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Historical note:

Col. Benoni Waterman (1701-1787) was born at Warwick, Rhode Island, the fifth child of Capt. John (1666-1728) and Anne (Olney) Waterman. He married Sarah Wicks (1700-1786) on February 11, 1724. He resided on family property in Warwick his entire life. Benoni was involved in the shipping trade with his brother, Resolved; their vessels often conducted business in Surinam, South America. Benoni was also involved in Warwick's civil and military affairs, holding a wide variety of civic titles and militia ranks between the late 1720s and the late 1760s. He participated in recruiting troops for an expedition to Canada (Cape Breton) during King George's War circa 1745. He died November 3rd, 1787. He and his descendants are buried in the Col. John Waterman cemetery lot in Warwick.

One of Benoni and Sarah Waterman's children was John Waterman (1730-1812), who like his father lived on the family homestead in Warwick, and was deeply involved in the civic and military affairs of the town. His primary trade was leather tanning. He served in the Kent County militia almost continuously from 1752, when he was commissioned as an ensign, to 1777. He was made colonel of the Kent County regiment of militia in 1763 and served with that rank in 1764, then inclusively from 1767 to 1777. In January 1777, he commanded the American militia forces against General Wallace on Prudence Island. He was a justice of the peace for Warwick in 1761, and served in several other civic capacities from the 1750s through the 1790s, including Surveyor of Highways, Assessor of Rates, member of the town council, town moderator, and Deputy.

John Waterman married Sarah Potter at South Kingstown on June 13, 1754. The couple had seven children, all born at Warwick, one of whom was "Deacon" John Waterman (1759-1837). Deacon John married Welthian Greene in 1782. One of their children was John Robinson Waterman (1783-1876), a close friend and supporter of Thomas Wilson Dorr, leader of the 1842 Dorr Rebellion. For the papers of John Robinson Waterman, see MSS 790.

Bibliography:

Jacobus, Donald Lines and Edgar Francis Waterman. *The Waterman Family Vol. 3: Descendants of Richard Waterman of Providence, Rhode Island*, Hartford: The Connecticut Historical Society, 1954.
Representative Men and Old Families of Rhode Island, 2101-2102. Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1908.
Rhode Island Cemetery Database
Smith, Joseph Jenckes. *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island*. Providence: Preston & Rounds Co., 1900.
White, Dorothy Higson. *Descendants of Roger Williams, Book I: The Waterman and Winsor Lines Through His Daughter Mercy*, 14, 34-35. Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1991.

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Scope and content:

Benoni Waterman's papers consist mostly of ledgers and loose accounts dated between 1724 and 1772. Much of the trading activity of the vessels used in his shipping business, including the brigantine *Cumberland*, the sloop *Warwick*, the snow *Prince William*, and the sloop *Prince William*, can be traced via the ledgers. The books also contain information for the construction of at least two vessels in the Warwick villages of Pawtuxet and Cowesett. A worker named "Old Miah", believed to be a slave of Benoni, is mentioned frequently throughout the ledgers, as are members of the Spywood family, believed to be American Indians. The loose bills, receipts, and memoranda, taken from Benoni's account books during an earlier processing of the papers, include a bill of sale for "one negro boy abought thirteen years old named Cudgo", from Benoni Waterman to Capt. [Ammys?] Page, dated 1757/04/07 (box 1, folder 1).

The papers generated for an expedition to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia during King George's war include names of enlistees and accounts for recruiting and supplies. Other items of interest are a 1741 petition from Benoni and three other men to the General Assembly, requesting "satisfaction" for the remaining time on the indentures of their servants, who have enlisted to serve against Spain (box 1, folder 16); and an agreement for the guardianship of fourteen-year-old Hannah Waterman (1740-1820), daughter of Captain John Waterman (1698-1851), to her uncle Benoni Waterman (box 1, folder 6).

Most of the papers of Col. John Waterman pertain to the Warwick and Kent County militia during the Revolution. However, some militia-related papers are pre-Revolution, dated mostly between 1757 and the late 1760s. The militia returns in Box 2, Folder 16 includes an undated list of prisoners received from the British prison ship *Lord Sandwich*; the location of the ship is not specified, but it may have been anchored in Newport, Rhode Island.

