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BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

FAMILY

OF

Homer OR de Homere

OF

ETTINGSHALL, CO. STAFFORD, ENG.

AND

BOSTON, MASS.

[DIXON, BENJAMIN HOMER]



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## HOMER FAMILY.

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**H**OMER is an old Saxon name derived in all probability from the manor of Homere, now called Hummer, County Somerset, England.

As "hoh" signifies high, and "mere" a pool or lake it may mean high lake. Mere, however, also means a boundary, a ridge of land. There is a fish-pond at Hummer, but no lake.

It is not mentioned in Domesday Book, but it occurs no less than eight times in the *Inquisitiones Post Mortem* from 5 Richard II., (1381-2) to 2 Henry V., (1414-15), as "Homere mess 't terr'" *i. e.*, Homere, messuage or manor and lands, and strange to say always spelt in the same way, for the old clerks were exceedingly careless in that respect, and in ancient documents surnames are often spelt two or more different ways even in the same deed.

There are no remains of the manor house which is not surprising as it was probably built of wood as was then customary.

The first of the surname on record is THOMAS DE HOMERE, Lord of the manor of Homer, to whom lands in the neighboring county of Dorset were granted A. D., 1338, by Lord Maltravers.\* His name appears in two

\**Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, Vol. 6, p. 349, London, 1840

deeds, both of the same year, as Thome de Homere and Thomam de Homere.

In the fourteenth century according to a tradition in the family of the Staffordshire Homers, their ancestor left his native county on account of having fought a duel, and settled in the county of Stafford, where he or one of his descendants built the house of Etingshall, near Bilston, parish of Sedgley, and as the name of Thomas de Homere does not occur again in connection with the manor, which in the latter part of this same century (viz. A. D. 1381) was held by John Wydeford, to whom or to whose predecessor he may have sold it, it is exceedingly probable that this Homere was the founder of the Etingshall family, especially as this tradition was received in 1855 from Mr. Benjamin Homer of Bilston, an old gentleman of seventy, whose name occurs in Pigott's Directory under "Gentry" and in White's (1851) as "Homer, Benj., gent.," and who had never heard of Thomas de Homere, besides which the name is a very uncommon one and only found in Staffordshire.†

Surnames with few exceptions, were assumed about the year 1000. It soon became customary to be named after one's landed possessions, and the territorial *de* was introduced into England by the Normans in 1066.

Thomas of Homere's family had probably held the manor for so long a period that they considered the name hereditary and it was therefore retained by him when he parted with the lands to John Wydeford,

† Homerton in Middlesex has no connection with this surname, having been originally a hammer or forge town.



who it is evident did not assume the name of Homer but retained his own, derived either from some other manor, or from the place he came from; it is impossible to say which as he had already dropped the prefix, which in the latter case would have been the Saxon "atte," John at the Wide-ford.

There was a family of Homers residing at Solihull, Co. Warwick, but one of them informed me about forty years ago that they were a branch of the Eттingshalls although they did not bear the same Arms as the latter who carry argent, a cross-bow, sable between four cocks gules, and I have a painting of these Arms which belonged to my great-grandfather Benjamin Homer who died in 1776.

Eттingshall was an old half-timbered structure of the so-called Elizabethan type. It was in such a state of decay that it was taken down about the year 1868. Its being of wood shows it was probably older than the time of Elizabeth as they were then beginning to build of stone. Harrison, who wrote during her reign says: "The ancient manours of our gentlemen are yet and for the most part of strong timber, in framing whereof our carpenters have been and are worthilie preferred before those of like science among all other nations. Howbeit, such as be latelie builded are commonlie of either bricke or hard stone, or both "

Many timber houses still remain. Bramhall House, Co. Chester, is a good specimen and is believed to date from the fourteenth century. The great hall measures thirty-six feet long by twenty-six broad. The old house of the French Ambassadors in Butcher's Row, London,

demolished about 1803, was built of timber and was covered with roses, fleurs-de-lis and dragons, and the famous Nonsuch House on old London Bridge was constructed entirely of timber carved and gilt. It was four stories high and was built in Holland.

