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SAMUEL and ELIZABETH RODMAN,  
THEIR FOREBEARS AND ASSOCIATES

By MISS JULIA W. RODMAN

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Whereas Samuel Rodman son of Thomas Rodman, late of Newport in the County of Newport & Colony of Rhode Island, in New England, deceased. & Mary his Wife, & Elizabeth Rotch, daughter of William Rotch, of Sherborn, in the County of Nantucket, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England aforesaid; & Elizabeth his Wife, Having declared their intentions of taking each other in Marriage, before several Monthly Meetings, of the people called Quakers in Sherborn aforesaid, according to the good order used among them, & proceeding therein after deliberate consideration thereof, (with regard to the righteous law of God in that case) they also appearing, clear of all others, & having consent of Parents, & others concerned; were allowed by said Meetings.

Now These are to certify all whom it may concern, that for the full accomplishing their said intentions, this first day of the Sixth Month in the Year One thousand Seven hundred & Eighty, they the said Samuel Rodman & Elizabeth Rotch, appeared in a public assembly, of the aforesaid people met together, at their Meeting House, in Sherborn aforesaid, And in a solemn manner, he the said Samuel Rodman taking the said Elizabeth Rotch by the Hand, did openly declare as followeth.

Friends I desire you to be my Witnesses, that I take this my friend Elizabeth Rotch, to be my Wife, Promising by the Lords assistance, to be unto her a true, and loving Husband, untill we are by Death separated. — And then, & there, in the said assembly the said Elizabeth Rotch, did in like manner declare as followeth, Friends I desire you to be my Witnesses, that I take this my friend Samuel Rodman, to be my Husband, Promising by the Lords assistance, to be unto him, a true & loving Wife, untill we are by Death separated.

And as a further confirmation thereof, the said Samuel Rodman, & Elizabeth Rodman, did then & there to these presents set their hands, She according to the custom of Marriage assuming the name of her Husband,

Samuel Rodman  
Elizabeth Rodman

And we whose names are hereunto subscribed being present at the solemnizing of their said marriage & subscription, in manner aforesaid, As Witnesses hereunto have also to these Presents, Subscribed Our Names, the day & Year above written.

W. Rotch	Daniel Starbuck
William Rotch Junr	Silv Wills
Eleah Coleman	Poley Coffin Junr
Sam. Starbuck	Benjamin Rotch
Barreah Coleman	George Folger Junr
Edw. Silsbee	Matthew Barney
Jonathan Macy	Samuel Haybuck Junr
Benj. Barney Junr	Poley Folger
Osias Starbuck	Thomas Rotch
John Mitchell	
Joseph Harris	
Jonah Barker	
Jonathan Barney	
William Matur	
Hyckiah Starbuck	
Daniel Mac	

Elizabeth Rotch	Mary Gardner
Hannah Rodman	Elizabeth Barker
Sarah Barney	Lydia Rotch
Abigail Starbuck	
Lord Barney	
Phoebe Swain	
Deborah Coffin	
Elizabeth Barker	
Henry Coffin	
Little Starbuck	
Levin Macy	
Abary Ray	
Lydia Macy	
Hannah Gardner	
Sarah Folger	
Deborah Coleman	
Sarah Coffin	



# SAMUEL AND ELIZABETH RODMAN

## THEIR FOREBEARS AND ASSOCIATES

By MISS JULIA W. RODMAN

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{Read to the members of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society  
at their annual meeting, April 12, 1926.}

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This inadequate sketch of some of my ancestors has been prepared to coincide with the gift of the marriage certificate of Samuel and Elizabeth Rodman to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society.

In preparing these Memorials this undertaking has been aided by valuable help from several sources. Besides the letters and diaries in my possession, as well as the Rodman Book, I am deeply indebted to the Rev. Alfred Rodman Hussey, a direct descendent. Papers written by my cousins, Mrs. Henery A. Wood (Anna Wharton Wood) and Mrs. Harrison S. Morris (Anna Wharton Morris) for the Newport Historical Society dealing with the same family have stimulated me to add a little to records of the lives of the Rodman-Rotch connection.

As Mrs. Morris says: "Romantic fiction is delightful to write, and always delightful to read, but such products of the imagination grow pale and even tedious once we become interested in the stories of real life. It is pleasant to imagine the romances which must have occurred; it is better still to know what did occur and best of all when the actors were of one's own blood."

Thomas Rodman, who was the son of Samuel and Mary Willett Rodman and father of the Samuel who married Elizabeth Rotch, a native of Rhode Island, was born in Newport in 1724. As his father followed the sea as a profession—later retiring as owner, manager and agent of ships and property, so was Thomas trained for the mercantile life, serving his apprenticeship with fidelity and efficiency until he was in command.

In 1850 he married Mary Borden, daughter of Abraham Borden and Elizabeth Wanton, his wife. He was drowned on a passage from Honduras, Nov. 16th, 1776 when only

42. The accounts of him are very meagre. In 1740 William Coffin writes to Captain Samuel Rodman, "Your son Thomas is in good health and sticks close to his learning. Hope before you leave this place will be fit for your mate." In 1841 W. Coffin writes, "Your son Thomas got through all he can learn at Mr. Ham's school." In 1755 he made voyage in Osprey to London as captain and was gone for three years. In 1760 he bought land at Easton's Point. In 1763 he was Master of the Brig, Prince of Wales, 12 mo. 30, owned by Godfrey Malbone, bound for Jamaica and then to Hispaniola for molasses. He was urged by the owner to beware of taking on board any French "Manufactts." In 1764 he was Master of the schooner Eagle bound to Hispaniola, he owning the cargo jointly with Sol Townsend and Jacob Rodriguez Reveira. In 1768 Joseph Maud writes to Mrs. Rodman from Bay of Honduras alluding to the death of Captain Rodman.

Among the schooners owned by his father was the Dove, of which he was Master at one time. Assorted cargoes of fish, ale, staves, furniture, etc. were shipped to the West Indies, returning with cargoes of molasses and rum.

