

# *Time Line of Isaiah Thomas's Life*

## **U.S. History**

### **1740**

The estimated colonial population is 889,000.

### **1740's**

**Westward expansion** begins as settlers move into the Ohio Valley region.

### **1750**

The estimated colonial population is 1,207,000.

### **1754**

Hostilities between France and Britain erupt as both countries struggle to maintain control over North America. This conflict comes to be known as the **French and Indian War**.

A young major named **George Washington** plays an important role in the opening battles of the war.

### **1760**

The estimated colonial population is 1,610,000.

### **1763**

The **Treaty of Paris** is signed, effectively ending France's dominance of power in North America.

Britain issues the **Proclamation of 1763**, closing western lands to further settlement.

### **March 22, 1765**

The **Stamp Act** is levied by Parliament upon America.

### **March 17, 1766**

**Stamp Act** is repealed by Parliament.

### **May 1769**

The Virginia House of Burgesses adopts the **Virginia Association**, an agreement banning importation of British goods (except paper) upon which a duty is charged.

### **June 7, 1769**

Folk hero **Daniel Boone**, hunter, trapper, and explorer, leads his party through the Cumberland Gap and into Kentucky for the first time.

## **Isaiah Thomas, Worcester MA**

### **January 19, 1749**

Isaiah Thomas is born in Boston, MA.

### **1756**

Isaiah Thomas begins his apprenticeship with Boston printer Zechariah Fowle.

### **Fall 1765**

Thomas sails to Halifax, Nova Scotia; denounces the Stamp Act in the *Halifax Gazette*.

### **Spring 1766**

Thomas sails back to Boston.

### **Later in 1766**

Thomas sails to Charleston, SC.

### **December 25, 1769**

Thomas marries Mary Dill of Bermuda. They travel through the southern colonies and Bermuda.

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### 1770

The estimated colonial population is 2,205,000.

### March 5, 1770

In what comes to be known as the **Boston Massacre**, five colonists are killed when British troops fire on an angry mob whose members have been taunting the soldiers with words and stones.

### November 2, 1772

**Committees of Correspondence** are appointed to communicate patriotic news between Boston and surrounding towns in Massachusetts.

### December 16, 1773

During the **Boston Tea Party**, a group of men dress as Indians and board three British ships in Boston harbor, dumping 342 chests of tea overboard in protest of the British Tea Act.

### April 19, 1775

Shots are exchanged between British **redcoats** and colonial **minutemen**, leading to the battles of **Lexington and Concord**.

### June 15, 1775

The second **Continental Congress** chooses George Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.

### June 17, 1775

The **Battle of Bunker Hill** is fought on Breed's Hill in Charlestown, MA.

### Spring 1770

Thomas and his wife return from Bermuda.

### August 7, 1770

Thomas publishes the first regular issue of the *Massachusetts Spy*.

### October 23, 1770

Zechariah Fowle sells Thomas his interest in the printing shop.

### March 27, 1772

Thomas's daughter, Mary Ann, is born. September 5, 1773  
Thomas' son, Isaiah Jr., is born.

### February 6, 1774

Thomas publishes the first issue of the *Royal American Magazine*.

### 1775

The first issue of Thomas' *New England Almanac* is published.

### February 1775

Thomas' wife, Mary Dill Thomas, runs away with a British officer, Major Benjamin Thompson.

### April 16, 1775

Thomas dismantles his Boston printing shop and smuggles his press out of the town.

### May 1775

Thomas is appointed Postmaster of Worcester by the Provincial Congress. Benjamin Franklin is Postmaster General at this time.

### May 3, 1775

The first Worcester issue of the *Massachusetts Spy* is published, containing Thomas' account of the battles of Lexington and Concord.

November 17, 1775

The *Massachusetts Spy* announces the establishment of the United States Post Office, consisting of one mail eastbound and one mail westbound each week.

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### **July 4, 1776**

The **Declaration of Independence** is approved by Congress.

### **July 5-6, 1776**

Copies of the **Declaration of Independence** are prepared for dispatch to all of the states.

### **June 14, 1777**

Congress resolves that the US flag will consist of "...thirteen stripes alternate red and white, that the Union be thirteen stars white in a blue field..."

### **October 17, 1777**

In a major turning point in the war, British General Burgoyne surrenders his army to the Americans after defeat in the **Battle of Saratoga**.

### **1780**

The estimated colonial population is 2,781,000.

### **April 15, 1783**

Congress ratifies the **Articles of Peace**, declaring that Britain recognizes the United States as a sovereign nation.

### **1786**

The first steamboat in America, built by John Fitch, sailed on the Delaware River.

### **July 14, 1776**

Thomas detains a dispatch rider carrying a copy of the Declaration of Independence to Boston. Thomas delivers the first public reading of the Declaration in Massachusetts from the steps of the Worcester Meeting House.

