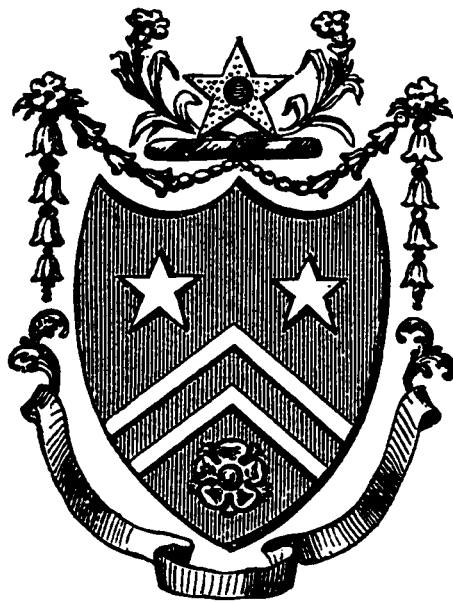


MEMENTOS
OF
THE SWETT FAMILY.



BY JOHN WINGATE THORNTON.

In Memoriam.

ROXBURY — DECEMBER, 1851.

PRIVATELY PRINTED,

ONE HUNDRED COPIES.

This Memoir
OF
HIS FAMILY
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO
SAMUEL SWETT, ESQ.
OF BOSTON,
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,
J. WINGATE THORNTON.

Roxbury, Dec. 12, 1851.

THE SWETT FAMILY.



NEW ENGLAND cannot reward her deserving citizens or their children or perpetuate the memory of her founders by the honors or rewards peculiar to royalty, but she is bound in gratitude, to keep their deeds of passive or active heroism, their lives of unostentatious virtue, their wisdom and prudence in laying the foundation of our institutions, on the solid principles of constitutional liberty, universal education and the open bible, familiar to the minds of her children;—and he who slights their sober annals, and cannot be interested in the contemplation of their homely but romantic lives, too surely indicates a recreant neglect of the history and spirit of our government and institutions, which to know and to appreciate aright, is the strongest guaranty of their continuance, and an ignorance of them is equally a symptom of decay and dissolution. In them “we must trace the origin and history of almost every institution now existing in the United States.”¹ With this apology, is introduced a brief sketch of the family of one of the early planters of New England.

According to Burke the Swete or Swett family, — bearing

Gules two chevrons between as many mullets in chief and a rose in base argent seeded or, Crest, a mullet or, pierced azure between two gilly flowers proper,

was formerly of Trayne in Edward VIth's time and subsequently

¹ Halliburton's “Rule and Misrule in America,” 18, 19.

of Oxton in the county of Devonshire,¹ which furnished many colonists to New England. JOHN SWETT, admitted to the freedom of the Massachusetts colony, 18th of May, 1642,² was one of the grantees of Newbury, as early as December 7th 1642, when "it was declared and ordered according to the former intentions of the towne that the persons only above mentioned are acknowledged to be freeholders by the towne and to have proportionable right in all waste lands, commons, and rivers undisposed of."³ Among these, ninety-one in number, were JOHN SWETT, Mr. John Woodbridge, Henry Lunt, whose grand-daughter Mary Lunt married Col. Joshua Wingate of Hampton, N. H., John Emery, brother of Anthony, who came to Newbury in the ship "James," in June, 1635, from Romsey, then a busy village near Southampton in England, was for a while, a leading townsman at Dover, and finally settled and died in Kittery leaving a family,—and Nathaniel Weare, himself an honorable man, of note in New Hampshire history, and the founder of an influential family.⁴ —Coffin relates no particulars of Mr. Swett's subsequent life or death, but we can safely conjecture from the fact of his emigration at this period, that he was, like his associates, a devout low-churchman,⁵ a republican, and a man of thought and action.

HIS SON BENJAMIN SWETT, born as early as 1626, married HESTER or Esther, daughter of PETER WEARE and sister of NATHANIEL WEARE, in November, 1647. Mr. Swett and his brother Weare, lived on the most intimate terms of friendship, the more delightful, that each was a man of marked independence of character, calculated to lead others than to follow, and their life-long brotherly intercourse begun in this matrimonial alliance, had no bond in any relation of dependance, but in the union of brave hearts and the congeniality of noble minds. Tracing their lives, private and public, will open to view the early colonist's history, his industry, energy, indomitable perseverance, dangers, bravery, his mental and moral manhood.

In 1695, October 26th Mr. Weare "aged about 60 years" de-

¹ Richard Sweet was bailiff of Exeter, 1540 and 1590.

² Reg. iii. 189.

³ Coffin's Newbury, 38, 392.

⁴ Died May 13, 1718, aged nearly 87. Coffin's Newbury.

⁵ Hutchinson, i. 431-2.

posed "that about the yeare of our Lord God 1655 my brother in law Capt Benjamin Swett and myself had a lease of the honorable Mr. John Woodbridge of Newberry his farme for seven years, the Northerly or northwesterly side of the s^d farme was bounded in part with y^e land of old Mr Pike, at the South or the southeasterly corner of the s' pik's land was a springe that was called the watering place nere to which those that had to doe or s^d they had to doe with y^e s^d Mr. pik's land, did, I remember, clayme a litell pece of land, the quantety or bounds thereof I know not, but the slipe of land so claymed and the watering place was within the fence of the s^d woodbridge's farme and improved by us that dwelt on the s^d farm and by no other as I know of while wee lived on the farm which was to y^e yeare 1661 or 1662, and to the best of my remembrance the fence that is betwene the farm of y^e s^d woodbridge and the s^d Pik's land stands in the same place as it did for about forty years agoe."¹ The following is nearly a fac-simile of his autograph at that date.

