The MacNauchtan Saga
A STORY-BOOK HISTORY OF AN ANCIENT CLAN AND ITS BRANCHES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND BIOGRAPHIES BY V. V. McNITT

VOLUME TWO

PALMER • MASSACHUSETTS
WRITTEN AND PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF CLAN MEMBERS
1951
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Credits: Photographs of old McNitt homes in Pennsylvania were made by Robert J. McNitt; those of the house at Palmer (frontispiece) and of Governor McNutt's home in Vicksburg were made by Frank McNitt; most of the rest were the work of portrait photographers.
BOOK FIVE

MARYLAND’S EASTERN SHORE
1684 AND AFTER
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK FIVE

John McKnitt, who arrived in Maryland from Ulster in 1684; noted chiefly as a mediator in helping New Munster neighbors out of land troubles; as great-grandfather of Dr. Ephraim Brevard, chief author of Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, and grandfather of John McKnitt Alexander, secretary of Mecklenburg convention in 1775.

Thomas Stevenson, of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who supplied the money to buy lands in New Munster tract prematurely occupied by Matthew Wallace and five Alexanders.

John McKnitt II, who inherited his father's farm, Glasgow, in Somerset County; when he sold it in 1728, his wife signed the deed as Dorothy McNitt; left a widow in 1733, she married Robert Patton before qualifying as executrix of deceased husband's estate.

John McKnitt III, grandson of first of name, who inherited Hispaniola lands from his father.

John McKnight IV, who amended surname, as Cecil County records show.

Margaret McKnitt, daughter of first John, who married James Alexander; their son John McKnitt Alexander preserved records of Mecklenburg Declaration of May 1775 and became a central figure of controversy.

Katherine McKnitt, sister of Margaret, who married John Brevard, Huguenot refugee to Ulster and then a Maryland colonist; their grandson Dr. Ephraim Brevard was chief author of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

William, Andrew, Samuel, John, James, Francis, and Joseph Alexander, neighbors of the McKnitt family in the Laggan and in Maryland, whose descendants were to become numerous in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Rev. Thomas Wilson, Rev. Francis Makemie, and Rev. William Traill, Presbyterian ministers from the Laggan who provided leadership for earliest of the Ulster-Scottish colonists; first-named was pastor of the McKnitt family.
35. Our First Colonial American

The first of the restless McNaughts to dare the Atlantic and establish a home in the colonies was John McKnitt. In 1684 or perhaps a year or two earlier he left the yeasty community of the Laggan in County Donegal and came with his wife Jane to the level fertile lands of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, to settle at Manokin in Somerset County.

This was at least thirty-four years before the beginning of the real migration of Ulster Scots to America, thirty-six years before Alexander McNitt and his son Barnard came to Massachusetts, and thirty-eight years before another Alexander McNitt appeared in Pennsylvania.

The Eastern Shore, the long peninsula lying between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, is a land favored by mild climate and honored in legends. Men think and speak of it with the respect given a countryside fortunate in natural blessings and rich in the mellow colors of tradition.

Here John and equally ambitious neighbors worked hard, accumulated lands, and argued for their rights. John and the others raised flax and tobacco, and on Sundays listened to long sermons with attentive relish.

It will be observed farther along that though landowning planters, a number of these men claimed trades, as tanner, weaver, or carpenter. These crafts were chosen, we may believe, to permit gainful use of time to supplement income from the land, and to avoid the waste of an hour.

Without doubt the economic motive was strong in impelling all these settlers to seek better fortune in the colonies, though we should remember that as early as the 1680s the exactions of rulers and landlords in Ulster were not nearly so severe as they became after 1700. Religious freedom also attracted the early migrants to Lord Baltimore’s province of Maryland. And it was the leadership of three ministers that incited them to risk the voyage. Of these men Bolton says in his Scotch-Irish Pioneers:

The early annals of the Presbyterian church in the colonies south of New England are closely linked with the name of the Rev. Francis Makemie of Ramelton on Lough Swilly, County Donegal, who was licensed by the Presbytery of Laggan in 1681, and came to America soon after. Makemie covered the Atlantic coast colonies in his ministrations, devoting much of his time, however, to Maryland. Before 1690 there were three and perhaps four congregations in Somerset County, which then included Worcester County, with their meeting houses at Snow Hill (1684), Manokin, Wico-
moco, and Rehoboth. These places lie south of the present southern boundary of Delaware.

Makemie has rightfully been called the founder of organized Presbyterianism in America. He established the first Presbytery, and inspired faith and courage wherever he went. Once when he ventured to preach among the English in New York he was arrested for speaking without a license and was kept in jail from January until July.

Another of the trio of leader-ministers and a friend of Makemie was the Rev. William Traill, a Glasgow University graduate and member of the Laggan Presbytery. Bolton tells us he “suffered imprisonment for his convictions, and upon his release came to Maryland in 1682.”

Even earlier than that, “perhaps in 1681, came the Rev. Thomas Wilson to found a church at Manokin, a settlement now called Princess Anne. It is supposed that Wilson was the minister of the same name who had been at Killybegs, County Donegal.”

It is reasonable also to suppose that John McKnitt and some of his friends may have been members of the Killybegs congregation, and that they came with Mr. Wilson to Manokin, perhaps in 1681. The date of their arrival has been conservatively set at 1684, but the minister could hardly have founded a church without his flock.

Among John’s closest friends were families named Alexander, Wallace, Dale, and Brevard, with whom the McKnitts intermarried. The Dales were English Presbyterians who had settled in Ulster, and the first Brevard was a Huguenot who had fled from France to Northern Ireland to escape persecution after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

It is fortunate that the story of the Maryland family was gathered from the records for the October 1948 issue of the *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* by the editor, Dr. John Goodwin Herndon. He had a great-grandmother McKnight.

Dr. Herndon was entertained, as so many others have been, by the carefree manner in which members of the Maryland family used — almost at random we might say — eighteen varieties of surname forms. The McNaughts in Scotland, in Ulster, and in colonial America, considered as a group, perhaps were world champions in elaborating the variations on a basic theme. The Allen family of Old and New England had seventeen varieties of signatures; the McNaughts must have had nearly fifty.

On September 2, 1728, John of the second generation in Maryland and his wife Dorothy (Wallace) deeded a parcel of land to Francis
OUR FIRST COLONIAL AMERICAN

Mercer. John’s name appeared as Macknitt; his wife, with a mind of her own, signed just below as Dorothy McNitt. The notary or other official who drew the document allowed himself a range of choice. He spelled the husband’s name at the beginning as Macknitt, and below the signatures he wrote that “Dorothy, wife of John McNight of Bohemian Manor, Cecil Co., acknowledges her dower in above land containing 133 acres on Pocomoke River which was formerly bought by John McNight — deceased — [the first pioneer] from Walter Taylor.”

Dr. Herndon’s article on John McKnitt and his kinfolk — which after publication in the magazine was made into an attractive brochure — opens with a discussion of the numbers of persons using each of the various name forms and leads into fourteen lines of humorous verse: “Call them a sonnet at peril to your soul!” Thus:

A GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

Two people say he was lean, not fat,
Our worthy Scotch-Irish John MacKnatt;
Thirty assert he was firmly set,
Was Presbyterian John MacKnett;
One who speaks of him as grand to meet
Calls him honest, plain old John McNeet;
Forty-nine find him vigorous, fit,
Ocean-crossing, thrifty John McKnitt;
Yet thirty-five do definitely claim
John McKnight was his only name.
Fifty times and more we find it “Mac,”
But as for me, alas and alack,
The correct spelling I cannot say,
Since sixty-three omit the “a”;
Yet now, noting the dominant writ,
I'll just call him loyal John McKnitt.

What follows is based upon Dr. Herndon’s carefully documented article, in which all sources are indicated in footnotes. Dr. Herndon obtained his material from rent rolls of various counties, records of deeds, wills, and testamentary proceedings, parish records, Clayton Torrence’s Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and an article on New Munster by Carl Ross McKendrick, published in Vol. xxxv of the Maryland Historical Magazine. The story is so soundly buttressed that there is no need to allude to the references in this text.

John McKnitt is presumed to have married before he left Ulster; his wife Jane may have been a member of the Alexander family. Whether John and his fellow migrants landed at Philadelphia, or at New Castle
in Delaware, or at one of the Virginia ports no one can say. New Castle
would have been the most convenient port for settlers bound for
Maryland.

John almost at once acquired eighty-eight acres in a tract called The
Strand, which extended to 1,000 acres in the Manokin River neighbor¬
hood in Somerset County. In another transaction he bought 133 acres in
The Strand from Walter Taylor, and to his farm he gave the name Glas¬
gow. Among his neighbors were the Alexanders, Browns, Kings, Polks,
Strawbridges, and Wallaces, all Ulster Scots like himself and members
of the congregation of the Rev. Thomas Wilson. During all the fifteen
years and more that John and his family lived at Manokin, Mr. Wilson
was their pastor. In this period four children were born:

Robert, June 4, 1685.
John, September 8, 1687.
Katherine, August 10, 1689.
Mary, February 26, 1692.

When William and Mary came to the thrones of England and Scot¬
land after the Revolution of 1688 had driven James Stewart to France,
the Protestants of Somerset County sent to their new rulers an Address
of Loyalty dated November 28, 1689. At page 194 of the Album of
American History, of which James Truslow Adams was editor-in-chief,
there appears a photographic reproduction of the first page of a printed
document with this line beneath the title: “Licens’d, November 28th,
1689. J. F.” The title reads: “The Declaration of the Reasons and Mo¬
tives for the Present Appearing in Arms of Their Majesties Protestant
Subjects in the Province of Maryland.” Bearing the same date as the
Address of Loyalty from Somerset County, this declaration, which may
be seen in the Library of Congress, has a warlike note. Some of the
Maryland Protestants saw in the Revolution a signal to unhorse the
Catholic Calverts — or thought they did — and organized in arms a band
that captured St. Mary’s City in 1689, and printed their declaration
there. Fortunately nothing came of their belligerence. The more pacific
men of Somerset County signed their names to a pledge of loyalty that
opened with a salutation to William and Mary and continued:

Wee your Majesty’s subjects in the County of Somersett and Province of
Maryland being refreshed and encouraged by your Majestys great and
prosperous undertakings and by your late gracious letter to those of this
province, do cast ourselves at your Majesty’s feet humbly desiring and hope¬
fully expecting the continuance of your majstys care of us, as our Case or
Circumstances doe or may require, in the confidence whereof wee resolve
to continue (by the grace of God) in the Profession and defence of the Protestant Religion and your Majesty’s Title and interest against the French and other Paptists [sic] that oppose and trouble us in soe just and good a cause not doubting but your Majestys wisdom and clemency will afford unto us all needful suitable Aid and Protection for securing our Religion lives and liberty under Protestant Governors and Government, and enable us to defend ourselves against all Invaders. Thus praying for your Majestys long and happy Reigne over us, Wee know ourselves to bee (with due Reverence and sincerity) Your Majesty’s Loyall Obedient and humble Servants.

More than 200 names were signed to this address; among them were those of John McKnitt and Presbyterian friends and neighbors including William Alexander, senior and junior, William Polk, John Porter, Robert Polk, Rev. Thomas Wilson, and Major Robert King. Members of the Church of England signed also, but they could not have done so with the fervor of the Ulster Scots. The Siege of Londonderry had taken place only a few months before, and undoubtedly was at this very time a topic of excited discussion among the Presbyterians of the Eastern Shore. To them, William and Mary must have seemed deliverers, as they were in actual fact, to their kinfolk in Scotland and Ulster.

Jane McKnitt did not long survive the birth of her daughter Mary in 1692. Men did not remain widowers in those days, especially when they had young children to rear, and few indeed must have been the damsels destined for spinsterhood. On March 28, 1693, John McKnitt married Jane Wallis — properly Wallace. Then, we read in the Somerset County records of the birth of John’s fifth child:

Margaret M'Knitt, Daughter of John M'Knitt & born of Jane his wife at Monocan the 26th day of December anno Domini 1693.

Margaret, we shall be at pains to remember, later was to become the wife of James Alexander of New Munster, a carpenter, and son of Joseph, a tanner. James Alexander was a landowner, an elder of his church, and one of His Lordship’s Commissioners of Justice for Cecil County. One of the sons of James and Margaret was John McKnitt Alexander, of whom a great deal will be related presently. Other children were Theophilus, Edith, Keziah, Hezekiah, Jemima, and Amos. The mother of James Alexander is said to have been Abigail McKnitt.

Now we must return to the story of the first John McKnitt. In the month before his daughter Margaret was born, Nicholas Carpenter had died; in his will he had named his friends Major Robert King and Captain John King as executors. John gave security for them. Dr. Herndon says: “This is the first reference to him as surety on any administration
bond, but the fact that he later several times so qualified, both in Somerset and Cecil Counties, clearly indicates that he was a man of substance and integrity.

Two more children were born to John and his second wife, Jane or Jean Wallace, although the records are not very clear. William, born about 1696, was living in Dorchester County when he died in 1747, leaving a widow, Elizabeth, and a daughter, Ann. Next came Jean, born about 1698, who is presumed to have married Andrew Alexander, later to be met in Charlotte, North Carolina.

John McKnitt, solid character though he was, apparently was subject to the temptations that beset moderns when they prepare their tax returns. Let him without sin of having sought to ameliorate his own tax burden first cast a stone! From the Somerset court records of the January 1702 term this item is gleaned:

John McKnitt of Somerset Parish fined for concealing his son Robert McNitt from the tithes list for 1701, said Robert being at that time 16 years old and upwards.

Not long after the turn of the century John removed to Cecil County, well to the northward. His second wife had died about three years before the trouble over the tithes. John, we are informed by Dr. Herndon, "thus left with the sole responsibility of the upbringing of his children whose ages ranged from fourteen down to a year, moved to the northeastern end of Cecil County, Maryland, near the Pennsylvania line, probably at the suggestion of Matthew Wallace, who if not the younger children's grandfather, was certainly a close relative. But John McKnitt did not wait long before marrying again. He chose as his third wife Martha Dale, whose brother John had settled in Somerset before 1687 and whose brother James about 1699 'landed at Philadelphia, from there he went to the Head of Elk—he had a sister living there who was married to a gentleman by the name of McKnite.' [That is, John.] ... To John and Martha (Dale) McKnitt were born two daughters: Sarah, about 1701, and Elizabeth, about 1703, who married her first cousin John Dale, son of James."

The precise date of John's removal to Cecil County is not known, nor is there certain information as to where he lived at the outset, except that he was in the neighborhood of the New Munster tract where Matthew Wallace and at least five Alexanders had farms. Dr. Herndon says there is substantial reason to believe John and his family lived on a farm he named Glasgow, from the time of their first arrival in the community. Glasgow, it will appear, was carved from the Hispaniola grant.
"The patent to Glasgow," says Dr. Herndon, "states that a warrant for its survey was granted to John McKnitt on 15 June 1713; that it contained ninety acres; that it adjoined on different sides three properties: Bullen's Range, a tract laid out for Samuel Alexander called Sligo, and another called High Spaniola; and that the annual rent [i.e., quit-rent] was to be £0:3:7 1/2. The patent itself was not issued until 10 September 1716, about nine months after the death of the grantee, John McKnitt, Sr."

John liked the name Glasgow; he had given it also to his first farm in Somerset County, evidently retained by him after he moved to Cecil County. Inherited by John McKnitt, Jr., it was sold by him and his wife Dorothy on September 2, 1728 to Francis Mercer. Dr. Herndon believes John, Sr., fancied the name Glasgow because he had lived in the Scottish city. That is possible, though we lack evidence in the usual records that any of the McNaught family lived in Glasgow in that period. Perhaps John as a youth always had dreamed of Glasgow as a metropolis, and wished to go there.

The distinguishing act of John McKnitt's life was his intervention to help his friends on the New Munster tract in Cecil County, Matthew Wallace and the Alexanders, out of what we now would call a bad jam. Clearly he exemplified one of the two main types of men in the McNaught family: the mediators and the crusaders. John was a mediator.

In 1683 a grant of land had been made to "Edwin O'Dwire and 15 [other] Irishmen," and it had been called New Munster. Why the name? Munster is one of the four great divisions or provinces of Ireland, the others being Ulster, Leinster, and Connaught. Edwin O'Dwire (usually O'Dwyer) and his fifteen Irish associates doubtless had been attracted to Maryland by the protection given Catholics, and presumably some of them were natives of Munster.

But the sixteen Irishmen did not develop New Munster; they seem to have abandoned the idea and the land as well. The tract looked inviting to Matthew Wallace and the five Alexanders and they took it over quite informally, perhaps supposing no one would object to their putting empty land to use. In Pennsylvania, when land-hungry Ulster Scots a few years later found the dilatory Penn family reluctant to sell vacant, unused land, they moved in anyhow. When given the opportunity they bought and paid for the properties on which they had settled.

After Matthew Wallace and Company had established their farms and improved them, they were confronted with the fact that some considerable time before, the New Munster tract had been bought by Robert Roberts, a glover of Queen Anne County. Roberts now took
exception to having squatters on his land and undoubtedly proposed that they leave.

John McKnitt was related by marriage to Wallace and the Alexanders, and it is evident he entered the situation to try to cure an impasse. Roberts apparently was inhospitable to the idea of selling the land to the men who had taken it.

John had a friend with money and benevolent spirit; another Scot named Thomas Stevenson, who lived in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He had married Mrs. Sarah Jenings Pennington, daughter of Governor Samuel Jenings; he was a justice of the peace, and a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from 1710 to the end of his life. He had contributed to the building of a Dutch Presbyterian church at Bensalem, Bucks County, although he and his family were Quakers, and he had extensive real estate interests in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey.

John McKnitt must have gone to Thomas Stevenson with a story of the plight of his friends, Wallace and the Alexanders. If so, he did not make his plea in vain. On April 1, 1714, Thomas Stevenson bought the New Munster tract from Robert Roberts, and appointed John McKnitt as his agent to sell the land as promptly as convenient to the men living on it. Dr. Herndon relates:

On 20 August 1714 "Thomas Stevenson of Bucks County Province of Pennsylvania, gentleman," executed a power of attorney "to his good friend John McKnitt of Back Creek, Cecil County Province of Maryland" in connection with the disposal by Thomas Stevenson and his wife Sarah of his Cecil County holdings to a group whom he designated as "Matthew Wallace and Company."

The property involved was a tract of 1,050 acres on the "East Side of the main fresh of Elk River." ... The price paid by Matthew Wallace and Company was £172:10:0. The grantees were named in the deed as "Matthew Wallace, yeoman, James Alexander, farmer, Arthur Alexander, farmer, David Alexander, farmer, James Alexander, weaver, and Joseph Alexander, tanner." ...

The reason given by Thomas Stevenson for conveying the New Munster tract to Matthew Wallace and Company is stated in the original deed of 18 May 1714. Title was conveyed to them because these lands "had for some years past been improved and possessed by them and had been divided amongst themselves, each man according to his holden [holding], and that he the said Stevenson being minded to sell the tract of land, thought it most equitable, honest and right that they the said possessors thereof should have the first offer to buy or purchase each man his holden or division of ye same."

John could not have had much time left to complete the conveyance
of the individual farms. It was his last work. On December 24 his widow Martha and his son John, Jr., were appointed to administer his estate; the next legal step is mentioned in the record of the April 1715 session of the Prerogative Court:

Martha Macknet and John Macknet, Admr. of John Macknet, the Admistrn bond in Comon forme with Samuel Alexander & Adam Wallace their sureties in one hundred and fifty pounds Sterl. dated 24th day of January 1714/15....

which preceding bonds are ordered to be filed.

Dr. Herndon found in the Cecil County Inventories at Elkton the appraisal of personal property made by Francis Smith and Oliver Wallace, and classified the assets as follows:

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<td>Farm produce, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Earlier we learned that the second farm of Glasgow had been surveyed for John only a few years before, and that the patent was not issued until September 10, 1716. The second John appears to have inherited the original Glasgow farm in Somerset County, as we have seen. He was twenty-seven years old at the time of his father's death. Later he bought 185 acres from the Hispaniola tract on the east side of the Bohemia River and on the north side of Long Creek, which had been originally surveyed on October 1, 1678 for Nicholas Painter. Hispaniola comprised 868 acres when resurveyed in 1720. John, Jr., bought 150 acres of it in 1724, and thirty-five acres more in 1731.

In the spring of 1733 he died; in his will he had named Dorothy his wife to be his executrix. Before she qualified for the task she had married Robert Patton, a neighbor, who bought 150 acres of the Hispaniola tract in 1734. John the second left four children: Daniel, "likely never to be 'capable of maintaining himself'"; a third John, who inherited his Hispaniola lands, and who died in 1747; Mary, who married Adam Brevard of Worcester County, Maryland, and Hannah.

John McKnit III, Dr. Herndon tells us, sold thirty acres to Andrew Alexander on June 14, 1745 from "a property called Glasgow formerly taken up by John McKnit late of sd County, grandfather to the above-
said John McKnit on a branch of Bohemia Back Creek originally taken up by Nicholas Painter and called High Spaniola.” The deed was signed “John McKnitt.”

“The fourth John was always John McKnight in the Cecil records,” Dr. Herndon says in his concluding paragraph. Probably male descendants of the Maryland family use the McKnight form now. But where are they? Robert, first son of the pioneer John, who was concealed from the tithe list of 1701, Dr. Herndon says “may be the Robert McKnight whose will, probated in New Castle County, Delaware, 7 April 1769, mentioned his wife Isabella, his sons Moses and Alexander, and his grandchildren Isabella and William Nevins. If thus correctly identified, it follows that he had received his share of his father’s property during his father’s lifetime, and having removed outside the jurisdiction of the Maryland courts, his next younger brother [John, Jr.] qualified in his stead in 1714/15 as administrator of their father’s estate.”

The association of the McKnitt and Alexander families in Maryland is remindful of that of the McNaughts and Gordons in Galloway. The Gordons and Alexanders were blessed with numbers of able sons, while the McNaughts of Kilquhanity and of Maryland provided daughters to marry them. The pioneer John McKnitt had all too few direct male descendants to continue his line as vigorously as he might have wished. It may be said, though, that because of intermarriages that linked so closely the Brevards, McKnitts, and Alexanders, old John was well represented at Charlotte, North Carolina, in May 1775.

For let us see: two of his daughters made marriages that provided descendants notable in North Carolina history. Katherine became the wife of John Brevard, youthful Huguenot refugee from France who became a friend of the McNaught families in the Laggan, and removed to Maryland a few years after John McKnitt, later his father-in-law, settled there. He was a substantial citizen, and as an elder in the Presbyterian Church attended many Presbytery meetings. A son of John and Katherine (McKnitt) Brevard was John, Jr., who married Jane McWhorter and removed to the Salisbury neighborhood in North Carolina about 1747. Their eight sons all served honorably with the Revolutionary forces; one of them and a Princeton graduate, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, was chief author of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, adopted in Charlotte, North Carolina, in May 1775. Later he was a surgeon with the patriot armies in the Carolinas until captured and imprisoned.

