

New Hampshire



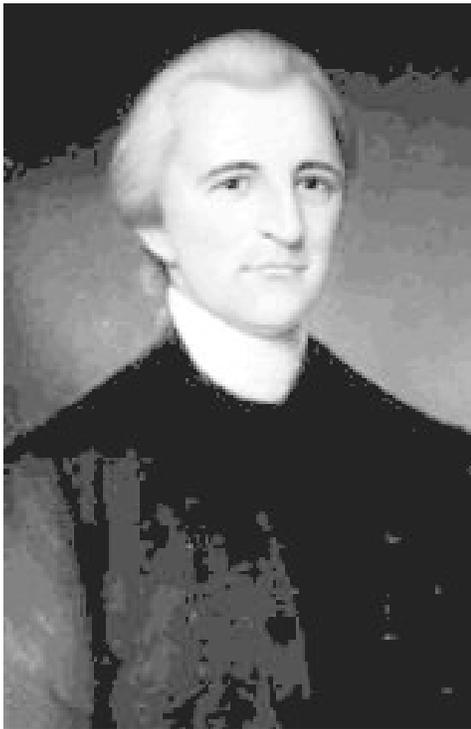
Minute Man

A bulletin issued in the interests of the New Hampshire Society, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION and in tribute to the PATRIOTS OF THE THIRTEEN COLONIES, who pledged their lives and fortunes to establish the Republic.

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REVEREND ISRAEL EVANS

Israel Evans was the fourth generation of his family to enter the ministry. His grandfather emigrated to this country from Wales.

Evans graduated from Princeton College in October 1772. He was licensed to preach by the First Philadelphia Presbytery in 1775 and ordained by the Presbytery in 1776. In 1775 Evans was appointed chaplain of the First New York Regiment of the Line, and in 1776 he was made chaplain of the Second New York Regiment of the Line, commanded by Col. Philip Van Cortlandt. He was with the troops attacking Quebec in Winter 1776, according to Record & Pension Office correspondence dated 1902, and served with General Gates at Ticonderoga in the same year.

In 1777 Evans became chaplain of a brigade of New Hampshire troops and served with these troops under the commands of General Enoch Poor, General John Sullivan and General John Stark. During 1777 Evans was with Brigadier General Poor when English General Burgoyne was captured by General Gates at Saratoga, New York.

Reverend Israel Evans (1747-1807)
Born Chester County (PA); died at Concord
(NH).
Portrait by U.D. Tenney, after unknown artist.
Presented to the State by a descendant, 1884.



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Minute Man

He then went to Valley Forge, PA for the winter of 1777/8. A biographer, John Calvin Thorne, says, "In passing, it may be mentioned that Valley Forge was located...on the property of a Mr. Evans, probably a relative of the chaplain..." [John Calvin Thorne, "Rev. Israel Evans, M.A.", in *Granite Monthly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 11 (Nov. 1902), p. 289.] On December 18, 1777 Evans preached a Thanksgiving Day sermon to the troops at Valley Forge. A copy of Evans' text was mailed to George Washington, who wrote Evans a thank you letter on March 13, 1778.

In 1779 Evans accompanied General John Sullivan as chaplain and aide on a campaign against the Five Nations, headed by the famous Joseph Brandt, or Chief Red Jacket. On October 17, 1779 Evans addressed the returning officers and men of the Western Army. Response to his remarks was so positive that the general and field officers paid the printing costs to have the speech distributed free among the command. On September 9, 1780 General Poor died at Hackensack, New Jersey, and at the internment the next day, Rev. Evans eulogized his old commander before Washington, Lafayette and other general officers. "...[S]o near was a strong force of the enemy...that the customary salute was not fired over the grave." [See *Granite Monthly*, vol. XII nos. 7,8 (July-August 1889).]

In October 1781 Evans was at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia and standing with General Washington when a cannonball landed close by, covering Evan's hat with sand. He showed his hat to Washington, who remarked that Evans had better take the hat with him to show to his family after the war. After the surrender of Cornwallis and Howe at Yorktown, October 19, 1781, Evans delivered a prayer of thanksgiving to American officers and men. His last sermon as an army chaplain was delivered in New York City, December 11, 1783.

After the war Reverend Evans returned to New Hampshire, where he sought financial relief from the devalued Continental currency in which he had been paid. According to Thorne, "In 1780 the 'Depreciation' was so great that nine thousand Pounds were voted to be raised to pay the minister's salary in Concord [NH], and not finding that sufficient the parish voted to raise three thousand Pounds additional. In 1781 they voted to raise fifty thousand Pounds." (Thorne, op cit., p. 298.)



Patriots of the Revolution: **REVEREND ISRAEL EVANS**

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Minute Man

Evans corresponded with New Hampshire President Meshech Weare during 1783/4. Weare responded in a June 6, 1783 letter: "In answer to your several Queries respecting a settlement with the Army would inform you, that the State of New Hampshire, in settling with their Troops, supposed the Paymaster paid them their wages in Continental money to Jan. 1st, 1780, and that it amounted in the year 1777 to one half, in 1778, to one sixth, and in 1779 to one twentieth of the sum promised, and accordingly made up Depreciation to the three Battalions of the New Hampshire Troops..." (Thorne, op cit., p. 297.)

After the war Evans preached in Charlestown, MA where he met and married Hulda Kent, sister of Colonel William A. Kent. Childless, the couple adopted and raised a niece, Mary Kent, who became the third wife of Isaac Adams Porter. [Mrs. Porter survived her husband by forty years, dying in Concord, NH in 1847.]

In 1789 Reverend Evans became the second "settled" minister of the First Congregational Society in Concord, NH. He was paid 105 Pounds for his first year, and given use of the parsonage. He was also allocated 200 Pounds so that he might build a house. [Thorne, op cit., says, "The whole equal to about \$350"]. During his years as minister, 1789-1797, there were continual difficulties over his pay and when he was to receive it. He also introduced music into his services. "Some persons left the 'meeting house' rather than hear the profane sounds of the fiddle [base viol] and flute." (Thorne, op cit., p. 308)

While in Concord, Reverend Evans preached in 1791 before the state authorities on the need for universal education, and he was appointed chaplain in the same year (1791) of a convention called to revise the state constitution. He also served as chaplain for the New Hampshire Legislature, 1788-92.

Between 1789 and 1807 Reverend and Mrs. Evans lived at 200 North Main Street, Concord, in a house demolished more than a century ago. After Reverend Evans' death, Mrs. Evans moved to Pleasant Street, Concord. Both were buried in the Old Concord cemetery. "Over his grave stands the first marble monument erected in the old burying ground." (Thorne, op cit., p. 308.)

