

18th Century Material Culture British & American Military Blanket Clothing



Blanket Coats

Letter From Governor Fauquier to John Forbes

January 24, 1759
(Fauquier Papers)

*"As Coll. Washington's Regiment were so much exposed to the Hardships of the Weather for want of Cloaths, I have ordered each of them a **Blanket to be made up in to a coat** to guard them from the Inclemency of the Season, which is the utmost, if not more than, I have a power to do till the Assembly meet in February..."*



Colonel George Washington of the Virginia Regiment
by Charles Wilson Peale c. 1772
(Washington & Lee University)

The Virginia Gazette

1756

"DESERTED from the Virginia Regiment, June 19, 1756, from the Mouth of Patterson's Creek, the following persons, viz.

William Pane, aged 30 years, 5 feet 6 inches high, has dark brown hair, sandy complexion, blind of the left eye, Virginia born, but off in his regimentals, late Captain John Mercer Company.

*Francis Glascock, Capt. Harrison's company, aged about 21 years, 5 feet 10 inches high, fair hair, ruddy complexion, Virginia born: Had on when he went away, a **blanket coat** , a pair of buckskin breeches, and had with him two ozenbrigs shirts, and a fine one."*

Adam Stephen to George Washington

September 13, 1758

(Letters to Washington & Accompanying Papers - Society of the Colonial Dames of America)

"CAMP ON LOYAL HANNON Sepr. 13th 1758

SIR,

*We have fortifyd this place; & taken post ten miles to the westward on Kishimatos, 1 about forty miles from Fort du Quesne. In obedience to Col Bouquets Commands I wrote you by Sergt. Boynes to send up the mens Cloathing, but humbly Conceive, that **Blanket Coats** would suit Better than any that can be got for your Regiment. -- You will be so good as to excuse me for not being particular about our Situation & designs; as I cannot depend on your getting Letters that I write -- Some of great importance wrote by others; have fallen into the hands of the Enemy I offer my Compliments to the Gentlemen with you and am with respect,*

*... Sir, Your most Obt. hbe St
... ADAM STEPHEN"*

Christopher Harwick to George Washington

December 12, 1758

(Letters to Washington & Accompanying Papers - Society of the Colonial Dames of America)

"Decr. 12th. 1758

*One Marke & Tent Table (Iron Screw to Do Missing) 4 Camp Stools Bedstead, 2 Mattrases, 4 Blankets, 6 Pack Saddles (one of Which Miles Carrys with him) 2 Oyl Cloths, 2 Candle Sticks 1 Pr. Snuffers, 1 Pr. Curtins, 1 Bottle Oyl 5 Cups & Six Saucers (some of which have peaces broke out of them) 2 Tumblers, 1 Do. Broke, 3 Table Cloths, 2 Pr. Sheets, 1 Box of Candles, 1 Curry Comb & Brush, 1 Pr. Saddle Bags, 3 horse Beels (one of Which is at Winchester) 1 Cag of Wine, 13 Plates 1 Bason, **1 Blanket Coat**, 4 Wanteys, Hors Shoes & Nails, 2 Boxes, 2 Pr. Legings 1 Copper kettle (the Cover missing Miles says it is at Winchest. 1 Tin Quart Mug, 1 Tea Kettle, 1 Small Tent 1 Tomehock 2 Delph Bowls 7 Knives 9 Forks -- Part of a Bottle of Musterd -- some Spices, 2 Pewter much bent Dishes, 7 Table Spoons, 3 Tea Do. 2 Pieses of Supe [soap] 3 Neats Tongs --*

... Decr. 12th. 1758 I have Recd. the before Mentiond things (except such as is excepted in the Memorandom) I say Recd. Pr. Me... CHRISTOPHE HARD WICK"

Barton Forbes Exp Diary

Wednesday September 20, 1758

"Wednesday Sept 20th 1758

*"Orders are issued that **no Officer** for the future shall appear in a **Blanket coat.**"*

