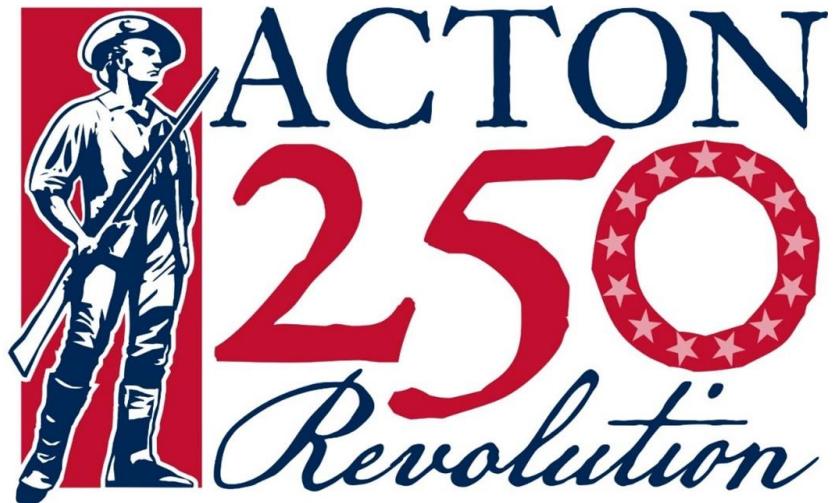


Daily Life in Colonial Acton

by Historian Mary Fuhrer

- Presented by the Acton 250 Committee
- More events of all kinds to follow well into 2025
- Acton has a lot of history to celebrate!



Daily Life in Acton on the Eve of the Revolution

Acton 250

November 2023

“The past is a foreign country.”



1. Major Pitcairn at the head of the Regulars advancing
2. The British Regulars in the front of the British Regulars
3. Major Pitcairn taking of his hat

4. Regulars advancing on the road to Concord
5. The British Regulars in the rear of the British Regulars
6. Major Pitcairn taking of his hat

From the Collections of the Clements Library

First Peoples of this Area – Nipmuck



The World of Late Colonial Acton

- Family & Household
- House & Possessions
- Farm
- Neighborhood
- Church
- Town
- Two guides on tour: Simon Hunt & Lucy Davis

I. Families & Households



Families with deep roots
& broad branches

Simon Hunt Family

Simon Hunt b. 1734

Married Lucy Raymond 1754

Children (all born in Acton):

- Lucy 1755, d. 1755
- Simon 1756.
- Lucy 1758
- Nathan 1760
- Mary 1762
- Paul 1764
- Elizabeth 1766
- Ruth 1769
- Tabitha 1771
- Sarah 1773
- Joanna 1779



The Savage Family, c. 1799, by Edward Savage, Worcester Art Museum

All people lived under “family government.”
“Family” = Household

- husband & wife
- children (average 6-8 per family)
- grandparents
- unmarried siblings of husband/wife
- visiting relatives
- apprentices
- hired help
- boarders
- town poor
- slaves

II. House and Home

Colonial era house plans

	PLAN	ONE-STORY	TWO-STORY
HALF-HOUSE (ONE-ROOM-DEEP)			
HALL-AND-PARLOR HOUSE (ONE-ROOM-DEEP)			
HALF-HOUSE (TWO-ROOMS-DEEP)			
CENTER-CHIMNEY HOUSE (TWO-ROOMS-DEEP)			
CENTER-HALL HOUSE (TWO-ROOMS-DEEP)			

NORTH ELEVATION
FAIRFIELD, CONN.
FAIRFIELD COUNTY
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
1970

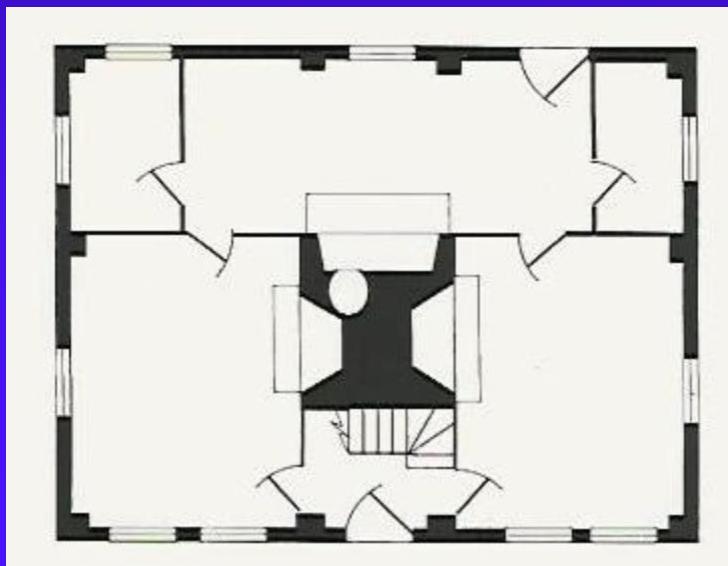
Thomas Hubka, Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn

Household Goods

Probate Inventory of
Isaac Davis, June
1775

<i>The Inventory of the moveable Estate of Capt Isaac Davis Late of Acton Deceas^t which was taken June 27th 1775 as it was shown to us (viz) Ephraim Hapgood Joseph Robbins and James Pulker which did divide them</i>	
one Hatt 29 th one gral Coat 2 ^{1/2} one coat 20 th	£ 3: 11: 0
one Gacet 6 th one coat 12 th one Gacet 6 th	1: 11: 0
one pair of Breches 2 ^{1/2} one coat n Gacet 3 ^{1/2}	0: 15: 0
one pair of Leather breeches & another pair of Breches 1 ^{1/2}	1: 1: 0
two Shirts & two pair of Stockins 1 ^{1/2} three pair of Gloves 1 ^{1/2}	0: 16: 0
two pair of Stockins 2 ^{1/2} the first Bed and Furniture 36 th	16: 1: 2: 0
the Second Bed and Furniture 36 th the third Bed & Furniture 3: 12: 0	3: 12: 0
the forth Bed 21 th two Brads 2 ^{1/2} two Sheets & a Table Cloth 1 ^{1/2}	1: 17: 0
two pair of Troupers 4 th one window Curtain 1 ^{1/2} two Table Cloths 1 ^{1/2}	0: 6: 6
four Pewter Platters 14 th twelve Pewter Plates 1 ^{1/2} old Pewter Dishes 7: 11: 4 th	7: 11: 4 th
one Pewter Quart Pottle & a point Pott & one Spoon 3 ^{1/2}	0: 3: 6
one Cask of Knives for 10 th 3 ^{1/2} two Skins 1 ^{1/2}	0: 5: 6
one Brass Kettle and a Brass Skillet 3 ^{1/2} a pair of spectacles 1 ^{1/2}	1: 1: 4
a Iron Pott & Kettle and Skillet 5 th a pair of Silver Shoot Buckles 10 th	0: 15: 0
one pair of Silver Sheff Butter 2 ^{1/2} a Gun Barrel 5 th	0: 5: 0
a pair of Brass Mop Buckets & a pair Steel Kneebuckets 4 th	0: 1: 0
one Powder Horn & a sword 2 ^{1/2} a quarter of a pound of Powder 0: 2: 6	0: 2: 6
one Gun 3 ^{1/2} a pistol & Cartridge Box 1 ^{1/2} a powder Flask 3 ^{1/2}	1: 19: 0
a pair of Larders 3 ^{1/2} one Crain 6 th two flat Irons 3 ^{1/2}	0: 14: 0
one Coal and Hod 1 ^{1/2} one Roasting Iron 1 ^{1/2} two Candle Sticks 1 ^{1/2}	0: 4: 0
one Morning Glass Hand Bellows & a pair of Shears 1 ^{1/2} a Shovel and Pong 1 ^{1/2}	0: 8: 0
Sheep Shears & Chopping Knife 1 ^{1/2} one yard of Hingel 1 ^{1/2}	0: 11: 6
one Half Bushel in one pack 1 ^{1/2} three old pack 1 ^{1/2}	0: 3: 0
one Bible and other Books 6 th Bullet mold 3 ^{1/2} Glassware 1 ^{1/2}	0: 10: 0
Earthenware 3 ^{1/2} and old Earthenware 1 ^{1/2} and a pectlet 1 ^{1/2}	0: 6: 6
Twenty old Silver Barrels 26 th & two meet tubs one soap Pail 1 ^{1/2}	1: 10: 6
Dry Cask 6 th one Gallon bottle 1 ^{1/2} one funnel 1 ^{1/2}	0: 8: 0
Roping Dan 2 ^{1/2} five yard and half of allebowl Cloth 2 ^{1/2}	1: 8: 8
one pair of Scissors 1 ^{1/2} two pair of old Shears 2 ^{1/2}	0: 4: 0
one Crain 2 ^{1/2} & twenty pounds of Sheeps wool 2 ^{1/2}	1: 2: 1
Seven pounds of Combed flax & one old Deck 10 th	0: 18: 0

