

November 12, 1780. Deborah Samson joins the Third Baptist Church in Middleboro.

Nov<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> 1780. Then the following persons were rec<sup>d</sup> as members of the church virginity: Isaac Churchel, Samuel Benson, William Holmes, Samuel Gurney, Benjamin Museam, Ezra Thomas, Thankfull Ellis, Experience Shearman, Deborah Samson, Mary Shearman, Tilpha Bryant, Martha Tinkerham, Susanna Bosworth, Sarah Benson, Mary Benson and Lucy Raymond.

Deborah Samson

These are the (November 1780) minutes from the 3rd Baptist Church in Middleboro, Massachusetts. The original is above and a more legible copy is below. . This document is compliments of the Andover Newton Theological Society., and may be found at their site in Andover, MA .

November 12th 1780. Then the following persons were received as members of the church virginity: Isaac Churchill, Samuel Benson, William Holmes, Samuel Gurney, Benjamin Museam, Ezra Thomas, Thankfull Ellis, Experience Shearman, Deborah Samson, Mary Shearman, , Tilpha Bryant, Martha Tinkerham, Susanna Bosworth, Sarah Benson, Mary Benson and Lucy Raymond.

After Deborah Samson left Middleboro, and joined the Continental Army, in New York (May 1782), this document was written (Sept 1782). Note the spelling error on her last name.

2. Considered the case of Deborah Sampson a member of this Church, who last Spring was accused of dressing in mens cloths and inlisting as a soldier in the army and altho she was not convicted; yet was strongly suspected of being guilty and for sometime before behaved very loose and unChristianlike. and at last left our parts in a secret manner and it is not known among us where she is gone. and after considerable discourse it appeared that as several brethren had labored with her before she went away without obtaining satisfaction concluded it is the churches Duty to withdraw fellowship until she returns and makes Christian Satisfaction.

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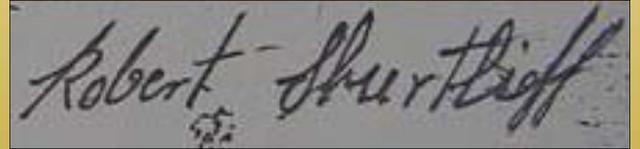
Considered the case of Deborah Sampson a member of this church who last Spring was accused of dressing in men's clothes and inlisting as a soldier in the army and although she was not convicted, yet was strongly suspected of being guilty and for sometime before behaved very loose and unChristian like. And at last left our parts in a secret manner and it is not known amongst us where she is gone; and after considerable discourse it appeared that as several brethren had labored with her before she went away without obtaining satisfaction concluded it is the churches Duty to withdraw fellowship until she returns and makes Christian Satisfaction.

Robert Shurtleiff's Continental Army enlistment paper.

Worcester May 23. 1782

Received of Mr. Noah Taft \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman of Class No. 2 for  
The Town of Uxbridge \_\_\_\_\_ The Sum of Sixty Pounds \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Legal Money as a bounty to serve in the Continental Army  
For the term of Three years-----

Witness my Hand!

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Shurtleiff".

Some Deborah Samson character analysis.

Deborah Samson was a self educated woman, who...to use the words of Governor William Eustis of Boston was... ***"a person of uncommon native intellect and fortitude and one who conversed with ease on a variety of subjects."***

Herman Mann Jr. portrayed her as one with ... ***"a general knowledge and fluent in speech plus able to read with propriety in almost any book in her language"***.

Paul Revere considered her as someone who was an articulate conversationalist and ***"conversable"***. He saw her as knowledgeable and well informed. ***"A person with a self taught education whose learning entitled her to a better situation in life."***

Deborah Samson's: Intension of Marriage 1784, and Marriage record 1785.

The Intention of Marriage Between Benjamin Gannett Jr of Sharon  
Deborough Samson of Stoughton Entered with me ye Subscriber October

Deborough Samson

The Intension of Marriage Between Benjamin Gannett Jr. of Sharon + Deborough Samson of Stoughton Entered with me ye Subscriber October ye 14 1784.

Deborah Samson and her husband Benjamin Gannett, lived in Sharon, MA in 1785, and married in Stoughton, April 7, 1785.

The entry below reads: Married by George Crossman esq.....Benjamin Gannett Jr. of Sharon + Deborough Samson of Stoughton ...all 3 married April 7, 1785.

