

CS 71  
.R684  
1905  
Copy 1

ROCKWOOD

— OF —

GRAFTON, MASS.



Class C571

Book P684

PRESENTED BY

*Author. Gordon*

*1<sup>st</sup> Aug '05.*















# THE DESCENDANTS

- OF -

## BENJAMIN ROCKWOOD, SR.

### OF GRAFTON, MASS.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS ANCESTRY AND THE  
EARLY ROCKWOODS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY CHARLES A. FLAGG.



WASHINGTON, D. C.

1905.

CS71  
R 684  
1905

PRESS OF GIBSON BROS.  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1905

Gift

Author

(Person)

12 Ag 105



Ms. A. 1. 7. 1. 9. 05.  
69  
M. C. W. M. B. 109

*Dedicated to my dear aunt*

**Mrs. Maria Olivia (Flagg) Hunt,**

*on her 81st birthday, February 21, 1905, in memory of  
our companionship in the past: at Kingston,  
at Bernardston, and more recently in the  
home life in Washington.*



## PREFACE.

In these days of genealogical research and publication, no history of the Rockwoods has made its appearance, such material as is in print being confined for the most part to brief family sketches in numerous local histories.

The first generations are covered in Savage's "Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England" (1860-62), with some errors corrected later by J. W. Porter in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. 45, page 314, and Vol. 46, page 185. Abner Morse, in his "Genealogical Register of the Inhabitants, and History of the Towns of Sherborn and Holliston" (1856), on pages 211-231, has given the only genealogy of the family as a whole; but it was much abbreviated, by no means free from errors, and is to-day much out of date. That article was reprinted in the author's "Genealogy of the Descendants of Several Ancient Puritans," Vol. I (1857), pages 103-122, with a coat of arms in colors and two pages of additions numbered 122 $\frac{1}{4}$ -122 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Since Morse's time, W. S. Tilden's "History of the Town of Medfield" (1887) and E. O. Jameson's "History of Medway" (1886) have contained notices of the posterity of Nicholas Rockwood, of Medfield, as far as they continued to reside in the old towns.

There is absolutely no printed account of the family in Grafton. F. C. Pierce, in his "History of Grafton" (1879), does not give it a place, though five successive generations had lived in town; the explanation probably being that the Rockwoods were neither among the original settlers, nor were any of the name living there when he wrote.

In this contribution to the family history, original records have been consulted as far as possible, but much has been learned from living descendants, especially from our late cousin Mrs. Nancy G. (Brooks) Dolliver, who died 27 Sept.,

1903, at the age of 85. None took a deeper interest in the work than she, or would have felt more gratification at seeing it in print.

The writer of these pages also returns grateful acknowledgment to his aunt, Mrs. Maria O. (Flagg) Hunt, who during our two years of pleasant companionship, 1902-04, has given many a helpful hint.

In addition to collecting available records of the Grafton line, the compiler has taken much interest in the earlier generations of the family. In the Appendix is printed such information as could be gathered from many sources regarding the early Rockwoods in this country. This portion will be of equal interest to all persons of Rockwood ancestry.

CHARLES A. FLAGG.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February*, 1905.

ABBREVIATIONS.

The common abbreviations are used: (b. for born; co. for county; d. for died; dau. for daughter; m. for married; rem. for removed; res. for resided or residence; s. for son; unm. for unmarried). Where other contractions are used they are believed to be self-explanatory. If no state is mentioned, Massachusetts is to be understood.

## THE ROCKWOODS OF GRAFTON.

### I.

**Benjamin Rockwood**<sup>4\*</sup> [*John*<sup>3</sup>, *Nicholas*<sup>2</sup>, *Richard*<sup>1</sup>]; born 19 Nov., 1697, † in the part of old Medfield incorporated as Medway in 1713, and now the town of Millis (since the division of Medway in 1885). His early life was spent in Medway, where he served as selectman in 1736, 1738, and 1745. He was undoubtedly the Benjamin Rockwood, Jr., ‡ who, with other church members, was active in disciplining a brother for "striking into a pitch of the tune unusually raised, Feb. 18, 1739." § It is equally probable that he was the Benjamin Rockwood, of Medway, who was impressed for service in "King George's War," as appears in a return of 1745. || It is not recorded what this service was; perhaps in the Cape Breton expedition which captured Louisburg, as most of the troops were raised in the Massachusetts colony.

In May, 1762, we find the signatures of Benjamin Rockwood and Benjamin Rockwood, Jr., attached as witnesses to the will of Eleazer Flagg, of Grafton. It is not certain that he was the first of the family in town; more likely he removed thither to be near his son, who had purchased a farm adjoining the Flagg estate, in the preceding March.

In June, 1763, he bought for himself from Israel and Jacob Stevens a tract of 150 acres on George Hill, Grafton, for £533 6s. 8d. This purchase also included other parcels of five and forty acres, and still another described by the grantors as follows: "Together with two or three acres of land lying near Perly Meadow, laid out upon the right of Captain Jonas

\* For ancestry, see Appendix.

† Vital records of Medfield, 1903. (Benjamin Rockett, son of John and Bethia.)

‡ So called to distinguish from his father's brother Benjamin, who was a resident of Wrentham, but had inherited real estate in Medway. We can learn of no other contemporary Benjamin Rockwood in Medway.

§ Jameson, *History of Medway*, 1886, p. 107.

|| Same, p. 212.

Houghton, deceased, as also our right in the common and undivided land yet to be laid out on said Houghton's right that is not yet disposed of in Grafton aforesaid." Jonas Houghton, above-named, of whose rights Benjamin Rockwood became possessed, was from Lancaster, one of the 40 purchasers of Hassanimisco (Grafton) from the Indians in 1728. This proprietary share was duly transmitted by will to the new owner's son, Benjamin Rockwood, Jr.

Benjamin, the father, made his home on his new purchase on George Hill, not far from his son's residence in the Merriam District. He died 6 June, 1777 (gravestone record). There was evidently some trouble or delay in settling the estate, for appeals were made to the probate officials by two of the heirs. Appraisers appointed Aug., 1778, found real estate worth £1,400, beside property which each of the heirs had already received. The share of the son was £800; that of each daughter £400.

Benjamin Rockwood married in Medfield, 7 Oct., 1723, Rachel Morse,\* daughter of Benoni and Rachel (Bullard) Morse; born in Medfield, 30 May, 1702; died 8 Mar., 1778 (gravestone record).

#### Children:

2. i. BENJAMIN, b. Medway, 18 Nov., 1723; d. 13 Jan., 1801; m. 1750 Ruth Adams.
3. ii. ABIGAIL, record of birth not found; mentioned in father's will as elder daughter; d. about 1811; m. John Daniels.
- iii. JOHN, record of birth not found, but included in list of children, by Mrs. Dolliver. Probably d. young, as he is not mentioned in father's will.
- iv. RACHEL, b. Medway, 5 July, 1737. According to Mrs. Dolliver, she made her home in Grafton with her sister, Mrs. Daniels; and, after the latter's death, when 85 years of age, went to live with Mrs. Sally (Flagg) Bennett, granddaughter of her brother Benjamin; d. about 1829; unm. No record of death has been found.