Parlor, Hall, & Kitchen



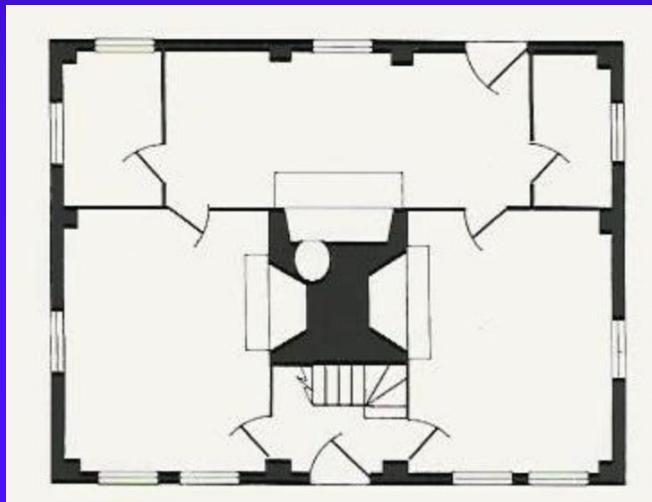
James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England*



Multi-use “Hall” & Kitchen



Scott Thorp 2013, scottthorpphoto.com



James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England*



Image: Carole Conn, “No Butter in the Buttery”

III. Farm

“Here once the embattled *farmers* stood . . .”



Yankee Yeoman Farm



Harvard Forest Diorama

Land provided security, independence, and civic identity

In colonial New England, a farm that would *sustainably* produce the food, clothing, and fuel for an average household required about **60** acres.

Ideal Mixed-Use Sustainable Family Farm
Freedom's Way Colonial Towns

Woodlot 20 Acres	Meadow 15 Acres	Pasture 15 Acres
Tillage 6 Acres	Houselot 2 Acres	Orchard 2 Acres

