

CHAPTER VIII.

SAMUEL BRACKETT. THE FIRST IN BERWICK.

Samuel Brackett, the son of Thomas (see chap. IV) and wife Mary Mitton, and grandson of Anthony Brackett, the immigrant, was born at Falmouth, Me., about 1672. In some genealogical publications his birthday is given as April 27th, a statement based wholly upon another, viz., that he was eighty years of age at the time of his death, which occurred on April 27, 1752. There is no reliable authority for the day and month of his birth; he, himself, perhaps did not know them. Both of his parents were dead before he completed the sixth year of his age, and town and other records had been destroyed; thus he was deprived of the sources from which he could learn his age. At the time his father was killed he was taken captive by the Indians. It is traditional that upon his redemption by his grandfather from captivity, he went to live with his aunt Martha in Kittery, Me. Her husband, John Grove, was a very worthy man; he united with the Quakers and thereby became useful in developing the spleen of God's chosen people of the day in that locality, whose delight, next to a trial for witchcraft, then was to worry a Quaker. Grove, who had enough sense to shake the dust of the place from his feet, went to Crompton, R. I., to live, where probably he died. Before his departure from Berwick he instilled into young Samuel's head, something besides the fanaticism of the day; later on, though we shall find that Samuel was connected with the saints in a religious way, as he was obliged to be in order to dwell in peace, we shall also find that he was not a model saint after the heart of Cotton Mather.

Samuel Brackett married November 25, 1694, Elizabeth Botts, the Rev. Edward Thompson, minister of Berwick, officiating. She was an inhabitant of Berwick, was one year younger than her husband, and a daughter of Isaac Botts. He was killed October 15, 1675, by the Indians in an attack on Salmon Falls in Berwick; on that day they had killed one Richard Tozier at his home not far from the garrison house of Lieutenant Roger Plaisted. A party of nine men were sent out to reconnoiter; it was ambushed and Isaac Botts was one of three who were killed. In a letter under date of October 16, 1675, Lieutenant Plaisted gave an account of the affair and the names of the men who were slain, whom he said, were his best men. On the same day Plaisted, himself, was killed in an attempt to recover the bodies of those who lost their lives the day before. Near to where he fell he was buried, and a monument has been erected at his grave. It is supposed that close to the place was buried the body of Isaac Botts. His home was near to the center of the settlement at Salmon Falls, but a few rods from the mill; his land bordered on Salmon Falls brook. His wife's Christian name was Elizabeth. In

July, 1679, she married Moses Spencer, b. about 1642, d. about 1719; their children were Moses Spencer, Jr., b. about 1680, mar. Elizabeth C. Abbott, d. in 1746; Isaac, b. about 1682, mar. Elizabeth Emery, d. in 1736. Mary, b. about 1684, mar. Joseph Jones.

Elizabeth Botts, daughter of Isaac, was about a year old when her father was killed; upon her mother's remarriage she became a member of the family of Moses Spencer, and was one of its members at the time of her marriage with Samuel Brackett. Certainly she and young Samuel could relate doleful tales of harrowing times. Indian wars meant sorrow and affliction for them; they meant to them in their married life, not death nor captivity it is true, but the living in block and garrison houses in times of peril, and a narrow escape from death by the young husband on one occasion, owing to his being fleet of foot. He could name a score of relatives who had been killed or captured by the Indians. He had reached the sixteenth year of his age when war with the Indians commenced in 1688, which continued for over ten years. So he early in life became a soldier, was ever ready for duty, was a minute-man of the time. From 1688 to 1693 there were dreadful times in Berwick. The inhabitants of Maine were hard pressed to maintain their frontier post in the town of Wells. In March, 1690, thirty-four people were killed and fifty-four were taken captive by the Indians in an attack on the settlements of South Berwick. Several outrages were committed in the town in July, 1691, and there were frequent attacks during the years 1692 and 1693. In the neighboring towns frightful massacres occurred.