Letterbooks of John Fitzpatrick

April 22, 1769

*“To JOHN STEPHENSON, Pensacola
New Orleans, April 22, 1769*

*I hope are [ere] this comes to hand you have recivd. The things I sent you By Savon, and Should this not overtake you at pensacola hope it will find you safe arrivd in England, which Shall be always glad to hear; the Spanish Frigate Sailed for the havana 3 days ago We are Still in Suspence About the Result of the Rupture between the French & Spaniards but is the General oppion of the people here that it will fall to the Spaniards if so Cash will Circulate in this place, and the Articels you was kind Enough to promise to send me will Answer extream Well, I omitted to Mention Blankets in the Memorandum, which if you think proper to send please to **let them be good Blankets proper for making Blankett Coats with Either black or Blue Strips only.** I am afraid Mr. Monsanto Will Shortly be pushed very hard for money he owes at Mobile to Messrs. McGillivray & Struthers for Negroes Bought of them a long time Ago[.] I have nothing more at present worth your notice but should this Reach you at pensacola refer you to Mr. McNamara who no[w] goes there[.] I am with due Esteem...P.S. Youl please to send me the Universal History will bound with proper Cutts and Maps tho they should Cost 6d or a Shilling More a Volume. ...”*

The Constitutional Gazette

October 28, 1775

“NEW – YORK, October 28.

The Following is the substance of examination of Elijah Cable, of Fairfield, in Connecticut, taken yesterday before the Provincial Congress; viz.

*That he left St. John's on Friday the 13th, that there is about 4,000 men at that place; General Montgomery is on the south side, and the Canadians on the East side; the bomb battery is 66 or 67 rod from the fort, that they had set one barrack on fire in the fort, with great mortar commonly called the old sow. On Saturday the 14th, when he was at the Isle a Noix, a very heavy firing began early in the morning, and continued until night, and then began the next morning, and continued until 10 o'clock when the firing ceased what was the event of this action he could not tell, the wind being fiar he set sail. He met General Wooster near Ticonderoga; **our people had taken from the Regulars some blanket coats, stockings, and shoes, four hogheads of rum, and some win;** that a party of the regulars went out in a floating battery to drive off our Canadians, about 500 in number, who were at work on the East battery, but were repulsed three days successively. Saw several Indians when he came away; our people lie on the North side, about three quarters of a mile from the fort, and often go up and kill the centinels. Provisions plenty, dn the men in good spirits. Our Army had lately received a reinforcement of 600 men from different quarters. General Montgomery has a sloop schnooner, and two row gallies, each has a twelve pounder, and eight or nine swivels, a boom is across at Isle a Noix. Our people shot several holes thro' the King's vessel after she was hauled up. No snow when he left St, John's”*

The Virginia Gazette (Dixon & Hunter)

November 25, 1775

“WARWICK, November 15, 1775. RUN away from the Subscriber's Plantation in Prince Edward County, on Saturday the 11th Instant, four Negro Fellows, viz. PRINCE, CATO, CHARLES or TRASH,

and BILLY BURTON.----Prince is a very large Fellow, is an African, and speaks badly, and is very drunken and quarrelsome, he is notable for being an excellent Swimmer and Diver.

Cato, a thick well Made Fellow about 5 Feet 6 or 7 Inches high, is also an African, and speaks very broken English, and is a tolerably sober well behaved Fellow.

----Charles or Trash, for he will answer to either Name, is a Native of Jamaica, a small slim Made Fellow, about 5 Feet 4 or 5 Inches high, and about 25 Years of Age.----

Billy Burton, a Mulatto, a stout young Lad, about 19 or 20 Years of Age, was raised at this Place, and is a very well behaved Fellow.

All of them but Trash were clothed this Fall in Dutch Blanket Coats and Breeches, Trash had Clothes such as Water Negroes generally wear, though he and all the others had other Clothes with them,

so that it is probable they will change their Dress.

ROBERT DONALD.

ROBERT OWEN.”