Margaret McKnitt married James Alexander. Their son John McKnitt Alexander became a figure of unending controversy; as secretary
of the Mecklenburg convention he preserved and handed along the text of the Mecklenburg Declaration, attacked after his death as spurious, and garbled by him from Jefferson’s National Declaration. A vindication of John McKnitt Alexander, a documented discussion of charges of plagiarism made against him, and an account of the real culprit of the Mecklenburg controversy, with portrait, will be found in Appendix A.

It is worth pointing out that many of the chief figures in the North Carolina independence movement were members of a compact group of families that had been neighbors in the Laggan in Ulster, had continued as friends in migrating to Maryland and intermarrying there, and then had joined in a fresh migration to Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties about 1750.

Members of the Maryland McKnitt family may have removed to the Carolinas and to other places in the South, where the surname McKnight is often encountered.

Seven brothers of the vigorous Scottish Alexanders had migrated together from Raphoe barony in the Laggan at the same time John McKnitt came to America. Dr. Herndon found that William, Andrew, Samuel, and John settled in Somerset County, and that James, Francis, and Joseph were early in Cecil County. Samuel moved there from Somerset a little later. One of their sisters, Elizabeth, married Matthew Wallace. The other, Jane, is said to have been the wife of John McKnitt.

Dr. Herndon hazards a guess that the father of the numerous family was the Rev. James Alexander of Raphoe, a member of Laggan Presbytery in 1680, “whose ministerial brethren then in Northern Ireland included David Brown of Urney, William Traile [or Traill] of Lifford, Thomas Wilson of Killybegs, and William Liston of Letterkenny, to mention only a few.”

To avoid an impression that the early Ulster Scots in Maryland were regarded as the salt of the earth, let us have a corrective English view of them. Some of the English officials and promoters of trade held them in bitter disregard. It may prove salutary to read from Bolton’s Scotch-Irish Pioneers the words of Edward Randolph. Writing to the Commissioners of Customs from James City on June 27, 1692, he gave his opinion of the Ulster Scots in Somerset County in the following reference to the acts of the new royal Governor of Maryland:

I hear he has continued Maj’r King to bee ye Navall Officer in Somerset Co\textsuperscript{y} on ye eastern shore, a place pestred w\textsuperscript{th} Scotch & Irish. About 200 families have within ye 2 years arrived from [Northern] Ireland & settled in y\textsuperscript{t} Co\textsuperscript{v} besides some hundreds of family’s there before. They have set up a linnen Manufacture, Encouraged thereto by Co\textsuperscript{v} Brown, a Scotchman,
one of ye Councill & by Majr King and other principall persons upon ye place, who support ye Interlopers & buy up all their Loading upon their first arrivall, & govern ye whole trade on ye Eastern shore, so y't whereas 7 or 8 good ships from England did yearly trade & load ye Tobb° of y't Co'y I find y't in these 3 years last past there has not been above 5 ships trading legally in all these Rivers, & nigh 30 Sayle of Scotch Irish & New Eng'ld men.

To entertain an idea that the “Interlopers” could contumaciously set up a manufacture of linen or anything else, and conduct their own “illegal” shipping operations without being made to feel the edge of English displeasure, would be a vain exercise of the fancy. Yet we may be quite sure the Ulster Scots of the Eastern Shore kept right on weaving linen and shipping their tobacco without paying (outwardly) the least attention to what the Randolphs thought about them.

A reader who has come with me through the vicissitudes in Scotland and Ulster, and who now observes the tendency to place restraints upon colonial enterprise, will understand why Ulster Scots in America were the first in the land to try to break the bonds of restraint and demand independence.
BOOK SIX

NEW ENGLAND

1720 TO PRESENT DAY
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK SIX

Barnard McNitt, who arrived in Boston from Ulster in 1720, bought farm at Palmer in 1732, became town clerk, selectman, mediator in neighborhood troubles, and Presbyterian elder; built house ca. 1750, died in 1773; his sons Alexander, James, John, and Andrew McNitt served in the Revolution.

William McNitt, another son, who married Elisabeth Thomson, removed to Nova Scotia in 1761, built a Presbyterian church at Truro, and raised a large family with the surname McNutt; among his descendants were John Murray Upham McNutt of Ohio and Dr. William Fletcher McNutt of San Francisco.

Alexander, Jr., Daniel, David, Andrew, and John McNitt, sons of Captain Alexander, eldest son of Barnard McNitt, also were soldiers of the Revolution; three other grandsons of Barnard — Adam, Barnard, and Barnabas McNitt — were Revolutionary soldiers. Most observed of Barnard’s sons were Captain Alexander McNitt, who bought a farm at Salem, New York in 1769; fought Indians and Tories in the Revolution; his brother, John McNitt, who sold Palmer homestead in 1776 to younger brother Andrew, bought a farm at Murrayfield, and later removed to Champion, New York, near eastern end of Lake Ontario; the youngest of Barnard’s sons, Andrew McNitt, sold Palmer home in 1776 to Seth Adams, was a Minute Man in 1775, and was murdered in 1778; subsequently brother John looked after his three sons, who were grandsons of Barnard:

Samuel McNitt, who won renown as a militia Captain at battle of Sackett’s Harbor in War of 1812; then rugged
Eli McNitt, who married Perthena Newell and built Old Brick Tavern at Leolyn, Pennsylvania, in 1827, and lastly
Andrew McNitt II, who made no record. Returning to the sons of Captain Alexander, who were grandsons of Barnard McNitt:

Alexander McNitt, Jr., veteran of Revolution, inventor and farmer, who was excommunicated in 1816;
Daniel McNitt, the Deacon, a sergeant in the Revolution, who took over farm of his father, the Captain, and
John McNitt, another veteran of the Revolution, who removed to Norwich, New York in 1794 and established a family.


James McNitt, their elder brother, held Salem farm, built present house in 1823-24, and became a distiller and fancier of fast horses; meanwhile in 1830 brother Benjamin removed to Shawnee, Niagara County, in 1830; chief of the rugged individualists and stubborn idealists among Benjamin’s sons, great-great-grandsons of Barnard, were

Sylvester, Elijah, Sylvanus, Peter, and Frank McNitt, who disagreed sharply over issue of State Rights in the Civil War period. Passing their descendants, we encounter

Francis Augustus MacNutt, great-great-great-grandson of Barnard McNitt, descended from the Nova Scotia colonist William McNitt or McNutt, who became an aristocrat, a junior diplomat, and a Chamberlain at the Vatican court; finally we come to his nephew,

Joseph Scott MacNutt, who is a portrait painter in St. Louis.
In 1720 a brigantine entered the port of Boston with a party of settlers from Ulster that included Alexander McNitt, his wife Sarah, and his son Barnard. The small ships then plying from Londonderry and Belfast to New England usually were brigantines: two-masted, square-rigged vessels without cocktail lounges and orchestras. The price of an ocean ticket for one of these no-luxury liners was generally £9.

It would be helpful to this history to identify the father of this Alexander and fix his home locality, but doubt must restrain us. If we were to be guided by the surname form alone, we might make a tentative selection of Alexander McNitt of Culylee, Raymocky parish, in the Laggan. He would be an obvious choice except that in all sorts of investigations the obvious so often is overthrown later by the appearance of inconvenient facts, so disturbing to pat conclusions.

We might keep the door of possibility open a little for John McNaught of Culfad, proscribed and forfeited for treason in Galloway. He had a son named Alexander. John may have used the name McKnight, or McNeight, as did the great majority of his Galloway kin at the time, but pursuing officialdom knew the original surname form was McNaught and wrote John down that way in the black book when he was stripped of all his possessions. Partiality to the idea of descent from a covenanting "traitor" to Charles II, and liking for the simple cottage at Culfad, should not be allowed, however, to color deductions.

So perhaps Alexander of Culylee was father to the Alexander McNitt who, with sons, nephews, and cousins, was to become more numerously represented in the modern United States and Nova Scotia than anyone else in the McNaught clan. John and Robert McNitt, living near Culylee, may have been brothers of this elder Alexander; all three names appeared on a Hearth Money Roll in the period of 1665. It is reasonable to suspect that another Alexander McNitt, who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1722, was a son of Robert McNitt of Aghadacor, Mevagh parish, because the name Robert has recurred persistently in the Pennsylvania family to this day.

It was long customary for McNitts in the Laggan and in America to give the name Alexander to the eldest son. They brought the idea from Scotland, where the name often had been used in the neighborhood of Dalry. It is a good surmise that the first son of the Massachusetts Alexander was the Alexander McNutt who appeared in Maryland about
1735 and in the Valley of Virginia in 1744. Barnard McNitt of Palmer no doubt was the youngest in this family. Who were the sons between? Surmising again, they may have been the men who settled around Londonderry, New Hampshire and in Berkshire County, Massachusetts in the period of 1720 and after, and who generally used the surname form McKnight. Though lacking proof we still may hold it reasonable to think all the early settlers of the McNaught line in New England, Pennsylvania, and Virginia were sons, nephews, or cousins of the Alexander McNitt who spent the last of his ninety years at Palmer.

The arrival of an immigrant ship from Londonderry was no gala event for the bored Bostonians of 1720. They had observed such arrivals for two years, without enthusiasm. Alexander McNitt and his wife Sarah, and their son Barnard and his wife, must have sensed a trace of reserve after they left the crowded, uncomfortable little vessel with their friends and kinfolk from the Laggan to have their first look at the capital of the Puritans.

The project for an Ulster Presbyterian colony in New England had been studied with a great deal of care. Early in 1718 the neighborhood around Londonderry was astir with chat about departure from the land of rack-renting landlords to seek new fortunes in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Had they better try it? Counseled by two ministers, the Rev. William Boyd and the Rev. James McGregor, 319 men signed a letter to Governor Samuel Shute of Massachusetts, expressing desire to come if assured of welcome. Seven of the signers were ministers and university graduates. Of their letter, John Fiske says in Old Virginia and Her Neighbors:

"In a document signed in 1718 by a miscellaneous group of 319 men, only thirteen made their mark, while 306 wrote their names in full. Nothing like that could have happened at that time in any other part of the British Empire, hardly even in New England."

In the spring, Mr. Boyd brought the letter to Governor Shute. He also talked with the Rev. Cotton Mather, who told him he thought Presbyterians had sufficient grace to fit into the theocratic Bay Colony. This view was not precisely shared by others in Boston, as appeared later.

In truth, Boston had conflicting opinions of the Rev. Mr. Mather himself. Only twenty-six years before, nearby Salem Village had executed twenty persons — nineteen by hanging and one by crushing to death under heavy rocks — in a mad hysteria of witch-hunting incited by the antics of a group of silly, exhibitionistic teen-age girls. Cotton Mather had seen in these horrors a poetic wrestling between Satan and
God, and had invited into his own home for observation one such girl named Margaret Rule, aged seventeen. Margaret appeared to suffer torments of spectral affliction, and Mather and his father, the Rev. Increase Mather, encouraged spectators to come in from the streets of Boston to observe. One of the observers was a coffee house wit and skeptic, Robert Calef, who wrote of what he saw, for private circulation, remarking — according to Marian L. Starkey in *The Devil in Massachusetts* — “She visibly liked being stroked across the face and naked breast and belly by the Mathers, father and son, this being a kind of laying on of hands by which they tried to relieve her, but let a woman touch her and she cried out sharply, ‘Don’t you meddle with me!’”

Governor Shute encouraged Mr. Boyd, bearer of the letter from 319 Ulstermen, and word was sent back of a waiting welcome. On August 4, 1718, five ships bearing a hundred families arrived in the port of Boston from Londonderry — ships as much cherished in historical recollection by descendants of the Ulster Scots aboard as the Mayflower is cherished by some others, though not nearly so much celebrated. No bonfires were lighted; no keys to the city were offered. Even Cotton Mather may not have been on hand with an address of welcome. He may already have had misgivings about these plain, sensible immigrants.

The Bostonians were not away at Nahant and other North Shore summer places not yet conceived; they were at home, worrying. They intimated to the newcomers that Boston did not have food and employment enough for a swarm of strangers, and pointed to the frontiers which actually were not very far away. Behind their hands they whispered among themselves that the “mere Irish” were likely to prove a burden if allowed to stay in the community.

The device of shooing Ulster-Scottish immigrants to the frontiers beyond the settlements was generally adopted later in other colonies, as an excellent means to set up a human barrier against the Indians. Men who could hold and save Londonderry could be just as useful in holding frontier settlements and saving established dwellers in coastal regions.

We may be quite sure that when Alexander and Barnard McNitt and their wives arrived in Boston in 1720 they were under no illusions; they asked nothing but a chance to get going. Probably the two wives — the old one and the younger one — murmured that the clothes they all were wearing didn’t look just right for Boston.

Without doubt they knew exactly what they were about and where they proposed to go. Quite possibly they had with them several others of the clan: the McKnights or McNights who appeared soon at Bedford, New Hampshire, and the McKnights who settled in Berkshire...
County in western Massachusetts. It is almost safe to say that Alexander and Barnard went straightway to Worcester to join friends who had preceded them.

Worcester was the chief frontier town, a community of about fifty houses located forty-five miles west of Boston. Some of the newcomers in 1718 had gone to Worcester, but many more had chosen southern New Hampshire and set up a community in a grove of nut trees that they called Nutfield. In a little while they changed the name of the place to Londonderry, in honor of the city back home. What Plymouth means in the English settlement of New England, Londonderry means for the coming of the Ulster Scots.

Let us say that after reaching Worcester, the McNitts found preferable the nearby community of Rutland as a home for a few years. They may not have been in the neighborhood in 1740 when the Presbyterians of Worcester decided to build a church of their own. This move looked like rebellion to the English Puritans, who felt certain the tough-minded newcomers would refuse to contribute to the established church when they had one of their own to support. Indignation grew as the frame of the new church rose. Then one dark night a mob appeared with axes, tore down the timbers, and set fire to them. This act persuaded the Presbyterians they could do better in new communities of their own. They began to move away, some to Spencer, some to Rutland, and some to Connecticut and New York.

The Ulster Scots constituted in fact an unpopular racial minority group. In 1720, the year Alexander and Barnard McNitt arrived in Boston, the General Court adopted a resolution ordering that one of their settlements be broken up within seven months; otherwise prosecution would ensue. Jacob B. Moore in his "Sketch of Concord" relates that when plans were made in 1725 for the settlement of the town, restrictions were placed on sales of land to exclude Ulster Scots, "against whom a strong national prejudice existed."

A considerable group from Worcester removed to a new district about thirty-five miles to the west called The Elbows, from bends in the Quabag River. This neighborhood also was known for a while as Kingstown or Kingsfield, thus informally named for the first settler, John King, who had arrived in 1716. After local government had been set up the town became permanently known as Palmer. It was named by Governor Shirley in honor of a Scottish friend, Thomas Palmer.

To be direct about it, the McNitts came to The Elbows, where Barnard bought a farm of 100 acres on January 24, 1732, and paid £110 in cash for it to John Moor, a weaver. He found he had a small house
beside a brook. He built a large barn in 1735, and probably a larger house in a higher location to replace the one at the brookside. The house now on the premises was built in the period of 1760.

Alexander McNitt was seventy-six years old when his son bought the farm, and Barnard must have been about thirty-two. Fourteen children were born, which meant a sure-enough career for Jean. She also was called Jane, and the fact that one of her sons was christened Adam Clark may indicate Clark was her maiden surname. An interesting big family grew up on this place, and stories of its members will appear.

When Barnard first came to The Elbows, land ownership was in a state of confusion. In 1686 Joshua Lamb and several associates from the older part of Massachusetts Bay Colony had made a deal with sachems of the Nipmuck Indian tribe to purchase a tract eight by twelve miles in area for £20. The promoters didn’t bother to get their purchase approved or legalized by the colonial government. Years passed and all the speculators but one were dead when Ulster Scots and other settlers began moving into the district in the decade between 1720 and 1730. Then the heirs of Lamb & Co. became interested in the possibilities of the tract their fathers had got from the Indians for the frugal price of £20. They sent surveyors and agents to The Elbows to sell plots averaging 100 acres to the newcomers.

Temple’s *History of Palmer* relates at length how everyone escaped from the predicament; here the story may be summarized briefly. In June 1733, after the Gentlemen Claimers had renounced pretense to an honest claim to the Nipmuck lands and had been given instead a tract embraced in the present township of Hardwick, nearby, the colonial government yielded to the humble petition of Barnard McNitt and fifty-six other landholders and granted them the farms on which they were established on condition that they pay into the public treasury in the course of a reasonable time the sum of £500, plus an additional £67 representing the cost of surveying. The settlers paid up the £67, but they showed no inclination to hurry the £500. Years passed before final payment was wrung from the settlers, reluctant to pay twice for their farms.

Barnard’s ownership of his farm was definitely confirmed to him by the action of the General Court or legislature and Governor Jonathan Belcher in June 1733, to which reference already has been made. On June 12 of the previous year, when all the uneasy landholders were considering what to do to get clear titles, they held a “toun metten” with Samuel Shaw as moderator. When it was decided to petition the General Court, this action was recorded in the minute book:
"Voted by the Inhabaints that seven men should determen how should be ptitioned, to wit, Samill Shaw, John King, James Maklelan, Joseph Wright, Bingmin [Benjamin] Parsons, Barnett Macknet, Tomas Littel."

Their petition was humble enough, but months passed before it received any notice. Then a legislative committee visited the district, gathered a complete list of settlers with descriptions of lands they occupied, and submitted a report recommending that ownership be officially confirmed to the petitioners. Barnard’s name appeared with a few others at the top of the list; men whose ownership was so clearly justified by their manner of purchase that their lands were confirmed to them without limitations.

Barnard’s farm lay on both sides of the old Boston road and extended southward to the Quabaug River. The small house John Moor had built was on the east side of Wigwam Brook about 150 feet north of the road. Traces of the old cellar may still be seen. A well with sweep and bucket was located a few feet north of the house.

Across the river to the south there rose a long, high hill that ran away to the southeast to join the Brimfield mountains. In times since it has been called Sawmill Hill. Almost opposite the house Barnard presently built was the first low hill in a succession of rising peaks known as the Cedar range, extending to the northeast. Less than a mile to the northwest, Barnard could look up to Tamar Hill. Rising from springs on the westward slope of the Cedar range, Wigwam Brook made its way southward in a little valley of its own and emptied into the Quabaug. That is the landscape Barnard and Jean found, and there it remains for future generations to enjoy: a green bowl in the hills, with the brook and the Boston road running through it. Westward the road follows the river through a low pass toward Palmer and Springfield.

The community was growing and Barnard was ambitious to get ahead and make the most of his new farm. The buildings were too small, he must have concluded, and the house was too close to the brook. The bottom of the cellar was lower than the level of the stream and the place must have been damp the year around. Across the road and about 215 yards away to the southeast was a fine knoll that offered a much better site for buildings. Barnard began making plans.

In the year 1733 a new road was brought through the woods from the north, running from Greenwich and Enfield, Massachusetts, to Monson and Stafford, Connecticut. It came down along the eastern edge of Barnard’s land to the old Boston road, which it joined for about half a mile westward to the side of the river; then it departed to the southwest over
the hills to Monson. The new turnpike undoubtedly seemed a great improvement to Barnard, as it was used for heavy hauling between the settlements in Connecticut and northern Massachusetts. Today it is a minor back road. Another highway branched off to the southeast from the new turnpike at Barnard’s corner, and ran to Brimfield and Sturbridge. Hardly a trace of it remains now. Two miles north on the turnpike was the little settlement that became known as Palmer Old Center. The Presbyterian church and cemetery presently were to be established there.

So Barnard found himself at a busy crossroads point. To the northward, the turnpike gave him access to Steward Southgate’s new sawmill at Pottaquattock Pond, adjacent to the Ware River. He meant to be using considerable lumber very soon, and he could choose among two or three mills that were hurried into activity to take care of the needs of the rush of settlers. Grain mills also were being set up beside the small streams.

The year 1735 marked the realization of the first of Barnard’s plans. Then it was he built his new barn, fifty feet long and thirty feet wide, with two great doors at the front, each wide enough to admit a load of hay. It must have seemed a large barn for those days of comparatively small beginnings. The frame was constructed of heavy hewn timbers, well mortised together and solidly braced. Room was provided for hay and grain in large bays at either side of the two driveways. The ground sloped downward from the front to the rear, making possible a large stable for horses and cattle beneath the planked main floor of the barn.

The year of building has been established in recent times by the discovery of the date 1735 painted on a board inside the barn. This dated board was seen while the barn was still standing, by Frank S. Keith of Palmer, whose family lived for a number of years on the farm. The barn survived until 1922, when its sagging roof invited demolition to make room for a garage. Had it been known then that Barnard had made the barn his first project, it would have been spared and restored. All that is left of it now is a large wrought-iron door handle of interesting design that was placed on the front door of a summer cottage built in 1922.
With several children already on the scene, Barnard and Jean McNitt must have felt very crowded in the little house beside the brook. There is no evidence to sustain a conviction Barnard must have built a larger house in or before 1735, on the site where the pre-Revolution house now stands. Frank Keith has related a tradition that the first house on this spot was burned. When the 1760 house was restored in 1927-1928, discovery was made that the original stone foundation walls had been made about two feet higher at some time in the past. This could have been done when the house destroyed by fire was replaced with what we now see.

Standing behind the old house is a great elm that a tree expert has declared to date from the year 1650 or thereabouts. When Barnard was erecting his barn and perhaps his first new house, the elm was about eighty-five years old. The trunk now has a girth of sixteen and a half feet, and the branches have a spread of 112 feet. Each of the five branches is about seven and a half feet in circumference.

Barnard financed his building operations by borrowing £40 from Alexander Ewing of Ashford, Windham County, Connecticut. As security he pledged his second drawing of 100 acres of land to which he was entitled by virtue of the confirmation given his title of ownership by the General Court in 1733. The additional land, adjoining his original farm, was not actually granted to him until May 16, 1746. Ewing accepted from Barnard a deed to the anticipated grant of 100 acres, dated May 12, 1735; it is evident the loan was repaid long before the land came into Barnard’s possession.

The vital records of Palmer supply information of births and marriages of Barnard’s children, beginning with 1729, but there is a gap for the period before the family came to the neighborhood. That the eldest son Alexander was born in 1721 is established by the inscription on his gravestone at Salem, New York. The record of the birth of Elisabeth in 1729 indicates the family was at Palmer then, three years before the purchase of the farm in 1732.

Since the names of Joseph and Arthur do not appear in Palmer records of baptisms, it must seem they were born before 1729, and elsewhere, or that they may have been nephews, adopted into the family. The fact of their recorded marriages to Palmer girls in 1761 and 1765 warrants including them in the roll of children.

Barnard evidently was married in 1720 just before taking ship to the
Massachusetts Bay Colony. As in so many other cases threatening life-long separation from those left behind, he may have proposed to his favorite girl that she marry him right away and cross the sea with him. It has been recorded in the family of his son John that Barnard was born in 1700, which may be an approximation. Early marriages were not at all unusual then. And since a period of thirty-three years elapsed between the birth of his son Alexander in 1721 and of his daughter Jean in 1754, it must be concluded Barnard was twice married. Jean is the only wife to whom the Palmer records refer, and she must have come there with him, hardly more than a young girl when Elisabeth was born in 1729.