Before the Reformation one of the Homers built a mortuary chapel beside and forming part of the chancel of the old church of Sedgley, and the family vault was under it, the entrance being from the inside of the chancel. On account of its age and dilapidated state the church was taken down and rebuilt by Earl Dudley in 1829, when the vault which was also rebuilt, was left outside, as may be seen by the plans still preserved showing where the old mortuary chapel stood, and which was not rebuilt, probably not being considered a proper annexe to the chancel of a Protestant church.

Edward Homer erected a pew in this church in 1626, which was occupied by his descendants until the demolition of the church when the oaken seat was given to Earl Dudley, who to preserve it as a relic, had it built in the wainscot of one of his houses, The Park, Wren's Nest Hill, near Dudley. In 1887, I requested F. A. Homer, Esq., J. P., of Sedgley to ask the present Earl's permission to have it photographed, but his Lordship very kindly made him a present of it and it is now in Mr. Homer's possession.

It bears the following inscription :

This : sete : setvp : at : the : proper : cost : and  
charis : of : Edward Homer : anno : domni : 1626.

Although "pews" are mentioned as early as 1546 still they were for a long time confined to the family

of the patron or of the leading families, and were exceptional rather than otherwise, until about 1600, and even thirty years later Weever, writing in 1631, complains of pews as a novelty.

The surname first occurs in the Parish Register of Sedgley in 1560, written Holmer, but prior to that date some of the family had removed to the adjoining county of Worcester, and the first entry of the name there, A. D. 1552, is an abbreviation of Holmer; the second in 1559, an abbreviation of Homer. It then appears in Sedgley as Holmer, and the year following, 1561, in Worcester as Homer.

Humf. Holm. *m.* Elizabeth Thorne, at Hartlebury, Co. Worcester, Nov. 13, 1552.

Anthony Hom. *gent. m.* Dorothy dau. of John Rowse, Esq., of Rous Lench, Co. Worcester, June 12, 1559.

Richard Vidian *m.* Joan Homer at Hartlebury, July 15, 1561.

As is generally the case with parish registers, not only are the Sedgley entries very imperfect, no parents names being given in the sixteenth century, but there are also sundry gaps; no baptisms having been recorded for sixty-one years, from 1573 to 1634; no marriages for sixty-three years, from 1565 to 1628, and no deaths for fifty-four years, from 1606 to 1660.

The first entry is, "Baptized was William Holmer, January, 1560;" the next, "Buryed was Eliz. Holmer, June, 1560," followed by "Elizabeth Holmer married Friday, September 1561,"—not even giving the name of her husband!

Besides the above William a second of the name, was baptized in 1563, a John in June, 1565, and an Ellen six

months later ; a Margaret in June, 1570, and an Elizabeth next month, a Richard in August, 1571, and a second John in November of the same year, showing that there was at least two families of the name in the parish, and in the following century there were two or more designed "of Eттingshall," at the same time.

RICHARD HOLMER *m.* Oct. 1565, Margaret Wright, and after this marriage occurs the birth of Philip, 1567, (*ob.* 1569) ; Margaret in June and Elizabeth in July, 1570 ; Richard\* in August and John in November, 1571 ; Joane in January and Anne in October, 1573,— some of whom may have been the issue of this marriage. Richard Homer of Eттingshall was buried September, 1606. Although only called "of Eттingshall," in the record of his death it does not follow that he had only shortly come into possession. It may have been previously omitted by neglect.

EDWARD HOLMER (I.) who may have been grandson of above Richard Homer of Eттingshall, *m.* July 8, 1628, Elizabeth Wilkes, and had issue :

1. EDWARD, bapt. Nov 5, 1634.
2. Thomas, bapt. June 15. Buried July 2, 1637.
3. Simon, bapt. Mar. 10, 1639.
4. Richard, bapt. Jan. 23, 1642.

