

## INTRODUCTORY BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS SHAW

Thomas Shaw was born in Hampton, now Rockingham County, New Hampshire; probably on Sargent's Island located in the Hampton River. Date of birth was 10 October 1753; son of Ebenezer. Ebenezer was born 7 October 1713 in Hampton; married 19 November 1738, Anna, daughter of Thomas and Abiah Philbrick of Hampton. This Ebenezer was the son of Caleb Shaw, born in Hampton, 3 January 1671; married about 1695, Elizabeth, daughter of Timothy Hilliard of Hampton, and settled near the falls in what became the town of Hampton Falls. It was incorporated after his death. Caleb was Captain and co-owner of a fishing sloop (the "Mayflower") in which, while tacking in Hampton harbor, 19 March 1715, he was hit by the "boom," carried overboard and he drowned. Caleb was the son of Joseph born 1635, probably Cambridge, Massachusetts. Caleb married, 26 June 1661, the daughter of William Partridge of Salisbury, Essex, Massachusetts.

Joseph was the son of Roger Shaw, the immigrant. Roger Shaw was born about 1600, probably in Gawsorth, Cheshire, England. Roger was first noticed in 1636, Cambridge, Massachusetts where he owned two hundred acres of land on the south side of Arrow Street. Roger was also a town clerk and selectman for a number of years in Cambridge. He bought land in Hampton from Roger Crosse and obtained a grant of land, from the current King of England, giving him a large estate. Descendants still own bits and pieces of the original grant in Hampton. Roger's descendants dispersed. Mainly, in northern New England. In Maine, Standish, Cumberland County and Bethel, Oxford County received the larger contingents.

### Sources:

Harriette F. Farwell, "SHAW RECORDS, a Memorial of Roger Shaw, 1594 - 1661," Bethel, Maine, E.C. Bowler, 1904. Copyrighted 1903, by the Author. (now in the public Domain).

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Volume 158, October 2004. "The English Origin of Roger and Ann Shaw of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Hampton, New Hampshire."

Town of Hampton, Rockingham County, New Hampshire, ancient town records.

### THOMAS SHAW'S DIARY

I was born in the year 1753, and in 1775 I went into the Continental Army at Cambridge. And now I was the first man in this town (Standish, Maine) that was listed for the war, and I served one year and eight months therein, the first of my freedom, and the very first dollar that I ever had I let go for the service of my country.

And I being nine years old when we came into this town (Standish, Maine), where there was no school until I was twenty-four years old, and so I never went to school a moment in my life. Nevertheless, I learned to read and write a little. And in the year 1775 I began in my ignorant way to write spiritual songs all the opportunity I had until at last I have a trunk full of my manuscripts wrote on various subjects, and some of them I have got printed.

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Says my father, in his journal, that he was put to Moses Pearson Esquire, to learn the Joyner's trade, who moved to Portland (Maine) where he stayed until he was twenty-one years old (1692). And then returned to his native place in New Hampshire, which was called Hampton Falls, or Exeter in that state, and then he married Anna Philbrick of Newbery, who was my mother.

Now my father (Ebenezer) lived on the island in the Hampton River (Sargent's Island), and followed going to sea about twenty years to Boston and down east, and elsewhere.

On the sea-shore (Hampton River) there has been many a vessel cast away. Now I remember one, the Captain's name was clay, and one of his men was brought to my father's house on the island so frozen that he had his toes cut off by a doctor, and stayed there till he got so well

as to go away. It is said that another vessel was cast away on the rocks and my father got up early the next morning and saw the men on the rocks and he and his brother Josiah went immediately to them in his boat and brought them to his house and saved their lives. And another ran ashore high and dry on the sandy beach and was got off and sailed to sea again. And a rich British mast-ship also was cast away on that beach and lost.

Besides these, a great whale came ashore there also, and was tied up into Ile.

Brothers and sisters have been there  
And I with them, to see the fair  
Of vessels sailing on the sea—  
A pleasing sight it was to me.

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And now my father, seeing the danger that he and his children were in going to sea, he concluded to quit going to sea, and to move his family into the woods. And in the year 1762, or thereabouts, he moved to Pearsontown (now Standish, Maine). And a few years after this we were visited with a host of worms as a judgment it seems from heaven, and they came from the east like an army of men, but not with guns, and a great blazing star also appeared to come from the east. Which the people took much notice of and concluded that there was trouble at hand, which came by the Revolutionary War in 1775.