It is related of his being in Barbadoes and going on board the Admiral's Ship (perhaps the Vermont) to bring back some of his sailors who had been taken from him and put on board the Englishman. He walked straight up to the Admiral, held out his hand and saluted him as an equal, demanding his property. High words passed before the end of the conference, but the end was that Captain Rodman gained his point and brought back his sailors.

(Mrs. D. B. Smith to Eliza G. Hazard, 1846). It is also said that he was a noble man and a model for manly beauty.

### Children of

(Mary Borden Rodman 1729-1798).

Thomas Rodman, 1724-1766.

Elizabeth, 1752-1753.

Samuel, married Elizabeth Rotch, 1753-1835.

Mary (Invalid), 1757-1835.

Elizabeth, md. Wm. Rotch, Jr., 1759-1828.

Anna, md. Thomas Hazard, 1761-1845.

Hannah md. Samuel Rowland Fisher, 1764-1819.

Sarah, twin of Hannah, unmarried.

Charity, md. Thomas Rotch in 1790, 1766-1834.

Mary Borden was born in 1729, married Thomas Rodman in 1750 when she was 21, died in New Bedford, at the home of her daughter Charity Rotch, early in 1798, aged 69.

A brief survey of the life of Mary Rodman convinces us that she was a rare personality. Mary Rodman was the daughter of Abraham Borden and Elizabeth Wanton, his wife. Her early training fitted her for a difficult life, and there are many testimonials from contemporaries which proved her ability to grapple problems and conquer all obstacles. She married Thomas Rodman in Newport in 1750 at the Friends' Meeting House.

Her husband's sea faring duties separated them for long periods, so that most of the upbringing of the family devolved upon her prior to his decease in 1766. Eight children were born to them.

Her daughters were said to have been beautiful girls, and at the approach of the Revolutionary War, she was afraid to keep them in Newport, then a Garrison town, for fear they might marry British officers, so in 1775 she broke up her home and went to live at Smithfield.

It is said, all the schooling the girls obtained, was given them by their brother, Samuel.

They learned to spin while they were in Smithfield, but it must have been a severely quiet life.

(Letter from Mary Rodman, to her son,) written while she was visiting in Newport.

Newport, Sept. 7th mo. 1st. 1776.  
Dear Samy,

We got safe to Jacob Mott's—all glad to see me. Went to Meeting with them, and arrived at Cousin Robinson's about four this afternoon. Dr. Hunter has been here, and in-

tends setting out for Smithfield tomorrow morning; shall be as easy as I can for I am sure you will do all in your power to make the doctor happy. I was pleased to see him and more so with the information that I had of his being pleased with us. He loves thee. Dr. Easton says we have almost made him a Friend in belief, though not in practice. I cannot say when I shall return. Have not time to write the girls so let them have this. My love to you and all as if named, Charity in particular.

I am, thy affectionate Mother,  
Mary Rodman.

The wine is in ye lock closet.

If wanted for cookery there is some not so good in ye other. Eliza Allen knows where.

To Samuel Rodman, Smithfield.

In 1777 their mother purchased a farm at Leicester, Mass., to which they moved shortly. One of the daughters, in writing to a cousin thus describes it: "We have a small house, a pretty little orchard, meadow and pasture agreeable, an acre or two of Indian corn and rye planted, three cows, ten sheep and one horse completes thy cousin's farm which, however, I am pleased with. It is pleasant retirement, far from the commotions of the busy world."

In a letter written to her cousin, Mary Robinson, after describing the farm, at Leicester, and its stock, written from there July, 7th mo. 2nd, 1777, she goes on to say, "As something is ever wanting to complete our happiness, my poor girl Molly's invalidism, sister Howland's illness, and deprivation of company dear to me beyond expression, and the little probability of seeing any of you soon, spreads a melancholy over this present peaceful solitude.

After all a mind resigned to the Will of Heaven is most to be desired. May thou and I, my dear Molly, attain this happy situation. Farewell, my dear, and continue to remember and write as often as thee can to thy absent Mary Rodman."

While still at Leicester, she writes on August 28, 1779., "I went to Providence with an intention to ask leave to go on Rhode Island, but was discouraged at that time from applying to the General.

If any should open before the winter shall make another attempt, though I believe it would be proper to know whether the British General would permit me to spend a few weeks, to transact my business there. If any of my friends would make the

request and inform me, should take it very kind."

After this absence of six years in 1783 she and her family returned to Newport. The house in which they lived still stands at the corner of Walnut and Second streets.

From old letters and documents we are struck with the "ceaseless succession of Friends Meetings these young women and their elders attended. Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, and upon every possible occasion between, they held extra Meetings in their own homes, with visiting Friends.

The young Quaker girls of those days revelled in these gatherings not only because of the religious significance, but because of the social opportunities. Many a marriage was the outcome of the social intercourse established through these Meetings where Friends came from far and near to bear their testimony.

The first of this family to embark on the matrimonial venture was Samuel, who went to Nantucket, for his bride to be, the daughter of William Rotch, Senior. Propinquity was a factor in accomplishing marriages between Elizabeth Rodman and William Rotch, Jr., also Charity Rodman and Thomas Rotch. Hannah married Samuel Rowland Fisher, a descendent of John Fisher who accompanied William Penn to this country. Anna became the wife of Thomas Hazard. Sarah, the twin sister of Hannah and a very lovely character, died shortly after the marriage of Hannah in 1763.

In a letter from Anna Mott, 1794, there is a description of a visit to New Bedford as follows: "Left this morning for Bedford and rode to Howland's ferry five miles; were obliged to wait a little as the boat was on the other side. It is thought it will be a great advantage to Newport. From this ferry to New Bedford is 18 miles of as bad a road as ever I went over in a carriage. We left the ferry a little after eight and did not reach Bedford until half past one. We were affectionately welcomed by Charity Rotch and her mother, Mary Borden Rodman. Went to dinner at Thomas Hazard's accompanied by Mary Rodman and her daughter Molly. We met with a kind reception from another amiable branch of this extraordinary family, etc.

In the Spring of 1794 she was taken ill at the house of her daughter, Charity Rotch, with whom she continued to spend her last days, the end coming early in 1798.

