

## **Ancestors of Martha Calef Hewes**

Martha Calef Hewes was mentioned in The Lineage from George Hewes to Abigail Hewes Maxham as the wife of Solomon Hewes. The very interesting story of her immigrant parents is described in the attached pages from a biography of Robert Calef that was printed in *The Granite Monthly: A New Hampshire Magazine*, in 1907. The article has the title: Robert Calef, “Merchant, of Boston in New England”, by William S. Harris.

Robert Calef was born in 1648, probably in England, and he arrived in Boston with his wife Mary and six children before 1688. It states on Page 162 that the fifth child of Robert and Mary Calef was Martha, who married Solomon Hewes on September 28, 1700. It is also written that Solomon and Martha Calef Hewes lived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and then Wrentham, Massachusetts where she died March 4, 1759.

The article discusses the life of Robert Calef who was a prominent clothier and merchant in Boston, and it is particularly about the aftermath that followed the publication of a very influential book that he wrote and had published. The story starts with Cotton Mather who was a very influential minister in Boston who wrote a book *The Wonders of the Invisible World* about the famous Salem witchcraft trials that took place in 1692. Mather recounted stories from some of the absurd accusations that led to these trials and strongly supported these stories as being based on actual events. That is, Cotton Mather was supporting the persecution of ‘witches’ that took place in Salem.

Robert Calef was sufficiently astonished by the premise of Mather’s book that he wrote his own book *More Wonders of the Invisible World* in response, in which he dismissed the beliefs that were written in Mather’s work as being based on “heathenish notions”. Robert Calef’s book had to be printed in London in 1700 and then sent back to Boston. There were later additional printings of the book in both Boston and Salem. Robert Calef’s book outraged Cotton Mather and others who wished to continue justifying the persecution of ‘witches’ during the Salem trials. The extremely harsh reaction of Cotton Mather and his supporters caused Robert Calef to move to Roxbury, outside Boston. Robert Calef has since been widely praised for the courage that he displayed in taking a strong public stand against the absurd ideas that were put forward by some of the most prominent citizens of Boston. The fact that his book was reprinted several times indicates that Robert Calef actually did have very wide support for his beliefs from the general public in Boston.

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## Robert Calef, "Merchant, of Boston, in New England"

*By William S. Harris*

The Calef and Calfe families in this country are nearly all descended from Robert Calef, the famous "Merchant of Boston in New England," who was a hero in the memorable controversy over the strange and horrible "Salem witchcraft delusion" of two hundred years ago.

Branches of the Calef family have been prominent in Portsmouth, Exeter, Kingston, Hampstead, Chester, Sanbornton, Salisbury, and other towns in New Hampshire, and multitudes of descendants of Calefs in that and other names are scattered over New Hampshire and the other states of our Union.

It is believed that Robert Calef was of English origin, and that he came to Boston from England before 1688, accompanied by his wife, Mary, and six children. He was born about 1648. He became a clothier, or woolen merchant, in Boston, where he resided until the antipathy aroused by his advanced and bold stand on the witchcraft question drove him to seek a residence in Roxbury about 1708. Here he lived on the corner of Washington and Eustis streets, and he was buried in the old Roxbury burying ground on the opposite corner of the same streets. The inscription on his gravestone is still distinct, and reads as follows:

Here Lyef Buried  
The Body of M<sup>r</sup>  
ROBERT CALEF  
Aged Seventy one  
Years. Died April  
The Thirteenth  
1719.

He lies in good company, the two governors Dudley, Chief Justice Paul

Dudley, John Eliot, apostle to the Indians, and others scarcely less distinguished, being buried in the same yard.