He was buried Dec. 19, 1681, when he is called "Old Edward Homer of Eттingshall," and his wife Elizabeth Homer of Eттingshall was buried Feb. 22, 1685. His eldest son

EDWARD HOMER (II.) of Eттingshall, *m.* July 16, 1656, Anne Gibbins. Although written Holmer at birth, he is then styled "Edward Homer son of Edward Homer,"

\*He probably went to London where a Richard Homer, gent., died in 1615.

and at the death of his son Joseph is called "Jr. of Eттingshall." He had issue :

1. Joseph, buried Feb. 9, 1660.
2. Anne, bapt. Jan. 7, 1661.
3. Edward, bapt. Nov. 9, 1664, and probably died young, as a second of the name was bapt. in 1668.
4. JOHN (Captain), bapt. Mar. 20, 1665. Ancestor of the American branch, of whom hereafter.
5. EDWARD, bapt. Feb. 9, 1668, of whom next.
6. Mary, bur. July 25, 1672.
7. Francis, bapt. Sept. 11, 1673.
8. Rebecca.

Mrs. Anne Homer was buried May 12, 1675, and he married again, as Benjamin, son of Edward and Jane Homer of Eттingshall was bapt. Nov. 23, 1682, and this Benjamin, *m.* Feb. 1, 1703, Mary Palmer.

Edward Homer (II.) was succeeded by his son

EDWARD HOMER (III.) of Eттingshall, who had issue by Mary his wife, a son Benjamin, bapt. Sept. 16, 1710.

Edward Homer of Eттingshall was buried July 10, 1731, *ae.* 63, and his line is not carried further in the Register.

We now take up another branch, not knowing which of the two is oldest, but even if it was that of Edward the succession merged into the following :

HENRY HOMER of Eттingshall, *m.* May 16, 1661, Elizabeth Kurton, and is then styled "son of the widow Homer of Eттingshall," but it is difficult to say whose widow she was. Perhaps she may have been the relict of a younger son living at home ; for instance of

Simon, born 1639, who may have married and died soon after.

Henry Homer is called "of Eттingshall" in 1667, and also at his death in 1719. He had issue :

1. Mary, bapt. April 2, 1662.
2. THOMAS, bapt. Aug. 10, 1664.
3. Anne, bapt. Dec. 21, 1667.
4. Elizabeth, bapt. Dec. 21, 1667 and buried Nov. 5, 1673.

Mrs. Homer was buried Nov. 13, 1668. He was buried May 16, 1719. His eldest son

THOMAS HOMER of Eттingshall had issue by Elizabeth his wife :

1. THOMAS, bapt. Apr. 16, 1702.
2. Anne, bapt. Dec. 10, 1703.

Mrs. Homer was bur. Oct. 20, 1704. Thomas Homer of Eттingshall, gent., was bur. June 4, 1730, *ae.* 66, and was succeeded by his son

THOMAS HOMER (II.) of Eттingshall who *m.* Patience dau. of Richard Keeling. He d. 1767, *ae.* 65, and was suc. by his son

JOHN HOMER of Eттingshall, who *m.* Martha Cox. On account of the encroachment of the collieries which made the place no longer desirable for a gentleman's residence he sold the greater part of the Eттingshall estate and went to reside at another family property, Bromley Hall, in the same county, where he *d.* in 1788, and was suc. by his son

RICHARD HOMER, who *m.* firstly Mary Weaver and secondly Elizabeth Kemp. He sold the remainder of the Eттingshall property, and *d.* at Pedmore Hall, Co. Worcester in 1847. His son

CHARLES KEMP HOMER, m. Anne Mary Leake. He *d.* at his house in Sedgley in 1857, having had issue, with two sons who *d. s. p. m.*, and a dau., two surviving sons

- (1.) Thomas Keelinge Homer, and
- (2.) Frederick Augustus Homer, a Magistrate for the Co. of Stafford. Both of Sedgley.

We now return to

Captain JOHN HOMER, eldest son of Edward Homer (II.) of Etingshall, who was baptized March 20, 1665, and who appears to have resigned his right of succession to his younger brother, probably however for an equivalent, as he was owner or part owner of the vessel he commanded.

The term "Captain" by which he was called, is used throughout to distinguish this John as the founder of the American branch.

