



SKETCHES

OF THE

EARLY HISTORY

OF

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BY

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The following paper was not written for publication, but to be read before the Somerset Literary Club, March the 8th, 1884. Its abridged publication in the *Sunday Star* did not satisfy the members of the club who heard it read, and, at the earnest solicitations of both friends and strangers, I have been induced to give it to the public, with a few additional items of interest, in a form more convenient for perusal.

THE AUTHOR.

Somerset, April 4th, 1884.

SOMERSET VILLAGE.



I PROPOSE to sketch the history of Somerset village, from the time of its first settlement by the whites, down to a period within the memory of old people now living. The *recorded* facts relating to the earliest year of its settlement are so scanty and uncertain, that were we forced to rely wholly upon them, the undertaking would, indeed, be hopeless. But the liberal stock of traditional lore, which has been accumulating for nearly two centuries, and has been handed down from generation to generation, will be freely drawn upon, to supply knowledge which cannot be drained from other sources. Prior to King Philip's war, nothing is known regarding the sparse settlement alleged to have existed on the west bank of Taunton Great river.

But soon after the close of that memorable event, a party of young men from Newport set out in a sail-boat, partly from pleasure, and chiefly from curiosity, to explore the river. This was found to require more time than they anticipated, and having proceeded as far north as Conspiracy, and there finding another river of nearly equal volume (the Assonet river) a dispute arose as to which they should follow, which resulted in a decision to return to Newport.

While returning, however, it was discovered that there were two men in the party who had an eye to business, viz:—William Slade and Jonathan Bowers. The former settled on the river in the south part of the town, and subsequently established a ferry. Jonathan Bowers located near the south end of this village. He undoubtedly built the first framed house that was built in this place. This house is still standing, and is leased by the Mount Hope Iron Co., and occupied by the Perry family, and owned by the heirs of

the late Isaac Pierce. This house, with seven others which were built soon afterwards, fronted the river on Water street. This street commenced at a point near where the depot now stands, known as Stonehouse Point, and substantially followed the river to near where the Old Colony Iron Works office now stands, and for nearly sixty years was the main thoroughfare in the place. The exact year in which the Bowers house was built is not known, but probably in the year 1695, as soon after that date he married a lady from Rhode Island, whose name was Elizabeth Bourne, and it is fair to presume that a man of his forethought would provide a cage before he secured the bird. A log house of greater antiquity was found standing near the middle of what is now Main street, in front of the way leading to Bradford Simmons' stable. This, without doubt, was the first structure for human habitation ever built in the village. It was taken down or removed in 1765, and a subterranean passage was found, leading to the river, thus affording a safe retreat from the attacks of hostile Indians.

When Jonathan Bowers first landed on this shore, the river bank rose much more abruptly than it does at present, and was dotted with huts or cabins of the most primitive type.

These structures consisted of an excavation made in the bluff, and were lined and arched with walls of rough stone, and supplemented by a room in front, made of round logs, notched at each end to keep them in place, thus forming a sort of vestibule to the less exposed apartments. Whether this appendage was intended for use or ornament is not definitely known, but probably both. It was made tight in winter by filling the crevices with clay; and perfect ventilation was secured in summer by its removal. This room was sometimes used for a dining room, but generally as a reception room for neighbors and friendly Indians. From the centre of the rear apartment, a hole in the ceiling was made, and from thence upward through the earth to the surface, which constituted the chimney.

The occupants of these rude habitations were mainly refugees, or deserters from the ranks of Captain Church, who was then fighting against Philip. Fish and game were abundant and easily entrapped, and from this source they drew their principal subsistence. The hill lying south and east of the Dublin Schoolhouse was covered with a primitive growth of white pine, and was inhabited

by the remnant of a tribe of friendly Indians, which afterward were called *Quakers*, because they refused to take up arms for or against Philip. Where openings were found in the forest they planted corn, and supplied the new settlement with seed, which enabled them to add the luxury of corn bread to their liberal rations of fish and game.

