

The Patch Family

Presented by Maureen Howard

Good afternoon, my name is **Julia Ann Patch**. I was born in the lovely month of April in 1807. But before I talk about myself and show you my sampler which I am very proud of, I would like to talk about the two generations of my family that came before me.

My grandfather, **Benjamin Patch** was born in Concord, Massachusetts in 1744. During the Revolutionary War he was a private in the Minute Men Company that marched to Cambridge in April, 1775. In his diary he mentions that he arrived in Otisfield at Mr. George Peirce's home in May of 1776. Six years later when he was 37 years old, he married my grandmother, Sarah Peirce, the oldest daughter of George Peirce. A month later he bought lot 92 "in consideration of 5 shillings, also to build a house and clear the land" on the southerly side of Otisfield Hill – later known as Bell Hill. On this land Benjamin built a log home.

Although not a church goer, my grandfather was a very generous and public spirited man. One season when provisions were scarce, a stranger came from up country and stopped overnight on his way to Portland. My grandfather told him he would let him have corn at half the market price and save him the expense of a journey to Portland. The man happily filled his sacks with grandfather's corn and was on his way back north. Another story I have heard about his generosity was to Dan Morse who had a blacksmith shop in town. My grandfather visited him one spring day to ask how he was getting along. Mr. Morse replied that he was feeling poorly and that he was not going to do any farming. "Oh devil" said my grandfather, "you must plant some potatoes. I will come and plow your ground". With this encouragement, he plowed and planted and had a good harvest and always remembered this kindness. My grandparents had four children, Levi (my father), Sally, Deborah and Tarbell. Unfortunately, my grandmother, Sarah, died before I was born when she was only 38 years old. However, I have great memories of my grandfather, Benjamin, as he lived to be 75 years old and died in 1819 when I was 12 years old.

My father, **Levi Patch**, better known as "Captain Patch," was my grandparent's oldest child and was born in 1782; a year after Benjamin and Sarah moved to Otisfield Hill. There has always been a tradition that there was a prize of 100 acres of land given to the first male child born in Otisfield and that this prize was given to my father, Levi. However, the story goes that it rightfully should have been given to William Cobb who later put a curse on our land so that it could never grow crops. There are no records to support that the tradition about the prize ever existed and later owners of my family's property believed their land was as fertile as most on Bell Hill. So, I will leave it up to you to decide if this story is true.

My father married my mother, Martha, when he was 21. In 1810 at 28 years old, he built the present house that you will see as you travel down the hill. Besides becoming a successful farmer and potato harvester, he was engaged in the cutting and selling of cedar "knees" for ship building, which grew on his land, probably in College Swamp. In later years he also served as Otisfield's first postmaster. He lived his whole life on the old homestead and died there at the age of 80.

My parents had 8 children. Two of my brothers, Benjamin and Levi, died before their first birthday. My brother, John, died at the age of 32 when a tree fell on him where he lived in the part of Otisfield that later became Naples. Two of my brothers are not buried in this cemetery as they were very adventurous and moved out West where they are both buried. My brother, Samuel, moved to Kansas when he heard about the money to be made raising wheat. Unfortunately, he lost two crops by grasshoppers and storms and gave up farming. My brother, Edwin, moved out to Michigan. He farmed for a while and later engaged in the mercantile trade. I had one sister, Hester Ann, who married Robert Andrews when she was 23 and they lived on the Patch family homestead.

I now will bring this story back to me and my linen sampler. As I previously stated, I was born in the lovely month of April in 1807 and embroidered this sampler in 1824 when I was 17 years old. As you can see, my sampler features 5 alphabets, as well as numbers and family genealogy, and 11 borders.

I am sad to say that Julia Ann's life on this beautiful hill was far too short as she died when she was only 41 years old. But I am happy to say that her sampler has lived on to honor her life and spirit. Alas, however, this was almost not the case. In 1960 when the Patch House was being sold to Moulton and Winifred Pottle, her sampler was found by Dorothy Dyer Lombard in a box of old textiles about to be thrown away. Thankfully, Dorothy recognized that it was an old sampler and it was donated to the Otisfield Historical Society where it now framed and one of our prized possessions. In 2012, the Historical Society had Julia's sampler appraised. The appraiser noted that her needlework was "superior" and valued it at \$5,000 to \$6,000 dollars. Can you imagine how astonished Julia would be at that price?