Savage, in his *Genealogical Dictionary*, considers it doubtful that he was a son of Edward, but although the Etingshall family were very careless about their records still they had preserved some memory of their ancestors, and about the year 1855, Mr. Benjamin Homer of Bilston, already referred to, said there was a Captain John Homer who emigrated to Boston and a few years afterward returned home and paid a long visit to his family, and that he was a son of Edward Homer of Etingshall. He said moreover that his own father and grandfather, and if my memory serves me, his great-grandfather also, were all named Benjamin, and that his only son, likewise a Benjamin, died a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and it will be noticed that commencing with the Benjamin born in 1682, and his American nephew born in 1698, there were five Benja-

mins in the Boston branch, showing this was a favorite name in the family.

At this time the Parish Register had not been examined and I was not aware of the existence of Benjamin, step brother of Captain John, nor of his (Benjamin's) son Benjamin, who were undoubtedly the one's referred to by old Mr. Homer. There were then five of that Christian name in direct succession in his line.

The Hon. James Savage quotes Somerby, the Genealogist, as his authority, but the latter made the inquiries for me. He had not time to go to Bilston but wrote to Mr. Homer and some days after, that gentleman who had come up to London to consult an oculist called on him to apologize for his neglect in not replying, and Mr. Somerby wrote me a full account of the interview.

Until then I did not know who was the father of Captain John, and several years after desiring to confirm the statement wrote to the Parish Clerk who sent me a very few names, but there was neither a John nor a Benjamin among them. He professed to have examined the Register carefully, but either he could not decipher the crabbed writing or was too careless to do so.

Lately however Mr. F. A. Homer had the Parish Register brought to his own house and carefully examined, with the result not only of discovering the one important entry, but also a great many more which the parish clerk had overlooked.

I may add that Mr. B. Homer of Bilston, was born about seventy years after Captain John's death, which is not long for a tradition, besides which the connexion between the English and American lines had not



been entirely lost until recently as about the year 1818 two Boston gentlemen connected on the mother's side with our family, Mr. Joseph Joy, of Beacon St., and Mr. Samuel Cobb, paid a visit to their Staffordshire cousins by whom they were very hospitably received. Mr. B. P. Homer of Boston, who died in 1838, knew all about this, but his three surviving children had forgotten the particulars.

Captain John Homer emigrated to Boston, *circa* 1690, and *m.* July 13, 1693, Margery Stevens. They had issue six sons and two daus. viz :

1. John, *b.* Aug. 8, 1694. According to a Mss. of the Rev. Jonathan Homer, he died young. Savage however, says administration of a John Homer was given to Mary Homer, Dec. 19, 1738.
2. Mary, *b.* 1696, *d.* young.
3. BENJAMIN, *b.* May 8, 1698. Of whom next.
4. William, *b.* June 29, 1701.
5. Michael, *b.* Sep. 26, 1703, *m.* and had four sons, of whom the eldest, William Homer, *b.* 1727, was father of Joseph Warren Homer, father of the late Peter Thacher Homer of Boston. The second son, Michael Homer, was father of the Rev. Jonathan Homer of Newton, Mass., S. T. D., S. H. S., who *d. s. p.* in 1843.
6. Robert, *b.* May 29, 1706. Merchant at Honduras, Central America. He sent his sons to Boston for their education and afterwards converted his property into Spanish doubloons and he and his wife, dividing the gold, embarked in two different ships, both of which were supposed to have been captured by buccaneers. One of his sons was ances-

tor of Charles Homer of Boston, who *m.* a dau. of Horatio Sprague, U. S. Consul at Gibraltar, and had issue :

7. Thomas, *b.* 1707.

8. Mary, *b.* 1708.

There was a Michael Homer residing in Boston in 1676, when he petitioned for release from impressment for the war, saying he had had one servant killed. He was probably a relation of Captain John, as he was married on the same day with him, July 13, 1693, to Mary Burrows.

In 1679, a Roger Homer commanded the ship *Mallagoe Merchant*, bound from Barbadoes to New York.