A hole cut in the surface of a flat rock, in which they pounded this corn, remains to this day, and pestles of stone and arrowheads were frequently found in this vicinity by the early cultivators of the soil.

Jonathan Bowers having served an apprenticeship on the Clyde, and having inherited a few thousand pounds from a deceased uncle, came to this country with the determination of engaging in shipbuilding. The location he had chosen for the purpose offered rare facilities for the business. Excellent timber was at hand, in unlimited quantities. Iron could be had at the old forge in Raynham, and Plymouth would furnish the duck and cordage.

At first, of course, he was compelled to employ unskilled labor, but everything being done under his constant supervision, the simple hewer of wood soon became a skilled workman. He continued this business successfully till the time of his death, which occurred in 1735, and was succeeded in the business by his second son Benjamin, who built vessels up to the time of the Revolution, and subsequent to that event, Joseph and Gideon Robinson conducted it till 1812, when the war with England broke out, and the demand for vessels for the merchant service ceased, and was followed by great activity in the various navy yards of the country in the construction of privateers, gunboats and ships of war. I might here just add, that during the war, and in time of the embargo, our river was a favorite resort for many merchant ships, which had just retired from the service to escape the enemy and await the cessation of hostilities. These ships were in charge of captains and a shipkeeper, who, being young gentlemen of good address, soon became favorites with the young ladies of the village, so at the end of three years when the war was closed, many took wives with them, while others, less fortunate, were forced to sing of "the girl I left behind me."

Jonathan Bowers may be justly regarded as the founder of Somerset village. He built, as we have already seen, the Isaac

Pierce house, which he occupied till his death, after which it fell into the hands of Jonathan, his eldest son. He was the father of six boys, who all lived to be old men, viz:—Jonathan, Benjamin, Philip, David, Henry, and Jarathmael. He built a house each for four of his sons, as follows:—For Benjamin he built the house formerly* occupied by A. P. Slade, for Philip he built the Philip Bowers house, and for David he built what is now called the Black Block, and for Henry the Burgess house. These houses were built in a substantial manner, and in a style regarded as extravagant in those days. For his youngest son, Jarathmael, he refused to build, a rupture having broken out between father and son, when the latter was quite young, and was never healed while the father lived.

The name of Bowers was widely known, and was a passport to credit and distinction, throughout the principal towns in the colony.

About this time, 1760, young Jarathmael, while on a visit to Boston, fell desperately in love with a young lady, whose name was Mary Shurburne. She was an educated lady, very beautiful and accomplished, and possessed five thousand pounds in her own right. Young Bowers was, in many respects, her exact opposite. He was illiterate and crafty, with sharp features, possessing no personal attractions whatever. Having heard that "a faint heart never won a fair lady," he pressed his suit, and to his great joy and greater surprise was accepted. Tradition says that had he presented himself under any other name than that of Bowers, he would have been discarded unnoticed. On his arrival in town with his bride, he was hailed as a conquering hero, and those who had hitherto regarded him with indifference, now flocked around him, and felt fortunate indeed could they shake his hand or get a glimpse of his bride. The height of his ambition was soon made known. He proposed to build a house, which should far surpass in finish and grandeur any which his father had built for his older brothers. The house now owned by Mrs. Peterson was the result.

Of this family of boys, it may be said that Jonathan lived in the homestead; kept a store, and had one son who was noted for his faultless dress and fine personal appearance.

Benjamin and David were types of fine old English gentlemen who lived quiet and honorable lives, and always within their income. They married sisters, Mary and Comfort Taber, the daughters of an

extensive landowner who lived in Dartmouth. This gentleman gave by will large tracts of land lying in Dartmouth, Westport and New Bedford, to these daughters, of which neither they or their descendants have ever taken possession. One of these tracts covers the north half of the city of New Bedford.

