

Archer *and* Silvester

FAMILIES

A History Written in 1870

BY

DR. ROBERT ARCHER

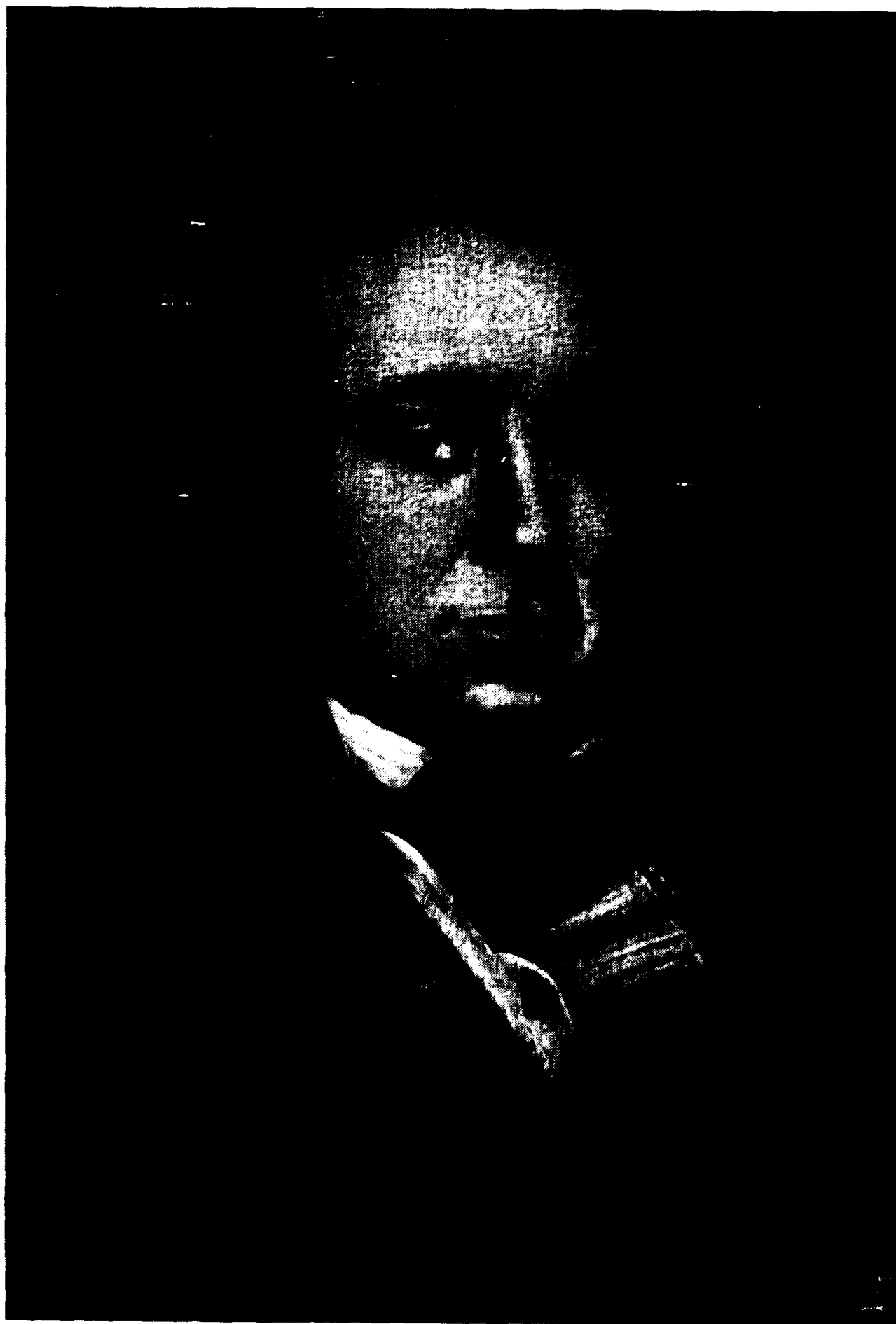
Born August 28, 1794

Died May 19, 1877

(With notes by Rev. E. L. Goodwin, a grand-son)

PRINTED APRIL, 1937,
FOR ANDREW D. CHRISTIAN, A
GREAT-GRANDSON OF DR. ARCHER.
THE ORIGINAL IS IN THE POSSESSION
OF LEVIN JOYNES, A GRANDSON.

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ROBERT ARCHER, *Surgeon*, U. S. A., from 1825-1839

*(Reproduced from a portrait in the possession of
Frances W. Christian, a granddaughter)*

ARCHER FAMILY

A HISTORY OF THE ARCHER AND SILVESTER FAMILIES

By DR. ROBERT ARCHER—1870

RECOVERING from the discomforts of a broken arm, but still confined to my chamber, I think I could not employ the hours that hang so heavily on me more profitably than by collecting and reducing to some form the scattered material at my command, and throw some light on the early history of my ancestors, the Archer and Silvester families, and rescue from oblivion what little that remains known about them. My descendants will thank me for this effort, as I should have thanked those who have gone before me if they had performed their share of the task and left any record to enlighten my part, for all before me is darkness, and the only ray of light reflected from the family *Bible*, family tradition, and the half obliterated inscriptions on mouldering tombstones, and with these scanty materials, I proceed to my labor of love; and begin with

The Archer Family

I know nothing of my paternal ancestry prior to the year 1665 when the great plague prevailed in London. Having lost most of a numerous family by that scourge, our ancestor with his wife and one child emigrated from England and settled down in Bermuda. They were the grand parents of my grand father, or my great great

grand parents. Whether the child he brought over with him was the father of my grand father, or whether he had other sons born to him in Bermuda is not known, but it is certain that a blood relationship exists between us and the Hutchings family of Bermuda. A female of the family must therefore have intermarried with a Hutchings.