Here then is the record of Barnard's family; we may consider the three eldest the sons of a first wife, and the others as Jean's children:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Elisabeth McClem, at Pelham</td>
<td>April 14, 1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Elisabeth Ward</td>
<td>Nov. 7, 1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>Jane Quinton</td>
<td>Sept. 4, 1765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Elisabeth</td>
<td>March 28, 1729</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Martha Patrick, at Rutland</td>
<td>March 18, 1756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>Elisabeth Thomson</td>
<td>May 8, 1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Isaac Farrell</td>
<td>Aug. 27, 1762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Name of wife, place of marriage, undiscovered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Josiah Farrell</td>
<td>April 9, 1768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>May 6, 1744</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Reuben Cooley</td>
<td>Jan. 22, 1772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>1st, Mary Fuller, Dec. 23, 1773; 2nd, Patty Wilson at Murrayfield,</td>
<td>Jan. 14, 1777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Chloë Chapin</td>
<td>July 18, 1771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Thomas Brown</td>
<td>Dec. 15, 1774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Elbows community was first designated as a plantation, then as a district; not until the onset of the Revolution was it permitted the dignity of a township form of government. Meetings of “Proprietors and Grantees” were held from the beginning, and Barnard served variously as member of the auditing committee, clerk, and moderator.

He was clerk of the plantation from 1741 to 1750, and after the district of Palmer was authorized by the General Court, he was clerk from 1755 to 1761. He also was a member of the board of selectmen in 1754 and 1755. He was a member of the committee that chose the site and laid out the first cemetery at the Old Center, and was constantly called upon to serve on committees to dispose of matters that in modern times are handled by town officers.
The first house beside Wigwam Brook undoubtedly was a log cabin, because only logs were available for building before the sawmills began operating in the neighborhood, in and after 1730. The name of the brook suggests the character of former dwellers in the Indian meadow between the stream and the Cedar mountain range directly at the east.

Many arrowheads and stone axes have been picked up in modern times along the banks of the brook at Barnard’s place, and a small collection of them is now kept at the Palmer house.

The English settlers in Massachusetts had small use for an odd item of food introduced by the Ulster Scots: the potato. They regarded it as coarse and harsh-tasting, and were slow to admit it to their tables. Another innovation from Ulster was the small spinning wheel, with the attendant art of weaving fine linen cloth with threads spun from flax. Without doubt Barnard had a small field of flax somewhere near the brook; after cutting the full-grown stalks he would place them in the brook to soak until the fibers were sufficiently separated to permit hackling. The loosened and dried fibers went eventually to the spinning wheel.

Temple says: “The Scotch women — wives and daughters of the early settlers of this town [Palmer] and Pelham — excelled in the art of spinning fine linen thread. . . . ‘Scotch linen’ at once became fashionable and in demand among the more wealthy families — greatly to the advantage of our people at The Elbows.” No doubt Jean McNitt and her daughters also spun woolen yarn on the large wheel, and perhaps they had a loom for weaving linsey-woolsey (of linen and wool) for the family clothing.

The principal crops grown by Barnard and other Ulster-Scottish farmers around Palmer, besides potatoes and flax, were Indian corn, summer wheat, rye, peas, oats, and barley. Wheat then was worth five shillings a bushel in cash, or eight shillings in barter. When the minister accepted wheat in part payment of his £80 a year, his account was charged at the barter rate: eight shillings. Rye, barley, and peas were worth four shillings in currency, and corn, three shillings, with proportionately higher prices in barter.

Nearby grain mills with their water wheels, set up alongside the small rivers, ground wheat and corn into flour and meal for home use, and surpluses were carted to Springfield for sale to traders. Carting was an arduous job in those days because the roads were narrow, rough, and without bridges. The streams had to be forded. It was common to fell a large tree across a brook or narrow river and hew the upper surface flat, to provide foot passage for those who walked.
REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION ENTERED BY BARNARD MCNITT
IN PALMER TOWN RECORD
FRANK McNITT AT 37; above library mantel in Palmer house is self-portrait at 21. — See p. 131

FRANK'S PORTRAIT OF HIS WIFE VIRGINIA, which hangs also in Palmer house.
Cattle and hogs were raised numerously for the family larder and for sale. There was no refrigeration then, of course, and at hog-killing time in the autumn, pork was “put down” in barrels of brine for winter fare. Hams were preserved by smoking over smouldering corn-cobs or hickory in tight little smoke-houses. Ears of corn were hung by their stripped-back husks on beams in kitchen ceilings to dry while waiting their call to usefulness. Chickens roamed yard and field, buying time with their eggs until festival occasions brought them to their appointed end. The Quabaug and Ware Rivers abounded in fish, and the surrounding woods in wild turkeys, quail, partridges, and other game. Trout still may be seen in Wigwam Brook, and deer find shelter in the nearby woods to this day.

Molasses as a spread for bread and for cooking and baking was a staple necessity. The Ulster Scots in New England bartered for it by the gallon and seemed never to have enough in the house to last. Another staple with the men was rum: hot, potent rum distilled in New England from molasses brought from the West Indies in sailing ships. Whenever neighbors gathered to raise the heavy frames of a house or barn, rum was provided in pails. For every husking bee and road-making job, too, as well as for any gathering of neighbors, or a wedding, or a funeral, or perhaps even a meeting of the kirk session, the wine of the New England country was hospitably served. We read little complaint of drunkenness, though.

One egg could be traded at a small neighborhood shop for a glass of rum, and there is a legend of one thrifty soul who demanded a dividend when he brought a double-yolked egg.

An early community leader was Steward Southgate, whose father had brought his family from England in 1715, and had settled in 1718 in Leicester. Harvard graduate and civil engineer, Southgate surveyed the community and laid out farms. He secured confirmation of land titles from the General Court; then was authorized to call the first plantation meeting, held August 7, 1733, at which he served as clerk. He was on the committee chosen to engage the first minister, and on another committee entrusted with £50 to build a meeting house thirty by thirty-six feet in dimensions on a knoll in what came to be called the Old Center. A store, a tavern, and a blacksmith shop were built near the church. The latter disappeared long ago; the others and a few houses remain to mark the first community center.

The Rev. John Harvey, a Presbyterian minister from Ulster who had been preaching in homes and living on voluntary contributions since 1730, was invited by Southgate’s committee in 1733 to become the
established minister. He was offered £80 a year, the use of the ministry lot of 100 acres in addition to his own farm of the same size, £100 with which to build a house, and all the firewood he needed. Perhaps he was glad to accept.

He was ordained on June 5, 1734 under a white oak tree in a pasture lot east of the Old Center road, about a mile north of Barnard's home. Four Presbyterian ministers and one Congregationalist came from points as distant as Boston and Londonderry to read the Scripture and pray and preach and deliver the charge, no doubt in the company of the entire community. The scene may be recaptured in imagination now as one views the lonely pasture, with the white oak tree that seems never to have attained its growth.

Mr. Harvey continued preaching in homes until November 1735; then the plain little unheated church was ready. The godly felt it their duty to shiver, and try to forget the warmed houses where they had worshiped in preceding winters. In coldest weather, Temple says, the minister led his flock to the nearby tavern and used the bar for a pulpit.

Five plain benches on either side of the center aisle of the church provided the principal seating, with box pews along the side walls for those wishing to pay for their use. The men sat on the benches on one side in the order of their taxpaying rank; their wives sat in corresponding positions across the aisle. In the seating list for 1764, Barnard McNitt appears as the eighth largest taxpayer, entitled to the first seat on the second bench.

Sons and daughters were assigned seats in the gallery. Of the younger generation of the McNitt family, only two were accredited to seats, on the girls' side above their mother. They were Mary, nearing twenty, and Margaret, who was seventeen that year. Jean, the baby of the family, was only ten and perhaps too young for recognition. John and Andrew still were at home, aged fifteen and fourteen, and they were overlooked too. Could they have managed to get out of going to church? It seems hardly possible.

Although Steward Southgate had led in engaging the minister, building the church, and arranging the ordination service under the oak tree in 1734, he was unhappy. A Congregationalist, he was not pleased with the idea of being taxed to support a Presbyterian ministry. Nor can we be much surprised at that, in itself. He found what seemed an excellent opportunity to get rid of the Rev. Mr. Harvey and proceeded to action.

On September 19, 1739, the General Court of Massachusetts received a petition from Southgate and twenty-seven others asking to be relieved of paying taxes to support Mr. Harvey. He had been drinking too much
rum, the petition recited; he had been indicted by a Hampshire County
grand jury for intemperance on ye first Tuesday of March 1738, and
had been convicted on his own confession of guilt, by a justice of the
Court of General Sessions in Northampton.

Copies of the record had been given the Presbytery: “Yett nothwith-
standing they clearly acquitted him of sd crime against clear and mani-
fest evidence,” despite the “authentick record of his own confession.”
The Presbytery of four ministers had tried Mr. Harvey after his con-
viction at the county seat, heard his humble confession and promises to
do better, and had told him to go freely and sin no more. All this to the
great affliction of Steward Southgate and his fellow-petitioners, who
included a few of the sterners Scots.

How stood Barnard McNitt? An answering remonstrance was pre-
sented to the General Court on December 14, 1739, signed by Barnard
and forty-five others: a majority of the congregation. The men who
rose to defend the minister bore such Scottish names as Wilson, Blair,
Lamont, McElwain, McMaster, Hunter, Rutherford, Shaw, McClena-
than, Nevins, Spear, Breckinridge, Little, Thomson, Ferguson, and
Sloan.

This petition pointed out that the grievance was “national”; that
Southgate and other English Congregationalists were dissatisfied because
the ordination of Mr. Harvey had been performed “for the most part
by pious and orthodox ministers of another nation.” Assimilation had
not yet begun, apparently. The American melting pot was not yet
working.

“Mr. Southgate and some few others have since that ordination set
themselves against the Rev. Mr. Harvey, seeking by all possible means
to blast his reputation... As to the Council of Ministers or Presbytery
in June last, that would not allow Mr. Southgate’s wife and mother and
sisters to be sworn of stories nine years old: We produce their [the
Presbytery's] definitive sentence, and submit it to the judgment of this
Honbl Court, humbly conceiving it must carry in the face of it more
weight than all the hard and indecent language of ye petitioners against
it; and further declare that Mr. Southgate then consented to it and pro-
fessed a reconciliation with Mr. Harvey in these terms, forgiving him
all his trespasses as he hoped for forgiveness with God....”

The General Court referred both petitions to a committee, which on
December 22 dismissed Southgate’s complaint as groundless.

Possibly the feeling stirred in the community may have caused the
Proprietors and Grantees, who managed the affairs of the plantation, to
come to regard some of Southgate’s bills for surveying as excessive.
When some were not paid, Southgate began suing. Barnard McNitt was delegated to make a final settlement with him, and this he accomplished. But Southgate had tired of living in a community where he was at odds with so many, and in 1742 he sold his property and returned to his former home in Leicester. In the first record book of the town of Palmer is the account Barnard rendered to a town meeting, written with the casual informality of a man feeling safe in the good will of his neighbors:

Kingstown, March ye 10th, 1745/6 [1746].

My bill for reckoning with Steward Southgate.
Eight Days Service is my Demand but then I give in a Third part and my Demand is Four Pounds old tenor.
And for going to make up with Steward Southgate for his late Sute he Commenced against us, and I made up with him.
And likewise for Going to Boston for a Power to raise our Taxes; and I was Eight Dayes gone, and as near as I can think I have spent Six Pounds in Money and my time, which I count to be at Ten Pounds old tenor [altogether].
And for my assessing two years, Three Pounds old tenor.
And Three Pounds one shilling charge by Southgate this last.
Sum Totle £20:1:00.

Barnard McNitt, His Bill.

“All of the within bill” was voted, the moderator indorsed on the paper. Barnard had no get-rich-quick ideas, with his charge of £1:10:00 a year for acting as assessor.

Mr. Harvey was not happy after his conflict with the Southgate party; in 1744 he spoke to his congregation of leaving, and there was talk of getting a supply for the pulpit, but nothing happened immediately. Perhaps feeling the need of consolation, Mr. Harvey in 1746 made a trip to and from Boston with Mrs. Agnes Little, wife of Thomas Little. According to Temple, “a story got afloat, charging them with unchaste conduct.” The parson may have been a weak reed after all.

All the men who had defended him resolutely when he was accused of tippling, thought this a wild oat of another color; they were determined he must go. Two committees were appointed to carry the case to the Presbytery. On June 11, 1747, Barnard McNitt, Seth Shaw, and Andrew Rutherford were appointed to prosecute with the aid of one or more attorneys, and £100 old tenor was voted for their use. Mr. Harvey saved trouble by resigning at the end of 1747. Barnard McNitt made the final settlement, as evidenced by the following:
Kingstown, July the 5, 1748.

Recaved from Mr. Barnard McNitt the full of my Reates, Sallery and Wood-reates, during his collection. Ney, the full due to me since my coming to the Elbows, which has been seventeen years past, the Eleventh day of May last, as witness my hand this fifth day of July 1748.

Mr. John Harvey.

Witness present
Samuell Shaw, Juner.

The community then known as Kingstown or The Elbows could not attain a township form of government until the disliked assessment of £500 levied against proprietors’ lands in 1733 was paid the provincial government. Time had dragged, with no payment made. In December 1739 the General Court appointed three men — Colonel William Pynchon of Springfield among them — to assess the whole sum against the farms of the grantees, and sell the lands of any who failed to pay. Nearly a third of the plantation had been carved off and annexed to the township on the east, now called Warren. That made no difference; landholders of the remaining portion must pay in full.

When the settlers petitioned through Samuel Shaw for relief for “this little poor Infant Plantation” from such summary action, the General Court relaxed for a while; then in 1743 demanded £125 at once, and remaining fourths in 1744, 1745, and 1746. Barnard McNitt was appointed at a meeting of Proprietors and Grantees on October 5, 1743 to serve with Samuel Shaw and Isaac Magoon to sell lands of delinquents to enforce payment. It must have been a disagreeable duty. From time to time, when individuals had failed to pay their share, plots of ten to fifteen acres were cut off their farms and sold at auction, until the entire exaction finally was paid.

Hope stirred again that The Elbows plantation might be permitted to have a town government. Barnard McNitt was chosen at a meeting of Proprietors and Grantees on September 22, 1748 to visit Boston to beg the General Court to authorize establishment of a township. He was instructed to “use all due and proper means, with the advice of the members of the Court, as many of them as he can have conference with.” Temple relates that “he evidently did some good lobbying, and made a favorable impression.” On March 9 following he was sent again to Boston. He submitted the following petition:

To His Excellency William Shirley, Esq.

The petition of the Proprietors & Grantees, so called, in a new Plantation or Settlement commonly known by the name of The Elbows, in the County of Hampshire,
Humbly Sheweth That Your Petitioners have fulfilled the orders of the Great & General Court when the land in said Plantation was granted, fifty families having been brought in and fixt there, & a Minister settled; but recent difficulties arising between the Minister & the People, and there being little prospect of his serviceableness among them, the minister and the people parted, and the people have invited another Minister, who is near settling with them as they hope: But so it is circumstance with them — May it please yor Excellency and Honrs, that they are likely to be much embarrassed in proceeding in this affair, as well as divers others, unless they can be erected into a Town, or some way made capable of proceeding regularly & legally to do those things which the interest, peace & good order of so considerable a Number of Families as above fifty make requisite.

The Land which yor petitrs pray may be included in this Township corporation, abuts easterly on the Town of Western so called, and westerly on Brimfield, northwesterly on a Plantation called Cold Spring [now Belchertown], northerly on a Tract of Land belonging to the Heirs of John Read, Esq.

And yr Petrs as in duty bound shall every pray &c

In the name & by order of the Inhabts above sd,

Barnard McNitt.

Elbows, May 31, 1749.

The Governor's Council and the House of Representatives, the two houses of the General Court, voted on June 14, 1749 to grant Barnard's petition and authorize the incorporation of a township with all the rights enjoyed by other towns, including that of electing a member of the House. Governor Shirley refused his consent. The explanation is simple. The British government was dissatisfied with the growing power and independence of spirit of the lower house of the General Court, and wished no additional members elected from newly created towns.

Once more The Elbows plantation tried, when in the autumn of 1751 it sent David Shaw as agent to Boston. He succeeded in getting the colonial government to make The Elbows plantation into a district, with all the rights and privileges of a town except that of sending a representative to the lower house. On January 30, 1752, the General Court passed "An Act for erecting ye Plantation called ye Elbows, into a District by the name of Palmer." The community had to wait until the outbreak of the Revolution to become a town; then an elected representative was welcomed to share in planning for the War for Independence.

David Shaw was clerk of Palmer district until 1755, when Barnard McNitt succeeded, and by annual re-election continued to serve for six years. The second volume of records of the town of Palmer contained many pages of his minutes of town meetings, which I had the privilege
of reading in 1917, when J. H. Foley was town clerk. In order to pre-
serve the leaves of the first and second volumes, which contained so
much of the early history of Palmer, Mr. Foley had caused them to be
enclosed between sheets of thin, transparent silk. At the same time, both
volumes had been strongly re-bound.

After Mr. Foley’s death the second volume disappeared from the
vault in the clerk’s office; obviously it had been stolen by or for some
antiquarian for its historical value. There is little likelihood of our ever
being able to read Barnard’s orderly minutes unless the book turns up
some day in a library. The handwriting is very much neater than Bar-
nard’s rugged script as illustrated by examples shown in adjacent pages.
Barnard either had his quill pen on its good behavior, or had employed
a younger member of his family to transcribe his minutes for him.

Barnard was elected an elder of the Presbyterian Church on June 4,
1755, with William McClanathan, Samuel Shaw, Jr., and David Spear,
Jr. One of his last recorded services as an elder was his participation in
an agreement made with the young Rev. Moses Baldwin at Southold,
Long Island, to serve as minister at Palmer. On March 3, 1761, it was
“voted by the inhabitants of Palmer to give the Rev. Moses Baldwin a
call to settle in the work of the Gospel ministry, according to the Pres-
byterian platform of the Church of Scotland.” He was installed on June
17 by the Boston Presbytery.

Then only twenty-nine, Mr. Baldwin had been graduated from Prince-
ton in 1757; in 1791 he was honored with a Master of Arts degree. He
remained in the ministry at Palmer long after the Ulster Scots who first
welcomed him had died; as members of the younger generation moved
away to find more fertile soil and better opportunities generally, they
were replaced by Congregationalists. When Mr. Baldwin had only a
few weeks to go to complete a half century at Palmer, he learned the
congregation was tired of a man of seventy-nine. He begged for a
younger minister as assistant, and to be made pastor emeritus. He was
thrust aside with a pension of $100 a year, and he died two years later.
That was the end of Presbyterianism in Palmer, except for a few in-
dividuals who may cherish its traditions.
38. Closing Years at Palmer

When Barnard McNitt served with a committee in 1761 that engaged Palmer’s last Presbyterian minister he completed his final service of that nature. The veteran adjuster of community difficulties, though past sixty, still had his old vim for public affairs as well as for his private concerns. We have evidence of his part in a town meeting held on June 7, 1762 in the rough minutes he made in his angular scrawl on a single sheet of paper, for copying in revised form into the permanent records.

The meeting was typical of all those held throughout the period, though it was a fairly important one because it authorized the building of the first schoolhouse at the Old Center, and voted £50 for repairing the meeting house. The prudent thrift of the “freeholders and inhabitants” is manifest in every move they made. Barnard was thrifty with words, though that is true with anyone who makes notes of a meeting in progress. His style and spelling should be regarded with tolerance. He was moderator of the meeting as well as clerk and had no time for niceties. His text follows:

At a meting of the freehldrs and other Inhabitants Legually Conveaned and assembled at the Publick meeting house on Monday the Seventh Day of June, 1762, at twelve o’clock on sd. Day,

The meting being opened Barnard McNitt was Chosen moderator to Regulate said metting.

2dly, voted that the Committe for Repairing the meeting house shall imploy no man to work att y¢ inside of the meeting house but those that they think Profitable [i.e., efficient].

Third artical: Voted that the whol of the price that the pues [pews] was sold for be abeated to the purchasers. Voted that thear be no pues in the Body of the meeting house, or where the seats should stand.

The 4th artical past in the Negative.

5th. Voted that two shellings per week be Drawn out of the Tresurry by Deacon Seth Shaw and given to Thomas Farrin for his Daughter Janes Suport till further orders.

6th. Voted fifty pounds to be Raised for Repairing the meeting house. [Following words scratched out: and voted a man’s Days wages shall be 2s.]

7th. Voted that the Subscribers build a School house at the meeting house on thair one [own] Cost and that they have their porportion of the School money.

8th. Voted that the Committe for Repairing the meting house Shall sell the old Stuff and Glass to the best Advantage and lay out the money in finishing y¢ meeting house.

Barnard McNitt, moderator.
At a meeting of the freemen and other inhabitants duly convened and assembled at the Publick meeting house on Monday by the seventh Day of June, 1762, an act was passed for the building of a new schoolhouse, the meeting being opened by Barnard McNitt, moderator.

The moderator then called for the Committee for repairing the meeting house, and requested them to report at the next meeting in the business of the meeting house, at which the action shall be taken.

The question was then put in the negative.

It was voted that two shillings per week be drawn out of the Treasury by Deacon Seth Shaw and given to Thomas Shaw for his daughter's support, till further orders.

It was voted that the repair of the meeting house be put into the hands of those who have the same, and that the same be done in a manner that shall be satisfactory, and that the Committee for repairing the meeting house shall select the best and bravest person for the task, and that the work shall be done in the best possible manner.

Barnard McNitt, moderator.
MRS. MARIE B. McNITT SEATED ON ROCK BEFORE PALMER SCHOOLHOUSE VOTED IN 1762

BARNARD McNITT HOUSE AS REDISCOVERED IN 1917; AT RIGHT IS 1735 BARN
Some of the deliberations so compactly set down in these minutes deserve a little interpretation. After a year of Mr. Baldwin’s term as the new minister, the congregation had decided the meeting house needed overhauling. Long before, box pews had been built along both sides of the room to be sold to parishioners wishing to pay for evidence of social eminence. The idea hadn’t worked; thrift had conquered whatever faint stirrings of high-toned exclusiveness may have been evident; all but a few preferred the plain benches. At this town meeting the plan was abandoned, the pews were ordered removed, and money previously collected was ordered abated to the purchasers. It was voted further that no new pews should be erected in the body of the house, where benches would serve well enough. When the Congregationalists later took over, they restored box pews, and bought and sold them.

Barnard undoubtedly helped finance and build the little schoolhouse erected at the Old Center at the cost of those who wished it, as four of his children were of school age. Margaret at the time was fifteen, John was thirteen, Andrew twelve, and Jean, eight. The small building, which remained on the site until a few years ago, was provided with some of the detail that may be seen now in Barnard’s 1760 house; in particular, the rope-turned moulding used about his front entrance. A photograph of the schoolhouse made in 1917, with your author’s wife seated on a rock in front, is reproduced in these pages.

Notwithstanding the care to avoid loss or waste, the community still had the will to vote a little money to help with the support of a neighbor’s daughter in distress. We are strongly reminded by the tone and content of the minutes of the acts of kirk sessions in Scotland.

Barnard’s land was bounded on the south by the Chicopee River, now the Quabaug. Just across the river in the Monson district was a tract of seven acres that William Shaw was willing to sell for £7. Barnard fancied the plot, and it was deeded to him on June 8, 1765.

