

MUSEUM PIECES

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The improbable life and legendary career of Nathanael Greene

Nathanael Greene was one of the founding members of the Kentish Guards, the private militia company in East Greenwich chartered in October 1774. At the time, Greene was a successful businessman, represented Coventry in the General Assembly, and was helping to revise the state's militia laws.

However, his fellow Kentish Guards didn't think he was officer material. Not only had he been raised as a Quaker, but he walked with a limp, he suffered from asthma, and he liked to read books.

Only seven months later, though, his military standing improved considerably. In May 1775, a month after Lexington and Concord, the General Assembly—passing over more experienced and better-known military men—made Private Greene Brigadier-General of Rhode Island troops.

He would go on to fight in more battles than any other officer, emerging victorious in the Southern campaigns that chased British

**Thursday, April 2
at 7:00 p.m.**



troops out of Georgia and the Carolinas into the trap at Yorktown, Virginia that led to the British surrender. By the end of the war, Major General Greene was George

Washington's second-in-command.

Nathanael Greene's improbable rise, from militia private and gimpy son of a Quaker preacher to military legend and George Washington's most trusted advisor, sounds like fiction. But it's all true.

On Thursday, April 2, Gerald M. "Ged" Carbone will be in our Museum Gallery to tell us about Nathanael Greene's incredible life.

Ged Carbone is the author of *Nathanael Greene: A Biography of the American Revolution*, as well as a biography of George Washington and a history of Brown & Sharpe.

A former journalist, he is a recipient of the American Society of Newspaper Editors Distinguished Writing Award. Ged completed a John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University, and earned a master's degree in Public Humanities from Brown University.

Please join us at the Museum or live on our YouTube channel for this fascinating story.

Our Spring 2026 Lecture Series begins on Thursday, April 2



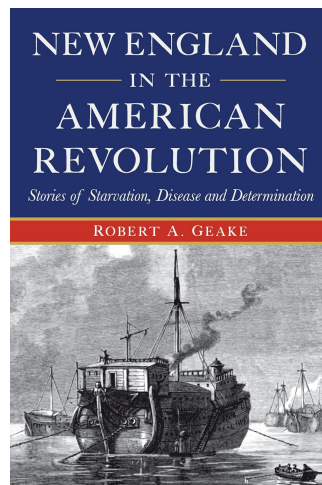
New England in the American Revolution: Stories of Starvation, Disease and Determination

During the Revolutionary War, New England soldiers had a greater, and more effective, enemy to fight than British Army. It was disease— smallpox, dysentery, typhus (known as “camp fever”), and other highly contagious illnesses that flourished in crowded environments with poor sanitation, poor nutrition, and inadequate protection from harsh weather.

In his latest book, *New England in the American Revolution: Stories of Starvation, Disease and Determination*, Robert A. Geake explores the challenges soldiers faced through diaries, letters, and other documents.

When the war started, New England was in the grip of a smallpox epidemic that eventually spread across the

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at 7:00 p.m.**



continent. The 1775 attempt to capture Quebec City failed because the Army’s strength had been depleted by disease, primarily smallpox.

Dysentery, also known as “the bloody flux,” spread through eastern Massachusetts in late 1775, when many Continental soldiers were still camped at Cambridge. Supplies of food and clothing for the Army were chronically late or nonexistent. Two unusually cold and harsh winters, in 1777-1778 and 1779-1780, compounded the suffering.

Despite all of these hardships, many men continued to fight, a testament to their determination as well as their bravery. Bob Geake will tell us about some of those men when he appears in our Museum Gallery on Thursday, May 21.

Our Spring 2026 Lecture Series will take place in our Museum Gallery. The programs also will be live-streamed so you can watch on a computer or other device. To watch, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQZtR6kJyDMO1v0AKQoYrHA>.

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The Life and Times of Oliver Hazard Perry

"We have met the enemy and they are ours." So begins one of the most famous dispatches in American history. Its author, Oliver Hazard Perry, wrote it in a report to Gen. William Henry Harrison after his victory over British forces on Lake Erie in September 1813.

Oliver Hazard Perry, born in South Kingstown on August 23, 1785, was destined to be a Naval officer. His father, Christopher Raymond Perry, served on privateers before joining the Continental Navy in 1779. In 1798, he became a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. The following year he commanded the U.S.S. General Greene, named Nathanael Greene. Oliver, then 13 years old, served under his father as a midshipman.

Although the Battle of Lake Erie was relatively small compared to other naval engagements of the era, its outcome had far-reaching



**THURSDAY, APRIL 23
at 7:00 P.M.**

consequences for both Perry and the new republic.

On Thursday, April 23, Professor Evan Wilson will be in our Museum Gallery to describe the battle and place it in a broader context. How did Perry come to be in command of American forces on Lake Erie? How did his victory contribute to the

broader American war effort? And what can Perry's career tell us about the history of the U.S. Navy in the early nineteenth century? Please join us on April 23, in person or on our YouTube channel, to learn why Perry's victory was so important.

Evan Wilson is an associate professor in the Hattendorf Historical Center at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport. A recipient of the Sir Julian Corbett Prize in Modern Naval History, he researches the naval history of Britain and other countries from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Before coming to Newport, he was the Caird Senior Research Fellow at the National Maritime Museum in the United Kingdom, and Associate Director of International Security Studies at Yale University. He holds degrees from Yale, Cambridge and Oxford.

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Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, by Thomas Birch, ca. 1814 – Wikimedia Commons