

Three speeches given Epsom Old Home Day 1899, and printed in a local paper.
Dolbeer on early history, Ruhamah J. (Locke) Fowler on Epsom Schools, and
Andros P. Chesley on Epsom's physicians.

EPSOM CELEBRATION

The Old Homes Remembered with Appropriate Exercises

Historical Sketch of the town by J.H. Dolbeer

Who can imagine the feelings that prompted those men, who one hundred and seventy five years ago, with their gun and axe, those inseparable companions of the successful pioneer, left their home by the sea and on foot, made their way through the unbroken forest to this wilderness?

Was it all a desire to make for himself a home – to secure a farm, to own property, or was there mingled with it a spirit of adventure – the hope of making some valuable discovery, the expectation of becoming famous?

Whatever may have been their ambitions, certain it is that they must have experienced trials, mishaps, danger and suffering that are difficult for us this late day to conceive of.

In tracing an historical sketch of Epsom, the material for making it sensational or thrilling is lacking, save as they come down to us in tradition or story, if we may except the captivity of Mrs. McCoy by the Indians.

The early history of the town was sadly neglected, the brief records of the town clerk and church scribe being absent – the only thing upon which the historian can safely rely.

A short historical sketch was published by the late Rev. Jonathan Curtis in 1823 which is valuable so far as it goes.

It is impossible to tell the exact date of the first settlement made in town, but somewhere about 1725, one William Blazo, a Frenchman, came here and commenced his home near where what is commonly known as the Old Center.

It is said of him that he was rather changeable in his plans and moved about from place to place, so much so, that in after years, it was frequently said of persons who were discontented with their lot and were seeking unsuccessfully to better their conditions, that they had Blazo's row. It is also said that this Blazo was the first white person who died in town and the first who was buried in the old burying ground on the hill.

Following Mr. Blazo came the McCoy family who settled on Sanbury hill whose history of Indian trouble is familiar to all. The youthful Samuel Blake, frequently referred to as "Sergeant Blake" at the age of fifteen years was among the earliest settlers, settling upon the farm now owned and occupied by D.G. and J.A. Chesley, descendants of said Blake.

Some of you may be interested in the charter or grant of the town which is as follows:

George, By the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith.

"To all People to whom these presents shall come: Greeting:

"Know ye, we, of our especial knowledge and meer motion, for the due encouragement of settling a new plantation, by and with the advice and consent of our council, have given & Granted, and by these Presents, as far as in us lies, do give and grant unto all such of our loving subjects as were inhabitants and free holders in the year one thousand seven hundred and twenty-three, in our town of New Castle and in the Parish of Greenland, both within our Province of New Hampshire, in New England, to be divided among them in proportion to their Respective Rates, which they paid in the year 1723 aforesaid,

one tract of Land to be laid out at the head of Nottingham and Northward of land formerly granted to the children of Saml. Allen, decsd., the same to be six miles in Breadth and four miles in Depth, or in such other form as the land ungranted, in that place will admit, so as it contains the same Quantity of Land, and the same to be a town corporate by the name of Epsom to the Pursons aforesaid forever. To Have and to Hold and said Tract of Land to said Grantees and their heirs and assigns forever upon the following conditions:

"1st. That they build twenty Dwelling Houses and settle a Family in each within the term of four years, and break up three acres of Ground for each Settlement, and plant or sow the same within four years.

"2d. That a house be built for the Publick worship of God within the term of six years.

"3d. That One Hundred acres of Land be Reserved for a parsonage, one hundred acres for the first minister of the Gospell and one hundred acres for the Benefit of a School. Provided, Nevertheless, that the Peace with the Indians continue during the aforesd conditions.

"Rendering and paying therefor to us, our heirs and successors, or such other officer or officers as shall be appointed to Receive the same, the annual quit rent or acknowledgement of one pound of good merchantable Hemp in sd town, on the first day of Decembr yearly, for ever, if demanded.

"Reserving also unto us, our heirs and successors, all mast trees growing on said Land, according to an act of Parliment made and provided in that case.

"And for the better order, Rule and Government of the said Town, we, by these Presents, Grant for us, our heirs and successors, unto the aforesd Proprietors, and those that shall inhabit the said Town, that yearly and every year, upon the first Wednesday in May, they may meet at any place within our Province of Newhampshire aforesd, until the settlement of the aforesd Town is perfected, and afterward in the said town, to elect and chuse by the Major part of them constables, Select men and all other Town officers within our aforesd Province have & enjoy, and we appoint our Loving Subjects, Theodore Atkinson, Joshua Foss & Capt. Samuel Weeks to be the selectmen to manage the affairs of the said town for the Present year and untill others are chosen in their Room by the aforesd Propriors.

"In Testimony whereof we have caused the seal of our said Province to be herewith annexed.

