THREE EPISODES OF LINCOLN HISTORY

by

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1952

FOREWORD

When Charles Francis Adams was asked to give the address at the Lincoln celebration in 1904, he did not have time to make a systematic study of the town of his adoption. Had he done so, he would surely have turned up much of the material here presented. His "Three Episodes of Massachusetts History" was almost the first attempt to penetrate the fog of ancestor worship which was making saints and heroes of the human beings who founded our colony, and To study them with Truth as the sole object. That has been my intention with this material and I present it even though it shows one of my own connections a convicted murderer and one of his a captain of the Lincoln Minute Men. I have had invaluable help from Harriet Merrifield Forbes and to her memory I dedicate this work.

Thoreau Farm

Concord, Massachusetts

(The little figures on page 3 may be omitted)
showing the generations
I will put them in, in ink

Oldest Inhabitants

The early history of Lincoln does not begin in 1754 but more than a hundred years earlier when the grandfathers of the men who petitioned for a separate town, first settled on the farms which were to be included in Lincoln.

The original bounds of Concord were laid out in what was thought to be unclaimed wilderness and due allowance was made for possible error so that the "six miles square" granted in 1635 to Simon Willard and his associates was actually six and two-thirds miles on each side. The boundary on the West was substantially as it is today, except that it ran up into Carlisle to "Berry Cormer",- a pile of rocks which can still be found in the woods at the head of Spencer Brook Valley. The North-east corner was East of the Shawshine river in the present town of Bedford. A portion of the present Bedford-Lexington line just North of the present Lincoln line follows the original line between Concord and Cambridge Farms. (Cambridge was granted the land to Concord line in 1642) On the Bay road (as the main road to Cambridge used to be called) it was the boundary between the Nelson farm which ran to the old line in Lexington, and the Rice farm (now the Bean place) which was in Concord and bounded on the old town bounds The stome bound on the Bay Road between Concord and Cambridge marked with a C on each side was called on the old Lincoln maps the See or the C It was between Folly Pond and Mill street not far from the Paul Revere marker. On paper the lines can be found by projecting the present Concord-Sudbury line and the short Bedford- Lexington line to their intersection, which is found to be in the present Weston-Lincoln line south of the Waltham road. a spot still marked in 1880 when C.H. Walcott traced the lines for his carefil book Concord in the Colonial Period The line crosses the Concord Pike between

~~A spot has not been moved again to accommodate motor traffic~~

the old Hoar and Stone farms, follows the East side of the old Flint farm, and touches the East side of the old Beaver pond. When laid out in 1635 it took in part of the land in this corner already granted to Watertown, but the General Court awarded the land to Concord, compensating Watertown in 1639 with the town of Sudbury. For convenience in dividing land. Concord was divided into three sections called quarters. This section of Lincoln was partly in Concord's East Quarter and partly in the South Quarter, the bound running North of Flint's pond and farm. When the land was divided in 1653, the South part had already been granted in large tracts to the persons who had put up the capital to get the new town started, only what we call Baker Farm was left for small South Quarter holders.

SOUTH QUARTER FARMS

Henry Woodis and Thomas Stow (perhaps in the right of Simon Willard) had 666* acres south of Fairhaven and east of the river, extending to the Sudbury line and to what we know as the Codman place. The Codman place was on 750 acres granted to Peter Bulkeley, extending north to Flint's pond and the brook leading out of it. East of the pond and brook and extending to the town bounds was 750 acres granted to the widow of Thomas Flint in 1661 in the following words:

" The Court considering that Mr. Thomas Flint, deceased, served the Country in the magistracy and other public capacities and some whiles ~~after~~ after public allowance was paid unto the magistrates, and had no recompense nor any grant of land and that the said Mr. Flint left a widow and numerous family many whereof were in minority,...judge meet to grant to the widow of the deceased Mr. Flint and her son John, eight hundred acres of land..."