Captain John Homer *d.* Nov. 1, 1717, *ae.* 52. His widow *d.* in Yarmouth, Mass., in 1762, *ae. circa* 96 or 98. His second son

BENJAMIN HOMER (I.) was *b.* in Boston, May 8, 1693. He removed to Yarmouth, Mass., where he bought a house and farm, which house was standing about the year 1850, and was still a good one. It was two stories high and at the time it was built must have been one of the best houses in the town. He *m.* there, Elizabeth Crowe or Crowell, dau. of John Crowe and Bethia Sears, his wife, and granddaughter of John Crowe, one of the three original grantees of Yarmouth, Representative to the General Court and Magistrate.

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#### SEARS FAMILY.

John Sayer, Alderman of Colchester, County Essex, England, *d.* in 1599, and his widow *d.* 1530. They were buried in St. Peter's church, and the following brass memorial is still in existence :

“In this yle and neare unto this place are buried the bodyes of John Sayer sometyme Alderman of this Towne of Colchester and of Elizabeth his wyfe which said John dyed the xiiij day of February in the year of our Lord God MCCCCCIX. and which said Elizabeth dyed the xxvij day of April in the yere of our Lorde God MCCCCXXX.”

His son JOHN SAYERS *d.* 1562, and was buried near his father, with the following memorial, also in brass :

“John Sayres bodye lyeth enclosed here in grave  
Whose ghost the heavens do possess, whose fame on  
earth we have

His life and eke his death with good report he past  
And now (doubtless) doth enjoy the life that aye  
shall last.

When fiftene hundreth .yeares and sixty three were  
spent

From Chryst his Byrth accounted just from payne  
to joyes he went.

He dyed Ano Dni 1563.”

His eldest son RICHARD SAYERS, *b.* 1508, *m.* Anne Knyvet, dau. of John Knyvet of Ashwelthorpe, County Norfolk, by his wife Jane, dau. and sole heiress of John Bouchier, second Lord Berners, by his wife Catherine, dau. of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk. Her mother, Anne Plantagenet was dau of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, son of King Edward III.

Richard Sayer or Sayres, a political refugee, settled in Amsterdam in 1537, and *d.* 1540, leaving a son John Bouchier Sayer, *b.* 1535, *m.* Elizabeth, dau. of Admiral Sir John Hawkins, and *d.* in Holland. His son John Bouchier Sayer (II), *b.* in Amsterdam, 1561, *m.* 1585, Maria Lamoraal van Egmond, dau. of Philippe Lamoraal van Egmond, (believed to have been a relation of the famous Count Lamoraal van Egmond, who was

murdered by the bloody Duke of Alva), and acquired with her a large fortune. He *d.* 1629. His eldest son Richard Sayer or Sears, *b.* in Holland in 1590, attached himself to the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, and sailed for America, landing in Plymouth in 1630. He *m.* there Dorothy, sister of the Rev. Anthony Thacher. He was a representative to the Colony Court and *d.* 1646, *ae.* 86. His second son, Paul Sears, *m.* Deborah Willard, and was father of Bethia, wife of John Crowell, whose dau. Elizabeth, *m.* Benjamin Homer to whom we now return.

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Benjamin Homer (I.) had issue, six sons and three daughters, viz.,

1. Bethia, *b.* March 18, 1722, *m.* Benjamin Cobb, of Boston.
2. JOHN, *b.* Sept. 28, 1724, *m.* Sept. 28, 1749, Abigail Osborn of Nantucket, of whom next.
3. Margery, *b.* June 13, 1727, *m.* Jan. 3, 1765, William Sears of Harwich.
4. William, *b.* July 14, 1729. A Loyalist. Removed to Barrington, N. S., and *d.* a bachelor on voyage from Barbadoes to Boston.
5. BENJAMIN, *b.* Aug. 5, 1731. Removed to Boston. Of whom hereafter.
6. Stephen, *b.* April 15, 1734, *m.* Elizabeth Chapman of Yarmouth.
7. Thomas, *b.* March 21, 1736, *m.* Nov. 21, 1765, Elizabeth Sears and removed to Vermont.
8. Elizabeth, *b.* Nov. 18, 1738, *m.* David Knowles of Eastham.
9. Robert, *b.* Jan. 28, 1742, *m.* first, Jerusha Sears, and secondly the widow of John Thacher.