Elizabeth Rotch, Jr., pays the following tribute:—Mar: 5th, 1798 "Altho our Mother's loss is great as her understanding continued to the last, unimpaired, which rendered her company truly pleasant and our parting harder, yet we have abundant cause to be thankful that she was continued with us, until we were in a situation to act for ourselves. we are now reaping the benefit of her tender care and steady example among her children, in which she was excelled by few."

In 1838, Jeremiah Winslow, a family friend, in conversation with her granddaughter, Mrs. James Arnold, thus describes Mary Rodman:— "She was a woman of great merit, and, as far as I could judge, of superior talents. I have seen a letter which she addressed to her only son Samuel, when he was about to leave her for the toils of a counting house. It contained the best moral and religious precepts couched in language that did honor to the woman and the mother. I was always a pleased listener to her conversation which was lively and interesting. The events of the Revolutionary war were ever fresh in her memory and many a tale of the olden time amused those who were permitted to share her society."

(Mary Rodman was Administrator of her husband's Estate, in 1767. Bought the Brig Dove after her husband's decease. 1770 owns stores on Long Wharf. 1777 sold furniture at Smithfield.)

#### **William Rotch—1734-1828**

And now the scene shifts from Newport to Nantucket as we trace the ancestry of Elizabeth Rodman. A common ancestor of both her parents was Tristram Coffin, the pioneer.

Elizabeth Rodman's father, William Rotch, was born on the island of Nantucket. His parents were Joseph Rotch and Love Macy, his wife. Joseph, a native of Salisbury, England was the first of his name to settle there. He arrived in a ship on which he had worked his passage by various devices, taking up shoemaking, his trade, as a means of livelihood. Later he embarked in mercantile business in which he was very successful. He was born in

1704, O. S. In 1733 he married Love Macy of Nantucket. Realizing that New Bedford had great advantages as a whaling port, he removed there in 1765, established himself in business, having ships and warehouses. His house was at the foot of Johnny Cake hill (corner of Union and First streets). His property was destroyed by the British under command of General Charles Grey (father of Earl Grey of Reform Bill fame) in 1778. He then removed to Nantucket, remaining till 1782, again making New Bedford his home, where he died in 1784 (Dwight's Travels).

He was a man of great activity and shrewdness. He was determined, at the same time had a pleasing address so generally had his way. He delighted in a joke and was singularly quick at repartee. He was full of unostentatious benevolences. As a man, he was held in high estimation.

His son William was born in Nantucket in 1734. He was trained by and associated with his father in the whaling business. Thomas A. Greene thus speaks of him in an obituary notice appearing in the *Morning Mercury*, May 23, 1828. "A native of Nantucket, Mr. Rotch continued to reside there until the close of the Revolutionary war. Distinguished in the community as an upright and intelligent merchant, as well as for urbanity and kindness in all the relations of social life. It was not until after the troubles of the revolution had commenced that calumny ventured to utter a word against him. It was then that in adhering to his firm determination to support, at every hazard, the peaceable principles he professed, he incurred the displeasure of the more ardent patriots of the day, and was called to Boston more than once to render an examination on that account. His firmness and intrepidity on these occasions confounded his accusers, and produced conviction in the minds of all who heard him, that in all things whereof he had been accused, the only motive by which he had been governed was an undeviating adherence to his religious principles without fear and without reproach.

During the unsettled state of commercial affairs, with his son, Benjamin, he sailed for England on the *Maria*, July 4, 1785, in search of some more ample field for the development of commercial enterprise, though he was now more than 50 years of age. He made propositions to the gov-

ernments of both France and England, but the British would not permit the introduction of American built ships. The French government were so favorably inclined, that Benjamin was left to further negotiate, while his father returned to Nantucket, arriving Jan. 1, 1787.

The propositions were so acceded to by the French Government as to induce him to remove with his family, and the wife and child of Benjamin, and some other persons from Nantucket, and settle at Dunkirk, in 1790. This was the commencement of the whale fishery in France, but the French Revolution, which was fast approaching its climax of bloody misrule and anarchy soon rendered that country an undesirable residence and after two years of trials and difficulties not a few, he removed to England which seemed to offer a fairer opportunity for the prosecution of his views, transferring his business to that country and establishing whale fisheries at Milford Haven, under the direction of his son Benjamin.

In the meantime the adoption of the Constitution, and the more stable basis on which the commercial regulations of our country were placed had changed the aspect of things in America. The attachments of home and country were now powerful enough to withstand all inducements which were offered by the British Government to detain him longer in that country, and after having resided another two years in England, he returned to the United States in 1794 and took up his residence in this town, where in patriarchal simplicity, gradually withdrawing from the cares of business as the infirmities of age increased upon him, he spent the last 30 years of his useful and exemplary life.

The Mansion house where he lived was so called because the most prominent and imposing house of the village, and, moreover, because in the absence of comfortable houses of entertainment, he hospitably entertained strangers from abroad, often people of distinction. When it became a hotel in 1828, the name followed.

He was nearly four score years of age when our acquaintance with him began. How often since that time have we listened with intense delight to his narration of the striking incidents of his eventful life, particularly with those connected with the Revolutionary War, and his



subsequent residence in Europe, his manner combining in a remarkable degree, the novelty and affectionate interest of younger years with the gravity and experience of age. Many of these come up and their freshness recalled to our memory, and will continue, we trust, to form some of the most interesting reminiscences of later life."

In a letter written by him to his partners, (his son William Rotch, Jr., and his son-in-law, Samuel Rodman) dated London, 8th mo., 3rd, 1885, he says: "Having wrote your dear mother on the 26th ult. which I here enclose, the day I reached this city, but found no opportunity to send until now, I refer to it for particulars. Our passage was very fine, 23 days and a few hours to my landing at Dover, somewhat short of 25 to the Maria being at this city. I have had but little time in this country, therefore can form no judgment of many interesting particulars, which I know would be agreeable for you to know, but, this I can say; I came through a highly cultivated delightful country, which still would doubtless have appeared to greater advantage had my mind been prepared for receiving to advantage the pleasing prospects which often presented from both Nature and Art, but it was was otherwise with me. What I partook of in that respect rather forced its way than otherwise. I have also found an open generous hospitality both in the country and the city. Many people of rank commiserate our situation. I cannot write you at present respecting our public matters, not having had opportunity to form any judgment. I am, with paternal love to my dear daughters, your wives, to whom I intend writing soon, in which Benjamin joins, your affectionate father, William Rotch. (from letter to Wm. Rotch and Sons.)

