

1904

bed blanket round you.' When Captain Woodhull's little daughter Fanny asked if he was going to take her 'new calico frock' the spy replied that he would not, if she would show him which it was.

"The Captain's uniform was next demanded, this his wife tried to save by stratagem, but a slave, fearing for the life of her mistress, said, 'You know missy you put it between the feather beds.'

"Just before the men left the house, Mrs. Woodhull was ordered not to look out the window, a command which of course she did not obey, and by the clear moonlight easily saw them ride off in the direction of Major Strong's house, and before long, heard the fatal gun shots which ended that brave man's career.

"Claudius was afterward captured, and when on trial in the town of Goshen did his utmost to keep Mrs. Woodhull from testifying against him; not succeeding in this he glared at her fiercely, exclaiming with bravado, 'You never saw me before.' Remembering the Tory spy's handsome attire, especially the rich lace ruffles at his wrists, the lady pointed to his hand-cuffs and quietly remarked, 'Oh, yes I have, but you wore different ruffles at your wrists.'

"The spy was captured on Long Island, from which place he was taken to Fishkill Landing, and from thence to Goshen Jail, by Sheriff Isaac Nicoll, escorted by some of Captain Woodhull's Light Horse Troop.

"Mrs. Woodhull's testimony, it seems, convicted the British spy, and it is rather odd to reflect that he was hung, not for the murder of Major Strong, but for the robbery of Captain Woodhull's house and other robberies."

It is supposed that Captain Ebenezer Woodhull was a Presbyterian, at any rate we find the names of two of his sons, Thomas and Fletcher, among the contributors to the Presbyterian parsonage at Blooming Grove, and in those days most vigorous Whigs were staunch Presbyterians.

Captain Woodhull died October 4th, 1803, leaving a widow and nine children.

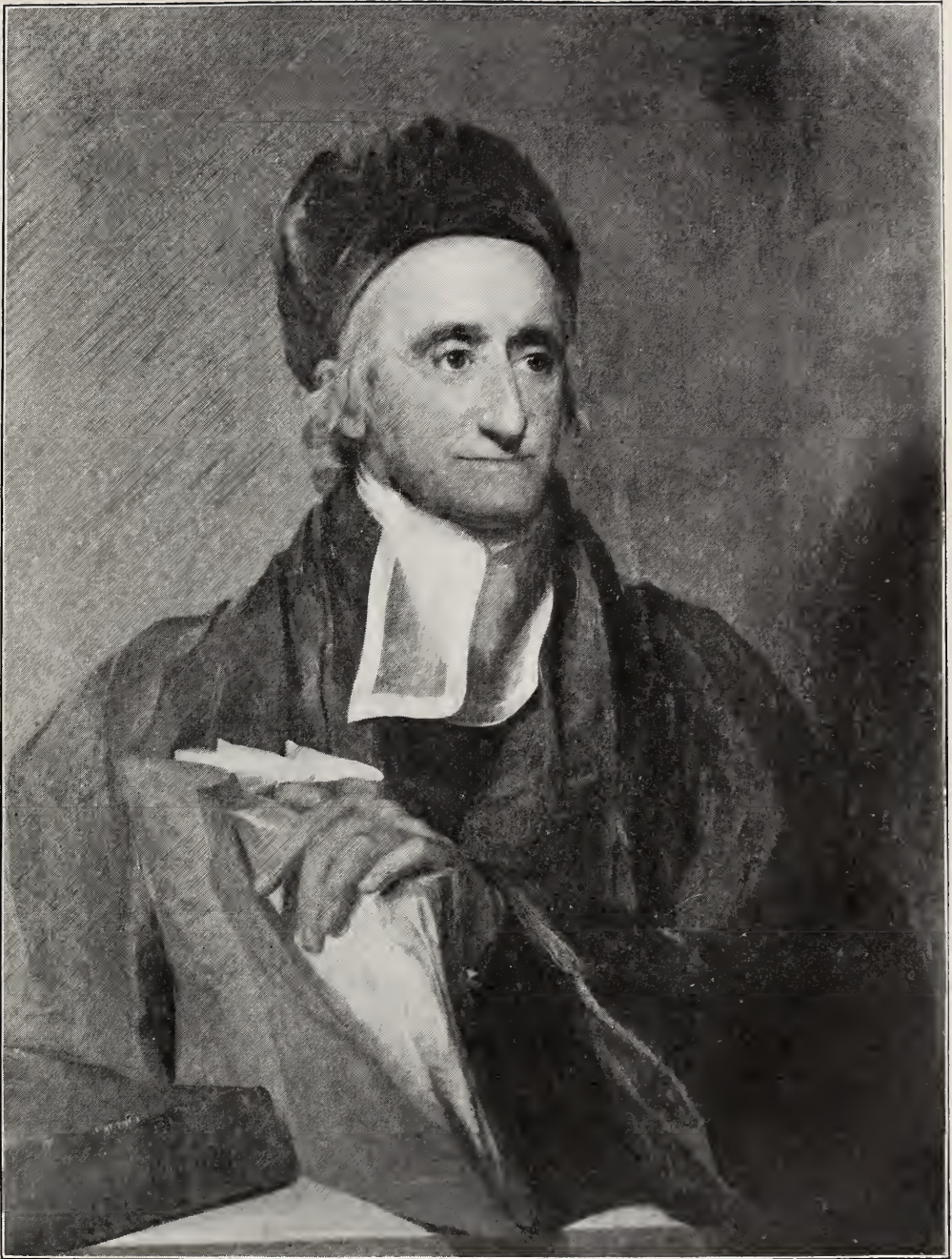
(See Genealogy, No. 30.)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH XIII.

JOHN WOODHULL, (D. D.), fifth generation from Richard Woodhull I., Patentee of Brookhaven, Long Island, was born at Miller's Place, Long Island, January 26, 1744.

He was the second son of the Hon. John Woodhull and Elizabeth, daughter of Major William Henry Smith, of the "Tangier Smith" family.

John Woodhull prepared for college under his maternal uncle, the Rev. Caleb Smith, of Newark Mountain, now Orange, New Jersey, and in 1766, received the degree of A. B., from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University.)



JOHN WOODHULL, D. D.

From the Thomas Sully portrait, painted in 1822, when Dr. Woodhull was seventy-eight years of age.

At this time Samuel Finley, D. D., was President of the College. From Princeton the young student went to Fagg's Manor, Chester County, Pa., where he pursued his theological studies under the Rev. John Blair, and was licensed to preach, by the Presbytery of New Castle, August, 1768.

Several urgent calls were received, from among which, John Woodhull chose that of the Presbyterian Church at Leacock, Lancaster County, Pa.

He was ordained and installed August 1, 1770. Upon that occasion, the Rev. Joseph Montgomery preached the sermon, the Rev. Robert Smith, D. D., presided, and the Rev. Alexander McDowell gave the charge to pastor and congregation.

Mr. Woodhull was the successor of the Rev. Robert Smith, D. D., an eminent theologian, and second Moderator of the General Assembly.

John Woodhull married, May 28, 1772, Sarah, only child of Captain George Spofford, of the Royal Navy.

Sarah Spofford Woodhull was a woman of fine mind and noble character; an ideal pastor's wife, full of zeal and helpfulness.

In the first year of his pastorate at Leacock, the Rev. John Woodhull purchased 138 acres of land from Mr. David Orner, upon which he built "a large, substantial, convenient, and for that day, an elegant house."

Since that time the house has been added to, but the part built by him is exactly as when the Rev. John Woodhull occupied it. This house is now in possession of Mrs. Steele, widow of Captain John Steele.

For ten years John Woodhull preached at Leacock, the beloved pastor of a loyal and united congregation. He was "a strenuous Whig," and with a number of other patriotic men, signed "a remarkable petition to the Pennsylvania Assembly, December 31, 1777, praying that all of the troops of the State be ordered out."

In the early part of the Revolutionary War, inspired by the patriotic fervor of their pastor, all the able-bodied men of the congregation went into the field, accompanied by the Rev. John Woodhull, as Chaplain.

He was Chaplain of the 7th Battalion 1777 Lancaster Militia, Colonel John Boyd.

Owing to a typographical error in the printed records, his name appears as John Woodwell, but in the original archives, according to the late William H. Egle, M. D., State Librarian at Harrisburg, the name was John Woodhull. (See letter at close of sketch.)

He was in the Germantown Campaign, and also in the Jerseys. On the occasion of the Battle of Monmouth, when a cannoneer fell near where he stood, John Woodhull assisted in serving the cannon. The authority for this statement was the late Colonel William C. Alexander, whose father, the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., of Princeton, was a personal friend of John Woodhull's.

A number of interesting letters from camp are in the possession of Thenford Woodhull, of Brooklyn, New York, while his sword and sword-belt are in the possession of another great-grandson, John Tennent Woodhull, of Camden, New Jersey.

(For "Letters from Camp," see Genealogical Appendix, Note X.)

The funeral sermon of the unfortunate Captain John Huddy, who had been ruthlessly murdered by the British, was preached by Chaplain John Woodhull to a large concourse of people, some accounts say from the hotel piazza in the town of Freehold, New Jersey.

Later, he also preached the funeral sermon of the Hon. Nathaniel Scudder, M. D., Colonel First Monmouth Regiment, who met his death in an engagement near Shrewsbury. The text chosen for the sad occasion was from the words, "And all Judea and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah."

Colonel Scudder was buried with the honors of war, in the Old Tennent Churchyard. It was said of this man "few have fallen in this country that were so useful or so generally mourned in his death."

In 1779, much to the regret of his Leacock congregation, Rev. John Woodhull accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church, near Freehold, New Jersey, for many years known as the "Old Tennent Church."

He succeeded the celebrated William Tennent, who had preached for forty years in that church. Dr. Woodhull's pastorate was from 1779 to 1824, a period of forty-four years.

In 1778, John Woodhull received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale College, which, says one, "Was a distinction rarely conferred at that day, and more rarely perhaps by Yale than by any other College in the country."

For many years, in connection with his duties as pastor and preacher, Dr. Woodhull conducted a very successful grammar school. He also prepared young men for the ministry, many of whom became useful and beloved pastors.

This work he carried on until the establishment of Princeton Theological Seminary, of which he was a director, and most of the time Vice-President of the Board; until his death at an advanced age, he took the deepest interest in the welfare of the Seminary.

Among the young men who prepared for the ministry under Dr. Woodhull were the following: Robert Barkley, for years pastor of the Bound Brook Church; Holloway Whitefield Hunt and his brother Gardner, both of Sussex; Joseph Rue, of Pennington; Joseph Campbell, D. D., of Huntington; Cyrus Gildersleeve, who preached at Wilkesbarre; Peter Fish, of Long Island; Matthew La Rue Perrine, D. D., pastor at Madison, and later of Spring Street Church, New York; also one of the professors of the Auburn Theological Seminary. George Spofford Woodhull, of Cranbury; Selah Strong Woodhull, D. D., pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn; Isaac V. Brown, D. D., pastor of the church at Lawrenceville, New



OLD TENNENT CHURCH,
Monmouth County, New Jersey, Built in 1751,
Where the Rev. John Woodhull, D. D., preached for nearly half a century.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH XIII.

Jersey, and founder of the successful preparatory school in that place. Rev. John McDowell, D. D., pastor of Elizabethtown church and of the Central and Spring Garden Church, of Philadelphia; Jacob T. Field and Jacob Kirkpatrick, D. D., Joseph Shafer, D. D., and the Rev. George Spofford Bergen, D. D.

John Woodhull, D. D., was one of the earliest members of the Cliosophic Society of the College of New Jersey. The Well-Meaning Society disbanded in the year 1769, and re-organized as The Cliosophic, June, 1770, the members of the former always having been recognized as belonging to the latter society.

He was a Trustee of the College of New Jersey for forty-four years, and upon one occasion, during the short absence of Dr. John Witherspoon, was Acting President.

Amidst his varied duties as preacher, pastor, classical teacher and theological instructor, Dr. Woodhull kept up a deep and lively interest in affairs of State and Union.

As a preacher he is said to have been exceedingly popular, so much so that "some pulpits in the vicinity of Freehold continued vacant for years, the congregations being satisfied with quarterly or half yearly visits from him."

Rev. John Woodhull, D. D., was Moderator of the last Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May, 1788, and the third Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The following interesting bit of reminiscence is from an Historical Sermon by the Rev. P. J. Timlow, D. D.:

"In the winter of 1818-19, while I was yet a student at Princeton, though licensed to preach, I went at the suggestion of Dr. Miller to Freehold, New Jersey, to pass a Sabbath with Dr. Woodhull. It was my first acquaintance with him, and a letter from Dr. Miller was my introduction.

"I reached the hospitable, but rather humble dwelling (the historic 'Old Tennent Parsonage') on Saturday evening. He and his wife gave me a cordial welcome and I soon found that I was to be amply repaid for my journey.

"The house, which he occupied, stood, I think, on an open field; and he quickly told me that it was on or near the spot on which was fought the famous Battle of Monmouth.

"It was the house in which William Tennent had lived before him, and where Whitefield had often been a guest; and I remember his saying that when something of which he was speaking occurred, 'Whitefield sat there, and Tennent sat there.'

"His reminiscences of the olden time, and especially of the events of the Revolutionary War, seemed inexhaustible; and what rendered them the more interesting was, that he scarcely spoke of anything of which he was not himself a sharer or a witness."

Dr. Woodhull has been described as "a man of fine appearance, about six feet in height, erect to the last, very dignified and of an attractive benignity of countenance and manner."

He was a great favorite with the young people of his congregation, and beloved by all. Many anecdotes of Dr. Woodhull are still extant about Freehold.

The Spring previous to his death, Dr. Woodhull attended the Anniversary of the American Bible Society, and was one of the speakers of the occasion.

The Rev. Dr. McDowell who was present, said, "he attracted the marked attention of the audience. He spoke with an elevation of voice and distinctness and earnestness that surprised the audience, and it was the most popular speech made on that occasion."

Dr. Woodhull was nearly eighty-one years of age when he died, December 22, 1824. His illness was of short duration and he retained his vigor of body and mind to the end.

He was buried in Old Tennent Church-yard where a monument was erected to his memory by his devoted congregation.

The Rev. Isaac Brown a former theological student of Dr. Woodhull's preached the funeral sermon. Among other beautiful tributes to Dr. Woodhull's character was the following:

"In condescension, meekness, charity, and benevolence to the afflicted, his life was an open volume of instruction."

Dr. Woodhull had six children four of whom survived him. His widow, Mrs. Sarah Spofford Woodhull, died three years later; they had lived together over fifty years.

(See Genealogy, No. 46.)

STATE LIBRARY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

LIBRARIAN, WILLIAM H. EGLE, M. D.

HARRISBURG, PA., Feb. 28, 1891.

Schuyler C. Woodhull, Esq., 106 Market St., Camden, N. J.:

DEAR SIR:—I am in receipt of your favor of February 26th.

Mr. Jordan is right in his surmises that John Woodwell chaplain 7th battalion, 1777, was John Woodhull. I yesterday compared the original and find it was a typographical error. He was not, however, at Valley Forge, in 1777 and 1778. He was in the Germantown campaign and I think was in the Jerseys in 1778, but was not in the cantonment at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777 and 1778, as stated.

Yours with respect,

(Signed) WILLIAM H. EGLE.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH XIV.

ABRAHAM WOODHULL, (Hon.), fifth generation from Richard Woodhull I., Patentee of Brookhaven, Long Island, was born October 7, 1750.