Now when people move into the woods, they very often have a hard time of it, for in new places they have bad roads or none at all, or only a footpath, or spotted trees to go by, and very often get lost in the woods for want of roads, and sometimes they have no gristmill for ten, twelve, or twenty miles. I know these things by experience. And again they have no meeting of any kind to go to, and also have no schools among them. These things I know by experience. And again they have no squires to do justice to the oppressed, no sheriffs to catch the rogues, nor no law to punish them, so that very often, when they first go into the woods do live without law and gospel, for some time to come. And very often have no blacksmith to shoe a horse, and have no tailor to cut and make a pair of shoes. Those and many other inconveniences I could mention, that attend settlers in a new country.

Now when my father came into this town, we were scant on't for most of the above conveniences of life. And the gospel was not preached to us for a long time. Now I remember that I heard a Baptist preacher, and he seemed to be very wild, and slapt his Bible on his desk and sought, I thought, to fright the people.

#### AN ARMY OF WORMS

A great army of worms, I see,  
Come from the east and west wood flee,  
That eat the fruits from off the land  
That in the way of them did stand.

The corn and grass before them fell  
And everything they loved well,  
That all behind them then became  
Like to a stubble burnt by flame.

Our pastures did become quite bare,  
Our cattle, they went hungry there—  
Our crops cut off before our eyes  
That I did see with sad surprise.

God's army them was all so bold  
To do as their commander told,  
And did God's work faithfully  
Until at once they all did die.

Or were all taken to their place  
From whence they came in their fierce race,

And whence they went we cannot tell,  
Except those that in ditches fell.

For we dug ditches for their grave  
That some provision we might save,  
Where thousands died, and was no more  
To eat out food as here to fore.

The time of worms never forgit  
And always do remember it,  
All you that hereafter be,  
Remember, I did that sight see.

Somewhere about 1776 as nigh as I can reckon, who saw them.

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Now I lived to see and hear many a reformation, and I rejoice with the same, having experienced religion when I was about fifteen or seventeen years of age, and have joined to the Methodist order in 1808, and have been happy among them ever since, and glory be to God for the same, for I have seen great things among them, and hear wonderful preachers among them, and saw sinners turned from sin to serve God.

As it came to past in the year 1775 that the war broke out between Great Briton and America, and then I must needs to go into the army; but there I still remember the God of my salvation. I sot out from home for Cambridge under the command of Capt. Stuart, with a few of my townsmen on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, and left my weeping friends behind. Now I stayed at Cambridge all the remainder of that year and the next winter, and still remembered my God, though in an army of men there were many temptations to draw me to sin, but blessed be God in that he kept me from hideous sins though all the time I was in the army. Now it came to past that on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 1776, that the British troops then left Boston, and I with others on the 20<sup>th</sup> day then went into Boston all summer; and there I had smallpox and was very sick indeed, in so much that I was senseless part of the time... Now in October, I with some invalids did march to Ticonderoga for to join our regiment, for Col. Phinney had marched his regiment. At Fort George we stayed until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1777, then our enlistment was out. Then we went to Albany and got a little money for to fetch us home. And I sot out from Albany on the first Saturday in that year and arrived at my uncle Philbrick's in Hollis on the next Saturday, and I stayed there in that place until the next Tuesday, and on the next night I came to a cousin of mine, and stayed all night, and sot out the next morning, and at night I came to my uncle's whose name was Joseph Shaw, who received me and entertained me kindly... and on the next Monday I sot out from my loving uncle's and at night I lodged at Summersworth, and the next night I have forgotten where, and, and the next night I got home to my brother's Ebenezer Shaw's where I sot out from, and they were glad for my return, and the next day I went to my father's and my father and mother received me with a joyful heart.

I had a farm and carried on farming and the cooper's trade.

14 March 1782.—My father died at my house, and left my kind mother with me, and we had no minister at the funeral for the Rev. John Thompson had left us the year before. And then when my father was dead and gone, then my kind mother was left alone; and then I took her into my house, and took care of her above twenty years. Now in the year that my father died, I built a windmill for to grind corn in.

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#### THE WIND-MILL

Oh, my friend, wait; you are all too late  
To send for rye or wheat,  
For wife and I are drained dry,  
We've not enough to eat.

I sent to you the winter through  
 Of such meal that I had,  
 And now if I do you deny  
 Pray, sir, do not be mad.

For the poor come in my door  
 And on me do attend,  
 To me they cry and say shall die  
 If I don't give or lend.

To me they come, and will have some,  
 And dry they do me drean.  
 My mill doth go but very slow  
 So that my toll is lean.

I tell ye all the wind is small  
 Neither can I it draw.  
 Till the wind rise, get your supplies,  
 And wait a while for Shaw.

—*Standish April 21, 1778*

An uncommon noise in the air, August 30, 1787.