The son John Flint sttled in Concord above the North bridge. The son Ephraim settled in Lincoln on this grant of 1661. I see no reason to suppose that the old Flint house still occupied by Mrs. Edward Flint and her

* these figures are all indefinite - sometimes the record says 800 - sometimes 750 - Henry Woodis bought out Simon Willard.

son was not built at this time It once had a big central chimney and a long sloping roof There was a direct road to the house from the Bay road in Concord, a portion of which may still be seen near the Albert Brooks place on route 2, north of the pond. Hawthorne lane and Sandy Pond road were also known as "the way to Mr. Flint's farm". South of the Pond

The successive owners of the farm have been Mrs. Thomas, Ephraim, his nephew Edward, his nephew Ephraim, the latter's son and grandson each named Ephraim, then George of the seventh generation, his sons Edward and Ephraim and their sons of the present generation. The center of Lincoln took a large part of the farm and the remainder was divided by the eighth generation

The Watertown corner was at first held in common, each of 13 small proprietors of land in Concord's South Quarter had a right of pasturage in the corner. In 1650 these were Samuel Stratton, Nathaniel Billings, Luke Potter, George Wheeler Obadiah Wheeler, George Hayward, John Heywood, William Buss, James Hosmer, John Miles. Michael Wood, Thomas Brooks and Oliver Barret.* Richard Parks bought a houselot in the Watertown cormer of Nathaniel Billings, ~~his brother-in-law~~ in this corner in 1687 and soon his descendants owned most of the land south of the Flint grant and east of the Bulkeley grant, land on both sides of the Watertown road. The Cousins place beyond the railroad crossing is a surviving Parks place and another, torn down in this century stood on the farm now called "the Lincoln Line". Richard Parks' first purchase, however, was part of the old Goble farm, perhaps the old Goble house itself, for the Goble family and name were forgotten in Concord even by the families of the daughters who inherited the land. Among these families were White, Dean, Shepherd, Stratton, Dana ~~and~~ Dudley and Hutchinson. The Goble farm was the southern half of the large grant of ~~666 acres~~

* 1 most of these proprietors lived near the Sudbury river in territory still in Concord
Nathaniel's son of John. Parks' son Richard married Nathaniel's sister Elizabeth?
(John's Nathaniel?)

Tate, Newspaper 9 South Quarter farmers, continued

bought from Stow and Woodis by Daniel Dean and Thomas Goble, Daniel was the son of Thomas Dane of Concord. He built the house now standing as the ell of the house at the intersection of Wayland road and the Fitchburg turnpike. Daniel Dean married first Mary, daughter of Thomas Goble, and second, Margaret Eames widow of Joseph Adams (John[2], Henry[1]) who brought with her two soms and a daughter, Daniel, John and Chary Adams. When Daniel Dean died childless in 1725, at the age of 97 he left the Lincoln property to his step-sons. Daniel Adams and his brother had married Minot sisters, Elizabeth and Love while Love's twin sister Mercy married Samuel Baker and lived just over the East Sudbury line. Love became a widow in 1725 and married Ephraim Fint. The sister Chary married Jonathan Stone from the Stone farm just over the Lexington line from the Flints. The house inherited by Daniel Adams descended to Captain Joseph Adams in 1771 and in 1809 to Captain Charles Adams Wheeler who built the front section of the house.

Daniel Adams sold parts of his farm at different times, one parcel of 20 acres at the Watertown road intersection in 1736 to Nathaniel Billings and his wife Hannah, the parents of Grace who married Jacob Baker first of the Bakers to appear in this part of Lincoln The house was undoubtedly a small one, the present house, I am told was partly made from the old school house moved from the triangle. In 1768, Nathaniel gave his negro William Fillis two recorded deeds, one his freedom from slavery, the other the real estate "because he has behaved towards me and my wife with distinguished care and tenderness in my old age" Title was contingent on continued care, the provision of a horse to ride to meeting, expenses in their last illness and burial. Both died within the year, but the record does not show whether the Court allowed Fillis to keep the property.

*2 Recent Adams genealogists to are sure that this was the same Adams family as the Presidential Adamses see "Henry Adams of Somersetshire England and Braintree mass" by J G Bartlett

After the Indians destroyed Lancaster in 1676, Jacob Farrar's widow took refuge in Concord where her father George Hayward lived. One son, George Farrar, went to live as apprentice to Thomas Goble. When he married Mary How in 1692 he built the house on part of the Goble farm where his descendants have lived until 1950. A Goble son-in-law named Hutchinson lived South of Farrar on the town line. Between the Goble-Dean and the Flint farms was the big farm granted to the Rev. Peter Bulkeley. It is probable that Thomas Goble first came out to Concord from Charlestown as tenant of the Bulkeley farm.* The farm was inherited by the Reverend Peter's son Peter, who lived in London, and was sold by him in 1671 to Timothy Prout for £45. In 1701, Prout's son Ebenezer sold it to Nathaniel Hobart, who sold the northern part to Simon Dakin in 1702, the next year. Until then it included 800 acres from Flint's pond to Beaver Pond bounded east on the brook which ran between the two. In 1788 this Dakin part became the Zachariah Smith farm.