#### 2.

**Benjamin Rockwood**<sup>5</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>1</sup>]; born in Medway, 18 Nov., 1723. As a young man he probably lived in his native town. The Worcester registry of deeds shows the sale by

\* Vital records of Medfield, 1903 (Benjamin Rocket and Rachel Morse).



Jonas Warren, of Upton, to Benjamin Rockwood, Jr., of Medway, 5 Jan., 1749-50, of a dwelling-house, barn and 70 acres of land in Upton, the same being the southern part of land originally laid out to Capt. Jonathan Draper. The consideration was £1,100 (old tenor). To this home he brought his bride a few months later. 2 Mar., 1756, he purchased 4 acres additional from the same Jonas Warren.

After living in Upton eleven years, 5 Mar., 1761, the sale of his property there is recorded for £225, 13s. 4d. to Moses Holbrook, of Upton.

A deed of 5 Mar., 1762, on file in Worcester, shows the conveyance from Nathaniel Stedman, of Grafton, to Benjamin Rockwood, of Upton, for £333, 6s. 8d. of a plot of land of about 102 acres in Grafton. This purchase, destined to be the family home for nearly one hundred years, was located in the Merriam District, about a mile east of the centre of the town, and bounded on the south by the Flagg estate, the home of Benjamin's son-in-law, Samuel Flagg.

The original homestead was on the west side of the road, a little south of the old Rockwood house now standing, which was built by Benjamin's son, Moses Rockwood, Sr. On the death of his father in 1777, Benjamin Rockwood became possessed of a proprietor's share of one-fortieth of all undivided lands in town, and also considerable real estate on George Hill, Grafton.

The little old school-house in the Merriam District, attended for generations by the children of that part of town, was erected on land by him given to the town on condition that it always be used for educational purposes. This land reverted to John Rockwood, his great-grandson, about 1900, on the final abandonment by the town of the district system.

Benjamin Rockwood, Jr., died 13 Jan., 1801 (gravestone record).

Married in Medway, 17 May, 1750, Ruth Adams, daughter of Daniel and Sarah (Sanford) Adams; born in Medway, 6 Mar., 1728-29. She was admitted to the Grafton Church, 26 Feb., 1775. Her Bible is in the possession of Henry E.

Brooks, a descendant of her daughter Lydia. Died 22 Jan., 1817 (gravestone record).

Children:

4. i. LYDIA, b. Upton, 12 Sept., 1751; d. Grafton, 1 Oct., 1824; m. 1769, Samuel Flagg.
5. ii. ABIGAIL, b. Upton, 12 Mar., 1754; d. Newton, 22 Aug., 1832; m. 1781, Daniel Rand.
- iii. RUTH, b. Upton, 12 Mar., 1756. After the death of her father she continued to live in the old home, a part of the house having been left her by will. Her brother Moses inherited the remainder of the dwelling, and unfortunately the relations between the two were not of the pleasantest. It may have turned her against the whole sex; at least all her property was willed to her three sisters Lydia Flagg, Abigail Rand, and Rhoda Taft, and their seven daughters. She d. in Grafton, 4 Sept., 1816, unmm.
- iv. RHODA, b. Upton, 30 June, 1758; d. there, 16 May, 1759.
- v. BENJAMIN, b. Upton, 23 May, 1760. He is probably the Benjamin Rockwood, Jr., who marched, Aug., 1777, as a private in Capt. Joseph Warren's company on the Bennington alarm, and served again under the same captain in Col. Wheelock's militia regiment, Sept.-Oct., 1777. There is a family tradition, which we have been unable to verify, that he entered college, where his course was cut short by his death, which occurred 21 Jan., 1782 (gravestone record). unmm.
6. vi. RHODA, b. Grafton, 12 Sept., 1762; d. 2 Mar., 1826; m. 1784, Robert Taft.
7. vii. AZUBAH, b. 21 Sept., 1765; d. Westminster, Vt., 20 Dec., 1836; m. 1st, 1789, Daniel Grout; m. 2d, Isaiah Eaton.
8. viii. MOSES, baptized at Grafton, 5 June, 1768; d. Grafton, 26 Nov., 1833; m. 1792, Huldah Brigham.

3.

JOHN DANIELS. He is supposed to have been of the Daniels of Medway, but is not identified by Morse in his Genealogical Register nor mentioned by Jameson, who has quite an extended genealogy of the family in his History of Medway. It has not been possible to learn anything from his descendants. He was probably born in Medway, removing to Grafton, where he and his wife lived in George Hill on land she inherited from her father. No mention of his death has been found.

Married **Abigail Rockwood**<sup>5</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Medway according to tradition, but not recorded; mentioned in her father's will as elder daughter. In 1803, after her husband's death, she sold the George Hill property to Jonathan and Moses C. Hayden, and spent her last days with her grandniece Mrs. Sally (Flagg) Bennett in North Grafton. The date of her death is not known, but her will, dated 30 June, 1810, was admitted to probate 8 Feb., 1811. In it she left \$2 each to her son and daughter; the balance of her little property to the Knox grandchildren.

Children:

- i. ABIGAIL, b. Medway, 1752, according to Morse. She is not mentioned later, and probably died young.
- ii. ZEBULON, b. Holliston, 9 July, 1758. He lived in Grafton, and saw considerable service in the Revolutionary War in various commands. Tradition speaks particularly of his campaigns in the "Jerseys." d. Grafton, 14 Feb., 1825, and is buried with several of his family in a lot near the tomb in the old burial ground, altogether unmarked. m. Grafton, 18 Apr., 1782, Sarah Brigham. (4 sons, 4 daus.)
- iii. MARY, b. Grafton, 8 Nov., 1766, usually known as Molly. She was living in Grafton in 1811. m. Grafton, 24 Apr., 1796, John Knox, of Ashford, Conn. (3 sons, 2 daus.) He deserted his wife and d. in Sutton about 1811.

4.

SAMUEL FLAGG, son of Eleazer and Huldah (Chandler) Flagg; born in Grafton, 5 Dec., 1741. He inherited from his father, one of the town's earliest settlers, the estate in the Merriam District which the latter had received from *his* father, one of the 40 original proprietors of Hassanimisco or Grafton. Samuel Flagg was a prosperous farmer, held town offices, and as a man none stood higher in the respect of the community. He died in Grafton, 17 Oct., 1824.

Married in Grafton, 28 Dec., 1769, **Lydia Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Upton, 12 Sept., 1751. She was remembered by those who knew her as small in stature, nervous and somewhat impulsive, but industrious, and withal a little proud of her social position in town. Her

house was well stocked with the necessaries and luxuries of the period, and many a valued heirloom is preserved among her descendants at the present day, especially by Miss Sarah A. Hale, of Grafton, a granddaughter of her son Jeremiah. She died in Grafton, 1 Oct., 1824.

