Historical Notes from the Valley Times
A series of articles 1868, no author given, but possibly John Cate French

The McClary Family

The old town of Epsom has furnished many worthy men during the past hundred and fifty years, who have held prominent positions of trust and honor, in the State and Nation; but none stand out in so bold relief, or are more worthy of remembrance, than the McClary's.

In fact, no family in the Suncook Valley fills so large a space in its history, or the hearts of the people; and as the "Times" attempts to gather some of the incidents from memories of the past it seems appropriate that early mention be made of our most distinguished characters. For nearly a century, the McClary's were the leading influential men in all our civil, political and military affairs, and were identified with all the important events and measures, that received the attention and governed the acts of the successive generations during that long period of time.

There is something mournful in the thought, however, that a family and name, once so familiar in our midst, is but a record of the past and that no lineal male descendant is living to inherit the honors so dearly won by a noble ancestry, or to transmit the name to a grateful posterity.

And it is passing strange, that so little has been written or preserved, concerning their noble deeds and many years service in public life, and that no testimonials are in existence, except public records, to aid in preserving their memories.

We know of no instance in our State where history has so sadly neglected to do justice to a family which had rendered so efficient service in defending the rights, and promoting the interests of our commonwealth and nation, as in this instance.

The only official effort made to perpetuate the name as of national interest, has been to honor one of the fortifications of Portsmouth harbor, with the name, Fort McClary, and a privateer which had but a short existence. The name of only one, Major Andrew McClary, appears in our printed histories, while several others of the family are equally deserving of mention.

The early proprietors and settlers of Epsom were of good English stock, though there was a small company of Scotch Irish from Londonderry who bought lands here about 1738.

Among the number were the McClary's, McCoy's, McGaffey's, Dickey's, Wallace's, Knox's &c.

These Scotch Irish were a peculiar race, not liked by the English.

They were of pure Scotch descent, with the broad dialect and brogue and many of the customs peculiar to their ancestry. They resided for a long time in the north of Ireland, where they suffered a series of oppressions and persecutions which would have disheartened and subdued ordinary men.

The famous siege of Derry is fresh in the minds of every student of history, where, for eight long months, these Scotch-Irish defended their city against the assaults of a powerful Irish army. History furnished no parallel to the bravery, suffering, valor and endurance displayed by that memorable siege. They fought for their homes and the Protestant religion, with want, famine and destruction, staring them full in the face. Horses, dogs, cats, rats and mice were choice morels of food, before they received succor from England, and drove back the besiegers. But in after years, with rents, taxes and the annoyances of Catholicism, many were induced to emigrate to the cheap, fertile soils of America and a few families founded a settlement in Londonderry in 1719, under the ministry of Rev. James McGregor. The history of this settlement is the most important and entertaining in the unwritten history of New Hampshire. Among the descendants of this people, now numbering over sixty thousand, have been found the ablest men of the nation in all walks of life.

The Bell;s, Stark's, Thornton's, McKeen's, McNeil's, Reed's, McClary's &c., were of this stock, besides many others who have done much to give character, wealth and reputation to the State, and make New Hampshire what she is.

The colony first introduced the culture of the potato and flax, also the spinning and weaving of linen. There were high-spirited out-spoken, industrious, hardy, jovial, and immovably attached to the principles of the Protestant Religion.

Among the number who felt the wrongs and oppressions, and sought an asylum for himself and children in the wilderness at Londonderry, was Andrew McClary. He soon died, but two of his sons, Andrew and John, grew to manhood and settled in Epsom, where they carved for themselves a farm and fortune.

By the records, we find that Andrew McClary held town office in 1739, and for eighty-three successive years some members of the family were promoted to positions of trust and power by their townsmen. This forcibly illustrates the popularity and appreciation of this family by their kinsmen and townsmen.

Epsom at that time was a frontier town with a few scattering pioneers, striving to find a "local habitation and a name," in the unbroken forests.

Theodore Atkinson, a wealthy land owner, was the leading spirit, among the proprietors, in inducing a few families to push a settlement so far into the woods. None of the adjoining towns were settled till many years afterward. This was nearly thirty years before Chichester, Pittsfield or Barnstead were settled; twenty years before Concord received its present name; twenty years before Northwood and Deerfield were incorporated, and thirty six years before the Revolution.