My grand father Edward Archer was born in Bermuda. I have no record that throws any light on his early history, or that of my grand mother. The old family *Bible* which I presume contained it, and which I remember when a child, has long since disappeared; but in St. Paul's Church yard in Norfolk there are three tombs in good preservation containing the remains of my grand mother and her deceased children: the slab which covered my grand father is gone. I remember it was broken and some sacrilegious hand has removed the fragments.¹ I am therefore uncertain as to the date of his death, although I believe it was about the beginning of the Revolution;² but I am more fortunate in being able to fix the time of his birth, for on the back of his portrait now in my possession, painted in the year 1769, his age is given as 56. This would make 1713 the year of his birth. As his first child was born in 1734 it is probable he settled in Norfolk some where about 1732 when 18 or 19 years of age.

This was 27 years after Norfolk was established as a town by Queen Anne and four years before it was

¹ Cousin Susan Archer Weiss in some notes she wrote on Grandpa's MS. remarks, "The Archer tombstones were broken by Federal troopers in the Civil War who were quartered in St. Paul's Church and grazed their horses in the church yard so I was told by various Norfolk people".

² Edward Archer died in Norfolk, Virginia, Nov. or Dec. 1771, Merchant of the Borough of Norfolk, made his will Nov. 13. It was recorded Dec. of the same year.

chartered as a Borough by George II. The inscription on my grand mother's tomb is "Mary wife of Capt. Edward Archer, born April 5th, 1714, died June 9th, 1757".³

On the next tomb is inscribed "Eliza Dail, daughter of Edward and Mary Archer, born 7th May 1734, died Jan'y 15 1735, William their son, born Jan'y 7th, 1736, died at Smithfield Dec. 3d 1751, Edward their son, born Jan'y 2d, 1738, died Feb. 1739. Ann Dail, born 27th March 1745, died 5th of March 1749, Anguish their son, born May 18th, 1752, died May 24th, 1752".⁴ The third tomb is inscribed "John Archer died 18th of Oct. 1793, aged 39 years".

There is a gap between 1738 and 1745 and another between 1745 and 1752. These must have been filled up by the births of the surviving children. I do not know my grand mother's maiden name but as two of her children were called Dail it is likely it was that. I judge she was born in Princess Ann County as the Eddys, the Ivys and others residing in that county were related to her.

On referring to the biography of Commodore Richard Dale,⁵ a distinguished officer of the Revolution, I find that he was born in 1756 near Norfolk. Dale is an uncommon name and it may be that he was of my grand mother's family. The different spelling of the name

³ Grandfather gives only part of the inscriptions which read as follows: Here lies the body of Mary, wife of Capt. Edward Archer born April 5th, 1714, died June 9, 1757, and buried here the 10th by his three sons and two daughters. Some think this means that his sons and daughters buried him but as they had only two living sons, I translate it as meaning buried *beside* his three sons and two daughters who were buried there.

⁴ The son Anguish was probably named after the first husband of Mary Archer. I am inclined to think Dail on the tombstone is a corrupt spelling as I have never come across it in any old books or papers. It is always spelt Dale.

⁵ For Commodore Dale see Bishop Meade's "*Old Churches*". He says the Dale family was an ancient and respectable one in Norfolk Co.

amounts to nothing for his biographer says he went to sea when he was twelve years of age, probably with little or no education, and rarely had occasion to write his name; but eight or ten years later when he became of some importance as an officer in the Virginia Navy, it became necessary that he should, and it is just as likely he should have spelled it one way as another.

My grand mother was a year younger than my grand father. She was about 19 or 20 when they married for their first child was born in 1734.⁶

My grand father engaged in business in Norfolk as a merchant. I presume he was brought up to the sea as he was called Captain but could have made but a voyage or two as Captain when he settled in Norfolk as he was only 19 or 20 years old.

His residence and warehouse were at the east end of Bermuda Street, called so most probably by himself and other Bermudians who settled there, to commemorate the place of their birth. The extreme end of the street where it is bounded by the creek is still called Tucker-town and the Tucker family came also from Bermuda. Before this time the street was called Back Street, as it ran parallel to and back of Main Street, and within my recollection it always was called Back Street by the old inhabitants.

I always understood that my grand father came over with a brother, and parted on their arrival in Norfolk, he remaining there and his brother going *up the country*. When we consider that up the country in those days was a wilderness of difficult access and scarcely any direct communication with the seaboard, it is not surprising that they should have lost sight of each other for nothing further is known of him. Six children survived my grand

⁶ Record of the Marriage Bond in Norfolk County corresponding to the present day Marriage License: "1733—August 11, Edward Archer to Mrs. Mary Anguish," showing she was a widow at the time.

father, viz. Edward (my father), John, Mary, Susan, Frances, and Dinah.⁷

John was a Lieutenant in the Virginia Navy during the Revolution and served under Commodore Sam Baron the grand father of our present Commodore Sam Baron of the Confederate Navy. He married and died without issue in 1793, and his widow married Mr. Martin. The children always called her Aunt Bettie Martin. She died about twenty years ago at a very advanced age. He lived in a large brick house on Bermuda Street in rear of the dwelling built by my father at the east end of Main Street. Mary married Thos. Applewhaite of Barbadoes, a prominent merchant of that Island where I believe many of his descendants still live.⁸ Susan married Mr. Sims, leaving issue, Molly Sims who married Mr. Pleasants and subsequently John Brown of James City, and afterwards Philemon Gatewood of Norfolk. By her husband Brown she left five children: Fielding, Beverly, Orris, Susan and Mary. Fielding married at Key West, Orris married in Southampton, Susan married Midshipman Randolph, and Mary married Mr. Brown of Philadelphia. Frances died unmarried in 1815. Dinnah also died unmarried.

