

[Torrey, Levi]

Biographical Sketches
Joel and Levi Torrey
Levi Torrey
(From Everts History of Jefferson County, 1878)

These brothers were born in the town of Chesterfield, N. H. Joel was born in 1785 and Levi in the year 1788. They both came into this country at the same time, and settled in the town of Lorraine, in what was called the Done neighborhood, before the War of 1812. During this war Levi received a commission and had command of a company of men, and was at different points on the St Lawrence river, from Cape Vincent to Ogdensburgh, in which he served his country with honor. We think at or near the close of the war he received the commission of colonel; and we presume there are persons yet living in this country who served under him.

Some time after the war closed, in the early part of his life, he taught school in different parts of this country; and as a teacher he was very successful. He finally settled in the village of Brownville. Was a brick-maker by trade, and made the brick for his house, which stands yet on the upper side of the village, the walls, to appearance, as unbroken as ever. While living here he had born to him, by his first wife, five daughters, all of whom survived him. He filled many places of honored trust, and his integrity in doing business was never questioned.

He was employed by John La Farge to survey Penet's Square, which was a tract of land ten miles square, the greater portion of which lies in the town of Orleans. In this business he was very successful, and his name is in our County Clerk's office perhaps more times than any other man that ever lived here; and we believe he was the first surveyor in this country that ran his line by back-sights, thus overcoming local attention. He was very particular and precise, as every one knows that ever carried chain for him; strictly honest in this as in all his business, he aimed at justice to all parties, and owing to this he was called upon to settle a great many disputed lines.

We think it was in the year 1832 he lost his most accomplished wife by cholera, which blow fell heavily upon him.ⁱ It was a sickly time, and he took his children and went to visit his brother, Joel, who had a year before moved into the woods, in the then town of Lyme. His health being recruited, he returned to Brownville. Afterwards he married the second time [to Lasira I. Osborn], and the same year moved into the Warren Settlement, where his sixth daughter was born. Here he owned fifty acres of good land, which, with his surveying, furnished a good living until the year 1857, when he, with his two sons-in-law and and his entire family, except one, moved to Adams County, Wisconsin, where he was chosen as county surveyor. He

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resided there until three years ago, when he went with his second widowed daughter, Mrs. Elvira Hill, to Minnesota, to visit some of his children; and here, at their solicitation, he remained and closed his long and eventful life, October 18, 1875. At the residence of his son-in-law, Hon. L. Cook, after an illness of twelve days, at the advanced age of 88, leaving his second wife and all his children to mourn his loss.

In his politics he was an old-line Whig, inclined to the Silver Gray, opposed for some time to any movement against slavery. But when the first Republican platform was made he stepped square upon it, and labored with all his influences to see its noble principles carried out and maintained. In the early years of this country he was one of the most useful and reliable men; he was elected constable six years in succession. Such was the confidence the people had in his ability and honesty that he was intrusted with the finances of many of his neighbors and acquaintances. He possessed a very social nature; he would take and give a good joke with as much pleasure as any person we ever knew, and his square, hearty laugh must be well remembered by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.

His religious belief was in the universal salvation of all mankind; that all wicked persons would be justly punished for their sins, and in the end he restored to the favor of God. He lived constantly in this faith. He was one of the most tender-hearted of men in all his relations in life.

Thousand Islands Sun, Alexandria Bay NY, Sat. 3 Aug 1978

ⁱ DEATHS. In Brownville, on the 18th inst., Mrs. *Jerusha Torrey*, late consort of Capt. Levi Torrey, in the 42d year of her age. Mrs. T. possessed many excellent qualities, and a character without blemish. She was a devoted Christian, and her life uniformly evinced her sincerity. About eight years since, she was suspended from the fellowship of the Presbyterian church, for no other reason than believing according to Scripture and evidence, and independently expressing the honest convictions of her mind. No answer was ever made to her able defence of her sentiments, which she furnished at that time. (See *Watertown Herald of Salvation*, vol. ii, printed in 1824.) About an hour before her death, she said to her husband, "I have but a few minutes to live, and I die rejoicing in the full belief of the 'restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.' Acts iii:21. She died with the smile of serenity on her countenance, and the joy of divine love in her heart. Her memory is engraved in the hearts of all who knew her moral, social and intellectual worth. She has left a worthy companion and five small children, together with numerous friends, who

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mourn in sincerity, but not without hope. May the God of consolation sustain them in this deep affliction.

Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate, Utica NY, Sat. 4 Aug 1832
[a Universalist newspaper]

Transcribed on 2 Oct 2023 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY