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THE NEW YORK Genealogical and Biographical Record.

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No. 2

HON. ABEL I. SMITH.

CONTRIBUTED BY HIS SISTER, DORA SMITH.

Hon. Abel I. Smith, a valued member of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society since April 13th, 1900, died at his home in New York City on December 26th, 1916. He was born June 12th, 1843, in the old family homestead at Secaucus, Bergen County, New Jersey, where his great-great-grandfather Abel¹ Smith of Long Island, New York purchased a tract of land on October 24th, 1732, and who in the deed to this land was described as "Abel Smith, Gentleman." This Jersey land has since its purchase been continuously possessed and occupied by the direct descendants of Abel¹ Smith up to the present day.

Daniel² Smith, son of Abel¹ Smith, served with honor in the Revolutionary War as a member of Col. Oliver Spencer's famous Cavalry Regiment.

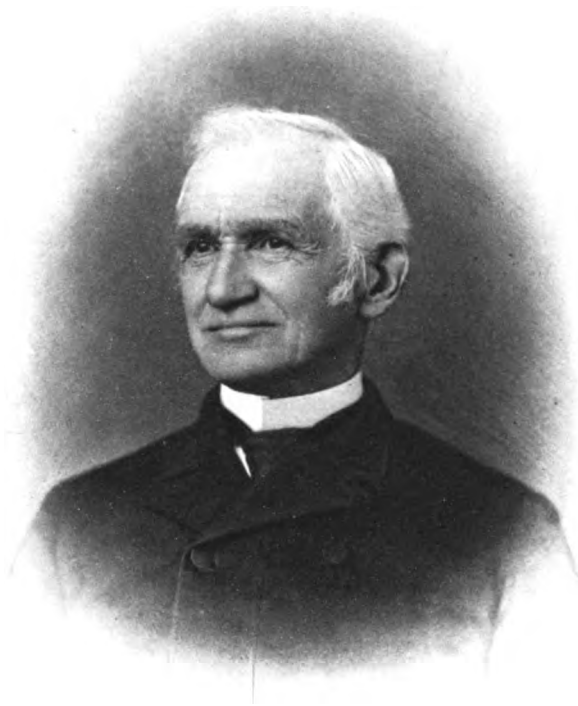
His son John³ Smith was the father of Abel I.⁴ Smith who served in the War of 1812 and later held positions of honor and trust in Hudson and Bergen Counties, New Jersey.

It is recorded of Abel⁴ Smith that as a matter of conscience he freed his slaves before the law was passed which abolished slavery in New Jersey. He also cared generously for his freed slaves during their life time. One of these former slaves attained the age of 102 years, and the subject of this sketch Abel I.⁵ Smith charged himself with the burial of eleven of them.

Abel I.⁴ Smith died in 1865 a venerated citizen of his county. He was one of the few persons honored by Robert Stevens and John Stevens in 1820 with a pass for life over the Hoboken ferries. The original "Pass" in the handwriting of Mr. Stevens is still in the possession of the family. It reads "Abel I. Smith, and his wife, if he gets one."

Abel I.⁴ Smith married Prudence Cary and Abel I.⁵ Smith, the subject of this sketch, was their son, who proved himself a worthy descendant of these honorable progenitors.

Abel I.⁵ Smith entered the Junior Class of Rutgers College in 1860, from which college he was graduated with honor in 1862. His preparation had been most thorough having been under the tutorship of Rev. Dr. William Mabon for eight years.



Ephra Whitaker.

EPHER WHITAKER OF SOUTHOLD, LONG ISLAND.

CONTRIBUTED BY HERBERT C. WHITAKER.

Rev. Dr. Epher Whitaker was born in Fairfield Township, Cumberland Co., New Jersey, March 27, 1820, and died in Southold, New York, September 1, 1916. His parents were Reuel Whitaker and Sarah Westcott. His grandparents were Nathaniel Whitaker and Lydia Whitaker, first cousins to each other; John Westcott, an officer in the War of 1812, and his second wife, Mary Bennett. His great-grandparents were Ambrose Whitacar and Freeloove Stratton; Lewis Whitacar, brother of Ambrose, and Anna Thompson; Samuel Westcott, a captain in the Revolution and Hannah Shaw; Jeremiah Bennett, also a captain in the Revolutionary War and Sarah Berryman.