"Witness, John Wentworth, Esq., our Lt. Governor and Commander in Chief in and over our said Province, at our town of Portsmouth, the eighteenth day of May, in the Thirteenth year of our Reign, anno Domini 1727.

"J. WENTWORTH.

"By order of his Hon. The Lt. Gov., with advice of the counsel.

"RICHD. WALDRON, *Clerk*.

"Province of N hampshire: Recorded in ye 18th Book, pages 479 & 480, this 29th of June, 1732.

"JOSPH PIERCE, *Recorder*.

"Pd 2s 6d."

By an act of the Provincial Legislature, passed February 21, 1778, the time holding the annual meeting was changed from the first Wednesday of May to the third Wednesday of March.

The first meeting of the proprietors was held at the ferry house in New Castle, Dec. 4, 1727.

It was first voted that the moderator be chosen by holding of hands, the place not being convenient for writing. At this meeting a committee was chosen to run the line of the town and have five shillings for their work.

On the 15th of May, 1728, at a meeting held at the same place the regular officers were elected and another committee, James Randall, Daniel Lunt and James Seavey, were chosen to run out the bounds of the town and do it as soon as possible, and the selectmen were directed to raise thirty pounds upon the proprietors to defray the charges.

On the first and second days of May following the survey was made by the above committee who reported as follows:

"We, whose names are underwritten, being hired by the selectmen of Epsom to lay out the said township of Epsom according to the Charter, have laid it out and bounded it as follows, viz: Beginning at Nottingham head line four miles north westward from Chester line at a maple tree marked with letter N on the eastside for Nottingham and Epsom on the west side for Epsom, from thence running west-northwest four miles to a pitch pine tree which is one mile west from Suncook river, from thence running northeast and by north six miles to a tree westward of the Suncook river from thence running east-southeast four miles to a hemlock tree standing by Nottingham head line by a pond called Epsom pond, with several marked by it; from thence running southeast and by south by Nottingham head line six miles to the maple tree first mentioned.

Laid out and bounded this first and second day of May, one thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine, by us,

Joshua Foss

Daniel Lunt

Jedediah Weeks, Committee

Edward Hall, surveyor

At a later meeting it was voted "that the selectmen procure some industrious person to view the said land and to see where and in what method to lay out their lots and where to settle the town and to do what they shall think proper for advancing the settling of the town aforesaid and to raise money sufficient to defray the charges thereof upon the proprietors."

In May, 1732, it was voted "that there be laid out at some convenient place in the town suitable for building a meeting house and for settling twenty-one families accordingly one thousand acres in fifty-acre lots, one lot to be given to every person who will settle and will fulfill the charter so far as relates to building a house and clearing three acres of land," and it was further voted "that thirty acres be added to each of the twenty men mentioned in the above vote to be laid out in some other part of the town as the proprietors shall think best, beside the fifty acres above mentioned to make up each man eighty acres."

At the proprietors meeting held at the house of Daniel Lunt in Greenland, May 22, 1732, the following twenty men drew their twenty lots, viz., James Seavey, Richard Goss, Thomas Berry, Daniel Lunt, Noah Seavey, William Lock, Samuel Dowst, Zach Berry, Eben Berry, Solomon Dowst, Samuel Wallis, William Wallis, John Blak, Josiah Foss, Simon Knowles, Paul Chapman, Joseph Lock, Jotham Foss, Jedediah Weeks and James Marden.

These several lots have since been known as the "home lots" and are situated upon both sides of the road leading from Deerfield past what is known as the old Center. Perhaps the highway may have been changed a little since the lots were laid out, and I understand they extended, or what is now Deerfield, to just west of the town house. There are certain questions that have arisen in my mind in reference to these settlements. It seems by the record that there were twenty lots laid out and they were drawn by the above named twenty men, yet, we are told that the parsonage lot, the school lot and the ministers lot, each to contain one hundred acres, according to the charter, were all included within this territory. It is also noticeable that none of this property is held at the present time by persons bearing the name of the original owner, nor by any of their descendants unless it be that the Chesley brothers are descendants of John Blake.

Several years ago the Suncook Valley Times of Pittsfield published sketches of Epsom and Epsom people from which I quote.

"The early proprietors and settlers of Epsom were of good English stock, though there was a small company of Scotch Irish from Londonderry who settled here in 1738. Among this number were the McClarys McGaffneys, Dickeys, Wallaces, Knoxes, etc."

Epsom was at that time a frontier town with a few scattering pioneers striving to find a local habitation and a name in these unbroken forests.

Theodore Atkinson, a wealthy land holder, was a leading spirit among the proprietors in inducing a few families to push a settlement so far in the woods. None of the adjoining towns were settled until many years afterwards. This was nearly thirty years before Chichester, Pittsfield or Barnstead were settled, twenty years before Concord received its present name, twenty years before Northwood and Deerfield were incorporated and thirty-six years before the Revolution.