Mr. HOMER *d.* in Yarmouth, Oct. 24, 1776, *ae.* 78. His eldest son JOHN HOMER, removed to Boston and was a merchant and ship owner. He was also one of the "Sons of Liberty," an association of fifteen gentlemen formed about 1768. who were in the habit (for there were no clubs in those days), of meeting at the old Green Dragon tavern, in Hanover street.

During the year 1768, the Massachusetts Assembly voted to raise a Committee of Correspondence with her sister colonies, upon their mutual grievances, which alarmed the British Ministry who gave instructions to Governor Bernard to express to the House their disapprobation of the Act and to demand its repeal. This led to a warm debate which resulted in a vote "Not to Rescind "

The Sons of Liberty, in order to commemorate this event had a massive silver punch bowl made, on which was engraved, together with several emblematical devices, the following inscription :

"To the memory of the glorious ninety-two Members of the House of Representatives of the Massachusetts Bay, who, undaunted by the insolent menaces of villains in power—from a strict regard to conscience and the liberties of their constituents—on the 30th of June 1768 voted 'Not to rescind.'"

On the reverse side are "45" "Wilkes and Liberty"\* and along the edge are the names of the "Sons" in the following order :

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\*This refers to that shamefully traduced man, John Wilkes, who conquered for us the freedom of the press, and the number (45) of his paper, the *North Briton*, which caused his prosecution by Government. He is too often judged from his portrait by Hogarth which may be styled a political caricature. The "villains in power" were the British Ministry, and they were not unaptly so styled.

John Homer, William Bowers, Peter Boyer, Benjamin Cobb, William Mackay, John Marston, Caleb Hopkins, Nathaniel Barber, John White, Daniel Malcolm, Benjamin Goodwin, John Welsh, Fortesque Vernon, Daniel Parker, Ichabod Jones,—all of whom belonged to Boston. The fourth, Benjamin Cobb, was brother-in-law to John Homer, having married his sister Bethia.

Although a "Son of Liberty" in 1768, John Homer was a loyalist a few years later and accompanied the Royal army to Nova Scotia in 1776, and thereby lost a great deal of shipping and also landed property which was confiscated. He settled at Barrington, N. S., and was father of Joseph Homer, J. P., Collector of Customs, who had issue (I.) John, member of Provincial Assembly, *d.* 1846, and was suc. as member by his son John W. ; and (II.) Joseph, father of J. A. R. Homer, M. P. of New Westminster, B. C., who was member of the first Legislative Assembly in British Columbia, and member Dominion Parliament, *d.* 1846. The family in Nova Scotia still treasure up some silver plate and choice old furniture which John the loyalist brought from Boston.

The second surviving son of B. Homer (I.),

BENJAMIN HOMER (II.) *b.* Yarmouth, Aug. 5, 1731, removed to Boston and *m.* Oct. 23, 1759, Mary Perrott, dau. of Bryant Perrott and Ruth Wadsworth his wife.

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#### PERROTT FAMILY.

Bryant Perrott of County Somerset, England, and Hannah his wife, had a son Bryant, *b.* 1690. He was a merchant and resided in Water street, Boston. His

brick mansion house and stable were consumed in the great fire in 1760.

He *m.* Ruth, dau. of Deacon John Wadsworth of Milton, Mass., representative to the General Court, and niece of Rev. B. Wadsworth, President of Harvard University, and of the Hon. Joseph Wadsworth, one of H. M. judges—three sons of Capt. Samuel Wadsworth, who with his Lieutenant and twenty-six men, were killed by the Indians in 1676, at Sudbury, Mass., where there is a monument to his memory.