My Aunt Fannie lived in my father's family and took special charge of me during my childhood. I slept with her until I grew so large that I was ashamed of myself, when she was forced reluctantly to give me up. She was

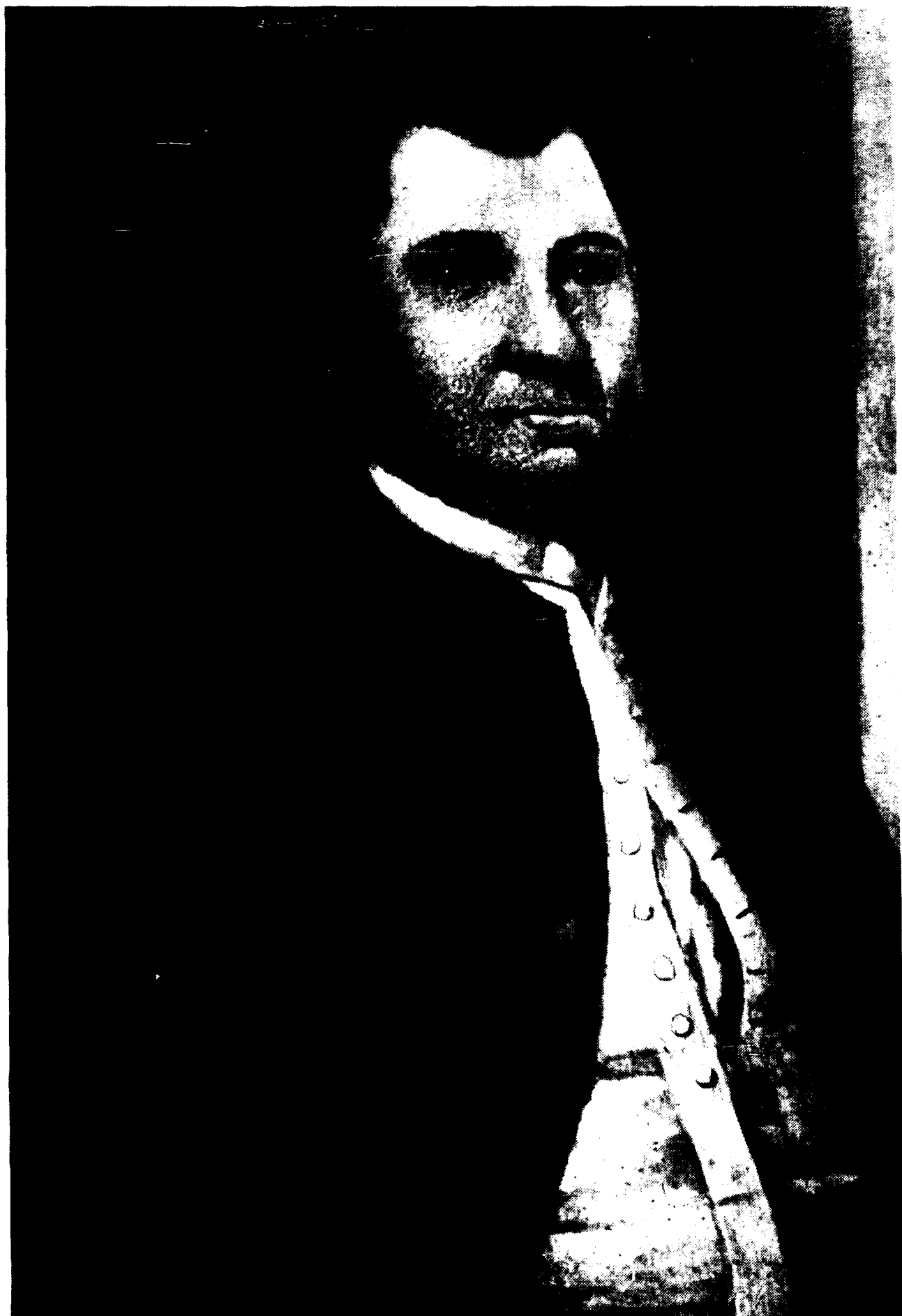
⁷ It seems certain that Capt. Edward Archer married again after the death of his wife Mary (Anguish). The record gives the marriage of Capt. Edward Archer and Dinah Belgrove, Sept. 5, 1761. He would thus have remarried (when) a widower over four years. I am inclined to believe that his youngest daughter was the child of his second marriage and named after her mother. Probably this second Mrs. Archer lived but a few years after her marriage and Grandpa forgot that he had a stepmother, if he ever knew it. Cousin Sue Weiss says she never heard Grandpa had a sister named Dinah. She must have died young.

⁸ Marriage Bond of William Applewhaite and Mary Archer, July 1, 1761.

devoted to cards, but Loo was the only game she had the capacity or inclination to master; at this she was a proficient and instructed me at a very early age (9 or 10) in its mysteries. There was a rare set of gamblers in a small way at that time amongst the old ladies of Norfolk. I was always her escort and took my seat at the Loo table with her, she furnishing the capital and we playing in partnership, four pence deal and eighteen pence Loo. I have frequently suspected her of throwing up a good hand lest she might prevent my taking the Loo; for as we were partners half of all my winnings were hers. She delighted in egg nog on Christmas. Colonel Hamilton the British Consul was in the habit of sending around to his friends by his servant Ralph a full supply, with directions to leave a tumbler full at each house. She provided herself with one holding about a quart. Ralph remonstrated, she insisted that a tumbler was a tumbler. Ralph could not upset that logic and was forced to yield, and ever after she enjoyed her quadruple share of the Colonel's egg nog.

