

HISTORY
OF THE
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH,
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY,
NEW HAMPSHIRE,
WITH THE
REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
IN 1839; AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE RECORDS OF THE
ORIGINAL PROPRIETORS; AND A GENEALOGICAL
AND HISTORICAL REGISTER.

By ALBERT SMITH, M. D., LL. D.

"Memor esto majorum."

C.
BOSTON:
PRESS OF GEORGE H. ELLIS,
NO. 7 TREMONT PLACE.
1876.

- 32 *Fonathan*, } m. Rebecca Rockwood ;
he d. April 11, 1832, æ.
50 yrs. ; r. Greenfield.
33 *David*, } b. March 11, 1782 ;
d. May 6, 1782, æ. 56
dys.
- 34 †*Robert*, b. May 8, 1784 ; m. Betsey Spring.
35 *Smith*, b. Aug. 16, 1786 ; d. Dec. 20, 1786, æ. 4 mos.
36 *Betsey*, b. Nov. 8, 1787 ; m. William Graham, May 13,
1806. She d. Oct. 30, 1843, æ. 56 yrs.
37 *Ezekiel*, b. Nov. 16, 1792 ; d. Sept. 11, 1823, at Green-
ville, Miss., æ. 30 yrs., 10 mos.

2- 17 SAMUEL MORISON. He occupied a place in the south part of the town, begun by Gustavus Swan, and afterwards owned by Matthew Wallace, and next came into the hands of Samuel Morison. He lived here till his death. He m. Elizabeth Smith, dau. of William Smith, Esq. ; all their ch. but the son, who d. at 7 yrs. of age, were born *deaf-mutes*. He d. Nov. 24, 1837, æ. 79 yrs. She d. May 21, 1833, æ. 75 yrs. The daughters were educated at the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, at Hartford, Conn.

- 38 *Elizabeth*, b. 1789 ; d. Sept. 22, 1791, æ. 2 yrs.
39 *Mary*, b. June 28, 1791 ; d. Nov. 15, 1854, æ. 63 yrs.
40 *Hannah*, b. 1793 ; d. March 16, 1809, æ. 16 yrs.
41 *Samuel*, b. March 10, 1795 ; d. Oct. 26, 1802, æ. 7 yrs.,
7 mos.
42 *Sarah*, b. Oct. 26, 1799 ; d. Sept. 15, 1868, æ. 69 yrs.
43 *Elisa*, b. July 1, 1801 ; d. March 13, 1875, æ. 73 yrs., 8
mos.

12- 31 NATHANIEL MORISON. He succeeded his father on the homestead ; m. Mary Ann Hopkins, of Londonderry, Sept. 13, 1804. He d. at Natchez, Miss., Sept. 11, 1819, æ. 39 yrs., 11 mos. She d. at Medina, Mich., Aug. 27, 1848, æ. 69 yrs.

For the following interesting account of the family of Mr. Morison, I am indebted to Rev. John H. Morison, D.D., one of the sons :—

“Of my ancestors on my father’s side beyond John Morison, my grandfather’s grandfather, I know nothing. He lived to be ninety-eight years old. For many years he was looked up to with great respect by the younger members of the family. From what I could learn, I have inferred that he was a man of sound judgment, of a mild disposition, and a natural dignity of character,—a man to command the confidence of others. The

account which I gave of him in the centennial was taken from the recollections of his two grandchildren, Jeremiah Smith and Sally Morison, both of whom had very distinct and pleasant recollections of him as, more than any one else, the patriarch of the town.

“His son, Capt. Thomas Morison, was a more enterprising and ambitious man, with greater activity of mind and greater force of character. These more efficient traits were ascribed to his mother, Margaret Wallace, who wished her house, if it must be a log-house, to be a log higher than any other in the place. During the active period of his life he was, I suppose, one of the five or six leading men in Peterborough.

“His sons were none of them remarkable men. Three of his daughters, Polly, Sally, and Mrs. Wallace, were uncommonly intelligent. My grandfather, Robert Morison, was a man of good sense, but of moderate ability. He was a very devout man. I have seen many of his letters to my father that were marked by a degree of practical good judgment which I fear he did not know how to apply to his own affairs; for he was always in debt, and always appealing to my father for pecuniary assistance.

