.

September the 20 day. And it rained very hard in the forenoon and they was very still this day.

September the 21 day, A.D. 1775. This day they fired 16 or 18 cannon and bombs, and one of the bombs fell into the fort but did no damage.

September the 22 day, A.D. This day they fired from all parts but fired nothing but powder.

September the 23 day, A.D. The regulars fired one hundred and eight cannon in the forenoon upon Roxbury and upon the fort and did no damage and our people gave them 8 cannon.

September the 25 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon the main guard, and it was very still times, and I took [hoarse?].

September the 29 day. At night there was two regulars come out to Roxbury.

September the 30 day. I was upon main guard and the regulars fired 39 cannon upon us but did no damage.

October the 2 day, A.D. 1775. The regulars fired upon our men when they was going down upon picket 6 guns, but did no damage.

October the 4. Our regiment was free from duty because we mustered by muster master general.

October the 6. Elish Cageston had discharge, and the regulars fired ninety odd of cannon upon Roxbury and shot one man arm off and three cows, and they was fired all in an hour. And the same day I was upon regiment court martial. One of the prisoners was Peter Bourn was fined for shooting his gun off wild two shillings and six pence, and the other was one Polle drum major and he was brought before the court and he was found guilty of burning powder and making a stir in the camps and was fined five shillings.

October the 7 day. At night there was a regular come out of Boston.

October the 8 day. At night there was a regular come out of Boston, and he says there was another regular sot out to swim out from Boston Common and the other one swim so near the floating battery they see him and they catch him.

The 9 day I see one of the rif[le]men whipped 39 stripes and was drummed out of the camps, 55 drummers and 60 fifers.

October the 10 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon main guard and it was very still times, and it was supposed that General Gage sot out for home.

October the 11 day. At night 9 o'clock it begun to rain and thunder, and a remarkable storm of thunder and rain it was.

October the 16 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon the main guard and it was very still times.

October the 17 day, A.D. 1775. At night they come from Cambridge with their floating battery, and they fired upon the common, and they split their cannon and it killed two men and wound[ed] 6 more our men.

October the 21 day, A.D. 1775. I went upon main guard and it was a rainy day and it was very still times. The night before there was a regular come out of Boston.

October the 26 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon fatigue.

October the 30 day, A.D. 1775. At night I was upon picket.

November the 4 day, A.D. 1775. At night I was upon picket, and there was a regular or two, our sentry spied them and they hailed them and they did not answer, and they fired upon them and we fired 12 or 14 guns at them.

November the 5 day. The regulars did fire from all their ships, for it was powder plot day.

November the 6 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon a regimental court martial upon one Plats belong[ing] to Capt. Ely's company, was brought before us and found guilty of choking and cursing, and was fined one shilling and for choking he was to confess to the man that he choked.

November 9 day. The regulars went on Pigment Pint to get some cattle, but they got defeated and went back, and they wounded three or four our men and took one of the riflemen.

November the 11 day. At night I was up[on] picket.

November the 15 day, 1775. At night there was three reg[ulars] come out from Boston.

November the 16 day, 1775. At night I was upon picket.

November the 23 day, A.D. 1775. I was upon duty tearing down barns.

December the 2 day. I was upon main guard.

December the 10 day. I was upon main guard.

December the 11 day. I sot out for home about 2 o'clock, and I got to Mands and the next night we got to Lev. Edmon.

Feb. 27, 1901

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