Tom Moore the poet was on a visit to the British Consul about this time; he was nearsighted and used a glass which he invariably put up to his eye when he saw a female approaching. Some wag reported that Mr. Moore's spy glass could turn people upside down. This announcement produced a terrible commotion amongst the old maiden ladies of Aunt Fannie's set, and not one of them dared to pass Col. Hamilton's house without holding tight to their petticoats.

Edward Archer, my father, was born in Norfolk the 16th of June 1747, and died 27th Feb. 1807. He was brought up in my grand father's counting room, and was employed during the Revolution as commissary for supplying the army, as I find in an old Ledger of his, and account opened with the Loan Office of Virginia. He



EDWARD ARCHER. BORN JUNE 16, 1747.

DIED FEBRUARY 27, 1807.

*(Reproduced from a portrait in the possession of Anne W.
Archer and Virginia R. Archer, great-granddaughters)*

was a great loser by the burning of Norfolk by Dunmore, as at that time he was engaged with my grand father in the West India trade and their dwelling, warehouse, and contents were totally destroyed. He was appointed Post Master of Norfolk by Washington and continued in office until he was turned out by Jefferson in 1804 and it is a consolation to know that he left the office with clean hands for his ledger shows that his quarterly accounts were promptly settled and fully balanced up to the day of his dismissal, but he was an uncompromising Federalist and had to share the fate of his party. For although Mr. Jefferson in his inaugural proclaimed "We are all Federalists, we are all Republicans", yet the victors claimed the spoils and the Federalists had to retire.

At that day the term Democrat was rarely used except by a few who if they did not altogether approve, at least excused the atrocities of the French Revolution.

I cannot forbear relating an anecdote of my father, communicated to me by Mr. Moses Myers of Norfolk who knew him well in his early life:

Whilst he was in business with my grand father, he seems to have become weary of the monotony of the counting room, and prevailed on him to let him make a voyage as captain of the Brig "Polly's Letter".⁹ My grandfather finding all remonstrance useless, yielded, but taking care, as he supposed, to provide a good mate to navigate the vessel. The "Polly's Letter" set sail in due time, bound for Barbadoes with favoring breezes and the prospect of a short and prosperous voyage, but after beating about for a considerable time and no Barbadoes heav-

⁹ Capt. Edward Archer's daughter Mary married Mr. Applewhaite of Barbadoes against her father's wishes. She wrote her father a letter full of love and excuses which pleased the old gentleman so much he named his Brig the "Molly's Letter", probably a slip of the pen when Grandpa wrote "The Polly's Letter". Mr. Applewhaite became very prominent and prosperous in Barbadoes and some of their descendants still live there.

ing in sight, there rose a terrific snow storm. Such a thing was never seen or heard of by the mate or the oldest mariner, in the latitude of Barbadoes. They fortunately overhauled a fishing smack and hailing asked how far they were from Barbadoes. The skipper answered he didn't know where Barbadoes was, but that if they would keep their course two hours they would strike Cape Cod. This was the first and last voyage made by my father as captain, although he retained the title to the day of his death.

My father was twice married, first to Polly Cocke of Surry in 1772, and to my mother in 1791. My mother was the widow of William Wirmington of Norfolk County (who died about a year after their marriage) and daughter of Richard and Dorcas Silvester of the same county. By his first marriage my father left four children John Ruffin, Richard Cocke, Samuel Bedford, and Anna Maria.

John married Mary Cornick of Princess Anne and died without issue in 1807. He was a lieutenant in the navy and served with Preble at the bombardment of Tripoli and with Truxton when he captured the French Frigate "Insurgente". He resigned and became a farmer in Princess Anne. Richard married Elizabeth Street of Norfolk and died without issue. When a very young man he had a duel with a Mr. Rowry, growing out of a coarse remark made by the latter about a lady friend of his. The result was Rowry's death, and he had to fly and take refuge with his relations the Applewhaites in Barbadoes. On his return he commenced the practice of law and subsequently was appointed purser in the navy, and continued in office 'till his death in 1824.

Samuel was born in 1783 and died in 1825. He married Margaret Kennedy of Delaware by whom he had no issue. He practiced law in Norfolk and the adjacent

counties until the breaking out of the war of 1812, when he was commissioned Captain of Artillery in the Army and ordered with his company to the Northern Frontier. His lieutenants were Tho. Mann Randolph of Tuckahoe and William Tyler, brother of President Tyler.

He was a man of speculative and original mind, a deep thinker, full of queer conceits and a fund of dry humour, in truth eccentric. He was a great snuffer and made his own snuff by grating strong chewing tobacco; the notion took him one day that the titilating effect of the snuff would be improved by the admixture of a portion of powdered glass but after a few trials he gave it up as it made his nose sore. At William and Mary College the discipline was very strict, and the students were locked up when they went to bed. This was no impediment to him, for when he wanted a spree, he would descend from his third story dormitory by aid of the lightning rod, and return the same way before morning. On one of these nocturnal sallies, he engaged in a game of cards with a party more knowing than himself, and lost fifty dollars. He had no money to pay and wrote his father acknowledging his folly and promising amendment and begging him to save him from disgrace by sending the money: the money went, and I have no doubt with a suitable paternal lecture. From that day to the day of his death, he never touched a card or played any game of chance.

Were it worth while, I could relate a hundred amusing anecdotes about him, but I will refrain. I might tell how one day fishing he lost his leaden sinker and substituted for it a valuable gold snuff box, which he also lost. How he drove out of town an imposter claiming to be an English Lord, by doffing an old embroidered waistcoat and other antique garments of my father and grandfather and following my lord up and down the street and mimicking his actions. How he made old Hillary Moseley the

Clerk of the Court, who was extravagantly fond of Rock Fish lose his dinner by whispering to the servant to hold back the Rock Fish until the crowd at the table had thinned off, and many such innocent pranks; but enough.