Houselot – Dooryard, Barnyard, Garden

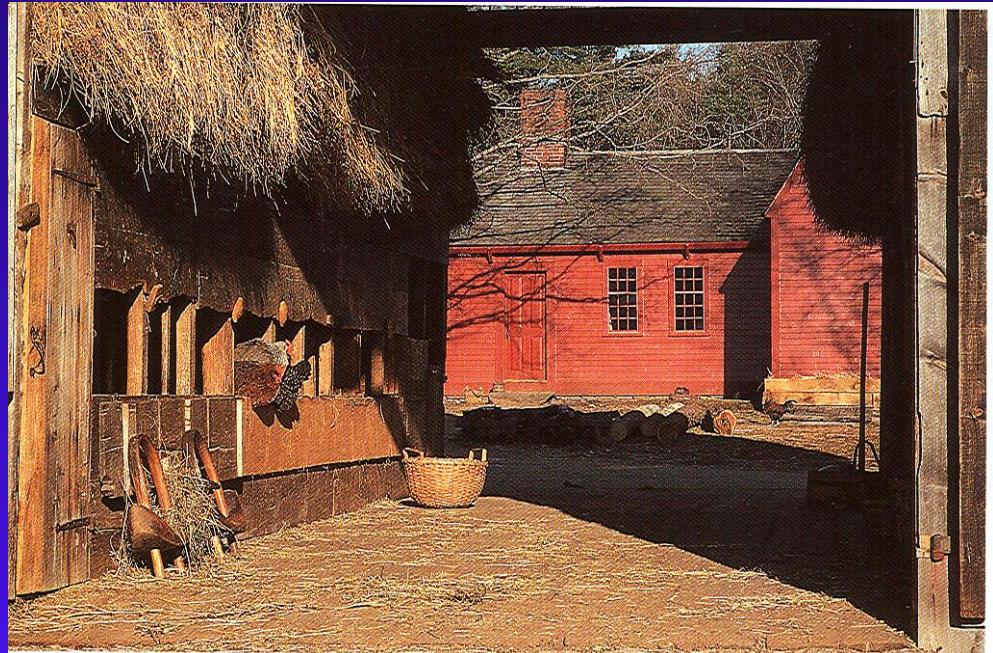


Photo:s Old Sturbridge Village

Orchard: Cider and Fruit



Photo: Old Sturbridge Village

Tillage: Grains and Flax



Photo: Old Sturbridge Village

Pasture: Grazing

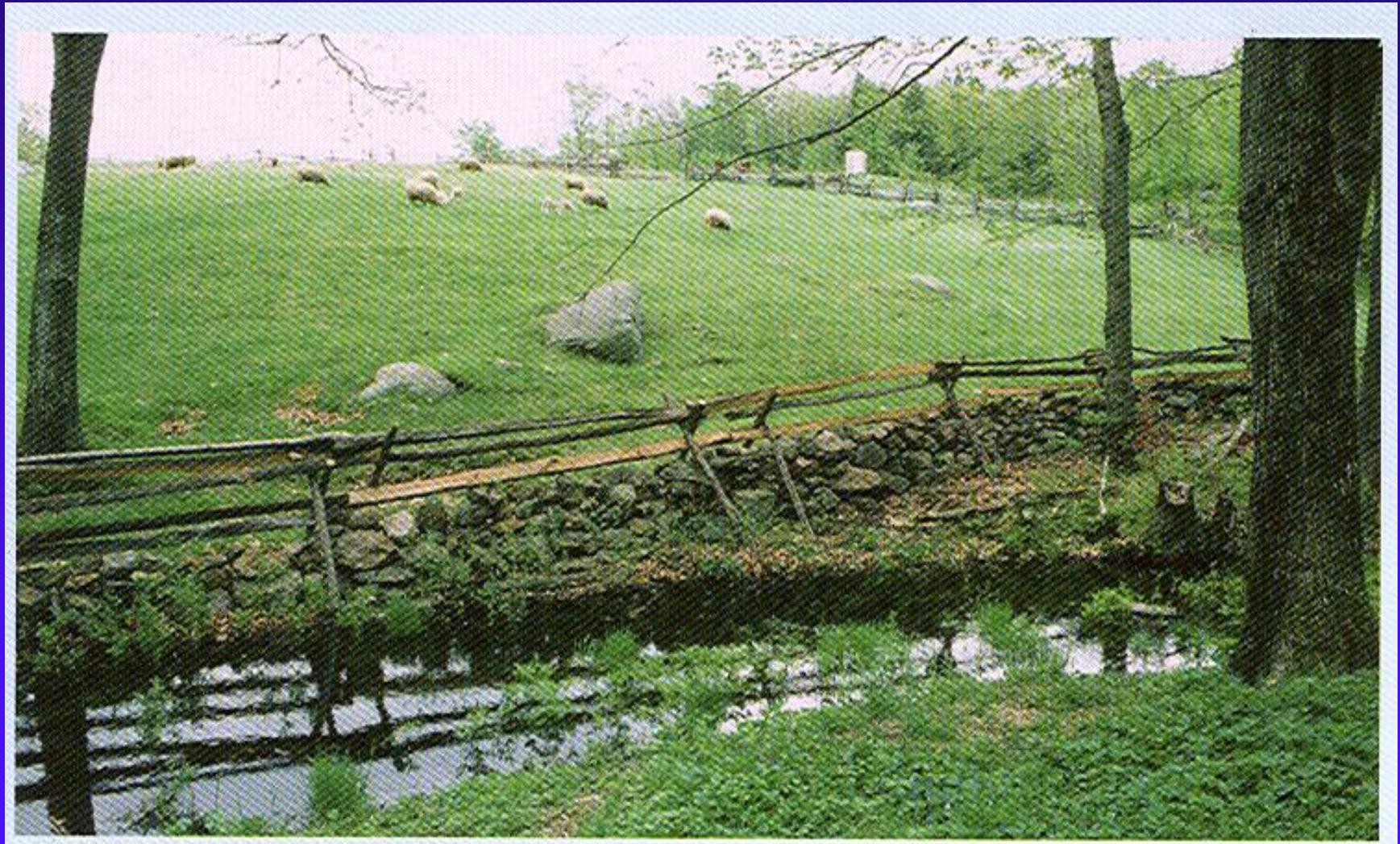


Photo: Old Sturbridge Village

Meadow: Hay



Painting; Cutting the Hay by Martin Driscoll

Woodlot: Fuel and Timber



Farm Valuations

1735 Lexington Valuation

Names. 1735	pol	pol	house	mil	One	moor	Patte	Tilla	Real	She	oxe	Cow	hors	sheep	goat	Personal
	Rat	not	sing	hun	run	ing	re	ge	Estate	she	oxe	Cow	est	sheep	Personal	Estate
	all	all								us						Estate
Dea: Jos Brown	4	0	2	0	1	02	10	04	31--10	0	2	06	2	00	1	17--08
Dea: Jos Eastabrook	2	0	2	1	1	12	12	06	33--00	0	2	10	2	16	0	25--08
Amos Murzy	2	0	2	0	2	25	15	05	30--00	0	4	04	1	04	1	17--00
Thomas Cutler	1	0	2	0	1	10	10	10	30--00	1	2	08	2	10	0	29--00
Thom: Feslington:se	1	0	2	0	1	10	10	02	27--00	0	2	05	1	00	0	13--10
Sam'l Winship:se	1	0	2	0	01	12	20	06	33--00	0	2	04	2	00	0	14--00
Fran: Whitmore	1	0											1			02--00
Edward Winship:se	1	0	2	0	1	06	05	04	15--00	1	2	02	1	00	0	24--00