Children, all born in Grafton:

- i. HULDAH, b. 15 Sept., 1770; d. Grafton, 21 Oct., 1778.
- ii. SAMUEL, b. 9 Aug., 1772; d. Grafton, 7 Nov., 1778.
- iii. SALLY, b. 24 Sept., 1774; lived all her life in Grafton, and d. there 28 Mar., 1863; m. 1st, 1791, John Bennett, a hatter, undertaker, and farmer in Grafton (1 son, 1 dau.); m. 2d, 1823, Amos Ellis; they soon separated, and she resumed name of Mrs. Bennett. She was the grandmother of Mrs. Nancy G. Dolliver, to whom allusion has been elsewhere made.
- iv. ABEL, b. 16 Apr., 1777; d. Grafton, 15 Oct., 1778.
- v. JEREMIAH, b. 26 Dec., 1779; in shipping business in Boston, and later a farmer in Grafton, in the Merriam District, south of his father's place. d. Grafton, 27 Aug., 1843. m. 1st, 1799, Lydia Drury; m. 2d, 1801, Sarah Brigham, widow of Benjamin Kingsbury (3 sons, 2 daus.).
- vi. CHANDLER, b. 1 Jan., 1782; graduate of Brown Univ., 1803; a noted physician at Marblehead, where he d. 10 Sept., 1859. m. 1815, Lucretia B. Lewis (1 dau.).
- vii. BENJAMIN, b. 25 Apr., 1784; physician, Worcester, Mass., and Athens, Me. d. Athens, 1 Jan., 1816. m. 1st, 1806, Lydia Harrington (1 son); m. 2d, 1815, Lydia Leighton (1 dau.).
- viii. JOSEPH, b. 2 Dec., 1786; gave up his plans in life to help his father at home, receiving the farm at the latter's death. d. Grafton, 5 Dec., 1841. m. 1821, Olivia Rebecca Milliken; she m. 2d, 1844, Timothy Hunt, and died 1886 (3 sons, 3 daus.). The compiler of this work is a grandson of Joseph.

## 5.

DANIEL RAND, son of Daniel and Martha (—) Rand; born in Shrewsbury, 12 July, 1760. Lived in Shrewsbury in early life; 20 May, 1785, bought a farm in Grafton from John Maynard and removed to that town. In Nov., 1797, he sold the same to William Brigham for £750, also his pew, No. 36, in the meeting-house. Worcester was his next residence, till Jan., 1824, when he sold for \$3,000 to William Eaton all the land he held in Worcester and Shrewsbury and

removed to Newton. He died in Newton 14 Sept., 1828, intestate, leaving an estate valued at \$5,764.

Married in Grafton, 21 June, 1781, **Abigail Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>3</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Upton, 12 Mar., 1754; died in Newton, 22 Aug., 1832.

Children:

- i. JOHN, b. Shrewsbury, 2 Apr., 1782; a merchant in Boston, dealing in West India goods. Was stricken with paralysis and unable to move from his chair for 20 years. d. about 1853. m. a widow Mrs. Duade. (No children.)
- ii. LEVINAH, b. Shrewsbury, 13 Feb., 1784; lived for some years with her aunt, Mrs. Lydia (Rockwood) Flagg, in Grafton. d. about 1824, unm.
- iii. DANIEL, b. Grafton, 6 Oct., 1785; was a watchmaker in Boston; went to California as a gold seeker about 1850; died on the way and was buried at sea in the Pacific. m. — Howard (2 daus., 1 son).
- iv. ABIGAIL, b. Grafton, 29 Feb., 1788; d. in Newton, unm.
- v. ARTEMAS, b. Grafton, 11 Aug., 1789; was a manufacturer and dealer in combs in Boston; d. there Aug., 1868. unm.
- vi. MARY, b. Grafton, 23 Feb., 1791; d. Brookline, 13 May, 1857; m. about 1821, Phineas Goodnough, a farmer in Brookline (3 sons).
- vii. IRA, b. Grafton, 24 Sept., 1793; was a dealer in West India goods in Boston, and later a farmer. d. Newton, 30 Sept., 1862, unm.
- viii. CALVIN, b. Grafton, 26 Feb., 1796; a farmer in Newton, where he d. 27 Aug., 1861; m. Eliza Holmes. (1 dau.)
- ix. LYDIA, probably b. in Worcester about 1799; d. Boston, Oct., 1868, unm.

6.

ROBERT TAFT, son of Robert and Jane (Crag) Taft; born in Upton, 15 Oct., 1756. Was a shoemaker; res. Upton. Rem. to Barre, Mass., about 1794, and bought 100 acres of land in that town, from Reuben Tatman, 10 June, 1795. He died 13 Oct., 1824, aged 68.\* 8 Nov., 1824, the widow requested that her husband's estate be administered by their daughter Nancy Conant, as only heir. Robert Taft married in Grafton, 8 Jan., 1784, **Rhoda Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>3</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Grafton, 12 Sept., 1762; died 2 Mar., 1826.\*

Children:

- i. POLLY TAYLOR, b. Upton, 8 Oct., 1784; d. young.

\* Vital records of Barre, 1903.

- ii. NANCY [birth recorded as Anna], b. Upton, 6 June, 1787; d. Barre 23 Dec., 1864, aged 77; m. Elijah Conant [intention filed, 11 Nov., 1809]; res. Barre. He died before 1824. (2 sons, 1 dau.)
- iii. POLLY, b. Upton, 24 Oct., 1789; was undoubtedly the Miss Taft who d. 14 Apr., 1807, aged 17.\*
- iv. RHODA, birth not recorded; d. July, 1820, aged 25.\*

7<sup>1</sup>.

DANIEL GROUT, son of Daniel and Elizabeth (Adams) Grout; born in Grafton, 28 Feb., 1763. When he was about 14 years of age the family removed to Acworth, N. H. He was a physician in Acworth and died there 2 Oct., 1802. Married in Westboro, 1 Feb., 1789, **Azubah Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born 21 Sept., 1763 (according to family record; baptized, Grafton, 9 Mar., 1766). She married 2d, Isaiah Eaton and died in Westminster, Vt., 20 Dec., 1836.

A number of pieces of furniture, silverware, etc., once belonging to Azubah Rockwood are now in the possession of her grandson, Wm. Grout Barrett, of San Francisco.

Child of Daniel and Azubah Grout:

- i. NANCY, b. Acworth, N. H., 14 June, 1790; d. Chester, Vt., 12 Nov., 1872; m. 1819, Thomas T. Barrett (b. 1792; physician in Chester, Vt.; d. 1863). (1 dau., 3 sons.)

7<sup>2</sup>.

ISAIAH EATON, son of Timothy, Jr., and Abigail (Massey) Eaton; born in Haverhill, 15 Oct., 1757. 19 Apr., 1775, he enlisted for 8 months as private under Capt. James Sawyer in Col. James Frye's Massachusetts regiment. In Dec., 1775 he again enlisted for 12 months as artificer under Capt. Bacon and in March, 1777, for a year and a half in the same capacity.

Some time before his second marriage he had removed to Westminster, Vt., where his trade is said to have been that of goldsmith. He was known as Major Eaton. In 1832 he applied for and was granted a pension for Revolutionary services, stating in his application that he had been twice married and had six children living.

\* Vital records of Barre, 1903.

Died in Westminster, 21 Jan., 1847.

He married 1st, Priscilla Davis (?), who died Nov., 1804. Married 2d, **Azubah Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; widow of Daniel Grout; born 21 Sept., 1765; died at Westminster, 20 Dec., 1836.

Child by 2d wife:

- i. WILLIAM GROUT, b. Westminster, Vt., 3 June, 1808; d. there, 30 Sept., 1813.

