

REMARKS BY TERRENCE PARKER

THE OLD BURYING GROUND BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEMORIAL DAY ~ MAY, 30 2016

In the northeast corner of the Old Burial Ground are the remains of Caesar Jones, Cambridge Moore and Caesar Prescott. Three former slaves who fought for the freedom of the colonies during the Revolutionary War.

Although there is no official record, family tradition has it that Cambridge Moore and Caesar Jones accompanied their masters on April 19, 1775 to the skirmish at the North bridge in Concord which marked the beginning of the American Revolution.

In Abram E. Brown's "History of Bedford" he states, "It is noticeable that three Negroes, relics of the days of slavery in this town, not registered as liable to do military duty, were in the Continental Army during the greater part of the war - Cambridge Moore, Caesar Prescott and Caesar Jones."

Up until 1780, Jones, Moore and Prescott served in the army without pay as they were enslaved. However with the adoption of the state constitution in 1783, slavery was abolished in Massachusetts.

As the war lengthen and reenlistments became necessary, 2 of the 3 former slaves re-entered the army in 1780 as free men. They received the same bounty and pay as their white neighbors. For re-enlisting for another 3 years, Cambridge Moore and Caesar Prescott were each paid 20 head of cattle.

In 1782 in answer to another call for soldiers, Caesar Jones also re-enlisted.