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Benjamin Homer (II) was a merchant and ship owner in partnership with his brother John, and the firm owned several vessels. Unfortunately however, he was accidentally killed in 1776, and his brother, as already stated, left the country, and all their vessels were seized and confiscated during the Revolutionary War. He resided in Cross street, North End, then the best part of town, and owned negro slaves (house servants), for slavery was not then abolished in Massachusetts, and to give some idea of the times, his son Mr. Benj. Perrott Homer, told me when I was a boy that he, when of the same age, had a negro boy to attend to himself alone; that he then wore breeches\* with little gold knee and shoe buckles, carried a little gold headed cane, and his negro attended him to school and followed him everywhere. He had one son and four daughters, viz.,

1. BENJAMIN PARROTT, of whom next.
2. Ruth, *m.* Mons. Pierre Remi Arsonneau, a French gentleman, and *d.* a widow, *s. p.*
3. Elizabeth, *m.* Judge Amasa Paine, of Troy, N. Y.,

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\*Boys, when he said this, wore pantaloons, for knickerbockers were not introduced, or rather re-introduced until some years later

brother of Judge Elijah Paine, father of Hon. Charles Paine, Governor of Vermont.†

4. Mary, *m.* Hon. Lot. Hall, of Westminster, Vt., Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont.
5. Bethia Cobb, *m.* Col. Oliver Gallup, A. D. C. of Governor Chittenden.

Mr. Homer was killed at Farmington, Conn., while returning home from Montreal on horseback, the only way of travelling then, by a slide of earth falling upon him, March 30, 1776. He was buried there and his epitaph says he was "A Kind Husband, a Tender Father, a Faithful Master, a Pleasant Friend and a Zealous Patriot."

His widow survived him but a few years, dying of a broken heart, March 4, 1779, *ae.* 39. His only son,

BENJAMIN PERROTT HOMER, *b.* in Boston, June 30, 1761, was baptized Benjamin, but, afterwards assumed the additional name of his mothers family which was then become extinct by the decease in 1784, of the only son (Bryant Perrott) of his mother's only brother. He *m.* in Gloucester, Mass., April 1, 1790, Abigail, dau. of David Pearce of Gloucester, and Bethia Ingersoll, his wife. She *d.* Jan. 11, 1811, *ae.* 37.

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#### PEARCE FAMILY.

David Pearce was fifth in descent from Abraham Pearce who was in Plymouth, Mass., with two servants about the year 1623.

He was one of the first merchants in the country and is said to have owned a fleet of about fifty vessels, forty

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†The Duchess of Marlborough is of this family, her mother's name being Elizabeth Homer Paine.



of which were square rigged, but lost most of them about A. D., 1800, they being all seized and confiscated by the French.

I have a painting of the ship *Sukey*, built in 1793. She measured 390 tons and was considered a first class ship. He sold her in London in 1797, to Admiral Sir Home Popham.

During the Revolutionary war he rendered important services to the American Government, for the Navy of the Revolution consisted almost entirely of private armed vessels, as the Government had no squadrons upon the seas and this Navy did their duty so well that the rates of insurance rose in England to forty and even sixty per cent. and was a principal reason that a feeling in favor of peace at last took place there.

The following is a "List of Guns" of his afloat during the war:

SHIPS.—*Betsey*, 24 ; *General Stark*, 24 ; *Providence*, 20 ; *Polly*, 20 ; *Harriet*, 16 ; *Wilkes*, 16 ; *Glo'ster Packet*, 16.

BRIGS.—*Gloucester*, 16 ; *Success*, 16.

SCHOONERS.—*Speed*, 10 ; *Speedwell*, 10 ; *Langdon*, 8 ; *Ranger*, 8. Total, 204 guns.

The *General Stark* was captured by the British frigate *Chatham* (50 guns). The *Wilkes*, *Harriet* and *Betsey* were also captured at that time. Others were taken by the French prior to July 1801. He would never insure, considering it a mistrusting of Providence. He had very large "French spoliation" claims, but his papers which were sent to Washington, in 1806, were burnt when the British destroyed the Capitol in 1812. He died March 16, *ae.* 81.