## 8.

**Moses Rockwood**<sup>6</sup> [*Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; no record of birth, but baptism recorded in Grafton, 5 June, 1768. He inherited the home place in the Merriam District, his unmarried sister Ruth being left a portion of the house in her father's will. A short distance north of the old homestead he erected a new dwelling, which stands to-day as the "Old Rockwood house" on the west side of the road. He never held public office nor interested himself greatly in outside affairs. Was considered a just man, but stern and somewhat hard, with very little that was genial in his nature. His industry was indefatigable and he was reputed a thrifty farmer, unusually prosperous for the times. Died in Grafton, 26 Nov., 1833.

He married in Grafton, 12 Apr., 1792, Huldah Brigham, daughter of Ezekiel and Martha (Bigelow) Brigham; born 1 Dec., 1762; died in Grafton, 3 Oct., 1833.

Children, both born in Grafton:

9. i. SALLY, b. 10 Oct., 1792; d. Oxford, 15 Feb., 1851; m. 1831, Clark Adams.
10. ii. MOSES, b. 20 Apr., 1796; d. Grafton, 2 June, 1835; m. 1823, Nancy Livermore.

## 9.

CLARK ADAMS, son of John and Elizabeth (—) Adams; born in Northbridge, 5 Nov., 1773. He resided in Northbridge till after his second marriage. Removed to Charlton, where he purchased a farm of 95 acres in the northeastern part of the town. He died 8 May, 1850.

Married 1st, in Northbridge, 15 Mar., 1798, Silence Benson (6 sons, 2 daughters). She died 4 Sept., 1829, and he married 2d, in Grafton, 19 Oct., 1831, **Sally Rockwood**<sup>7</sup> [*Moses*<sup>6</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Grafton, 10 Oct., 1792. After her husband's death she removed to Oxford and died there 15 Feb., 1851.

Child, by 2d wife:

- i. MARY ELIZA, d. Oxford, 18 July, 1857, aged 21; m. — Stone. No children.

## 10.

**Moses Rockwood**<sup>7</sup> [*Moses*<sup>6</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Grafton, 20 Apr., 1796. On his marriage his father gave him a portion of the farm, and a new house was erected on the opposite or east side of the road, later known as the "New Rockwood house," still standing. He was an orderly and energetic man, a model farmer; also dealt in cattle. He would fatten the stock and drive it to market in Brighton, before the day of railroads, starting as early as 2 in the morning. By inheritance and his own thrift, he accumulated quite a property for the time, and his family were left well provided for, despite his early death, which occurred in Grafton, 2 June, 1835.

He married in Leicester, 2 June, 1823, Nancy Livermore, daughter of Salem and Nancy (Walker) Livermore. She was born in Leicester, 13 Oct., 1800; married 2d, 22 Feb., 1837, Stephen Adams, of Grafton, and removed with him to Paxton about 1840. He died Oct., 1846, having had 3 children by her. She removed to Leicester about 1847, and died 30 Dec., 1875.

Children of Moses and Nancy Rockwood:

- i. SALEM LIVERMORE, b. Leicester, 2 June, 1824; d. Grafton, 9-Apr., 1840.
11. ii. JOHN, b. Grafton, 20 Oct., 1825; m. 1846, Melinda A. Prouty.
12. iii. ANGELINE, b. Grafton, 24 Oct., 1827; m. 1845, James L. Meriam.
- iv. DAVID, b. Grafton, 26 June, 1830; d. Paxton, 19 Oct., 1846.
13. v. MARY, b. Grafton, 7 Nov., 1833; m. 1850, Henry Lamb.
- vi. MOSES BRIGHAM, b. Grafton, 14 July, 1835; d. Leicester, 30 Jan., 1847.



## 11.

**John Rockwood**<sup>s</sup> [*Moses<sup>i</sup>, Moses<sup>6</sup>, Benjamin<sup>5</sup>, Benjamin<sup>4</sup>*]; born in Grafton, 20 Oct., 1825. Rem. with the family to Paxton about 1840. After his marriage, went back to Grafton and lived for a time on the old Rockwood place in the Merriam District, which he had inherited; occupying the house of his grandfather, Moses, Sr. About 1855 he sold the farm, which then finally passed out of the family. Removed to Worcester, 1860, and became a dealer in farm produce. His wife was an invalid for 15 years before her death, and nearly all of his time was devoted to the care of her. He is the last of the Grafton Rockwoods.

Married in Spencer, 23 May, 1846, Melinda Adeline Prouty, daughter of John N. and Melinda (Luther) Prouty; born in Spencer, 8 Mar., 1824; died in Worcester, 29 Feb., 1904.

Child:

14. i. ADELIN ELLA, b. Grafton, 10 July, 1848; m. 1872, Norman A. Harrington.

## 12.

JAMES LOVELL MERIAM, son of Samuel and Nancy T. (Nichols) Meriam; born in Oxford, 11 Aug., 1822; served apprenticeship as a house builder. Was a contractor about 17 years, living in Oxford one year after marriage, Leicester four years, Palmer 2 years, and removing to Princeton, Ill., in 1853. 1863 he went to Chicago and opened an office as architect and superintendent, continuing there until his death, which occurred in Chicago, 4 July, 1897. He married in Leicester, 2 Dec., 1845, **Angeline Rockwood**<sup>s</sup> [*Moses<sup>i</sup>, Moses<sup>6</sup>, Benjamin<sup>5</sup>, Benjamin<sup>4</sup>*]; born in Grafton, 24 Dec., 1827. All her life she has been actively engaged in church work, and served many years on the executive board of three of the largest philanthropic institutions in Chicago.

Children, all born in Princeton, Ill.:

- i. JAMES CLARENCE, b. 2 June, 1855; was a salesman in Chicago, and d. there, 5 Sept., 1888. m. Chicago, 24 Dec., 1878, Nettie Agnes Downing. (3 children.)
- ii. ARTHUR LOVELL, b. 25 Oct., 1857; an architect and superintendent in Chicago; removing, Oct., 1899, to Springfield, Ill. m. Marshalltown, Ia., 25 Oct., 1881, Minnie Colley.
- iii. ALICE LAURA, b. 8 Aug., 1859; d. Chicago, 1 Dec., 1884. unmm.

## 13.

HENRY LAMB,\* son of Liberty and Harriet N. (Stone) Lamb; born in Leicester, 8 Aug., 1828. Was a carpenter in Rochdale (Leicester) and Oxford. He died in Oxford, 19 Feb., 1888. Married in Pomfret, Conn., 19 Feb., 1850, **Mary Rockwood**<sup>8</sup> [*Moses*<sup>7</sup>, *Moses*<sup>6</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Grafton, 7 Nov., 1833; living in Worcester with her brother, John Rockwood.

Children, both born in Leicester:

- i. MARY ELIZABETH, b. 1 Apr., 1852; res. West Auburn, a widow; m. William L. Lamb,\* a farmer and wood chopper in Oxford. (1 dau.)
- ii. HENRIETTA VIOLA, b. 12 May, 1859. m. 1877, William J. Lamb,\* a shoemaker in Worcester. (No children.)

## 14.

NORMAN ANDREW HARRINGTON, son of Thomas and Rhoda (Truesdell) Harrington; born in Jaffrey, N. H., 10 Oct., 1848. Is in fire insurance business in Worcester. He married, Worcester, 23 May, 1872, **Adeline Ella Rockwood**<sup>9</sup> [*John*<sup>8</sup>, *Moses*<sup>7</sup>, *Moses*<sup>6</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>5</sup>, *Benjamin*<sup>4</sup>]; born in Grafton, 10 July, 1848. She was a school teacher before marriage.