No. 12 "I have had a most trying time (in England) with the ministry, who were determined to give us no privileges but on a positive removal to this Kingdom. I in vain insisted on the same advantages for Hallifax and for the Maria to be admitted here duty free, but they unwisely thinking to force us here if if they granted no favors elsewhere, especially our family, at which they particularly pointed. This put me upon seeing what could be done in France, though with great reluctance. There we found that nation desirous to introduce the fishery, particularly the Greenland and their

Ministry wise enough to stick at nothing to answer that purpose. I mean encouragement. I have not time to write you particularly, but intend doing it by the New York packet."

No. 13 is dated 6th mo., 7th, 1786. It goes into particulars as to making Dunkirk the French Port for Whaling business. It is a most interesting document.

No. 14, dated London, 7th mo., 28th, 1786.

"I hope we shall leave this country by the latter end of the 9th month. The unexpected opening in France in our way has a prospect of advantage, but it still needs our attention to get the consumption in the proper way, yet, I cannot yield to the thought of staying in Europe another winter, unless we should not get away timely for a probable arrival in America before winter, as I so dread that season on our coast that I should stay long before I would attempt it." The rest is all business details.

No. 16 is dated London, 9th mo., 6th, 1786.

"My last was begun at Calais and concluded at Rochester on the third which I sent from there to Deal to go by the Resolution supposed to be in the Downes, and as it is not returned, expect it is aboard her I am pleased that I am safe back to this city, having crossed the channel. I hope, for the last time at present. We are now making all the dispatch we can to leave England. I am anxious to set off for my desirable home, altho the season is so far advanced that I expect a rough passage, but hope for the best. Benj. is yet at Dunkirk dispatching the ships which hope will sail this day, if not yesterday. This goes per Thomas Dickason, Jr., who goes out in the packet for New York. We continue our business in their house." My dear love to you all."

William Rotch, Senior, from Samuel Rodman, Jr.'s Diary, May 1828.

"On the sixth day morning, the 16th at 6 o'clock, William Rotch expired. His constitution once so strong and vigorous, was entirely overcome by the infirmities of age, and his release was only an occasion for congratulation. Thus had terminated a long life, for he was 83 years and 5 months old, marked by a vigor of intellect and energy of character, which gained him a high consideration with his contemporaries, and an integrity and firmness which commanded the respect and esteem

of his numerous associates in the scenes of active business, or in those more peculiarly appropriate to the exercise of the benevolently social feelings. The inflexible adherence which he always evinced under circumstances of unusual delicacy to the minister of his religious tenets marked an erect and noble spirit and the peculiar and native urbanity of his character and feelings seemed to make full amends in his intercourse with individuals of exalted rank or different religious views—for the angular aspect, when contrasted with the current of the world—of the language and manners of the Society of Friends and won him the cordial esteem and respect of all of those with whom he was thrown in contact, who were capable of estimating the superior traits of human nature.

Some of the events of his long life brought him, in connection with men high in office, and of commanding talents, in England and France together with a very numerous class of those not officially distinguished, with whom it is believed he uniformly made, and left a strong impression for strength of intellect and moral worth.

The last 35 years of his life have been passed in retirement from the extensive engagements and operations in which he acquired his ample fortune, devoted with characteristic activity to his social duties, and the well ordering of the numerous appendages of his simple and hospitable establishment, which the village character of this period specified, rendered convenient. And to improvements of his property for the encouragement and advancement of the interests of enterprising industry in the place where his family was settled, and which had as to its commercial importance been founded by his father. His character for a long course of years has had a celebrity which has made his unostentatious and prosperous course like a beacon light to direct and encourage the sincere aspirant, after moral worth and the cheering rewards of persevering and honorable industry.

He sleeps in peace and has had a large share of the applause which excites the spleen of the envious. May his Descendants imitate his numerous virtues, and some of them

leave, if not as bright, as spotless a character in conclusion of a shorter career."

#### **Elizabeth Barney Rotch, 1734-1824**

She was born in Nantucket, the daughter of Benjamin Barney and Elizabeth Starbuck in 1734. Through the Starbucks she was a direct descendent of Tristram Coffin, also of his daughter the famous Mary Starbuck. These Starbucks were a long lived family and it is related of her grandfather Jethro Starbuck that he was a strong vigorous man, scion of an originally good stock, both physically and intellectually. He lived to the greatest age that any Nantucket person, save one, ever attained, and his friends thought he might have fulfilled the full years of a centenarian, if he had not been impressed that he had lived long enough and so old a man could not be any longer desirable in the social or family circle. This feeling induced him to retire from his friends and finally to seek his room and his bed, where, after a short confinement, he passed away aged nearly 99 years. He retained his intellectual vigor till within a few months of his death, and it may be remarked in connection with this that a number of his descendents have lived to a great age, the declining years of whom have been alike, unclouded.

When Elizabeth Barney was 20, she married William Rotch. For seventy years they lived together sharing their joys and sorrows, happy in each other and their children. Their only long separation occurred in those years when her husband first went out to Europe in the interest of whaling. On that second voyage, his wife and daughters, Lydia and Mary accompanied him.

During their stay there have recently come to light some incidents told in an old diary written by John Grubb, dated 1793. It speaks of "meeting Elizabeth Rotch and her daughters, Lydia and Mary at Castle Pill near Milford, England, where they were visiting their relatives, Daniel Starbuck. This house was opened for a Friend's religious meeting. Several Friends came from Robinson Hall, a large house three miles distant, where five of these Nantucket Friends lived. Various meetings were held in the vicinity, attended by Lydia, Mary and their mother.

**REMINISCENCE OF ELIZABETH  
BARNEY, WIFE OF WILLIAM  
ROTCH, SENIOR.**

(By Sarah Rodman Morgan.)