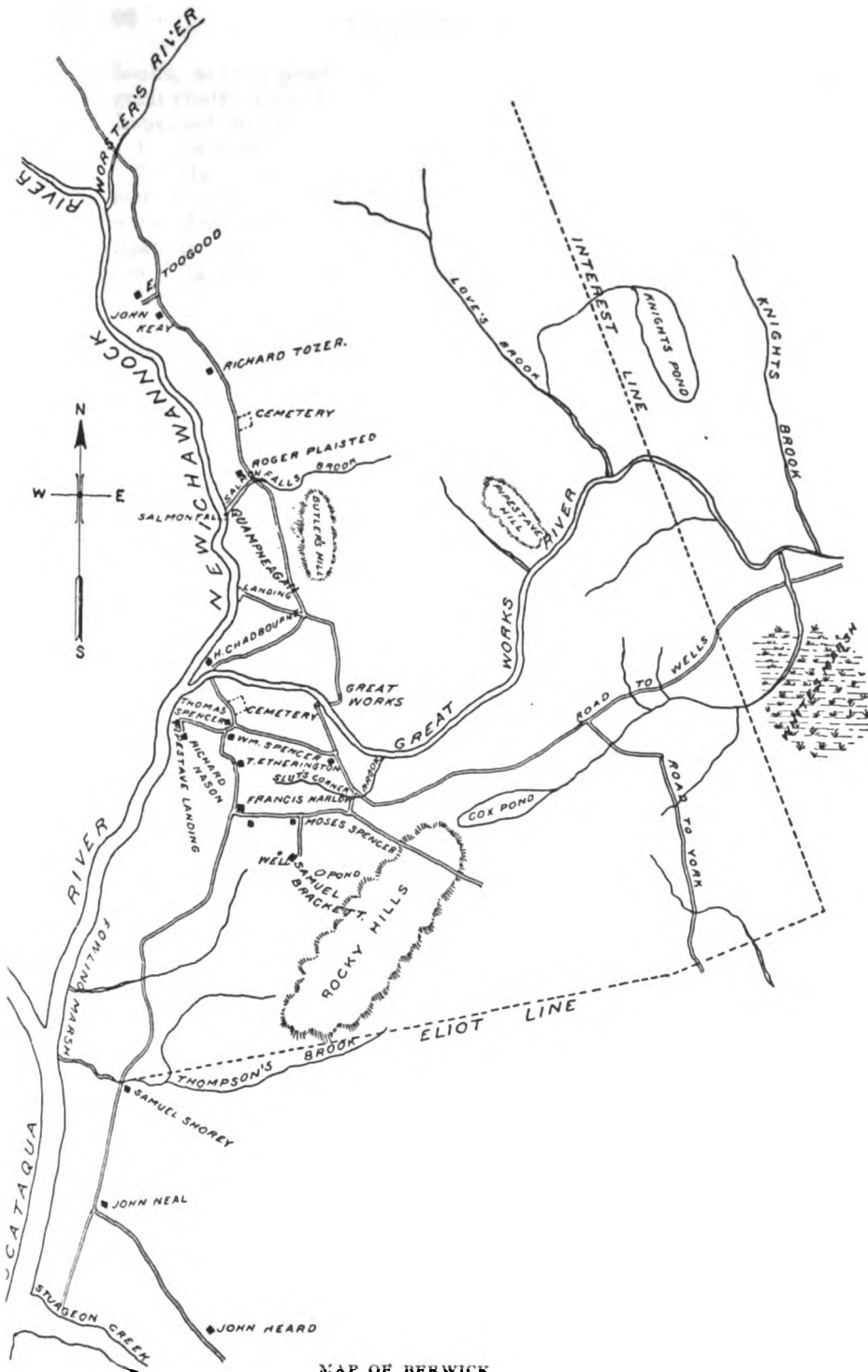
As a result of the successes of the Indians, Berwick was desolated for three years; the settlers had abandoned their homes and the town. In 1693, there were negotiations with the Indians for a peace, and there were promises to that end. For nearly six years longer, hostilities were carried on in a desultory way in Berwick, and there were one or two attacks on the settlers in the town. The settlers began to return to their homes in the year 1693, and through the vigilance and active service of the four companies of troops stationed in the several towns "to the Eastward," some degree of safety was secured to the people of Berwick. Another Indian war commenced in 1703, and continued to 1713. During this war the settlers did not desert the town; however, many of them were compelled to forsake their homes and dwell in block and garrison houses, and attacks by the Indians were not infrequent. In one of these wars, Samuel Brackett was wounded, received a long knife cut in his abdomen, which let out his intestines; these he hastily gathered in their place and with his hands tightly pressed over the wound, he ran for the garrison house, which he reached without further accident. This incident the writer has heard his father relate, to whom it was told by his grandfather, Deacon James Brackett, who lived near or with Samuel Brackett for twenty-eight years. It is probable that Samuel Brackett served as a soldier in one or more of the several expeditions against the French, though nothing is known as to his having so served.