There is reason for believing Barnard gave some help to his son David, who had married a Rutland girl, Martha Patrick. David bought twenty acres of land in that community for £26:13:4 in December 1758 and sold it in January 1760 for £60:13:4. On December 11, 1767, Barnard paid Thomas McIntyre £60 for fifty acres in Rutland, Worcester County, “lying on both east and west sides of the road leading from Rutland meeting house to Spencer.” David witnessed the signing of the deed. Perhaps the farm was bought for his use; if so, the plan didn’t work out well, for Barnard sold the tract on January 18, 1771, to Samuel Browning for £73:13:4. David may have removed to Buckland at this time; his family grew up there.
With some of his neighbors Barnard had invested in land in the town of Lyme in New Hampshire Colony; on February 26, 1768, he sold his share to Nathaniel Hews, Jr., of Lyme for £12. Hews (or Hughes) may have bought the other shares at the same time.

Barnard undoubtedly was meeting some special emergency when on November 9, 1772, he borrowed £60 from John Murray of Rutland, and secured the loan by giving a deed to his farm, and a bond falling due in three years. He may have been refinancing debt, or helping one of his children. This borrowing was almost the last of Barnard's transactions. Within two months and no doubt because of an alarming illness, Barnard on January 2, 1773, sold the homestead of 200 acres to his unmarried son John for £200. John naturally would assume the debt of £60 to John Murray.

Two weeks later, on January 16, Barnard died. We shall always wonder whether worry over a sharp emergency clouded his final days, for a man in the seventies doesn't often borrow heavily. All his children were married but two, and the family in the Palmer house now included only the widowed Jean, the son John not yet twenty-four, and eighteen-year-old Jean.

It is evident that efforts were made for a while to keep the homestead and pay off the debt, but John may have found the debt too much for him. He married Mary Fuller two days before Christmas in 1773, and Jean married Thomas Brown on December 15, 1774. The shadows were falling on a home from which all the children but John had gone, and Jean could not have liked the prospect of living on in the big house with her memories.

On April 9, 1776, John sold the homestead to his brother Andrew for £200; he signed the deed alone, so Mary already may have died. Twenty days later Andrew sold the farm to Seth Adams of Wilbraham, formerly of Boston, for £250. Relinquishing her dower right, Chloe signed the deed with Andrew. Both brothers named Palmer as their home in the deeds.

We have no way of knowing whether John stayed on at Palmer for a year or two, or went to Murrayfield, where Andrew had begun Revolutionary service the year before at the time of the engagements at Lexington and Concord. We do know that John bought a farm of 100 acres at Murrayfield, for which he paid £80 to Nathan Wheeler; the deed was dated July 9, 1777. If Andrew had bought a home there, no deed was recorded to prove it. Murrayfield long has been known as Rowe; one wishing to visit this spot in the high Berkshires turns off the Mohawk Trail to the road marked for Zoar and climbs six miles to the northward.
over a paved highway. Rowe has a remote quaintness. Beside its steep, winding main street a mountain brook tumbles over rocks on its way to the valley below.

Mrs. Alice V. Truesdell, at present assistant town clerk of Rowe, has discovered old records of town meetings held in Murrayfield in March 1788 that indicate the spot where John’s farm was located. In those days the meeting house was two miles north of the present village of Rowe. It was voted to build a road two rods wide, starting at the meeting house and curving to the northwest about two and a half to three miles to John McNitt’s house, and thence in a northerly direction about a mile or a mile and a half to the present Vermont line. The nearest Vermont town was Whitingham. The road eventually was abandoned, and the spot where John once lived is now half a mile from the nearest highway.

It is related of the widowed Jean by her son John’s descendants that she lived to be ninety-one, presumably in John’s family.

In this story of the dispersal of the family we must remember Alexander and Sarah. They lived to know ten of their grandchildren at Palmer, including the twins Mary and Adam, born in 1744. Sarah died later in that year, and Alexander in 1746. Oliver Perry Allen, a Palmer antiquarian, wrote in 1916 for the Palmer Journal a long historical article about the McNitt homestead and family (see Appendix B), in which he said the graves of Alexander and Sarah were marked with monumental stones. These stones cannot now be found; they may have been removed in the intervening years.

If no stone remains to mark the spot where their son Barnard lies, a monument to his memory shines like a bright shaft in an unusual passage in the deed by which John transferred the farm to Andrew. It appears in the description of the property:

“... the Home Lot originally granted and laid out to my Honored Father, Barnard McNitt, late of said Palmer, deceased.”

When Andrew sold the farm twenty days later to Seth Adams, the reference to the Honored Father was repeated in the new deed. Notaries and others who draft deeds and make entries in official records are notably without sentiment, and the sons had to ask to get inserted in the deeds the two words of testimonial that convey so much.

Although the homestead had been sold, two parcels of land remained, and details connected with the division of the estate awaited action. We have no knowledge of how money and personal property may have been divided; all we have is the record of a deed given Andrew by the other heirs on August 9, 1776, by which they conveyed to him for £6 the plot of seven acres south of the river, and another tract of seventeen
and a half acres, "laid out to our Father, Mr. Barnard McNitt, dec'd."

The deed as recorded in Springfield is an enlightening document because it lists in the order of their ages all the living heirs of Barnard McNitt, or at least all who had any claim to rights in the property, or whose places of residence were known. At the outset the deed names the heirs granting the two parcels to Andrew, the eldest first. Husbands of daughters appear with their wives. The list fails to show the names of these sons and daughters whose names appear in the list of births in an earlier chapter:

Elisabeth, presumably died unmarried.
Arthur, possibly then living somewhere in Nova Scotia.
Sarah, living with husband Isaac Farrell somewhere in Nova Scotia.
Adam, probably deceased.

Here are the names listed in order as grantors at the beginning of the deed: Alexander McNitt, James Bolton and Isabel his wife, William McNitt, David McNitt, James McNitt, Josiah Farrell and Mary his wife, Reuben Cooley and Margaret his wife, John McNitt, Thomas Brown and Jean his wife. All signed the document except William and James; William certainly was in Nova Scotia at the time, and James may have been also; it was not feasible to send the document so far away for signatures in a transaction of more sentimental than material importance. Isabel Bolton may have been a grand-daughter of Barnard. On June 15, 1778, Andrew came over from Murrayfield and sold the two parcels of land to Seth Adams, buyer of the homestead, for £30.

As members of generations moved farther from New England all memory of the first home in America was lost, until its rediscovery in 1917 led to its restoration to family possession in 1922, and its rehabilitation. For the story of this, see Appendix C. The name of Barnard McNitt now appears on a bronze tablet erected to his memory beside the main entrance to his Palmer house.

While Barnard thought he was building for the long future of his family at Palmer, his sons came to think otherwise. They may have agreed that the valley amidst the hills, with the brook flowing through the land to the river, was charming; they may have liked watching the summer sun set behind Tamar Hill. The fireflies over the water and the notes of whippoorwills in the warm summer evenings may have been pleasing. But the soil was not very productive, and in their valley, frosts often came late in the spring and comparatively early in autumn. Restless and eager, they pushed westward.
Five of the McNitt brothers were soldiers in either the French and Indian War or the Revolution or both. Eight of their sons were in Revolutionary armies. Such was the period in which they lived that all of them either began their careers as warriors or became fighters soon after starting life on their own.

Alexander was the eldest son in the Palmer household and the one with the most militant record. He left home as a young man to join an Ulster-Scottish colony at Pelham, about twenty-five miles to the northward, perhaps lured there by the bright eyes of Elisabeth McClem. He married Elisabeth in 1749, bought a small farm, built a little house, accumulated some farm animals and equipment, and held such modest public offices as fence viewer and surveyor.

This is how he became a soldier. In 1755 the French built a fort later to be known as Ticonderoga; Sir William Johnston at once led a British force to try to capture it, and another at Crown Point. He failed to take the forts, but defeated the French under Baron Dieskau in the battle of Lake George, and erected Fort William Henry at the head of the lake. Two years later General Montcalm moved against the new British fort.

Down in Pelham, Captain Robert Lothridge in 1757 recruited a company for Colonel Israel Williamson’s regiment, which was ordered to the relief of the threatened Fort William Henry. One of the privates in Captain Lothridge’s company was Alexander McNitt. Clerks were always getting names wrong: Alexander’s was entered as “McNiett.” Williamson’s regiment no doubt did its best, but Montcalm captured the fort and held it for a year. Then he went in 1758 to meet Wolfe and lose a battle and his life at Quebec.

Alexander had small part in the campaign and no part in a glorious victory, but he was learning how wars are fought and discovering the fertile country south of Lake George. There in 1769 he joined about twenty-five Ulster Scots and their families from Pelham in a young colony first called White Creek, then New Perth, and finally Salem. Alexander bought a farm there, which remained in the ownership of his family for 177 years. Since his part in the French and Indian War was limited to a single campaign, we shall leave him now and return later to his more exciting Revolutionary record.

William, a younger brother, enlisted at Boston under Captain William Williams on October 10, 1754, and served until November 25. Obviously he couldn’t have become a hardened soldier in that short period,
THE NEW ENGLANDERS

or fired a shot in anger at a Frenchman or an Indian. Other adventures awaited him. On May 8, 1755, before reaching his twenty-second birthday, he married at Palmer a girl of eighteen: Elisabeth, daughter of Captain John Thomson, one of the earliest and most substantial settlers there. Three children were born before they joined a migration to Nova Scotia to replace the exiled Acadians. The children were Abner, born August 29, 1756; Sarah, born June 30, 1757; and Eunice, born October 21, 1759.

We come next to James, who began the soldier's life on April 10, 1758. At the age of nineteen he was mustered into Captain Daniel Burt's company of foot in Colonel William Williams' regiment, raised for "the reduction of Canada." According to Temple's *History of Palmer*, the march began late in May when the roads became settled, and the route led by way of the Westfield River to Pittsfield, Greenbush, Lake George, and thence to Canada. Louisburg in Nova Scotia fell to British and Colonial forces in the summer of 1758. There is a tradition in the family that James took part in the siege and suffered great hardships. He was mustered out of service on November 4.

Then on April 10, 1760 he enlisted in Captain Tristram Davis' company "for His Majesty's service for the total reduction of Canada." We lack information as to how long this campaign lasted, or what it achieved. James' third enlistment came on February 17, 1763, when he went to Boston and enrolled in Captain Ebenezer Cox's company. Active duty began on March 27, and lasted eight months and nine days. Enrolling officers entered James once as McKnight, once as McNight, and once as McNitt.

Alexander McNutt, a restless bachelor cousin from Staunton, Virginia, who previously had taken part in an Indian campaign, came up to Palmer and Londonderry during the French and Indian War, intent upon action. At Londonderry he was commissioned a Captain, and in his company he enrolled James, John, and Robert McKnight, all living in the community. Captain McNutt's company served in Nova Scotia throughout the summer of 1760, active duty beginning May 26 and continuing until November 30.

Roger McKnight, another of the Londonderry family, had enlisted on April 3, 1758, under Capt. Jeremiah Green in the township of Boston. His service probably lasted through the summer and may have taken him to the siege of Louisburg.

We have finished now with the French and Indian War, and we return to Palmer to await the early events of the Revolution. In the spring of 1776 the General Court asked Massachusetts towns to express their
sentiments regarding the stirrings toward independence that occupied the attention of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. A town meeting was called at Palmer for Monday, June 17. Robert Farrel, brother-in-law of Sarah and Mary McNitt, was moderator of the meeting, and Robert Hunter, who had shared a bench with Barnard McNitt in the Presbyterian church, was clerk.

"A very full meeting of ye Inhabitants" gave a positive and stirring answer to the General Court, we learn from Temple's History. The resolutions adopted that day have been called the Palmer Declaration of Independence. After an enumeration of grievances the declaration closes thus:

We, therefore, the Inhabitants of this Town, do believe it absolutely Necessary for the safety of the United Colonies, to be Independent from Great Britain, & Declare themselves Intirely a Separate State, as we can see no alternative but Inevitable ruin, or Independence. — But as there is a General Congress of the United Colonies, composed of Honourable, wise and good men, who sit at the Head of Affairs, consulting measures which will be most for the Safety and Prosperity of the whole, & have the means of Intelligence and Information in their hands, we submit the whole affair to their wise Consideration and Determination; — And if they shall unite in a separation from Great Britain, we do unanimously determine and declare we will Support them with our Lives and Fortunes.

This is an eloquent paper for a town meeting in a small community. The last sentence, embodying the pledge Jefferson was to use in the National Declaration a few days later, marches with so thrilling a spirit that it might well be read to a crescendo of drum-beats. The Palmer Declaration should silence those who cry plagiarism when plain men in a small community bring forth as their own a document so stirring, evolved from the depths of strong feeling.

The service records of Revolutionary soldiers to follow have been studied with the care made necessary by varieties of surname forms given single individuals on succeeding enlistments. The sources of information are the Archives of Massachusetts and New York, the seventeen printed volumes entitled Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolution, the Roster of State Troops of New York, and the volumes of Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, edited by Berthold Fernow. Anyone wishing to pursue further or to verify any of the records to follow may obtain information by calling at the Department of Archives in the State House at Boston or at the New York State Library in Albany. Revolutionary War records are now in charge of the Archivist of the U. S., Washington 25, who
has custody of pension records for the early wars, and who also can be helpful in research.

Alexander McNitt of Salem, New York, with a single campaign in the previous war to his credit, was fifty-five years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed, but very much the warrior in spirit. Evidently he was regarded as too old for tough campaigning, but he would not be denied. Since Alexander and his sons were to take part in the war in Charlotte County militia regiments and others, a glance at the organization in and around Salem is due.

Dr. John Williams, born in England, had arrived in the community in 1773, and because of experience and forthright ability had become at once the leading citizen in the neighborhood. He practiced medicine, became an assiduous buyer of lands, and later a county judge. He was instrumental in organizing a regiment of Charlotte County militia and was commissioned its Colonel, as well as regimental surgeon.

From Vol. 1 of the *Documents* referred to above we learn on pages 540-541 of the progress of war events at Salem. Colonel Williams’ command, called the Dorset regiment, was given its commissions by Act of the Provincial Congress on February 19, 1776; Williams was appointed Colonel, and Alexander Webster of Black Creek was named Second Major.

Line officers for the company raised in Alexander McNitt’s Black Creek neighborhood had been commissioned on September 29, 1775: Captain, Alexander Webster; First Lieutenant, John Hamilton; Second Lieutenant, George McKnight. In the following February, as noted in the paragraph above, Webster was promoted to be a Major. Hamilton then was advanced to the post of Captain of the Black Creek company, and McKnight became First Lieutenant.

Perhaps denied a commission as a line officer in the Black Creek company, it is evident that Alexander McNitt organized a company on his own and became its Captain. His unit and others like it were officially designated as the Charlotte County Voluntary Associates. An entry in the records dated June 16, 1778 shows Alexander was still Captain, and Alexander Simson was his First Lieutenant. Captain Alexander served under three succeeding Colonels: Williams, Webster, and Armstrong.

We discover in the records that on June 25, 1778, Colonel John Williams was dismissed for defrauding the Continental Pay Office by false payrolls; he was removed also from the office of Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Charlotte County. Alexander Webster, the Black Creek man, subsequently was commissioned Colonel to succeed Williams.
Captain McNitt's company was occupied chiefly in breaking up bands of Indians and Tories, and on one occasion it fought and drove away a detachment of these allies invading the Captain's own premises. The company held a strong position in a log barn near the house and road, and its fire was too hot for the marauders. The barn was cherished for decades afterward because of the bullets lodged in the logs.

The busiest period for the militia was the summer of 1777, when Burgoyne was approaching from Canada toward his ultimate defeat and surrender at Saratoga. In anticipation of the coming of the British army of 8,000, including some Brunswick mercenaries, Indians and Tories were raiding for supplies and burning homes all over the countryside, and noncombatants were fleeing southward. A manuscript history of Washington County (originally Charlotte) by Dr. Asa Fitch contains this order found among papers in an iron-bound chest from Jarvis Martin's house, that had been thrown out a window when the house was in flames:

At the Court Martial held at Dr. John Williamses in New Perth [Salem], Ordred that Squire [Moses] Martin deliver to Capn Alex. McNitt 4 pounds of powder and an Equal Quantity of Lead in purpose to kill all the Tories and Drive those Villians away that keeps about Ticonderoga or any way Infests the Lakes. Let him have it Free Gratis.

ALEX. WEBSTER, an Eye Witness.

Evidently Captain McNitt had asked for the ammunition and volunteered to use it. The paper was indorsed on the back thus: "Reed the within pouder. Alexd. McNitt Capt." A frugal amount of ammunition, surely, to liquidate the pillaging Tories, but likely a fresh supply followed. The order jotted down by the indignant Scot Alexander Webster, later a Colonel and county judge, indicates that Captain Alexander McNitt led a campaign against the villains infesting Ticonderoga and Lakes George and Champlain before General Burgoyne took Ticonderoga on July 5, 1777.

The Governor of New York twice appointed Captain McNitt as one of three Commissioners for Conspiracies to deal with Tories. From a published volume of Governor Clinton's public papers we get this evidence of activity by his appointees in the Salem neighborhood:

New Perth, Charlotte County, Nov'r 25, 1778.

Sir, By Virtue of the Act of the 30th June, We, as Commissioners, have Ordred Seth Chase of the County of Albany, Archibald Livingston & James Mount of this County, persons who refused to take the Oath as prescribed by the Aforesaid Act; We, therefore, agreeable to said Act, Inform your
Excellency that we are about to remove the above named Disaffected persons within the Enemies lines. We only wait your Excellency’s Answer, as to what you do or direct us, as to their Exchange for any of the Subjects of this State that May be in the hands of the Enemy.

We are sorry that so many of the disaffected have been sent to Canady, as they have such Opportunities to put their hellish plots in Execution. We are your very obt. & Humble Serv’ts,

ALEX’R WEBSTER, ALEX’D MCNITT, EBN CLARK
Commissioners for Conspiracies.

His Excellency Gov’r Clinton.

Vigorous treatment given the Tories often brought protests, because of the angry way in which the Ulster-Scottish Commissioners moved against those who connived with Indians. Abraham Biringer, who described himself as a Swiss, complained to Governor Clinton under the date line “Cambden, Apr 16, 1779,” that he had been robbed of his goods and gear by the Commissioners for Conspiracies by leave of General Stark. He named “Left. [Lieutenant] John Barns, Capt. Alex’r McNute of New Perth, and Ensen [Ensign] John McLong of Cambridge.” Later in his communication he referred to “old Alex’r McNite and his son, [and] young Rowin a weafer, from New Perth.” There is no evidence in the Clinton papers that Biringer received any satisfaction.

We of modern days who take a kinder view of the Loyalists of Revolutionary times may think the Captain and his fellow Commissioners unduly harsh with the Tories with whom they dealt. There were three classes of Loyalists: 1. The aristocrats, socially allied with Royalist provincial governments, who built fortunes by aid of special favors. 2. Middle class business men and others who conscientiously believed colonial status best or who stood to lose financially through separation from Britain. 3. Men of lower class who joined Loyalist regiments to fight their patriot neighbors, or profited from supplying the invaders, or who, on the frontiers, joined Indian allies in pillaging, burning, and general bushwhacking. Captain Alexander knew men of the third class and fought them with everything he had.

The Captain no doubt was a reader of Tom Paine, for Paine was writing for men like him. We can visualize Alexander with a copy of No. 1 of The Crisis papers in his hands, and imagine the deep stirrings in his mind and emotions as he read the opening paragraph:

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this
consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph...."

Then a few pages further, the Captain would have found a paragraph of immediate application to his own community, from which whole families were fleeing southward. We can imagine him with the pamphlet in hand, summoning the attention of his fighting men and neighbors: "Listen to Tom Paine!"

"And what is a Tory? Good God! what is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave."

And so we perceive the spirit with which old Sandy went out to "Drive those Villains away that keeps about Ticonderoga or any way Infests the Lakes." And he let them have it, "free gratis."

Captain McNitt's company was in service as late as 1781, and officers and men were not paid until 1784, according to a letter of August 9, 1949 from Major General Edward F. Whitsell, Adjutant General in the Pentagon Building in Washington. Referring to Captain Alexander, the letter says:

"His name appears first [in records in Washington] on an abstract for 22 April to 25 April 1778, of pay etc. due to Colonel John Williams and part of his regiment in the county of Charlotte, which turned out on an alarm against the Common Enemy for the defense of the United States, which shows that the abstract was audited 14 April 1784 and states 'Capt. Alex McNitt received £12:19.'

"His name appears on an undated abstract [period following 1778] of 'Certificates delivered out to Colonel Webster's regiment . . . which shows certain sums received by himself, [perhaps for various short terms of service].

"His name is also shown on a pay abstract of the different payrolls of Major Thomas Armstrong's regiment of militia in the county of Charlotte for various militia services in the year 1781, and shows the abstract as audited 31 July 1784 and that Captain McNitt's company received £62:0:5."

Barnard McNitt's youngest son Andrew had removed from Palmer to Murrayfield before the war began; he was a corporal in Captain Oliver Avery's company of Minute Men that marched on April 21, 1775 in response to the alarm from Lexington and Concord that spread...
like wildfire after the historic engagements of April 19. This service lasted one week, but Andrew had just begun.

Before the week was over he had enlisted again, on April 27, under Captain Hugh Maxwell in Colonel William Prescott’s regiment. He appeared again on the new muster roll of the same company on August 1. Then on July 10, 1777 he joined Captain Samuel Taylor’s company as a sergeant in a march from Charlemont, Massachusetts, to reinforce the northern Colonial army after the evacuation of Ticonderoga to the British five days earlier. He was discharged from this service on August 12.

John McNitt quite possibly was present at the town meeting that adopted the Palmer Declaration of Independence on June 17, 1776, for only a few weeks before he had been collaborating with his brother Andrew to sell the family homestead. His Revolutionary record was good but a bit difficult to state clearly because of confusing records and the fact of his enrollment at different times as McNitt, McNut, and McNutt.

At page 112 of Vol. xii of the D. A. R.’s *Graves of Revolutionary Soldiers Buried in New York State* it is said that “John McNitt served as a private for two months under Captain Lallen in Colonel Mosley’s Massachusetts regiment,” and in “February 1777 enlisted for six weeks in Captain Steward’s company of Colonel Wells’ regiment.” The records in the Massachusetts Archives show “John McNut,” a private in Colonel Leonard’s regiment, served forty-seven days at Ticonderoga in 1777. This entry may refer to one or the other of the periods of service noted by the D. A. R.; in any case, some of the information is indefinite.

On July 9, 1777 John completed the purchase of 100 acres of land at Murrayfield; on the day after the execution of the deed, he joined his brother Andrew in enlisting in Captain Samuel Taylor’s company, Colonel Porter’s regiment, for the northward march from Charlemont into the region where Burgoyne was advancing in New York. Their company was discharged from service on August 12, four days before the battle of Bennington. The purpose of the brief campaign, according to the record in the Massachusetts Archives, was to reinforce the northern army after the evacuation of Ticonderoga.