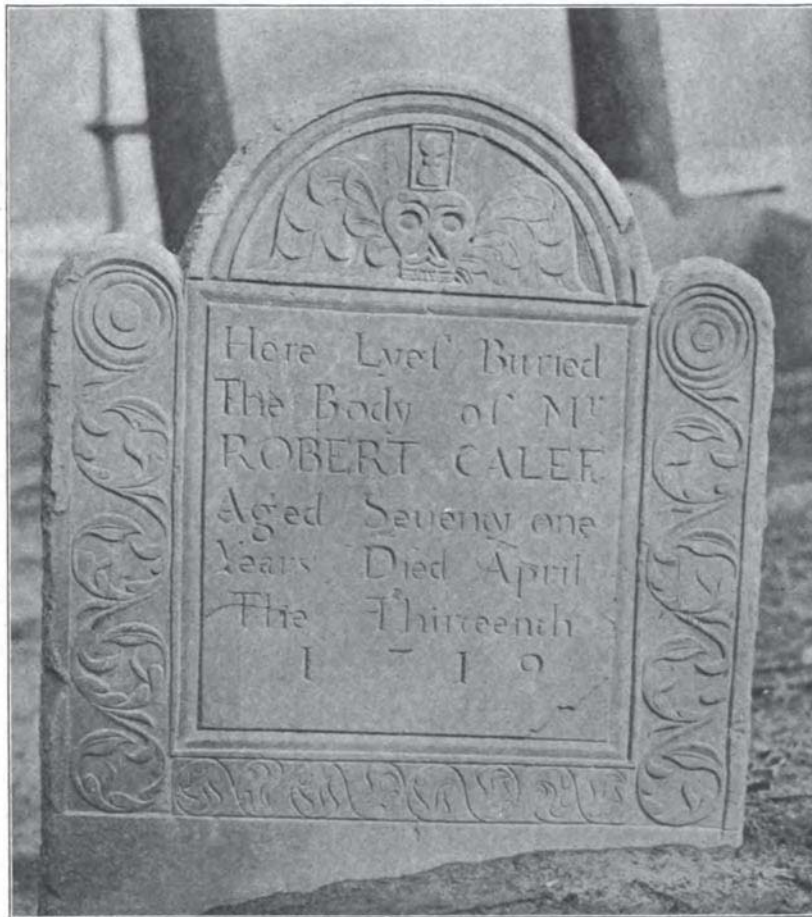
Of Robert Calef's life but little is known aside from his connection with the witchcraft delusion, but his little book, entitled "More Wonders of the Invisible World," bears unmistakable testimony to his progressive spirit, sincerity of purpose, courage, and level-headedness, as well as his more than ordinary literary ability.

In the year 1692 there raged that strange and terrible craze called the witchcraft delusion, having its seat chiefly at Salem, Mass. The best and most intelligent of the citizens seemed to lose their wits with the ignorant and superstitious, until twenty persons were put to death as witches, often on the most absurd and whimsical testimony, and about 150 others had been accused and imprisoned before the public mind awoke from the horrible nightmare.

The Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, the influential pastor of the North Church in Boston, wrote a book recounting with full credulity some of these witchcraft cases, entitled "The Wonders of the Invisible World." Robert Calef was not only sufficiently advanced beyond his times to disbelieve in these "heathenish notions," as he calls them, but bold enough to write in opposition to the influential Mather and other leading men of the times. His book was entitled "More Wonders of the Invisible World, or The Wonders of the Invisible World Displayed. In Five Parts. Collected by Robert Calef, Merchant of Boston, in New England." It was

originally printed in London, England, by N. Hillar, in 1700, as a small quarto of 168 pages. Copies of this first edition are now rare and valuable. It was reprinted in Salem, Mass., in 1796, and again in 1823, and in Boston in 1828. There have also been later editions.

prepared several able papers in different forms, in which he discussed the subject with great ability, and treated Cotton Mather and all others whom he regarded as instrumental in precipitating the community into the fatal tragedy, with the greatest severity of language and force of logic,



Robert Calef's Gravestone, Old Roxbury Burying Ground

Charles W. Upham, in his "Salem Witchcraft," thus speaks of Calef and his work:

