

**Office of the Vermont Secretary of State
Vermont State Archives**

**Representatives John Abbot
and Daniel Martin, "Impeached,"
Tried, Convicted and Punished, 1781**

Though the term "impeachment" was used, this was more accurately an expulsion and reprimand (with the expulsion lasting less than a day). Though the General Assembly referred to this as an impeachment, the entire process took place within the House and was not tried by the Governor and Council as the Constitution required for impeachments.

On June 28, 1781 the General Assembly ordered the impeachment of two of its members, John Abbot, representative from Hoosack (one of the New York towns joined to Vermont under the Western Union of 1781-1782) and Daniel Martin, Putney Town Representative.

According to the Assembly Journal of June 28, 1781:

"Information being given that Mr. [John] Abbot, a member of this House has exchanged the Bills of credit of this State for hard money at a discount of one fourth--The said Abbot confessed the fact alleged--And on the question being put by order of the House, whether the person who made the exchange with him is a member of this House? he answered in the affirmative--Mr. [Daniel] Martin a member of the House Replied that he was not ashamed to own himself to be the person; and that he had made exchange with said Abbot of hard money for bills of credit of this State at a discount Whereupon

Ordered that Mr. [Matthew] Lyon be desired to draw and lay an impeachment against them before this House therefor which was accordingly done.

The impeachment being read the said Abbot and Martin confessed the fact alleged against them therein--and they having been heard before

the House, were directed to withdraw--which they accordingly did--
The House then entered on the consideration of the case and after
debate:

Resolved That the said Martin be and hereby is expelled from being a member of this House for the crime for which he stands accused in the impeachment before mentioned, of which he stands convicted by his own confession.

Resolved That the said Abbot receive a public reprimand from the Chair for the crime above mentioned --And the Reprimand was accordingly given."

Martin then "appeared before the House and made a public recantation for the crime for which he was expelled. and evidenced signs of sorrow and Repentance--Whereupon *Resolved* That the said Martin be and hereby is restored his seat as a member of this House."
(See [Vermont State Papers](#), Vol. III, Part I, pp. 268-269).

Bills of credit, to be redeemed through a land tax, were authorized by several acts during 1781 in order to meet Vermont's war expenses and public debt. Devaluing the State's bills of credit undermined the ability of the State to pay its debts. Counterfeiting or altering bills of credit was punishable by death. Martin was apparently a currency speculator; see E. P. Walton, Records of the Governor and Council (Vol. II, pp. 101-102).