The Connecticut Courant

May 6, 1776

*“Deserted from my company, Col. Warner’s regiment, one John Smith, about – years of age, about six feet high; had on when he deserted, a green coat and trowsers, blue vest, and a **blanket surtout coat**, has some impediment in his speech, says he was born on Long Island. Whoever takes up said deserter and brings him to me, shall receive a handsome reward, by
Joshua Stanton; Captain
Salisbury, March 1, 1776.”*

The Connecticut Courant

May 13, 1776

*“DESERTED from the company, commanded by Capt Stanton, in Col. Warner’s regiment, Jacob Brden, about 50 years old, 5 feet high; **had on an old blanket coat.** Whoever takes up and returns said deserter, shall be reasonably rewarded, and necessary charges paid.*

Samuel Pettibone, Ensign in Capt. Stanton’s Company.”

Journal of Lieutenant James Hadden 2nd Battalion Royal Artillery

“In February [1777] M. G'L Philips reviewed the 21st Reg't at St. John's and 12 Men were taken away Frost bitten, but recover'd by being kept from the fire, in a warm Room & chaf'd with Snow.

*Previous to this all the Troops were provided with **Blanket Coats and Leggins**, as also a **Woolen or Fur Cap & Mittens** to protect the **Face, Ears, & Hands** against the inclemency of the Season.”*



Private, H.M. 21st Regiment of Foot
after Friedrich Konstantin von Germann c. 1777

The Pennsylvania Evening Post

March 29, 1777

“RAN away last night from the subscriber, a servant lad named GEORGE WOODFORD, about nineteen years of age, and dark brown hair. He had on, when he went away, a blanket surtout coat bound with blue, brown jacket, a red double breasted jacket, white cloth breeches, a pair of boots, and a hat with a red feather in it. It is supposed he is enlisted with some of the recruiting parties, or entered on board some of the vessels. Whoever apprehends said lad, so that his master gets him again, shall have Eight Dollars reward by applying to William Dibley, at the Fountain inn, Chesnut-street, or the subscriber living at Mountholly, West New-Jersey. March 20. THOMAS MAYBERY.”

The Virginia Gazette (Dixon & Hunter)

Williamsburg April 4, 1777

*“FORTY SHILLINGS REWARD. RUN away from the Subscriber, the 29th of November, a likely young Negro Fellow named JOE, about 5 Feet 10 Inches high, had on, when he went away, Jacket and Breeches made of dark coloured Kersey, with white Metal Buttons, a short Coat made of a Dutch Blanket, with white Metal Buttons, Virginia knit Stockings, and plain Shoes. As he was brought up in Williamsburg, I expect he is lurking about there. Whoever takes up the said Slave, and commits him to Gaol, or brings him to me in James City County, shall receive the above Reward
JOSEPH HORNSBY. YARMOUTH, April 1, 1777”*

The Continental Journal

October 16, 1777

Excerpt from the Narrative of Ethan Allen

Description is from on board Gaspee Brig, October 1775

Previously described is the “*deplorable*” conditions of the prisoners on board prison ships. The men were “*destitute of any cloathing.*”

“—*thus circumstanced, they were obliged to convert a blanket (given by governor Cramacee at Quebec to each man) into a kind of loose coat, to enable them to stand the cold on the deck, as they were obliged to work the same as the crew.*”

The Continental Journal

April 9, 1778

“HEAD-QUARTERS, Boston, April 6 1778. ABSCONDED from Cambridge, in Violation of his Parole of Honor sacredly pledged, ST. LEGER BEVIL, Ensign in the 62d British Regiment. He is about 30 years of Age, low in Stature, has been bred to the Sea, talks like a Seaman, and frequently wears a long Blanket-Coat.

Whoever will apprehend and convey him to this Place, shall receive TWENTY DOLLARS Reward.