The first settlement in the Suncook valley was made here and not a tree was cut between this and the Canadas, and not a clearing or friendly smoke or any signs of civilization to break the monotony of the unbounded forest or cheer the loneliness of the early settlers. Meager, indeed, are the record and traditions concerning these hardy foresters during their many years of border life before the Revolution. Nottingham fort was their nearest neighbor and asylum of safety. The Indians frequented the valley and the bears, wild cats, deer and catamount roamed through the forests undisturbed.

The proprietors built a blockhouse or garrison for refuge in case of danger. It was built near where Andrew McClary then lived, now the residence of Joseph Lawrence. To this place of refuge Mrs. McCoy was hastening when captured by the Indians. Though the Indians were generally friendly, the inhabitants were greatly annoyed and the growth of the settlement slow and difficult.

During the French and Indian war, commencing in 1756, Epsom was a frontier town. The people lived in fear of the scalping knife and the tomahawk and suffered by the incursions of the prowling savages. Garrisons were established at Epsom, Beech street, Pembroke and a fort at Canterbury. Government frequently sent small detachments of troops up through this section scouting for the enemy and to protect and encourage the settlers. Capt. Andrew McClary was the leading man in this section in all military matters and rendered the colony efficient service during these perilous times.

In 1755 he applied to Governor Wentworth and obtained a company of troops to go in search of the Indians that committed the massacre at Salisbury. At another time he obtained a small company to aid in doing garrison duty at Epsom while the Indians were seen lurking around.

Of the families that were prominent in the affairs of the town in its early days the name of McClary stands foremost. For thirty-five years some members of that noted family served the town as one of its selectmen, representative from 1775 to 1797 and from 1810 to 1818, town clerk fifteen years, state senator ten years, the honorable John president of the Senate in 1784.

The Locke's appear in 1746, Frances Locke selectman from then to 1749, Ephraim from 1754 to 1776, perhaps not continuously but the greater part of the time, and later other members of the family till 1865.

Samuel Jackson served five years about 1770 and then nothing more is said about him.

From 1745 to 1765 the Libbey family were prominent – Samuel, John, Isaac and Isaac Jr.

About the same time one Nathan Marden was member of the board of selectmen and town clerk and his name also appears upon the church records frequently, but I can learn nothing further about him or his descendants.

About 1760 the Sanborn's begin to take part in the affairs and from then until 1870, we find their name in the records. The first was Reuben, then Eliphalet, two brothers I take them to be, then Josiah selectman, then Frederick and Henry F. H.F. two, also representative. Another early officer was Col. Jeremiah Prescott, from which Prescott's bridge derives its name, then Thomas Babb, twenty years in office, Levi Brown six years, the Tripps - Richard, Jeremiah and Thomas. About 1804 Thomas D. Merrill appears and until 1875 was generally in office either as clerk, selectman or representative.

Dr. Samuel Morrill was town clerk from 1801 to 1819, and the records show him to be the right man in the right place, also selectman eight years.

Squire Hanover Dickey comes to notice about 1820 and Winthrop Fowler in 1824, and he and his descendants have been frequently honored by the citizens.

Then there were others who served shorter terms such as Capt. James Gray, Dr. David L. Morrill, afterward Governor of the State, William Ham, Levi Locke and after his son Benjamin L., Eliphalet Wiggin, John Griffin, Nathan Bickford, Jonathan L. Cilley, James Martin and others.

From 1779 to 1800 there are several names that appear on the town records two or three times and then nothing more is said about them, and they are names with which we are not familiar at present. One of these is Benjamin Goodwin, as it appears in one place and in another it is Gooding, selectman four years. John Casey. Clerk from 1780 to 1784, a fine penman. Solomon Sutton serving both as clerk and selectman, Amos Morrill, selectman from 1790 to 1793. Who can tell where they lived, what their occupation or where they went?

The record of this town in the wars in which this nation has been engaged is one of which we may justly be proud.

We have the names of thirty five of its citizens who did valiant service in gaining the Independence of this country.

Again I quote from another "The seven years war which closed in 1760 had completely aroused the military spirit of the province and organizations with experienced officers had been maintained up to the time of the Revolution. A new regiment was then formed, the Twelfth comprising the towns of Nottingham, Northwood, Deerfield, Chichester and Pittsfield. " "Coming events cast their shadows before." The people were expecting a serious conflict.

The battle of Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775, sounded the tocsin to arms. Signals flamed from the hill tops and fleet messengers transmitted the news from town to town. The sturdy yeomanry of the Suncook Valley snatched their trusty fire locks and powder horns and started for the scene of hostilities with spirits as brave as ever animated a soldier and with hearts as noble and honest as ever throbbed in the cause of liberty and freedom.