Philip, the fourth son, held a commission in the Revolution, and served with distinction in the Continental army, and at the close of the war retired to the peaceful occupations of rural life. It is his descendants who still live amongst us, bearing the name of that patriarchal family.

Henry, the fifth son, was a successful merchant. He did much to improve the village. It was during his career that the wharves were built, store-houses erected, Main street was laid out, the ropewalk was built and put in operation, private schools were established and the village was embellished with many ornamental trees. He established an extensive commerce with the South and West Indies, besides a direct trade with England and Canton, and was the controlling owner in 100 sail of vessels, when the Revolution broke out. Although a Quaker by birthright, he gave largely of his means to the Continental troops. Whole regiments from time to time were supplied with blankets, and even the commissary department was replenished from his own store-houses, and soldiers were paid from his private purse. But English gunboats and privateers soon swept from the ocean every vestige of his commercial fleet, and his princely munificence had so exhausted his means that the close of the war found him penniless.

All well-to-do families in those days owned slaves. The son of a chief who was kidnapped in Africa, was brought to this country and became the property of Henry Bowers. He possessed marvelous muscular powers, and a strong, but uncultivated intellect, and while chafing under his bondage was a constant terror to the villagers, and at their suggestion he was shipped in one of his master's vessels to Hayti, St. Domingo. On his arrival he immediately left the vessel. He lived there many years, and when the revolution broke out in that island, he joined the insurgents, and, on their final triumph, he was crowned their emperor, under the name of Touissant L'Overture. After this event, he was seen riding in his state carriage, dressed in royal robes, and recognized by sea captains from Somerset. He is supposed to be the first man that ever left this

village to sway a sceptre over a conquered people.

Henry Bowers was small of stature, had a light complexion, blue eyes and regular features. Although he wore a Quaker coat, and used the plain language, he enjoyed a joke, which he could either give or take with equal relish.

Jarathmael Bowers, the youngest of this family, though the Cæsar of this village, was a money-getter and a miser. While Henry was bestowing his wealth in aid of his country's independence, the former was oppressing the poor and robbing the soldiers of their homes. He was the Shylock of numerous communities, and the terror of widows and orphans. He held mortgages on 100 farms during the war, and at its termination had, on the most of them, foreclosed. He, too, held a commission in the army, and was court martialled for cowardice and insubordination.

In 1746 he was ordered into the king's service by Capt. Jona. Slade. He responded by fleeing to Rhode Island. He was subsequently arrested and brought before a magistrate, and entered into a recognizance for his appearance at court to answer for his conduct. Before the session of the court, however, he presented to Gov. Shirley a certificate signed by Dr. Winslow, of Freetown, setting forth that Col. Bowers had his collar bone broken, and that it was improperly set, and he was thereby rendered unfit for military duty. Gov. Shirley then issued a warrant exempting him from service. Capt. Slade then secured affidavits from several of his neighbors, who testified that "he was quick of foot and every way able to perform military duty." These were presented to the Governor, who immediately revoked his warrant, and the Colonel was taken before the court and fined for his contemptuous conduct. He was repeatedly elected a member of the Colonial Legislature by a constituency whom he controlled by the power of his wealth. Though a maker of the laws, he violated them with impunity. Somerset, at this time, was a part of Swansea, and finding that his popularity in that part of the district was beginning to wane, in 1790 he procured the passage of an act setting off the town of Somerset, and thereby creating a new Representative District, obviously for his special benefit.* To quiet the opposition and to secure the co-operation of a few leading men he made numerous promises, which were never fulfilled.

*NOTE.—The name of Somerset was given to the new town, in honor of Mrs. Bowers—the home of whose girlhood was Somerset Square, Boston.