In 1816 he was sent to Europe by the government and after serving several years as Major of Ordinance, was appointed Inspector General of the Army, in which position he continued until his death in 1825.

He had collected at home and abroad a very valuable military library which he bequeathed to the artillery school of practice at Old Point Comfort. At an early age he was elected by the Republican party to represent the Borough in the General Assembly of Virginia. Party politics ran very high at this time. A violent attack on the Republicans generally and individually on him personally, appeared in one of the papers. The author was believed to be Gen. Robert B. Taylor and my brother determined to challenge him and demanded the name of the author: to his disappointment, he found it to be Wm. T. Nivison a mere youth. They fought and Nivison received a ball in his arm.

Maria married William Woodford of Caroline, grandson of Col. Wm. Woodford who commanded at the battle of Great Bridge in 1776. She had a large family and after his death she removed to Kentucky where most of her descendants still live occupying a high social position.

By his second marriage my father left four children viz: Robert, Edward, Susan, and Eliza Frances. Edward married Sarah Williamson, the sister of my wife: they had one child which died in infancy a few weeks before him. He was born Feb. 1797 and died 1822, from the effects of a cold, contracted in Richmond while attending the Grand Lodge of Virginia. A few hours before his

death he revived and sang a part of Burns' adieu ending with "When friends and brothers all unite in that Grand Lodge that's far a'wa".

In the early part of the war of 1812 he was commissioned Lieutenant of the 35th Regiment Infantry, commanded by Col. Goodwin, and continued in service 'till the Regiment was mustered out at the close of the war, when he was elected collector of taxes for the Borough, in which capacity he continued until his death. His widow married Jas. R. Robertson of Norfolk. Susan married Ed. Valentine of Augusta County, and died in 1867 in Buchanan. They had but one child Mary Eliza, who married John W. Jones. She died leaving six children, Edward, Susan, Sarah, Ella, Mary and Rosa.

Eliza married Thos. Talley of Hanover, by whom she had four children, Corbin, Robert, Susan, and Eliza. Corbin died when an infant. Robert died in 1864. Susan and Eliza still survive. Eliza married Dr. Wm. G. Carter of Richmond.¹⁰

I, Robert, was born in Norfolk 28th of August 1794 and was married on the 28th of March 1816 to Frances Williamson daughter of Archibald and Sarah Williamson of Norfolk. We had twelve children of whom four died in infancy, viz: Edward, Adelaide, Ella and Rosa, leaving Mary Frances, Sarah Eliza, Susan Valentine, Margaret Roberta, Robert Samuel, James Williamson, Edward Richard, and William Meade.

Mary, my first child, married Rev. F. D. Goodwin, and had issue: Fanny, Frederick, Frank, Mary, Sarah, Robert, Ella, and Edward, all of whom are living. Fannie married Dr. Wm. Ribble of Roanoke. Frederick married Miss Sevier of Alabama, who died within a year of her marriage leaving no issue, he has since married

¹⁰ Susan married Mr. Louis Weiss.

Miss _____ of California.¹¹ Frank married Miss Lettie Rutherford of Richmond.

Sarah, my second child, married Jos. R. Anderson of Botetourt, a Lieutenant of Engineers in the Army. He resigned very shortly after his marriage and took charge of the Tredegar Iron Works of which he soon became Proprietor and is now President of the Tredegar Iron Company. They have had twelve children, viz: Archer, Kate, Nannie, Fannie, Ellen, Joseph, Mary Bruce, John T., Lily, Graham, Sally, and Lee. The last four died in infancy. Nannie died in the 10th year of her age. Archer married Mary Mason daughter of John Y. Mason and has three children living, Sally, Archer, and Joseph Johnston. Their first child Mason died in infancy. Kate married Dr. David Watson and died two years after her marriage, leaving a child George. Fannie married Col. Edwin Hobson, a gallant officer of the Confederate Army of Alabama, and has two children, Reid and Edwin.

Susan, my third daughter, married Dr. Levin Joynes, of Accomac, and has one child living, Levin. Their first child, Robert, died an infant.

Margaret Roberta, my fourth child, married Aaron Jeffery of Norfolk, who died in 1865 from disease contracted by exposure in camp, leaving seven children, Anne, Archer, Fannie, Richard, Mary, Roberta, Aaron. Mary died in 1869 in her 17th year.

Robert S., my fifth child, married Virginia Watson, daughter of Dr. George Watson of Richmond, and has five children, George, Nannie, Robert, Fannie, and Virginia. He is Superintendent of the Rolling Mill department of the Tredegar Works.

James is engaged in merchandise, and has charge of the Tredegar Company's store.¹²

¹¹ Miss Ella McMeem.

¹² He married Virginia Gibboney.

Edward is Superintendent of the Machinery and Foundry department and engineer of the Tredegar Company.