"His strong faculties and moral courage enabled him to become the most efficient opponent, in his day, of the system of false reasoning upon which the prosecutions rested. He

holding up the whole procedure to merited condemnation. They were first printed at London in 1700, in a small quarto volume, under the title of 'More Wonders of the Invisible World.' This publication burst like a bomb-shell upon all who had been concerned in promoting the witch-



craft prosecutions. Cotton Mather was exasperated to the highest pitch. He says in his diary: 'He sent this vile volume to London to be published, and the book is printed; and the impression is, this day week, arrived here. The books that I have sent over into England, with a design to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, are not published, but strangely delayed; and the books that are sent over to vilify me, and render me incapable to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ,—these are published.' Calef's writings gave a shock to Mather's influence, from which it never recovered."

Francis S. Drake says in his "Dictionary of American Biography":

"Such was the prevalence of the belief which he so powerfully attacked that, unable to publish his defense in Boston, it was printed in London in 1700. . . . Its plain facts and common sense arguments contributed, notwithstanding the learned and powerful were its opponents, most essentially to a change of public opinion. Dr. Increase Mather (father of Cotton), president of Harvard College, ordered the wicked book to be burnt in the college yard. The members of the Old North Church published in 1701 a defense of their pastors, the Mathers, entitled 'Remarks upon a Scandalous Book Against the Government and Ministry of New England,' with the motto 'Truth will come off Conqueror.' The complete triumph of Calef turned the satire upon them; judges and jurors confessed their errors, and the people were astonished and ashamed of their follies. Justice was, however, withheld from him in his day, and traces of his unpopularity are discoverable in several proceedings of the town."

No bookseller in Boston had the courage to offer Calef's book for sale, or dared to give it shop-room. (S. G. Drake's "Witchcraft Delusion in New England.") Indeed, Calef was

at one time caused to be arrested by the Mathers for scandalous libel, but was not brought to trial.

The author above quoted, Francis S. Drake, says in another publication (Winsor's "Memorial History of Boston"):

"Another name that deserves to be held in grateful remembrance by posterity is that of Robert Calef, a native of England; by occupation a clothier and husbandman, and who at the time of his death, April 13, 1719, at the age of seventy-one, was one of the selectmen of Roxbury. At a time when all were carried away by the witchcraft delusion, and when the excited multitude verily believed that Satan had been let loose among them, this clear-headed, courageous citizen almost single-handed opposed the popular madness and let in the pure rays of truth and common sense upon the dark shadows of superstition around him."

Savage in his "Genealogical Dictionary" says that Calef's book "served to prevent a renewal of the horrid tragedies that the patrons of delusion, unsatisfied with their sad experience, would surely have attempted. When President Mather ordered the modest work to be burned in the college yard, he failed in true policy almost as deeply as if he had prevailed to obtain similar treatment of the body of the author, as of his volume, and his own power in the institution that had long suffered as by nightmare ceased in a few weeks."

Rev. Samuel Mather, a son of Cotton, wrote in 1728, referring to Calef: "There was a certain disbeliever of witchcraft, who wrote against my father's book, 'The Wonders of the Invisible World,' but the man is dead; his book died long before him." If the book died, it had a resurrection, and is now to be found in at least two editions reprinted together with the companion volume of Mather.

The quotations already given are

amply sufficient to show that Robert Calef was a hero from whom all his posterity may well be proud to claim descent. But let us turn for a moment to the realm of poetry. The poet Whittier, so well versed in the history and traditions of New England, and so quick to appreciate any reformer or hero whose ideas were in advance of his age, or who suffered persecution in any form for conscience's sake, has devoted a fine poem to the memory of Robert Calef. The opening stanzas of "Calef in Boston, 1692" are as follows:

In the solemn days of old,  
Two men met in Boston town,  
One a tradesman frank and bold,  
One a preacher of renown.

Cried the last, in bitter tone,  
"Poisoner of the wells of truth!  
Satan's hireling, thou hast sown  
With his tares the heart of youth!"

Spake the simple tradesman then,  
"God be judge twixt thou and I;  
All thou knowest of truth hath been  
Unto men like thee a lie.

"Falsehoods which we spurn today  
Were the truths of long ago;  
Let the dead boughs fall away,  
Fresher shall the living grow."

The poem further declares:

In the ancient burying ground,  
Side by side the twain now lie,  
One with humble grassy mound,  
One with marbles pale and high.

This statement is not to be taken too literally, for the Mathers are buried in Copp's Hill burying-ground, and Robert Calef in Roxbury. The poem finally closes thus:

But the Lord hath blessed the seed  
Which the tradesman scattered  
then,  
And the preacher's spectral creed  
Chills no more the blood of men.

Let us trust, to one is known  
Perfect love which casts out fear,  
While the other's joys atone  
For the wrong he suffered here.

Whittier elsewhere (in "The Double-Headed Snake of Newbury") characterizes Mather as follows:

Cotton Mather came galloping down  
All the way to Newbury town,  
With his eyes agog and his ears set  
wide,  
And his marvelous inkhorn at his  
side;  
Stirring the while in the shallow pool  
Of his brains for the lore he learned  
at school,  
To garnish the story, with here a  
streak  
Of Latin, and there another of  
Greek;  
And the tales he heard and the notes  
he took,  
Behold! are they not in his Wonder-  
Book?

A few quotations from Calef's book will now be in order, giving, in his own language, some of his ideas on the subject that at the time was of so vital interest to all. In the preface, or "Epistle to the Reader," which is dated August 11, 1697, he says, respecting his purpose in writing the book: "Truly I take this to be just as the devil would have it, so much to fear disoblighing men, as not to endeavor to detect his wiles, that so he may the sooner, and with the greater advantages, set the same on foot again (either here or elsewhere) so dragging us through the pond twice by the same cat (cord or rope). And, if reports do not herein deceive us, much the same has been acting this present year in Scotland. And what kingdom or country is it that has not had their bloody fits and turns at it? And if this is such a catching disease, and so universal, I presume I need make no apology for my endeavors to prevent, as far



as in my power, any more such bloody victims or sacrifices; though indeed I had rather any other would have undertaken so offensive, though necessary, a task; yet, all things weighed, I had rather thus expose myself to censure than that it should be wholly omitted."

The prevalent belief he characterized as "that hobgoblin monster, witchcraft, whereby this country was nightmared and harassed, at such a rate as is not easily imagined."

As to the "doctrinals" of his own belief concerning the subject of witchcraft, he sums up some of them in brief in a letter to Cotton Mather in 1693, referring to a previous letter: "In which I again prayed that if I erred I might be shown it by scripture, viz. in believing that the devil's bounds are set, which he cannot pass—that the devils are so full of malice that it can't be added to by mankind—that where he hath power, he neither can nor will omit executing it—that it is only the Almighty that sets bounds to his rage, and who only can commission him to hurt or destroy any; and consequently to detest, as erroneous and dangerous, the belief that a witch can commission devils to afflict mortals—that he can at his or the witch's pleasure assume any shape—that the hanging or drowning of witches can lessen his power of afflicting, and restore those that were at a distance tormented by him."

Although the author of "More Wonders" was so conspicuous a character at the time, yet a strange error regarding his identity has prevailed for many years and until recently. This error was in supposing that the author of the book was Robert Calef, Jr., the son of the first Robert. Savage made the statement (1860), and later writers followed him, even Justin Winsor in his "Memorial History of Boston," inclining to accept this view. But investigations within a few years have shown

conclusively that the father was the author. Indeed, it is remarkable that a controversy of this character and writings which were so evidently the product of a mature mind, should ever have been credited to one who could have been but a mere youth. Samuel G. Drake in "The Witchcraft Delusion in New England" calls Robert, junior, the author, and at the same time says that he died about the end of the year 1722, aged about forty-five. This would make him but a lad of sixteen in 1693, when the first writings composing the "More Wonders" were dated, and but twenty when the whole book was ready for the printer—a preposterous supposition.