The first settlement in the Suncook Valley was here, and not a tree was cut between this land and the Canadas, and not a clearing or friendly smoke or any signs of civilization to break the monotony of the unbounded forest or cheer the loneliness of the early settlers. The sentiment that prompted the line,

"Oh! For a lodge in some vast wilderness"

could have been here gratified. Meager indeed, are the records and traditions concerning these hardy foresters during their many years of border life, before the Revolution.

Nottingham fort was the nearest neighbors and the asylum for safety.

The Indians frequented the Valley, and bears, wild cats, deer and catamounts roamed the forest undisturbed.

The proprietors built a blockhouse or garrison for refuge in case of danger. It was built near Andrew McClary's and the old foundation was disturbed last summer by building the new house for Augustus Lord, Esq. Mrs. McCoy and family were hastening to and had nearly reached this garrison when captured by the Indians in 1754, which will be the subject of another sketch.

Though the Indians were generally friendly, the inhabitants were greatly annoyed, and the growth of the settlement slow and difficult.

Andrew and John McClary were the leading influential men in all town or military affairs. Leaving John, who for half a century was a prominent man in public life, for future sketches, we will endeavor to relate some incidents in the life of his more romantic and adventurous brother

MAJ. ANDREW McCLARY.

In these "piping times of peace," ease and prosperity, we can faintly realize the times, manners, customs, hardships, dangers, privations and the rough life led by these wild woodsmen of a hundred and thirty years ago. Clearing, burning, hunting, scouting and prospecting, required strength, bravery and endurance, also the rough sports, wrestling, boxing &c. especially of the Scotch-Irish, tested the strength of the muscles and agility of the participants. Only the men who excelled in these tests of strength and skill, were the popular leaders of the day. In all such labors and pastimes, Andrew McClary was the acknowledged champion. He was a host in himself. He stood over six feet, straight as an arrow, finely proportioned symmetrical of form, every muscle well developed, rough and ready, jovial, generous, with a stentorian voice, blue eyes, florid complexion and such a man as would be picked out of a thousand as

evidently “born to command.” He possessed all the qualifications of a successful and popular border leader of that time. It is said that in a bar room scuffle at Portsmouth, one night, six men attempted to put him out of the room, when he turned upon them with his Herculean strength and through them all out of the window.

During the French and Indian war, commencing in 1756, Epsom was one of the frontier towns; the people lived in fear of the scalping knife and tomahawk, and suffered the incursions of the prowling savages.

Garrisons were established at Epsom, Buck Street Pembroke, and a fort at Canterbury. Government frequently sent small detachments of troops up through this sections scouting for the enemy and to protect and encourage the settlers. Capt. Andrew McClary was the leading man in this region in all military matters and rendered the colony efficient service during there perilous times. He had the personal acquaintance of the highest officials of the colony, and as such noted fighters, and rangers as Stark, Goffe, Rogers &c.

His name frequently appears on the State records. In 1755 he applied to Gov. Wentworth and obtained a company of troop to go in and search of the Indians that committed the massacre and captured the McCall family at Salisbury. At another time he obtained a small company to aid in doing garrison duty at Epsom, while the Indians were seen lurking about. As an officer, he was ever ready for any exposure or danger, while his men had the most implicit confidence in his ability and integrity. His command was authoritative and no man refused obedience. In case of an emergency he could swear enough for a battalion, enough to frighten the Penacooks out of the Suncook Valley and cause the old Scotch Covenanters to hold up their hands in holy horror. He built a one story frame house and kept tavern on the height of the land on the road leading from Epsom village to Pleasant Pond. The place is now owned by Joseph Lawrence, better known as Lawrence’s “muster field.” His home was the common resort of the settlers, proprietors and scouts, and all who had occasion to travel in this direction. Town meetings were held here until the “new meeting house” was built, jurors were drawn here for His Majesty’s Court, training of His Majesty’s soldiers, and many rude frolics and exciting incidents which have long since passed into oblivion, never to be recalled. His wealth increased as well as his popularity. He owned all the land on the north side of the road to the Deerfield line. He had won the advantages of a fair English education. He served as Town Clerk and his records on the town books indicated a thorough knowledge of business, a good use of language and a style and beauty of penmanship seldom found at the present day. His last writing on the town books, the year before he was killed, evinced care, accuracy and precision.