The entries in Col. John Waterman's small diary concern mostly weather, farm activities and plantings, vital records (mostly births and deaths), and local human-interest stories. In the center of the diary, there is a list of men chosen as officers for the Warwick militia, dated 1774. There is a gap in the diary between the years 1776 and 1802 due to the war. One of the earliest entries, dated June 10, 1772 describes the burning of the British schooner *Gaspee* in terms of "here say" and then "ye certainty."

For other Revolutionary War records of Col. John Waterman and the Kent County militia, see the Rhode Island Revolutionary War Records (MSS 673, subgroup 2).

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Provenance:

250 items relating to the Waterman family of Warwick were purchased from Mary S. Greene in December of 1904. This gift included colonial and Revolutionary War muster rolls, letters concerning the defense of Warwick, and miscellaneous Revolutionary War papers. In 1907, George Peabody Wetmore donated 6 commissions of John Waterman dated from 1752 to 1775. Some papers may also have come into the collection via a 1911 purchase of papers of John R. Waterman. The 1911 purchase, comprised of approximately 80 items, included "a number of military orders...and muster rolls of various Warwick military companies all relating to militia circa 1807-1808; party lists in Warwick; road-tax rolls, invoices, excise receipts, and commissions and depositions, 1752-1840."

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Processing note:

Researcher Cherry Fletcher Bamberg provided helpful insight into the commercial nature of Benoni and Resolved Waterman's shipping business and the possible ethnicity of members of the Spywood family.

The identification of the Sarah (Wickes) Waterman ledger dated 1753 to 1766 is not definite. As it was found among papers of Benoni Waterman and its dates coordinate with his, an assumption has been made that it may have belonged to his wife Sarah. The accounts are mostly for the weaving of cloth and making of clothing. Some of the names within the book coincide with names of Benoni and Sarah's relations and/or names of persons found among Benoni's business and personal papers. Persons for whom services were rendered include:

Hannah Waterman; John Warner, Jr.; Thomas Wickes; Jeremiah Lippitt; Capt. John Low; Robert Wicks; Elisabeth Stafford (may be the sister of Benoni, married Stukeley Stafford); Richard Green; Samuel Gorton; Randal Holden; Benjamin Earl; John Waterman; Morgan Calvin/Carvin; Josiah Arnold; Thomas Warner; and Nathan Westcot. The book's owner also made clothing for several slaves or servants of some of the people named above.

The leather-bound memoranda book (1753-1823) has been attributed to Col. John Waterman, though it is possible it also contains the writing of his father Benoni and his son, "Deacon" John. Clues as to its identity include:

"1753 Capt Fones Greene [husband of Benoni's daughter Mary] born 1726. departed this life September ye 12th at 12 oclock at night"

"Benjamin Waterman Began to go to school to T Warner decemr. 29th, 1763 on thursday...he left off going ye 17th march 1764." (This is probably John's son Benjamin, born 17 July 1755.)

"Coll John Waterman deceased the 11th day of June in the year of our Lord [1812] in the eighty second year of his Age since August last"

"I put my colt to aunt Waterman's pasture May 19th 1756"

"John Waterman Jr. began to work in the Tan yard In the year 1781"

"John Waterman and Sarah his wife was married June ye 13th 1754 in ye 24th year of there (sic) ages"

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Inventory:

Benoni Waterman (1701-1787):

Box 1, folder 1. Accounts, 1739-1767 and n.d.

Box 1, folder 2. Accounts for repairing of "old school house"(Warwick), 1756-1768. (One account is in a book of navigation exercises.)

Box 1, folder 3. Cape Breton expedition (King George's War), 1744-1746.

Box 1, folder 4. Codicil to will, 1771; and estate papers, 1787, 1789.

Box 1, folder 5. Commissions, 1732, 1737.

Box 1, folder 6. Indentures and bonds, 1744-1786.

Box 1, folder 7. Ledger, 1724-1734.

Box 1, folder 8. Ledger, 1733-1740.

Box 1, folder 9. Ledger (typescript), 1733-1740.

Box 1, folder 10. Ledger ("book no. 1"), 1739-1744.

Box 1, folder 11. Ledger ("No. 2"), 1745-1752.

Box 1, folder 12. Ledger - construction of vessels at Pawtuxet and Cowesett, 1748.

Box 1, folder 13. Ledger, 1749-1772.

Box 1, folder 14. Ledger, 1751-1770 (indexed).

Box 1, folder 15. Memoranda, 1739-1768 and n.d.