The southern part had two houses on it. One, moved and remodelled is the Henry Warner house, the other, also made over in the Federal period is the Codman place. The former was the home for a couple of years of Rev. Samuel Parris of Danvers, whose West Indian slave, Tituba, so aroused the Parris children that their hysterical fits started the witchcraft delusion. Parris moved on to East Sudbury where he died.

The wealthy families among the first settlers, with their land grants in Concord, their "rights" in Acton and their further grants in southern New Hampshire and central Massachusetts (which were a belated soldiers' bonus given to the sons and grandsons of those who fought the Indians) had become clans. By 1754, Some sold their Concord land and moved to the new towns. Those who stayed had bought and divided until there were three Hartwell houses, eight Brooks houses, seven Billings houses, four or five Parks' and three Farrar's.

* the other son lived on Westford road Concord next the Acton line.

* = [in margin]

Just as this division was progressing among the farmers, a multiplication of wealth was beginning for a new class, the merchants. Banking was unknown in 1635. Individuals with money like Rev. Peter Bulkeley or the Flints would lend ~~land~~ sums, but they frequently lost what they lent, or waited ~~for years~~ To collect until an estate was settled. Concord farmers could only get money by taking cattle, horses, produce or wood down to Charlestown or Boston. Down there the man with a little capital became a merchant and made a profit buying as well as selling. One such was James Russell. Charlestown was more convenient than Boston to Concord farmers because it did not involve the delay and expense of a ferry trip across the wide Charles. I have seen the inventory of a Concord estate in 1686 in which Mr. Russell owed for onions, also for horses shipped to Barbadoes and in turn was owed for books, anchovies, a wig, and a dress sword.* There was no uniform currency. The colony made a pine tree shilling but Spanish, English and French coins were also current and even the best of these had to be weighed to be sure it had not been clipped. Then the equipment of big military expeditions against the French led to the printing of unsecured paper money, followed by inflation. Finally a Boston group suggested a land bank which would lend printed money to farmers backed by the land as security. Nathaniel Billings[3] in this way lost the land given him by his father and it was bought by his rich neighbor Chambers Russell. Both the Chambers and the Russell grandparents had made money as merchants, and Chambers Russell was prepared to live in style on his country estate. He had a farmhouse as well as a mansion with slave quarters. After his wife's death he decided to go to England and got the ready cash by mortgaging the place to John Hancock† This mortgage was discharged in October 1766. Charles Russell, a

* Mid Registry Estate of Peter Bulkeley, Esq. grandson of Rev. Peter. The estate also owed money borrowed from Ephraim Flint.

nephew inherited the place. His wife was a Vassall of the Cambridge Tory family and the house in Lincoln has a Brattle street look about it. Dr. Russell left town on April 19 exchanging houses with Henderson Inches, a patriot who was equally anxious to leave Boston.. Dr.Russell died in Antigua before the end of the war, but the estate had meanwhile been confiscated by a Concord committee. Now however James Russell, the executor, discovered a second mortgage to Hancock was in existence and naturally the property of so famous a patriot could not be taken as Tory property The Hancocks then obligingly sold the property to James Russell's son, a second Chambers Russelll, who left it in due course to his nephew John Codman. Perhaps there was no smart Yankee trading here, but there is a letter from Judge Samuel Curwin to Hon, James Russell in 1783 which needs some explaining:

" I have heard of the sale of your late son Charles' estate at Lincoln to your son Chambers. I will presume you did not forget my demand for 300 pounds sterling and somewhat more for his bond to me, though your silence respecting it has since raised my apprehension.." That was a large legal fee for those days but perhaps the Judge earned it.