“My father, Nathaniel Morison, was the only one of his children who had more than ordinary ability. Ezeziel, his youngest son, was a man of correct and industrious habits. He died young in Mississippi. Nathaniel was born Oct. 11, 1779. In 1802, he went with an invoice of chairs to some place in the West Indies; but finding no market for them there, he took them to Wilmington, N. C. After disposing of them, he went to Fayetteville, in the same State, and entered into the business of making carriages. In 1804, he came to New England, and married Mary Ann Hopkins, who was born in that part of Londonderry which is now Windham, and returned to his business in Fayetteville, with his wife, where he remained till 1807. Then, at the urgent solicitation of his father, he came back to Peterborough, and settled down with his wife and daughter, having bought his father's farm. He brought with him five thousand dollars in specie, and there were still considerable sums of money due to him at the South. In five years he had laid up between six and seven thousand dollars. He was not fitted to be a farmer. The success of a more extended enterprise, and the habits formed in a different sphere, made him restless under its slow and limited operations. In 1811, I believe, he returned to Fayetteville, to settle up his affairs there, and when he returned he brought with him John H.

Steele, a young man whom he had found there, and considered a very ingenious and capable mechanic, and who afterwards filled so important a place in Peterborough. Three or four years more passed by, when he purchased for \$10,000 what was then called the South Factory, and devoted all his energies to that and kindred enterprises. He put up a building for the manufacture of fine linen, particularly table-cloths. The women in Peterborough and the neighboring towns were famous for their labors at the distaff. The object of this new undertaking was to weave, by improved processes, the linen yarn that was spun in the vicinity. The looms were worked by hand, but with what was called a spring shuttle, then a new invention. In connection with these factories, my father, now a militia captain, opened a small store, and he had upon his hands all that he could attend to.

“But he had chosen an unfortunate time for these investments. The war with England was soon over. The country was flooded with foreign goods. There was no sale for our domestic products. The factories were closed. His little competence melted away. He was embarrassed with debts. His farm and factory property were heavily mortgaged. For all industrial enterprises, the term from 1815 to 1820 was a period of greater depression than any other period of five years during the present century. After struggling in vain with adverse events, and with embarrassments which were constantly increasing, he went to Mississippi, in the fall of 1817, to collect a considerable debt that was due him there. He carried out with him a few cases of axes and shoes, which he disposed of at a good profit. He collected his debt so as to reach home in the spring of 1818.

“While he was in Natchez, he became acquainted with several gentlemen of large fortunes, and made a contract with them to supply the city with water by means of lead pipes, for \$30,000. On reaching home, he engaged a competent man in New Hampshire to lay the pipes, and in the autumn of 1818, he went out with a larger supply of axes, ploughs, and shoes. . But the boat which carried a part of his merchandise struck a snag and sunk in the Mississippi. And when he reached Natchez, and had made all his arrangements and got his men and materials there to supply the city with water, the Southern gentlemen repudiated the contract which he supposed they had made, and the whole enterprise, with consequences ruinous to all his hopes, was thrown back upon him. He had recourse again to his old occupation, and endeavored to gain a little money by working as a wheelwright

and carriage-maker. But disappointment, anxiety, and the hot, malarious, summer climate there were too much for him. He was taken down by the yellow fever, and after a few days of severe suffering, in which he was carefully attended by his brother Ezekiel, and his townsman, John Scott, Jr., he died on the 11th day of September, 1819, just before he had completed his fortieth year. Rumors of his death had already reached us, when, on a cold, cloudy, November Saturday afternoon, I, then a boy of eleven, walked to the village to see if any letter had come by the mail. On entering your father's store just before dark, I heard the people talking of the report, and, as they did not know me, they kept on with their conversation till I had received the letter. I had a sad journey home in the dark night, and the burst of grief with which the first line of the letter was greeted was more than I could bear. The next morning, my grandfather called us all together to prayers, as the custom was of a Sunday morning, and I shall never forget the solemnity and pathos with which the old man, with trembling hands and a voice broken with emotion, read the third chapter of Lamentations. 'I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.'