Ambrose and Lewis Whitacar were sons of Nathaniel Whitacar by his first wife, Mary (Abbot) Dixon, widow of Anthony Dixon and daughter of Thomas and Ruth (Sheppard) Abbot. Nathaniel Whitacar was the son of Richard Whitacar who came from London, England, to Salem, New Jersey, in 1675. Richard Whitacar's wife was Elizabeth (Provoe) Adkin, daughter of George Provoe, who also came from London to Salem, N. J., about 1675.

Freeloove Stratton was a great-aunt of Governor Stratton of New Jersey; she was a daughter of Benjamin Stratton and Abigail Preston. Benjamin was the grandson of Richard Stratton of Southampton, Long Island (1643), and his wife Elizabeth Edwards, daughter of William and Ann Edwards of Lynn (1641) and East Hampton (1650). Abigail Preston's ancestry included Roger Preston of Ipswich, Mass. (1639), John Russell, known as "the Anabaptist," founder of the first Baptist Church of Boston, and Henry Brooks of Concord, Mass. (1639), and of Woburn (1650).

Anna Thompson, wife of Lewis Whitacar, was the daughter of Benjamin Thompson and Anna Newcomb. Benjamin, born in Rhode Island, was the grandson of the poet Dr. Benjamin Thompson and Susanna Kirtland of Braintree, Mass. Dr. Thompson was the son of Rev. William Thompson and his first wife Abigail Collins, daughter of John Collins and Abigail Rose. Anna Newcomb was descended from the Martha's Vineyard families of Newcomb, Bayes, Butler and Norton.

Captain Samuel Westcott was the grandson of Daniel Westcott, for many terms a member of the Hartford, Conn., Legislature, and his wife Abigail Gaylord, daughter of Samuel Gaylord (son of William) and Elizabeth Hull (daughter of George Hull). Daniel Westcott was the son of Richard Westcott of Wethersfield, Conn. (1637), who was given a grant of land for his services in the War against the Pequot Indians.

Hannah Shaw, wife of Capt. Samuel Westcott, was descended from Edward Shaw of Southampton, Long Island (1655) and from Joshua Garlick who came to Easthampton about 1650 and died there in 1700, over one hundred years old.

Capt. Jeremiah Bennett's grandfather was one of a company of settlers who came in 1697 from Fairfield, Conn., in Cohansey, Salem Co., N. J., and gave the name Fairfield to the large district in which they settled.

Sarah Berryman was the great-granddaughter of Thomas Berryman and his wife Jane of Staten Island (1686).

The emigrant ancestors of Epher Whitaker all came to America before 1700.

Epher Whitaker lived on his father's farm in Fairfield Township, Cumberland Co., N. J., and attended the public schools there until he was fifteen years of age (in 1835) when he went to Bridgeton, N. J., and worked in all departments of the *Bridgeton Chronicle*. In 1843, he entered Delaware College at Newark, Delaware, and in 1847 graduated at the head of his class with the degree of A. B., later receiving from this college the degree of A. M. (in 1850) and the degree of D. D. (in 1877). Yale conferred on him the honorary degree of A. M. in 1867. After graduating at Delaware College, he taught for a year in the Academy of the College and in 1848 entered the Union Theological Seminary in New York, graduating in 1851. He at once became the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Southold, Suffolk Co., Long Island, the oldest Presbyterian Church in America and continued in that position until 1892, when after forty years of successful service in one pastorate, he retired. From that date until his death he was the pastor emeritus. His faithful work for the improvement of his fellow men was not discontinued, and so great was the esteem in which he was held that he was often called "Suffolk's Grand Old Man".

As a part of his pastoral work, he collected in 1866 and 1867 the funds with which to buy the grounds and erect the buildings of the Southold Academy which was opened for instruction in 1867, and is now endowed in perpetuity.

During most of Dr. Whitaker's pastorate, he preached four times a week besides conducting other religious services. He was from 1856 to 1903 the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Long Island; for thirty years he was present at every annual meeting of the Synod of which he was a member and after the Synod of New York became a body of delegates of the Presbyteries, he served in five annual meetings of this great Synod. He was Moderator of the Synod of New Jersey in 1860-1 and of the Synod of Long Island in 1871-2.

His diversions from his pastoral work were mainly in the fields of literature, poetry, history and antiquarian research.