Benj. P. Homer was an East India merchant and private underwriter, but retired from business about 1815, when he built the house No. 38 Beacon street corner of Walnut street where he resided until his death in 1837, when it fell to his only son as part of his share, and was sold at his decease (without the stable which was sold separately) for seventy thousand dollars.

Mr. Homer met with some heavy losses in the financial crisis of 1836-37. By one bank alone he lost exactly ninety-five thousand dollars, equal to twice or thrice that sum now, and his iron chest was robbed of over that sum in bonds payable to bearer, which were never recovered. Gentlemen then had so called strong boxes with locks that a modern burglar would laugh at.

He *d.* April 4, 1838, *ae.* 76, having had issue nine children, six of whom predeceased him without issue, *viz* :

1. Benjamin Perrott, *d.* an infant.
2. Benjamin Pearce, *d.* young.
3. Mary Bethia, *b.* June 7, 1792, *m.* 1818, Thomas Dixon, Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion and of the Order of the Lily,\* and had issue with one son who *d.* unm.

(1.) Benjamin Homer Dixon, K. N. L., Consul General of the Netherlands in Canada, of Toronto, who *m.* first Kate McGill, dau. of the Hon. Chief Justice Sir James B. Macaulay, C. B., and secondly Frances Caroline, dau. of William B. Heward, Esq. (2.) Fitz Eugene Dixon, who *m.* Catherine Chew, dau. of the Hon. George M.

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\* *Vide* The Border Clan Dickson, in preparation.

Dallas, Vice President of the U. S. A., son of the Hon. Alexander James Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury of the U. S. A., and *d.* 1880. (3.) Harriet E. M., *m.* first William Henry Boulton, Esq., of Toronto, M. P. P., of the Boultons of Moulton, County Lincoln, Eng., and secondly Professor Goldwin Smith, D. C. L., of Oxford and Toronto. Of the Smiths of Hough, Co. Chester, and in the fourteenth century of Peel House, Co. Lancaster, one branch of which was baroneted.

4. Eliza, *d.* unkn.
5. FITZHENRY, of whom next.
6. Harriet Paine, *d.* unkn.
7. Samuel Cobb, *d.* young.
8. Georgiana Albertina, *b.* 1809, *m.* Philo Strong Shelton, Esq., of Boston, fourth in descent from Daniel Shelton of Deptford, Co., York, Eng. who settled at Stratford, Conn., where he *m.* in 1692, Elizabeth, dau. of Hon. Samuel Welles, son of Hon. Thomas Welles, Governor of Connecticut, and has surviving issue as follows: (1.) Philo Strong; (2.) Charles Parkman; (3.) Benjamin Homer; (4.) Albertina, *m.* Frederick R. Sears, son of the Hon. David Sears, a descendant of Richard Sears, the pilgrim, heretofore referred to. (5.) Helen Eugenia, *m.* Capt. Richard G. Cary, son of the Hon. Thomas G. Cary. He was shot during the last war on the very day his commission as Lieut-Colonel was signed. (6.) Harriet Homer, *m.* Charles J. Randall, son of the Hon. Judge Randall and brother of the Right Rev. Bishop Randall.

The only son

FITZHENRY HOMER, *b.* in Boston in 1799, *m.* Nancy Bradford, dau. of the Hon. James D'Wolf, of Bristol, R. I., U. S. Senator, by his wife Nancy, dau. of the Hon. William Bradford, Lieut.-Governor of Rhode Island, who was fourth in descent from Governor William Bradford who came over in the *Mayflower* in 1620, and had issue :

1. Josephine Maria, *b.* 1830, *m.* Henry Bedlow, Secretary of the Legation of the U. S. A., to Naples, and afterwards mayor of Newport, R. I.
2. Isabel, *b.* 1843, *m.* John Combe Pegram, Midshipman, U. S. Navy, and now Barrister at-Law, Bristol, R. I.

By the death of Fitzhenry Homer, in Boston, in 1856, without male issue, this branch of the family became extinct.

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A short account of the family may be found in "Bridgman's King's Chapel Epitaphs, 8vo, Boston, 1853," in some editions of which, however, the family is erroneously derived from a Richard de Hehmer.

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