*By Order of the General,
J. KEITH, D. A. G.”*



The New Jersey Gazette

October 28, 1778

“Twenty Spanish Dollars Reward. RAN-AWAY from the subscriber, on the 8th day of October, a Negroe BOY, named CATO, alias Frie, about 5 feet 4 inches high, 17 or 18 years of age, he is a likely well made fellow, appears very innocent, but much addicted to lying and stealing; had on and took with him a small round hat, a sailor’s green jacket, a homespun blanket coat lapelled and bound with blue ferret, three good shirts, a drab coloured waistcoat half worn with plated buttons, one pair good leather breeches, one pair cloth ditto, several pair of stockings; he is supposed to be lurking about this city. Whoever takes up and secures said Negroe in any gaol on the continent, so that his master may have him again, shall, by applying to James Wilson, esquire, in this city, or the subscriber, in Alexandria, Virginia, shall receive the above Reward, with all reasonable charges. WILLIAM BIRD.”

Miscellaneous

New York Gazette
February 2, 1767

"a striped Blanket Coat, with flat Pewter Buttons..."

New York Gazette
May 8, 1769

"a blanket coat with yellow binding..."

Pennsylvania Gazette
August 10, 1769

"new blanket coat, tyed with brown yard strings"

Miscellaneous

Virginia Gazette
April 1, 1777

"a short Coat made of a Dutch Blanket, with white Metal Buttons"

Pennsylvania Packet
March 21, 1782

"a homespun blanket coat lappelled and bound with blue ferret..."

British Soldier in Winter Dress "1766"
Wearing a Coat made from a 3 "Point" Blanket
After Friedrich Konstantin von Germann (c. 1777)



British Soldier in Winter Dress “1766”
Wearing a Coat made from a 3 “Point” Blanket
After Friedrich Konstantin von Germann (c. 1777)



A 3 "Point" Blanket Recreated (Fort Ticonderoga)



*Ein Britischer Soldat auf den Posten in der
Candischen Winter-Kleidung. 1766.*



3 "Point" Blanket Reported to be Carried by Private Henry Marble of Massachusetts
During the American Revolution
White Wool, 2 3/4" Indigo Blue Stripes and Points
(Museum of the Fur Trade)



“Point” Blanket Reported to be Carried by Private Henry Marble of Massachusetts
During the American Revolution
White Wool, 2 3/4” Indigo Blue Stripes and Points
(Museum of the Fur Trade)



“En Canadischer Bauer” 1778
After Friedrich Konstantin von Germann



Ein Canadischer Bauer.

1778.

F. v. Germann

Kail

Canadians in Winter Dress

c. 1780

(Royal Ontario Museum)



Blanket Jackets

Maryland Gazette

June 25, 1757

*“Deserted from Francis Ware’s Company, the 14th of this instant June, on his march to Fort-Frederick, Patrick Grame, a Scotchman, aged 25 years,
5 feet 4 ½ inches high, of a brown complexion, has dark eyes, and black hair, middling long, has a down look, and is mark’d with the small-pox; had on when he went away, a **jacket made of a Dutch blanket**, grey country-made stockings, and shoes about half worn.
Whoever takes up the said deserter, and delivers him to any of the Recruiting-Officers in this Province, or contrives him to Fort-Frederick, shall have two pistoles reward paid by Francis Ware”*

Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon)

Williamsburg December 10, 1767

*“RUN away from the subscriber, about the 3d of last month, in Prince William county, near Dumfries, a Scotch servant man, named ROBERT CRAIG, about 5 feet 5 inches high, by trade a weaver, of a dark complexion, wears his own black short hair, and talks the Scotch dialect very broad; had on when he went away a drab coloured cloth great coat much patched, **a jacket made out of an old Dutch blanket**, an old felt hat welted round the brim with coloured thread, an old pair of osnabrug breeches, and a pair of ribbed yarn hose. Any person taking up the said servant, and conveying him to me, shall receive a reward of Three Pounds Virginia currency, besides what the law allows.*

WILLIAM BRIGGS. N.B. The above servant, I am informed, has wrote himself a discharge.”