Moreover, the name on the title page is not Robert Calef, Jr., as it should have been if it were the work of the son, as the father was yet living. It is worth mentioning as collateral testimony that in the sermon preached by Rev. John Kelly at the funeral of Justice John Calfe of Hampstead, N. H., in 1808, it is stated that it was an ancestor of his who wrote the book, which would not be the case if Robert, junior, were the author. A family tradition put in print so long ago should have great weight.

But there is absolutely indisputable evidence on this point. In the Lenox Library in New York City there is a copy of the "More Wonders" containing the following written inscription: "Presented to the Earl of Bellamont, from the author, Robert Calef." The signature of the author in this inscription has been compared with the known autograph of Robert, senior, and found to be identical with it, while it is totally unlike that of Robert, junior.

As the identity of this famous hero and author of "More Wonders of the Invisible World" is of some importance to his posterity, reference may be made to the following among the authorities which give the matter cor-

rectly: Francis S. Drake's "History of Roxbury," 1878., p. 149; "New England Historic and Genealogical Register," vol. XXX. p. 461; Allibone's "Dictionary of Authors"; Thomas' "Dictionary of Biography."

In regard to the spelling of the name, it appears that Robert, senior, always spelled it Calef, but that his descendants for the next three or four generations commonly followed the spelling Calfe, which doubtless represented the popular pronunciation; all seem now to have returned to the original orthography. On the early records the name frequently appears as "Calf," and on one Ipswich document of 1699 appears the name of "Mr. Joseph Califfe."

Robert Calef, Sr., died April 13, 1719, aged seventy-one. His widow, Mary, survived him only till November 12 following. His will was proved June 3, 1720, and his grandson, Joseph Calef, of Ipswich, was the executor, and in 1726 divided the estate.

Robert and Mary Calef had four sons and two daughters, who came with them to this country and lived to adult age. Boston records show that two more sons were born to them there, but died before reaching maturity.

#### CHILDREN.

I. JOSEPH, the oldest son, was a clothier and physician and settled in Ipswich Mass. He was born about 1671 and died December 28, 1707, aged thirty-six. He married, May 2, 1693, Mary Ayer. Of their six children, Ebenezer was a judge in Nantucket; Peter was a physician in Charlestown, Mass; Joseph, the executor of his grandfather's will, was a tanner in Boston, his tan-yards being on the site of the present post-office; and Robert, a clothier in Ipswich, who married Margaret Staniford, was the father of Dr. John Calef, the famous Tory in the Revolution, who became surgeon-general and chaplain in the

British army, and died in St. Andrews, N. B., in 1812.

II. ROBERT, JUNIOR, was a clothier and lived in Boston. He was born about 1677, and died at Chatham, Mass., December 4, 1722. He married, December 23, 1699, Margaret Barton of Boston, and had eight children. James, his only son living when his will was made in 1720, was to receive £100 more than the daughters when he became of age, and also £200 "for defraying the charges of bringing him up to the Collig, if he inclines to Larning."

III. JOHN of Chester, N. H., will be treated more fully below.

IV. JEREMIAH was a clothier and settled in Portsmouth, N. H., and in 1722 removed to Exeter, where he died in the spring of 1763. He married, December 2, 1708, Lucy Chadbourne of Kittery, Me. They had four children: (1) Jeremiah, Jr., of Exeter; (2) Daniel, buried in the Granary burying ground, Boston, the ancestor of William Wallace Lunt of Hingham, Mass., the Calef family historian; (3) Lucy, who married William French, Jr., of Stratham; (4) James, who married Ruth, daughter of Oliver Smith of Exeter, and was the ancestor of the Calef family of Sanbornton, in which town he died in 1801. Among his descendants was the late Judge Arthur Benjamin Calef of Middletown, Conn., state treasurer of Connecticut in 1855-'56, a distinguished son of Sanbornton.