James Russel	1	0	2	0	0	04	00	04	12--00	0	2	04	1	03	0	12--09
Phillip Russel	1	0	2	0	1	06	03	08	16--00	0	2	03	1	06	0	11--08
Eno: Willi: Munroe	2	0	2	0	1	10	05	06	21--10	0	4	04	1	10	1	17--18
George Munroe:se	3	0	2	0	2	15	08	08	34--10	0	4	06	2	24	1	25--00
Daniel Munroe	1	0	2	0	1	06	03	05	12--00	0	2	03	1	06	1	11--16
Jon: Herrington	2	0	2	0	1	05	20	08	30--00	1	2	05	2	00	0	35--10
Thom: Blagget:se	1	0	2	0	0	00	04	04	09--00	0	0	06	1	00	0	11--00
Thom: Blagget:ju	2	0	2	0	1	01	00	00	04--10	0	2	03	0	06	0	09--08
Joseph Lock:se	2	0	1	0	2	06	10	05	18--00	0	2	04	1	09	0	12--09
Joshua Simons	1	0	2	0	2	10	06	08	45--00	1	2	07	2	10	0	32--00
Jonath: Simons	2	0	2	0	0	03	03	04	15--00	0	2	05	1	00	1	18--18

pol Rat able	pol not sing Rat able	house sing	mil hun	Orc ing	moor re	Pattie re	Tilla ge	Real Estate	She she	One one	Cow cow	hort hort	sheep sheep	swine swine	Personal Estate
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Simon Hunt's Land - 1771

Polls rateable – 1	Required for Sustainable Farm
House – 1	[2 acres]
Orchard	[2+ acres]
Tillage	7 acres
Pasture	10 acres*
Meadow	21 acres
Assumed woodlot	42 acres**
TOTAL ACRES	84
	60 acres