William is senior member of the firm of Archer, Goodwin and Co.¹³

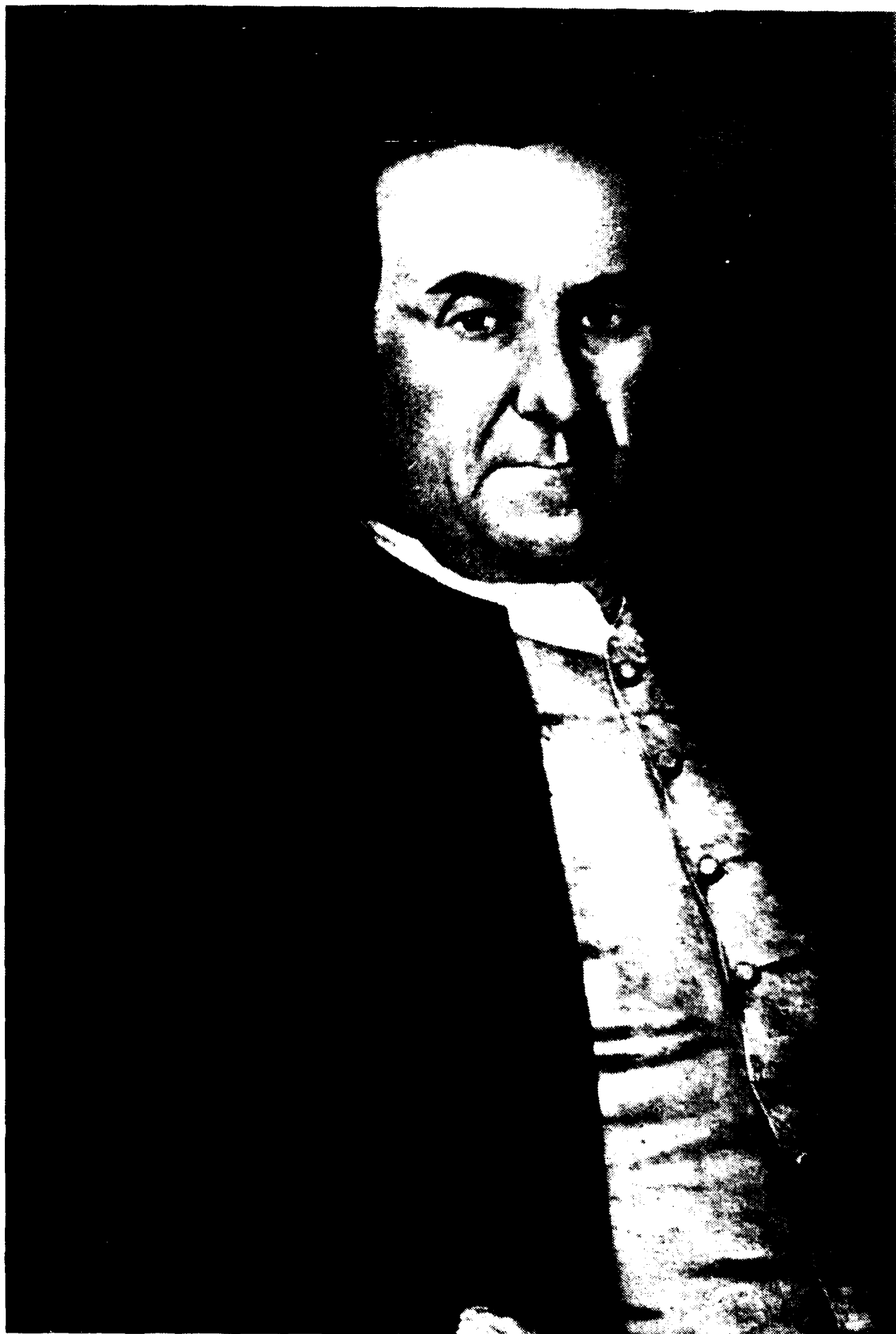
In the year 1810, I began the study of medicine under Dr. John T. Oliveira a native of Portugal. On arriving in this country he assumed the name of Fernandez. He had been, up to the time of his leaving Portugal, physician to the Royal Family, and stood eminently high in his profession: indeed I consider him the most thorough and best informed physician I have ever known. With him I studied for more than four years, for even after I had left his office and entered the Service, I considered myself his pupil and spent much of my time with him. His devotion to me was extraordinary: for four continuous years he gave me an hour's lecture every night, almost without intermission, expounding and commenting upon the text we were reading with all the interest a father could have felt for a son. I never had an opportunity of repaying his devotion, but the debt of gratitude will never be forgotten. In 1818 he was restored to favor at his court and was sent as Minister to the Court of St. James, and subsequently to the Court of France. He shortly after retired from public life and died in Madeira, where he held large possessions. His oldest son John was a leading wine merchant there and gave name to the celebrated Oliveira Madeira.

In 1813 George Ott, a German soldier of the old Frederick School, a jeweller by trade, raised a company of Artillery for the defence of Norfolk. Miles King was first Lieutenant, George Newton second Lieutenant, Marshal Parks, first and I second Sergeants. The company was called into service. Ott's discipline was too rigid for young America, and he was forced to resign.

¹³ He married Mary C. Deas.

King succeeded as Captain, Newton as first and I as second Lieutenants. In addition to my lineal duties, those of doctor were imposed upon me. For we had a rough set of surgeons in those days and our men would have nothing to do with them. I did not long enjoy the honors of my gold epaulet before I was appointed surgeon to Charles Fenton Mercer's regiment, stationed on the advanced line between Norfolk and the bay shore. There I continued until May 1814 when I received, unasked for, the commission of Hospital Surgeon's Mate with orders to report to Hospital Surgeon Tobias Watkins in charge of the General Hospital.¹⁴ I never thought of entering the Army but the compliment was too flattering to be declined. I accepted and thus decided my future destiny, continuing in the Army 'till 1839, when I resigned and settled on my farm, Oliveira, near Old Point Comfort. In 1848 I removed to Richmond to take charge of the Armory Rolling Mills. Subsequently when that property became merged in the Tredegar, I became a partner in the firm of J. R. Anderson and Co. and am now a stock holder and director in the Tredegar Iron Company. As a child I had a decided talent for mechanics. I used to trim tops which I sold the boys and if tops had always kept in fashion I should have grown rich. About this time Redheifer's perpetual motion machine was exhibited in Norfolk: this gave a new direction to my thoughts and in a little while I had collected any number of wheels, inclined planes and levers. I was very sanguine and every failure only excited me to further trials till at last I abandoned perpetual motion, for it worried me and besides all my funds were exhausted. I was about five years old when the frigate Chesapeake was launched at Gosport Navy Yard. My father took me to see the launch. It made a deep impression on me and I never before felt so excited; the clattering of the mauls was constantly

¹⁴ Fort Monroe.