Nath^l Weare
October 1695

The next year Mr. Weare was married to Elizabeth Swain, and here the brothers passed seven years in the cultivation of the prolific soil, then yielding its first fruits to the labors of civilized man. But for the alarms from the Indians on whose domains they were the first settlers, and the occasional arrival of colonists to the new world, bringing tidings from their friends and relatives in Old England—restless under her civil and ecclesiastical wrongs,—their life, even in its freshness and simplicity, must have been monotonous. The limpid water of the spring and the frugal homely board, supplied by the labor of their own hands gave them the flush of health, and clear minds. But a scrap of yellow, time-stained, tell-tale paper perpetuates the fact that some of our good puritans,² though not addicting themselves

¹ "Thornton Papers," No. 1021.

² In 1639 the Court forbade the drinking of healths on a penalty of 12^d for each offence.

to taverns, were not averse to "a draught of sack," for "Ensign" Benjamin, on or about the "27th of ye 7th month 1653 paid to Nath. Winsley, three pounds in current money for a "rundlett of sack."

That Mr. Swett and his brother Weare had not fully adopted Newbury as a permanent residence, appears by a petition from some of the active men of Dover and Newbury in 1649 "to the Honred Generale Courte now assembled at Boston," signed by Richard Walderne, Benia: Swett, Nathaniel Weare, and others, praying for "the grant of a trackte of land at Pennecooke of twelve miles square, which being granted," the petitioners will "be at the cost and charge of viewinge of it, and consider fully about it wheather to proceed on for the settlinge of a towne or noe, and for that end shall crave the liberty of three yeares to give in "their decision. This scheme they abandoned and their lease of the Woodbridge farm having expired, about 1662 or 1663 they removed with their families, to Hampton in New Hampshire. Mr. Swett was chosen a Commissioner for the county rates in 1665 and 1668, and a "selectman"¹ in 1665, 1669 and 1675, and in 1670² received a grant of one hundred acres of land in "No. 56," now the town of * * * * *, but his chief service was in improving their military discipline. His fondness for martial life, was early developed and appreciated by his townsmen who elected him to offices of great consequence in the public estimation; witness the following:

"Whereas it was ordered the last session of this court that the towne of Newbury should goe to a new election for there Ensigne in respect the last choyce was not cleare which accordingly they have done and have legally made choyce of Benjamin Swet to be their ensigne and they desire the approbation of this honor^d Court of what is done and that he may be confirmed in that place,

¹ Letters of the Rev. JONATHAN FRENCH, D. D., for fifty years pastor of the ancient church of North Hampton, N. H., who is thoroughly versed in New Hampshire history and in the antiquities of his own town. Great use was made of his manuscripts in the preparation of the account of the Dearborn family in volume 2^d of the "Register." May he have many years of happiness in the calm and dignity of his retirement from public service. Similar acknowledgements are due to Dr. French's son-in-law, Joseph Dow, A. M. State Mss. vol. 67. Military Papers, i. p. 54.

² Col. Samuel Swett's mss.

the Deput^s have granted their request and desire the consent of o^r Gouvⁿer and magist^t thereunto.

William Torrey Cleric.

14, (8) 51. Consented to by the magist^t

Edw Rawson, Secret.¹

The following document, copied from the original, preserved in the archives of Massachusetts,³ is apparently in Captain Swett's elegant hand writing and was doubtless his production. It is well worthy of preservation for its general interest.

“To the much Honoured Generall Court Assembled in Boston May 31st 1671: The petition of the Commissioned and other officers of the Militia in the County of Norfolk.

Humbly Sheweth.

That the action which (as we are informed) passed in the honoured generall Court at y^e sessions in May, 1670 in choseing & appointeing Capt. Robbt Pike to be the Sergeant Major over the militia of Norfolk, & his exerciseing his authority over us as Major, hath put us & many others upon consideration of o^r condition in respect of o^r military affaires; whereupon viewing & examining the first section of the Law entitled military, wee finde momentous clauses which we humbly present to yo^r grave consideration, viz., That in y^e sayd law by the Authority of this Court, there was priviledg granted to the freemen of the severall counties therein named, to chuse out of them selves one to be their Serjeant major, who so chosen, is to be sworn as the s^d law directs, and that A Serjant major beeing once stated, the s^d freemen by law have not power of new choice, so long as hee lives, and holds y^e place; Nor yet the Maj^r gen^l or gen^l court (as We with Submission humbly propose) to send forth their warrants for such a choice to be made. ffarther in the s^d section we find that by order and authority of this court, the Militia of Norfolk (we suppose by reason of y^e paucity of y^e number, & of men of ability among them which we readily grant) was stated at y^e same time under the care and conduct of the Serg^t Maj^r of Essex, with a proviso, as it is there incerted, wch hath given & still would give good satisfaction to your petitioners, & the

¹ Military, vol. 67, p. 57.

County in generall, both soldiers, & others of w^t degree soever, assuredly beleaving y^t we could not so well have provided for o^rselves, had it then or should it now be left to the freemens choyce, as it was in other counties not more faithful to Authority than o^rselves. We can not conceive any advantage by a change, & here of none y^t ever spake of the necessity of having a Maj^r among o^rselves, except some one or two whose reasons we could never fathom or see ground for, in respect of the service itselfe. We readily grant this court hath authority over us, and their judicious pleasure we shall submitt to, & as we have been, so we are & shall be free at all times to submitt o^r persons & estates to the orders comeing from the higher powers: but heareing some have procured this court to put a Maj^r upon us when we had no thoughts, nor saw any need of it, we are bold (with the favour of the court) to appear in this manner to make o^r motion & leave it with yo^r honoured selves, and humbly to declare how wee have through o^r weakness (if we were mistaken in y^e law) been misslead in o^r apprehensions, we had almost sayd, by the contrivance of one o^r, (friends to themselves) beguiled. We shall not urge w^t Samuell sayd to Israell when they desired to be like other people, and how afterwards they cried out of that as great sinn. Though we are not as other counteys in that o^r maj^r lived not in this county, yet we esteemed o^rselves in as good condition as others, and were not ambitious of alteration, w^{ch} we conceived could not be made but from better to worse: we have justly conceived o^rselves in o^r former condition not to be without a liveing head, w^{ch} this court in y^r wisdom did set over us, & we upon good ground have gloried in; and now being unexpectedly stripped of that o^r martiall glory, we cannot but speak, move & request this honored court that our selves, & the militia of Norfolk may be stated as formerly, under the command and conduct of the Maj^r of Essex, of whom we desire leave of this court to say he is o^r major; But if it be the absolute determination of the court, that we must have a major liveing amonst us, we crave humbly the like priviledges w^{ch} other countyes have had, that there may issue out warrants according to direction in the law fore-cited for a free choice. If it be replied that a law of a later date hath otherwise ordered the choice, & put it into the hands of this court, we desire leave humbly to urge o^r motion thus far that the law made in May 1669, regulating the choyce of officers