West of this Bulkeley farm, extending to Fairhaven Bay was a 200-acre farm given in the division of the South Quarter in 1653 to Nathaniel Billings, whose first house [illegible] was sold in 1678 to Rev. Joseph Estabrook. The two sons Nathaniel and John moved out to this fertile farm and built houses, as early as 1678 but not earlier than 1653, one on each side of the old road to East Sudbury. The road ran on over the dam which John Billings built for his mill on the north branch of Halfway brook, and the farm extended north beyond Baker Bridge road. John had seven children and his son Samuel had ten, so it is

no wonder that in the list of Revolutionary soldiers from Lincoln there are seven named Billings and their gravesare numerous in the center burying-ground though for living descendants you would have to look west, perhaps to Billings, Montana.

The Maj. Henry L Higginson house (now Prof. Merriam's) was built by Isaac Billings. son of a John who died in 1754. It was part of the estate of Ephraim Billings in 1811.

Nathaniel[2] Billings lived in the old red house, called Baker Farm[3] He deeded the north part of his farm in 1709 to Nathaniel Billings and the south part with the house to his son Daniel[3]:

"including the land on which I now dwell with all the buildings."

Nathaniel[3] built a house now marked by a fallen elm tree just north of Baker Bridge and lost it, as previously related, in 1720. In 1723 he sold with the court's permission a 40 acre piece near Fairhaven to his cousin Samuel. This was, I think, the Pleasant meadow and adjacent land where ih my childhood some red bee-balm, gone wild, marked ~~the~~ an old cellar hole near the old r oad which can still be traced. This piece of Baker farm was owned by Jacob Baker in 1782, bought about 1777 from Samuel Billings who moved to Somers Connecticut in that year

Nathaniel[2] Billings was wounded Dec. 6. 1675 in King Philip's War but lived until 1714 in August when he was "drowned in a spring," the only one of that sturdy generation to die from drinking water * The spring is still pointed out by the oldest inhabitants near the railroad at the head of Heywood's brook. Daniel[3] Billings had only one child, a daughter who married Amos Heald. Daniel gave them half his farm in 1736 with a house on it, which was the old Snelling place, burned a

* He probably had a stroke and fell into the spring - drowning was strenuous work.

few years ago. The Bakers got possession of the red house because Daniel Billings also got into financial difficulties and in 1785, Amos Baker got an execution for one-third of Billings' real estate, the remainder going to Eleazer Bradshaw, thus further splitting up the farm.

East Quarter Farms

The farmers who divided up the East Quarter were Thomas Brooks, John and Joseph Meriam, Richard Rice, John Farwell, Thomas Wheeler, Moses Wheat, Nathaniel Stow, William and Francis Fletcher, Edward Wright, Thomas Fox, Nathaniel Ball, William and John Hartwell, Christopher Wooley and William Taylor. On the old Woburn road which left the Bay road just east of the Brooks tan-yard was the Wheat place on the west Virginia road corner; the Wooley place on the north east corner, and further on farms owned by Taylors, Balls and Meriams.* The Farwell property became the John Jones and Farwell Jones property, part of it was beyond Meriams Corner on the old Bedford road in Concord but there were also some fields in what was later Lincoln. The whole hill a half mile beyond Meriam's corner went to Thomas Brooks' three sons. Caleb who had the middle part at the top of the hill sold to his brother Joshua and moved to Medford. Joshua's descendants built 3 houses on the south side of the street, the only houses not facing south built on this road until the twentieth century. They also chose to be included in Lincoln while the other side of the road, and Gershom's remained in Concord. Beyond the hill the road swung to the north around a piece of land called 'the meeting house frame' claimed later by the heirs of Peter Bulkeley but doubtless intended to supply timber for the meeting house In the same way land was set aside to provide timber for the bridges. in what is now the center of West Concord.

* the widow Mead and possibly a Whittaker were on this road in 1717 according to the oldest Assessor's list. The Mead farm is now included in the airport, the Samuel Meriam house is an Officer's Club but is over the Bedford town line

Other old place names in this neighborhood were Blind Plain where the airport is now, Rocky meadow, to the east of it; Well Head just north of the Bay road and Tar-kiln brook running into Shawshine brook. and Sub-urb meadow. South of the road was the Ox Pasture, land held in common on the south-west side of Brooks hill;* Chestnut Field^ and Folly Pond near the C. East of the ox pasture #2