"A month or two before, when news of the falling through of the Natchez enterprise had reached this part of the country, the sheriff had come to our house and taken possession of everything that the law allowed him to take. The sharpest pang that I felt at that time was in witnessing my mother's anguish, and, next to that, was when I saw the officers of the law drive away a pair of young steers that I had watched over and tended and fondled ever since they were born. I did not see them again for three years, and it was very painful to me then to find that I could not get from them any sign of affection or recognition. They had entirely forgotten me. After my father's death, we remained in the old homestead through the winter, till March or April, 1820. My mother had for her portion a shell of a house near the South Factory, and eight hundred dollars. It required half the money to convert the old 'weaving-shop' into a tolerable residence. I remember well the earnest gaze and the deep sigh with which, on leaving our early home, where all her children but one had been born, she looked back upon it, with a baby on each arm, and then turned slowly away towards her new home. She had been left alone in the fall of 1818 with seven children, the oldest thirteen years, and

the two youngest four months, old. All her means of support consisted in a half-finished house, two cows, and four or five hundred dollars. She had a most delicate, sensitive nature, but a force of will and an amount of executive energy such as I have never seen surpassed. In my remembrance of her, as she was during the early period of her widowhood, I always think of her sitting at her loom, working and weeping. She did not stop to indulge in discouraging apprehensions, but emphasized her grief by driving her shuttle with increased promptness and vehemence. With a resolution that almost broke her heart, she put her two oldest boys, one eleven and the other nine years old, into farmers' families to work for their living. Lessons of honest industry and helpfulness and self-dependence were thus learned. If there was a great deal of suffering on their part and on hers, caused by severe labor and a divided household, habits were formed which contributed largely to whatever measure of usefulness or success they may have attained. The heaviest burden rested upon our oldest sister, whose ability and willingness to help all the rest shut her out from the advantages of education which the others enjoyed.

"My father was endowed with abilities ill-adapted to his calling, and very much beyond what was required by the sphere in which he lived. He read the best books with a keen delight. The few letters of his which I have seen showed marks of a mental strength and culture superior to what we usually find in the correspondence even of the city merchants who lived at that time. Your uncle John, who was his teacher one winter, spoke of his brother Jeremiah of his mind and his ingenuous, truthful qualities with a sort of enthusiastic admiration. If he could have had the educational advantages which his sons enjoyed, I have no doubt that he would have been one of the most distinguished among all the natives of Peterborough. As it was, his lot was a very hard one, and his life very sad. He was a man of delicate sensibilities and generous impulses. He was fitted for intellectual pursuits, and would have made an admirable lawyer. But he had no special aptness for mechanical employments, or for trade. His thoughts moved in a different sphere. I have heard his social and conversational qualities very highly spoken of. But he had no special aptitude or taste for the sort of life that was put upon him. After the success of his early days, which certainly indicated no common ability even in uncongenial pursuits, he failed in almost everything that he undertook. His plan for introducing improved methods

of manufacturing linen cloth showed originality of mind and no lack of judgment. Nor could any one, situated as he was, be likely to anticipate the disastrous effects of peace on our domestic industries. And no honorable man would suspect the arbitrary repudiation of a contract like that which he had made in Natchez. But the disappointment was not, on that account, any the less severe to him. He became disheartened and unhappy. He was never, I think, according to the ideas then prevailing, an intemperate man, but amid his disappointments and trials he probably fell in too much with the habits of those around him. Indeed, when I look at his ledger, and see what quantities of rum and toddy almost everybody drank in those days, I wonder how it was that any one could have been saved from being a drunkard. My mother was so impressed with a sense of the evils and perils in this direction, and warned her children against them with such intensity of feeling, that I have no doubt she had seen in her home influences and dangers which we were not old enough to understand. In common with almost every woman around her, she used snuff, but, from her own experience and what she saw in others of the misery of such a bondage, she had a violent antipathy to it, and brought up her children with such a feeling against it, that not one of her five sons has ever, I believe, used an ounce of tobacco.

“My mother’s father, John Hopkins, was a farmer. He was a man of an easy, happy temperament, who, it was said, would sit at work on his shoe-maker’s bench, in winter, and sing Scotch songs all day long, without repeating a single song. His wife, however, Isabella Reid, was of a very different temperament, and belonged to a family of very marked and powerful characteristics. She was a woman of strong convictions, and of great energy of mind and body. She, like her daughter, Mary Ann, could do two or three days’ work in one, and had no patience with the idleness or inefficiency of other people. She probably did for the Hopkinses what Margaret Wallace had done for the Morisons three generations before, and introduced into the race a much more energetic type of character. She lived to a great age, with her son, James Hopkins, in Antrim. I remember her prompt and decisive interference on two or three occasions at my father’s. Once, when I was a very young boy, I took a small amount of honey from one of our bee-hives, and escaped without injury. But when the same experiment was tried a second time, it seemed to me as if the whole swarm of bees, with their stings in active exercise, had settled down on my head. In-

stantly, on hearing the cries sent out by the child, my grandmother appeared with a bowl of water, and quickly drove away my offended avengers of their rights. Not long before her death I saw her in Antrim. She was very feeble and very kind. Just before I left her, she unlocked a private drawer, and took from it two silver half-dollars which she asked me to give to my mother. I was greatly affected by her kindness, for it was probably nearly all the money that she had.