EDWARD ARCHER. BORN IN BERMUDA 1713.
DIED IN NORFOLK 1769.

*(Reproduced from a portrait in the possession
of Robert S. Archer, a great-great-great-grandson)*

ringing in my ears and I determined to get up a launch on my own hook. So with the assistance of our Negro boy Tom Indian we made our preparations by taking the long rails of a bed tester for the ways and the old walnut cradle for the ship. We propped the rails against the wall upstairs and with infinite exertion succeeded in pushing the cradle up them. Tom held on to it till I gave the word of command, "Up mauls, down daggers" when he let her slide, but unfortunately, the rails separated and the cradle came down breaking off a rocker and a piece of the head board; the launch was a failure. The old cradle is still in my possession. It was made for my grandfather's first child and in it were rocked all of his, all of my father's, and all of my children.

The Rev. James Whitehead a Scotchman, the father of Mrs. Commodore Skinner, was the Episcopal minister in Norfolk and christened all of my mother's children. His regular fee from my father was a demijohn of Antigua rum. He was a parson of the old school and had no objection to a game of whist or a glass or two of rum toddy. As I have mentioned the parson, although somewhat out of place, I will relate an anecdote of him. He was stout and broad shouldered, irascible and pugnacious. An Irishman by the name of Rourke kept a tavern in Norfolk. He was called little Rourke from his diminutive size, full of fun and a great wag. He and the parson were very hostile towards each other and going down town the parson happened to meet him and renewed their quarrel: they soon came to blows and a regular fight ensued, but the big Scotchman was too much for the little Irishman. He soon got him down flat on his back and straddling him pummelled him to his heart's content. Rourke could stand it no longer and sang out in piteous tones, "Gentlemen, will ye stand by and see a poor divil of a Christian priest-ridden as I am".

After the burning of Norfolk, my grandfather re-

moved with his family to Southhampton. In the year 1831 I accompanied a detachment of troops sent to that county to quell Nat Turner's insurrection. On our return we stopped at Mr. John Urquahart's where we were most hospitably entertained, and he showed me the ruins of the house my grandfather occupied. It was in a field across the road opposite to his dwelling. Nothing remained but a chimney. There was a large peach orchard about the ruins which Mr. U. informed me was planted in the Revolution, perhaps by my grandfather, and which is still in good bearing condition. I mention this fact to show how much longer the peach tree lived in former times than now.

About a year ago I paid a visit to the old house in which I was born. I had not entered since I left it 68 years ago. Every thing seemed as familiar as if I had left it but the year before, for although the surroundings were all changed, my fancy filled up the picture and presented it as it was engraved on my memory. There on the left of the entrance was my mother's chamber, where I first saw the light: there stood the bedstead between the two back windows, there on the front stood the bureau, there in the corner stood the candle stand, and there before the fireplace stood my mother's rocking chair and the old walnut cradle. On the other side of the passage was the dining room and parlour, both in one, and in my mind's eye I saw on the mantelpiece the two blue glass flowerpots filled with water in which Aunt Fannie grew her hyacinths, and there at each end stood the two china maidens at the fountain with their pitchers. There in the corner I saw the large green tub in which grew the yam whose luxuriant vine was tastefully trained around the room.

I ascended the staircase and stood upon the very step where I sunk down almost lifeless from my first attempt at a segar. There over my mother's chamber was my

aunt's where the nights of my childhood were passed, and there opposite was the room where the disastrous launch of the cradle came off. All this I saw and more but yet how much I missed. I missed the old kitchen with its ample chimney corner where old Uncle Caesar in his broken gibberish made my hair stand on end with the marvelous stories of his native Africa. I missed the old smokehouse and the hogshead of salt water in which Mammy Hannah daily and faithfully plunged me, scarcely giving me time to catch my breath before she plunged me down again, for I was a delicate child and my mother always ascribed my restoration to health to the cold bath, ginger cake and toddy. For the last two I have never lost my relish but the very thought of a cold bath makes me shudder now, and I am confident that I understand perfectly all the agonies of a drowning man.

I missed my aunt's flower garden and the vines that coiled so gracefully around the pillars and canopied the roof of the old porch. The old porch is still there, but there is no loving hand to decorate it. Progress has asserted its sway and the garden is buried under a mass of brick masonry. The world turns around and every revolution brings a change, but is it always for the better? I do not believe it. The people of Norfolk are no happier today than they were 70 years ago, the women no purer or the men more honest, more charitable or neighbourly.

Norfolk always enjoyed a well earned reputation for her hospitality. The experiment of tavern keeping was always a hazardous and usually a losing one. In the time of the tri-weekly stages it was not uncommon for gentlemen to congregate at the Post Office waiting the arrival of the stage and take to their houses any passenger with whom they had the slightest acquaintance, and frequently utter strangers if they bore gentlemanly or distinguished appearance. This outpouring of hospitality is not to be

wondered at when we consider the isolated position of Norfolk. Cut off from the thoroughfare of travel her citizens rarely enjoyed the society of strangers and as rarely left home, either in pursuit of business or pleasure. Many of the old inhabitants never travelled twenty miles beyond the place where they were born, and the masses were lamentably ignorant of the geography and condition of their own state except so far as politics were concerned. There every man and boy was at home. He had it at his fingers' ends and seemed to have taken it in the natural way: and it is this aptitude, or if you please inclination, for politics in the Southern mind that constitutes the difference in the knowledge of the science of constitutional government between the masses of the people North and South. It is not surprising then, that the people of Norfolk represented a peculiar type in the social scale. They were almost primitive in their simplicity. Contented with their lot, they aspired to little beyond a quiet and comfortable existence. Sociable, hospitable, and neighbourly they constituted almost one family. They had their aristocracy but it was not based on wealth, for Norfolk boasted of but few rich men, and wealth was so equally distributed that any respectable family could command all the comforts and most of the luxuries enjoyed by his neighbours.