Children, all born in Worcester:

- i. FLORENCE MELINDA, b. Apr., 1873; is living at home, unm.
- ii. LILLIAN ROCKWOOD, b. June, 1880; m. 1900, Milton C. Snyder. He is in machinery business with his father in Worcester; a book-keeper.
- iii. HAROLD JOHN, b. 11 Jan., 1882; d. 22 Jan., 1882.

\* It is a remarkable fact that these three Lambs are of different families, and, as far as known, entirely unrelated.

THE EARLY ROCKWOODS IN  
MASSACHUSETTS.



## THE EARLY ROCKWOODS.

The student is at once called to notice an apparent confusion of names in the early generations in this country: Rockwood and Rockett used interchangeably, with the latter form predominating. For example: the vital statistics of Medfield, Mass., down to 1728, as kept by the town clerks, show 11 Rockets, 49 Rocketts, 1 Rockitt, and 5 Rockwoods; all members of the one family.

Abner Morse gave what seems to be the true explanation of this; after much investigation he became convinced "that the name was never spelled Rockett by the family. It was so pronounced, as it still is, and so written by others, and answered to by the Rockwoods. But on no petition, deed, will, or certificate, ancient or modern, signed by either of them, have I ever found it subscribed otherwise than Rockwood; and both Nicholas<sup>2</sup> and John<sup>2</sup>, as if mindful of the importance of the true orthography, had their marriages in 1656 and 1662 recorded by the name of Rockwood. Such precaution in their day and circumstances was anomalous and *significant*. Other families yielded to innovation, adopted without resistance the misspelling of clerks, and seldom if ever recovered the original orthography of their names when thus publicly corrupted. But the Rockwoods (some if not all of the 4 first generations) withstood the corruption [universal on town records until 1728], continued to subscribe their names Rockwood, and they seem finally to have effected the correction everywhere, though at different and wide intervals. None of the race are known to retain the more convenient spelling of Rocket."

In the half century since Morse wrote the above, the old pronunciation of the name as Rocket seems to have been entirely abandoned, but as a survival we note to-day marked family traits or peculiarities still spoken of as "Rocketty."

The writer has had little time or opportunity to carry the investigations back to the mother country. He has found no evidence pointing to the early English home of our ancestors; but it is fair to state that some of our kindred in America have become convinced that such connection is established, and have adopted a coat of arms to which it entitles them.

It is, at all events, probable that Morse is in error in his conclusions as to the origin and etymology of the name: from rocky woods. Rockwood (as well as Rockett) is practically unknown in the mother country, and wherever it appears can be almost invariably identified as another spelling of Rookwood, which is a somewhat common English surname. In Burke's "General Armory" are recognized no less than eight different coats of arms of the family.\* Variations of spelling occur, as Rookewood and Rokewood, the latter clearly an intermediate form between the common English one and our own. As to the derivation of the name, the fact that each of the eight coats of arms contain either 3 or 6 chess rooks leaves little room for doubt. It may here be added that Morse appends in a foot-note the tradition that a "page by the name of Rockwood, at the court of Henry VIII, in a game of chess with his king won a manor belonging to one of the monasteries distributed in his reign, and that in commemoration of the victory, received from the king for his arms 6 chessrooks." A much earlier tradition is found in a curious old history of the family, "*Vetustissima prosapia Rookewodorum de Stanningefilde in comitatu Suffolciæ*,"† a manuscript compiled by a member of the family in 1619: "And so came these 6 towers or chesserookes, quasi de Rupe Lignea, w<sup>o</sup> some do affirme were originarely geven to the firste bearer of this coate for his excellente skylle in this exer-

\* Some of the American Rockwoods may have been misled into adopting the armorial bearings illustrated in a colored plate in Morse's work. This is entirely unauthorized. The various coats of arms described by Burke all agree in bearing the chess rooks, but beyond that there are various differences. No right to assume any arms can be upheld until (first) the descent from an English family has been absolutely proved, and (second), the arms of that English family are established.

† *Collectanea topographica et heraldica*, v. 2 (1835), p. 120-147.

cyse, of in this respecte playenge with the Conqueror at his firste entry into this lande.”

Rookwood means, then, rooks or towers of wood, and is derived from the coat of arms borne in early times.

It may be further noted that the eastern counties of Norfolk and Suffolk are the seats of the English Rookwoods, and probably there rather than in Dorset, as Morse suggests,\* must we search for the ancestral abode of the race. The published heraldic *Visitations* of these counties contain pedigrees of families of the name. But these investigations in England must be left to others.

In the absence of any general history of the family it has seemed best to preserve here such information as is at hand on the early generations.

## ANCESTRY OF BENJAMIN ROCKWOOD OF GRAFTON.

### FIRST GENERATION.

#### **Richard Rockwood.**

We have no definite information concerning the parentage and early English home of this pioneer of the family in America. Nor is this a matter to cause surprise; probably the same is true of a majority of those who came to the colonies in the 17th century, despite the willingness of many family historians to accept the most shadowy indications of descent.

We know that various families of Rookwood flourished in the mother country at the time, and it is by no means improbable that some of the investigations continually being made in English records may establish the connection.

This we are sure of at least: Richard Rockwood, or Rockett as the name is commonly found, was an early settler in Dorchester, one of the oldest towns in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

\* Morse's inference as to the Dorset origin of the family was based on the conjecture that Richard Rockwood's first wife, the mother of Nicholas (and so married as early as 1627) was a daughter of Zachary Bicknell, who came from Weymouth, Dorset. We know now that it was the widow and not the daughter of Bicknell that Richard married, and the date not earlier than 1636.

In 1630 no less than 17 vessels crossed the water to New England, bearing the first members of the new colony, 1,000 souls or more. Among them, the *Mary and John*, which weighed anchor at Plymouth, Devonshire, seems to have been the second to reach our shores, the 30th of May.

Its 140 passengers, men of Dorset, remained together and founded Dorchester. According to the histories, the next shipload of settlers for the town arrived in July, 1633, from Weymouth, Dorset, bringing 80 accessions. Whether Richard Rockwood was in either of these parties or, embarking in some other vessel, landed elsewhere and came to Dorchester independently, may never be known. Hotten,\* the standard authority on colonial immigrants, unfortunately, could not learn the names of passengers on these vessels.

Dorchester at this period was the largest and wealthiest town in the colony. In Oct., 1633, on the occasion of raising a colonial tax of £400, her share was £80, while the other towns, Boston, Salem, Watertown, etc., paid £48 or less.

The Dorchester archives, though claimed as the earliest ones preserved in Massachusetts, are quite defective. We are told that the first book, in which were entered names of settlers, localities allotted to each, and records of births and deaths, was burnt in 1657.†

Among the earliest entries preserved to us is the following, under date of 3 Dec., 1633: "Ordered that Rich: Rocket is to have an acre addition to his home lott in consideration of removing his pale‡ in regard a publicke way is to be through his lott."§ Again, 10 Feb., 1634-35, 8 acres more were granted to Richard Rocket,|| and Feb., 1635-36, 6 acres more to Richard Rocket.¶

Another of the name was early in Dorchester: John Rocket, perhaps a brother of Richard, but unidentified. He had a grant of 4 acres on "Naponset Necke," the 5th of

\* Our early emigrant ancestors. The original lists of persons of quality; emigrants who went from Great Britain to the American plantations, 1600-1700. 2d edition, 1880.