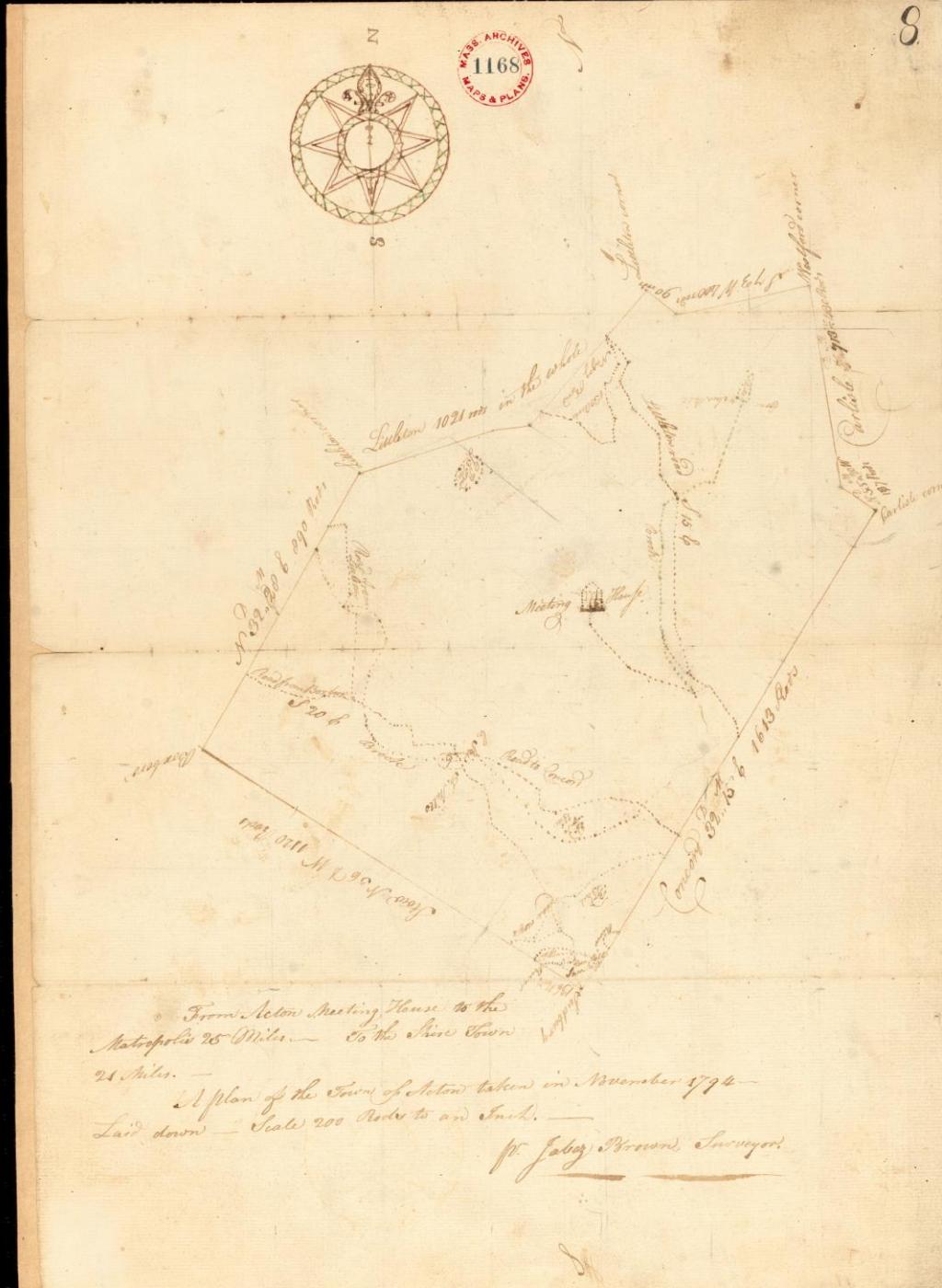
Livestock	Essential Stock to Sustain Family:
• Horse	1
• Oxen	2
• Cattle	5
• Goats/Sheep	10
• Swine	2
• Barrels cider	20