She was short and a rather stout woman. She was a noted collector of herbs, having, in her New Bedford house, a large closet filled with them, which she distributed to the sick. Remarkably fond of flowers, she had a beautiful garden at the back of the Mansion House. Here was a bed of chamomile, a solution of which was supposed to be good for the complexion; there to it came all the young girls of the town, including her own granddaughters, Sarah Rodman and Eliza Rodman. She planted the two curious trees which stood in front of the house. She also had a bed of house leeks. She was a favorite with every one, especially with children, of whom she was very fond and to whom she was very kind and good. A great knitter, she also made several carpets. S. R. M. often went and read to her. Hers was a quiet, kindly disposition. She always sat at one place at the table. One day, she accidentally changed her seat, and fortunately, for the ceiling fell upon where she usually sat. On the day of her death, she was up and about, but felt chilly. After dinner, she went into her bedroom, which was on the ground floor, lay down, and died almost immediately. Her daughter, Elizabeth Rodman, was sent for, but arrived too late.

The above statement was given to Rev. Alfred R. Hussey by his grandmother Morgan, when he was a young boy.

The following entry was made in the diary of her grandson, S. R., May 14th, 1824:—"I called after dinner to return grandfather the deed of the lot which I had obtained of him yesterday and spent from half to three-quarter of an hour with him and dear grandmother, both whom seemed cheerful and better of the cold, which had of late oppressed them, little thinking it was the last time I should see my grandmother, but such was the fact, for about half past four, after a severe coughing turn she was assisted to her room and bed by grandfather, and in the course of five minutes sank into unconsciousness, passing quietly away (at 90) full of years and wholly prepared for the change. Who would detain her? Yet, in consideration of my dear grandfather (with whom she lived 70 years) it is an event which must give to life an aspect

of peculiar significance. The dear man derives sensible comfort from the company and sympathy of his offspring and there is much satisfaction remitting from the thought that we can contribute something to lighten the sorrows of our so truly venerable (friend) of unblemished character and very advanced age.

Children of William and Elizabeth Rotch:

Elizabeth, married Samuel Rodman.

William, Jr., married Elizabeth Rodman.

Benjamin, married Eliza Barker.

Thomas, married Charity Rodman.

Lydia, married William Dean.

Mary, unmarried, died in 1848.

**SAMUEL AND ELIZABETH  
(ROTCH) RODMAN.**

**Samuel Rodman—1753-1835.**

Samuel Rodman was born in Newport, Nov. 11th, 1753, the only son of Thomas and Mary (Borden) Rodman. He was but thirteen when his father perished at sea, 1766 and the oldest living child.

From Abraham Rodriguez Reveira, a highly respected Jewish merchant of Portuguese descent, he received his training. Mr. Reveira was a wealthy man fitted to undertake his mercantile education. He took young Samuel in his office, successfully laying the foundation for a brilliant career.

In 1777 (then 24 years old) the family removed from Newport to Smithfield, R. I. He bought and carried on a farm there, and also taught school. Later on another farm was acquired at Leicester, Mass.

In 1780 he married Elizabeth Rotch, at the age of 27, and thereafter residing in Nantucket, associating himself with the two firms of William Rotch and Sons, the latter being organized to carry on the Dunkirk Whale Fishery. Later on he was in business for himself carrying on the same sort of business both in Nantucket, and in New Bedford, where he took up his residence, 1798, after all his children were born.

He built the stone house on the Northeast corner of First and William streets, living there until his death. Afterwards his widow and her unmarried daughter, Eliza went to live in the same house on Second Street, now occupied as a warehouse by George A. Bourne and Sons, having bought it from her son Benjamin. The house on First Street had a large garden extending down to

Water Street. For many years this house was rented and later was bought for the D. A. Snell cracker factory.

While on a visit to New York in 1794, he became a victim to the prevalent epidemic, Smallpox. His wife was at the Nantucket home with her little family, unable to hear much and deeply anxious for news of her absent husband, and waiting eagerly for word of the return from England of her parents and sisters. He writes to his brother-in-law, Samuel Rowland Fisher, on the 26th day of May, 1794 that,—“I indulge the hope of being able to leave the city in a week or ten days, having in the latter space gained health and strength to the admiration of myself and friends. I have been extremely reduced, having, I believe, had as great a share of small pox as my feeble constitution would bear.”

To the same correspondent, he says: “(Aug. 22, 1794.) I have letters from my father-in-law, when he wrote, June 12, expected to embark the last of that month. William’s ship, Barclay, David Swain, Master, in which we expect him, was then copprd. and had taken part of the freight engaged in London, intended proceeding to Lymington to complete their loading with salt, for Boston. I apprehend he must now be near at hand if not already arrived. Brother William has gone to Boston in company with Brother Hazard—the former purposes staying there till the ship’s arrival.”

To S. R. F., Nantucket (Feb. 14th, 1797) “My determination is fixed to shift my habitation to a place accessible in winter, and as my wife has a strong predeliction in favor of Bedford, since the removal of her parents, I have believed it right for me to take such preliminary steps as may, if my life be spared, place me there in the summer of 1798.

In 1809 he writes to a son at school:—“As I am stepping the declivity of life (aet 56) I feel less satisfaction in the transaction of business than I formerly did.” He was looking forward to the time when his sons would succeed him.

To the same son in 1811 he says in a letter:—“Thy mother wishes to know the state of thy clothes, and as a new coat will be necessary for Yearly Meeting, observes that James Allinson has good clothes, and having married an acquaintance, I gave him my custom while in the city.”

He left a large property, mostly acquired through his “trained mercantile ability” dispensed wisely and generously.

It is said that in his youth, maturity and old age he was a model of manly beauty. Rembrandt Peel’s portrait does not belie this statement, nor does Ball’s basrelief, both representing a noble type of manhood.