For instance, he promised the town, if they succeeded in their petition, he would build them a new town house and present it to the town. In 1792 he proceeded to fulfill this promise in part—that is, he built the house—but compelled the town to pay every cent of its cost. His wife proved to be a lady to the manor born. She neither encouraged his avarice nor concealed his intrigues. She was courteous and kind to her neighbors, and the poor she held in constant remembrance. Possessing by nature a refined and cultivated taste, she found but little to admire in her boorish husband, and to sweeten the pleasures of home and social life she kept open house for visitors, and people of the highest respectability, from Providence, Newport and Boston were her constant guests. This her husband endured rather than enjoyed. His ideal of social life was copied from the little he knew of that of the court of Charles the Second, and frequent acts of his life were far from being in harmony with the American code of social ethics.

They had five children, two sons and three daughters. Mary, the oldest, married Daniel Jenks, of Providence. Hannah married Dr. Borland, father of the late Joseph Borland, and Betsey married Dr. Thomas Danforth, of Boston, two of whose daughters are still living. Jarathmael, the oldest son, died at sea when a young man.

John, the only surviving son, was the idol of his parents. He was tall and well built, of a sandy complexion, a fair skin, a merry, twinkling eye, and exceedingly fond of a practical joke. While he possessed none of the traits which the community failed to appreciate in his father, he had inherited the mild, genial temperament of his mother, which, with his prospective inheritance, rendered him a welcome guest in the best society. He married a lady in Newport whose name was Mary Robinson. She was from a high-toned family, small of stature, having never weighed over 100 pounds, and exceedingly beautiful. She made herself very agreeable to her guests and was beloved by all who knew her. She was fond of display and company, and was a great help to her husband by the tact she displayed in investing money.

Perhaps *his* character would be better understood by asserting that he was a man to whom children were not afraid to speak. Nothing did he seem to relish so well as to meet them on the street and join them in a frolic, which usually resulted in a practical joke. A few anecdotes out of the thousand related of him, will serve to

illustrate this trait in his character.

A little twelve-year-old girl on her way to school met and saluted him with a snowball. She was wearing, for the first time, a new, white cambric apron, trimmed with a cheap edging. He caught her in his arms and carried her to the school room, and when he left her she found, to her great grief, that her new apron was stripped into shreds. The next morning, however, the loss was made good by a present of one trimmed with real Hamburg.

Boys were invited to ride with him and were pretty sure to lose their hats before they returned, when he would issue orders to his clerk to furnish each with a new one. He had constructed on one of the lawns a tilt, which consisted of a long plank, balanced and secured to a bar for a fulcrum. This proved a great source of amusement to his young friends, and none were so fortunate as those who were first there to tilt with the Esquire. At one time he selected two of the largest girls to balance one end of the plank, while he volunteered to control the other. After tilting awhile, he managed, by a simple contrivance which he had previously planned, to fasten his end to the ground, which left his playmates elevated ten or twelve feet in the air. In this prominent and exposed position he left them for an hour, when he invited his guests to the garden to witness what he was pleased to term an instance where young ladies had risen to eminence while in the pursuit of pleasure.

He at one time challenged a comrade to see who could eat the most costly breakfast. After partaking of rich food and the choicest fruits, he sandwiched a hundred dollar bill between two slices of cake, and with it completed his meal.

It was during this man's career that Somerset saw her palmyest days. He, early in life, received a justice's commission, which conferred on him the title of Esquire, and by which title he was always called.

Being the idol of his parents, he virtually inherited their property while they yet lived; and the subsequent history of John Bowers is substantially the history of Somerset village. His garden, which embraced the land lying north of his father's house, and now owned by the heirs of the late Capt. Daniel B. Eddy, was conceded to be the finest in New England.

It was bounded on the north by the lane leading to the David Bowers house, and was sheltered by a brick wall from 10 to 20 feet

in height, commencing at Main street and running westerly to the Duck Pond. On the south side of this walk were constructed costly houses of glass, whose floors and fountains were of marble, and many of the niches were filled with rare vases and expensive statuary.* Native summer fruits and asparagus were here grown in winter. Tropical fruits, of the finest flavor, daily supplied his table, and the floral department was alleged to have surpassed even the Flora of the tropics. His mansion was the constant abode of luxury, fashion and wealth. While the servants were numerous and well paid, the villagers recognized a generous friend in the "lord of the manor."