They were governed by one common impulse and they came from blazed paths and crooked roads that wound through the forests and thickets. They were all known to each other as brothers and townsmen. Each soldier represented a household and they and their cause were commended to the protection of heaven at the morning and evening devotions in the service of the Sabbath.

The men from this section reached Nottingham square about 1 o'clock, where they found Captain Cilley and Dr. Dearborn with a company of about sixty men making with themselves about eighty men. There is much to be written concerning the achievements of this distinguished company and many of the able men composing it, but the most remarkable and thrilling incident in this connection was their famous march to Cambridge.

There is not a parallel in the annals of all the wars in this country and such wonderful powers of endurance by a whole company of men excites our surprise as their patriotism does our pride and admiration.

No other location can boast of sending braver hearts or tougher men to aid by their valor and perseverance in establishing the noblest republic that ever cheered and blest a prosperous people. This noble Spartan band opened a series of brilliant exploits by performing one of the most remarkable physical feats ever recorded in our nation's history.

Dr. Dearborn gives an account of it and Bancroft a passing notice and tradition relates it from generation to generation, but it should be familiar to every son and daughter of New Hampshire as one of the brightest testimonials of our devotion to the cause of freedom and independence.

Accustomed as they were to life in the open air and trials of strength by long journeys, hunting, trapping and scouting, they knew little of fear or fatigue.

Leaving Nottingham square at 1 o'clock in the afternoon they pushed on at a rapid pace as if the destiny of the province or hopes the nation depended upon their alacrity or speed. At Kingston they took a double-quick or dog-trot, and followed it without a halt to Haverhill, crossing the Merrimack river in a ferry boat, at sunset, having made twenty-seven miles in six hours. But this is not all; they halted at

Andover for supper and then started for a night march and on the morning of the twenty-first inst., at sunrise, there were paraded on Cambridge common, "spilling for a fight."

Those from Epsom had traveled seventy miles in less than twenty-four hours and the whole company from Nottingham, fifty seven miles in less than twenty hours.

Did bone and muscle ever do better?

"That was the spirit of '76. That was the kind of stuff the men were made of who lived in the Suncook Valley one hundred and twenty-five years ago."

The record still further reads: Andrew McClary, killed at Bunker Hill; William McCrillis, killed at Bunker Hill; Lieut. Andrew McGaffey, wounded at Bunker Hill; Weymouth Wallace, wounded at Bunker Hill; Adj. John McClary, died of a wound at Albany; Ozome Lock, killed at Bennington; Francis Locke, died at Chimney Point; Peter Pomp (an African) died at Valley Forge; Simon Sanborn, died at Chimney Point; Noah St. Clair, wounded at St. John."

We find the record of forty-seven men who enlisted in the war of 1812, the most of them serving but sixty days.

In the War of the Rebellion, Epsom was well represented, but it was so recent that most of you are familiar with its details.

More than eighty men were credited to the town, while there were many others who were natives of this place who enlisted from other localities. Twenty or more of these brave men never returned, some killed on the field of battle, some dying in the hospitals from wounds or diseases and others against whose names are written missing or captured.

The population has varied with the passing years.

In 1767 the enumeration by the selectmen gives forty married men and forty married women, seventy-one boys under sixteen years, sixty six girls, two widows and fifteen unmarried men over sixteen years of age, a total of two hundred and thirty-nine.

In 1791 the population of the town was 799, in 1800 it was 1034, in 1810 it was 1156, in 1820 it was 1336, in 1830 it was 1418, the highest it has ever been. In 1840 it went down to 1205, in 1850 it gained to 1366, in 1860 it went back to 1216, in 1870 it dropped to 993, in 1880 down to 909 and in 1890 down still lower to 815, and I think the census of next year will keep it about where it was in the last.

MRS. J.W. FOWLER'S ADDRESS



"OUR SCHOOLS"