hath respect to the choyce of such officers as were formerly chosen by a mixt multitude in private companies, & not of such as are chosen according to or patterns (if we mistake not) wholly by the vote & voice of freemen whos libertyes & prividges this court hath been, and is, sedulously carefull to p^rserve & mayntayn: we beg this court seariously to weigh the first clause of the law made May 69. w^{ch} sayth all commission officers y^t at present are in being, are confirmed according to their respective commissions, w^{ch} clause we conceive did confirm the maj^r of Essex, as Maj^r still to the county of Norfolk, he being A chief commission officer to us & confirmed by the law mentioned, the law not putting fformer officers out, but taking order for future choyce where need should bee, by death, removeall, or discharge of any fro^m their trust, none of w^{ch} (we p^rsume) are applicable pr or former Maj^r, Whose care over us and app^rhension of being confirmed to the law cited is evident in that in the year 69 he had concluded to exercise the regiment of Norfolk, had not the councell of y^e country determined there should be noe gen^rll trayneing that sommer: at other times he hath taken care of us w^{ch} we now forbear to particularize. It was upon the p^rmisses mentioned that we have not before moved to put in or votes for another Major, w^{ch} otherwise we might and should have done before that law was made, w^{ch} seems to debar us of that priviledg, w^{ch} did Equally belong to us with the County of Essex in chuseing of a distinct Maj^r after the death of their & or Maj^r. We would not in the least be understood to oppose the Authority of this court or the laws established, but shall allwaies endeavor to uphold the authority of the same: but or aime is that the life of or Maj^r may not prove the death & buriall of those rights & priviledges which were established on us, as on other freemen, w^{ch} we should have improved, had we been destitute of a Maj^r two years since. We crave leave to summ up all in a few words, w^{ch} is humbly to request of this court, that they would be pleased to allow us the conduct of or former Maj^r under whom we have enjoyed, as government, so quietnes, w^{ch} hath not been altogether so, since the rumor of a change; this is or first and grand request, desire and aime of or hearts, & p^rsent addresse or ells that you would vouchsafe us the like liberty in choice w^{ch} other counties have had, considering now, & in w^t manner we have been deprived without any forfeit of or owne we know of, neither yet doe we

understand how the motion for a new maj^r came to this court. If this honored Court of thei^r wonted clemency shall as an act of favor at least grant vs or request especially or chiefe request, to settle vs under the commands of our former [and withdraw the commission of the later] Major. It will & shall strongly oblige yo^r Petitioners if not the whole County (as in duety they are bound) ever to pray for yo^r prosperity & continewance to maintayn the rights, libertyes & priviledges of the people & freemen of this Jurisdiction.

Benjamin Swett:

1671

John Seuerans.

John Gillman

William More

Joseph Dow

John Steuens

William Osgood

Thomas Philbrick

William Maston

James Parker

John Hoyt sen^r

Jonathan Thinge

Peter Johnson

The deputyes Judge not meete to graunt this petition With
reference to the Consent of or Honor^d, magistr^d hereto.

7: 4: 1671.

William Torrey Cleric.

Mr. Swett acquired great celebrity for his skill and daring in hunting and fighting the Indians, by whom he eventually lost his life, while in command of the Massachusetts forces at the East. In 1675 and '76, in the Provincial Account Book, now preserved in the archives of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, Benjamin Swett is the chief name in the accounts with "Hampton-Town."

In 1675, during Philip's war, there was a fear of "a design of a general rising of the *Indians* against the *English* all over the country," and their frequent and bloody incursions filled the whole country with terror. It was at this time that Capt. Thomas Lake, the eminent merchant of Boston, was killed at his fort at Arowsick. Men of true courage and discretion were now proved and known, and Swett won for himself a high rank among the

heroes of our Colonial wars. Hubbard, after relating many tragedies of the dreadful year 1675, says, "Much about this time [September] one Goodman *Robinson* of *Exeter*, with his son, were travelling toward *Hampton*, when, as they were going along, they were way-laid by three *Indians*, viz. *John Sampson*, *Cromwel*, and *John Linde* who shot down the old man, whom they left dead upon the place; his son, hearing the guns, escaped their hands by running into a swamp whither the *Indians* pursued him, but could not overtake him, so as he got safe into *Hampton* about midnight, where he declared what befell him by the way, and how narrowly he avoided the danger; intimating likewise that he feared that his Father was killed, which was proved too true, by Lieut. *Swett*, who the next day with a dozen Soldiers of the Town went to search those Woods, where they found the poor old man, shot through at his back, the Bullet having pierced through at his Body and was stopped by the skin on the other side." ¹