V. MARTHA, married, September 28, 1700, Solomon Hewes, lived in Portsmouth, N. H., and Wrentham, Mass., dying in the latter place at a great age, March 4, 1759. She was the grandmother of George R. T. Hewes, one of the party who threw the tea overboard in Boston harbor, December 16, 1773.

VI. MARY, married, October 9, 1712, Dr. Samuel Stevens of Roxbury, Mass. Their daughter, Mary, married, May 29, 1740, Joseph Warren,



and became the mother of Gen. Joseph Warren, who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

VII. EDWARD, born in Boston, January 30, 1689.

VIII. DANIEL, born in Boston, December 27, 1691; died young.

JOHN, mentioned above, was the ancestor of the Calef or Calfe families of Chester, Kingston, Hampstead and Salisbury, N. H. He was a clothier, settled in Newbury, Mass., and about 1734 removed to Chester (the part now Auburn), of which town he was one of the original grantees, and where he died in the spring of 1748. He married, June 10, 1702, Deborah, daughter of William and Deborah King of Boston. They had nine children, the births of the first seven being on Newbury records. (1) John of Newbury, a school-teacher, called "Master John." His son, Justice John, settled in Hampstead, and was a very prominent citizen, being an officer in the Revolution, secretary of the convention for forming the state constitution and of the convention for ratifying the Federal constitution, clerk of the New Hampshire House of Representatives twenty-five years, justice of the Court of Common Pleas for Rockingham County for an equal time and deacon of the church thirty-five years. The late Judge William Wallace Poor of Derry was among his descendants. (2) Deborah died young. (3) Deacon William removed from Newbury to Kingston 1740. Two of his sons, William, Jr., and Joseph, were early settlers of Salisbury, N. H., and were the progenitors of the numerous Calef family of that town, while the oldest, Colonel John, remained in Kingston, and was an officer in the Revolution and a deacon in the church. The latter's oldest son, Joseph, married Miriam, daughter of Gov. Josiah Bartlett, signer of the

Declaration of Independence, and among their descendants was the late Dr. Josiah Calef Eastman of Hampstead. Colonel John's daughter, Mary, married Rev. Zaccheus Colby of Pembroke and Auburn, and another daughter, Hannah, married Rev. Elisha Thayer, D. D., of Kingston.

(4.) Mary married Nathaniel Ethridge.

(5.) James settled in Auburn and removed to Haverhill, Mass. He and his son, Samuel, were taken prisoners by the French and Indians at Fort William and Henry, August 9, 1757.

(6.) King settled in Auburn and removed to Massachusetts.

(7.) Joseph settled in Auburn. One of his sons was Rev. Jonathan Calef of Bloomfield and Lyman, Me., who married Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Moses Hemmenway, D. D., of Wells, Me. Other descendants of Joseph have lived in Manchester, Auburn, and Hampstead, and among the number is Miss Harriette Eliza Noyes, the historian of Hampstead.

(8.) Daniel had a son, Moses; little is known of them.

(9.) Robert settled with his father in Auburn, where they had a saw-mill and fulling-mill. They had cloth brought 200 miles to be dressed, there being no fulling mill between there and Canada. Robert's daughter, Sarah, married Hon. Joseph Blanchard, a prominent citizen of Auburn, a state senator six terms and member of the governor's council two years, delegate to the convention which ratified the Federal constitution, and to that which formulated the state constitution, a Presbyterian ruling elder thirty-nine years. Their descendants are widely scattered, east and west.

NOTE.—The writer acknowledges his indebtedness, for many of the facts stated in this article, to William W. Lunt of Hingham, Mass., and Miss Helen W. Poor of Derry.