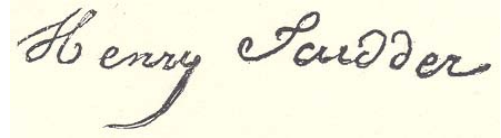


## **Henry Scudder (1743-1822)** *Patriot of the American Revolution*

The Scudder family were among the earliest settlers of the Town of Huntington. Thomas Scudder left England to become one of the earliest settlers in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He lived in Salem, Massachusetts from 1646 to 1657. His three sons left Salem and eventually found their way to Huntington in 1653, the year of the original purchase from the native inhabitants.



By the time of the American Revolution, Henry Scudder, a descendant who was born in 1743, lived on a large farm near Crabmeadow. In 1774, he was selected to serve on the Town Committee, through which news of events in the other colonies was spread and plans for action were coordinated. At a General Town meeting on May 2, 1775, Henry Scudder was named 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in a company of 80 men chosen to be ready to march and fight.

A year later at the Battle of Long Island, Scudder was captured by the British, but soon released. By the time he returned home to Huntington, the British had established a garrison on the Village Green and every male over the age of 15 was compelled to take an Oath of Fealty to the British Crown. Like many others, Scudder fled to Connecticut rather than take the oath.

From Connecticut, he planned and led numerous raids on Long Island intended to deprive the British of supplies and to capture supplies for Washington's army. He also helped gather information of British forts on Long Island. In 1781, Scudder provided a detailed sketch of Fort Slongo just across the town line in Smittstown (near his Crabmeadow farm). In October 1781, the British were preparing a fleet in New York City to assist the troops trapped in Yorktown, Va. In order to create a diversion, which would keep the fleet in New York, 100 American raiders armed with Scudder's drawing, rowed across the Long Island Sound from Connecticut to Crab Meadow Beach on the night of October 2, 1781. Early the next morning the American caught the British completely by surprise and chased them off into the woods. The Americans burned the fort and the fleet stayed in New York. While there was no loss of life, the sergeant who led the American charge – Elijah Churchill of Enfield, Connecticut – was wounded. To recognize his heroism, George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit, now known as the Purple Heart. Sgt. Churchill was its first recipient.

Scudder's activities almost resulted in his capture or death many times. Once he hid in the chimney of his house while a British officer threatened to kill his wife if she did not turn him in. Scudder's wife did not betray him and the officer did not follow through on the threat. But as he left, the officer said, "If I don't find your rebel husband in a week, I'll be in my coffin." The words turned out to be true. In less than a week, Scudder and a party of rebels surrounded a house where the officer was playing cards. He shot the officer and took sixteen prisoners.

After the war, Scudder was a member of the convention that framed the State Constitution. He also represented Suffolk County for several terms in the State Legislature. Around 1790, he moved to the head of Northport Harbor on what is now Route 25A. He died in 1822 and is buried in the Scudder Cemetery on the south side of Route 25A across from his farm. There a historical marker commemorates the patriot with a 1788 quote from New York Governor DeWitt Clinton that Scudder was "a brave and honest man."

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