The following entry in his son’s diary sums up his life, and its achievements thus:— “December 24, 1835. At twenty minutes past twelve at noon life expired. Thus has terminated the long and useful life of my honored father. The sweetness and benignity of his temper continued to the last, and a smile of recognition and extension of the hand always greeted his children and friends as they approached him. My father’s long life has thus peacefully closed and he gathered to his rest like a shock of corn fully ripe. He has left a name behind him which his descendents may well emulate. Possessed of a vigorous intellect and much benevolence of disposition, with the strictest integrity and industrious habits he was highly respected throughout his long career.

“His extensive business was conducted with a prudence and caution as well as ability and was crowned with success. Like my grandfather, Rotch, with whom he was long a co-partner, his maxim was never to extend his business on credit. They might lose their own property and be poor themselves, but they would not take the risk which they considered immoral, as well as unwise, of making others poor. They were therefore never dazzled with projects which their disposable means could not compass, however promising of profit.

“At a time when ruinous consequences, which often wait on a different policy from that which governed his conduct, he stepped forth, though at an advanced period of his life, when release from effort would have been more congenial to his taste, as well as more suitable to his years, and by an application of his resources, and by a renewal of his characteristic industry, though attended by many personal sacrifices and an anxiety natural to his age and character assumed the responsibility of the Whale Fishery from Havre under the superintendence of Jeremiah Winslow. By this act he laid the foundation for present affluence and golden prospects.

“My father’s benevolence of feeling, together with his clear and just appreciation of moral worth made him always kind and considerate towards those in the humbler walks

of life, and prone to render them personal service when opportunity offered and also pecuniary assistance when prudence would warrant it. Integrity, he honored in all situations, and hence he was honored and esteemed by the numerous individuals of the laboring classes, with whom his long habits brought him in connection.

"With these valuable qualities and a directness and simplicity of character which despised all affectation, he united a delicacy of sensibility which gave to his manner great urbanity, and secured him from giving unintentional or unnecessary pain to the feelings of any in his Social intercourse, or transgressing the limits of a scrupulous propriety of conduct, by an approach even to anything low or indelicate, in word or deed.

"He was ardent in his feelings and frank in expressing them when it was proper to do so. True to his principles, he was always ready to avow his convictions and reprobate wrong in any quarter. He was too conscious of the dignity of virtue to compromise her cause. Of course, he never sought the good opinion of others by disguising his sentiments, or making any sacrifice to the vices or follies of others. He was nevertheless, prudent in avoiding unnecessary collision of sentiment in his intercourse with mankind, so that among those from whom he was obliged to withhold his approbation he probably had no personal enemies.

"He never sought popularity, but he was highly respected and generally esteemed for his intelligence, judgment and discretion, and if public office had been an object of his desire, he might doubtless have been gratified, but he had too just an estimate of this kind of distinction to see in it any attractions, but to aid his friends and reconcile differences and heal disputes, he was often appealed to, and generally acquitted himself, if not to the satisfaction of all parties, yet in a manner to sustain, in the opinion of disinterested observers his high reputation for judgment, and his discrimination.

"He was warmly attached to the principles of the Society of Friends, adhered to their peculiarities of dress and language, and acted as Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, as well as of the subordinate meetings of which he was a member for many years, and was highly esteemed throughout the Society till the differences of

opinion which led to the late scism began to prevail, when he took side negatively rather than positively with the liberal party. Resigning his membership because of disapproval of what he considered the harsh treatment of some of the younger and more ardent of the side he favored, he later allied himself with the small meeting in the Lyceum, where he was a regular attendant as long as his friends thought his health was equal to the exertion.

"He was a kind parent, deeply solicitous for the welfare of his children, and though the current of his feelings played not on the surface, as is sometimes the case, in an unreserved affability of manner, in his intercourse with them, none acquainted with him could doubt that it was deep and strong.

"In his conjugal relation, as in all others he was highly exemplary, happy in his connection with my mother, a woman of superior mental and practical endowments, during a period of fifty five years, and favored remarkably in other points of prosperity, though his path has not been unclouded by afflicting dispensations, nor its light unmelting by that consciousness of dependence which is the foundation of religious feeling and pious trust, he has at last descended to the grave in his 83rd year, leaving behind him an unsullied reputation to participate, as we may humbly, hope, in the full fruition of the celestial state."

"May his descendents cherish the remembrance of his virtues and imitate his example, while they do all in their power to sooth the declining years of my mother in her bereavement."

A grandson, eleven years old, thus writes to an old family retainer: "My dear Grandfather Rodman is now no more. He died the 22nd of December and was interred the 26th. My father says he was without a stain on his character."

#### A SONG OF NANTUCKET.

"The land breaks out, like a gleam of hope,  
Over the Ocean foam,  
But Its daughters no longer are pulling the rope\*  
That's bringing her sailors home.  
Her whalers lie rotting, and lone and dread  
Far in some foreign port  
They have laid there rusting for many a year  
Of water and wind the sport.  
The decks are piled with the winter's snows;  
The men are scattered—Ah me!

No mast-head echoes to "there she blows"

Far out in the Ochotsk Sea.

But her hearts are as tried, and her men as true

As, when trimming the distant sail,  
They passed their lives on the waters blue,

In hunting the bow-head whale.

Her daughters are pure and sweet and fair,

And cheerful and kind and good;  
And sparkling water and sparkling air

Shine out in their changeful mood.

There's not a mate or a harpooner

More skilful than maid or wife

If you visit their land, you'll stay, I fear;

With a harpoon through your life.

But find a Nantucketer where you can

He never will duty skulk;

You may find him a rough and ready man,

But never a worthless hulk."

\*In the old whaling days, when a ship was homeward bound, with a fair wind, it was a common saying among the men that the girls of Nantucket were pulling the rope to draw them home.

### ELIZABETH RODMAN.

1757-1856.

Elizabeth Rotch was born on the island of Nantucket, in 1757 and it was there that her girlhood days were spent. Worthy daughter of a distinguished father, and a mother who looked well over the affairs of her household, she was surrounded by much the same influences that shaped the lives of her husband and his sisters in Newport.

From her father she inherited strength, ability and force of character. From her mother, she learned all the useful accomplishments so necessary in those Colonial days.

She lived at a time when wars and rumors of wars were rife, in fact in an atmosphere of anxiety for the safety of the island, when losses of shipping, and general disquietude prevailed.