From the same source, confirmed by the D. A. R. account, we learn that John enlisted the last time in Captain Newcomb’s company, Colonel Murray’s regiment, on July 13, 1780 and served three months. This time he was “John McNutt.” His nephew Samuel McNitt, who had entered his home a short while before at the age of six, related afterward that Uncle John had told him stories of his war experiences, and that he remembered clearly the circumstances when his uncle went away to
war again in 1780. John continued living on his Murrayfield farm until 1798, when he removed to Cambridge, near Salem.

Carelessness of enrolling officers in assigning the name McNutt to sons of Barnard McNitt prevents certainty in one case where probability exists. The *Roster of State Troops* of New York lists under the names McNut and McNutt men whose usual names were McNitt beyond doubt, and who were so enrolled in other enlistments; for example, Andrew, Daniel, and John.

Such corroboration is lacking for James "McNutt," who enlisted once in the Salem neighborhood under Captain Long in Colonel Willet's regiment, and again under Captain Starin in Colonel Bellinger's regiment. It is likely this James was the son of Barnard McNitt, who enlisted three times in the course of the French and Indian War.

Thus we have accounted for four sons of Barnard McNitt in the Revolution: Alexander, with three terms of duty as Captain; Andrew, with four enlistments in Massachusetts; John, with four in Massachusetts; and James, with two in New York. We turn next to eight grandsons.

If Captain Alexander was a scrapper, so were his sons Alexander, Jr., Daniel, Andrew, David, and John, all of whom were properly enrolled with the surname McNitt. The younger Alexander was a chip from the old block who served through most of the Revolution as a private in Captain Hutchinson's company in Colonel Williams' regiment, and in Captain Long's and McNitt's companies in Colonel Webster's regiment. That is, he served until the enemy got him. When the British surged back into the lake region in 1780 and recaptured Ticonderoga and other forts, Alexander, Jr. was made a prisoner of war when captured with others at Fort Ann. For two years he languished in prison camps, and then was exchanged as the war was drawing to a close. A later chapter will be devoted to him.

His brother Daniel was a private in Captain Long's company, Colonel Armstrong's regiment, and in Captain Long's company, Colonel Webster's regiment, and a sergeant in his father's company in Webster's regiment.

Andrew served two enlistments under Captain Long, in regiments commanded by Colonels Webster and Armstrong, and one under Captain Livingston in Colonel Willet's regiment. To identify him further: on January 12, 1787 he bought forty-four acres of land from his father.

David McNitt served two enlistments as a sergeant in Captain Long's company, Colonel Williams' regiment. We have no record of him in post-war years. There is no way of documenting David's exact relationship to the Captain, whether as brother or son, but he probably was a son.
John, later at Norwich, New York, enlisted twice under Captain Long in Webster’s regiment, once under Long in Armstrong’s regiment, and once under Captain Harrison in Colonel Harper’s regiment.

Several of the men so far mentioned were married before the war and had families; when they enlisted in the militia they had times out between campaigns to come home and get in the crops. The Continental Army with long-time enlistments drew younger men with fewer responsibilities. That brings us to the remaining three grandsons of Barnard in the total of eight who served. After accounting for these boys in Massachusetts — sons of David McNitt — we shall return to the New York scene.

Adam McNitt enlisted in the Continental Army from Shelburne on January 31, 1781, at the age of seventeen. He had just married Margaret Clark, a girl of fourteen. He entered for three years in Colonel Benjamin Tupper’s 10th Massachusetts regiment, and served twenty-three months and three days.

A younger Barnard McNitt enlisted at twenty-one for three years, from the town of Buckland in Hampshire County. This was on January 15, 1781. He was in the course of buying a farm when he enlisted; in a deed dated March 12, 1781, Jonathan Sprague of Buckland sold to young Barnard fifty acres of land for £35. He served twenty-three months and twenty-three days in the 10th Massachusetts.

Finally Barnabas, the third of these grandsons: of him it may be said that he suffered more in name from the carelessness of enrolling clerks than any of his kinsmen. The roll of Massachusetts soldiers and sailors in the Revolution fills many thick volumes, and those wishing to look up McNitts and McKnights may consult Vol. x. There it may be discovered that Bernice McNitt, town of Ashfield, was a private in Captain Samuel Bartlett’s company, Colonel James Wesson’s regiment, year not stated. He enlisted as an “eight months man.” The entry closes with the advice: “See Barnabas McNel.”

So we turn to Barnabas McNel and find this: “List of men raised to serve in the Continental Army [year not given] from 5th Hampshire County regiment, endorsed ‘Col’o David Field’s Return’; engaged from town of Ashfield; joined Captain Bartlett’s company, Colonel Wesson’s regiment; term, eight months. [See Bernice McNitt.]”

We may reject Bernice and McNel and conclude Barnabas McNitt was a good short-term soldier in the Continental Army, while regretting omission of dates.

All, or all but one or two, of the New York enlistments were in militia companies of Charlotte County. Since this county was on the frontier
and much of the fighting was with Indians and Tories, there is reason
to believe that the militia companies saw considerable guerrilla warfare.
Part of the job of these frontier fighters was to obstruct the advance of
Burgoyne’s army by felling large trees across roads and by foraging
for supplies that otherwise might fall into the hands of invaders.

Burgoyne’s campaign was designed to cut off the New England colo¬

nies from the others, and had it succeeded through the joint efforts of
Burgoyne and Clinton, marching northward along the Hudson River,
the Revolution might have been lost. Lord George Germain of the
British War Office, who was directing the campaign, forgot to send
General Howe instructions when in a hurry to get out of London for
a weekend, and when Howe finally received the order on August 16,
the bulk of his force was moving against Philadelphia. Sir Henry Clint¬
on was belatedly dispatched to meet Burgoyne, only to learn at Kings¬
ton that Burgoyne had surrendered at Schuylerville on October 17 to
General Horatio Gates. Clinton set fire to private houses in Kingston
and turned back southward.

“Gentleman Jack” Burgoyne had a good time while his campaign
lasted, we learn from Morison and Commager in their Growth of the
American Republic: he “would make no concession to wilderness con¬
ditions; he must have his service of plate, his champagne, and thirty
wagons for his personal baggage. Baron Riedesel, the commander of the
Brunswick mercenaries, was accompanied by the Baroness, who has
left us a most vivid account of the series of splendid picnics that marked
her hero’s advance.” Just before his surrender, we read in Stone’s History
of Washington County, Burgoyne entertained his staff at a champagne
dinner in the commandeered country house of the patriot General
Philip Schuyler. On leaving next morning, Gentleman Johnny ordered
the house burned. A few days later, a prisoner of war, Burgoyne was
graciously received by Schuyler in his Albany town house.

Saratoga was the decisive battle of the war, and the greatest. The
American victory persuaded the French King to throw the weight of
his forces into the war on the side of the colonies.

So the McNitt brothers and sons in arms made the greater part of
their war contribution to the campaign to stop Burgoyne in 1777. They
played obscure parts, but all of them capable of bearing arms were in
there fighting. Two members of the general clan were accused of giving
aid in some form to the British, as we discover in a list of men whose
goods were declared forfeited, on page 256 of Vol. 1 of Documents
Relative to the Colonial History of New York. The two named were
Malcolm McNight and David McNutt.
The McNaughtons of the Argyle patent, adjoining the township of Salem on the west, were good patriots too. The *Roster of State Troops* lists Peter three times: as Peter McNames, sergeant in Captain Dygert’s company and Colonel Clyde’s regiment; as Peter McNagten, sergeant in Captain Little’s company, Colonel Fisher’s regiment; and as Peter McNaghthen, a Lieutenant in the same company and regiment.

It is not difficult to account for soldiers named McKnight who enlisted in Charlotte County and fought under some of the same Colonels as the McNitts. Though of the clan, they were not members of Bernard’s family, mistakenly enrolled as McKnights. In all probability they belonged with the Ulster newcomers who had settled in Salem in 1766 as members of a colony led by Dr. Thomas Clark. The *Roster* includes the names of four: Alexander McKnight, a private in Captain Sherwood’s company, Colonel Webster’s regiment; George, a Lieutenant in Captain Hamilton’s company in Williams’ and Webster’s regiments; John, a private under Captain Hicks and Colonel Van Schoonhoven; and Thomas McKnight, a private under Captain Visscher and Colonel Van Schoonhoven. Regardless of surname form, all rate the same with us, and it is gratifying to find in this frontier county men named McNaughton, McKnight, and McNitt as brothers in arms in the same regiments. It is safe to venture they didn’t know their common kinship.

Mention has been made earlier of a family of McKnights that settled in Berkshire County, Massachusetts long before the Revolution, no doubt closely related to the Alexander McNitt who arrived in Boston in 1720. The Berkshire McKnights took very active part in the Revolution. Their records follow, with their names shown as found in the Massachusetts archives:

**JAMES McKNIGHT**, sergeant in Captain Peter Porter’s company, Colonel Benjamin Simonds’ Berkshire County regiment; enlisted April 26, 1777, discharged May 20, 1777. Also Second Lieutenant in Captain George Sloane’s company, Colonel Simonds’ 2d Berkshire County regiment; commissioned July 24, 1778. Served another enlistment with same rank in same company and regiment. Later was First Lieutenant in command of a detachment in Colonel David Rossiter’s regiment; entered service October 15, 1780 when his detachment was ordered to Bennington; was discharged October 18, 1780. Entered service again with same detachment and regiment on November 6, 1780 and served three days in a march to Stillwater on alarm from northward.

**ROBERT McKNIGHT**, private, Colonel Ashley’s detachment, entered service July 22, 1777, served twenty-three days in northern department (probably around Saratoga). Enlisted as private September 6, 1777 in Colonel John Brown’s Berkshire County regiment, took part in Ticonderoga campaign. Enlisted from town of Washington for nine months on July 20,
FAMILY OF FIGHTERS

1778, in Colonel Putnam's Berkshire County regiment. As corporal in Colonel Prime's regiment, served from March 6 to September 6, 1780 under Brigadier General Wadsworth; company was raised for defense of Eastern Massachusetts. Private, Colonel Rossiter's Berkshire County regiment, entered service October 15, 1780 on alarm from northward, served three days.

JOHN McKNIGHT, seaman, ship Pliarne, Ebenezer Bradford, master, bound on voyage to South Carolina to Nantes; engaged for service February 10, 1777.

JOHN McKNIGHT, private, Lieutenant Cornish's company, Colonel John Brown's regiment, enlisted in Berkshire County August 14, 1777, served at battle of Bennington, discharged August 22, 1777. Private, Captain Joel Stevens' company, Colonel Rossiter's regiment, enlisted October 12, 1781, called out on alarm from Saratoga, discharged October 25, 1781.

JOHN McKNIGHT, private, Colonel Hyde's regiment, enlisted October 20, 1781, served nine days at Stillwater.

THOMAS McKNIGHT, private, Lieutenant Colonel Miles Powell's Berkshire County regiment, enlisted July 18, 1779, served one month and ten days at New Haven. Fifer, Captain William Ford's company, Colonel John Brown's Berkshire County regiment, enlisted July 21, 1780, served three months, six days. Fifer, Lieutenant James McKnight's detachment, Colonel Rossiter's regiment, entered service November 6, 1780, served three days at Stillwater. Private, Captain Ebenezer Merry's detachment, Colonel Hyde's regiment, enlisted October 30, 1781, served seven days on alarm from northward.

JOHN McNIGHT, enlisted from Williamstown June 29, 1780, discharged December 14, 1780, served in the Continental Army.

ROBERT McNIGHT, town of Washington, enlisted in Lieutenant Cornish's company, Colonel Simonds' Berkshire County regiment for nine months from June 9, 1778. Enlisted for three years as private in Continental Army September 24, 1777, served in Captain John Trafton's company in Colonel Henry Sherburne's regiment.

JAMES McKNIGHT, private in Captain David Strout's company, enlisted September 21, 1777 from Berkshire County, served twelve days at Stillwater (on fringe of Saratoga battle).

ROBERT McKNIGHT, private in Colonel John Brown's Berkshire County regiment, enlisted June 30, 1777, served twenty-six days in Saratoga campaign.

We must not forget the Londonderry family that sent some of its sons to Canada with Captain Alexander McNutt of Virginia in the French and Indian War. These took part in the Revolution, according to Massachusetts records:

JOHN McKNIGHT, private, enlisted from Cobbosseecontee in Captain Samuel McCobb's company, Colonel John Nixon's 5th Massachusetts regiment, October 7, 1775. Length of service not given.

ROBERT McKNIGHT, enlisted as private at Londonderry May 2, 1775, served three months and six days in Colonel John Nixon's 5th Massachusetts regiment.
ROBERT McKnight, enlisted from Newburyport as private January 29, 1781, for three years in the Continental Army. (May have been same man as next above.)

Branches of the clan in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina made very considerable contributions of men to the Revolutionary war effort, as will appear in later chapters.

The most distinguished service of all was that of Dr. Charles McKnight of New Jersey, son of a Presbyterian minister, grandson of another, and great-grandson of a ruling elder in Antrim. He was a senior surgeon in the American Army who sacrificed his health in hard work; later he was Professor of Medicine and Surgery at Columbia College, and at one time personal physician to General Washington. A later chapter will tell his story.

For temperament and color, my choice from the long list is Captain Alexander, who though fifty-six at the time of Burgoyne’s invasion, set a fighting example for his five sons. When the War of 1812 began, Captain Alexander was ninety-one, a bit hazy perhaps, but ready. At the first news of conflict he put on his hat and started down the road. My great-great-grandfather Daniel, then sixty-one, overtook his father and asked: “Where are you going?”

“Why, of course,” the old warrior replied, “I was going to town to enlist!”
How the infertility of New England soil around Palmer and Pelham influenced Ulster-Scottish families to move to more productive lands will be illustrated in this chapter. Here is the story of a new migration to a frontier region just as beautiful in Charlotte County, later named Washington, in upper eastern New York. So many people of the same kind settled there, whose descendants remain there now, that this is one of a number of such regions in the country that might be called Little Scotland.

The manner in which the township of Salem was first settled will be worth our notice because we find here a typical story of the opening of the American frontier. This fertile land, “discovered” by New England soldiers in the French and Indian War, is roughly fifty miles northeast of Albany, below Lake George, in a region approaching the Adirondack Mountains.

Alexander McNitt came in 1769 and bought a farm which, with additions, remained in the hands of his descendants until 1946. The original pioneers at Salem were two of Alexander’s neighbors at Pelham — James Turner and Joshua Conkey — who explored the region in 1761 and found it good. In 1764 they obtained a grant of 25,000 acres from the Provincial Governor and Council of New York on submitting a list of about twenty-five heads of families at Pelham who wished new homes. The families began arriving on horseback that year, bringing their belongings on pack-horses.

The manner in which they obtained the grant illustrates the way in which royal Governors helped their Tory friends attain riches and patrician eminence in the young country. It was stipulated that half the lands in the grant be set apart for Oliver DeLancey and Peter DuBois. DeLancey was clever: he did not take his share of the land in a single block but arranged he should have alternate farm lots, all of which originally were of eighty-eight acres. In some cases he owned an undivided half interest in single lots. As settlers increased land values by improving their holdings, DeLancey’s lands naturally would rise in value. Talk of the unearned increment!

Had the Revolution failed, the DeLanceys and others in royal favor would have been land barons and rent collectors on a very large scale, assuming as we may that Oliver obtained similar cuts from other provincial land grants. But the Revolution succeeded, and all the lands Oliver DeLancey had obtained by collusive methods or otherwise were
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declared forfeited to the State, including city lots in New York. Daniel McNitt at Salem bought some of the forfeited farmlands from the Commissioner of Forfeitures, and Dr. Charles McKnight picked up some of the city lots.

DeLancey and other Loyalists thus despoiled of easily-won land riches, took flight to England, where a sympathetic government expended £3,000,000 to recoup them. DeLancey was consoled, we learn in Prof. Thomas J. Wertenbaker's book, *Father Knickerbocker Rebels*, with an award of £24,940.

Turner and Conkey named their new community White Creek, and there in 1765 they received a visit from Dr. Thomas Clark, a Burgher minister from Ballybay in Ulster, who after tiring of battles with Anglicans and two imprisonments for "irregular" preaching, was looking for land on which members of his flock might settle. He was a graduate of the University of Glasgow and a veteran of the 1745 uprising, in which he had fought the Jacobites. Early in 1766 Dr. Clark concluded an arrangement with Oliver DeLancey to take over the alternate lots and to collect quitrents from his parishioners to pay the Tory landlord. Then he re-named the community New Perth. He was a physician as well as minister: a curer of bodies and souls. The men of his congregation (organized at Ballybay in 1751) built of logs a small house for Dr. Clark, a small church, and a schoolhouse.

Meanwhile, Alexander McNitt and his neighbors were moving over from Pelham and establishing themselves on farm-lots, each a half-mile long, alternating with those occupied by the newly arrived Scots from Ulster. For a time they attended Dr. Clark's church, but not liking the strictness of the Seceders and preferring the doctrines of the Church of Scotland, they organized on moderate Presbyterian lines and started building a log church in 1774. When the Burgoyne invasion came they turned their church into a stockade fort and named it Salem, which means peace. Tories burned their church. They built a new blockhouse and named it for Colonel Williams, commander of their regiment; then presently they built another church, which was replaced in 1844 by a remarkably fine edifice now called the Brick Church. Dr. Clark's society took the name United Presbyterian, and in 1794 built a large frame church of beauty and dignity which now is called the Old White Church. So today the little village of Salem, named for the Revolutionary fort, has two Presbyterian organizations as independent of each other as ever they were. The Alexander McNitt family clung to the more moderate First Presbyterian congregation.

Alexander and his son Daniel joined in 1787 in a call to an early
CAPTAIN ALEXANDER AND DEACON DAN'L

minister: the Rev. John Warford of Amwell, New Jersey, who had been graduated from Princeton in 1774. The son, who as a member of the session of the First Presbyterian Church was known among neighbors as Deacon Dan'l, was sent on October 10, 1804, to confer with the Rev. Samuel Tomb, who came presently and was ordained.

Captain Alexander's original farm was lot No. 14 and comprised eighty-eight acres. He bought another tract like it and sold forty-four acres of it on January 12, 1787, to his son Andrew. Records are lacking to show his son David and brother James bought farms in the neighborhood.

Alexander's wife Elizabeth died on April 12, 1791, after forty-two years of marriage. A plot of about a quarter-acre, alongside the Salem-West Hebron road, was set off from Captain McNitt's farm very early for a private cemetery, and Elizabeth was one of the first to lie in it. Neighbors named Morey and Shaw, among others, used the little cemetery, which is now neglected to undergrowth and tall grass.

Elizabeth's headstone is of white marble, and on it is incised the Captain's farewell to her:

Sleep peaceful here my love,
Death can't us long divide,
A few more rolling suns
Will lay me by your side.

Alexander may have felt very old at seventy-one when Elizabeth died, but he was to live twenty-five years longer. Perhaps because he was lonely in an empty house he married again; the name of the second wife was Jane, and she was twenty-two years younger than he. It must have been a marriage of convenience.

When Alexander was seventy-five he arranged a sale of the home place where he had fought Tories and Indians, to his sons Alexander Jr. and Daniel. By a deed dated December 21, 1796, the Captain conveyed to them lot No. 14 with its eighty-eight acres, minus seventeen and a half he had previously sold, for £500 in cash. The sons gave him a life lease of the house, barn, garden and liberty to pass over the farm for the rest of his life. They also undertook as part of the purchase price, in the bond they gave, to deliver to the Captain annually through the rest of his days half the hay and grain harvested, and sufficient firewood for the house; to care for Alexander and Jane in sickness, and to provide decent burial. The sons also agreed to pay to other heirs within two years after the Captain's death the sum of £138:6:8.

The deed, life-lease, and bond are in my collection of documents. On the back of the bond are two indorsements:
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Received February the 12, 1812, on the within bond thirty-eight dollars as witness our hands.

Andrew McNitt
Alexa. McNitt, for Alex. McNitt.

Received on the within bond January the 13th, 1814, seventy-six dollars. Received for Alexr. McNitt.

Andrew McNitt.

The Captain outlived his second wife. Another and similar white marble slab was erected in the little cemetery with an inscription telling that Jane died on July 3, 1811. The epitaph this time sounded a different note:

Friends nor physicians could not save
My mortal body from the grave,
Nor can the grave confine me here
When Christ my Saviour shall appear.

Anyone who cares now to climb over the roadside fence and penetrate the bushes may see the Captain’s marble slab standing between those of the two wives—Elizabeth’s at his right and Jane’s at the left. His epitaph has a trace of family regard for him and conveys an idea of him in his later years. Beneath a conventional weeping willow and the lines: “In memory of Capt. Alexander McNitt who died Nov. 29 1817 in the 97th year of his age,” appear these words:

His mind was tranquil and serene,
No terror in his looks was seen;
His Saviour’s smiles dispel’d the gloom
And smooth’d the passage to the tomb.

Alexander McNitt Jr. must have had an inquiring and inventive mind, for a patent was issued to him on June 15, 1805, for a new method of making potash by “separating, collecting and preparing the sulphate of potashes... polychristum or tartarum vitriolatum.” A copy of the certificate was among the family documents and papers given to me by George Bardin, a great-great-great-great-grandson of Captain Alexander, after he sold the Salem farm on October 15, 1946, to Horace Clark. Alexander Jr. probably kept the original certificate. It was signed by Thomas Jefferson as President and James Madison as Secretary of State.

What Alexander Jr. was able to do with his improved method of making potash we do not know. He was preparing to leave Salem even before the patent was granted; on April 11, 1803, he received a deed for 100 acres of land on the Homer-Virgil road in Virgil Township, Onondaga County, New York. The seller was James Wright and the consideration was $800. The county was subsequently divided and
Virgil Township was included in the new county of Cortland. Alexander bought additional land afterward until his farm included 252 acres. We shall return later to him and his troubles with his church at Virgil.

The son who remained at home and built up the family landholdings was my great-great-grandfather Daniel: an energetic and provident man who evidently bought his inventor brother Alexander’s interest and assumed all the obligations to the aging Captain. On June 24, 1785, Daniel had bought for £30 from Alexander Webster, Commissioner of Forfeitures, forty-two acres in lot No. 23, “forfeited by the attainder of Oliver DeLancey, Esq.” Then on January 3, 1791, he bought from Richard Tuthill seventeen and a half acres in the west part of lot No. 14. This was part of the Captain’s original farm, which he must have sold to Tuthill at some pressing time. Daniel was bound to get the land back into the family and so paid £90 for it: more than the going price for land at the time.

More of the forfeited DeLancey land attracted Daniel, and on February 25, 1795, he paid £35 to Henry Quackenboss, Commissioner of Forfeitures, for fifty-seven acres or an undivided half of lot No. 12. Who may have been the other half-owner of the lot does not appear, but it is evident Daniel was able to buy all of lot No. 12, as well as all of No. 23. His son James had come into ownership of the Captain’s original farm — lot No. 14 — and on May 1, 1813 father and son made an exchange. Daniel sold No. 23 to James for $2,500 and James sold No. 14 to his father for $2,000.