It seems from little information that our forefathers immediately after settlement, consisting of twenty can be obtained from the town records families, reserved one hundred acres of land for the benefit of schools, and a meeting was held at the house of Capt. Andrew McClary on the 18th day of June, 1776, according to a notice by the Selectmen, to consult about the building of a schoolhouse. First, voted that the size of the schoolhouse be 21 feet in length, and 17 in breadth. This meeting adjourned until the 25th of June, at which time it was voted to build the schoolhouse on the school lot where the selectmen thought proper, and the cost to be paid in land or money. Ensign McGaffey, being the contractor and builder. Later on a complaint was made to Lieut. Ephraim Locke, grand juror, that the town had neglected to keep a stated school and May 22, 1780, a meeting was held, and a vote passed to raise what money the selectmen thought necessary that year for the support of schools. The next year two meetings were called, at the first one they voted to raise 100 pounds lawful money for schools, but at the second meeting, March 26, 1781, they voted to sell the schoolhouse at auction to the highest bidder, and the amount received be appropriated to the use of the town. It appears from what follows that this caused division and hard feeling among the intelligent part of the inhabitants; as a brief extract from a petition to the selectmen shows: "To the selectmen of the town of Epsom: That we ever have been and still are desirous to promote public schools in said town, for the instruction of our children, and of late used every exertion in our power to have a suitable schoolhouse in the district completed for that design, but every such effort proves abortive, owing to some among us who, from their conduct, seem to demonstrate a total disregard to the best interest of their families, by depriving their children of the means of instruction, and thereby rendering them, in a great degree, useless members of society. We therefore seek to the town for redress, as we know of no other remedy, and pray that a meeting of said town may be warned as soon as may be, that this our grievance may be considered, and some method adopted to put in execution that shall remove the dissension among us, and give us speedy relief in finishing the schoolhouse already begun, that a school may be had seasonably for the purpose aforesaid." This was signed by James Gray and ten other citizens of the town July 15, 1798. The 5th day of August, a meeting was held and 10 pounds was voted to be expended in finishing the schoolhouse; and should there be a surplus, the same should be laid out for school-keeping the present year. As near as I can ascertain this schoolhouse was situated at the Center, very near where the present one now stands. We have been informed that there was a schoolhouse at an earlier period situated near Joseph Lawrence's residence. Also that schools were kept in some private houses, still inhabited. May 19, 1808, the town was divided into six school districts. In 1825 Josiah Sanborn, Hanover Dickey and Winthrop Fowler, were chosen a committee to sub-divide it; but it was not thought expedient to do so until January 1833, at which time it was changed to ten with two Unions. In a few years time it was again altered, so at the present time we have but seven. Very little information can be obtained as regards the early teachers of the town, but James Gray is said to have been a school teacher before the Revolutionary war, and tradition tells of Master Sutton, Casey, Thomas D. Merrill, Master Batchelder, noted for the severity of his punishment; School Master Ham, General Locke, John Chesley Esq., Hersey, the latter having taught several terms, as I have been informed in the Short Falls district. On one day as the story goes it was the custom (when the school master was asked by some of the large scholars, to do an example in arithmetic) that he invited some one of his large pupils to hear the small classes read. At this time one scholar who did not present a very tidy appearance, commenced the sentence, "Time was once when I was young and fair." Coming to the word fair, the reader not knowing what it was, the sub-teacher told her clean; this caused much laughter, attracting the attention of the Esq. He remarked, "Be careful, young man."

Of these old-time school teachers I can only remember three of them as citizens, General Locke, Mr. Chesley, Esq. Ham, the later as superintending school committee. After visiting a certain school in town, being somewhat absent minded, he got into his carriage, without untying his balky horse; some of the boys seeing it, exclaimed "Mr. Ham, your horse is hitched" to which the Esq. replied "Very well, very

well, he'll go directly." Briefly I will allude to the wages of some of our early teachers. Among some old papers have been found the following receipts:

"Received 2 lbs. 8 shillings for 8 weeks' school keeping over the river in 1784, by me Joseph Goss, Epsom, March 8, 1785"

"The town of Epsom to Elizabeth Emery, Dr

To teaching school, in school district No. 4, in Epsom, 7 weeks at 1 dollar per week, \$7.00.

Received payment, Elizabeth Emery, Epsom, July 17, 1833"

This venerable lady is still living in Suncook, N.H. Though comparatively very small this was the usual price paid our lay teachers, besides the pleasant or disagreeable task of boarding round, as it was called just as the teacher found it among her scholars: the length of stay in each family varying according to the number of children sent from the home to school. This sum slowly increased from \$1 to \$3.50 per week to as recent a date as 1865.

As the inhabitants increased the old schoolhouse at the Center was insufficient to accommodate all of the scholars, who were large enough to attend school, and as many new seats as there was possible room for, were put in, and during some winter terms, boards were placed across the aisles. Here the lad and lass from 7 years to men and women, were wont to sit for six long hours, with, perhaps, from one-half to an hour at noon, and a few minutes recess in the forenoon and after. Well, I do remember the Sanborns, Halls, Lockes, Hoyts, Weeks, Chesleys, Griffins and Lawrences, who came to this box of learning as well as many others less in number to receive instruction from Henry F. Sanborn, Edwin B. Harvey and others. The former being a very successful teacher in governing a school of seventy five or eighty scholars; his sharp black eye and frowned forehead were usually good enough to quell the ill behavior of all except the most stubborn pupils, then some one of his most trusty boys were sent with jackknife, down to the gulf to cut a bunch of alders, of which a supply usually were found over the blackboard.