He took a lively interest in the affairs of the colonies and early espoused the cause of the people against the arbitrary encroachments of the mother country before the commencement of the Revolutionary War. His ancestry, education and experience would naturally lead him to take sides with the people in defending their liberties, when assailed by British oppression.

Frequent meetings were held at his house, and measures taken to co-operate with adjoining towns for natural rights and protection.

For fifteen years the white winged angel of peace had hovered over the State; the most prosperous period in her whole history.

The desire to possess real estate so strong in the Anglo Saxon mind, the huge growth of trees, the fertile soil in the Suncook Valley, attracted the attention of the emigrant and secured, the rapid settlement of Gilmanton, Pittsfield, Chichester, Loudon, Northwood and Deerfield, with Epsom as a common centre.

The “seven years war,” which closed in 1760, had completely aroused the military spirit of the province and organizations, with experienced officers, had been maintained up to the time of the Revolution. A new regiment was then formed, the 12th, comprising the towns of Nottingham, Deerfield, Epsom,

Northwood, Chichester and Pittsfield. “Coming events cast their shadows before.” The people were expecting a serious conflict.
The location of McClary’s tavern made it a common resort for the rustic foresters to meet and talk of the difficulties; while the popularity and ability of the jovial landlord, rendered him the political and military oracle of the Suncook Valley.
The battle of Lexington on the 19th of April 1775, sounded the tocsin to arms. Signals flamed from the hilltops, and fleet messengers transmitted news from town to town.
A swift rider, *blowing a horn*, passed through Nottingham and reached Epsom on the morning of the 20th. The alarm found Capt. McClary plowing in the “old muster field.” Like Cincinnatus of old, he left the plow in the furrow and hastened to obey the summons. With little preparation he seized his saddle-bags, leaped into the saddle, swearing as he left, than he would *kill one of the Devils before he came home*.
“Jocky Fogg,” who was his servant in the army, used to speak of his horse as “a large powerful iron-grey, four year old stallion, so exceedingly vicious that no one could mount or govern him, except the captain. He could spring upon his back, and, by the power of his arm, govern him with the greatest of ease.”
The sturdy yeomanry of the Suncook Valley snatched their trusty firelocks and powder horns, and started for the scene of hostilities, with spirits as brave as ever animated a soldier, and with hearts as noble and honest as ever throbbed in the cause of liberty and freedom.
They were governed by one common impulse, and came from blazed paths and crooked roads that wound through the forest and thickets. They were all known to each other as brothers and townsmen. Each soldier represented a household, and they and their cause were commended to the protection of Heaven at the morning and evening devotions, and in the service of the Sabbath; donations of food and clothing were freely sent to them, by the families at home.
The men from this section reached Nottingham Square about 1 o’clock where they found Capt. Cilley and Dr. Dearborn with a company of about 60 men making with themselves, about 80 men.
Who would not like to see those men, some with broad-tailed black coats, worsted stockings, three-cornered hats; others in coarse homespun; all with long stockings, knee and shoe buckles, and thick cowhide shoes. Their guns and equipments were as various as their costumes. Some had the old “Queen Ann” that had done service in the French War; some, long fowling pieces; some, a fusee, only one had a bayonet. Powder-horn and shot pouches took the place of cartridge box.
If we were to choose a subject for a historical painting, we would prefer the scene on Nottingham Square, April 20th, where were paraded the noblest band of patriots that ever left New Hampshire to vindicate her honor and protect her liberties. We would like to hear the roll call and see a photograph of these heroes.
Without the spirit of boasting, we doubt if ever one company in the country furnished so large a portion of distinguished men, or that cost “John Bull” so many lives, or so much money. Many of their names are historic, and come down to us in official records, filling a large space in our military history. Just reflect who composed this Spartan band, and not only astonished the nation with their famous deeds and heroism at the battle of Bunker Hill, but consider their positions and power in after years.
First, there was Captain McClary, the oldest and noblest Roman of them all, whose sad fall is familiar to any schoolboy.
Then Capt. Joseph Cilley of Nottingham, aged 32, soon to be promoted Maj., Col., and Gen., serving through the war with distinction, and in 1786, appointed Maj. Gen. of the N.H. Militia.
Then Dr. Henry Dearborn, but 24, to be Capt., then Maj. and Col., then member of Congress, U.S. Marshall, Sec. of War under Jefferson, Foreign Minister, and Commander in Chief of the U.S. Army in the war of 1812.