July 14, 1807. Tuesday, as I was riding to Portland I heard the melancholy news of Captain Adams' shipwreck on Richmond Island, and began a Mournful Song on the occasion. I wrote nine verses on the road, and finished the same in Portland. I attend again the funeral there on that day for three of the sufferers were carried to Kellog meeting-house; the greatest funeral that ever was known in this town, sixteen souls lost and six saved. I carried my song to the press, and then returned home the third day. The next Saturday I rode to Portland and see to the fixing of the type for printing the shipwreck song, and stayed to Quarterly meeting on the Sabbath, and heard Elder Breal and Brother Welch preach, and attend the sacrament there. On Monday I took my songs and spread them about, which met with great approbation, and returned home at night. The next day I spread them in this town, and in the afternoon I went to Windham, then to Portland and stayed two nights, and then took a circuit round to Saco and Buxton, and came home on Saturday night. This week I had 4500 copies printed off, and disposed of nigh 3000.

July 28. Tuesday I rode to Brunswick and lodged there... Wednesday I went to Topsham and returned, and at Nichol's Tavern was the college. The college boys beset me devil-like, and I told them they were learning to preach the Gospel, and I told them if they did not mend their ways the devil would have them.

July, upon the fourteenth day,  
 As I to Portland took my way,  
 Before ten miles I rode ahead  
 Awful tidings struck me with dread.

On Adam's shipwreck I did hear,  
 The news a spreading far and near,  
 Which led my mind, riding along,  
 For to compose that shipwreck song.

In Gorham I began that song,  
 And studied as I rode along;  
 And when I came to Portland town,  
 Concluded there to write it down.

7 September 1807, Wednesday. I went to Portland and Elder Lee preached... The next day I heard him preach at Scarborough, and I stayed in Saco until the 11<sup>th</sup> day, I went to meeting at Saco at the grove where a reformation had broken out three weeks before, and on this day I saw forty-one persons baptized with shouts and glory.

21 August 1808. I and Daniel went to Portland to see Drew hanged, where was a multitude of people gathered together. There was little preaching there, for it was a silent time indeed, for no one dared to open his mouth to the people in these awful times, it was supposed that Drew die a good man.

27 August 1808. I went to Portland and stayed till Monday, and my horse ran home, and I came home on Thursday. While I was at Portland, I got a piece printed on Drew.

### ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

What great works is, now, in our day  
By means of great machinery  
For to go swift without men's hands  
To do as is God's great commands.

To go, men have machinery  
Upon the land and on the sea,  
No one with swiftness can compare  
Like one a flying in the air.

Machinery carries a wheel  
Which turneth out the good fine meal.  
Machinery will sing a song  
Without a heart to help it along.

The wicked have machinery  
To sing God's praise with we can see,  
Without a heart within the same  
That doth produce a shameful sound.

With cat guts strung and horses tails,  
To groan and scream in all fierce gales—  
Till in God's house men to contrive  
Machinery—a place to hive.

I was troubled with Scriptural Dreams and visions, and the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. And the Word saith to Christians to be not conformed to this world, but to come out from among them and be separated, and not to run after the world's fiddles, and flutes, and pipes, and bugles.

Standish, 23 July 1811. Religion is very low among all orders of people. Lord, revive thy work all round our land.

### A REVIEW OF MY WRITINGS

Sheet after sheet I wrote with ink  
Full fifty years as I did think  
Year after year I wrote down  
Many a verse of Standish Town.

Book after book I made with care  
And wrote much of my mind down there;  
Many a reformation song  
I wrote as I did pass along.

And mournful pieces I have made  
Upon the living and the dead,

On fires and drowned in the deep  
For which many a one did weep.

Now I have been writing sixty years; and my books and papers lie very loose under my hand, and are now very many; and God only knows whose hands they will fall into after my decease. Now I have made it my rule for to write nothing but the truth, and to let nothing but the truth be found in my writings because I am a Bible Man. 27 July 1836.

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### MY TOMB

My wish has been a tomb to make,  
Where, my body for to rest.  
At last, the same did undertake,  
And trust the same I have the best.

Come bless the Lord, my soul, and wait  
On him above contently,  
Unit till I end this mortal state,  
And so prepare to die.

And then to close my eyes in peace,  
And then to wing my soul away,  
Where sin and sorrow all shall cease,  
And happiness always to stay.

God grant that I in heaven shall rest  
Whene'er my breath I do resign,  
And all mankind also be blest,  
And be above forever Thine

Composed and wrote 21 October 1837, when I was hardly able to write.  
Thomas Shaw (He died 20 October 1838).