Some select schools were taught here by B. Van Dame, Mrs. V.G. Ramsey, Harriet McCutcheon, and later by some of our local teachers. As the length of schools were not over twenty weeks a year in the largest districts, and some of the smallest, perhaps twelve, this afforded the larger scholars very little schooling, so in 1854 the town hall was fitted up by certain interested citizens, purchasing the old seats that had been removed from Pittsfield Academy and on the 3rd day of August, of that year, Samuel G. Lane began a school, which proved to be both interesting and profitable, and for the next six years a school was kept there every autumn, taught by the following persons: James W. Webster, taught two terms, and still is teaching in Boston, Mass.; Cyrus O. Brown, George W. Morrill and Thomas M. Chase, each taught one term. Still later other private schools were taught here by our resident teachers.

Thus far I have only spoken of some of the male teachers of our town, and were I to attempt to count the female ones my efforts would be a failure, as they have been so numerous, that it reminds one of "Mrs. Partington's men," that they numbered one of the less usual when they got married.

But I feel that this history would quite incomplete without giving special mention to some of our lady teachers who have gone from this good old town. In memory I recall Mrs. Susan Brown Forbes of Byfield, Mass., Miss Jennie Harvey of Exeter, only recently resigning from school labors, Mrs. Abbie Wallace McAlister of Englewood, Ill., these having pursued this avocation for nearly a quarter of a century.

There are many, many others who have done credit to themselves and the town. Perhaps there are no residents among us at the present time that were engaged in town a greater number of terms than Mrs. Lucy Bickford Sherburne and Mrs. Mary Libby Dowst. Fearing my imperfect history may be too lengthy will go no farther, only hoping that the present generation may so improve their much greater school district privileges, that as many useful men and women, may go out from the town of Epsom (or remain here) as in past generations.

DR. A.P. CHESLEY'S ADDRESS

Fellow Citizens. Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tennyson has said:

"It is a beautiful belief that ever round our head,
Are hovering on angel wings the spirits of the dead."

And I believe today the dear old souls of Epsom's past physicians are mingling with us in this celebration, perhaps it is as much a home week for the spirits of the aid as it is for us. We can fancy them gazing at the well-remembered hills and dales, the often travelled roads, the ripening harvest, the green and fertile fields, and all the old familiar scenes where they have lived and loved and worked. And perchance the lines of Longfellow come to them when he says "And in thought I go up and down the streets of that dear old town. And my lost youth comes back to me."

It is an undisputed fact that in all ages, as we are informed by history, tradition, and song, that the doctor's calling is the most important of all the vocations of man. He is looked up to; he is appealed to on all matters as guide, philosopher and friend. Not even the minister gets so near the hearts of all to cheer and comfort as the village doctor.

"He is a man to all the country dear, And passing rich on forty pounds a year."

There was no medical organization or association in the State for more than half a century after the town was settled. And information in regard to the earlier physicians is extremely limited. **Stephen Sweat** was the first physician of Epsom. He was followed by **Obediah Williams**, who was active in the affairs of the town, and was one of a committee of three to treat with the Rev. Mr. Tucke, in 1773. He also served as a surgeon in the Revolutionary War.

The doctor of the present time, who drives in his carriage over our roads, rides in his automobile, or in the electric cars, or makes his way from place to place by railroad train, knows but little of the hardships and dangers of these early days. There were in most instances no roads, and the physician on horseback, or more frequently on foot, was obliged to make his way by means of spotted trees.

These were indeed pioneer times but the records show that they did not interfere with excellent professional services.

The next physician was **David L. Morrill**, born in Epping, New Hampshire, 1772, June 10, son of the Rev. Isaac Morrill and Anna Lawrence. Few men in the State ever occupied more numerous and important offices than Dr. Morrill did. Educated at Washington, Mass., and Exeter Academy, he studied medicine and began to practice in this town in 1793, and continued to practice till 1800, when he became so deeply imbued with religious ideas, that he studied for the ministry, and in 1802 was ordained pastor of a church in Goffstown, but resigned his pastorate in 1811 and resumed the practice of medicine. He was representative to the General Court, 1808-1816 and in 1816 was speaker of the house, and at this session was chosen to the senate of the United States for six years. In 1823 he was elected State senator and was president of that body. He was elected Governor by the legislature and the three following years elected governor by the people. In 1825 he had thirty thousand, one hundred and sixty seven votes out of thirty thousand seven hundred and seventy which were cast. He received the honorary degrees of A.M. and M.D. from Dartmouth college, and L.L. D. from the University of Vermont. Various minor offices were held by him and there are various publications and addresses in existence. He married for his first wife, Jane Wallace of this town, Sept. 25, 1794, who died in December 14, 1823, leaving no children. The following June, 1824, he married for his second wife, Lydia Poor of Goffstown, by whom he had four sons, three of whom survived him. In 1831, he moved to Concord, after which time he did not engage in public life, and at the time of his death, June 27, 1849, was a member of the South Church. The State claims him as an honored public official. The ministry claims him as one of her soundest theologians and the medical fraternity claims him as one of her most distinguished members.

