

[Hawks, Thomas]

Hawks, Thomas, was born in Petersham, Mass., April 2nd, 1784. In 1790 he came with the family to Richfield, Ostego county, N.Y. He learned the clothier's trade of his brother-in-law, Roswell Starr, in the town of Warren, Herkimer county. [On] June 23d, 1811, he married Nancy Fitch, of Richfield, a native of Pawlet, Vt. He had previously (in 1807) moved to the town of Columbia and there, after clearing a place from the wilderness, started a wool carding and cloth dressing establishment. Some years later he built one of the first saw-mills in the town. Here up to the close of his life Mr. Hawks continued to reside, engaged for the most part in the management of his farm and mill; although relieved in his last years from more laborious duties by his son Samuel. Here he raised a family of nine children, two others dying in childhood. Here, on the 24th of March, 1870, seven years after the death of his wife, and one year before that of his oldest son, Lemuel Fitch Hawks, he died, retaining his intelligence to the last. Mr. Hawks served in several minor civil offices. He held a commission as justice of the peace in 1813, signed by D. D. Tompkins, and was afterwards elected to the same office by vote of the people. In 1836 he was sent by Herkimer county to Albany, as member of the State Assembly. While holding this office he served on the committee which located the Insane Asylum at Utica. He ever took a lively interest in politics. By close and intelligent observation and extensive reading he attained to a familiarity with the political history of the country which made him an authority upon this subject, and which is rarely found in men whose profession or trade has in itself so little to do with the finer points of national politics. Mr. Hawks in 1829 assisted in organizing a Universalist society at German Flats, now Mohawk, the object of the society being "the promotion of religion and morality among ourselves and our fellow men." This object he never lost sight of, and was ever a believer in the coming of "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken." He possessed the virtues to which he was entitled by Puritan descent and training, chief of which were loyalty to truth and justice. He was a free mason and for some years an active member of the brotherhood. He was large in stature and of commanding appearance.

F. W. Beers, *History of Herkimer County* (1879) p. 238