

Photo: Unavailable

Name: Colonel Abraham Drake  
Date of Birth/Details: December 4, 1715, Hampton, NH to Abraham and  
Theodate Roby Drake  
Residence: Drake Farm, 148 Lafayette Road, Route 1, North Hampton,  
NH  
Date of Death/Details: August 1, 1781

The **historical marker** on front lawn of Drake Farm placed by Clifford S. Drake 1927 reads:

This boulder marks the site of the home of Colonel Abraham Drake.  
December 4, 1715 – August 1, 1781.  
Captain of horse in French and Indian Wars.  
Fought at Crown Point 1755-1756.  
One of the first to take up arms in the Revolution.as Lieutenant Colonel in 3<sup>rd</sup>  
New Hampshire volunteers.  
Commanded by General Washington to attend Councils of War.  
Member of Provincial Congress at Exeter 1777.  
Colonel in New Hampshire Militia 1776-1777  
Marched with his company drawing artillery with oxen from here to Saratoga to  
intercept General Burgoyne and was present at his surrender.

The **homesite**, first built in 1705, is currently known as Drake Farm Books and Abigail's gift shop. It is the yellow house and barn at 148 Lafayette Road, just north of North Road on the west side, currently owned by Bob Gross and Marcia Van Dyke.

Abraham Drake's **military career** began as a lieutenant of cavalry (Dragoon company) in Major Tash's Battalion of the New Hampshire Provincial Regiment at Fort #4. He was a captain in the French and Indian War (1755-1757).

In The Revolutionary War, he was lieutenant colonel of the Third New Hampshire Regiment. In 1777 he was promoted to Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire Militia Regiment, serving in Ebenezer Learned's brigade, "to reinforce the northern continental army at Stillwater" and Saratoga, NY, from September 8th to December 15, 1777. He was a member of the New Hampshire Provincial Congress, held at Exeter in 1777, organizing the members of the 13 states in order to be a force against the British Empire.

By mid-summer (1777), the British opened an offensive campaign to sever New England from the rest of the country. Alarmed over this threat to their security, many towns hastily raised troops and sent them to the American camp near Bemis Heights, New York, where they took part in the decisive battle on October 7<sup>th</sup> which resulted in the British surrender at Saratoga on October 17, 1777. Col. Abraham Drake of North Hampton had raised a whole regiment for this affair. Capt. Moses Leavitt led a company.

A brief description of this historical battle demonstrates the significance of Drake's participation in the Revolutionary War. Drake is considered to be one of the major heroes of the Battle of Saratoga.

General Charles Cornwallis, fresh from his rout of the General Gates' forces at Camden, N.J., determined he would split the Colonial strength in two. He wanted to separate New England from the southern Colonies, thus cutting off the supply line of goods both north and south in the Colonies. He directed Gen. "Gentleman Johnny" Bourgoyne to take some 7,000 British regulars and nearly 2,000 German soldiers to secure Saratoga. If this were to be accomplished, the war for America's freedom would be all but lost.

Gen. Washington saw the dire circumstances of the plan and called upon Gen. John Stark of Londonderry to move the New Hampshire militia westward to meet the oncoming forces. Stark immediately called upon Col. Drake to take his Second New Hampshire Militia into the fray. Drake was well aware that Bourgoyne scoffed at the idea that any American militia was a match for a British army. He considered the Colonists rabble, while he spoke with "the voice of king."

In Bourgoyne's estimation, a true army has cannons, while a militia did not. So, Drake set to work to arrange a surprise for Bourgoyne's forces.

Before leaving the area, Drake sent his men to each fort and shore battery in the region for every available cannon. In short order, cannons of various sizes were brought from Kittery, Maine, and Newburyport and Salem, Mass., and other locales and sent overland to Saratoga. The trek was long and arduous, but the surprise worked to perfection.

Drake's "army" arranged the cannons on the high ground of Bemis Heights, and the American infantry lay in concealment in the low ground. The battle lasted some three weeks, ending with a surprise attack on the main British force at Barber Farm. Bourgoyne was correct. Cannons make all the difference in a war.

The toll exacted on the British in that battle was staggering. Of the nearly 20,000 men who marched into the fray, about 6,000 were able to turn in their weapons at the surrender. Drake's cannons were never returned to their original locations. Large weapons of that era were useful for up to 50 shots before they showed signs of stress. Those cannons were melted down to make others to continue the war.

For further information on Col. Drake, his ancestors and descendants, go to [www.drakefarm.com](http://www.drakefarm.com) for more information.



Further reference to Colonel Abraham Drake is found on the Regiment of the 24<sup>th</sup> of Foot in North America web site, “Organization of the Army under the Command of Major General Horatio Gates at Bemis Heights October 7, 1777”, by Eric Schnitzer.

The **Drake Family History** follows, as researched by Marcia Van Dyke. Beginning with the first Drakes in New Hampshire, this is a brief overview of Col. Drake’s ancestry, the family life of Col. Drake and his wife, and their descendants.

The first Drake to settle in New Hampshire was **Robert Drake**, born in Colchester in Essex, England in 1581. In 1642, at the age of 61, he sailed to America with his two sons, Nathaniel 39, Abraham 31 and a daughter. It is assumed his wife had died before the voyage, as there is no mention of her. Robert brought with him from England a quantity of goods, chiefly woolens. They first settled in Exeter where he opened a store and worked there with his children. He purchased an estate in Hampton and moved his family there c.1650. As referenced in The Drake Family of New Hampshire, 1962, Robert Drake’s house stood on the place occupied by the Baptist Meeting House. He was one of the first founders of that town, a Selectman and a leader in the community.