Samuel Morrill, brother of David Lawrence Morrill, was born in Epping, July 12, 1779, received his education in the public schools of the town and in 1794 became a clerk in a general store. Through the influence of his brother in 1796, he entered Exeter Academy, afterward studied medicine with his brother in Epsom, and Dr. Josiah Bartlett of Stratham, NH. He was examined by the censors of the New Hampshire Medical society in 1800. He commenced the practice of medicine in the town of Salisbury in the spring of 1800, but in a few months, came to Epsom and took the place of his brother, who gave up the practice of medicine to study for the ministry. He continued his practice here till 1819. He was town clerk during the nineteen years of his stay in Epsom and selectman for seven years. He was a man strong in judgment, simple in treatment, skillful in application. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical society. He moved to Concord in 1819. In 1826, he received the honorary degree of M.D. from Dartmouth college, was justice for the court of sessions for the county of Rockingham 1821, register of deeds and judge of probate for Merrimack County 1823-1828; 1829 treasurer of New Hampshire branch of Educational society; 1830, treasurer New Hampshire Savings Bank. He was a deacon of the First Congregational Church of Concord.

Josiah Crosby followed Dr. Samuel Morrill. He received his education under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. Hidden of Tamworth, New Hampshire, and afterwards attended school at Fryeburg and Amherst Academies. He attended three courses of lectures at Hanover, being the last year a pupil of Dr. Nathan Smith. He practiced in Sandwich for two years, when he moved to Meredith Bridge, and in 1818 was practicing in Deerfield. Coming here in 1819, he remained until 1825 when he removed to Concord. In 1828 he removed to Lowell, Mass., where he held various offices in the town and city governments of Lowell. He was one of the founders of the Appleton Street church. In 1838 he again moved to Meredith Bridge, and in a short time moved to Manchester where he died in 1875, at the age of 81 years. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical Society and its president in 1850, and 1857 was elected vice president of the American Medical Association. Dr. Crosby was one of New Hampshire's noted physicians and surgeons. He invented many surgical appliances that are still in use. The records tell us that he did not protect these by letters patent, but gave them freely to the profession for the relief of human suffering, believing with the poet in the quality of mercy.

"It is twice blessed; It blessing him that gives, and him that takes."

The next physician was **John Proctor**, born in Rowley, Mass., in 1781, of an old and distinguished family and a brother of Benjamin Proctor, a noted physician of Massachusetts. The earlier years of his professional life were spent in Chelmsford, Mass. He came here about 1825 and remained till he died in 1837, aged 56 years. He was twice married, his second wife being Catherine L. Gray of this town. He is spoken of by the older residents of the town as an honorable, courteous Christian physician, and a skillful surgeon. He was a friend of the poor and needy. Although his professional career was not long, his patrons' who were numerous, had confidence in his ability and he was sincerely mourned by the people of the town at his death.

Dr. Stephen Gale was a native of East Kingston, born in 1799. He went to Raymond in 1824 and practiced there the most of the time till his death in 1846. During this time he practiced one year in East Kingston and later a short time in Gloucester, Mass. In 1833 he joined the New Hampshire Center District Medical society from Epsom. His stay in Epsom was short. He was a faithful, industrious and skillful physician, and had an extensive practice. He married Sarah Kimball of Gloucester, Mass., by whom he had two children, one of whom survived him.

Dr. Babb practiced here from 1837-1840, when he moved to Manchester, where he continued his professional work for a long term of years. He was a man honest of purpose, sincere in his motives and with kindness of soul. He studied with Dr. Josiah Crosby and at Philadelphia where he received his degree. He married Maria Lang of Epsom, and three children, one son and two daughters survive him.

Hanover Dickey was born in Epsom, Sept. 14, 1809. He was educated in the town schools and at Dartmouth College. He attended the first course of lectures at Hanover and the second at Boston, where

he graduated. After receiving his diploma, he returned to his native town, and practiced successfully from 1840 till 1845, when he went to Lowell, Mass. Here he pursued his professional duties to the day of his death, May 29, 1873. Dr. Dickey was a man of superior judgment, retentive memory, well-posted in his profession, honorable and much esteemed by acquaintances, patrons and professional brethren.

