

Massachusetts & Vermont Militia

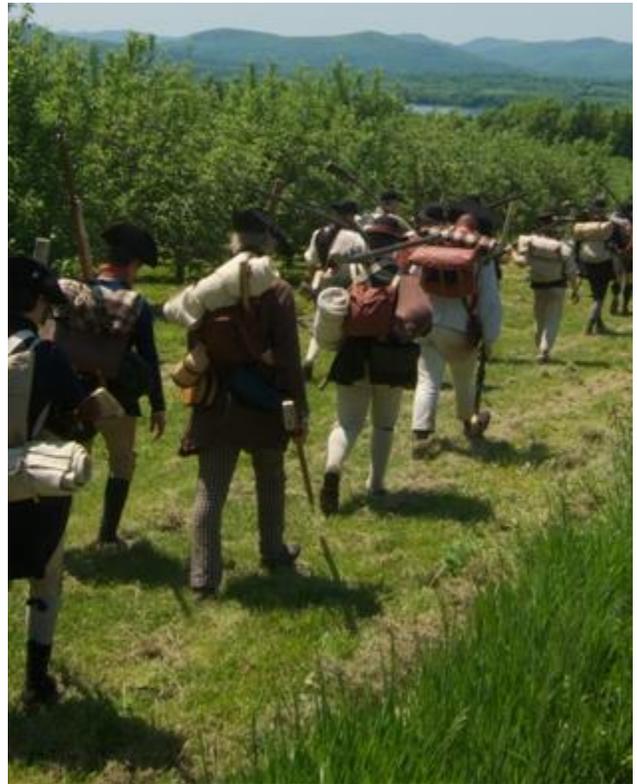
Of the five-hundred men who followed Colonel John Brown to Ticonderoga, the majority were Massachusetts and Vermont militia men. Colonel Brown's Massachusetts militia men were companies of men from Hampshire, Berkshire, Worcester and Essex County, who were drafted or volunteered August 9th for three months of service. In addition, Brown chose a company of Colonel Marsh's Vermont militia, who were called out from eastern Vermont as of August 11th. Although there is little specific information as to what those soldiers were wearing, Massachusetts militia regulations and contemporary accounts indicate that they wore their own civilian clothes. Militia laws were rigidly enforced in New England during the early years of the Revolutionary War. These town and state laws specified what every man subject to militia duty was to have in case of service. Militia laws generally only referenced equipment, omitting mention of clothing. However, one 1777 Boston Gazette advertisement described that militia men should have, "a powder horn, a bullet pouch to contain 40 leaden balls, a knapsack, a canteen, a firearm of good worth, a haversack, a belt, [and] a good pair of overalls," After two years of war, this advertisement may indicate the use of gaiter-trousers amongst other civilian clothing for militia service. During Brown's Raid, two men of Herrick's Regiment were captured and their arms and equipment taken by the British and Germans. Since this was their own equipment, funds were requested to be furnished by Vermont as reimbursement of those taken. Secretary Thomas Chittenden resolved in the Council at Manchester October 16th, 1779, "Please pay to Philip Smith or order the sum of forty-four pounds five shillings and four pence L money of the within account." The account within "Which were taken from the above named Stephen Smith and Philip Smith by the enemy," included:

2 guns of the best and suitable for Rangers

2 powder horns

2 bullet pouches

2 blankets



2 haversacks

Diarists and Brunswick army surgeon, J. F. Wasmus, left an account of General John Stark's militia from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and the New Hampshire grants at Bennington. Wasmus' account of them described their informal dress that summer.

Putting all of it in a bag, I wanted to take it along, but my guide took it away from me and urged me to drink some strong rum with him. All the enemy were very well provided with it and I noticed that almost all of them were drunk. Each one had a wooden flask filled with rum hanging from his neck; they all were in shirt-sleeves, had nothing [to cover] their bodies but shirts, vests and long linen trousers, which reached down to their shoes; no stockings; [in addition] a powder horn, bullet bag, a flask of rum and a gun - that was all they had on them. They all were well-shaped men of very healthy appearance and well-grown; better than the Canadians.

General Benjamin Lincoln, a well respected Massachusetts militia Colonel in his own right, issued orders to all his raiders, including Brown's, to pack light. The General was brief, ordering them, "to leave behind all our heavy Baggage and take one Shift of cloaths only".



Shirts

Best: Hand-stitched checked, striped, or white linen shirt narrow band cuffs with thread Dorset buttons or made for sleeve-buttons (cuff links).

Acceptable: Machine stitched checked, striped, or white linen shirts.

Unacceptable: Cotton calico or plaid shirts.

Neckwear

Best: Silk, linen, or cotton neckerchiefs; linen neck stocks, or linen rollers, well-tied around the neck.

Acceptable: Machine hemmed neckerchiefs or linen rollers.

Unacceptable: Military horsehair or leather neck stocks.

Hats and Caps

Best: Hand-finished, round-blocked, hats made of black wool or beaver felt, cut round, and left plain or cocked in appropriate civilian styles.

Acceptable: Knit-wool Monmouth, Dutch mutt, or Kilmarnock caps, oval-blocked hats made of black or white felt in cocked or round styles.

Discouraged: Grey or brown wool felt hats, cut down felt caps.

Unacceptable: Slouch hats from unfinished blanks, straw hats, fur caps.

Coats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, wool broadcloth coats of drab, brown, green, red, or blue in straight-bodied or cutaway styles. Wool Broadcloth short coats or sailor's jackets with short skirts and mariner's cuffs in similar colors.