The remainder of Mr. Swett's life was passed in active military service. He was always in that post which most required sagacity and courage. In 1677, "the savages seemed to have marked out the town of Wells, in Maine, for early and utter destruction. From their first entering it, April 6th, when they killed three, to the end of the month, they made attacks upon the people and their garrison several times. On the 13th, [or 29th,] John Weld and Benjamin Storer were killed by them. Two or three, approaching a man and boy who were fowling in the marshes, were first espied by the boy, when the man was half sitting and fixing his flint. Springing up as the boy spoke, he aimed his gun directly at them, crying out, *Ah, you rogues, I've been looking for you*; when they, being startled by his bold rebuff, turned and fled. The fort was commanded by Lieut. Swett, a brave and vigilant officer—always alert and active for the safety of the inhabitants. Seeing a strolling Indian, who was in fact a decoy, Swett despatched eleven of his men towards the place, to make discoveries. By venturing too far, they fell into an ambush, when two were shot dead and one mortally wounded. Hearing the report of the guns, Swett sent out auxiliaries, who

¹ Hubbard's "Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians," &c. London, 1677, 4to, p. 12-19.

killed five or six, and would have done thorough execution, had not an Irishman sung out, *here they be! here they be!* which so alarmed them, that they withdrew and sheltered themselves among the thick trees and bushes."¹

From this time the Indians continuing their sanguinary attacks, excited the alarm of the government for the safety of the distant and exposed settlements. The government having had good experience of the faithfulness and valor of the Christian Indians about Natick,² (some of whom had been on the eastern service in February, and had given counsel, which if followed, would doubtless have worsted the enemy at that time,)³ armed two hundred of them and ordered a recruit of forty English soldiers, and all such able bodied men to be enlisted or impressed, as could be found, who had come from the Province of Maine,⁴ to be under the command of Capt. Benjamin Swett of Hampton, and Lieut. Richardson, to march to the falls of Taconick⁵ on Kennebeck river, where, it was said, the Indians had six forts, well furnished with amunition.⁶ Hubbard⁷ says that the government "not judging aright of the number of the enemy, much underdid their business, for besides that the number they sent of English was a great deal too small, those that were chosen this bout, to take their turns in the service abroad, were, many of them, young, raw, and unexperienced soldiers, who were not able to look danger, much less death, in the face, in cool blood, by which means it came to pass that the enterprise succeeded so ill." The forces were embarked in vessels which came to an anchor off Black Point, in Scarboro, on the 28th of June, where Captain Swett, being informed that some Indians had been seen, went on shore with a party, confident in his strength, and began to try the valor and courage of his company before he had disciplined them, or had any experience of their ability to fight. They

¹ Hubbard's History of New England, p. 632, Harris' edition.

² Ibid, 634.

³ Gookin's History of the Christian Indians in American Antiquarian Society's trans. i. 516.

⁴ Williamson's Maine, i. 549.

⁵ Ibid, 550.

⁶ Belknap's N. H., 82, but Williamson i. 550, says they were designed especially for the defence of Black Point and Winter Harbor.

⁷ Harris' edition, 634.

were joined by some of the inhabitants, so as to make ninety in all. The next morning, June 29th, the enemy shewed themselves on a plain in three parties. A large decoy, supposed to be the main body of the Indians, feigned a retreat, and were pursued a distance of two miles from the fort, when the English found themselves in a most exposed situation, between a thicket and a swamp, upon the declivity of a hill, and instantly from an ambush on each side great numbers of Indians, rising with a war whoop, fired at once upon the two divisions, and turning so violently and suddenly upon them, threw the young and undisciplined soldiers into confusion. Swett with a few of the more resolute, fought bravely on the retreat, till he came near the fort, when he was killed ; sixty more were left dead or wounded, and the rest got into the fort.¹ Hubbard's account is that, "while some were ready to run and shift for themselves, the Captain strived so long to keep them together, to bring off the dead and wounded men, that he brought himself and company into danger of an utter overthrow, which soon after took place ; for the poor unskilful soldiers, being scattered, were shifting for themselves, while a few resolute men of courage bore the brunt of the service till they were in a manner all knocked down. Lieutenant Richardson was killed soon after the first onset ; the Captain, having received near twenty wounds, yet still held out, defending and encouraging his men, till he was surrounded with more of his enemies than he was able to grapple with, and so was at the last barbarously murdered by them within a little of the garrison house. There were slain at this time somewhat above forty of the English, and twelve of the friendly Indians that assisted, very few escaping, but were either killed right out or dangerously wounded."

Williamson's description of the fight is that "though the ranks were broken, the engagement was sharp and protracted, Richardson was presently slain and many on both sides soon shared the same fate. Swett fought the enemy hand to hand ; displaying upon the spot and in a retreat of two miles, great presence of mind as well as personal courage, in repeated rallies of his men,

¹ Manuscript letter of Rev. Nathaniel Gookin, of Hampton, whose grandson Judge Daniel Gookin, of North Hampton, married Abigail Dearborn, a lineal descendant from Capt. Swett. Farmer's Belknap, 82.

in his exertions to bring off the dead and wounded, and in defence of his rear, upon which the savages hung with destructive fury. At last, wounded in twenty places, and exhausted by loss of blood and by fatigue, he was grappled, thrown to the ground, and barbarously cut in pieces at the gates of the garrison. With this intrepid officer, fell sixty of his men, forty English and twenty Indians, being two thirds of the whole number in the engagement. Seldom is the merit of a military officer more genuine, seldom is the death of one more deeply lamented." At Kirkwood's neck, Black Point, on the plains where he fell with his sixty men, the remains of the extensive fortifications, erected in 1682 by Capt. Joshua Scottow and the town of Scarborough, are still distinctly visible; and on the neck is the cellar of the old garrison from which Swett rallied out for the fatal engagement.¹

It is evident from these cotemporary accounts that the fatal result of this expedition is to be attributed chiefly to the error of the Government in supplying raw, undisciplined soldiers for a service, peculiarly hazardous, and often attended with imminent peril. The heroic commander and his 'forlorn hope,' became a sacrifice to the weakness, negligence, or still more blameable conduct of the authorities.