Then, Thos. Bartlett, afterwards Capt., Member of the Com. of Safety, then Col. in the army, and in 1792, Brig, Gen. of the N.H. Militia.
Then, Henry Butler, but 21, afterwards Capt., under Col. Bartlett, and Maj. Gen. of the N.H. Militia.
Then Amos Morrill, first selectman of Epsom, Lieut., then Capt. And Maj. serving in the army four years with honor to himself and town.
Then the young and chivalrous Michael McClary who served with credit four years in the Revolution, then represented the military spirit of the State, for nearly half a century, and as Adj. Gen., called out the northern troops in 1812.
Then Andrew McGaffey, another worthy officer from Epsom; also James Gray and Nathan Sanborn, both gaining the position of Captain in the army; also Joseph Hilton of Deerfield.
Capt. Andrew McClary was by common consent the leading spirit of this noble band of patriots, though there was no previous organization.
There is much to be written concerning the achievements and adventures of this distinguished company, and many of the able men composing it, but the most remarkable and thrilling incident in this connection, was their famous march to Cambridge.
There is not a parallel in the annals of all the wars in our country, and such wonderful powers of endurance by a whole company of men, excites our surprise, as their patriotism does our pride and admiration. No other locality can boast of sending braver hearts, or tougher men to aid, by their valor and perseverance, in establishing the noblest Republic that ever cheered and blest a prosperous people.
This noble Spartan band opened a series of brilliant exploits, be performance one of the most remarkable physical feats ever recorded in our nation's history. Dr. Dearborn gives an account of it, and Bancroft a passing notice, and tradition relates it, from generation to generation, but it should be familiar to every son and daughter of New Hampshire, as one of the brightest testimonials of our devotion to the cause of freedom and independence.
Accustomed as they were to life in the open air, and trials of strength by long journeys, hunting, trapping and scouting, they knew little of fear and fatigue. Leaving Nottingham Square at one o'clock in the afternoon, they pushed on at a rapid pace as if the destiny of the Province, or hopes of the nation depended upon their alacrity and speed. At Kingston they took a double-quick, or "dog trot," and followed it without a halt to Haverhill, crossing the Merrimack River in a ferry boat, at sunset, having made twenty-seven miles in six hours.
But this is not all: - they halted at Andover for supper, and then started for a night march, and, on the morning of the 21st, *at sunrise they were paraded on Cambridge Common, 'spilling for a fight*. Those from Epsom had traveled seventy miles in less than twenty-four hours, and the whole company from Nottingham, fifty-seven miles in less than twenty hours.
Did bone and muscle ever do better? That was the spirit of 76 that was the kind of stuff the men were made of, who lived in the Suncook Valley eighty-three years ago.

BUNKER HILL

The part which the soldiers of the Suncook Valley and adjoining towns took in this memorable fight, has never yet been written and we propose now to give it in full connection with the sketch of Andrew McClary.
For personal courage and firmness the battle of Bunker Hill stands among the first, in the brilliant events of the war. When we inquire who were the men that gained the highest prize of glory in this great contest, which ushered in our nation's birth, we can, with honest pride, claim for the men of the Suncook Valley a rich share of the praise and honor rightfully bestowed upon the soldiers of this memorable battle.
The company from this section was not only composed largely of men who afterwards became distinguished in the Revolution and, at the outset, made the best march ever recorded in out military

history, but it was one of the largest and best companies on the field and held the post of honor in the engagement.

The American army, composed of rustic heroes who had left their implements of husbandry in the fields and seized their fire-arms and powder-horns and flocked to the scene of the action, holding the British cooped up in the narrow limits of Boston, was without proper organization, equipment, ammunition or supplies. In fact, they had nothing but pluck a righteous cause and a love of liberty to sustain their hopes. They were commanded by Gen. Ward and old and incompetent military officer.