† New Eng. Hist. and Gen. Register, v. 21 (1867), p. 164.

‡ Fence.

§ Boston Record Commissioners. Fourth report, 1880, 3d edition, 1896, p. 4.

|| Same, p. 10.

¶ Same, p. 15.



August, 1633,\* but may not have come to the new settlement at all, as 1 Sept., 1634, we read that the land laid out to him was granted to another.† “The map of the meadows beyond the Naponset river and how y<sup>l</sup> is allotted out,”‡ with its 49th entry, “Rocket, 4 a.” undoubtedly relates to this John Rocket, and so it would seem that the date of the map is established.

The Dorchester records have no further mention of Rocketts or Rockwoods. In the spring of 1636, the church and a large part of the population withdrew in a body to Windsor, Conn., and the town never again recovered its pre-eminence.

The transfer of Richard's Dorchester property was not recorded; in fact it is notable that the Registry of Deeds of Suffolk County§ contains no entry of a transfer of land *to* or *from* a Rockwood down to the death of Nicholas in 1680. The former fact is explainable, since they were always among the first settlers or proprietors, and received their land by grant or allotment rather than by purchase; the latter can be attributed only to carelessness in omitting to record.

Probably Richard Rockwood left Dorchester about the time of the exodus to Connecticut in 1636 and we infer that he sojourned for a time in the neighborhood of Weymouth, then a flourishing settlement a few miles farther south on the coast. There lived the widow Bicknell, whom he married in that or the following year. And in 1639-40, he is spoken of as “of Monoticott,” which is the name of the stream forming Weymouth's northern boundary, and seems to have likewise designated the region on the north of this stream, the site of the modern village of Braintree, then and for some years afterward practically unsettled.

A notable trait of our early colonial ancestors, coming as they did from a country where landholding was the privilege of the few, was their desire to own large estates. Then, too, the natural increase was rapid; towns speedily became too

\* Boston Record Commissioners. Fourth report, 1880, 3d edition, 1896, p. 2.

† Same, p. 7.

‡ Same, p. 321.

§ The various homes of the family, Dorchester, Braintree, Medfield, Medway, were all in Suffolk County, till the formation of Norfolk County in 1793.

cramped, and boundaries were enlarged or extensive migrations removed the surplus population. Boston, with its advantage of location, soon outstripped the other towns, and the narrow peninsula became almost at once overcrowded. Out beyond Dorchester to the south between the Neponset river and the Monoticot, lay a tract, containing Mt. Wollaston, well known a few years earlier as the resort of Morton of Merry Mount, but now unoccupied; and by decree of the General Court in Sept., 1634, it was "ordered that Boston shall have enlargement at Mount Wollaston." Under this permission two or three large grants were made by the town of Boston, and then, 4 Jan., 1636, a committee appointed with full powers to allot the land. At the very outset the settlement was almost broken up by the Antinomian troubles, the party of Mrs. Hutchinson and her sympathizers centering there until expelled by the intolerant colonial authorities. But 16 Sept., 1639, those dwelling at the Mount had so increased in numbers that a church was formed. Settlers came in rapidly, and among many like grants from the Boston committee is the following: "24 Feb. 1639-40, to Richard Rockett, of Monoticott, at Mount Woolystone, a great lot there for 5 heads 20 acres, and 20 acres more at his request. Upon the covenant of 3s. per acre."\*

Should we wonder who the "five heads" were, there were certainly: Richard and wife Agnes; probably also Nicholas and Lydia, children of Richard, and John Bicknell, then aged 16, son of Agnes by her first husband. This, of course, is pure conjecture. The question of Nicholas will be taken up later; Lydia, if a daughter of Richard and Agnes (as stated by the historian of the Adams family and others) must have been their first child, and born not later than 1637, as she was married to Edward Adams in 1652. John Rockwood, only recorded child of Richard and Agnes, was not born till Dec., 1641, about five years after the marriage of his parents. And it may be questioned if John Bicknell,

\* Second report of the Record Commissioners of the city of Boston, 1877, p. 50.

even if living at the time in his step-father's family, would confer an added right to land.

The later history of Richard Rockwood is veiled in obscurity. We may suppose him to have lived an uneventful life in the new home soon incorporated as Braintree, and now the town of Quincy, since the division of old Braintree. His name is not found in the records either as public official or lawbreaker, nor yet in the list of freemen of the colony.

It appears that he died in 1660. "An inventory of the Estate of Richard Rockwood late of Braintry Deceased the 7 (9) 60"\* shows "a dwelling-house standing and 4 acres of ground and a little orchard, all at £15"; with other items to make a total of £38, 3s. 4d. Of this amount goods to a value of £8, 8s. were given to his "dafter" and £4, 13s. paid "to Richard Taire to satisfy for a cove that was killed by Jno. Rockwood."

The above paper was sworn to, 15 Nov., 1660, by Elder Stephen Kingsly and "Ann Rockett."

Very little is known regarding the wives of Richard Rockwood. If we are correct in supposing Nicholas to have been his son, then the first marriage must have occurred in England as early as 1628; but the name of this wife, whether or not she accompanied him from England and the date of her death are unsettled questions. At all events Richard must have married the widow Agnes Bicknell in 1636 or early in 1637.

We find that Zachary Bicknell, aged 45, his wife, Agnes, 27, and their son John, 11, came from Weymouth, England, Mar., 1635, in the ship *Assurance*.†

They settled at Weymouth, out south of Boston, on the coast beyond Dorchester and Braintree. Zachary Bicknell died soon, probably in 1636.‡ The son, John, was the ancestor of the American family of the name. Some authorities

\* On file at Suffolk County Registry of Probate.

† Hotten. *Our early emigrant ancestors*, 2d ed., 1880, p. 286.

Bicknell. *A memorial of . . . family of . . . Joshua Bicknell*, 1880.

‡ *New Eng. Hist. and Gen. Reg.*, v. 46, p. 185.

have erroneously stated that Agnes, wife of Richard Rockwood was daughter, and not wife of Zachary Bicknell, and it has more lately been asserted that she was a daughter of Robert Lovell. The latter came in the same ship with the Bicknells, and a comparison of his recorded age, 40 years, with that of Agnes Bicknell, 27, effectually settles that question.

The fact as well as the period of the marriage of Richard Rockwood to Agnes Bicknell is proved by the following order of the General Court of 9 Mar., 1636-37: "William Reade haveing bought the house and 20 acres of land at Weymoth, unfenced for 7<sup>l</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup>, w<sup>ch</sup> was Zachary Bicknels, (after Bicknels death) of Rich<sup>rd</sup> Rocket & his wife, is to have the sale confirmed by the child\* when hee cometh to age, or else the child to alow all such costs as the Court shall thinke meet."†

Although the death of Mrs. Agnes Rockwood is not found in the defective town records of Braintree, it does occur in a copy of the same forwarded to Boston by the clerk, 9<sup>o</sup> (5<sup>o</sup>), 1643,‡ or as we should write it, 9 July, 1643.