Married by George Crossman Esq.  
Tho Allen & Isaac Stone Both of Stoughton  
Decem 6<sup>th</sup> of 1784  
+ Rufus Fuller & Hannah Billings Both of Sharon  
March 23 1785  
+ Jedidah Wentworth & Polly Jordan Both of Stoughton  
Benj<sup>n</sup> Gannett Jr of Sharon & Deborough Samson of Stoughton  
+ Melzer Drake & Uloa Morse of Sharon  
all 3 married April 7 1785

Robert Shurtleiff's (Deborah Gannett) Military Endorsements

Boston, Aug 1, 1786

This may Certify that Robert Shurtleiff was a soldier in my Regiment in the Continental Army for the town of Uxbridge in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts & was enlisted for the term of three years . . . . that he had the confidence of his officers and did his duty as a faithful and good Soldier & was honorably discharged from the army of the United States.

Henry Jackson late Col in the  
American Army -----

Whom it may concern

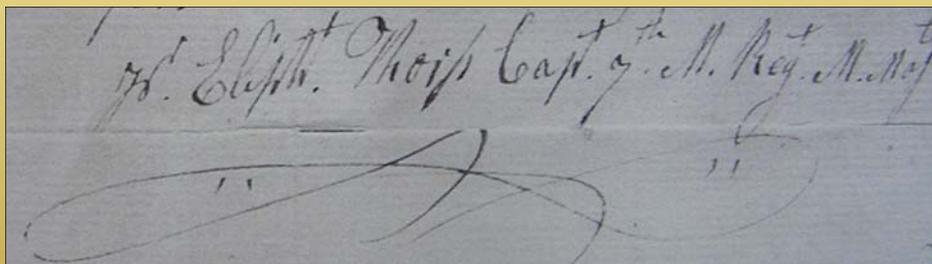
A true copy of the original delivered to said Shurtleiff

Attest -----

John Avery jun Taylor

Dedham, Dec 10, 1791

This Certifies that Mrs. Deborah Gannett inlisted as a soldier on May ye 20<sup>th</sup> 1782 for three years and was mustered ye 23<sup>rd</sup> of ye Same Month at Worcester and Sent on to Camp soon after and as I have been informed served the duty of a Good Soldier.



Capt. M. Reg. M. Mass  
" "

Note Robert Shurtief was ye name by which Mrs. Gannett inlisted and mustered.

This letter shows the Commonwealth of Massachusetts quick approval of Deborah Gannett's back-pay request. She received only a paltry 34 pounds for her 17 months of service in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 1792

House of Representatives

On the petition of Deborah Gannett praying compensation for services performed in the late army of the United States.

Whereas it appears to this court that the said Deborah Gannett enlisted under the name of a Robert Shurtlieff in Captain Webb's company in the 4<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1782 and did actually perform the duties of a soldier in the late army of the United States to the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October 1783 for which she has received no compensation.

And whereas it further appears that the said Deborah exhibited an extraordinary instance of female heroism by discharging the duties of a faithful gallant soldier, and at the same time performing the virtue of chastity of her sex unsuspected and unblemished, and was discharged from the service with a fair and honorable character. Therefore resolved that the treasurer of this Commonwealth be and he is hereby directed to enforce his note to the said Deborah for the sum of thirty four pounds bearing interest from October 23, 1783.

In Senate January 20<sup>th</sup> 1792

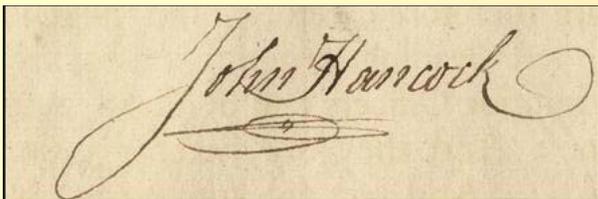
Approved

Sent up for concurrence

D Cobb - Speaker

Read and Concurred,

Sam G Phillips Senate

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "John Hancock". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

After their meeting, this letter written by Paul Revere on behalf of Deborah helped her gain her first pension payments as an invalid retired soldier

William Eustis  
Member of Congress  
Washington

Canton Feby 20 1804

Sir

Mrs. Deborah Gannett of Sharon informs me that she has enclosed to Your Care a petition to Congress in favor of Her. My works for Manufacturing of Copper, being at Canton, but a short distance from the Neighborhood, where she lives; I have been induced to enquire her situation, and Character since she quitted the Male habit, and soldiers Uniform; for the more decent apparel of her own Sex & Since she has been married and become a Mother.— Humanity and Justice, obliges me to say that every person with whom I have conversed about Her, and it is not a few, speak of her as a woman of handsome talents, and Morals, a dutiful wife and an affectionate parent.— She is now much out of health, She has several children; her husband is a good sort of a man, tho of small force in business; they have a few acres of poor land which they cultivate, but they are real poor.