*Valuation says these 10 acres of a quality to feed 7 cows

**Rule of Thumb: double acreage to estimate woodlot

IV. Neighborhood

Map of Acton 1794



Farm Account Books

Oct 1745 Ens Peirce Deter

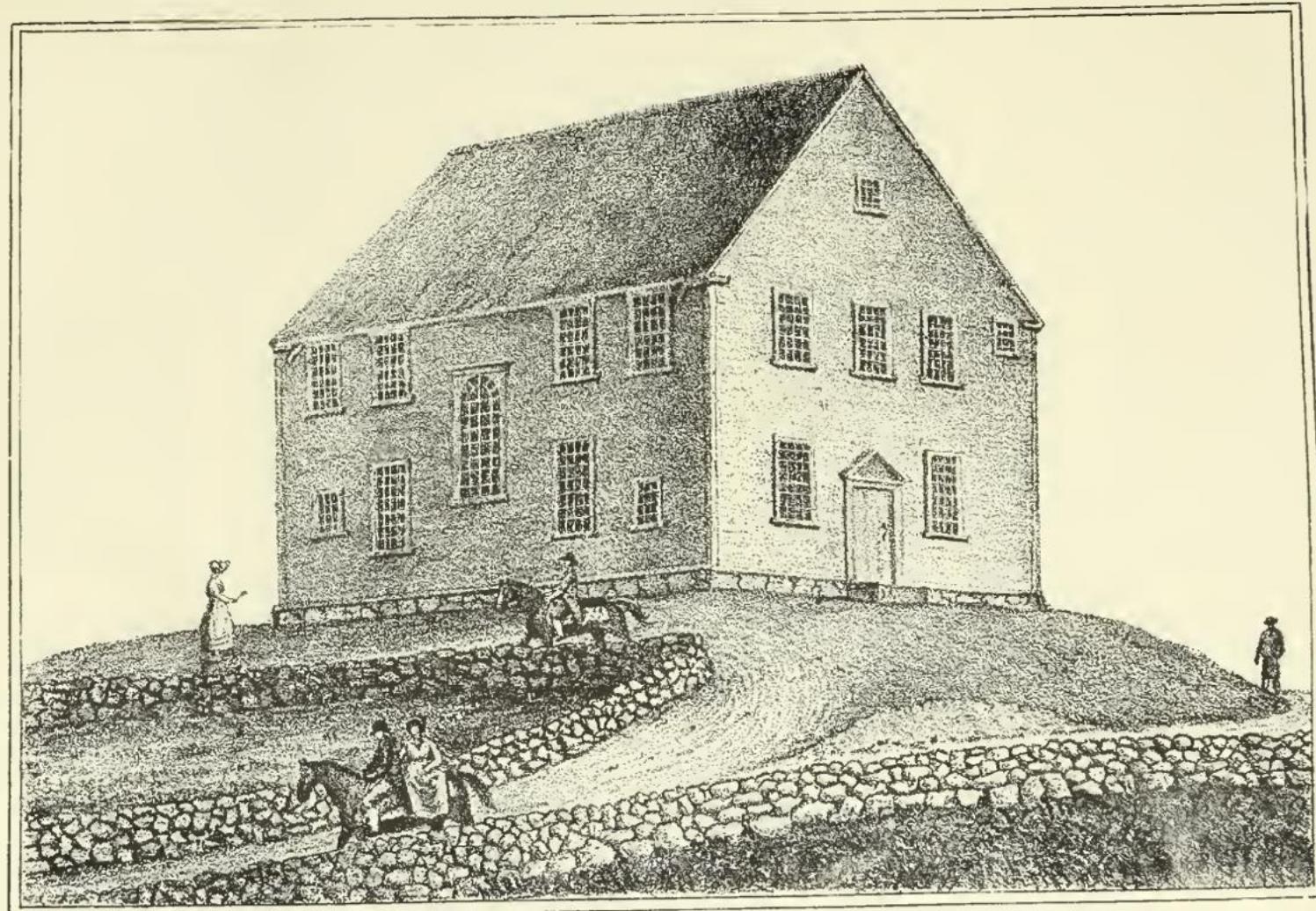
to a Barril & $\frac{1}{2}$ a hundred of nails — 0-17-03
to a Coffin & 8 Bows to ty Cattle — 0-03-00
to a Brake — 0-03-00

Feb: 20th. 1746: then Reckoned with
Ens Peirce and there is Due to me. — 3-2-3
to my oxen 1 day & half & in ax before. — 0-2-9
to making a tub & other things — 0-5-6
May to my oxen half a day Plough — 0-2-6
to a Chees mill — 0-14-0
to my oxen half a day plowing & other things — 0-5-0
to my oxen to plough in your Rice — 0-03-0
to mending your mill & setting hoops — 0-04-6
to my oxen to get in your hay — 1-05-0
to mending your Cartwheel & setting hoops — 1-0-0
to making your oven — 0-08-0
to Shiving your sled — 0-03-0
to mending your carriers — 0-06-6
2 8-6
10-7-6

January 31: 1747: then Reckoned with
Lof. Peirce and there is Due to me — 0-15-2
to making your leading Slat — 0-05-0
July 1: to 23 pounds of meal at 15 pds. 01-08-9

Feb: 1: 1748 then Reckoned with Lof. Peirce
& there is Due to him — 4-14-10
Feb: 3: to $\frac{1}{2}$ hundred of nails — 0-03-00
April: to my oxen one day & $\frac{1}{2}$ — 0-18-00
Total: Bushel of oats — 0-06-00
to my oxen to Get in your hay — 2-00-00
to four oxen to Joseph a day & half to Plough — 1-16-00
to a foot wheel & in mending another — 1-02-06
Feb: 3: 1749 then Reckoned with Lof. Peirce & Due to him — 10-4

V. Church



THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE. 1738.