The probate records at Ipswich show that his widow Hester administered on his estate in the fall of the same year, which was valued by Rev. Seaborn Cotton, Samuel Dalton, Antony Stanyan and Steven Greenleaf at £558 19 shillings and his debts £2 and six shillings.²—Mrs. Swett was married by Commissioner Dalton to Ensign Steven Greenleaf of Newbury on the 31st of March 1678. Capt Swett's companion and brother, Nathaniel Weare, out lived him many years. He was in 1683 appointed by the people of New Hampshire their agent to present their grievances under Cranfield, to the King, and he was again appointed the province agent in 1685 to present a fresh petition to the King. In 1692 he was appointed a counsellor of the Province. His son Peter was appointed to the same office in 1698 and was the grand father of the Hon. Meshec Weare, the

¹ Manuscript letter of Rev. Henry G. Storer, of Scarborough.

² Col. Samuel Swett's notes.

first President of New Hampshire under the constitution of 1783.¹

Capt Swett's children were Hester born 7 June 1648, m^d Abin Greene 1668, Sarah 7 November 1650, m. Morris Hobbs 1678, Mary 7 January 1652, Mary 2 May 1654, Benjamin 5 August 1656, Joseph 21 January 1659, Moses 16 September 1661, all born in Newbury, and Hannah 1664, 16, 3, Elizabeth 1667, 2, 5, John 1670, 17. 3, Stephen 1672-3, 7, and perhaps one other, all born at Hampton.² The family probably removed to Newbury, upon their mother's marriage to Mr Greenleaf of that place. To trace the history of each will be the privilege of their various descendants. There is evidence that several of them were married and the sons Benjamin, John, Joseph, and Moses became respectable citizens of Hampton, the first two being seventeen and nineteen years of years of age at their father's decease, a time of life, when they may be supposed to have formed the local attachments, and interests which fixed them permanently in that settlement.

John, married Bethiah, daughter of Thomas Page, October 3, 1696, and had children Huldah, who married Samuel Winslow, July 16, 1699; Sarah, Dec. 23, 1700; John, Dec. 4, 1702, Elisha, Sept. 30, 1705, Benjamin, Oct. 17, 1707, Joseph of Marblehead, and perhaps others. He bought a farm of his brother-in-law John Page, who removed to Cape May. His will made June 16, 1748, was proved Sept. 26, 1753. He died at Kingston, N. H., in 1753, aged 82, leaving a widow Sarah.

Moses Swett, and his wife Mary, had children Mary born 2^d Feb. 1689, Esther born 10 June 1690 mar'd John Eaton Nov. 18, 1718; in 1722 he drew a half share in the fifth division in right of Richard Swain. His will, made 15 of April, 1719, when he was "sick of body, sound of mind," proved 19 January 1731, names wife Mary, eldest daughter Elizabeth (wife of Nathaniel Hall) deceased daughters Mary Swain, Esther Hoeg, son Daniel,

¹ Farmer's Belknap's History of N. H., 103, 14, 24, 9, 54, 5, 217, 495, 408, 486, 475, 472, 471, 459, 417, 411, 364. "At a meeting of y^e freeholders of y^e Town of Hampton, y^e 24th of September, 1685, *Mr. Nathaniel Weare*, Lieut. John Sanborne and *Nathaniel Bachelder*, sen. were then chosen by y^e freeholders abous^d to serve in the next Generall assembly, by y^e major vote of y^e freeholders.

² Coffin's Newbury and Hampton Records.

daur. Deliverance Coleman, Theodat Purington, son Stephen and daughters Phebe Purington, Huldah Coleman, and Patience. The estate of Mary Swett of Hampton Falls, deceased, was appraised in 1764 by Meshech Weare and Jonⁿ. Burnham at £ 1777, old tenor; "a note of hand for 1137 £ old tenor, on interest "at 15 per cent," is named in the inventory.¹

JOSEPH, ² under the guidance of the Rev. Mr. Barnard of Marblehead, by whom he was styled "a young man of strict justice, great industry, enterprising genius, quick apprehension and firm resolution, but of small fortune," became the founder of the temporary commercial prosperity of Marblehead, which town subsequently paid one of the highest in taxes the Colony, and was one of the principal ports on our New England coast. He had sons Joseph and Stephen, and daughters, Ruth who married Robert Hooper, known as "King Hooper," Mary who married Doctor Joseph Lemmon of Marblehead, and was the mother of Mary, who married Col. Wm. R. Lee, of the Revolutionary army, the father of Wm. R. Lee, Samuel now W^m. R. Lee who married Hannah daughter of Nath^l. Tracy of Newburyport, a son of Patrick Tracy, (a principal merchant of Newburyport, who married Hannah, daughter of the Rev. Nathl. Gookin of Hampton, N. H.) Elizabeth, Joseph Lemmon, and Hannah Swett, who married Hon. Henry A. S. Dearborn, of Roxbury.

Ruth, another daughter of Dr. Lemmon, married John Prentiss, of Londonderry, N. H. and Elizabeth, married Thomas Lewis, of Marblehead. Martha Swett, sister of Mrs. Lemmon, married Jeremiah Lee, an eminent citizen, of Marblehead,³ and was the mother of Mary, wife of Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport, Martha who married Pike, and of Joseph and Abigail. Samuel Swett, son

¹ Rockingham Prob. Rec. No. 3, p. 115.

² The account of the family of Joseph is given chiefly on the authority of manuscripts of Col. Samuel Swett, of Boston.