I took leave of the old house, sad and subdued, a sensation of isolation and loneliness crept over me. Memories of the past clustered around me and I felt as if indeed I belonged to another age and was a lone and solitary wanderer in a home that knew me no more.

SILVESTER FAMILY

The Silvester Family

The history of my maternal is as obscure as that of my paternal ancestry. All I know is that the first Silvester,¹⁵ like the first Archer, was driven away from London by the great plague and settled in Norfolk County not far from the Great Bridge. Both reached the continent of America about the same time. I remember an old iron bound oak chest which with its valuable contents, chiefly old documents and letters, is unfortunately lost. In that chest I remember to have seen a parchment and deed conveying to him a large body of land, executed by the Indian Chief who owned the country, and his signature was a bird. What family he brought with him from England is not known; but that there were some young ones is beyond doubt for he had his coffin made some years before his death and kept it under his bed as a safe depository for his

¹⁵ In Book 7—Land Office of Virginia is this record: Richard Silvester granted 300 acres of land, So. branch of Elizabeth River, Co. Lower Norfolk due for transportation of six persons, Richard Silvester, Hannah his wife, John Johnson (and three others whose names I could not decipher) April 23, 1688. The date of the Land Office does not mean that Silvester had just arrived in Virginia. In 1688 Richard and Hannah Silvester deeded this 300 acres grant to John Wormington, stating in the deed that they had brought him up from a child, or from infancy. Hannah Silvester died between 1693 and 1699. Her maiden name is unknown, also whether she left children. In 1699 or 1700 Richard Silvester married Sarah Wingfield, widow of Richard Jennings before marriage to Wingfield, her maiden name unknown. Whether Hannah or Sarah was the mother of Richard (William) Silvester 2nd is a question. Richard (William) Silvester 2nd, married twice or thrice. In 1746 he made a deed to his son Thomas. His son Samuel is also mentioned; he had also a son Richard (William) 3rd, and a daughter who married Barton, Anne who married John Cleeves, and Dorcas who married Mr. Weston. I am indebted to my Cousin Mollie Galt for what little I know of the Silvester family.

apples against the juvenile depredations. What descendants he left is equally unknown. My grandfather I presume was his grandson.

At the opening of the Revolution, in order to escape the marauding expeditions of the British who occupied Norfolk and its neighbourhood, my grandfather removed with his family to his lands at Stumpy Point in North Carolina and remained there until the close of the war when he returned to Norfolk County.

I have heard my mother speak of a ball at the Great Bridge at which she was present given by the officers of Col. Woodford's command on the night of Major Fordyce's attack upon that port. The British were repulsed with great slaughter and Fordyce was killed. My mother saw his body and described him as a young and very handsome man.

My grandfather's name was Richard,¹⁶ his wife's Dorcas. I do not know her maiden name. They left seven children, viz: David, Richard, Sarah, Betsy, Mary, John and Dorcas.

David left a daughter Anne who married Dr. Owen. They removed to Alabama where he died. She, I believe, still survives surrounded by a large and highly respected family.

Richard left one child, the late Dr. Richard Silvester of Norfolk, who died of yellow fever in 1855.¹⁷

Sarah married Capt. Aaron Jeffery of Norfolk¹⁸ and left five children, viz: Dr. Richard, Capt. William, Sarah, Thomas, and Mary. Dr. Richard Jeffery married Anne Woodlief by whom he had five children of whom

¹⁶ Richard William 3rd. His will probated 1782.

¹⁷ Richard (William) 4th, who died a martyr to the physician's devotion to duty during the scourge of yellow fever in Norfolk and Portsmouth in that year.

¹⁸ Aaron Jeffery and Sarah Silvester, Marriage Bond Norfolk Feb. 5, 1777. He was the son of Aaron Jeffery who came to Virginia about 1746.

Richard and Aaron alone survived him. Aaron married my fourth daughter, Roberta. Capt. William Jeffery was lost at sea. Sarah married Capt. Leacock; Thomas died, and Mary married Alexander Galt, leaving five children: William Richard, Alexander, Anna, Alexina, and James. Alexander was a sculptor.

Betsy married George Capron¹⁹ and left two children John and Richard.

John married Anne Baylor of Essex, Richard married Sallie Galt of Williamsburg.

Mary, my mother, married William Wirmington,²⁰ who died within a year of their marriage without issue. She then married my father in 1791. She died at my quarters at Fort Monroe July 13, 1833. She was a devoted wife, a kind, affectionate, and dear mother, and a meek and humble Christian, fulfilling all her duties to society and her family, beloved and respected by all about her.

John married and left one child, Sallie.

Dorcas married Robert Butt of Norfolk County; and left two children, Frances and Camilla. Frances married Joseph Timberlake, by whom she had two sons, Joseph and Robert, who both died. Camilla married William Loyall of Norfolk by whom she had three sons and five daughters, viz: Virginia, Camilla, Caroline, Celestia, and Augusta. Virginia married Admiral Faragut. Caroline married Dr. Ashe of San Francisco. Celestia or Lessie, married George Newton, and Augusta married Mr. Zantzinger. Camilla died unmarried.

¹⁹ George Capron and Elizabeth Silvester, orphan, Marriage Bond March 24, 1789.

²⁰ William Wirmington to Mary Silvester, Marriage Bond Norfolk July 21, 1784.