As the father grew old, his avarice kept pace with his age. And, as incredible as it may appear, he was made to believe that all this extravagant expenditure was warranted by the fortunate ventures of his darling son, and never for a moment even surmised that they were supported by a constant drain on his well-filled exchequer. This was made practicable by the inauguration of an intelligent system of bribery and deception, which was managed with military precision, and rarely failed of its object. Every servant in the employ of the Esquire,—from the cook in the kitchen to a captain of a ship—were so well drilled as to act judiciously on any given occasion. Even the inhabitants of the village were accessory to the fraud, believing that the prosperity of the village depended on the success with which it was practised. For many years before the Colonel's death, his eyesight became so impaired as to render the working of this scheme comparatively easy. Many an anecdote might be told, illustrating how completely it worked, and how nicely it was adapted to his simple credulity. For instance, Mary and Hannah, his daughters, like other girls, were desirous of visiting their friends in Newport and Boston, but knowing their father's chronic objection, on the ground of needless expense, they soon ceased to ask his permission. As soon as Mary had gone to Newport, and her absence was noted by her father, she was reported sick, and a lady who had been drilled in the dramatic art was called to personate the unfortunate victim of disease. When visited by the old man, the room was darkened by order of the physician, and

* NOTE.—Nearly half a million brick was taken from these ruins. The Borland Block, on North Main street, Fall River, was entirely built of them, but the greater portion was shipped to Newport, and used in the construction of Fort Adams, and some of the marble from the hot-houses may be seen in Bristol, E. I., it being used to flag the walk leading from the street to the main entrance of the Captain James De Wolf mansion.

she was forbidden to converse above a whisper. Knowing when Mary would return, she would assume the *role* of a convalescent, so when she reached home she was barely able to resume her normal position in the family. About this time, 1793, a brig, with a cargo of tea, arrived in Boston from Canton, belonging to Colonel Jarathmael Bowers. The Esquire was commissioned to go to that city, and dispose of the cargo. This he did in a summary manner, which proved quite unsatisfactory to his father. On the first night of his arrival he lost the entire cargo at a gaming table, and on the second night, while endeavoring to repair his shattered fortune, the brig followed the cargo, and both were speedily swallowed up in the whirlpool of dissipation.

This unfortunate occurrence gave rise to an episode in the life of our hero, which would embellish the romance of a more chivalrous age. None knew the father so well as the son. And rather than face the fury of the old man's rage, he decided to abandon his home, his friends and his fortune, and fly beyond the reach of successful pursuit.

Accordingly he boarded a vessel bound to New Orleans, and from where he followed the river up some 200 miles, when he joined a tribe of Indians living west of the Mississippi. Here he remained two years, and during his stay married the daughter of an Indian chief. He was discovered by some white people, who, after learning his history, communicated with his father, who immediately despatched a messenger, promising him, if he would return home, the affair should never be mentioned, but the fatted calf should be killed, and music and dancing should once more be resumed in the family mansion. He readily accepted the pardon and speedily returned home. He was cordially greeted on his arrival, by his family and townsmen, and welcomed to the village, over whose social and business aspect his absence had cast a gloomy shadow.

About this time, 1796, the father died, leaving the daughters \$20,000 each, and to his son the balance of his immense fortune, estimated to exceed \$600,000. Now commenced the *Golden Age*, and the ducats which the old *Doge* had spent a lifetime in raking in, began to find their way back to the pockets from whence they came.

Commerce with the West Indies flourished, and the village

became a noted distributing centre for foreign goods. Ship-building revived, and old store-houses were repaired and new ones built. Many dwellings were erected, and ornamental trees were planted. the streets and townways were improved, labor was in good demand, and people from other towns flocked to this, where they were sure of constant employment and good pay. All felt that a period of genuine prosperity awaited the business of the village.