Evidently Richard remarried, though here again the record of the event is lacking. We may suppose the "Ann Rockett" who appeared as witness to the inventory of his estate, to have been his widow. In the probate court of Suffolk Co., 20 Apr., 1664: "Power of administration to the Estate of the late Anne Rockwood is granted to John Taylor that married Phabe, Daughter to said Anne Rockwood in Behalfe of His Wife & such others as it may Concerne."

"An Inventorye of what goods was found left by y<sup>e</sup> Widow Rockwood Late of Braintree, at her Decease March 1, 1664" showed an estate of £21, 12s. 6d., including "a House, Orchard and Land about the Highway, £10."

The Phebe mentioned above may have been Anne's daughter by Richard Rockwood or by an earlier marriage. The former supposition seems more probable, as she is the only heir mentioned here, and the house and orchard, which was

\* John Bicknell.

† Records of the Governor and Company of Mass. Bay, .v 1, p. 189.

‡ New Eng. Hist and Gen. Reg., v. 3 (1849), p. 247. (Agnes, wife of Richard Rockett.)

the most important item in the inventory appears to be the one which had figured in Richard Rockwood's estate four years earlier, and would hardly descend to one unconnected with the original owner.

## SECOND GENERATION.

### **Nicholas Rockwood.**

It is proper to state in the beginning that some students of the family history believe that Nicholas was the first and not the second of our line in America; that he was a Rookwood (or Rockwood) and not a son of Richard, who was a Rockett, and of an entirely different family; and finally that the record of his baptism in England in 1629 has been found, making him the heir of a family of gentlefolk. By virtue of this discovery some of the Rockwoods have adopted the armorial bearings of the English family to which they feel themselves entitled.

The holders of the above theory do not care at this time to make the evidence public, but we do not understand it is claimed that the identity of this English Nicholas and our Nicholas of Medfield is yet conclusively established.

On the other hand it must be admitted that we have found no direct proof that Richard of Braintree and Nicholas of Medfield were father and son.

The date of Nicholas' birth, according to Morse, was about 1628, and that seems to harmonize so well with known facts that it has secured general acceptance.

Let us first consider the probability of Richard having a son born as early as that. The widow Bicknell, whom he married about 1636, was born about 1608, according to the register of passengers, while her son John Bicknell was born about 1624. So it is not only clear that Richard was old enough to have a son born in 1628, but also rather improbable that in that age and situation he should have lived a bachelor till 1636, when he had been a landholder at least three years, and married a widow of 28.

Then Nicholas was not named, it may be urged, in the inventory of Richard's estate in 1660; but the former had then been nine years a resident of Medfield, and furthermore John Rockwood, an undoubted son of Richard, was mentioned only because he, a minor, had accidentally killed a neighbor's cow.

The argument from the dissimilarity of names that Richard was a Rockett and Nicholas, a Rockwood, cannot be substantiated. We have been careful to spell the name in each case as it is found on the records. If the very few allusions to Richard during his life read Rockett, the inventory of his estate, as well as that of his wife later, was in the name of Rockwood. In the case of Nicholas, the records usually read Rockwood (though Rocket also is found), but at his death it was the estate of Nicholas Rockett that was settled, and his descendants for the next two generations at least were almost invariably entered Rocketts on the records.

Those who emphasize the significance of the transmission of Christian names as a proof of descent in colonial times, will note that no son of Nicholas bore the name Richard.

The early Rockwoods seem to have disregarded custom here; for the failure of Nicholas to name a son for his father loses its significance, as we note that of Nicholas' six sons, no one named a child after *him*.

Until the contrary is established by indubitable evidence, it seems safer to follow Abner Morse, Thomas Temple Rockwood (1812-1872), and the other older investigators who were satisfied of the relationship of Richard and Nicholas.

The first mention of Nicholas we have found (unless we count him as one of the five heads referred to in the grant to Richard Rockwood 1639-40) is on his appearance at Medfield in 1651.

The town of Dedham had been founded in 1636, embracing a large tract of land east and south of the Charles river, including the modern Dedham, Medfield, and other towns. Certain of the settlers were early impressed most favorably with "Boggestow," in the valley of the Charles, a region

partly in their own territory eastward of the river and partly in the ungranted colony lands beyond. The two respective owners having conveyed the domain to the new proprietors, Medfield was incorporated, May, 1651.

Our ancestor does not appear as one of the original incorporators, but among the very earliest newcomers in the spring or summer of 1651 was a group of men from Weymouth and Braintree, who all took land on the modern Bridge street, among them Nicolas Rockwood, who had 3 acres and 3 roods.\* Morse, by the way, states that he went from Braintree to Medfield in 1650 with the sons of Henry Adams.

From a portion of the town valuation of 1652, still preserved, we find that Nicolas Rockwood was credited with estate to the value of £100.†

He erected a dwelling-house on his land, and as Morse informs us "seems to have been a husbandman in common circumstances, and a worthy and respected citizen."

In addition to the home lot in the village on the east side (modern Medfield) he had land to the west of the river. The portion directly across formed part of the original Medfield, and out beyond that lay the so-called "new grant," given by the General Court in 1659. All this portion of the town beyond the river was set off in 1713 as Medway, but only the "new grant" is now known by that name, the older part having become a separate town in 1885, as Millis.

In the original west side Nicholas Rockwood received land with the other proprietors of Medfield, 11 acres‡ in 1659, and after the new grant was made he drew by lot in 1660, a section of 85 acres.§

Nicho. Rocket, of Medfield, was made freeman of the colony 23 May, 1666.||

Among the 77 proprietors of Medfield in 1675 occurs the name of Nicolas Rockwood and his sons Josiah and Samuel.¶

\* Tilden. *History of the Town of Medfield*, 1887, p. 48.

† Same, p. 56.

‡ Jameson. *History of Medway*, 1886, p. 19.

§ Same, p. 23.

|| A volume of records relating to the early history of Boston, 1909. (29th report, Boston records), p. 148.

¶ Tilden. *History of the Town of Medfield*, 1887, p. 78.

The great event in Medfield's early history was its destruction by Indians in King Philip's War.\* After the burning of Mendon in 1675, Medfield was left as the most advanced settlement of the colony. In spite of a guard of 100 or more soldiers in the town, on the 21st of Feb., 1675-76, a band of Indians made an attack and burned 32 dwellings (about half the houses in town), with barns and other buildings. Warnings had been given early, and most of the inhabitants were able to escape to the garrison houses. 17 only were killed, and several others wounded.

Morse's statement that Nicholas and his family were sheltered in the stone house at Bogistow Pond, we think is an error. That building, erected as a garrison house, and occupied as a dwelling by Geo. Fairbanks, was the refuge of those settled west of the river. Jameson found no evidence of Rockwoods living in that part of town in 1676, and we have reason to think that the home of Nicholas and family was still in the village east of the river, and hence that he found refuge in one of the several garrison houses in the neighborhood.

While our ancestor's buildings were destroyed by the foe, none of the family seem to have been injured.