During these long weary years of war, when danger to life was imminent at all times, and every day brought its prospect of destruction of property and of combat with a most determined foe; with

houses burned, stock destroyed, farms deserted and members of families maimed or in captivity; in this land of desolation, rapine, woe and want, the Puritan church official forgot not to prowl on a heresy hunt. If no better game than a delinquent, one who did not pay his tax for the support of the divine or who did not frequent the place of worship where said divine preached his stern doctrine, was brought to bay, it was bagged, though said official much preferred to see a Quaker whipped or a defenseless old woman in jail on a charge of witchcraft. Young Samuel was bagged early in his married life,—needed special care did young Samuel, as he had been reared by a Quaker. In June, 1696, he was charged with the crime of "not frequenting the public worship of God on the Lord's day;" later he and his wife were charged with a similar offense; he was fined five shillings and she was admonished. Imagine, if you can, the state of mind of Samuel and of his pretty young wife, after listening to censure for their neglect to support a church for which they had no affection,—she with all the meekness of a gentle, loving woman, and he, the soul of honor and manhood. The picture of her in modest mien, her babe in her arms, listening to the tirade, is present as these words are written. The solace of a poverty-stricken, war-desolated home far excelled the consolation which that church could afford, though its minister lived to preach for a century the promises to come.

Samuel Brackett was a near neighbor of Moses Spencer; he lived at Pound hill, less than one-half mile south of the Country road to Rocky hills. His other neighbors were Deacon Nathan Lord, James Warren, James Emery, Captain James Grant, and Richard Heard. He possessed several tracts of land at one time and another. June 10, 1703, from the town of Kittery, of which Berwick was then a part, he received a grant of fifty acres. In 1709, he sold fifty acres. In 1710, he sold eighteen acres of his wife's land which was purchased by her father in 1671. Then we have this entry bearing date May 10, 1715: "Measured and laid out to Samuel Brackett sixty acres of land by virtue of a grant to Isaac Botts by the parish of Unity in the town of Kittery, April 13, 1671, which Brackett is husband to said Botts, his daughter, and it lies at the head of Sergeant Tozier's land at Salmon Falls."

The site of the house of Samuel Brackett is still pointed out; a small pond which was near the house may be seen by visitors; there remains a well with its rugged rock walls, which tradition says, he dug. Where he built his house, he lived his remaining days, raised his family, and died. Before the administration of his estate was completed, his good wife died at the age of eighty years. The following is a list of his personal property, as shown by the inventory made by his administrator, Samuel Brackett, Jr. Cash £8 New Hampshire money, or £5, \$15., our province (Massachusetts). "His wife de'c., her wearing apparel," 7 gowns, 3 silk crepe ones, 8 petticoats, 3 under-vests, 2 silk hoods, 1 riding hood, 1 pair of stays, black gauze handkerchief, black fan, 1 pr. of sleeve buttons, 3 pr. of cotton gloves, muslin and linen aprons, considerable number of other articles. Also 1 cow, £20; 2 ewes and 2 lambs, £8; 1 heifer, coming in, four months, £18; heifer's calf, £3; one heifer, coming in, in 3 months, £18; large breeding sow and shoat, £11;



MAP OF BERWICK.

books, 511; 2 pewter platters; looking glass; 1 woolen wheel; 1 great chair; 4 old small ones; number of other articles of furniture. Issue, not in order of birth:

1. Samuel, b. 6 Sept. 1695. See chapter IX.
2. Mary, bapt. an adult, 20 Dec., 1719; d. 28 Feb., 1773; mar. Thomas Tuttle of Dover. This family were Quakers; children were Mary; Hope; Sarah; Elisha; Samuel; Thomas; Abigail; Ebenezer; Reuben; Bathsheba.
3. Bathsheba, mar. Jonathan Abbott; d. Feb. 21, 1802.
4. Elizabeth, bapt. an adult, 20 Dec., 1719; mar. Samuel Abbott.
5. Hannah, mar. Samuel Thompson; bapt. 24 Dec., 1719.
6. Dorothy, bapt. 21 Jan., 1728.