Sketch from Harold R. Phelan, *History of the Town of Acton*

Seating the Meetinghouse

John Bell Jones Lock Sam'l Duley Thomas Baker Moses Glendon Stephen Bell	John Alderson Ben Arms Elijah Arms Sam'l Baker	Robert Arms P. Cook Arms Dr. Wright wife W. Rose wife	Col. Hale John Melvin Joseph Robbins Capt. Avery Mrs. Avery Dr. Lewis	Eleazar Dickinson Louisa A. Dickinson Dot. Abby Hannah Bassett Eliza Bassett Charles Avery Dr. Rogers
David Jones Purcell man Cyrus Jones son Dr. Henn Dr. Bell Dr. Lester	Sam'l Arms Sam'l Baker Aaron Arms	Major Barnes Elder Bassett Dr. Williams	Joseph Melville Rich Wright Sam'l Barnes Jerehith Arms Wid. Abigail Arms Elijah Arms	Sam'l Cather Seth Hob Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Abigail Taylor
Eleazar Jones John Baker John Bell Ben Baker Hannah Alexander John Chapman	Asa Wright John Fitch Cyrus Wright Elijah Jones Sam'l Cather Katherine Jones John Baker	May'z Lickinger Sam'l Barnes John Williams Lock Barnes Dr. T. Hale	Elijah Arms Sam'l Melville John Shelding Sam'l Arms	John Alderson James Henn Abel Hob Sam'l Hins Little Jones Joseph Hins Abner Baker Elijah Baker Sam'l Hins
John Baker Sam'l Baker George Cook Sam'l Cather John Chapman Ben Bell	Asa Wright John Fitch Cyrus Wright Elijah Jones Sam'l Cather Katherine Jones John Baker	John Lock Sam'l Arms Elijah Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Oliver Hob Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Alderson James Henn Abel Hob Sam'l Hins Little Jones Joseph Hins Abner Baker Elijah Baker Sam'l Hins
Ben Williams Sam'l Baker Elijah Barnes John Baker	Sam'l Arms Sam'l Baker Elijah Barnes Sam'l Barnes	John Lock Sam'l Arms Elijah Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Oliver Hob Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Alderson James Henn Abel Hob Sam'l Hins Little Jones Joseph Hins Abner Baker Elijah Baker Sam'l Hins
Sam'l Cather Dr. Lardner David Baker Elijah Arms Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins John Alderson	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Lock Sam'l Arms Elijah Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Oliver Hob Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Alderson James Henn Abel Hob Sam'l Hins Little Jones Joseph Hins Abner Baker Elijah Baker Sam'l Hins
Sam'l Cather Dr. Lardner David Baker Elijah Arms Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins John Alderson	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Lock Sam'l Arms Elijah Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms Sam'l Arms	Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Oliver Hob Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins Sam'l Hins	John Alderson James Henn Abel Hob Sam'l Hins Little Jones Joseph Hins Abner Baker Elijah Baker Sam'l Hins

VII. Town



Town
Meeting

Town Matters



Town Roads



Town Schools

March the 2 then put the widow Trow to the lowest bider for 13 weeks and She was Struck off to Calvin Hayward at 5=9 per week for Said term

March ye 7: 1743 to an order to William Connant for his carreing [carrying] John Mallery out of town

Town Poor

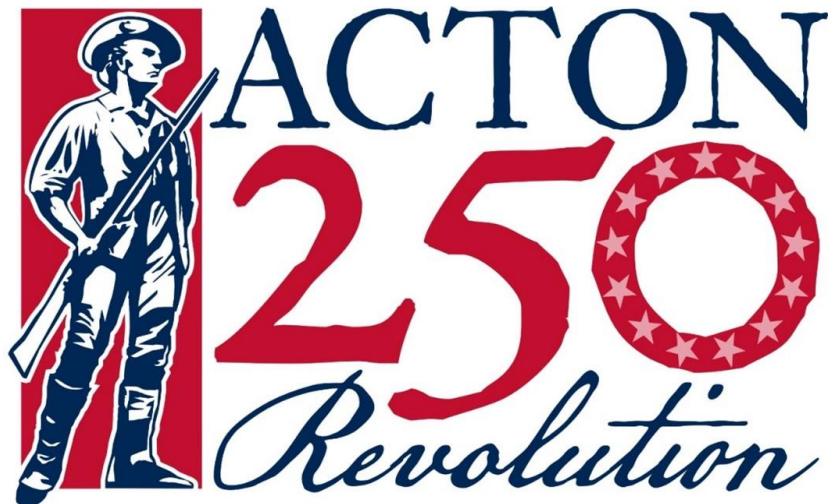


Town Pound



Question and Answer Time!

- Please wait until called upon
- Please be respectful and save time for others



Thank You! ... and More to Come!

Next Up:

Sunday, December 10 2-4PM
Acton Center Tour – Amy Cole

Saturday, December 16 2-3PM

Steeped In Secrecy: The Boston Tea Party, 250 Years Later