Mr. David Anthony of Somerset, father of the late President of the Fall River National Bank, was the Esquire's managing agent, and Mr. Billins Coggeshall, late of this village, was his bookkeeper.

In this flourishing condition, and while all was going merrily as a marriage bell, an unpleasant event occurred, which filled the social atmosphere with an unsavory odor.

There arrived in the village, one pleasant day in May, a person who claimed to be the daughter of an Indian chief, and the wife of John Bowers, who, she said, was the father of her child. She was escorted by two young men of her tribe, and had with her a *pappoose*, about two years old, all draped and jeweled as became their rank. The "sound of revelry by night" in Belgium's capital, was not more speedily hushed, than was the voice of merriment in the Bowers mansion. She demanded her husband. The Esquire refused to give her an audience, or even to see her, but appointed a commission to capitulate with her, on liberal terms. The unexpected visitors were treated very kindly, and made the recipients of valuable presents, and a sum of money, which she frankly acknowledged amply compensated her for the loss of her truant husband. Shaking the dust of Somerset from her beaded moccasins, she quietly left the village, and was never heard of more.

The disturbance produced in the Bowers court by the brief visit of this dusky damsel, was soon quieted by her silent departure, and though not soon forgotten, was rarely alluded to outside the sewing circle, and then always discussed in a whisper. She was described as being of medium height, graceful in her movements, with a sort of savage refinement in her manners and bearing, which clearly betrayed her rank. Her features were regular and irresistibly bewitching, and her personal appearance generally would have rendered her the peer of any lady in town.

So from these facts came the popular *verdict*:—The Esquire was justified.

The carnival went on. The house was constantly thronged with leaders of fashion and those who made amusement a business, and

“Bright the lamps shone
O'er fair women and brave men ;
A thousand hearts beat happily, and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spoke again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.”

This continued for the space of eight years, or till the year 1804, when suddenly a portentous sound was heard. It was not the wind or the rattling of a car on the stony street, nor the cannon's opening roar, but the sharp, significant rap of *creditors* at the door, *clamoring for admission*. The host turned pale and trembled, and, while gazing at the handwriting on the wall, the music ceased, the lights grew dim, and the morrow found the banqueting hall deserted.

The failure of John Bowers resulted from an error of judgment. He firmly believed, and frequently avowed, that the ordinary lifetime of a man was not long enough in which to spend his fortune.

But the neglect of *business*, his love of *pleasure*, his indulgence in gambling, and his princely prodigality—which was only surpassed by that of his wife—would, in a *short* lifetime, bankrupt a nation.

From this time forward, he lived an indifferent life, and died in 1819, while supercargo of a ship, on the coast of Guinea.

The whole Bowers family in religious sentiments were Quakers. They used the plain language, their style of dress never changed, and they attended the Quaker meeting, near the centre of the town.

A few items of interest, unavoidably omitted where they should have appeared, I will mention, though they swell this paper beyond its intended limits.

The first manufacture ever started in that place was that of earthenware. This was as early as 1705. The kiln was at the north end of Water street, near the depot. This, with two houses that were built there, and subsequently a large store-house, was, for a while, expected to be the court end of the village. This ware, with a few vessels of pewter, was the only ware used for domestic purposes for a period of fifty years, when it was superseded by the importation of crockery.

The first commercial enterprise, was by the earliest settlers, which consisted in carrying wood to Newport and Bristol, and which was exchanged for the necessaries of life.

The first wharf built was that in front of the Mount Hope Iron Mill, and on which lies their stock of scrap. On it was erected try works, which gave it the name *Tryhouse Wharf*. As early as 1715, small vessels were fitted to cruise in the Vineyard Sound and around Nantucket for blackfish and whales, whose blubber, when taken, was brought here, and the oil rendered.