Boston, 17 July 1776. The first piece I wrote in 1776. This is a copy of the record of Thomas Shaw's march to Cambridge in 1775, from his house on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Copies of the original diary was made available to me from Mr. Glenn B. Skillin. The original diary is assumed to be in the hands of the Maine Historical Society (MeHi). Thomas Shaw Henley.

## 'SEVENTY-SIX

On July the twelfth day,  
As I'm a going to tell,  
We marched away to Cambridge (Massachusetts),  
And all was very well.

And early in the morning  
Our Captain we did meet,  
And had as good a breakfast  
As I desire to eat.

And sot out from Gorham (Maine),  
Left friends for to meet foe—

No more for to see them  
As ever we did know.

And traveling towards Cambridge  
By the beat of the drum:  
At length we did get there  
Where we sot out to come.

And when we got there,  
We had no house or inn—  
Soon there came a shower  
That wet our outer skin.

Our Major then turned out  
Some old sails to obtain—  
Of these we made our tents  
And sheltered off the rain.

Soon after this was done—  
Then, went we upon guard,  
And not being used to it,  
We thought it very hard.

It was to Charlestown Neck  
We had a mind to be;  
When the enemy did fire  
At all the men they see.

So I did stare round  
Where both above did fly,  
But all were overhead  
Because they shot so high.

We then did get away  
And got home safe again,  
For notwithstanding fire,  
Not one of us was slain.

But a while afterwards,  
To Plowed Hill we did go,  
To build a breast-work there  
Against our haughty foe.

And after this was done  
And winter did draw near,  
To build on Cobble Hill  
Our men did now appear.

And after we did that,  
Our men did then prepare  
To build a fort on Beachmore

For fear they should come there.

From Boston they have bombs—  
From Beacon Hill were shot—  
Intending for to kill us,  
But found out they could not.

We built our fort at Beachmore,  
Then very soon did hear—  
For to lay siege to Boston!  
Our men did the prepare!

And after we did fire,  
The Bretons did the same  
From their Boston high forts,  
Which then unto we came.

It was the third night:  
All night cannon did boom—  
From both side shots did fly:  
Boston did rattle doom.

On March, eleventh day,  
We paid them to our will,  
While on Dorchester side,  
We built forts on a hill.

They crowed full their boats  
To drive us off the neck;  
But meeting a fierce wind,  
Were forced to go back.

They saw it would not do,  
And soon they did agree  
To get into their ships  
And sail into the sea.

On the seventeenth of March—  
As we did surely know—  
They sailed out of Boston  
For Nantasket below.

After they left Boston,  
The Castle they did spite,  
And so they had their pleasure,  
And spiled it in the night.

We marched into Boston  
On March the twentieth day,  
And on Fort Hill did work

To keep our foes away.

And a while afterwards  
Our bakers pressed us short;  
We did grow very faint,  
Because our food was naught.

On May the thirteenth day,  
As we then all did hear,  
To drive their ships away  
Our general did prepare.

The harbor now is clear  
Full in our possession,  
So that all merchant ships  
May have free passage in.

The Court now passed an act  
For us small pox to take  
To make it well with all  
Who vaccination make.

I don't mean all was well,  
For some did surly die,  
Their bodies in their graves,  
And souls to God did fly.

As I was at hospital,  
Our regiment marched away.  
And we that were sick,  
Behind, were forced to stay.

And now the time did come  
That I must march away  
For Ticonderoga (New York): sot out  
September, eighteenth day.

At morning, we sot out  
With thirty men or more  
For to travel the road  
We never did before.

We traveled day by day,  
And came to Number Four,  
I think it took us six days,  
Perhaps a little more.

And so we travel on  
Unto where we were sent,  
And then at length we came  
To Mount Independent.

And now in October,  
Our fleet was then destroyed,  
But we did keep our guards,  
For we were much annoyed.

Some of our men they took,  
And some of them did kill;  
And so at Ty. We were  
Till winter did us chill.

Enemies came into sight  
With their boats in the lake,  
But did not fall upon us,  
For fear we should them take.

And so we went to Fort George—  
And there a while did stay—  
Till the last day of December,  
Which brought my freedom day.

Seventy-seven, first day,  
I left our fighting men,  
And came to Albany,  
Like to a robbers den.

I travel day by day,  
Till to my friends I came,  
And very slowly went  
Because I did git lame.

Uncles and cousins I did see  
And with them I did stay  
So kindly they did help me  
Upon a tedious way.

Though Hampton then I came,  
Then entered in this state:  
To Brunswick, and then came  
To Kennebunk, though late.

The next day I arrive  
Until one Standish Town,  
And found our people all alive  
With joy and great renown.

And so was glad to see  
Father and mother there—  
They glad to look on me  
So happy, well, and fair.