Virginia Gazette (Purdie & Dixon) Williamsburg September 28, 1769

*“NORTH CAROLINA, Sept. 3, 1769. COMMITTED to the publick jail for the district of Halifax an outlandish Negro man who calls himself HARRY, about 25 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, and his fore teeth very much decayed; **has on an old jacket made of a Dutch blanket**, Negro cotton breeches, and an old brown linen shirt. He says he belongs to William Hunter, but cannot tell in what province his master lives. The owner may have him on proving his property, and paying charges.
CHRISTOPHER DUDLEY, Jailer. ”*

Blanket Trousers

Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet

May 6, 1777

*“DESERTED from Captain John Hammit's Company, in Col. Oliver Spenser's Regiment of Guards, the following men; -- John SMITH, a shoemaker by trade, 27 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, swarthy complexion, brown hair; it is probable he may change his name. STEPHEN STEWARD, country born, about 35 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, swarthy complexion, strait brown hair; had on a blue coat with red facings, **blanket trowsers buttoned down his legs**, and is probably gone towards Egg-Harbour. MORRIS WEKCH, born in Ireland, 5 feet 6 inches high, fresh complexion, strait fair hair, commonly wears a red great coat, has since inlisted with Capt. M'Fartredge, on board the Washington galley, and deserted from him. JAMES MELSOM, an Englishman, a tanner, about 20 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, dark complexion, strait brown hair.—Whoever takes up and secures the above deserters, so that they may be brought to their regiment, shall be entitled to a reward of TEN DOLLARS for each, or FORTY DOLLARS for them all, and reasonable charges, paid by JOHN HAMMITT.”*

The Connecticut Courant

September 8, 1778

*“THIRTY FIVE DOLLARS REWARD. MADE their escape from Hartford, on the first of September, 1778, the following prisoners, viz Nicholas Philips, a Dutchman, about 50 years of age, dark complexion, about five feet eight inches high. Had on a white short woolen jacket, and **trowsers made out of an old blanket**. Also, Nicholas Philips, jun and John Philips sons to old Nick; about the same height and complexion: Had on each an old green coat. Also, John Crookstone, a tall, slim fellow, and black eyes: Had on a short green jacket with yellow lining almost new, and white linen overhauls. Also, John Chambers a Dutchman, and Nathan Smith, both of middle stature, and dressed in like manner as Crookstone. Likewise, William Sutherland a Scotch man, about 40 years of age, short , thick set fellow: Had on a short green coat faced with red and linen overhauls. Whoever will take up said prisoners and return them to Hartford gaol, shall be entitled to the above reward, or five dollars for each, and necessary charges, paid by EZEKIEL WILLIAMS, Deputy Commissary of Prisoners.”*

Blanket Leggings

The Pennsylvania Evening Post

February 18, 1777

*“DESERTED from Third Pennsylvania regiment, commanded by Col. Joseph Wood, and out of Capt. John Reese’s company, the following men, viz. WILLIAM JONES, a native of Wales, in which language he speaks. He had on a blue surtout coat torn in the skirts, a new pair of shoes, **blanket leggings**, an old beaver hat cut, about thirty five years of age, five feet six inches high, of a dark complexion, and black hair. HUGH BROWN, a native of Ireland, a well set fellow, about five feet seven or eight inches high, of a dark complexion, short black hair and eyelids, and grey eyes. He had on an old light coloured Wilton coat and jacket, with regimental buttons of the Second regiment, the letters scraped out, an old pair of pumps, and copper buckles. WILLIAM HURLIHILL, a native of Ireland, a low squat fellow, near five feet two or three inches high, about twenty-five years of age, of a sandy complexion, brown hair, and grey eyes. He had on an old brown coat, white frize jacket, a pair of buckskin breeches, an old pair of shoes, with plated buckles. Whoever secures said deserters, so that they may join their regiments, shall have THIRTY DOLLARS reward, or TEN DOLLARS for either.*

JOHN REES, Captain.”

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Acknowledgements

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