The New Hampshire troops, who, as the news of the slaughter at Lexington and Concord spread like wild fire over the land, had rushed to the place of rendezvous, had organized into two regiments, and lay entrenched at Medford.

John Stark, by a unanimous voice, was chosen to command the first under the rank of Colonel with Andrew McClary as Major. The company, composed of soldiers from Pittsfield, Chichester, Epsom, Deerfield and Nottingham, was commanded by Henry Dearborn of Nottingham, Captain, Amos Morrill of Epsom, Lieutenant, and Michael McClary of Epsom, Ensign.

The British having become impatient of restraint, determined to take the offensive. The first design in their plan was to move on the 18th of June and take possession of Bunker Hill, which commanded the city of Boston, and would enable them to annoy the American lines. Fortunately this design became known to Gen. Ward and he was urged to anticipate the movement and frustrate the plan. He accordingly ordered a detachment of about a thousand men to march stealthily during the night of the 16th and entrench themselves on the commanding eminence.

At sunset, the men were paraded on Cambridge common and stood reverently with uncovered heads, while President Langdon of Harvard College offered a fervent prayer and commended them and their cause, to the protection of Heaven. They then took up their silent march, passing the narrow neck of land that connects Charlestown with the main land, and reached the summit of the hill without being discovered by the enemy.

The bells in Boston tolled the hour of midnight before a sod was turned. In three short hours, the shadowy folds of night would lift and expose this bold advance and this brave band to the view and fire of the enemy who lay in the harbor.

The British ships Lively, Falcon and Somerset lay in the stream between Charlestown and Boston, and from the decks of these, the drowsy cry of the sentinels "all's well" could be distinctly heard by those who patrolled the shore. The Americans plied the pick and spade with vigor and threw up a square redoubt, near the middle of which, the monument now stands.

At daylight, the enemy discovered this daring band of patriots entrenching themselves almost over their heads, and immediately opened a brisk cannonading upon their works, but, regardless of the flying missiles, the Americans toiled on until their entrenchment was completed, with the loss of one man. This bold advance caused in instant commotion among the startled British, who immediately made preparation to land their forces and attack our entrenchments to dislodge our men from their position.

All was soon commotion also along the American lines. Col. Stark and Maj. McClary came down to Charlestown in the morning to reconnoiter the field and made many valuable suggestions in the preparation of the conflict which it was evident was about to open. The movements of the British indicated a formidable attack, and orders were issued for reinforcements to be forwarded to the redoubt, but such was the want of discipline and the conflict of authority, that few reached the scene of action.

The battle of Bunker Hill was a series of blunders and individual heroism. It was fought without a commander. Each regiment acting and fighting on their own hook. Two of the regiments that had been ordered to the redoubt, halted at the neck, which was swept with a continual discharge of chain and solid shot from the ships of war. It was at this juncture the New Hampshire troops under Gen. Stark came up hurrying forward to the aid of their comrades in the redoubt. Each of his soldiers had received a gill of

powder, fifteen balls and a spare flint. There were scarcely two muskets alike in the regiment and the men were compelled to reduce the size of the balls to suit the caliber of their respective guns. They had received orders to be in readiness to march about ten o'clock and reached Charlestown neck about one. It was one of the hottest days of the season and the men suffered severely from heat and thirst, yet every man was ready for a tilt with the British regulars. Finding the way blocked up with the halted regiments, Major McClary went forward and with his stentorian voice and commanding appearance called out to the commanders of those regiments to move on, or open up the right and left and *let the New Hampshire boys pass*.

This was immediately done. The regiment opened and they marched forward. The fire across the neck from the British Frigates was so galling, that Capt. Dearborn, whose company was in front, as he marched by the side of Stark, suggested to him that they take a quicker step, but that grim old veteran sternly replied, "Dearborn, one fresh man is worth ten fatigued ones" and strode on as coolly as though on parade and not a man of his command flinched or deserted his post.