She told me, she has no doubt her ill health is a consequence of her being exposed when She did a soldiers duty; and that while in the Army She was wounded.

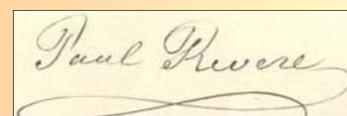
We commonly form our own idea of the person we hear spoken of, whom we have never scene, according as their actions are described, when I heard her spoken of as a Soldier, I formed the idea of a tall Masculine female, who had a small share of understanding without education, & one of the meanest of her Sex.— When I saw and discoursed with her I was agreeably surprised to find a small effeminate and conversable Woman, whose education entitled her to a better situation in life.

I have no doubt your humanity will prompt you to do all in Your power to get her some relief, I think her case is much more deserving than hundreds to whom Congress may have been generous.

I am Sire with esteem

& Respect

Your humble servant,



A 44 year old Deborah Gannett wrote this letter to Captain George Webb in Holden Mass. He was her first officer, in 1782, in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. In 1802, she visited his family in Holden MA during her lecture tour. This letter suggests, she may have borrowed money from his nephews, and wanted to assure them she would return the loan. Deborah "the reader" also shared some of her books with a retired Captain Webb's father.

Sharon June 2, 1804

Honored Sir

I take the liberty of writing to you not for mere compliments, but real esteem. I hope sincerely that that these may find you and every branch of your family enjoying Health and happiness. I should be extremely happy to see you all again. I hope I shall have the gratification before many months.

I present my love and acknowledge my gratitude to all my friends in this place. Dear Sir: I flatter myself that should I live, I shall see better days than ever I have done before---I hope to be able to satisfy every demand against me. It is my real wish never to injure anyone neither in name or property---Sir will you be so kind as to tell your two nephews that I feel myself under the greatest obligation to them. I will make my remittances to them as soon as I possibly can---but must beg their patience a while longer.

Sally I believe you have forgot me or you would have wrote me long before now. Do some of you write. I long to hear from you---and in your letter let me know if your father has received those books I sent him, and Ms Pratt, adieu my friends.

x. those  
adieu my friends  
Deborah Gannett

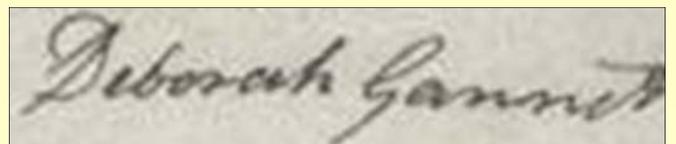
This letter written by Deborah to Paul Revere suggests she probably made many such requests for a small (\$10) loan to help her family. It suggests Mr Revere had a soft spot for poor veterans of the American Revolution, like Deborah, and also, since she alluded to it being the 99th time, he probably "loaned" her money many other times, and that she probably road into Boston to get the money occasionally.

February 22, 1806

Honored Sir--

After my unfeigned regard to you and your family--I would like to inform you that I and my son have been very sick---though in some measure better---I hope Sir that you and your family are all in the enjoyment of helth--which is one of the greatest of blessings.--My own indisposition and that of my sons causes me again to solicit your goodness in our favour though I with Gratitude confess it rouses every tender feeling and I blush at the thought---that after receiving ninety and nine good turns as it were---my circumstances require that I should ask the Hundredth---the favour that I ask, is the loan of ten Dollars for a Short time---as soon as I am able to ride to Boston I will make my remittance to you.

With my humble thanks for the undistinguished favour---  
from your Humble Servant.

A rectangular inset showing a close-up of the handwritten signature "Deborah Gannett" in cursive script.

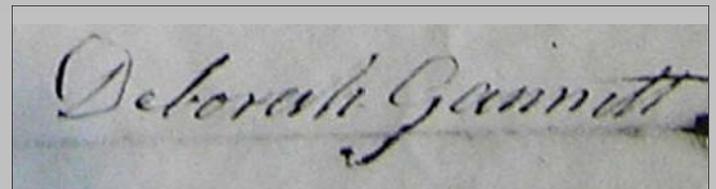
Deborah made many appeals to Congress to plead her case. This letter shows that on December 26, 1809, she wrote a petition to Congress asking for what she deserved.... that her invalid soldier, (wounded veteran) pension be made retroactive from the time her "regular" honorable discharge in 1783. Unfortunately her pension only started in 1803, because that is when she initially submitted the proper paper work with endorsement letters from several of her War-Time officers. Because she didn't know this law, she lost or missed out on the initial 20 years of pension payments from 1783-1803. She kept trying though. Then in 1816, her pension went up automatically when Congress, in its generosity, increased the monthly stipend for invalid veterans of her class from \$4.00 to \$6.40 per month. This came to \$76.80 per year.

