

Patriot



Peter Salem
African-American

Peter Salem
1750 - 1816

Peter Salem was born a slave. His owner, Jeremiah Belknap, named him after his hometown of Salem, Massachusetts.

Peter Salem was sold to Major Lawson Buckminster, who freed Salem.

Salem became one of the Minutemen heroes of the American Revolutionary War.

Peter Salem
1750 - 1816

On April 19, 1775, Salem fought at Concord, Massachusetts.

On June 17, 1775, fought with Captain Drury at the Battle of Bunker Hill. British General William Howe attacked three times without success. In this battle the Americans had 400 dead and wounded men; the British lost more than 1000.

Peter Salem

1750 - 1816

Peter Salem has been credited with killing British Major Pitcairn at the height of combat. In John Trumbull's famous painting "Battle at Bunker's Hill" (shown on the next slide), Major Pitcairn is dying under the British flag, being held up by his son and another officer. Salem is at the far right - behind an American officer.

"Battle at Bunker's Hill"



Major Pitcairn

Peter Salem

"Battle at Bunker's Hill"



Peter Salem

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1750 - 1816

After the war, Peter Salem built a cabin near Leicester, Massachusetts, and worked as a cane weaver.

He died in the Framingham poorhouse in 1816. He is buried at the Old Burying Ground. In 1882, the town of Framingham erected a monument in his honor.

Peter Salem

1750 - 1816