They reached the Hill about two o'clock. Stark halted below the redoubt and harangued his men in a few short characteristic sentences, which were answered by three hearty cheers from his men. When he arrived he found the redoubt exposed to a flank movement from the enemy and, selecting his position wit the practical eye of an old soldier, he led his regiment to the left of the hill, and posted them near a rail fence east of the redoubt which ran down to the Mystic. This was then a hay field, the grass having been cut the day before; the men seized the hay cocks and crowded the hay between the rails of the fence, giving it the appearance to the enemy, of a breast-work, though it afforded no real protection. Capt. Dearborn's company was posted on the right of the line, which gave them a fine view of the action and his written account of the battle throws much light upon the part borne by Major McClary and his men. The British had then landed in large force and were forming for the attack, near the waters edge. While this was going on, Col. Stark stepped out and deliberately measuring off forty paces stuck down a stick. "There," said he, as he returned to the line, "don't a man fire till the Red Coats come to that stick, if he does I'll knock him down."

The British regulars, in the gay scarlet uniforms, presented a formidable and beautiful appearance, as they marched and countermarch in preparation for the attack. They at length moved forward, with the order and precision of a dress parade. The column that was to make the attack upon the rail fence was commanded by Gen. Howe in person and was composed of the Welsh fusiliers, a veteran regiment, and the flower of the British army. On they came as if flushed with the prestige \of a hundred victories. When within a hundred yards of the rail fence they deployed into line and opened a regular fire by platoons as they advanced. Along the whole line of the fence lay the New Hampshire boys peeping through the hay, their guns resting on the rails; every man a dead shot, knowing his trusty firelock was good for a red coat, but intent on reserving their fire till they reached the stake. But John Simpson, better known as "Ensign Simpson" of Deerfield being too much excited to wait, let drive, and this was a signal for a murderous fire along the whole line, so severe that the bold Britishers were driven back in confusion and disorder.

Simpson being reprimanded by Stark for firing against his orders, drawled out: "How in ___ could I help it when I see them Red Coats within gun shot". The fate of the British in front of the redoubt was equally disastrous and their whole line was thrown into confusion and compelled to retire before the well directed fire of the despised Continentals. They were however rallied by their officers and being reinforced, again moved up the hill on the redoubt and upon the rail fence below in the same perfect order as before.

"Don't waste the powder" "Pick off the officers" "Look out for the handsome coats" "Take good aim" and similar remarks were passed from mouth to mouth in Capt. Dearborn's company.

“Don’t fire again till they pass the stick and I say the work” said Stark. “Fire low and aim at their waistbands” rang the clear voice of Maj. McClary as he moved along the lines encouraging the men by word and example. On came the British, making the same imposing display as before, stepping over their fallen comrades and firing as they advanced. An ominous silence held possession of the American lines, not a shot was fired from the rail fence until the enemy reached the stick when “Fire!” yelled Stark and “Fire!” thundered McClary and never did a volley of musketry do more fatal execution. Almost the entire Welsh Fusileers went down. No troops could stand the fire which blazed from that rail fence, pouring into their bosoms a storm of lead which swept them down like the mown grass.
The officers were nearly all picked off. General Howe’s aids were all shot but one. Howe himself made the most vigorous efforts to urge on his men. His long white silk stockings were smeared with blood that fell like rain upon the tall grass. British honor and British valor were at stake and cost what it might he was determined to urge them on to victory.
There was but one mounted officer upon the field during the engagement and as he rode forward to aid in steadying the wavering columns and urge it to advance, Capt. Dearborn’s men caught site of him, and the Captain writes that he heard them say, “There! There is an officer on horseback; let us have him now, old on, wait till he gets to the knoll; now!” They fired and Maj. Pitcairn of Lexington fame, fell dead at the hands of Capt. Dearborn’s men.
Meanwhile the whole regiment with the rapidity with which men practiced in the use of the gun alone can exhibit, loaded and fired, keeping up a continual stream of fire until the Red Coats, despite the efforts of their officers, broke and ran, leaving the ground strewn with the dead and dying. The Americans, jubilant at the success and carried away with the tempest of excitement, leaped the rail fence and chased the fleeing regulars till restrained by their officers and brought back to their post. Their joy and exultation knew no bounds. They had won a victory and driven the proud defiant army of old King George. They threw up their hands and made the welkin ring with shouts of triumph though their tongues were parched with thirst and heat. They thought the day was won. Twice shattered before their scathing well directed fire, they had not thought the enemy would rally again.
But Clinton who had viewed the struggle from Copps Hill in Boston, now hurried over to the scene of the action. It would never do to have it go out to the world that two thousand well trained British troops had been routed beyond rallying, before a little band of half armed Continentals. Being reinforced the routed troops were again formed into line and marched to the assault. But the Americans had already exhausted their ammunition and without bayonets, they could offer but feeble resistance to a furious bayonet charge from the enemy.
Those in the redoubt were compelled to beat a hasty retreat, but the New Hampshire troops retired in excellent order and covered the retreat of the army. They were the last to leave the field and Maj. McClary was in the rear maintaining order and discipline.
During the engagement, Capt. Dearborn lost but one man killed and five wounded. While the slaughter on the side of the British had been terrible. Of the regiment of the Welsh fusiliers, but eighty men escaped unharmed.
As the Americans retreated across the neck, Maj. McClary was remarkably animated with the result of the contest. That day’s conflict and the glorious display of valor which had distinguished his countrymen, made him sanguine of the result. Having passed the last place of danger, he went back to see if the British were disposed to follow them across the neck, thus exposing himself to danger anew. His men cautioned him against his rashness. “The ball is not yet cast that will kill me” said he, when a random shot from one of the frigates struck a button wood tree and glancing, passed through his abdomen. Throwing his hands above his head, he leaped several feet from the ground and fell forward upon his face, dead.