It is not to be implied that only depression marked her young days, for there are various references to Meetings on the Island and mainland when there was intercourse with the outside world.

In 1780 she became the wife of Samuel Rodman, at the age of twenty-three. Although she fulfilled admirably all the requirements of wife and mother, they did not satisfy her as regarded the upbringing of her children. Her reply to a sister-in-law who commended her for her wisdom and tact as mother was:

"Give me leave to tell thee, my dear, that I think thy judgment is very erroneous reflecting my faculties with children, for a poorer creature, and one less qualified to direct and guide aright, in my opinion, is hardly to be found."

In letters to her children, affectionate solicitude is the dominant note.

In 1800 there was an epidemic of small pox, and she consented that two of her daughters should go to a hospital at Woods Hole for inoculation. Apropos of this, she writes to a relative: "We have indeed, a thorny path, and some alloy or other, constantly attending our journey through life, but it matters little what the conflicts are, to those who so regard the unerring Pilot as not to miss the Haven of Rest, at last—and how desirable to be of the number who steer thus wisely—but I am doubtful of ever becoming victorious over the numerous enemies of my own household."

An overwhelming sorrow in the death of her eldest son, Thomas, who died of fever in Havana, in 1809, cast a deep shadow on their happy household. In a letter to her son Samuel, then a student at New Garden school, she thus refers to it. "The affliction of our family is too poignant, nor do I believe the variety thou met with on thy journey could long dissipate thy grief, for the inexpressible loss we have sustained, by the removal of thy dear brother, whose memory, I trust will be fondly cherished while life is lent to us, and its uncertainty, I hope will be a daily subject of serious consideration and excite to diligence in preparing for the solemn event."

During the same year a very pleasant event occurred, thus mentioned: "Thy Uncle Francis Rotch, thy grandfather's only brother, has lately arrived from Bordeaux; we shall soon expect him here, which is, in Idea very pleasant; I think it is about twenty-four years since I last saw him; no doubt there must be a striking difference in his appearance, tho it is said he does not look old. He is 59 years of age."

Quite in another vein, she writes to the same son still in school: "Let me know thy health, and whether colds are as prevalent with thee during the last winter, and how thy clothes hold out; pocket handkerchiefs must be wanting, one was left at Wakefield, and two more I found at New York. With our united love, I can with great propriety subscribe. Thy very affectionate mother."



In 1813, her eldest daughter, Mary, the wife of Wm. Logan Fisher of Philadelphia, passed away, lamented by her family. Mr. Fisher, in writing to a member of her family throws some light upon her appearance and character, thus:—"An old elder from New York, by the name of Burling, who was well acquainted with New Bedford, when he was young, told me in a large company of people, when I went to see him, that when I married Mary Rodman, I plucked the fairest flower of the place. This subject is still too tender for me to dwell upon, but as thy father told me that it was indelicate for me to allude to the beauty of the Rodman children, I may be permitted to allude to this anecdote, and to add, that my Mistress Elizabeth Rotch, (wife of William Rotch, Jr.) told me, while yet a youth, that Mary Rodman's countenance indicated an angelic purity in mind."

During the years between this and 1848 she was bereaved of mother, father, Sister Lydia, (Dean) and husband, meeting all these dispensations bravely and with sure confidence in her Pilot.

In 1848 a startling event, affecting family, friends and a large circle occurred when her daughter, Anna (Robeson) and her daughter-in-law, Rebecca, the wife of her son William, died within a few hours of each other, from an affection that was catching and fatal.

Parts of a letter to her sister-in-law, Eliza (Barker) Rotch, widow of Benjamin, living in England, show her remarkable powers at 92.

"New Bedford, 12th mo., 5th, 1849. I find great satisfaction in looking back occasionally to bygone days, when youth and sprightliness were not only seen in others, but partaken of by ourselves in a drive to your country seat with thy dear mother, from whom I accepted many an invitation with heartfelt pleasure. Thy dear note delighted me so much that I intended answering at once and took my pen, but had interruptions and the next morning we were involved in sorrow that overwhelmed everything else. My dear Anna Robeson had been unwell with erysipelas and so far recovered as to think safe to visit her son William who had been very sick, but it proved too much for her and without my apprehending any serious danger, her husband entered with the heartrending intelligence in the morning that she was sinking and no hope of revival. After a short time, I entered her room to

witness the closing scenes of a darling daughter, who had been in the habit of visiting me almost daily, and sometimes several times in a day as it might happen. And in addition to this poignant sorrow, information was brought from Fall River of the decease of my amiable beloved daughter Rebecca W. Rodman, who had been with her daughter Anna to help in nursing her (Anna's) husband, William Robeson, during his dangerous illness, took the fever and thus we were deprived of two of the excellent of our family. Both interred on the same day. An accumulation of afflictions thou wilt readily admit had fallen to our lot, and since then my grandson T. R. R. (Thos. R. Robeson) and sister Mary have departed from this changeable world. The ninth of this month perhaps thou knowest, my birthday occurs, when if I live shall see my 92nd anniversary, an age in former days I never expected to see. Can I hope ever to be indulged with another line from thee. Could it be accomplished without fatigue it would be very gratifying. Thy age is about 86—my sight is poor and hearing or comprehension very defective, not understanding common conversation in a room and yet, when a person sits by me and converses, remark is often made, "why, thee hears very well."

Then comes a reply dated 1851 from Eliza (Barker) Rotch:—"I feel inclined to commune with thee, and to express the pleasure which thy dear grandsons have been to me. They are fully occupied all day in investigating the Christal palace, or rather, its contents, and very many wonders (London) I have not seen the interior, nor will my strength permit.

"I can only remember my niece Eliza as a sweet little darling about six years old when she accompanied by her sister Mary came to take leave of me in 1791, the day before I left France. I can see her sweet little face now and alas! how little I then thought I was nevermore to see my Native Land.

"When I saw thy picture with the long mitts, I tried to procure some for thee, but nothing of the sort for ages had been made. Friends here generally wear long sleeves now. I hope thou wilt try it next winter, thou wilt find them very comfortable, a great improvement in cold weather.

