



**Colonel John Thomas
(1766–1852)**

Colonel John Thomas, a successful merchant and colonel in the Massachusetts Militia, is best remembered by the story he told of his experience “as a sentry” during the Revolutionary War.

John Thomas was the son of General Thomas, a Kingston physician-turned-soldier and town Selectman, who was considered the most capable officer on General George Washington’s staff. At the age of ten, the young Thomas joined his father, whose command

executed one of the smoothest and amazing engineering feats of the war. The General had his men construct heavily armed gun emplacements overnight. These emplacements, which blocked the British from overtaking the city and surrounding area, withstood the constant bombardment of the British military, and eventually compelled the evacuation of Boston by British troops.

The younger Thomas recalls seeing two finely dressed gentlemen observing the British lines from the parapets of one of these emplacements. As cannon balls whistled by, the young Thomas climbed a ladder and grabbed hold of his father’s hand. As he stood watching the British forces, he later remarked of his pride in standing sentry with his father and the other man on the parapet, George Washington.