Thus fell Major Andrew McClary, the highest American officer killed at the battle; the handsomest man in the army and the favorite of the New Hampshire troops. His dust still slumbers where it was lain by his sorrowing comrades in Medford, un-honored by any adequate memorial to tell where lies one of the heroes that ushered in the Revolution with such auspicious omens.

Before taking up other members of this distinguished family, we add one "note" to make the sketch of Maj. Andrew McClary complete and embody herein some of the eulogies of the times. He was the favorite officer of the New Hampshire soldiers and his death spread a gloom, not only over the hearts of his men and through the scattered homes of the Suncook Valley but throughout his native state. His sun went down at noon on the day that ushered in our nation's birth, an early martyr to the cause of freedom with the affections of his countrymen to grace his burial.

Capt. Henry Dearborn, after fighting his way, by regular graduations, from the position of Captain to that of Commander in Chief of the United States Army, pays the following glorious tribute to Maj. McClary, forty three years after the battle of Bunker Hill. "He was among the first officers of the army, possessing a sound judgment of undaunted bravery, enterprising, zealous and ardent both as a patriot and a soldier. His loss was severely felt by his compatriots in arms while his country was deprived of the services of one of her most distinguished and promising champions of liberty. After leaving the field of battle, I met him and drank some spirit and water with him, he was animated and sanguine of the result of the conflict for independence.

He soon observed that the British troops on Bunker Hill appeared in motion and said he would go and reconnoiter them, after he had satisfied himself that they did not intend to leave their strong posts on the heights, he was returning towards me and within twelve or fifteen rods of where I stood with my company, a random shot from one of the frigates lying near the center of Craiggie's bridge now is, passed directly through his body and put to flight one of the most heroic soul that ever animated man. He leaped two or three feet from the ground, pitched forward and fell dead on his face. I had him carried to Medford where he was interred with all the honors and respect we could exhibit to the remains of a great man. He was my bosom friend; we had grown up together on terms of the greatest intimacy and I loved him as a brother." Another article written in Epsom and published in the New Hampshire Gazette July 1775, indicates the feeling of his townsmen at the time of his death. "The Major evinced great intrepidity and presence of mind in the action and his noble soul glowed with ardor and the love of his country, and like the Roman Camillus who left his plow, commanded the army, conquered his opponent, so the Major, upon the first intelligence of hostilities, left his farm and went a volunteer to assist his suffering brethren where he was soon called to a command which he executed to his eternal honor, and had thereby acquired the reputation of a brave officer and a distinguished patriot.

May his name be held in respect by all the lovers of liberty to the end of time, while the names of the sons of tyranny are despised and disgraced and nothing left of them but the badges of their perfidy and infamy.

May the widow be respected for his sake and may his children inherit his spirit and bravery but not meet with his fate."