“Here is a very slight sketch of those who have gone before us, and whose lives are transmitted through our veins to those who shall come after us. I believe in inherited qualities, but it is difficult to reconcile with this belief the very different qualities of those who inherit the same blood. For example, your grandfather, William Smith, and his wife, Elizabeth Morison, were the brother and sister of my great-grandmother, Mary Smith, and her husband, Thomas Morison. The blood in the two families was the same, and the circumstances under which they entered life were substantially the same. Yet every one of the six sons of William Smith was a man of marked ability, and not one of the sons of Thomas Morison was much, if at all, above mediocrity. Samuel was a shrewd, thrifty man. But that was all. Three of the daughters of Thomas Morison, however, were uncommon women. Mary—the Aunt Polly who was so long in your father’s store—was, I suppose, one of the most brilliant women ever born in Peterborough. Her sister Sally was, as Judge Smith used to say, a born lady. Her intellectual and moral qualities, and delicate, womanly susceptibilities, were admirably harmonized. She took snuff and smoked a pipe, and yet no one could meet her or talk with her without feeling that she was a refined and delicate woman. Margaret, the wife of Matthew Wallace, was said to be a woman of uncommon ability.

“We sometimes seem to recognize different ancestors in our different moods and feelings at different times. When I am indulging in the thought of projects vastly beyond my ability to carry out, I feel my great-great-grandmother, the ambitious Margaret Wallace, stirring my blood, and call to mind my grandfather’s caution to his son to remember that his name was Morison, and not undertake more than he could do. When I feel very much fixed in any decision, and unwilling to be reasoned out of it, right or wrong, I feel something of the Holmes obstinacy rising up within my veins. When I am in an easy, indolent mood, and disposed to let the day go by without effort in pleasant dreams, I think of my grand-

father Hopkins, whose name I bear, and his Scotch songs. If I ever succeed in stripping off its surroundings, and looking calmly and clearly into a difficult and important subject, without prejudice on either side, I rejoice to feel that I have in me something of the mild, unbiased good sense which has come down from the Smiths as they were before they were united with the Morisons. In this way I lead different lives, and feel myself swayed by widely different impulses, and brought under the influence of different ancestors, according to the mood that happens to be uppermost. Sometimes I feel as if I were my father, looking out from his eyes and walking in his gait, and then I detect the mother in the earnestness with which I find myself gazing on some person before me, as your uncle, Judge Smith, seemed to see his sister Betty when he put on her cap and looked at himself in the glass."

- 44 *Eliza Holmes*, b. Fayetteville, N. C., July 10, 1805; m.,
Sept. 18, 1845, Stephen Felt; d. Aug. 14, 1867.
- 45 † *John Hopkins*, b. July 25, 1808; m., Oct. 21, 1841,
Emily Hurd Rogers.
- 46 † *Horace*, b. Sept. 13, 1810; m., July 27, 1841, Mary E.
Lord; d. Aug. 5, 1870.
- 47 *Caroline*, b. June 20, 1813; m., Aug. 29, 1837, George
W. Moore, Medina, Mich.; d. March 17, 1849.
- 48 † *Nathaniel Holmes*, b. Dec. 14, 1815; m., Dec. 22, 1842,
Sidney B. Brown; r. Baltimore, Md.
- 49 † *Samuel A.*, } m., Nov. 9, 1847, Ellen
Smith; r. San Francis-
co, Cal.
- 50 † *James*, } b. June 20, 1818; m., 1st w., Jan. 29, 1857,
Mary Lydia Sanford, of
Boston; 2d w., June 16,
1868, Ellen Wheeler, of
Keene.

31- 45

JOHN HOPKINS MORISON. The following autobiography was furnished at my request:—

"I was born in Peterborough, July 25, 1808, and was the second child and oldest son of Nathaniel and Mary Ann Morison. I remained at home till April 15, 1820. At the age of three I began to attend school in the summer, but after I was six years old my services on the farm were thought too valuable to be dispensed with, and from that time forth till I was sixteen I went to school only in the winter, from eight to twelve weeks in