

Thomas Roby (born 1759 in Lynn, Massachusetts)

Presented by Derek Dorr

- I was born in Lynn, Massachusetts. The boots worn by our soldiers in the War for Independence were made there!
- My father was a beloved pastor in the 3rd Parish Church in Lynn and an ardent Patriot. He was paid for his service in the Ministry with thirty pounds lawful currency, a house and barn, and pasture and tillage land ; twenty cords of wood, sixty bushels of corn, forty-one bushels of rye, six hundred pounds of pork, and eight hundred and eighty pounds of beef, which came to two bushels of grain and twenty-eight pounds of meat per week!
- My brother Joseph dressed himself as an Indian and participated in the Boston Tea Party. My father would gather 62 men from his Congregation and march with them to fight at Lexington and Concord in 1775. He served on the Committee for Safety and followed the Massachusetts Provincial Congress' advice to come to church armed, carrying a musket under one arm and his sermon under the other
- My brother and I both served in the War for Independence
- I graduated Harvard College in 1779, following my father Joseph into the ministry
- I married Lucretia Sturgis in June of 1786 and we had three children, **Joseph, Samuel and Abigail**. Her father Samuel, was a proprietor of this town of Otisfield! Perhaps this was how I came to be welcomed as Reverend of the Congregational Church of this town, as it became known after some time that they were in desperate need of a learned man to lead the Congregation. Unfortunately, my dear Lucretia passed in 1795 before we came to Otisfield
- I came to Otisfield and began preaching in 1796 and a year later, in 1797, I was installed as the first pastor of the Congregational Church you see behind you. Of course, the church I presided over was not so grand as the one that stands there today. The first meeting house was but a year old when I came to town
- My pay, agreed upon by the town, was **45 pounds** that first year, to be increased by **5 pounds** each year until it amounted to **75 pounds**. However, this would not be paid as you may expect. Living in such a rural area, outside of a major township, I was paid but **one third** of this fee in gold or silver. The remaining **two thirds** were paid to me in either bushels of wheat (**6 shillings per bushel**), rye (**5 shillings per bushel**) or indian corn (**4 shillings per bushel**). And, in case you were unaware, there are 20 shillings in a pound! I would have but **15 pounds** of my fee in gold or silver and the rest would be made up of bushel upon bushel upon bushel of wheat, rye or corn! This was some different than what my father had been paid but 50 years earlier!
- After my arrival to Otisfield I met a young woman by the name of **Elizabeth Osgood Knight** and we were wed in September of 1797. Dear Betsey had lost her first husband, **William Knight**. I brought my 3 beloved children to this marriage and she brought her young **William**, only 2 years old at the time. She was but 22 years to my 38.
- By the summer of 1798, we had our first son, born here in Otisfield, **Henry**. Soon followed by our daughter **Betsey** in 1800 and our last son, young **Thomas** in 1805. He lies here in this burial ground for we lost him at a mere 22 months of age. Unfortunately, many young children would be lost to illness in my time. It was not uncommon to lose half of the children you had brought into this world before the age of 5!

- In 1799, the townspeople voted to relinquish their right to a plot of land for the minister, myself and my family, to live on. The house we lived in still stands to this day, at the bottom of this road. A white, cape style home that you would notice on the way toward the village of Casco
- I preached in good standing from my first sermon in 1796 until some unfortunate business where the town decided no longer to pay me in 1803, after I had finally reached my minimum salary of **75 pounds**. I did keep my salary until 1804, as the town was bound to uphold at least that part of the arrangement we agreed to back in 1797. I was not officially removed from my preaching duties until 1810, after which point I left the town behind and moved to Harrison.
- There are whispers of my conduct at the pulpit. Some would say I had a love of strong drink and I would ask, in this cold, unforgiving climate, who doesn't have a use for a strong drink now and again? And what else was I to do with bushel upon bushel of fermentable grain as payment for saving their souls! I would also remind those same people that I was also known likewise for my good and fiery ability and eloquence in the pulpit. And also, under my pastorate, this fair congregation rose from a mere 8 members to 14! Now, sometimes I may have needed a bit of help in to the pulpit for my sermons and mayhaps I slipped into some profane language now and again, but I was a soldier, ministering to soldiers. And anyways, so strong was my legacy that they did not find another Pastor to replace me until 1814!
- My time in Otisfield, having come to its end, officially I may add in 1810, my Betsey and I moved to Harrison where I passed in 1836 and she in 1854. We are buried together there though our young Thomas lies here.