The town was naturally impoverished by the dreadful calamity. 23 May, 1677, a petition was sent to the General Court praying for an abatement of the colonial rate, one of the signers being Nicolas Rockit.†

Among their other interests the colonists did not forget or neglect their new college at Cambridge, and in 1675, the year before the Indian attack, 62 persons in Medfield subscribed to the "new brick college." On this list occurs the name of Nicholas Rockwood for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  bushels of corn and 1 bushel of wheat.‡

In 1678, in answer to a request for payment, the town authorities represented that certain of the citizens had been so

\* For accounts of this event see Bodge. *Soldiers in King Philip's War*, 1896, p. 284. Exercises at the bi-centennial celebration of the burning of Medfield by Indians, 1876. Jameson, *History of Medway*, 1886, pp. 29-34.

† Tilden. *History of the Town of Medfield*, 1887, p. 93.

‡ Same, p. 77.



reduced in circumstances as to be unable to fulfil this obligation, and, therefore, prayed that 11 men (of whom Nicholas Rockwood was one) be excused from paying the 14 bushels of corn and 1 bushel of wheat promised by them.

This was accompanied by a letter from the pastor, Rev. John Wilson, "in behalf of foure persons in our Towne who according to the present state of things are in great straits as to payment of present rates. . . . A third is Nicolas Rockwood, an old man whose house and barn with cattell not a few, with horseflesh save a colt, all burnt."\*

Nicholas must have rebuilt his house soon after its destruction, for he deeded it in 1678 to his son-in-law, John Partridge. His third wife had died in 1677, and he seems to have withdrawn to the west side of the river, finally settling as Morse believed, "about one-quarter mile S.W. of Richardson's mills, in the N.E. part of Medway" (now Millis).

On a list of those who took the oath of allegiance in 1678-79, occurs the name of Nic<sup>o</sup>: Rocket.†

Nicholas Rockett died in Medfield, 26 Jan., 1680-81. As his estate included no houses, it is inferred that his latter days were spent with one of his sons, undoubtedly Josiah, who had erected a house in 1677, and was the only one living at that time across the river.

The court records, 18 Mar., 1680-81, show that power to administer "the goods, estate and credits of Nicholas Rockett, late of Meadfield, dece<sup>d</sup>, intestate, is granted unto Josiah Rockett, his eldest son."

The agreement for settling the estate bears signatures of the heirs as follows:

Mark of Josiah Rocket.  
 Mark of Samuelt Rocket.  
 Joseph rockett.  
 Mark of Benjamin Rocket.  
 John partridge.

Edward adams gardeen for John roockwod and nethan-  
 iall roockwod.

\* Tilden. History of the Town of Medfield, 1887, p. 95.

† A volume of records relating to the early history of Boston, 1900. (29th report, Boston records), p. 177.

Nicholas Rockwood married 1st, Jane ——. Writers on the family have generally assumed with a greater or less degree of certainty that she was an Adams, but the historians of the Adams family do not mention her. This marriage occurred and the two oldest children were born before Nicholas came to Medfield, probably in Braintree, as Morse and Savage agree. Mrs. Jane Rockwood died in Medfield, 15 Dec., 1654.\* (3 sons.) Nicholas married 2d, in Medfield, 16 July, 1656, Margaret Holbrook†, whom Morse believes to have been a daughter of John Holbrook the first, immigrant ancestor of the family. She died in Medfield, 23 Apr., 1670.‡ (3 sons and 1 dau.)

He married 3d, in Medfield, 26 May, 1675, Silence Duntling.§ Nothing is known of her family. She died in Medfield, 9 Nov., 1677.|| (1 son.)

8 children, of whom the 6th child and 5th son was

### THIRD GENERATION.

**John Rockwood**, born in Medfield, 12 Feb., 1662–63.¶ He was only thirteen years of age when the town was attacked and his father's buildings destroyed by King Philip's warriors; and undoubtedly removed with that parent to the west side of the river about 1678. At the latter's death, in 1680, being still under age, he and his younger brother, Nathaniel, chose their uncle, Edward Adams, as guardian. In the division of the estate, he had a fifth part of the lot in the Upper Broad Meadow and 5 acres of upland lying near to it (now in the northern part of the town of Millis).

Morse is authority for the statement that this inheritance was the homestead a half mile south of the lowest water privilege on Bogistow Pond, from which we may understand that Nicholas Rockwood had spent his last days on this the most

\* Vital records of Medfield, 1903. (Jone Rockwood, wife of Nicolas.)

† Same. (Nicolas Rockwood and Margreat Hollock.)

‡ Same. (Margaritt Rockett, wife of Nicolas.)

§ Same. (Nicolas Rockett and Silence Duntling.)

¶ Same. (Silence Rockett, wife of Nicolas.)

¶ Same. (John Rockitt son of Nicolas and Margarit.)

valuable part of his land. As his father's estate included no dwelling-house, John undoubtedly erected one of his own previous to his marriage in 1688.

Settlers came in so slowly to the section west of the river that the tax list of Medfield for 1693 shows John Rockett as one of only 16 residents in that part of the town.\* Again in 1702, occurs the name of John Rockett on a list of Medfield proprietors living west of the river.†

The same year John Rockett participated in the division of the Black Swamp,‡ not far from his residence.

In 1709 he held the position of constable.

The population had meanwhile increased so much on the west side of the river that that portion of Medfield was, in 1713, incorporated as Medway (the township including both the modern town of that name and Millis, set off from it in 1885).

John Rockwood was certainly one of the most prominent citizens of the new town; was often chosen moderator of the town meetings; first town clerk in 1713, and served again in 1716; on first board of selectmen in 1713 and also in 1714, '15, '17, '18, and '22, being each time named first, or chairman of the board.

He was likewise chairman of the committee to build a meeting-house in 1713,§ and member of the joint committee of the two towns on the public lands of Medfield.

Morse says, "He was styled Rev. on the records, probably from his speaking in religious assemblies, for I can find no evidence that he was ever ordained or otherwise licensed to preach than by common consent. He is presumed to have been a Separatist, and to have contributed to the establishment of the Baptist Church in Medfield." We have found no verification of this last conjecture; there was no Baptist Church in Medfield or Medway till long after his death, and if a Baptist at all it would seem that he must have changed

\* Jameson. History of Medway, 1886, p. 39.

† Tilden. History of the Town of Medfield, 1887, p. 112.

‡ Jameson. History of Medway, 1886, p. 40.

§ Same, p. 98.

late in life, for in that day official honors seldom went to dissenters from the established church.

He died in Medway, 16 Dec., 1746. Married 1st, in Medfield, 19 July, 1688, Bethia Twitchell,\* daughter of Benjamin and Mary (—) Twitchell, of Dorchester. She died in Medfield, 1 Jan., 1706-07.† (6 sons, 2 daus.) Perhaps he was the John Rockett who married Rebecca Crafts, widow of Isaac Turner, in Medfield, 14 May, 1708.‡ If so, she must have died soon, without issue.

He certainly married in Medfield, 20 June, 1710, Sarah Adams,§ daughter of Jonathan and Elizabeth (Fussell) Adams; born in Medfield, 6 Dec., 1667; died there, 17 May, 1758.|| No children.

His 5th child and 4th son was

#### FOURTH GENERATION.

#### **Benjamin.**

See p. 7.

\* Vital records of Medfield, 1903. (John Rockett and Bethiah Twitchell.)

† Same. (Bethia Rockett, wife of John.)

‡ Same. (John Rockett and Rebekah Turner.)

§ Same. (John Rockett and Sarah Adams.)

|| Same. (Sarah Rockwood, widow of John.)

















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 006 150 413 8