Daniel drew his will on March 19, 1823 and it was probated December 4, 1829. The heirs were given these bequests: sons Alexander and Benjamin and daughters Sally McLachrey, Betsey Whipple, and Polly Thompson, $300 each. The residue in land went to James, who got the home farm. Three sons not mentioned presumably had already received their inheritances.

I have gone seldom to read gravestones, but those in the small neglected lot near Salem have interested me. On a stone taller than the Captain’s is carved this inscription: “In Memory of Daniel McNitt, Died Nov. 12, 1829; In the 79th year of his age.” Then this epitaph:

Rest worthy Sire, thy race is run  
Thy toil is o’er, thy work is done;  
Thy God propitious sits above,  
To bless thee with a Saviour’s love.

Daniel had been a widower for twenty-one years. The stone next his reads: “In memory of Mrs. Mary, Wife of Mr. Daniel McNitt, who
died Oct. 11, 1808, in the 53 year of her Age.” Mary’s epitaph would have been better without the two concluding lines:

A woman kind and friendly to the poor,
And well belov’d by all that knew her.
When this you see remember me
And see where you must shortly be.

Daniel’s son James was the most forthputting, two-fisted, and aggressive McNitt of his time. He stood well over six feet tall, and was broad and powerful of frame. He built in 1823 and 1824 the large house that still stands on the home farm. In addition to tilling his acres he bought hogs all over the countryside and shipped hogsheads of dressed pork and lard to commission merchants in Montreal. He kept all of his statements and receipts in a filing case made of a long strip of buckskin, with pockets for alphabetical arrangement of papers. After consulting documents or filing new papers, he rolled up the case and tied it with a leather thong. The buckskin roll with all its contents, including deeds, court summonses, bills, receipts, and letters, was given me by George Bardin.

That James McNitt was a contentious man is proved by all the court papers he kept with scrupulous care. He was frequently summoned to defend actions to collect minor debts and bills. He always paid; court costs were so low he may have felt it worth while to take his time and let the other fellow sue, and his lawyer charged only $3 or $4 for defending a case. More often he filed suits on his own account when he thought he had waited long enough.

James became a distiller. He set up two stills, piping spring water from the high hill across the Hebron road from the house, down to the small distillery he built at the side of Black Creek a few hundred yards away. One still was used to make whiskey, and one was for gin. It must be that gin proved the more profitable because he sold more of it, and may in time have devoted all his equipment to distilling it. Elihu Phelps was a partner for a short while at the outset.

There was nothing illicit about this distillery business. Official documents in the buckskin roll show that James paid license fees regularly to the revenue collector. It appears he was forgetful only once.

Among the papers in the old buckskin roll is a receipt given James by Daniel Lord, a commission dealer at 20 Old Slip, New York City, which shows how such business was handled in those days. It is worth reading now:

Mr. James McNitt has left with me six Hogsheads, one Tierce, and twenty-one Bbls. of Gin said by him to [be] 33 per Cent above proof, to be sold
HOUSE AT SALEM, N. Y., BUILT BY JAMES McNITT IN 1823-24

JAMES' BUCKSKIN FILING CASE
JAMES McGINTY'S ACCOUNT WITH GEORGE GETTY FOR GIN, WHISKEY
AND FORK, WHEN 77.1 EQUALED 52.56, AND TWO BITS (OR SHILLINGS)
MEANT 25 CENTS

[Handwritten document]
by me at not less than Seventy Cents per Gallon at proof, but if that price cannot be obtained in two Months from this date I am authorised to sell the same at the best price I can obtain in the market. The sales to be made for cash or credit as I may think best and to be for his account and risk; commissions on sales 2½ per Cent. I have advanced him my note at three months for five hundred Dollars, and cash and Hops three hundred and seventy-one 11/100 Dollars, for which I am to have a lien upon the Gin and its proceeds after paying Storage & Cartage.

Daniel Lord

New York, Decr 2nd 1818.

Supposed to be when reduced to proof 1,800 Gallons. Stored at No. 20 Old Slip.

D. Lord.

James McNitt had interests other than selling gin, pork, and lard. On returning from one of his trips to Canada he brought with him a French pony, likely enough for his children to ride. He drove good carriage horses, and one of the few things remembered about him in the Salem community is that on town meeting days and other public occasions he challenged neighbors to race with him on broad, straight stretches of road. He always enlivened groups of men with these proposals and got his races.

His later years were clouded by almost total blindness. The tallest stone of all was erected for him in the little family cemetery; it proved too tall and fell forward from its base when frosts and storms weakened it. The stone was repaired and set up again, but the top third broke off and fell with its face to the ground. The remaining portion has part of the inscription, saying James died “Jan. 27, 1861, AE. 79 yrs, 5 ds.” The rest of the epitaph was carved so lightly in small letters that it cannot be read.

Interestingly enough, a stone about as tall, erected fifteen years earlier for James’ wife Lydia (Martin), remains proudly upright to this day. It reads: “LYDIA, Wife of James McNitt, Died May 17, 1846.” A sentiment of two lines thinly carved in small italic letters is illegible.

James’ son Martin McNitt (1812-1887), and Daniel’s daughter Betsey, with her husband, Daniel Whipple, joined relations and neighbors in a migration to the new country around Quincy, Illinois. In the old buckskin roll is a letter from Whipple, written in 1830, telling of progress and an ambition to buy more quarter-sections of land, and suggesting he would appreciate help. Four years later Betsey wrote a friend back home; she felt inspired by the rapid growth of the congregation at her church, the brightness of her children, and her husband’s prosperity, though he worked very hard. But she was troubled by the reluctance of
her brother James to pay bequests he owed as executor of his father Daniel's estate:

Otis wrote to us after David died that he would do anything for us. We sent him a power of attorney to collect [for] us what was due from Brother James. He never has said one word to us about what he has paid or what he will pay. . . . When Mr. Brown came back [from Salem] he said he . . . persuaded James to pay that 25 Dollars for John . . . said James had not the money with him and David lent it to James for Mr. Brown who receipted for this money . . . . Show this letter to Brother James and tell him to pray to his God who he ought to feel indebted to for all he has, not to wrong himself. If he does not, I am not afraid of his wronging me.

The letter was handed James so he might know all his sister Betsey had written, and into the file it went, with every other paper that came his way. Receipted bills from John Moodie for services in 1823 and 1824 contain items like these: "To work and stuff for dog chrin, £1:0:0; to 3 3/4 days at cyder press, £1:10:0; to boarding Maria 15 weeks at 4 sh. per week, £3; to nine days work at house, £3:12:0; to 1 1/2 days shingling house, 12s.; to writing Daniel McNitt's will, 6s."

In moments of abstraction James sometimes wrote on the back of an inconsequential paper some idle thought passing through his mind; thus: "For Value Rec'd I promise to pay James McNitt or barer Ten Dollars Thirty Dollars one Day after Date." "When this you see remember me & so forth." His mother's epitaph? And with a thought of his daughter Ann Eliza's need for improvement: "Analisa McNitt of Salem, Command you may your mind from play."

One of the children in the family was James, Jr. who was born September 22, 1821; married Emily A. ———; died September 22, 1874. The children in this family were James, born November 25, 1844; died March 20, 1846; Martha, born June 14, 1847, died eight days later; Martha Rosetta, born April 13, 1849, lived one year and two days; and Sanford W. McNitt, born March 27, 1857, died May 3, 1933.

Sanford married, but the name of his wife eludes me. His son Howard H. McNitt, born November 10, 1906, spent his boyhood near West Hebron, and then resolved to get an education. Admirably he hitchhiked to Syracuse, entered the New York State College of Forestry, and worked his way through to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Forestry, won in 1930. He is now head of the Duane Tree Expert Company at Delanson. On July 17, 1937 he married Esther J. Lindsey; on their wedding trip they visited Barnard McNitt's old home at Palmer, a proper objective for newlyweds. Their children: Robert L. McNitt, born March 21, 1939, and James I. McNitt, born January 25, 1941.
James McNitt’s able son Martin removed to Illinois as a young man; no son remained at home to manage the farm. James’ daughter Miriam married Daniel Woodard, who took over the home farm after James’ death. Emma Woodard, the elder of two daughters, married Captain Joseph H. Hays, who made a good record in the Civil War, and who in turn operated the old Captain McNitt farm for a number of years. The children of this family were Marion Hays, who married George Bardin and had two sons, Louis and George; Roscoe, who became vice president and cashier of the Whitehall National Bank and a Major in the National Guard; Horton, who died as a young man; and Mary, who married Archibald Alexander, a deputy sheriff of Washington County.

Many years a widow, Mrs. Emma Hays lived on the Salem farm until her death in 1932, cherishing always the traditions of the place. The farm passed to her daughter Marion Bardin, who spent her own years of widowhood with her mother. On Mrs. Bardin’s death the farm went to her son George, who because of ill-health was unable to operate it, and who sold it in October 1946 to Horace Clark of an old Ulster-Scottish family. Thus the place where Captain Alexander had fought Indians and Tories from a log barn, passed through the female line for generations, and then to outside ownership after 177 years.

The second daughter of Daniel and Miriam McNitt Woodard is Lou, born August 11, 1866, who married on June 12, 1892, Silas Edward Everts, born September 17, 1867. Mr. Everts, a lawyer for many years, lives with his wife Lou at Granville, New York. Their daughter Miriam, born July 12, 1897, is a teacher at Granville. Roscoe, born February 20, 1902, came to the end of a promising life in 1943.

The eldest of the Everts family of three children, Palmer W., was born on September 2, 1893. He became a lawyer, and on May 28, 1925, married Meta Mae Dennison of Detroit. Their children are Alice and Barbara. He is now executive secretary of the New York Title Association, whose membership embraces title and abstract companies and lawyers interested in conveyancing. Palmer’s record in two World Wars is worthy of his great-great-grandfather, old Captain Alexander McNitt.

In the first World War he was a Second Lieutenant with the Engineers of the 90th Division, and fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns in France. After serving with the Army of Occupation in Germany he spent three months as a student at Cambridge University in England. When discharged he had the rank of First Lieutenant.

When the second war began, he was commissioned a Major and
began service on Staten Island. Subsequently he was in Washington in the procurement division, employed in the acquisition of real estate title evidence; then he was transferred to New York for similar work. Early in 1943 he was handling Replacement Unit personnel in New Orleans. In May he was transferred overseas to New Caledonia, and for two years was occupied with Army replacement personnel for the whole South Pacific area. He came out of service a Lieutenant Colonel, and held this rank as a reserve officer until late in 1949, when he retired. His office is in New York and he lives at Merrick, Long Island.
It is an odd thing that a substantial member of a family so long devoted to Presbyterianism should be excommunicated, but it happened in 1816 in the Virgil community in Cortland County, New York. Perhaps it would be more exact to say that Alexander McNitt, Jr., a mettlesome man, excommunicated himself out of pride of spirit. Should any of his descendants chance to learn the strange story now for the first time, let them be undismayed.

The central figure in the present chapter is the Captain’s son Alexander, Jr., who fought throughout the Revolution except when a prisoner of the British. The war records show that an Alexander McNitt was for a while an enlisted man in the Dutchess County militia. This possibly was Alexander, Jr., who may have joined in the field between enlistments in Charlotte (now Washington) County.

We remember of him too that he obtained a patent for a new method of making potash, and that he bought 100 acres of land on April 11, 1803 from James Wright: part of lot No. 3 in Virgil Township. On March 1, 1804, he bought an adjoining tract of fifty acres from Samuel Hunter for $300, and soon afterward he brought his family there from Salem. Subsequently he bought enough additional land to extend his farm to 252 acres. Anyone driving now through the beautiful hill country between Homer and Virgil, a few miles southwest of the city of Cortland, may discover where Alexander lived by observing a rural delivery mail box bearing the name of W. D. Cutler, standing before an old house on the east side of the road.

Great areas of undeveloped land in Central New York — now one of the finest regions in the country — were allotted in bounties to veterans of the Revolution. Captain Alexander was entitled to 1,500 acres, and his brothers and sons to 600 acres each. Many of the former soldiers did not care to go into new country, and sold their rights to speculators for what they would bring. Evidently this is what all the veterans in the family chose to do, preferring to buy developed farms in communities to their liking a little later, if they found themselves wishing to push westward. That is just what they did do.

The present county of Cortland was part of the military tract set aside by the State of New York in 1789 to be divided into bounty lands and given veterans. The military tract ran from Oswego to the southern border of Cortland County, and from Seneca Lake to the eastern boundary of Cortland County. When Cortland was set apart from Onondaga
County it comprised four large townships: Homer, Virgil, Solon, and
Cincinnatus.

Many other townships in Central New York have similar classic
names: Lysander, Hannibal, Cato, Brutus, Camillus, Cicero, Manlius,
Aurelius, Marcellus, Pompey, Romulus, Scipio, Sempronius, Tully,
Fabius, Ovid, Hector, and Ulysses. Many have smiled at these names.
What scholars bestowed them? They were given by Commissioners of
the Land Office: the Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor,
and Attorney General, meeting in New York City. All educated men,
beyond a doubt.

All of Cortland County was bare of settlers when in 1790 the State
began portioning out bounty lands. Lot No. 3 in Virgil Township was
drawn by Leonard Chambers. He was succeeded in ownership by James
Wright, who sold parts to Alexander McNitt, Jr., and Seth Sherwood.
Settlement began in 1791, and development was thirteen years along
when Alexander brought his family in 1804.

The materials for the story of Alexander’s trouble with the church
were provided by Mrs. Clara A. Elder, executive secretary of the Cort¬
land County Historical Society, from the old record book of the Virgil
church for the period from the organization of the society on February
28, 1803, to 1825. When one thinks of the Presbyterian Church of those
days one thinks of Ulster Scots. It is rather striking to find that virtually
none of the names encountered in this case, beginning with that of the
minister, the Rev. Oliver Hitchcock, are Scottish names. As a matter of
fact, the society at Virgil was originally Congregational; then for some
reason it became Presbyterian in name, though the minister and other
leaders evidently remained Congregationalists.

In a list of “Professing Members of the Church” in the record book,
under date of 1813, appear the names of Alexander McNitt and his wife
Mary. We find the names of their children in lists of persons baptized
into the Church: on March 7, 1813, Alexander Cook, James Benjamin,
and Mary Eleanor McNitt. On February 8, 1814, William Riley Mc¬
Nitt. On October 22, 1815, Reuben R. McNitt.

To come to the point about Alexander: he was accused of having
appeared “merry with drink” or “disguised with liquor” on several
public occasions. With the church record before us, let us recreate in
imagination a series of meetings called to try Alexander for “the sin of
intemperance,” with the Rev. Mr. Hitchcock presiding and praying
with solemn fervor.

The record tells a straightforward story of the protracted investiga-
tion, of the efforts of the culprit to clear himself, and by inference of a
family's discomfiture. The inquisition began in May with a sermon calculated to mortify the spirit, and lasted until the end of August. Now for the minutes in the record book:

Virgil May 11th in 1816. A Church meeting was held after a preparatory Lecture for the purpose of attending to a Complaint exhibited by John E. Roe against Alexander McNitt for the Sin of Intemperance. Rev. Oliver Hitchcock present and aided as Moderator. The Church found by inquiry that the offending Brother had not had proper Notice given him. They consequently adjourned the Meeting until the Eight day of June next at 4 o'clock afternoon.

Virgil June 8th 1816. The Church meet according to adjournment, meeting opened by prayer by the Rev'd Oliver Hitchcock who presided as moderator. The complaint was read which was for intemperance in four particulars. 1th. At Bunnels Store, this he acknowledged. 2nd. at the time when he was at the Corner and went to Esquire Boyes and other places. 3rd. at Town Meeting. 4th. At a vendue [auction] at Mr. John I. Gee's. The Church could not proceed to act on the Complaint, the Evidence not being present. The meeting was adjourned till Saturday June 29th, 1816, at one o'clock afternoon.

Virgil June 29th 1816. The Church meet according to adjournment, meeting opened by prayer but for want of evidence on both sides was adjourned to July 20th at 3 o'clock afternoon.

July 20. The Church met according to adjournment. Opened by prayer. The subject of Complaint against Alexander McNitt was brought forward. Enos Boughton was sworn at request of said McNitt. He saith at a vendue at the House of John I. Gee that he was disguised with liquor, also Abram Parleman made oath to the same effect.

John I. Gee sworn saith that at the same time above mentioned at his House that it appeared to him that the said McNit had drinked too much so he appeared to him to be disguised with drink. This evidence relates to the 4th article of Complaint.

Article 3d at Town meeting at Mr. Chatteton's. James Chatteton [Chatterton?] sworn saith that he had drinked so as to feel quite merry more than he ought & that when two men were dancing on the floor he cut one of them out & proceeded to carry on the dance some time.

William Umpstead [Olmstead] sworn saith on above he thought the said McNit had drinked so as to make him merry.

As to the 2d Article when he was at the Corner & went to Esquire Boyes, John I. Gee saith when he came to his house and asked for liquor he replied not best to drink any more at present to which the said McNit replied he did not mean to get drunk though he had already drinked too much. He said further after eating some food he appeared more steady and regular.

The Church condescended to hear 3 men which the said McNit brought forward which did not militate against the other. They proceeded.

After due consideration on the matter, viewing the articles of complaint against Alexander McNit & the testimony procured by the complainer, came to the following result: that the complaint was supported in the 1st.
The New Englanders

Article by his own confession. All the rest he denied. As to the 2nd. Article, there was only one evidence which appear full & clear — passed it over. As to the 3rd & fourth Articles the Church viewed them supported so that they consider the said McNit as guilty of drinking in several instances to excess or disguised in some degree contra to solemn Covenant engagements & the pure precepts of the Gospel and as he left the meeting before the result was made up & did not receive the first admonition the Church agreed this should be done by writing. They then adjourned untill the tenth day of August 5 oclock.

It appears that when the pious began talking about “pure precepts” Alexander — after the impatient manner of his tribe — walked out of the trial without waiting to hear his admonition. We resume:

August 10 the Church met according to adjournment. voted a second admonition and adjourned to Saturday 31 day of August at 3 oclock afternoon.

August 31, 1816. The Church met according to adjournment voted that suitable pains had been taken with brother Alexander McNit to reclaim him and that it was the duty of the Church to withdraw their watch from him.

That is the end of the record of the church trial. After months of cat-and-mouse punishment by inquisition the case was dropped. But that did not end the matter. On a page set apart for listing the damned, under the heading “Excommunicated,” appears this entry: “Alexander McNitt, for the sin of intemperance.” The date is Sunday, September 1, 1816 — one day after the society had voted to forgive Alexander and withdraw its watch. What had happened overnight?

It is my opinion that Alexander, released from tension, had exploded with wrath and delivered a burning recital of his estimation of John E. Roe, the complaining witness. There is no record in the book that excommunication was voted by the church membership. The Rev. Mr. Hitchcock, advised by Brother Roe and others, may have excommunicated Alexander himself, challenged to do it by the angry man who did not care to be thus “reclaimed.”

In writing of this case, Mrs. Elder has said: “It was customary back in those days for nearly everyone to have a still and make his own liquor, and drink as much of it as he pleased. I feel that Alexander was discriminated against — that perhaps this little church, hearing of other church trials, thought it time to have one of their own and picked on Alexander. Certainly he could not have been the only one in that church to over-indulge in ‘spirituous liquor.’ My sympathies are all with him and his family.”

Writing of the sequel Mrs. Elder added: “The facts about Alexander McNitt [his trial and excommunication] now seem to us ridiculous,
funny, and even cruel. Back in those days they were cruel and even tragic and this instance, I believe, was the cause of Alexander McNitt's selling all his property in Virgil in 1817 and leaving for parts unknown. He was either so disgusted with his treatment by the church, or his family was so humiliated that they could not be happy there any longer."

The simple story is that Alexander and Mary his wife sold their farm of 252 acres to their neighbor and friend Obadiah Boies for $1,438. The deed was dated June 18, 1817, less than eleven months after the end of the trial. Mrs. Elder believes the buyer may have been the "Esquire Boyes" whom Alexander went to see at the "Corner." Colonel Obadiah Boies was an outstanding man in the community and perhaps the leading citizen. He was for a time part owner of the Cortland Republican. One of his sons became a Presbyterian minister, and the other was for several years clerk of the United States Court for the Northern District of New York. Colonel Boies did not testify against Alexander, although he doubtless was invited to do so.

The church record has one more entry for us. On April 5, 1820, it was voted "that a letter should be granted to Mary McNitt for her dismission and a recommendation to any other Church of the same faith and order." But Alexander's wife evidently was not telling anything: she did not ask that the letter be addressed to any specific church. Where had they gone? I have been unable to discover any trace of them.

The continuing pious zeal of the church at Virgil is fascinating. Not content with what it had done, it soon began another process of excommunication. The victim was Sanford Boughton. Charges were lodged against him in 1818 "for the sin of absenting himself from Public worship and the Sacrament and a criminal conformity to the customs and manners of the world." Hearings continued for a year or more, and one of the admonitions was given by none other than our favorite saint, John E. Roe. On July 7, 1819, the "Church voted a letter of excommunication for Brother Sanford Bouton." In the church minutes of July 18 it appears that "This excommunication [was] read in public."
Secure in memory is the man about whom legends are woven. Such a man was John, presumed youngest of the sons of Captain Alexander McNitt and last to be born at Pelham, Massachusetts before the trek to Salem. After his Revolutionary service with his father and brothers he went pioneering on his own in 1794, and established a family at Norwich, New York.

Mrs. Caroline E. Barwick of Lanagan, Missouri, a daughter of Julia McNitt of the Norwich family, relates that an old aunt was fond of telling how John had refused to swear allegiance to George III. It is a pity the aunt didn’t write the story in detail and leave it to be preserved; a great wealth of family stories has been dissipated through lack of recording. John perhaps had been picked up as a straggler by the British somewhere in the Saratoga country, and an officer had resolved to transform him into a good Loyalist. Perhaps John had been moseying around the enemy to discover what he could learn, and got caught.

Anyhow, the British officer informed John he would have to take the oath of allegiance if he wished to save himself, and John decided to play dumb. This is what ensued:

Officer: Repeat these words after me: I, John McNitt —
John: You, John McNitt —
And he couldn’t be made to say it any other way. He must have been given up as either incorrigible or half-witted, which was the conclusion John wished to be drawn. Another story is that at some time in his campaigning John left bloody footprints in the snow. Only that: a tantalizingly brief mention that implies a story of hardship.

John evidently was the first of the Salem group to head westward into the Finger Lakes region, where several were to become established in the three counties of Chenango, Cortland, and Cayuga. The Norwich telephone book proves how many remain. He selected a farm of 100 acres on the east bank of the Unadilla River in the Polkville neighborhood, and received his deed in exchange for $100 on August 6, 1800, from John Davenport of Stamford, Connecticut. The pond lilies in the slow-moving stream may have diverted his attention from the shale deposits in the soil that would make ploughing hard work. He bought fifty acres more on March 26, 1817 from James Birdsal and his wife Mizpah, for which he paid $100. His prosperous descendants later crowded the registry books with records of their real estate transactions.