³ Gen. Henry A. S. Dearborn, left among his voluminous manuscripts, now in possession of Mrs. Dearborn, a memoir, in two octavo volumes, of Col. Wm. R. Lee, which contains a comprehensive sketch of the life of Jeremiah Lee. This work should be published. He built the venerable mansion at Marblehead, which yet remains a noble specimen of the luxury of our Provincial Magnates. His grand-children at Newburyport have full length portraits of himself and wife, painted by Mr. Copley and pronounced by him to be two of his best paintings.

of Joseph, and brother of Mrs. Lemmon and Mrs. Lee, was the partner of his brother-in-law Robert Hooper, married Anna Woodbury, niece of Rev. John Barnard, and had children, *Dr. John Barnard Swett*, (adopted son and heir of Rev. Mr. Barnard) *Joseph*, who married Curtis and left no children, *Ann*, who married Knight and left children, *Samuel*, who married Salter and left children, *Martha*, now living, (November, 1851) in her 92d year, *Stephen*, who married Prince, (and had children *Samuel Woodbury*, president of the National Insurance office, and *Anna Woodbury*, unmarried,) *Sarah*, who married Prince and left children, *Ruth*, who married Doctor Drury and left no children, *Hannah*, who married Henry Jackson, (and had children *Dr. John B. Jackson*, Mary Wendell, wife of Samuel Woodbury Swett, and Henry, who married Lavina Whitney and left a son) *Benjamin*, who married Sarah Webb, of Salem, (and left children W^m B., and Anna W.) ~~and Samuel who left children.~~

Dr. John Barnard Swett, of whom Dr. Thatcher has given a valuable memoir in his Medical Biography, married Charlotte, daughter of Col. William Bourne, of Marblehead, and had children, Samuel, William Bourne, and Tasker Hazard, the last two of whom constituted the late well known firm of William B. Swett & Co. Samuel, a counsellor at law, married Lucia, daughter of Hon. William Gray, the eminent merchant. He served as topographical engineer in the U. S. army, during the campaign of 1814, is the author of several publications, and was a silent partner of William B. Swett & Co. Tasker Hazard, married Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph Coolidge and Elizabeth Bulfinch.

*Wm. B. who
m. Adelia
Coffin & has
children*

The following extract from Gen. Sullivan's order book is dated 27th September, 1778. "The Commander in chief takes this opportunity to return his most sincere and cordial thanks to doctors Simson, Hagar, Wilson, Parsons, Jackson and *Swett*, surgeons, and to Doctor Arnold, Director General of the hospital; for the unwearied care and attention which they paid to the wounded of this army. Had not the General's own observations furnished him with the most striking evidence, the thankful acknowledgements of the wounded officers and soldiers, with the grateful voice of an approving army must have convinced him how much America stands indebted to their skill, humanity and unwearied application which under Divine Providence has saved to this army so many

brave officers, whose dangerous wounds, but for their unparralled exertions must have proved fatal. The General assures these gentlemen that to whatever department they may be called, a grateful remembrance of their services must rest on the minds of the officers and soldiers that compose this army, and that he, as commander of it will ever take pleasure in acknowledging the obligations due to their merit."

JOSEPH SWETT, Esq., of Hampton, the most noted and influential of Capt. Benjamin Swett's sons, lived near to and for many years enjoyed the friendship of his uncle Nathaniel Weare, "in the part of ancient Hampton, which is now Hampton Falls, on the road from Newburyport to Portsmouth."¹ "He was a very smart active man, and took a warm interest in organizing the parish of Hampton Falls."² When in 1683, under Cranfield, the public grievances became insupportable, and the people were driven to making a vigorous stand for their liberties, by an address "to the King's most Excellent Majesty," presented by Mr. Weare, their ambassador, to the King, we find the signature of Mr. Swett to the address, though a very young man. The petition bore among others the names of John Gilman, Edward Smith, Nathaniel Bachiler, Joseph Smith, Thomas and Henry Dearborn, Peter Weare, Moses Swett, Morris Hobbs, John Shipway, Richard Waldron, John Cutt, William Vaughan, George Jaffrey, John and Anthony Nutter, John Winget, John Gerrish, the Wentworth's and John Tucke.³ "Lieut." Swett was one of the selectmen of Hampton in 1693, 8, 1712, 3, and 1717, when he was called "Captain" Swett. He was a representative to the Provincial Assembly in 1693, 8, 1708, and perhaps at other times. By his first wife Hannah, the Hampton records show the birth of Hannah, born 13th September, 1682, Margaret, born 21st July, 1690, and Abigail, born 29th May, 1693. By his second wife, Sarah —, Lydia, born 22d March, 1763-4, Hannah, born 23d May, 1708, BENJAMIN, born 2d May, 1710, Nathan,⁴ born November 17, 1712, Moses, born

¹ Rev. Dr. French's letter.

² Col. Swett's manuscripts.

³ Farmer's Belknap's, N. H. 103, 473.

⁴ Nathan Swett, of Kingston, N. H. administered on the estate of Thomas Dearborn, late of Biddeford, deceased, Jan. 1, 1749. £1025.10. Capt. Daniel Smith of Biddeford was an appraiser of the estate. *York Prob. Rec.* vol. 8.

12th December, 1716, and perhaps others. His will, made 27th September, 1720, was proved February 4, 1722. BENJAMIN SWETT, born in 1710, named for his grandfather, the warrior of Black Point, resided on the paternal estate. At the age of twenty-two years, July 20, 1732, he married ELIZABETH, widow of Jenness, daughter of BONUS NORTON, of Ipswich and Hampton (nephew of Rev. John Norton of Boston, son of William Norton of Ipswich, merchant, and brother of Rev. John Norton of Hingham) and had children, *Elizabeth*, (the first wife of deacon David Bachiler, of Hampton Falls,) *Moses*, of Hampton Falls, (married Rogers and died about 1764, his son Thomas Rogers Swett, settled at Pittsfield, N. H.) and SARAH, who married first¹ Dr. LEVI DEARBORN, of Northampton, and after his death, Hon. PHILLIPS WHITE, of South Hampton. The two magnificent elm trees, now standing at Hampton Falls, were set out by Mrs. Swett, in front of the house they then occupied, and her daughter SARAH, a little girl, held up the trees while her mother placed the earth about the roots. They have, for very many years, and do still excite admiration by their enormous trunks and gigantic wide spreading arms. In May, 1843, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan French and Mr. Abbott, measured one of them, at about seven feet from the ground, and found it to be fourteen feet in circumference. Higher up where it branched it was several feet larger.²