The Hartwell second division land still has its two old houses which however could not have been built before the division of 1653. Next to the Hartwells on the east were the lands of the Fletcher's Francis sold by them in 1693 to Benjamin Whittemore and the house and farm sold in 1758 to William Dodge and his wife Elizabeth (Proctor) former widow of William Salmon and given to her daughter Louisa Katharine Salmon when she married William Smith. in 1770 There was one other house near the old town line owned by Richard Rice's son-in-law Dr. Philip Reed and later by Ebenezer Lamson, with Richard Rice himself on the lane opposite. and Bradish Smith

Between these Bay road farms and Flint's farm was Thomas Wheeler's place and possibly a farm owned in 1717 by ~~Nathaniel Whittaker~~ Deacon Brooks and one next the town line owned in 1725 by the Hoar family. in the eighteenth century

Thomas Wheeler was the son of Deacon John Wheeler and grandson of Serg. Thomas Wheeler who had a large grant on Virginia road on which he and his descendants built five houses. Thomas[3] born in 1692, probably in the house that was later Thomas's built on the north side of Flint's hill when he married Mary Munroe., Here his descendants still live, on a lane which was originally part of The Way to Mr. Flint's farm.

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* now on the Lincoln side of the west boundary with the bridge made of a single huge stone.

omit [Nov 8 1770 to Katherine Louisa Salmon
Sept 6 1771 William Smith & wife Katherine Louisa of Boston
mortgage to William Smith of Weymouth.]

* Chestnuts are still trying to grow from the stumps of trees killed by the blight.

Ebenezer Fisk of Lex to A Brooks of Concord

4 acres in Concord H N by Ephraim Hartwell
Dec 12 1750 Elsewhere on Aaron Brooks.

BR 44 708-709-712-713

to Benjamin Hillman of Concord.

Abigail Rice only d. of Timothy Rice one of the sons of Richard Rice late of Concord dec'd both of them and Daniel Heaton with Abigail Heaton his now w. wife which is one of the daughters of Sarah Cutler widow of the children of R. Rice. also to deed for 25£ land in Sd pt of Concord

Dec 5 1710

grandfather Richard Rice aunt Mary Rice

12 A uplands & 1/8 pt of all lands not to tenement bound N on Coventry 2d E Sam'l Hartwell Son said Whittemore W on Daniel Brooks.

5A 1711

Paul Rice Sen. bounded on land which he bought of my father.

713

Ebenezer Lamson and whereas he has purchased of his uncle Paul Rice

2A. & W on him & B. Whittemore S. on Coventry Rd 5A & my

7 acres of swamp from John & Barthelomew Jones

1728 Son C. Road.

Benj to son Nath for 100 & 20 A adjoining the land whereon his house stands W on Sd Hartwell to bank side of my old Sellar

Joel Whittemore of Lex. to Aaron Brooks of Concord for 18 6 to 13/8/40

Land in E pt of Concord plow meadow pasture wood orchard with a dwelling house and barn thereon standing.

by heap of stones near dwelling N of same - then runs SE on a slip of land used as a way from the County road to dwelling ho & land of Ephraim Hartwell then SW. on land of John White then SE on White then NE on White then SE on Ephraim Hartwell till it comes to Lexington line then SW with the same 102 rds then SE 8 rods on land of Wm Nellom then SW on sd Nellons land 20 rs a ditch being in the line then NW 14 rs to sd N elms a large ditch being in the line then N W on said Dea. Brooks 47 rs then N E 14 rds to said Thomas Brooks then NNW on Th Brooks 45 rds to a stake & stones then 36½ rds on land fallen to the heirs of my father & land of Nathaniel Whittemore then 41 rds N W on sd " " then 24 rds on my fathers heirs land to heap (1st first ment. also a slip of land 2 rds wide from the dwelling to the County Road thru land of Eph Hartwell

Beer

April 4 1752

Owen Tribe's note

1846 Thomas Brooks to George W. Bean.

55-7

1827 Joseph Brooks to Brother Thomas Brooks.

274-248 (274 104)

for $2000 land where I now live
on corn. with Thomas the
EST unless he dies by his father
Aaron Brooks of Lueska -

1806 Aaron Brooks to Sons
Joseph & Thomas

111-344

1791 Inv.

Aaron Brooks of Lueska m Mary Stone 1755
born 1727 son of
Thomas[4] Brooks m Hannah Dakin
1725
born 1701 son of
Noah[3] & Dorothy ? was she a Rice or a Lawson
d. 1739 aged 63
eldest son of Joshua[2]

Hannah Dakin b 1704
d of Joseph Dakin
& Dorothy Wooster.