Only a few months after the second purchase, John sold the 150 acres
JOHN McNITT OF NORWICH

The writer was interested in a man whose name was John McNitt. He lived in Norwich, Connecticut, and his life story is of interest to those who like to follow the fate of pioneers. He was born in 1759, and at the age of eighty-two years sold his original farm on October 29, 1841, to his son John, Jr., for $500. Less than two years later the son was removing to Allegany County, New York, and John bought the place back on July 5, 1819, for $1,100. The years wore on and the son was back in Norwich again when John, at the age of eighty-two, sold the original 100-acre farm and an additional twenty-five acres of timber land on October 29, 1841, to John, Jr.

The father sold “in consideration of the sum of five hundred dollars & also for natural love and affection.” On the same day John, Jr. gave his father a life-lease of the property for the sum of $100 then paid. The son covenanted also to pay $100 to Eleanor Barr, evidently his sister, and $100 to John Barr, her son, on or before October 1, 1842.

Presumably while John, Jr. was living elsewhere, John had sold on April 11, 1822, thirty-one acres to his son Levi for $500, “reserving the plot thirty feet square where Eleanor McNitt is buried and where he and others of the family may be.” Levi evidently sold the land back to his father within a few years.

The small private burial plots used by the pioneers have been badly neglected in recent times, and are usually to be reached now only by pushing through undergrowth. The stone presumably erected to mark the burial place of John’s wife Eleanor has disappeared. A small one indicates that James, son of Joseph and Eleanor Barr, died August 7, 1819 at the age of two years and eleven months. A modest slab at the head of a grave into which animals have made exploratory diggings bears this inscription:

John McNitt
Died
April 17, 1843
Ae. 85 Y’rs
A Soldier of the Revolution

All the records agree John was born in 1759, but the writer of the epitaph must have believed the date was early in 1758. The old farm has for many years been owned by strangers.

From obviously hard beginnings there has grown a family of energy and considerable accomplishment. One of John’s great-great-grandsons was Charles Chauncey McNitt, who conducted an insurance brokerage business in Norwich until his death in 1943 at the age of seventy-one. His widow told me in 1948 of her husband and his family, drawing upon the most nearly complete records available. She showed with pride a photograph of her late husband, a handsome man. She told of an ideally happy marriage, complete in everything but the presence of children.
She had helped with the insurance business in her husband’s lifetime, and had taken on full management after his death.

During her talk she stated very simply a characterization of John McNitt and his sons and grandsons that seems an adequate summing up of these men and many of their kinsmen: “They were good citizens and good farmers, who paid their debts and prospered.”

The children and later descendants of John and Eleanor McNitt, as incompletely recorded:

I. James, b. at Salem 1785, m. Ruth Gates, d. November 22, 1862.
II. Alexander.
III. Levi.
IV. William.
V. John, Jr., previously mentioned, who sold farm after father’s death and moved to Rock River, Illinois.
VI. Margaret, b. 1793, m. October 31, 1811 Deodatus Sill, d. November 1875. The Sills removed to Cattaraugus County, New York in 1820.
VII. Betsey, m. Matthew Barr.

James McNitt (I. above) and Ruth Gates McNitt had issue:
1. Prudence, b. March 10, 1811.
2. Caroline, b. 1813.
3. William, b. 1815, m. Mary Hall.
6. George, b. 1821.
7. John, b. 1823.
10. James, b. 1834.
11. Aaron Dwight, b. 1839.

William McNitt (3 above) b. 1815, m. Mary Hall; one of their sons was (3-a) George William, b. 1854, m. Eliza Holcomb (1855-1947), d. 1942. George William and Eliza McNitt had issue:
3-a-1. LeRoy, b. 1881, m. in 1902 Bessie Purdy (1884-1936); was grain and feed merchant, now retired and living in Norwich.
3-a-2. Harold W., physician, eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, living and practicing in Binghamton, New York.

Morgan McNitt (5 above), b. 1819, m. Frances E. Day (1821-1896), d. 1872. Morgan and Frances McNitt had issue:
5-a. Chauncey Morgan McNitt, b. 1848, m. Frances Smith on Christmas day 1868, d. 1872; issue:
5-a-1. Julia, m. George Leslie. Their daughter Caroline related stories that open this chapter.
Others not accounted for above, and living in or near Norwich are Clifford D., Elson M., Leslie, Linn, Walter, and R. B. McNitt. John W. McNitt lives in Binghamton.

It is quite probable that more persons with this surname are to be found living comfortably in Norwich, New York, than in any other town or city in the United States.
We leave the fortunes of Deacon Daniel's line for later chapters and turn to sons of Barnard McNitt of Palmer: the Captain's brothers. Little can be added to what has been said of James. Adam, one of the twins born in 1744, eludes us entirely and may have died in childhood. Of John and Andrew, Barnard's youngest sons, we are soon to learn.

As we know, William and his wife Elisabeth Thomson went to Nova Scotia as colonists in 1761 and settled at Onslow. The Nova Scotians have a later chapter reserved for them. James saw considerable service in several enlistments in the French and Indian War, and appeared later at Salem to take part as a soldier in the Revolution.

David, who married Martha Patrick at Rutland, removed in the period of the late 1760s to a part of the township of Charlemont south of the Deerfield River in Hampshire County, then called No-Town because of confusion in land grants. The residents of No-Town, cut off from local government by the river, petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts on December 11, 1778, asking that their district be set up as a new township. David McNitt was one of the petitioners. The General Court acceded on April 14, 1779, and No-Town became the township of Buckland.

That is the last we hear of David. The 1790 census discovered the widowed Martha living in Buckland with four males under sixteen, sons no doubt, and four females, whom we may take for daughters. A descendant, Mrs. W. B. Caldwell of Pearisburg, Virginia, wrote in 1949 that two of David's sons were Barnard, born in 1760, who enlisted from Buckland for service in the 10th Massachusetts regiment in January 1781, and Adam, born in 1763, who enlisted from Shelburne in the same month, at the age of seventeen, for service in the Continental Army. The Massachusetts records list another, Barnabas, who enlisted from the adjoining township of Ashfield. The History of Buckland by Kendrick and Kellogg is unsure of Barnabas, confusing him with young Barnard, but we may regard him as another grandson of old Barnard.

Young Adam McNitt took a war bride before going away in 1781 for two years; she was Margaret Clark of Ashfield, and only fourteen. When the war was over they began a family, and these were their children, according to the records of Mrs. Caldwell, supplemented by those in The History of Buckland:

1. James, whose marriage intentions with Roba Jones were published November 27, 1805. 2. David, b. January 3, 1789, marriage intentions with
Jemima Ellis published October 18, 1814; Jemima bore six daughters and two sons. 3. Adam. 4. Ezra, b. 1802. 5. Sarah, or Sally, marriage intentions with Leonard Pike of Whitingham, Vermont, published November 22, 1806, bore three children and died young. 6. Patty, m. Asa Farnsworth, bore fourteen children and died at forty. 7. Susan, m. Reuben Bates and had four children. 8. Mary, m. Elijah Scofield, bore five children, d. at Hartfield, Chautauqua County, New York. 9. Prudence, b. July 12, 1807, m. 1st Marvin Davis, m. 2d Emulus Davis, one son, one daughter. 10. Harriet, b. 1812, m. Joseph Totman, seven sons, four daughters. 11. Naba, m. Calvin Hitchcock, five children. 12. Alvina, b. 1813, m. Norman Ladd.

A fascinating aspect of this recital of life in the invigorating Berkshire Hills is that we have accounted for fifty-two grandchildren for Adam and Margaret McNitt, without being able to include the children of James, Adam, Ezra, and Alvina, who may have augmented the total of grandchildren to nearly seventy.

Adam and Margaret McNitt remained in Massachusetts until 1812, when they removed to Stockton in Chautauqua County, New York. Some of their children followed them to the new community. Margaret died there in 1817 at the age of fifty, which may or may not seem too young for a tired mother and grandmother of nearly eighty persons.

Three years later Adam married a widow, Mercy Searles of Ellery, New York. He was still hale at fifty-seven — he lived to be eighty-five — but there is no account of any more children or grandchildren. He was living in Granville, Licking County, Ohio, in 1832, and he died in Berkshire Township, Delaware County, on June 24, 1848. His widow Mercy applied for a pension subsequently, got it, and according to the Bureau of Pensions was still living in 1855, seventy-two years after Adam finished his service in the Continental Army at the end of the Revolution.

The first of Adam’s sons was James, and it was either he or a son of the same name who became the subject of a story dug up by WPA workers in the depression years of the 1930s. Considerable historical research of a regional character was assigned in those days to persons on relief who were physically unsuited to manual toil. The story was told to Charles H. Hendrickson of Medford, Massachusetts, with the design of humbling his pride in relationship to the clan of McNaught, including McNutts and McNitts. This is the story:

James McNitt and his family once shared a house with a widow who was receiving poor relief from the town. The selectmen suspected he was thus receiving indirect public aid, and sent a messenger to advise James that a vacant house had been found for him, and to direct him to move his family there without loss of time. James moved. Some time
later he reported that he had just harvested the best crops in the community, and that his eldest daughter was about to marry a substantial young man.

Mr. Hendrickson, undisturbed by the tale and the taunts, quipped: "Well, James did better than some WPA workers seem able to do."

The Buckland history reports that Fanny R., daughter of James and Roby McKnight, married George H. Innis on July 17, 1873. Whether this is the James McNitt family of the story cannot be said, but the item reminds me to say that the surname McNitt appeared often as McNight in Buckland, and eventually as McKnight. Schuyler W. McKnight, born at Whitingham, Vermont, and long a selectman and assessor at Buckland, died at fifty-three in January 1879. His son Clifton L. McKnight, for many years town clerk and treasurer and member of the school committee at Buckland, left at death in 1927 the sum of $5,000 to establish a scholarship fund to help in the education of worthy boys and girls. The interest from the fund was maintaining two girls in schools in Springfield and Northampton when the Buckland history was written in 1934. Clifton McKnight never married.

As we take our last look at Buckland we discover in the town history one of those peculiar little items that perhaps could not originate anywhere else than in early New England. In 1798 Robert McNitt deeded a tract of about twenty-five acres, said to be part of Wyman's Grant. Later investigation indicated this tract, which to this day is called the "Rob Lot," was an overlooked, unsurveyed strip lying between two grants. No one ever has been able to discover who deeded the "Rob Lot" to Robert McNitt. It was a bit of no-man's land in No-Town. Nor is it possible to discover a Robert McNitt among the kin of Barnard McNitt in Buckland. Who was he? Another of David's sons? How came he by the land he sold in 1798?

John McNitt we remember as the son who referred so reverently to his deceased father in the deed by which he conveyed the Palmer homestead to his brother Andrew in 1776. John married Mary Fuller at Palmer in 1773, but she was soon lost to view. In those days young wives often died in their first childbirth, and Mary may have lost a baby and her own life thus. The records at Rowe show that John subsequently married Patty Wilson in that town, and that the following children were born to them:

Mary, b. March 16, 1777; d. September 21, 1778; Sally, b. May 8, 1779; James, b. November 29, 1781; Bebe, b. June 16, 1784; d. January 16, 1787;
John Wilson, b. March 30, 1787; Polly, b. July 24, 1789; Patty, b. February 13, 1792; Noah, b. October 28, 1797.

The first of these children to marry was Sally, who was not yet eighteen when notice of an intention of marriage was entered with the town clerk on April 23, 1797. Her bridegroom was Dorastus Waite of nearby Whitingham, Vermont. Doubtless Patty was happy when her daughter Sally married, but a mother who would name a June baby girl "Bebe" must have been heartbroken when she died within three years.

John McNitt undoubtedly was a responsible family man, for in addition to his own flock he took in at least one nephew, Samuel, when his brother Andrew the Minute Man was killed late in 1778. We heard last of Andrew on June 15 of that year, when he deeded the last seventeen and a half acres of his late father's possessions to Seth Adams. According to Archie McNett of Columbia Crossroads, Pennsylvania, one of his descendants, Andrew was murdered by a helper named Steele while driving a herd of cattle through the mountains. His family was broken up, and his widow Chloë married again.

Two other sons of Andrew — Eli and Andrew 2nd — probably stayed with or near their uncle John. A record of persons married in Rowe by the Rev. Preserved Smith includes the name of Samuel, who was only twenty when he took Hannah Foster as his bride on September 22, 1792. Before removing from Rowe, Samuel and Hannah had a daughter Arenda, born January 27, 1795. Samuel's brother Eli and Lydia Bassett were married in Rowe on September 27, 1796, when Eli was twenty-one. Lydia was not long for this world; she lost an infant at or soon after its birth in 1797, and that is the last we know of her. A later chapter will show Eli marrying again in 1802.

After these early marriages and deaths, we find John McNitt and all his kin at Rowe, removing together in 1798 to Cambridge, Washington County, New York, where they remained — most of them — for five years within fifteen miles or so of John's brother, Captain Alexander McNitt of Salem. Then in 1803 John removed to Champion in Jefferson County, which borders on the eastern end of Lake Ontario; there he took up 150 acres of land which he worked with the aid of his eldest son James. He helped organize a Presbyterian congregation at Champion, and doubtless was a useful citizen until his death on April 13, 1835, within twelve days of his eighty-sixth birthday. Patty, born July 9, 1758, died February 17, 1848 in her ninetieth year; no doubt every bit as good a citizen as her worthy John.

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THE NEW ENGLANDERS

Of the children of John and Patty McNitt, born at Murrayfield, information is supplied by R. A. Oakes' *Genealogical and Family History of the County of Jefferson, New York*, published in 1905, thus:

1. Sally m. Dorastus Waite and lived in Champion. 2. James went in middle age to Eden, Erie County, and lived to be ninety-five. 3. John Wilson became an agent for the Holland Land Co. at Somerset, Niagara County, and prospered. We shall return to him. 4. Polly m. Oliver Wright of Clayton. 5. Patty m. Alvin Wright; they became pioneers in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. 6. Noah was a man of mettle, recorded as a Minute Man at the time of the battle of Sackett's Harbor in the War of 1812. His first farm of 112 acres was on Stone Wall Street, Champion; in 1864 he bought a farm of 311 acres. Noah was a Democrat until 1856, when he helped organize the Republican party in his county. He died March 26, 1866, a few weeks less than seventy-two years old.

After Noah McNitt's death his sons Frederick H. and Egbert McNitt became joint owners of the farm, where they operated a cheese factory for thirty-one years. Frederick's children:


John Wilson McNitt, as intimated above, was a prosperous land agent in Somerset, Niagara County. Within a few miles of him lived the large and lively family of my great-grandfather, Benjamin McNitt, to be viewed in another chapter. John may have invited Benjamin to Niagara County and sold him land, knowing they were second cousins. After John Wilson McNitt died on March 13, 1851, his estate was administered by his widow Catherine and his son John, and an inventory of his personal goods was filed in the surrogate's office at Lockport.

Inventories are revealing: they lay bare a family's manner of living and attitudes toward life, interests in politics, religion, and education, and tastes in home furnishing. The long inventory of John Wilson McNitt's personal estate includes these items: a spinning wheel, melodeon, accordion, candle moulds, candle stands, snuffers, a cherry bureau, several feather beds, a black walnut table, a sofa and accompanying stool, two carpet bags, thirty-eight plates and much other china, silverware, bed curtains for tester beds, three pairs of crimson window curtains, many other curtains, and carpets in all rooms, including halls and stairways.

John also left five portraits, four miniatures, and eight other pictures. Books included two Bibles, a *Confession of Faith*, Barnes' *Notes on the*
Bible, Family Pictures from the Bible, The Sons of Temperance Offering, The Moral Probe, Mission of Enquiry to the Jews, and Bingham's Sandwich Islands. Perhaps it would be unfair to Catherine to attribute the selection of all these books to John; she may have had an interest in gathering and reading them.

But it was John, no doubt, who cherished the Convention Journal of 1846, the Red Book of the Convention of 1846, and Transactions of the N. Y. Agricultural Society, 1849. Probably he attended the conventions. Textbooks included Olmstead's Philosophy, Class Book of Nature, Watts' On the Mind, Boyd's Rhetoric, Rhetorical Reader, Historical Reader, Thompson's Higher Arithmetic, and Science of Government. These texts may have been studied by the younger John.

Continuing our shameless examination of the contents of this bereaved home, we find that John owned and wore, among other things, a silk hat, a Leghorn hat, an overcoat, one frock coat, a silk vest, one pair of broadcloth pants, one pair of satinet pants, and a gold watch and chain.

Samuel McNitt, eldest son of the Minute Man, who lived with his uncle John at Murrayfield until he married, probably never was content to live very far away from him. When the War of 1812 broke out Samuel was a militia Captain living somewhere near Champion, and some of the things he did are related in Hough's History of Jefferson County, New York.

Brigadier General Jacob Brown, in command of the forces defending the Sackett's Harbor area, sent Captain Forsyth and ninety-five men on September 20, 1812, on a secret expedition to Gananoqui, a Canadian port twenty miles below Kingston, to capture prisoners and ammunition. Captain Samuel McNitt volunteered to accompany the expedition, and did. The exploit was successful, and a larger force of 110 men was driven off. General Brown in reporting to the Governor of New York said all were "deserving the highest praise for their cool, intrepid valor and good conduct."

But this was a mere skirmish compared with what was to follow: the battle of Sackett's Harbor. In retaliation for various raids, the British General Sir George Prevost on the evening of May 27, 1813, embarked 1,200 men on the Wolfe, the Royal George, and Earl of Moira, and three schooners and forty barges. He was out to teach the Yanks a lesson.

When the small armada made its surprise appearance off Sackett's Harbor the following morning, General Brown was hastily summoned from his plough, for like Cincinnatus this soldier also was a farmer.
between battles. General Brown naturally leaped on a horse and summoned his militia to join the 300 regulars under his command. The British delayed their assault until the morning of the 29th, which was a mercy, because the farmer soldiers needed all the time, and more. The defenders numbered 1,000 men, including the regulars.

Under cover of gunfire from the ships, British soldiers and their Indian allies pushed for shore in thirty-three large boats. The noise was terrific to unaccustomed ears, and when detached parties of the enemy set fire to large buildings and stores, the billowing smoke disconcerted the nervous militiamen. The British and the yelling red men made a secure landing, and advanced with confidence while their muskets rattled — if muskets did rattle. In any event they rattled the militiamen, who ran under the hot fire.

All ran but one company of 100 men, commanded by Captain Samuel McNitt and Lieutenant Mayo, which had been stationed behind fallen trees in a thicket to flank the attackers on the left. Captain McNitt’s men fired with such effect that the advancing British soldiers began to fall. Those still on their feet began to waver. The 300 American regulars, who never had been daunted, began pressing a counter-attack. The militiamen, recovering from their scare, rejoined the battle and fought valiantly.

General Sir George Prevost concluded the Yanks could wait until some other time for the rest of their lesson, withdrew his men to the ships, and sailed away to fight again another day. Each side lost about 150 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

Captain Samuel found himself regarded as a hero for keeping his company steady and checking the British advance until the regulars could get into telling action. Something should be done for him, everyone agreed; he deserved a permanent public job. And that is how Samuel McNitt became lighthouse keeper at Sackett’s Harbor.

Twenty years later, on July 5, 1833, Samuel applied for a pension. He was then sixty-one and still lightkeeper. In his application he became reminiscent: he told the story of his adoption by his uncle John, and of the war stories his uncle had told that doubtless had made John a hero in his eyes, and stirred him to emulation. Because he told the Pension Bureau all this, it became possible for the story to get into this book.

We must not forget Andrew McNitt or McNett 2nd, Samuel’s youngest brother. In 1801 young Andrew went prospecting in northern Pennsylvania with his brother Eli, and when they encountered the mountains and streams of the Lycoming Valley Eli was pleased and wished to stay. But Andrew thought it would be hard to make a living there and
returned to Jefferson County. What Eli did will make another chapter; he stayed.

Almost nothing is known of Andrew 2nd except what was written in 1828 in a letter sent Eli and his wife Perthena by Annie Holmes, a daughter of Chloë, the Minute Man's widow, by her second marriage following the murder of her first husband. Annie wrote that the now aged Chloë couldn't work because of her trembling; her hands trembled so much she could hardly feed herself. She hadn't heard from Samuel or Andrew lately, but thought Andrew was living near Cazenovia. His wife looked like death when last observed.

As to Andrew: "I do not know what he is about but I hope he is following some more useful and honorable employment than he has in times past." This characterization of Andrew has burned the hearts of his family ever since. Was Andrew a black sheep? Or was Annie the half-sister a cat, and a very sour puss at that? Her letter is kept by Ruth McNett, one of Eli's descendants.

One of the Sackett's Harbor McNetts was the father of Colonel A. J. McNett, whose life story is told in the History of Allegany County, New York, published in 1879. The Colonel did not tell the historian the names of his parents, nor did he say whether his own first name was Andrew or Alexander, or whatever.

Colonel McNett was living in Belmont, New York, in a spacious house with piazzas all around it (as illustrated in a line engraving in the county history) when interviewed about his career. A. J. was born in Henderson, Jefferson County, February 3, 1822. After public school, he spent four years at Union Academy in Belleville with the plan of entering the junior class in Union College in 1843. Health failing, he didn't make it, so he entered the law office of Augustus Ford at Sackett's Harbor and in the autumn of 1847 was admitted to the bar. On December 7 he married Abby Clark of Belleville, and removed immediately to Buffalo to begin practice in partnership with Hiram Benton. He served two years as Alderman and one term as City Attorney, and represented his district in the Legislature in the winter of 1858. In 1859 he removed to Belmont and began practicing law in Allegany County.

In September 1861 he raised a company of volunteers and entered service as a Captain in the 93d New York Infantry, serving with that rank through the Peninsular campaign and with the Army of the Potomac until late in 1863. Then he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the 141st Infantry, serving in the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division of the 20th Army Corps of the Army of the Cumberland until the close of the war. He was commissioned Colonel on August 12, 1864.
He was wounded three times in the Atlanta campaign, and lost his right arm in consequence of the last injury. He was brevetted Brigadier General of Volunteers for distinguished service in battle. On July 28, 1866, he was appointed Captain in the regular army, and served from the autumn of 1866 until March 1869 on the staff of General Emery, and afterwards on the staff of General Canby, as Acting Judge Advocate General of the Department of Washington. Next he was stationed at Petersburg, Virginia, as military commissioner of seven counties, including the city. Later he was transferred to Suffolk in command of three divisions of the State, and as Mayor of Suffolk. While in active service he was brevetted Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel. In December 1870 he retired from service with the rank of Colonel in the regular army.

A farmer when interviewed for the county history, he owned candidly that he was a lawyer by profession, a soldier by inclination, and a farmer from necessity. This great-grandson of Barnard McNitt always was trying, and didn’t do badly.
Young Eli McNitt was left alone with his ambitions in the Lycoming Valley of northern Pennsylvania in the spring of 1801. His brother Andrew, youngest of the three sons of the Minute Man Andrew McNitt, had left him there with his prospecting to return to northeastern New York, where he would be near his uncle John and his elder brother Samuel.

Eli found a site overlooking the valley that pleased him, and after hunting up the agent who controlled the land, he deposited his overcoat as a token payment. The land he had chosen was about thirty-five miles southwest of Towanda. He wasn't to be alone long, for in 1802 he married Perthena Newell, daughter of John Newell, most of whose family had been killed by Indians in the Wyoming Valley massacre in New York in 1778.