Dr. DEARBORN, had brothers Benjamin, a physician of Portsmouth, a graduate of Harvard college, in 1746, who married Ruth, daughter of Dr. Benjamin Rogers, of Portsmouth, and Simeon Dearborn of Greenland, who married Anna Gookin, and a second wife, Martha, sister of Rev. Dr. Haven of Portsmouth. His cousin, Henry Dearborn was the revolutionary patriot, and father of the late Hon. H. A. S. Dearborn, who married Hannah Swett Lee, a descendant of Joseph Swett of Marblehead fame. Dr. Dearborn was born at Hampton, New Hampshire, March 7th,

¹ "Hampton Falls, Aug. 9, 1843. The following marriage is recorded in the church Records of the Congregational Society, Hampton Falls, "1732, July 20 married. Benjamin Swett and Elizabeth Jenness" certified by me.

JACOB CALDWELL, Pastor of said Society."

² Rev. Dr. French's letter.

1729–30, and traced his descent from Godfrey Dearborn,¹ John Marrion, Rev. Steven Bachiler, Robert Smith, of Hampton, Edward Colcord,² Edward Gove and others of the early planters of

¹ *Joseph Dearborn*, eldest son of John and Hannah, was born April 9, 1699, baptized May 21, 1699. Joseph had a brother John, who was afterwards deacon of the church in North Hampton, and father of General Dearborn, who was in infancy called Dudley, his name being afterward altered to Henry. Joseph had another brother, Jonathan, as is learned from a very aged grand daughter, now living in North Hampton and other aged people. Jonathan is said to have settled at Stratham, and that the removing of his family from Hampton, the distance of about seven miles, as the roads now are, occupied four days by a circuitous rout through Kensington and Exeter, by the guidance of marked trees.

Some traditional anecdotes of the mirthful propensities of Jonathan, when a young man, are still preserved. He once indulged this inclination so much too far, as to fire an alarm gun, when there was no occasion. The false alarm of Indians, spread even as far as Salem, Mass. and was the means of breaking up a court, which was then holding a session in that town. For this offence he was tried and condemned "to run the gauntlet" through a file of men and to receive their lashes on his naked back. The tradition is that when stripped, and all were ready to inflict the punishment, he looked so youthful and fair that the women present moved with pity mediated and begged him off, and that his pardon was obtained.

At what time Joseph Dearborn's family commenced their residence in the part of ancient Hampton, now North Hampton, cannot be ascertained. He lived in the northerly part of that town, about a mile N. W. of the residence of the late Judge Gookin, and on the road leading to Winnicut mills, which are in Stratham. He was usually called "Governor Dearborn." How he received this appellation is not at present known. He was a man of wealth and built or assisted his three sons in building a large house for each. One of them, a large gambrel-roofed edifice is yet standing on the hill in North Hampton, an eighth of a mile, perhaps, east of the Winnicut mills. Tradition says that "Governor Dearborn" once lived several rods west of this house, by the well, which now [May 16, 1843] remains. Another house, built for Dr. Levi Dearborn, is yet standing. It was occupied by Judge Gookin before he built the house in which he last resided in North Hampton, on the hill south of the brook. It was altered by Col. Lovering into a three story house, now owned by his heirs and by Dr. Morris L. Hobbs."—*Mss. letter of Rev. Dr. Jonathan French to J. W. T.*

² EDWARD GOVE lived in that part of Hampton which is now Seabrook. He was a member of the assembly dismissed by Gov. Cranfield. Exasperated at the arbitrary measures of the Governor, he endeavored to effect a revolution, was arraigned and condemned to death for high treason. After having been sent to England and imprisoned in the Tower three years, he was released and returned home, and his confiscated estates returned to him.—*Farmer's Belknap's Hist. of N. H.* 91, 98, 123, 477, 482, 465, 193.

New Hampshire. He studied medicine with Dr. Hall Jackson, a distinguished practitioner at Portsmouth. At the age of twenty-one years, having completed his preparatory studies, he was married to Sarah Swett, March 28th, 1751, and at once commenced at North Hampton, the practice of his profession, in which he became eminent, receiving from it a handsome income, but ever viewing his services as honorary, than for a reward, much to the credit and honorable rank of his vocation, and winning for himself a high reputation for christian benevolence. He was active in the revolutionary struggle, and was among the fast friends of liberty, and cheerfully contributed of his substance for its advancement. He died March 28, 1792, in his 63d year.¹ Mrs.

¹ Gen. Reg. ii. 298. The following sketch of the character of Doctor Dearborn, is taken from a familiar letter, addressed by a member of his family, Mrs. S. G. S. of Scarboro', Maine, to the writer some years since. "As I am no biographer, I shall not attempt to put matters in a regular shape, but mention his characteristics just as they occur to my memory, for truly I know not where to begin. The leading traits of his character were wit, amiability and generosity. His wit was unbounded, and flowed from him as naturally as his breath. Consequently he was the delight of the social circle, especially as his humor was governed by his amiability and kindness of heart, so that the feelings of his companions were never wounded by sarcasm or ridicule. The Rev. Mr. Thompson, of Berwick, and another gentleman fell in company with Dr. Dearborn, while on a journey. All three were on horseback. Soon after joining company, the doctor's wit began to flow, and Mr. Thompson, in relating the story, remarked, that for miles together he kept them in such a roar of laughter, that it was almost impossible to retain their seats in the saddle ! This was the only time Mr. Thompson ever met with the Dr. but the interview was never forgotten.