In 1865, he published a volume of addresses and sermons on educational, patriotic and other themes under the title *New Fruits*

from an Old Field. In 1880, he delivered an elaborate historical address at the bi-centennial anniversary of the organization of the church in Fairfield, N. J., and this address was published in octavo form. The following year he published *History of Southold; its First Century from 1640-1740*. The preparation of this volume extended over twenty years and the sources carefully used include the records of the Church, of the Town and of the New Haven Colony; legal documents, family registers, various Histories of Long Island; published and unpublished genealogies, many volumes in the Astor Library and the collections of the Long Island Historical Society and other societies. Many historians, biographers and genealogists gave aid in the preparation of the volume, which at once took a position of authority on the subject treated.

During the next few years, he superintended the printing and read the proofs of the Town Records of Southold for the 150 years from 1651 onward. This proof he compared not only word for word, but letter for letter with the faded, antique manuscript records of Southold; by the authority of the Town Clerk, these printed records were made of the same legal evidence as the original; they were printed in two large volumes with an introduction by Dr. Whitaker to each volume, appearing severally in 1882 and 1884.

In 1883 he published a historical sketch of Suffolk County.

He proposed the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Town of Southold which took place in 1890. Dr. Whitaker was made the Chairman of the joint committees, wrote the historical and descriptive introduction and edited the volume of proceedings, a volume of 220 large octavo pages. As an outcome of this celebration, a handsome granite monument to commemorate the founders was erected in the cemetery.

In 1894, Dr. Whitaker published *Leaves of All Seasons*, a collection of lyrics written at different times from 1851 to 1893. It includes translations into English verse made from eminent French and German poets.

At various times Dr. Whitaker delivered historical addresses before the New Haven Colony Historical Society and the Suffolk County Historical Society, which were published. He wrote historical and biographical articles which were published in cyclopaedias of the highest character, including the *Britanica*. Throughout his life he contributed to the press and had published uncounted articles in daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual periodicals. Prayers from his pen for devotional exercises and many of his sermons and addresses have been published.

In 1886, he was prominent in the organization of the Suffolk County Historical Society. This society from its organization until his death annually elected him its first vice-president. When the Long Island Historical Society held its first annual meeting in 1863, he was elected one of its councilors and held that position until his death. He was one of the five honorary members of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society made him a Corresponding Member in 1869, soon after its organization. Many references to his published writings are given in the pages of the RECORD of this Society. Two extensive contributions were made to the RECORD by Dr. Whitaker; the first a ten page biography of Charles B. Moore in Volume XXV, pages 105 to 115; the second an eight page article on the Founders of Southold in Volume XXVI, pages 85 to 89 and 114 to 118.

GRAVEYARD INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE TOWNS OF EASTON AND GREENWICH, N. Y.

CONTRIBUTED BY WILLARD'S MOUNTAIN CHAPTER, D. A. R.

(Continued from Vol. XLIX, p. 22, of the RECORD.)

Inscriptions from old church graveyard in town of Jackson, Washington County, N. Y., at Battenville, 4 miles northeast of Greenwich. The old brick church was removed many years ago.

Copied by MRS. H. C. HILL.

Anthony, Eliza T., dau. of Daniel & Lucy, d. 5 mo., 18, 1834, aged 2 years & 24 days.

Alexander, Mary, wife of Robert, d. July 5, 1844, in the 63rd year of her age.

Robert, d. May 27, 1858, in the 85 year of his age.

Burdick, Matthew, b. Feb. 7, 1795; d. Feb. 11, 1878.

Almira Kirkland, wife of Matthew, b. Aug. 27, 1816; d. Sept. 3, 1881.

Cannain, Anna E., dau. of Morris & Eliza, d. March 15, 1866, aged 2 years, 4 mos., 15 ds.

Carter, John, d. Aug. 29, 1839, in the 19th year of his age.

Cherry, William, son of James, Jr., & Hannah, d. Nov. 21, 1835, aged 1 year, 4 months & 24 days.

Alexander, son of James, Jr., & Hannah A., d. Feb. 17, 1838, aged 4 years, 9 months & 5 days.

Robert, son of James & Hannah A., d. Dec. 4, 1846, aged 2 yrs.

Cowan, Peter, d. April 17, 1840, in the 52nd year of his age.

Davis, Eugene B., son of Peter & Susan C., d. June 18, 1850, ae. 5 yrs. & 1 mo.

George H., d. Nov. 2, 1852, in the 26 year of his age.

Dixon, Osmer, d. Feb. 10, 1849, aged 34 years.

Dobbin, Rachel, wife of John, d. Aug. 29, 1849, ae. 45 years.

Gardner, Mary Ann, dau. of James C. & Maria, d. March 8, 1847, ae. 17 yrs., 6 mo. & 1 d.