### **January 1777**

One-seventh of the men aged 16 to 60 are drafted in order to fulfill Worcester's quota in the Continental army. Isaiah Thomas enlists Benjamin Russell, an apprentice, to service in his place. This is a legal and common practice during of the time.

### **May 27, 1777**

Thomas' divorce from Mary Dill Thomas is granted.

### **May 26, 1779**

Thomas marries his second wife, Mary Fowle.

### **1783**

Thomas builds his mansion in Worcester on Court Hill. He publishes a broadside entitled, *Important Intelligence of Peace*, which noted, "Great Britain acknowledges the Sovereignty and Independence of the Thirteen United States of America."

### **April 1786**

Thomas converts the *Spy* into a weekly magazine format to circumvent a newly imposed MA state tax on newspapers and almanacs.

### **1786**

Thomas publishes the first American edition of *Mother Goose*.

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### January 1787

Daniel Shays, a Massachusetts farmer, leads a farmers' uprising protesting the harsh economic conditions and demanding economic reform.

### May 25, 1787

Leaders from all states except Rhode Island gather in Philadelphia to attend the **Constitutional Convention** to write a new charter for the nation.

### June 21, 1788

With nine states having ratified it, the **Constitution**, goes into effect immediately.

### April 30, 1789

George Washington is inaugurated as the first President of the US.

### November 26, 1789

President Washington proclaims the first national Thanksgiving Day, in celebration of the Constitution.

### August 1, 1790

The first US census reports that the country's population is 3,929,625.

### December 15, 1791

The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the **Bill of Rights**, are ratified, guaranteeing freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly.

### 1794

The first major turnpike in American is completed between Philadelphia and Lancaster, PA.

One of the earliest American canals is built on the Connecticut River in MA.

### March 4, 1801

**Thomas Jefferson** takes the oath of office for the presidency in the first inaugural ceremony held in the new national capitol, Washington DC. This marks the first peaceful transfer of power from one party to another in modern history.

### October 20, 1803

The United States enlarged its national territory by 140 percent as the Senate ratifies a treaty authorizing the **Louisiana Purchase**.

### 1789

Thomas publishes William Hill Brown's *Power of Sympathy*, considered the first American novel.

### 1790

First Worcester census records approximately 2,090 persons living in the town (excluding slaves who were not counted.)

### 1793

Thomas organizes and becomes the first master of the Masonic Morning Star Lodge in Worcester.

### 1793 – 1796

Thomas' business reaches its peak, employing 150 people in Worcester. The inventory of his printing and bookstore in Worcester is valued at \$39,679.02.

### 1802

Thomas retires from active business pursuits in order to devote his energies to writing his *History of Printing in America*.

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### May 1804

**Lewis and Clark** and their party begin an expedition to explore the vast new territory acquired by the Louisiana Purchase. President Jefferson asks the men to map a route to the Pacific Ocean in addition to studying the land, vegetation, and animals along the way.

### August 11, 1807

Robert Fulton's steamboat, the *Clermont*, runs to Albany from New York in 32 hours at a rate of approximately 5 mph.

### April 30, 1812

The state of Louisiana is admitted to the Union.

### June 18, 1812

The **War of 1812** begins.

### 1819

Washington Irving begins his series entitled *The Sketch Book*, which contains stories of his popular character, "Rip Van Winkle."

### 1823

President James Monroe defines the foreign policy that comes to be known as the **Monroe Doctrine**, which states that the US will not interfere with the affairs of Europe and warns the Europeans not to meddle in the affairs of the Americas.

### 1826

James Fenimore Cooper publishes *The Last of the Mohicans*, which sells over 2,000,000 copies and is a success in Europe as well as America.

### December 3, 1828

Andrew Jackson is elected 7<sup>th</sup> President of the US.

### July 4, 1831

The song *America*, written by Rev. Samuel Francis, is first sung in public in the Park Street Church, Boston. Charter for the Boston-Worcester Railroad is granted.

### 1804

Thomas presides over a planning meeting that leads to the establishment of the first bank in Worcester.

### October 30, 1806

Thomas attends the first meeting of the Boston-Worcester Turnpike Company and is chosen as one of the company's directors.

### 1810

*History of Printing in America* is published.

### November 19, 1812

The first meeting of the American Antiquarian Society is held at the Exchange Coffee House in Boston. Thomas is elected president of the organization.

### July 1816

Thomas sells his Worcester bookstore.

### November 16, 1818

Thomas' second wife, Mary Fowle Thomas, dies.

### June 25, 1819

Thomas' son, Isaiah, dies.

### August 10, 1819

Thomas participates in the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown, MA.

### 1826

Thomas presides over the first nonpartisan town celebration of the Fourth of July.

### October 7, 1828

Thomas witnesses the opening of the Blackstone Canal as the first canal boat from Providence reaches the terminal at Thomas Street in Worcester.

### April 4, 1831

Isaiah Thomas dies in Worcester, MA.