Richard Rice

Richard Rice was one of the humbler first settlers and was the last survivor of the group, living until 1709 when an epidemic took him off together with his daughter, his daughter-in-law and his grandson, Joseph Rice. The town clerk reports "being accounted more than one hundred years old." He was listed as an inhabitant of Cambridge in 1635 but testified in 1684 that he was present when the town was purchased from the Indians:

"The testimony of Richard Rice aged seventy-two years showeth that about the year 1636 there was an agreement made by some undertakers for the town since called Concord with some Indians that had a right unto the land then purchased for the township. The Indians names was Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan Sagamore, Mattunkatucka, and some other indians that lived at that place, the tract of land being six miles square. The center of the place being about the place the meeting house standeth now, the bargain was made and confirmed between the English undertakers and the Indians then present to their good satisfaction on all hands."

Sworn in Court Oct. 8, 1684 *
Thomas Danforth, Recorder

When the first house lots were given out, Richard Rice, who had no large family, received a small lot at the head of the mill pond between the ford and the Watertown road, which he abandoned as soon as possible for his second division farm next to the town bounds. Here he built the house still standind on its own lane facing south east.

About 1667 Rice's daughter married Dr. Philip Read a

* This date, if he was 72, makes him 97 or 98 at the time of his death and the Town Clerk had cause to be skeptical.

physician who settled across the Bay road to practise in Concord and the neighboring towns. Mr. Frank Hersey in Heroes of the Battle Road says that the lily pond on the south side of the road at this point got its name of Folly Pond because a man named Read, who owned this land conceived the plan of draining the pond by cutting a passage through the ridge to Well Head Swamp on the north side of the road. He began the work, the marks of which still remain but because he never finished, the project was known as Read's Folly. Read was original in other ways. He compared Rev. Mr. Estabrook to aging Rev. Edward Bulkeley saying that the latter was not fit to carry Mr. Estabrook's books after him and had been called by a company of blockheads who followed the plow-tail. Then he told a patient that her illness had been caused by standing too long in church. The Court fined him twenty pounds after refusing to let him be represented by counsel.

Another member of Richard Rice's family got into the court records because he couldn't help laughing. This was the son Peter who was waiting in the sexton's house one Sunday while the church members stayed for communion. Tobacco leaves were drying by the fireplace while a savory stew was cooking in a pot on the crane. The children put some tobacco in the stew and waited expectantly to see what Sarah Pellet would say . Thomas and Sarah didn't think it was funny to have their dinner spoiled, and brought them all into Court where ;

"they did say and attest that the last Sabbath day was a fortnight, some young persons being at their house at noon time when the Sacrament was administering, their pot being boiling over their fire, when they did come to take of the same, they found it much abused and unfit to

be eaten....also that when they came to take notice of their pot, Mary Power, Hannah Stannup and Peter Rice did laugh and nicker."

Richard Rice had to pay a fine for this "rudeness and mischief done to the victuals of Thomas Pellet on the Lord's day." We can only hope that the young people had a warm place to wait the next Sunday

Richard Rice's house was sold by his heirs to Benjamin Whittemore who had succeeded the Fletchers in the house on the knoll east of the Hartwell's and when the Whittemores moved away theRice house went to Aaron Brooks and from him to the Bean family while the Whittemore place became the home of Captain William Smith.

~~Who Was William Smith?~~

William Smith, Jr. the captain of the Lincoln Minute Men was living on his farm just east of the Hartwell's on April 19, 1775. Charles Francis Adams was not inclined to admit in 1904 that this was his great grandmother Abigail Adams' brother* It is easy to prove however even without access to the Adams manuscripts, but there is a cloud over the last few years of Captain Smith's life but I have been unable to find any scandal which would make him undesirable to claim him as a relation unless the fact that he was extravagant was a crime in the eyes of the Lincoln historian. Unfortunately the biographers of Abigail Adams and the editors of her letters add to the confusion by ~~confusing~~ mixing brother William with Cousin William. Let us admit at once that there is some excuse for the mix-up. Abigail had a father, Rev. William Smith of Weymouth, a cousin William Smith, son of her father's brother Isaac, (a Harvard graduate in 1774 and a successful merchant in Boston) and father of another William The Adamses often stayed at their house in Boston and entrusted various business commissions to him when they were in foreign parts. Brother William, too had a son Billy, Then Abigail's daughter married a New York Col. William Smith and also had a son William. Abigail herself almost always referred to them as Brother William, Cousin William, Son William or Grandson William as the case might be and the Lincoln William's wife was Sister Smith, so the reference is clear enough if you have the facts beforehand.