Acceptable: Well-fit linen or linsey-woolsey coats of similar colors, broadcloth coats, short coats, and sailors jackets with minor visible machine stitching.

Discouraged: Regimental coats, hunting shirts, smocks, or over-shirts.

Unacceptable: Baggy coats, coats and jackets made of cotton canvas or damask upholstery fabric.

Jackets and Waistcoats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit waistcoats of drab, brown, white, green, red or blue broadcloth, kersey, or serge, made single or double breasted, skirted or square cut, with or without sleeves.

Acceptable: Well-fit, waistcoats of linen, linsey-woolsey, cotton, cotton velvet, wool plush or silk, in solid colors or simple patterns, made single or double breasted, skirted or square cut with minor visible machine stitching. Sleeved waistcoats are acceptable as the primary outer garment.

Unacceptable: Regimental waistcoats, cotton canvas, upholstery fabric waistcoats, extremely



long or baggy waistcoats.

Breeches and Trousers

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit trousers of linen or hemp canvas or checked linen, leather breeches, or breeches in black, brown, drab, kersey, linsey-woolsey, serge, cotton velvet, wool plush, broadcloth with buckled or tied knee bands.

Acceptable: Well-fit breeches, overalls, or trousers with minor visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Regimental breeches, fringed trousers, baggy breeches.

Leg wear

Best: Just stockings or well-fit, hand-finished spatterdashers or half-gaiters of black, brown, or drab wool, or black leather.

Acceptable: Well-fit canvas spatterdashers, or spatterdashers with minor machine finishing.

Discouraged: Wool leggings. Indian Leggings

Unacceptable: Military gaiters, baggy spatterdashers.



Socks and Stockings

Best: White or grey wool yarn or worsted stockings or socks, when worn with trousers.

Acceptable: White, grey, black, brown, blue, or green stockings or socks of wool yarn, worsted, linen or cotton.

Unacceptable: Red, yellow, or polyester stockings.

Shoes

Best: Hand-finished, short or long quartered shoes with round toes, made of black-waxed calf leather, fitted for buckles. Shoe boots, half-boots high-lows, of black waxed-calf.

Acceptable: Machine made, black leather, shoes with buckles or ties, high-lows.

Discouraged: Moccasins.

Unacceptable: Modern Footwear, modern moccasins, civil war bootees, or riding boots(except for field officers).



Arms

Best: New England style fowlers, English fowlers, either plain or modified for a bayonet.

Acceptable: Old pattern Dutch, French, British, commercial or American made muskets.

Unacceptable: Virginia or Pennsylvania styled long rifles, later French model muskets.

Side Arms

Best: Waist or shoulder belt mounted bayonet, hunting sword or cutlass.

Acceptable: None, small axes carried in a knapsack.

Discouraged: Sheathed tomahawks, belt axes, carried in a belt.

Unacceptable: Horse pistols, naval pistols, unsheathed bayonets, tomahawks, or belt axes.



Cartridge Pouches

Best: New England style soft cartridge pouches black or fair leather with approximately 19 round cartridge blocks, narrow black or buff leather straps, or linen webbing shoulder straps. Plain, empty, powder horns with narrow leather straps.

Acceptable: Small, simple leather shot pouches with narrow leather shoulder straps, or belt loops.

Discouraged: Belly boxes or shoulder converted belly boxes.

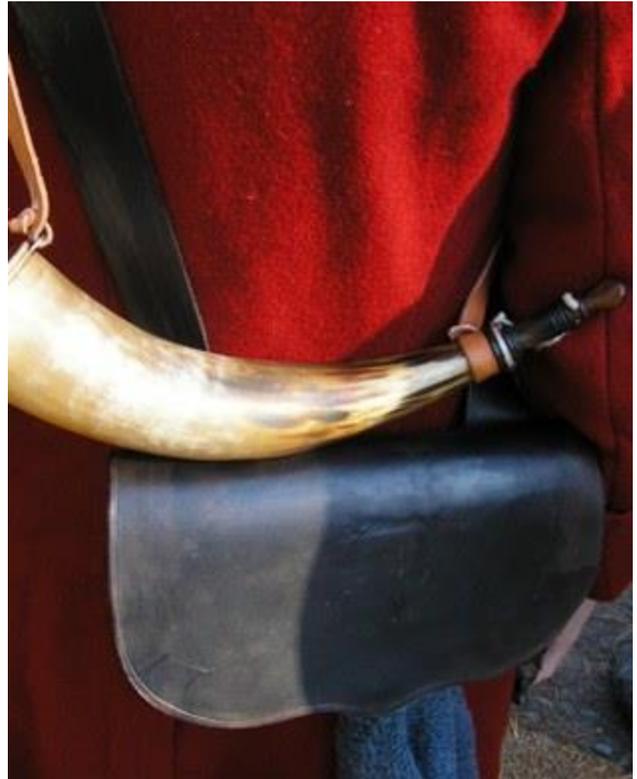
Unacceptable: British 36 or 29-hole cartridge pouches, New Model American pouches.

Powder Horns

Best: Plain, empty, powder horns with narrow leather straps.

Acceptable: No powder horn to go with a cartridge pouch.

Unacceptable: Native styled powder horns, or black powder filled horns.



Knapsacks and Tumplines

Best: Plain single envelope knapsacks, drawstring canvas snapsacks, or hemp tumplines.

Acceptable: Painted canvas Benjamin Warner or similar pattern knapsacks, blanket rolls.

Unacceptable: British painted or goatskin knapsacks.

Blankets

Best: 2-3 point check, Dutch, or rose blankets.

Acceptable: Plain white or Hudson Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.