"We are never overdone here with heat or cold, to me a great comfort; I remember well suffering from the great heat of the summer at Nan-

tucket, tho I never minded the severest winter. But then we have not the bountiful supply of summer fruit. I often miss that treat. Thy Pet, Benja Rodman sent me last year a great treat of green corn, tho the Gentry often plant a few hills in their Green Houses for the beauty of the long stalk, which is very ornamental, yet it will never produce an ear fit to eat—so thou sees, my dear, I am not so distant but that I still partake of your luxuries, and do so very amply.

“Adieu, my dear sister. May He who has promised never to forsake be thy comfort to the end, is the prayer of thy affectionate sister, E. R.” Dated June 6th, 1851.. We have to record one more loss in her old age in the sudden death of her son William, 1855.

From the home in Nantucket, after all the children were born and following in the footsteps of her father, they removed to New Bedford, 1798. It was a natural move for the extensive business operations could be carried on more easily than on the Island. Also the immediate family were establishing homes there.

A short entry in the diary of Samuel Rodman, her son, marks her passing:—“Mother departed in the midst of her children assembled to watch the last moment of our excellent and venerable parent (Aug. 26, 1855). It seemed a signal favor that our dear mother should have so peaceful an escape from the trials and infirmities consequent on her great age, which have so long pressed so heavily upon her. An obituary notice appeared in the Mercury of August 5th, glancing at the long period embraced by her life, and a few of the remarkable events of a political character connected with her father's family, and her own generous and noble characteristics.”

From the same diary, one notes the devotion and care for her that was bestowed by her children. To them she richly gave her affection and confidence. In their troubles and perplexities material aid and wise counsels were forthcoming. True to her religious convictions both in speech and dress, to the end. Her vigor of mind, clearness of judgment, and interest in all worthy objects were maintained thro age and physical infirmities, almost to the last, and she has left to her descendents the bright example of a truly wise and virtuous life.

“At 95, she presented a beautiful specimen of green old age. In her

long life, the Christian Character has been most strikingly exemplified.”

Children of S. and E. Rodman.

Mary—1781-1813, married 1802 to William Logan Fisher of Phil.

Eliza—1782-1864, unmarried.

Thomas—1784-1809, died of fever in Havana.

William Rotch—1786-1855, md. Rebecca Waln Morgan of Philadelphia.

Anna—1787-1848, June 17—md. Andrew Robeson of Philadelphia 1813.

Lydia—1790-1848, married Micah Ruggles in 1823.

Samuel—1792-1876, married Hannah Haydock Prior, 1819.

Sarah—1793-1888, married Charles Waln Morgan of Phil. 1819.

Benjamin—1794-1876, married Susan Waln Morgan of Phil., 1820.

Let us now go back to a summer day in the 18th Century when a party of relatives and friends assembled in the Meeting House at Nantucket to celebrate the marriage of Samuel Rodman and Elizabeth Rotch and listen to the words of the Marriage Certificate, presented today to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society.

#### MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

Whereas, Samuel Rodman, son of Thomas Rodman, late of Newport in the County of Newport, and Colony of Rhode Island in New England, deceased and Mary his wife, and Elizabeth Rotch, Daughter of William Rotch, of Sherborn, in the County of Nantucket, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England aforesaid, and Elizabeth, his wife. Having declared their intentions of taking each other in marriage, before several Monthly Meetings, of the people called Quakers in Sherborn, aforesaid, according to the good order used among them, and proceeding therein, after deliberate consideration thereof, (with regard to the righteous law of God in that case) and they also appearing clear of all others, and having consent of Parents and others concerned were allowed by said Meetings.

Now these are to certify all whom it may concern, that for the full accomplishing their said intentions, this First day of the sixth month, in the year one thousand, seven hundred and eighty (June 1, 1780) public Assembly of the aforesaid people met together at their Meeting House, in Sherborn aforesaid. And in a solemn manner, he, the said Samuel Rodman taking Elizabeth Rotch



by the hand, did openly declare as followeth:

Friends, I desire you to be my witnesses that I take this, my friend, Elizabeth Rotch to be my Wife, promising by the Lord's assistance to be unto her a true and loving Husband, until we are by death separated.—And then and there in the said assembly, the said Elizabeth Rotch did in like manner declare as followeth:

Friends, I desire you to be my witnesses, that I take this, my friend, Samuel Rodman to be my Husband, promising by the Lord's assistance, to be unto him, a true and loving Wife, until we are by death separated. And as a further confirmation therof, the said Samuel Rodman and Elizabeth Rodman did then and there to these present set their hands, she according to the custom of Marriage assuming the name of her Husband.

(signed) Samuel Rodman.  
Elizabeth Rodman.

And we whose names are hereunto subscribed, being present at the solemnizing of their said marriage and subscription in manner aforesaid. As Witnesses hereunto have also to these Presents subscribed our names, the day and year above written.—

William Rotch  
William Rotch, Jr.  
Elihu Coleman  
Samuel Starbuck  
Edward Emmett  
Jonathan Macy

Benjamin Barney, Jr.  
Chrisn Starbuck  
Jethro Mitchell  
Joseph Harris  
Jonah Barker  
Jonathan Barney 2nd  
William Minturn  
Hazeekiah Starbuck  
Daniel Macy  
William Macy  
Daniel Starbuck  
Silv Worth  
Peleg Coffin, Jr.  
Benjamin Rotch  
George Folger, Jr.  
Mathew Barney  
Samuel Starbuck, Jr.  
Peleg Folger  
Thomas Rotch  
Elizabeth Rotch  
Hannah Rodman  
Sarah Barney  
Abigail Starbuck  
Lois Barney  
Phebe Swain  
Deborah Coffin  
Elizabeth Barker  
Mary Coffin  
Alice Starbuck  
Lois Macy  
Mary Gray  
Lydia Macy  
Hannah Gardner  
Sarah Folger  
Deborah Coleman  
Sarah Coffin  
Dinah Bunker  
Ruth Gardner  
Mary Gardner  
Elizth Barker, Jr.  
Lydia Rotch