* See The Town of Lincoln, 1754-1904 page 135

A Hereditary Spice

The wife of the President of the United States was writing to her Sister Cranch on March 18, 1800. "Sister Peabody must not be too hard upon Betsy nor forget that she herself was once young and possessed a heart as liable to impressions and as susceptible of the tender passions as any body I can recollect Betsy has a hereditary spice of the romantic in her constitution. Guide her right. Her heart is good. A cold youth could be a frozen age. If she has more pangs in consequence of her disposition she has more pleasures" *

Betsy was the youngest of six children of Abigail Adams' brother Captain William Smith of the Lincoln Minute- men. She was born on the North Lincoln farm in 1780 but had been adopted by her Aunt Elizabeth before she was five years old in order to help out her brother's poverty-stricken family. Aunt Elizabeth, four years younger than William Smith had married the Rev. John Shaw of Haverhill and had named her first child William Smith Shaw. She had a daughter Elizabeth Quincy Shaw who had died in 1795 and another Abigail Adams Shaw. She herself married Rev. Stephen Peabody of Atkinson New Hampshire soon after her first husband's death. in 1794. It is said that he proposed at the first husband's funeral Whatever tender passion may have disturbed Betsy, nothing appears on the record. She had married James H. Foster of Boston on November 15.1798 and lived until the middle of the nineteenth century. She became the owner of the Lincoln farm after her mother's death John Quincy Adams and his son Charles Francis Adams frequently refer in their diaries to calls on their cousins the Fosters. After John and Abigail Adams came back from England in 1788, they took Louisa Smith into their household and she was companion and helper to her aunt until Abigail died in 1818 * Then she went to live with her sister Elizabeth Foster until her

* Stewart Mitchell Ed. New Letters of Abigail Adams
* Louisa was born in 1773

death in 1857. Louisa was a member of the Vice-presidential household in New York and of the Presidential household that moved into the uncompleted White House in Washington in the last months of her Uncle John's term of office, and doubtless helped hang the wash in the East room. She must have lacked the "hereditary spice", for the callers of the day if they mention her do so only in passing, as a young woman.

William, her father was born in 1746 in the Weymouth parsonage and attended Mr. Marsh's school which prepared for Harvard. There is no record of his entrance to college Perhaps he went to work for his uncle Isaac, a successful Boston Merchant whose own son William, born in 1735, did not graduate from Harvard until 1775. Boston was a distracting place for an unattached young man and William soon became a Son of Liberty. He is named on the list of those who dined at the "Liberty Tree " inn in Dorchester on August 14 1769 and must have acqired some reputation as a patriot in order to be accepted in Lincoln as a captain. He had a cousin in Medford, Cotton Tufts, and there he met and married an heiress — Catherine Louisa Salmon. The Registry of deeds records the transfer on November 8 1770 of the Lincoln farm from her mother and stepfather ~~William Lodge bought from the estate of her father William Salmon~~ in consideration of natural love and affection to Katherine Louisa Salmon, spinster"

In September 1771, William Smith of Boston, merchant, and his wife Katherine Louisa, mortgage the same farm to Rev. William Smith of Weymouth. ~~Rev. Mr. Smith's will left the farm in Lincoln~~ Cotton Tufts' diary twice records visits, in 177 / William Smith and wife and in 177 Mr. Smith, Billy and wife and Billy, Jr. In 1774, Abigail writes to John Adams of a visit with her father to her brother's farm. Louisa was then the baby with Mary, Isaac and Charles to come, before Betsy's birth in 1780.

On the nineteenth of April, 1775, Captain Smith was aroused early.

probably by young Dr. Samuel Prescott . He took his horse and rode to Lincoln to assemble his men and go on to Concord. Here he left his horse while the company took up a position on the ridge and later retreated to the hill beyond the North bridge. The British took the horse and we find Major Buttrick's affidavit, in The Archives filed in November, with Captain Smith's claim for the horse.