To the Honorable Senate, and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The petition of the subscriber humbly shows that, whereas she having served as a Continental Soldier in the Army of the United States, during three years, in the late American Revolution, and there borne on the rolls by the name of Robert Shurtlieff, and at the same conclusion of the Peace in 1783, was regularly discharged from said Army, and had successfully performed the duties of a Soldier -- and that, during that time of service for her Country, She received Wounds, by which she has been disabled from performing the common occupations of life, or otherwise she might have done, and that, in consequence thereof, she has been placed on the Pension-List by the Commissioner of Loans and Agent for pensioners in the State of Massachusetts, from January 1803. - Your Petitioner, therefore, prays, that These honorable Bodies will duly consider this subject together with the concomitant circumstances, to which she alludes, and that she may be entitled to the further consideration of having her pension-pay\_ commence at the time of other pensioners belonging to the said American Army, as the law has made and provided. And you Petitioner, as in duty bound, will forever pray---

Signed

Sharon, Dec 26, 1809

A rectangular inset showing a close-up of the handwritten signature "Deborah Gannett" in cursive script on aged paper.

After Congress passed the First Pension Act, which was to be awarded to wounded veterans of "reduced circumstances", and would increase applicable pensioners stipends to \$8/month, Deborah wrote this letter. She even "gratuitously" (falsely) added she was at the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis in 1781. On March 16, 1819 it was temporarily deemed a satisfactory submittal by a Judge John Davis. And on July 31, 1819, Certificate# 13434 was issued indicating probable approval by the Massachusetts Agency. But even with glowing reviews of her military career as the "Female Pensioner" from a local newspaper, this petition failed. Her request was denied, quite simply because she had not filed the required proof of poverty. But 2 1/2 years later, a 60 year old Deborah, made one last appeal about her poor financial situation, and Congress finally approved her request, increasing her pension to \$8 per month.

United States

Sept 14, 1818

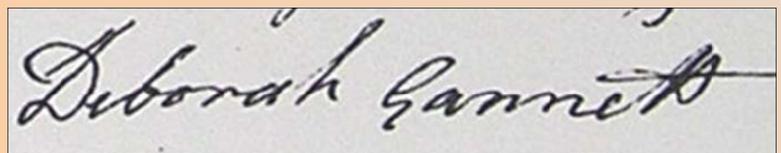
Massachusetts District

Deborah Gannett, of Sharon in the county of Norfolk and district of Massachusetts, a resident and soldier of the United States, and applicant for a pension from the United States, under an act of Congress, enlisted an act to provide for certain persons engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the Revolutionary War, under oath that she served as a private soldier under the name of Robert Shurtlieff in the War of the Revolution, upwards of two years in manner following viz \_\_\_\_ Enlisted in April 1781, in the Company commanded by Captain George Webb, in the Massachusetts Regiment commanded then by Colonel Shepherd and afterwards by Colonel Henry Jackson and served in said Corps, in Massachusetts and New York until November 1783, when she was honorably discharged in writing, which discharge is lost. During the time of her service, she was at the capture of Lord Cornwallis, was wounded at Tarrytown, and now receives a pension from the United States, which pension she humbly relinquishes. She is in such reduced circumstances as to regain the aid of her country for her support.-----

Mass'ts District Attorney

Sworn to before me

Mc Dever's ....Dist. Pres.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Gannett".

As noted below Deborah's made a 2nd petition to Congress (10 years after her first written attempt) for a retroactive sum covering the 20 years from her discharge 1783 to 1803. She was a woman with a desperate need for money and a sense of justice denied, who would not give up! She stated she was at a great disadvantage because no one told her to procure sufficient credentials of disabilities incurred in the War, at the time of her 1783 honorable discharge. Because of her status as a woman who was unfamiliar with procedures of the political system, Congress, on March 31, 1820. Congress turned down her plea, as it had done a decade before.

*To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:*

*The petition of Deborah Gannett of Sharon, in the county of Norfolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Humbly shows that she served as a soldier in the Army of the United States in the Revolutionary War, that she was wounded while in the service, and that while others were on the lists of pensioners and received their pensions soon after the termination of the war, she was not on the list of pensioners until 1803 owing to the great disadvantage she was under to procure sufficient credentials which were necessary to lay before Congress. She therefore prays that Congress would allow her at the rate of four dollars per month, from the time that others in similar situations received their pensions, up to the first day of January 1803 and as in duty bound will forever pray.*

*Sharon*

*January 25th 1820*

A rectangular inset showing a close-up of the handwritten signature "Deborah Gannett" in cursive script.