In 1779, a middle-aged lady, from the State of New York, came to Massachusetts, and set herself up as a religious teacher. She asserted that in 1776 she was very sick, and actually died, and her soul went to heaven. But very soon her body was re-animated by the spirit of Christ, and she was moved by the spirit to instruct the people in matters of religion. She pretended to foretell future wants, to discern the secrets of the heart, to heal diseases, and to work miracles generally. She came to Somerset village, where she found a field ripe for the harvest. Here she took up her abode, and after choosing her twelve apostles, proceeded to fulfill her mission. Her meetings were well attended, and in mild weather were always held in the open air, in a walnut grove, which stood on land now belonging to A. P. Slade, situated between the dwelling-house of Thomas Murray and the residence of William H. Tallman. She dressed in a style peculiar to her own taste, and her apparel was of rich and costly material. Her hair was black, and hung in long, loose ringlets.

She was described to the writer, by one who saw her, as being small in stature, with a mild, benignant countenance, which compelled admiration, and one whose deportment was always above reproach.

She rode a large white horse, richly caparisoned with gay and gaudy colors, while its mane was woven with blue and scarlet ribbons. This horse would stand unhitched during divine service, but was quite unmanageable in the saddle by any one except his mistress. Her apostles, who were mostly young and middle-aged men, were chosen from the higher walks of life. Her success in performing miracles depended largely on the faith of her followers, and in the case of failure, one or more of her followers were sadly wanting on the subject of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen.

She proposed to strengthen the faith of her disciples by walking on the water, and appointed the time and place. Accordingly an immense crowd assembled at the Town Landing, near the Old Elm Tree, to witness the performance. At the appointed time she made her appearance on her milk white charger, and rode to the waters edge. After the applause had subsided, she thus addressed

the assembly:—"Have you faith to believe that I can perform this miracle?" Then came the response:—"We have." "Such faith," she replied, "cannot be *strengthened* by a *miracle*," and mounting her horse, she rode to the grove, escorted and cheered by the songs of her admiring followers.

Many of our fathers lived and died in the belief that a special messenger from the court of heaven was sent to Somerset village, in the person of Jemima Wilkinson.

The first schoolhouse was built in 1796, and was located near the north-east corner of what is now the cemetery. It was moved from time to time to accommodate the pupils, and at last found a final resting-place at the south end of the village, where, after many years' service, it was converted into a cottage, and is now the property of Captain David P. Davis.

In 1757, two gentlemen came to this place—Messrs. Russell & Howland—to start the whaling business, but were deterred from doing so by the exorbitant price demanded for real estate. They left the place in disgust, and the city of New Bedford is the result of their disappointment. The high price for which real estate was held, at that remote period, was the besetting sin of our fathers, and has been visited on their children, in every generation, from that day to this.

The next occupant of the John Bowers mansion was a Mrs. Graham. She was the wife of an English nobleman, on whom her husband had settled a pension of £3,000 per annum, on condition that she would come to this country and spend the remainder of her life. She accepted the offer, and bringing her servants with her, she leased the establishment. The house was elegantly furnished with imported furniture, and the walls were hung with rare paintings. She was very handsome and very agreeable, and although a dusky cloud hung over her history, she soon became a favorite with all who knew her.

She gave weekly entertainments to the ladies of the village, by whom she was held in high esteem. To spend her pension during the year she regarded as a religious duty, and how to do it was the cause of her only anxiety. This proved a God-send to the villagers, whose gratuitous advice was always at her service.

She had lived here ten years, when she died. Her household effects were sold at auction, and mainly bought by the inhabitants of the town as keepsakes. And, at this time, among older families of the village may be found articles held sacred as souvenirs of Mrs. Graham.

NOTE.—As a remarkable occurrence, it may be said that it is recorded, that on the night of the fifteenth of the tenth month, in the year 1740, the river froze over so as to obstruct navigation until the eighteenth of the first month, 1741.