Box 1, folder 16. Miscellaneous: petition to General Assembly, Benony Waterman et al., 1741; certificate of residency, town of Exeter, for Ester Colling, widow, 1745; note, Arthur Fenner to Capt. John Greene concerning molasses, 1752; directive to "Mr. Wheton Shreiff" (sic) to return executions against John Andrews, signed "BW", "AL", n.d.; and printed prox, n.d. **Oversize storage:** table of lawful money, 1763/01/29

Box 1, folder 17. Receipts, 1743-1771 and n.d.

John Waterman (1730-1812):

Box 1, folder 18. Accounts, 1778-1787 and n.d. (probably ca. 1776-1778).

Box 1, folder 19. Commissions, 1754-1775.

Box 2, folder 1. Correspondence, 1756-1797 and n.d.

- Box 2, folder 2. Delinquent lists (Warwick militia), 1780./
- Box 2, folder 3. Journal, 1772-1809.
- Box 2, folder 4. Memoranda / account book, 1753-1823 (includes Benoni Waterman entries).
- Box 2, folder 5. Militia orders and resolutions, 1757, 1775-1778.
- Box 2 folder 6. Miscellaneous, 1768-1779 and n.d.: statement by clerk of Newport Court of Common Pleas, 1768; petition to General Assembly concerning militia, with plea concerning Boston Port Bill on reverse, 1774; list of rateable estate, 1779; speech to troops? with statement on preparation for defense on reverse, n.d.; diagram, "Mill Cove to the head of Warwick Harbor", n.d.
- Box 2, folder 7. Morning returns, Capt. Joseph Hopkins, October 1777.
- Box 2, folder 8. Morning returns, Capt. Solomon Thornton, October 1777.
- Box 2, folder 9. Pay receipts books, militia: "watch book", 1776; and 1777.
- Box 2, folder 10. Provision returns and militia accounts (book), 1777-1778.
- Box 2, folder 11. Quaker substitutes for Kent County militia, 1777 and n.d.
- Box 2, folder 12. Receipts, 1775-1782, 1801.
- Box 2, folder 13. Supplies for militia, 1776, 1777 and n.d.
- Box 2, folder 14. Warwick militia, book of classes, ca. 1780-1781.
- Box 2, folder 15. Warwick militia, company lists, 1757.
- Box 2, folder 16. Warwick militia, soldier returns, 1757-1782, and n.d.
- Box 2, folder 17. Weekly returns, Ens. Gideon Harris, October 1777.
- Box 2, folder 18. Weekly returns, Waterman's regiment, 1776-1777 and n.d. (bulk October 1777).

Waterman Family, miscellaneous:

- Box 2, folder 19. (Capt.) John (1666-1728) and Anne (Olney) Waterman (parents of Benoni Waterman) - deed, 1720.
- Box 2, folder 20. Resolved Waterman (1703-1751) (son of John and Anne (Olney) Waterman) - papers, 1726-1751.
- Box 2, folder 21. Sarah (Wicks) Waterman? (1700-1786) (wife of Benoni Waterman) - ledger, weaving and sewing of clothing, 1753-1766.
- Box 2, folder 22. Sarah (Gorton?) Wickes (c1678-1753) (mother of Sarah (Wicks) Waterman) - bill to estate, 1754.
- Box 2, folder 23. (Deacon) John Waterman (1759-1837) (son of Col. John and Sarah (Potter) Waterman) - correspondence, 1811-1835.
- Box 2, folder 24. Miscellaneous: petition from Warwick residents to General Assembly concerning fish, 1768; promissory note, Wm. Potter to Samuel Mumford, 1776; note concerning sheep and cattle, n.d.; printed act re: public schools marked on reverse "autograph of James Fenner", 1843.

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Subjects:

Cumberland (brig)
Gaspee (schooner)
Lord Sandwich (bark)
 Merchant marine - Rhode Island - Warwick
 Militia
Prince William (sloop)
Prince William (snow)
 Registers of births, etc. - Rhode Island -- Warwick
 Surinam - Commerce
 Tanning
 United States - History -- French and Indian War, 1755-1763
 United States - History -- King George's War, 1744-1748

United States - History -- Revolution, 1775-1783

Warwick (sloop)

Warwick, R.I. - Militia

Waterman, Benoni (1701-1787)

Waterman, John (1730-1812)

Waterman, John (1759-1837)

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