**Nathaniel** Drake left Hampton soon after their arrival and settled in the Greenland section of Portsmouth. There is a strong possibility that Nathaniel had left this part of the country and became founder of the New Jersey family of Drakes.

Upon the death of Robert in 1668 at the age of 88, Nathaniel’s legacy was much less than his brother Abraham’s. Robert’s Will offers no explanation of the legacies. Judging from his Will and inventory, he was a wealthy man and left a valuable property for those times. Abraham inherited the homestead since known as Drake Side in Hampton.

**Abraham** (b. 1620) was active in political affairs in Hampton. He served in the King Philip War. On April 14, 1641, with several others, he was appointed, as a surveyor, by the town of Hampton to fence off the Common Land near Boars Head to serve as a town common. He fathered 7 children by his wife, Jane. There is no clear record of his death, but he was at least 84 years old according to research. His Will read as follows: "My youngest son Robert will have half of the house, ten acres, half the salt marsh and fresh meadow, provided he carries out my work of husbandry along with his work and keep me comfortable during my natural life". He would then have the property only upon the death of Abraham, his oldest son.

**Abraham** (1654-1714), who inherited his father's property, was a Selectman in Hampton. He married Sarah Hobbs, with whom they had five children. He was one of the eight owners of the Brigantine. There was a considerable amount of shipping in Hampton in 1699. He and several others built a Common Landing Place on the ocean for the fleet to dock. He left his estate to his oldest son, Abraham (later to become father of Col. Abraham Drake.)

**Abraham** (1688-1767), and his wife Theodate Roby, had 10 children. When Hampton was first surveyed, several lots in different locations were set-aside as parsonage lots. After the town of North Hampton was established in 1742, Hampton and North Hampton began a lawsuit, which lasted several years, to determine which community owned the various parsonage lots. In 1766, Abraham was one of the joint committee, which made the final settlement. He was part owner of the Saw Mill that stood on Little River. He may have built the first house on the North Hampton "Drake Farm." It stood closer to Rt.1 where the pump/well house is now. **Col. Abraham Drake** was born here and was his first son. A plaque of honor was placed on the front lawn. His father left him the estate.

**Col. Abraham (1715-1781), war hero**, settled in North Hampton at the Drake Farm homestead, marrying Abigail Weare, the sister of Governor Meshech Weare, on January 13, 1738. In 1738, Abigail gave birth to a son and named him Weare. Two years later, she gave birth to a daughter on September 9, 1740. They named her Abigail after her mother. It is assumed that she had complications in childbirth, because she died 12 days after the birth. Abraham was left with a 2 year old and a newborn infant. On November 25, 1742, he married Abigail Dearborn. They continued to live on the homestead, raising Weare and Abigail from his first marriage and having 11 more children together. They also raised a niece, Anna Taylor, whose mother had died. Col. Abraham Drake was appointed her guardian. Anna grew up to marry her aunt's stepson, Weare Drake, with whom she had been raised since coming to North Hampton. Altogether, they raised 14 children. In 1760, when the child Abigail was 20 years old, she died. In 1761, Abraham and Abigail had their last child, which was a girl. They named the new baby Abigail, the 4<sup>th</sup> Abigail to live in the home.

In 1766, Col. Abraham was granted several hundred acres of land, which is now the town of Epping. He put the land in the name of all of his sons. Several of them, including

Weare, his oldest son, moved to Epping to live and raise families. One of the largest brick manufacturers was Drake Brick Yard in Epping. **Col Drake's son, Jonathan**, was with him on several Revolutionary War expeditions and was with him at the surrender of Burgoyne in Saratoga, NY. **Col. Drake's son, Abraham**, was chosen as a delegate from North Hampton to the second Constitutional Convention held in Concord in 1781.

Upon his death in 1781, Col. Abraham Drake left his property to his seventh son, Nathaniel.

**Nathaniel** (1760-1828) married Elizabeth Jenness and had 6 children. (There were several marriages between the Drake and Jenness families.) Nathaniel left the property to his son Samuel.

**Samuel** (1792-1835) married Mehitabel Pickering and had 8 children. (Olive Ann was their 5<sup>th</sup> child.) Samuel left the property to **Joshua Pickering** (1823-1901), who married **Sarah Drake Levitt** and had 6 children. The property then was inherited by **Justin** (1855-1938), who married Ethlyn Grant Toby, with whom he had 5 children. Justin left the property to **Joshua** Fabian (1898-1989), who married to Helen Brown and had 1 child, Mary. Joshua was a master carpenter. In the 1970's, he was a Selectman in town. After his retirement, the Annual Town Report was dedicated to him. His mother, Ethlyn, lived in half of the house and Joshua and his family lived in the other half until her death in 1960. In 1982, Joshua's wife passed away. He went to live at the Wentworth Home in Portsmouth until his passing in 1988.

**The last Drake to own the homestead** was Mary Joyce Drake (1930-). She married Wallace Hale and lived across the road in a house her father built for them. She lives in Barrington, NH at the time of this report (July 1, 2005, Source: Research conducted by Marcia Van Dyke).

#### References:

The Way It Was In North Hampton, by Stillman Moulton Hobbs and Helen Davis Hobbs 1978

North Hampton Historical Marker, placed by Clifford S. Drake 1927

"Organization of the Army under the Command of Major General Horatio Gates at Bemis Heights October 7, 1777", by Eric Schnitzer.

*Drake Family History*, researched by Marcia Van Dyke

<http://www.drakefarm.com>

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/news/exeter/07252006/community-curr-bisceglia.col0725.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham\\_Drake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Drake)

<http://www.answers.com/topic/drake-s-regiment-of-militia>