His generosity, like his wit, was without bounds. He not only gave to every one that asked of him, but he never passed by an apparently poor and distressed fellow creature, without bestowing alms. When admonished by some more prudent persons, that by such indiscriminate charity, he encouraged the vicious, he was won't to reply, "Should I give to ninety nine and refuse the hundredth, perhaps I should refuse the most necessitous and deserving of them all. If I give to every one, I shall be sure to hit the right."

His practice, was very extensive and among the poor, nearly, and oftentimes, quite gratuitous, and he experienced the truth of the scripture, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," for notwithstanding his uncommon liberality, he left a large estate at his decease. As a physician he was eminent and his skill was so well known and so highly estimated, that he often had calls from sixty or seventy miles distance, and it must be borne in mind, that in those days there were no roads to accommodate any kind of wheel carriages,

Dearborn, was distinguished for her great personal beauty, to which was added good sense and practical piety. She was married a second time to the Hon. Phillips White, of South Hampton, who was speaker of the House of Representatives of New Hampshire in 1776, one of the Committee of Safety, a delegate to Congress, Judge of Probate of Rockingham county, &c. Mrs. White, died August 2, 1808, and the Judge, three years after, August 11th, 1811.

Several of the children died young. *Sarah* Dearborn, born August 30th, 1755, married December 19, 1778, the Hon. Gen. Michael McClary,¹ of Epsom, Marshall of the U. S. District of New Hampshire. He was, when only twenty-two years old, an ensign in Captain Moore's company, in Col. Stark's regiment at the battle of Breed's hill or Bunker's hill, June 17th, 1775, from whose cool and determined bravery, on that day such astonishing havoc was made in the ranks of the British regulars. On that day, his uncle, the brave major ANDREW M'CLARY, fell, while attempting to rally his troops for a new attack. He was in the battle from beginning to end.

Levi Dearborn, born June 30, 1757, married September 11,

so that these journeys were always performed on horseback. Sometimes the person who came for the doctor from a great distance, would receive relays of horses, so that the physician might reach the patient in the shortest possible time.

In his habits he was very methodical. In the winter season he always rose at *four o'clock*, and devoted the hours till breakfast time to study. In the summer he rose one hour earlier, at *three*, and spent the time in going over his large and excellent farm, seeing that every thing was done as it should be. He used to say, that could he secure four hours sleep in the twenty four it was all he required.

He was a true patriot, and entered with all his heart into the revolutionary struggles. Here his liberality had a fine opportunity for exercise. The companies of soldiers who used to pass his house, were fed at his table or under the shade of his trees, and his own wants or those of his family were not thought of till theirs were supplied. In his person, Dr. Dearborn was of medium stature, finely made, with soft brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. In his manners, gentlemanly and urbane." He never made any public profession of religion, other than that of a consistent Christian life.

¹ Frothingham's "Siege of Boston," 186, 187, Swett's history of Bunker Hill battle, p. 8, 30, 4, 5, 48, and Farmer's and Moore's Historical Collections, iii. p. 40 of the appendix.

1781, Nancy, daughter of John Haven, Esq. of Exeter, brother of Rev. Dr. Haven, of Portsmouth.

Elizabeth, born September 11, 1760; married, May 30, 1789, James H. McClary, of the Epsom family.

Benjamin, born May 21, 1770; married Sarah Pickering, of Greenland, October 1, 1790.

Abigail, born March 10th, 1766; was married to the Hon. Judge Gookin, of Northampton, November 4th, 1787, by the Rev. Benjamin Thurston.¹ After Mrs. Dearborn's marriage to Judge White, and her consequent removal to South Hampton, Judge Gookin came into possession of the Dearborn estate, and there resided for several years, until his removal to the Wingate mansion, not far distant. Here the venerable John Wingate,² bowed down with age, esteemed and honored wherever known, closed his pilgrimage, on the 4th of September, 1812, in his 88th year, having survived his sister Mrs. Gookin but three years. There is a good notice of him in "Alden's Epitaphs," number 572, and a beautiful tribute to his memory, from the pen of his grand niece "Eliza," is in the "South Literary Messenger," for April, 1841. When past seventy years of age, Judge Gookin and his wife removed to Saco, where he died, in the family of his son-in-law, Seth Storer, Esq., counsellor at law, September 4th, 1831, in his 76th year. Mrs. Gookin, also died at her son Storer's residence, in Scarborough, January 9th, 1836. They both died of those unnamed diseases incident to old age, and are buried in the lot "Allon Bachuth," the family burial place of their son-in-law, James B. Thornton, Esq., in the cemetery on the eastern bank of the Saco.

Judge Gookin, son of the Rev. Nathaniel Gookin, A. M., of North Hampton, was a captain of the revolutionary army, and served during the whole war, councillor of New Hampshire, many years a judge of the court of Common Pleas, and afterward, of

¹ It was during Mr. Thurston's ministry that the records of the North Hampton church were with unpardonable carelessness scattered and destroyed, only a remnant remaining.

² Judge Gookin's only son, John Wingate Gookin, Esq., was a captain in the U. S. army in the last war with Great Britain, and in active service on the Western frontier. He is now resident in North Yarmouth, in Cumberland, for which county he is a magistrate.

Probate, in Rockingham county, vice prèident of the Rockingham agricultural society, and one of the original members of the American Cincinnati, as of the New Hampshire branch. He was a man of dignity, honor, and usefulness.

More than eight years since the writer of this memoir, received the larger portion of the facts it contains, from the Rev. JONATHAN FRENCH, D. D., of North Hampton, and the hallowed and happy associations with which it has been compiled, are, in part, developed by the following passage, from one of the epistles of this almost apostolic pastor and friend of four generations of the family. He says "although I have not been able to answer all your inquiries, it will be some satisfaction to you to know that the failure has not been owing to neglect. Since I wrote to you a week or more ago, I have devoted almost my whole time to this subject, and I shall not feel that it has been time misemployed, if the result shall afford some gratification to the son of a much loved lamb of my flock, and the grandson of my kind, constant and much esteemed friends, her parents."