Meanwhile in Philadelphia, John Adams naminated George Washington to be commander-in-chief and before Washington left to ride to Cambridge he asked Adams if he wished to give him any requests or instructions. Adams concluded his letter:

" There is another gentleman whom I presume to be in the army , either as a Captain or in some higher station whose name is William Smith, As this young gentleman is my brother-in-law,, I do not recommend him for any other place than that in which the voice of his country has placed him. But the countenance of the General, as far as his conduct shall deserveit, which in an army is of great importance, will be gratefully acknowledged as a particular obligation by his brother. " Washington's correspondence is silent about Captain Smith. His name does not appear in any of the courtsmartials which had to deal with the lax discipline at the Cambridge camp. That he fought at Bunker Hill is proved by a letter which he wrote in December recommending one of his soldiers for bravery.

The Lincoln historian says he served in Col. Eleazer Brook's regiment in 1776. After this he drops from sight, until his death "from black jaundice" in Sept. 1787 is reported to Abigail in London with the statement that he had been well-cared for while ill. Meanwhile his father had died in 1785 leaving a will which authorized his executors to hold the Lincoln property: during the natural life of my son William the profit therof to be applied to the

separate support of Catherine Louisa the present wife of my said son and her children and after the death of my said son, I give the use of the property to her"

"I give my son William all my wearing apparel and whatever shall be due from him to me on notes, bonds or accompts at my decease"

The widow Catherine Louisa had had a strange life. At the trial of Mark and Phillis for the murder of their master John Codman they testified that William Salmon had been fed arsenic by his negroes. He died in Harvard, Massachusetts in 1754 but had been a merchant in Boston. His wife Elizabeth Proctor had half her father's farmhouse in HARVARD willed to her and her children. When Salmon died Robert Holland an innkeeper of Still River seized all the personal effects including those of the widow and infant daughter, who had to petition the court for the return of the wearing apparel. The innkeeper submitted a long bill, one item of which was

" Jan22-29 to eight days for nursing and fireing and beding and four journeys to ye doctors for myself and horse being eight miles there and vitels and drink for ye watchers ---- 4 pounds."

The widow soon after married William Dodge, formerly of Wenham, who sold out the Harvard property and invested in the Lincoln farm which came in due time to Catherine Louisa.

William Smith's sisters continued their interest in Sister Smith and the children. Mary and Charles both died in 1797. Charles had been apprenticed to a Mr. Atwood. Abigail Adams is willing to give Miss Atwood a mourning ring but nothing expensive "Tis true he was my nephew but not the only relative that I had. Mary's sickness was much longer and more expensive Have you had any letters from William since the death of his brother?" This is the last mention of Billy, jr. but it proves he lived to be 25 at least. pinned

Abigail wrote to her sister that she thought the Smith farm was let

at much too small a rent" as produce is," and she was sorry for the distressed situation of Sister Smith but she was willing the caretaker of her Quincy house should have the room and bed-room for Mrs. Smithat 12 dollars a year but if she goes there, care should be taken that she should have a sufficiency of good and wholesome food for they are poor people and live pretty near.

Catherine Louisa survived this period and died in 1823 and was buried in the family vault in Quincy.

When the Adams manuscripts are opened to the public, all the gaps in this story can probably be filled in I should like to know whether there were any early manifestations of William's romantic hereditary spice whether there was any scandal about his later years aside from his extravagance and whether the children Billy and Isaac lived to have families of their own and what became of them. And why the historian Charles Francis Adams who had all the facts at his disposal was still unwilling to admit the relationship in 1904.

It is a curious coincidence that Thomas Boylston of Watertown great grandfather of Rev. William Smith figures in the County records and "was a gay young gentleman of London whose habits were not formed after the puritanical model" * * [Bond: Watertown p. 702] and whose property had to be kept by trustees.

President John Adams himself was a Boylston on his mother's side, and had his descendents known the facts, they need not have been oppressed as Henry Adams was by the crushing responsibility of living up to the standards set by their ancestors.

[Catherine Brooks Brown's young John Adams has a genealogy listing 3 wives for William Smith ? mixed up with Cousin William]