Leonard Peabody came to this town in 1845 and remained till 1871. He was born in Newport, N.H., Sept. 18, 1817, the son of Ami and Sarah (Johnson) Peabody. He studied at Kimball Union Academy and Concord Literary Institution, studied with Dr. Timothy Haynes of Concord, and Dr. John L. Swett of Newport, N.H., afterwards attending one course of lectures at Woodstock, Vt., where he received his degree of M.D., in June, 1844. After practicing for one year in Henniker, he came to Epsom. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical Society, Center District Medical Society and of the New Hampshire Historical Society, a frequent contributor to periodicals, town clerk of Epsom, postmaster for ten years, member of the Legislature in 1885. He died at Henniker Jan. 13, 1899. He united with the church at the age of 16 and for sixty-five years was interested and active in all its work. No words of mine can add to the grandeur and simplicity of his life. He loved these hills and valleys, and the people that dwelt among them, never putting himself forward, still ever in the front from his inherent virtues, he stands as a bright and shining light to all who would win the reward for good and faithful services. In his professional work and in his public and private life he won universal respect and esteem, and he died rich in the grateful memories of those with whom he had come in contact.

Sullivan A. Taylor was born in Strafford, N.H., Jan. 19, 1839. He graduated from Bishop's College, Lenoxville, P.Q., and in 1866 began the study of medicine at Mt. Gill College, Montreal, where he graduated in 1870. He practiced his profession in Lenoxville, till 1872, when he came to Epsom and remained here four years. He then went to Concord, N.H., where he remained two years and then moved to Gilmanton where he is still located. He excelled in the practice of medicine, also in the department of surgery. He made himself familiar with the various improvements of the times, and was thoroughly impressed with the dignity and high importance of the medical profession. He was true to his chosen occupation and cultivated it with industry during his stay in Epsom.

Albion H. French, M.D., once a well known physician of Epsom, was born in Gilmanton, N.H., March 27, 1849, son of Thomas H. and Mary Ann (Brown) French. He was only three years of age when his father and mother died. He attended the academies in Pembroke and Pittsfield and the Northwood seminary. He fitted for college at the Gilmanton Academy, took a partial college course under the tutorship of Professor Avery of the Tilton Seminary. He graduated from the medical department of the University of Vermont with the class of 1875. After that he pursued his medical studies in New York City. He was a delegate by substitution to the National Medical convention in New York City in 1880. The first eight years of professional life were spent in Epsom, N.H., from October 1875 to 1883. While in Epsom he gained a host of friends and built up a large practice. He was regarded as a skillful and reliable physician, and much sought for in all the adjoining towns. He moved to Leominster, Mass., in 1883. In 1892 he located in Pittsfield, N.H., and has since remained there. He has a large and lucrative practice and is highly esteemed by all.

Dr. M.F. Smith came to Epsom in 1883. He was born in Weare, N.H., and was a graduate of Dartmouth Medical College. He faithfully performed the duties of his profession for five years when poor health compelled him to give up his professional work. After six months of rest he located in Hampton, N.H., where he has acquired not only a large practice, but the esteem and respect of all with whom he comes into contact.



Dr. Roscoe Hill was born in Northwood, N.H., Oct. 9, 1856, son of Ivory B. and Eliza (Fogg) Hill. He received his education in the district schools and Coe's Northwood Academy and studied medicine at Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York, where he graduated in 1882. He practiced two years in Norfolk, Conn., three years in Lynn, Mass., and in 1887 came to Epsom, where he has since practiced. His cheerful smile, gentile countenance and his quiet sympathy are known to you all. I knew him as a faithful student, you know him as a thorough and skillful physician and as a citizen, who is always foremost in all that tends to the well-being of the community.

Such, briefly is the history of the doctors of Epsom. They were men of influence as well as physicians and occupied many positions of honor and trust, and many of them, who sought larger fields, attained a high position in their profession. They were men, whose duties did not exist only in the dispensing of drugs, but embraced a wider sphere, a broader field of action, services actuated by patriotism, humanity, kindness and love of all which was most ennobling and for the best interest of the community.

These acts of kindness and love have caused their memories to be transmitted to posterity. Daniel Webster fully appreciated this work when he said, "If we work upon marble it will perish. If we work upon brass, time will efface it, if we rear temples they will crumble to dust, but if we work upon our immortal minds, if we imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and our fellowmen, we engrave on these tablets something that will brighten to all eternity."

The old Epsom stock, it improves greatly on acquaintance. May it retain its identity and its integrity and continue to exert a somber and healthful influence in the shifting population through generations to come. No son of Epsom is or need be ashamed of the home of his fathers.

The speakers of the day have told us of the town as she was and as she is, but she speaks for herself. New Hampshire has sent her sons into every State in the Union, and everywhere they have maintained a high standard of integrity and ability. To this number Epsom has furnished more than her full quota.

"Princes and lords may flourish and may fade. A breath can make them as a breath has made.
But a good yeomanry, that country's pride, When once, destroyed, can never be supplied."