The pledged overcoat must have been redeemed, for Eli completed his land purchase. He gave a mortgage in 1806 to Messrs. Howell and Smith on fifty-five acres; the purchase price was $138.60. Eli paid half the amount in cash and gave notes for the balance, to be paid off in yearly instalments of $17.33. By further land purchases in 1818, 1828, 1839, and 1859 he extended his holdings to 640 acres, reaching from the
ridge of a range of hills, down and across the Lycoming Valley to the
tops of the hills on the other side.

Young Eli built a log house on his first tract, which he replaced later
with a better one. Starting with virtually nothing but courage, Eli and
Perthena prospered. Today their descendants may not be as numerous
as the leaves in a forest, but they are nearly as many as the leaves of a
young oak. Their children were:

I. Samuel, b. December 21, 1803; m. 1st Julia Dobbins, 2d Eliza Griffin;
d. March 19, 1899.

II. Andrew, b. September 17, 1805; m. in 1831 Marcella Keyes; d. July
17, 1874.

III. John, b. July 30, 1807; twice married, no issue; d. September 11, 1883.

IV. Roswell, b. December 14, 1809, m. in 1850 Charlotte Pidcoe; d.
June 4, 1884.

V. Eli, Jr., b. September 13, 1812; m. Olive Newell; d. in September
1871.

VI. Electa Jane, b. February 24, 1820, a beautiful girl who died unmar¬
rried August 12, 1842. When Eli found his only daughter had tubercu¬
losis, he sent her to his brother Samuel McNitt at Sackett’s Harbor,
hoping the climate would be more favorable.

Eli’s land was on a main road between two large towns; Elmira, New
York, lay thirty-eight miles to the north, and Williamsport, Pennsyl¬
vania, was about forty miles to the south. It was a logical place for a
half-way house to accommodate travelers by stage and to provide
changes of horses. So in 1827 Eli built what has become one of the land¬
marks of the region; undoubtedly one of the most interesting houses
erected by any of the whole clan: the Old Brick Tavern.

Very near it there still may be a stone post marking the corners of
Tioga, Bradford, and Lycoming Counties. The adjacent neighborhood,
with houses at intervals along the highway, came to be called Leolyn
(pronounced Lee-OH-lin). The postoffice now is down the road a
little way in a village in a forested glen, called Roaring Branch. The
tributary to Lycoming Creek whose rushing waters suggested this name
to one of the McNitts, adorns the sylvan scene. When a railroad came
through in time, the nearest station was Penrhyne.

Farming the rugged hillsides may not have been very profitable, so
Eli proceeded to bake 63,000 bricks and build his half-way house. He
may not have had an architect; if not, he and Perthena had the taste to
follow the good, simple lines of the best design of the period. All of the
woodwork was done by hand: all the window-framing, the interesting
front door, and the arched frame that encloses it and the fanlight above it.
Built into each of the ends of the building are two chimneys, each providing flues for two fireplaces. All of the eight principal rooms, four on each floor, have fireplaces with good mantels, each with grooved paneling. A central hall runs from front to back on both floors. High in the wall at each end of the building is a well-designed window ending at the head in a pointed arch.

On entering, the traveler found at his right the parlor or lounge; at his left the taproom and office. At the rear of the parlor was the dining room, and back of the taproom was the kitchen. An old account book kept by Eli shows that he charged fifteen cents for accommodating a horse overnight in the stable. What the rider paid for bed and meals we do not know, but a glass of whiskey cost three cents. It is one of the traditions of the place that Perthena disliked the whiskey business (which must have been lively, considering the price) and that she prevailed upon Eli to close the bar.

Another tradition is that the Old Brick Tavern, perhaps owing to Perthena’s compassion, had a “straggler’s bed” for the free use of any penniless wayfarer in need of lodging for the night. There was surprisingly little abuse of this kindness.

Eli was a sportsman, and he welcomed likeminded men who enjoyed staying at the tavern while they hunted in the hills or fished the streams. So great was the hospitality of the house that relations from New York State loved to come in sleighing parties in the winter to dance and have fun, and in some cases to remain for weeks.

All of Eli’s family were Universalists, and Eli and Perthena often had a minister come on Sunday, with sons and wives and children gathering for services.

So life went on at the Old Brick Tavern for many years. One night when Eli had to be away on business, a panther raided the premises and with bloodcurdling growls attacked the poultry. Unhesitatingly, Perthena took a blazing log from a fireplace, rushed outside, and pitched her firebrand at the prowler. The panther snarled a goodby and ran away. Next night, unaware that sure-shot Eli would be back home, the panther returned. Eli shot him dead. The animal measured twelve feet from nose to tip of tail.

Perthena was a good neighbor. Late one evening in the tavern, a friend who had noticed unusual quietness demanded of Eli: “Where’s Peretheeny?” “Oh, Pertheeny,” Eli responded, “she went out on her horse early this evening. A neighbor woman a good piece away is having a baby, and Pertheeny went to help her through.” Eli’s friend considered this for a while, and then observing it was very late, pressed
THE NEW ENGLANDERS

further: "Don't you get anxious? Don't you think somebody ought to go to meet her and come home with her?" To this Eli replied simply: "You don't know Pertheeny!"

Perthena was first to go; perhaps her work was hardest. Born April 30, 1782, she lived seventy years, until April 21, 1852. Keeping the tavern must have been a lonely job after she left. Toward the end of his life, when his sons were going hunting far away in early winter, Eli volunteered to go with them. It was necessary to sleep in the open at night. Late in the evening when sifting snow began to fall, the sons looked to see how their father was faring. He lay wrapped in blankets, fast asleep; the snowflakes touching his face did not disturb him.

When he was eighty, Eli resolved to make maple sugar again. Without assistance he tapped the trees, gathered and boiled the sap in big kettles in the sugar-house, and produced eighty pounds of sugar.

Two years afterward Eli sat for a photographer, and from the resulting daguerreotype Hilda Taylor has drawn the portrait that heads this chapter. We may get from it an idea of what Barnard McNitt and his sons and grandsons were like. Born either at Palmer or Murrayfield, Massachusetts on September 4, 1775, Eli lived to be ninety-five and died on July 11, 1870.

Stories like this are told: while hunting, Eh wounded a panther. Not sparing him time to reload his rifle, the animal rushed at him. Eh took flight. While climbing over a fallen tree the slack in the seat of his home-spun breeches was snagged by the end of a broken branch. He couldn't get away. So he just waited, and when the panther came up, Eh clubbed him to death with the butt of his rifle.

This story and many others are told by Mrs. Alma Edler McNett, whose husband is six-feet-two Archie (not Archibald) Dudley McNett, great-grandson of Eli.

Eli's sons were Democrats at the time the Civil War began. When the country was in turmoil over the firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, many Republican neighbors demanded immediate action against the South, Mrs. McNett says. When conservative McNetts advocated waiting a bit before deciding war was necessary, excited folk said they had better begin right away on the rebels at home. One of Eli's sons said they could begin with him. He barricaded his door at night thinking they might come for him, but he was not molested.

The reader will have observed that the surname McNett has entered the chapter to replace McNitt, and will wonder. The change apparently began in Jefferson County, New York, in the families of Samuel and Andrew McNitt, sons of the Minute Man, before or after the War
DINING ROOM IN OLD BRICK TAVERN UNDER DAVENPORT MANAGEMENT

ORIGINAL KITCHEN IN OLD TAVERN, WHERE GRAY LADY WAS SEEN
BY FANNY DAVENPORT
of 1812. Credit for making the surname change in the Lycoming Valley is given to Harrison McNett (1832-1897), one of Eli's grandsons and the eldest son of Andrew and Marcella Keyes McNitt. Harrison was an able citizen, a surveyor who laid out nearly all the lands along the line of Lycoming and Tioga Counties, who is remembered as having ghost-written a speech for a Pennsylvania Governor.

His wife was Emma Newell. She may have said in a post-bedtime briefing: “Harrison! I don’t like the name McNitt. Do like your cousins and call yourself McNett!” We’ll never know what passed between them on the subject. Harrison and Emma, if dissatisfied, would have done better to restore the earlier and better form McKnight.

The name change is presumed to have been made in the period of 1850. About that time a part was carved from McIntyre Township and the new town was named McNett, in honor of Eli McNitt. Everyone liked Eli and called him “Uncle Mac.” Every cousin in the family took the name McNett, and that’s the way it is now. Harrison’s younger brother, Eh L., was responsible for the introduction of free textbooks into the schools of McNett Township; a real reform for that time.

When the railroad came through the region the stagecoaches gradually disappeared and likely enough the business at the tavern diminished as the Old Brick and its proprietor grew older. Next in line to take over the place was Eli’s son Roswell (1809-1884), who had married Charlotte Pidcoe in 1850. We are by no means through with the story of the tavern, but we are due to make some inquiries about the family that had been growing larger. We cannot follow all the ramifications, but we should note the principal lines. The oldest son of Eli and Perthena McNitt was Samuel, who lived through nearly all of the nineteenth century (1803-1899). He married first Julia Dobbins, who bore three daughters and one son; his second marriage to Eliza Griffin was without issue. The children of Samuel and Julia:

I. Elizabeth Jane, b. Feb. 19, 1837; died at fifteen.
II. Sarah Frances, b. April 2, 1842, d. May 1921; m. Oct. 4, 1865 Seth Griffin.

The second son of Eli and Perthena McNitt was Andrew (1805-1874) who married Marcella Keyes. They had two sons: Henry Harrison, the
surveyor who changed the surname, and Eli L., who introduced free textbooks into the township schools. They also had four daughters: Mary, Juliet, Electa, and Frances. From this point on, nearly all children of Andrew's branch were daughters, for whom we lack space; they were very numerous.

John, third son of Eli and Perthena, had no children. The fourth son was Roswell (1809-1884), who married Charlotte Pidcoe and who later came to live at the Old Brick Tavern. Their children:

I. Samuel Eli, m. 1st Elma Parsons who bore son, Mark; m. 2d Nellie Parsons. Issue by both marriages:
   1. Mark.


II. George Edwin.

III. Roswell DeClaré.


V. Willard Dudley.

VI. William Andrew, b. 1865, m. 1st in 1888 Isabella Ward, 2d Kate McNeil.

The fifth son of Eli and Perthena was Eli, Jr., (1812-1871), who married Olive Newell. Their children:

I. Electa, b. 1844, d. 1883, m. James Gruver.

II. Andrew Milton, b. Aug. 13, 1847, d. April 10, 1910, m. 1880 Ann Eliza Withey. They had five daughters: Blanche, Myrtle, Jennie, Cora, and Edna, and one son, Chester.

IV. Elsie.

A number of the descendants of the Minute Man Andrew McNitt served in the two World Wars. In the first, Archie Dudley and Roswell Colin were in the Army, and Samuel Andrew was in the Navy. In the second war, Staff Sgt. Stephen Duane McNett was with the Marine Corps at Guadalcanal; William Henry, Jr., was with the Navy in Japanese waters; and the following were in the Army: Samuel William, MP at Gorizia, Italy; Jack Ward, in Japan; Robert Miller, Samuel Wright, at Panama; Francis, Kenneth, Woods Graham, in Medical Corps; Garth, in Hawaii; Eugene, Jesse, and Robert McNett.

The Old Brick Tavern, that had gradually lost its original function, passed from Roswell McNett to his son, Samuel Eli McNett, who sold it in 1914 to Bert Hopkins, a farmer. Then in 1923 it was sold again, and rehabilitated for a new career. Harry Davenport, in the eighth generation of an outstanding family of actors that has now reached the tenth generation with representation on stage or screen, went motoring with his wife in 1923. They saw the Old Brick, heard its story, and bought it from Bert Hopkins. They had been living for a long time in a fine old house at Armonk, New York, filled with antique furniture.

The Davenport's idea was to re-open the Old Brick Tavern as a restaurant or tea-room and place it under the management of their daughters Kate and Fanny. Some of the most interesting of their old pieces were brought from the Armonk house to furnish the tavern, including a chair that had been used by George Washington and a platter that Abraham Lincoln had sold when keeping store in Illinois.

Kate and Fanny Davenport continued the restaurant until the end of the 1937 season except for two long intervals when it was closed to the public: from the end of 1926 to the beginning of 1932, and from the end of the 1932 season to the beginning of 1935. During the latter shutdown the road was reconstructed, and in the same period the main course of highway traffic from north to south was diverted to another route. The effect of the change was to cut down travel so greatly that the Old Brick languished for lack of patronage. After 1937 the Davenports moved their furnishings away and locked up the building. Since then they have lived in Hollywood, where Harry Davenport was active in the studios, and as chairman of the board of the western branch of the Players Club of New York, until his death in 1949. The Old Brick Tavern now stands untenanted.

Kate Davenport very kindly lent the photographs of the exterior and
interior of the building which illustrate this chapter, made while she and
her sister Fanny were living and working there. She tells stories of the
place that belong with its traditions.

The sisters were very busy and very successful with the Old Brick
Tavern in their first season of 1923, and the work was hard. One Satur¬
day night in October Kate had finished late, and at 2 a.m. she was wash¬
ing lettuce for the next day's salads at the sink in the new kitchen that
had been added at the rear. The old kitchen had been converted into a
second dining room.

Feeling for several moments that she was not alone, Kate told me,
she glanced up and saw the figure of a tall, slender woman in the door¬
way leading to the central hall; a woman apparently fifty-five or older.
She was wearing an old-fashioned, high-waisted dress of wool, dark
gray or taupe in color, with a white apron, and a white neckerchief at
her throat. She looked tired and compassionate, and her expression
seemed to say: “You are worn out. Why don’t you go to bed?”

Kate said she was not startled or disturbed in the least; that it all
seemed perfectly natural. After a moment of gazing she let her glance
fall to the lettuce; when she looked up again the figure had vanished.
She thought best not to mention her visitor to her sister Fanny, who
might be alarmed, but at Christmas time she told the story to her mother.

Mrs. Davenport smiled and said: “Fanny also has seen your visitor.
She was putting the finishing touches on the dining tables in the old
kitchen one midnight in the same month of October. She glanced up,
and there standing before the fireplace was the lady in gray exactly as
you have described her. She was dressed in the same way, and wore the
same tired and compassionate look as though saying: ‘You have done
enough for today.’”

The gray lady didn’t appear again to the Davenport sisters. A McNett
family reunion was held in the neighborhood in 1932, and several of
the women came to the Old Brick Tavern with a request to see the
interior. Kate said: “Certainly, go through the place, wherever you
like.” As the party was leaving, one woman of about fifty lingered to
talk a little. She asked Kate: “Did you ever hear any unusual story about
this house?” Kate merely said: “Please tell me about it.”

Her visitor continued: “I belong to the family, and lived here while
a girl. When I was eight, my mother entertained one afternoon the
Ladies’ Aid Society. I was playing about the front steps, and remained
outside all the time. I counted the guests as they arrived, and again
when they left. When the party had broken up and the guests had gone
I asked my mother: ‘Who was the woman who stayed?’ Mother was
surprised: 'Why, everyone who came has left now.' Then I told her: 'I counted ten who came. Only nine left.' Mother asked me to describe the one who came in but didn’t leave with the others. I said: 'She was a woman in a dark gray dress, with white apron and neckerchief, and she wore no hat. She must still be in the house!'

These stories of the gray lady must not be subjected to any cold, quibbling analysis. Of course we do not believe in ghosts in the ordinary sense. A haunted house supposedly is one disturbed by clanking chains and shrieking spectres, and the Old Brick Tavern is a quiet, mellow place that never had any distressful manifestations like that.

We love most those persons and places that have called forth our most devoted efforts. Along with Eli and the children, the Old Brick Tavern was Perthena’s life. She was proud of it; she always wished it to be fine, and hospitable, and kindly in its welcomes. She worked hard in it, and she was ready to defend it with firebrands. Because she put so much of herself into it, she became a part of it and it became a part of her. Her indestructible spirit has never left it.

Perhaps no one ever again will experience the sense of seeing the gray lady, but who would not like to? For Perthena was one of the many women who in marriage have brought to us so much that was splendid in faith and courage.
45. Benjamin’s Generation

When Daniel McNitt of Salem drew his will in 1823 he left bequests to two sons, Benjamin and Alexander, and three daughters: Sally McLachrey, Betsey Whipple, and Polly Thompson. Had John Moodie, the jack-of-all-trades who did the writing for six shillings, given him better advice Daniel might have enumerated the sons for whom he had previously provided, for the benefit of the record.

James, eldest son, inherited the farm and probably had the responsibility of paying the cash bequests to the heirs who were named. Three other sons were not mentioned; they were Daniel, Elijah, and Stephen. The three had been buying land in Cayuga County only a few years before, and the natural conclusion must be that their father gave them their inheritances in cash at the time they most needed help. Benjamin presumably bought his first farm unaided. Alexander, given a legacy, had according to the family account “moved west.” Where, we have no present idea.

Benjamin, Daniel, Elijah, and Stephen settled in Brutus Township, Cayuga County, within a few miles of Port Byron, a little place about eight miles north of Auburn, the county seat. Benjamin, my great-grandfather, was first of the four to buy a home. He began with sixty acres, bought on January 13, 1812 when he was twenty-seven, from Benjamin Whitmore. He paid $220, and Elijah witnessed the signing of the deed. On January 18, 1816, Elijah bought 200 acres from John Davenport of Stamford, Connecticut (possibly an investor in frontier lands) for $800. A little more than a year later, on April 18, 1817, Elijah and his wife Esther (Whitmore) deeded half of this land to Stephen McNitt; consideration $400.

Daniel McNitt 2nd bought fifty-six and a quarter acres on March 4, 1819, from James Hamilton for $225. Four days later, Daniel and his wife Jane (Moore) deeded this tract to Robert Andrews for $560. Four years later Daniel bought fifty acres from Samuel Moore for $650; the deed was executed only a few days before Deacon Daniel drew his will.

Elijah McNitt (born 1788) died intestate in April 1828. His brother Stephen filed on July 25 a petition asking for the appointment of Thomas Dole of Brutus as guardian for four minor children: Sidney, aged sixteen; Harriet, thirteen; Ira, eleven, and Horace, six. Five years later when Sidney reached his majority he began appearing in real estate transactions as a seller.

Horace, born in 1821, married Sarah Ellen Whitney of an old Long
Island family; they removed in 1845 to Muskegon County, Michigan, and then to Sparta in Kent County where their children were born: Adeline, Henry Clay (March 19, 1849), Albert Clarence, Sarah Ellen, and Horace Elwyn. Between 1860 and 1865 the family moved to LaClede, Fayette County, Illinois; then in 1877 Horace returned to Michigan, finally settling in Haring Township, Wexford County, where he took over a store already established by his son Henry Clay, with the Haring postoffice. There Horace remained until his death on August 18, 1891; his widow lived until February 28, 1904.

Henry Clay McNitt returned from Illinois to Michigan in 1871, worked in stores in Trent and Bailey about four years, and then became proprietor of a store in Bailey with Dan Gallantine as partner. In 1880 he removed to Wexford County and opened stores in Haring, Round Lake, and Jennings; then another in Cadillac. Meanwhile he engaged in lumbering enterprises. Hard times came and he retired in 1892 to operate the old farm in Haring Township; he was a member of the school board and the county Board of Supervisors, and served two terms in the Michigan Legislature, active as a member of the Roads Committee. His wife was Carrie Belle Anderson, whom he married March 17, 1886. They had three sons: Clyde, H. Earl, and Clarence. Clyde, born January 22, 1887, was a teacher for several years and then returned to the old farm, which he operates with his youngest brother Clarence. The former married Esther Wirick on December 31, 1924; Clarence, born September 3, 1901, married Maybert Edwards in February 1929. There are no children in either family. Henry Clay McNitt at his death on January 15, 1925, was president and a director of the Michigan Mutual Windstorm Insurance Company of Hastings, Michigan.

H. Earl McNitt, second son of Henry Clay, was born December 25, 1888, and was a farmer in younger years. He married Bertha Johnson on October 29, 1912. He served on the local school board and the county Board of Supervisors, and in 1925 was elected to the House of Representatives of the Michigan Legislature, where he served twelve years.

During his series of six terms — when he was for six years chairman of the Roads and Bridges Committee — he sponsored two bills of particular importance that are still regarded as milestones. The first of these he introduced in April 1929. It provided for a State-owned and State-operated police radio system, and authorized purchase of equipment for one or more broadcasting stations and the necessary car receiving sets. It provided further that Michigan cities could buy radio equipment for intercommunication with the State Police system from the State Police at cost. The bill passed both houses of the Legislature in the month it
was introduced, was signed by Governor Fred W. Green, and became effective as law on August 28.

According to Charles M. Ziegler, now State Highway Commissioner, the McNitt State Police Radio Act was the first measure of the kind to be adopted by any Legislature in the country. Mr. Ziegler was Deputy State Highway Commissioner at the time, and his friend Earl McNitt consulted frequently with him in drafting another bill that became the McNitt Highway Act of 1931. A change of administration two years later caused Mr. Ziegler to resign, but in the interval he probably had a great deal to do with the application of the new law. He was elected State Highway Commissioner in 1943 and has held the post since.

The Highway Act of 1931 was of marked importance in the development of the excellent highway system of Michigan. It provided that the Road Commissioners of the eighty-three counties should gradually relieve the officers of 1,226 townships of the development of 68,000 miles of road formerly under their jurisdiction. It centralized control of all secondary roads under county authority, and made possible greater improvements through a more equable distribution of highway funds. Quite usually the township road officers had been inexperienced, while the County Road Commissioners had command of machinery and engineering skill.

Earl McNitt was a member of the Mackinac Bridge Commission appointed by Governor Frank Murphy to study the feasibility of building a long bridge over the Straits of Mackinac. The war halted these studies, which have since been resumed.

Early in 1933 all the banks in Michigan were closed for a short period by order of the Governor. One of these was the Cadillac State Bank, in which were deposited funds of the Grange Mutual Fire Insurance Company, of which Earl McNitt had been secretary since 1927. The company was the largest depositor. To safeguard the interests of all, a Depositors Corporation was organized in 1934 and Earl McNitt was elected president. He did some very hard work for the corporation; when he finished operations in 1944 every depositor had 100 cents on the dollar and three percent interest on his deposit for as long as it had been impounded.

At the time of his death on October 26, 1944, Earl McNitt was chairman of the rationing board and head of the Office of Civilian Defense in Cadillac, a member of the State Tire Rationing Board, and a member of the board of trustees of the First Congregational Church. After his death, the directors of the Grange Mutual Fire Insurance Company elected his widow, Mrs. Bertha McNitt, to succeed him as secretary.
A son and a daughter were born to Earl and Bertha McNitt. Helen Cornelia, born March 1, 1916, has been a teacher of commercial subjects. On August 29, 1942 she married George Arthur Hyry, a teacher of social science at Kalamazoo. He interrupted this work in 1949 for a course at the State Teachers Training College at Ypsilanti, where he is now a member of the faculty.

Harry Earl, born February 19, 1921, had attended college two years when he was inducted into the Army in August 1942. He was in service three years, two of them overseas; he became a staff sergeant, and received five battle stars for actions in Europe in which he participated. He married Mary Lucille Vrancic February 18, 1950, and is in the insurance business with his mother.

It must be evident that in reporting so many individual lives in capsule biographies and brief notices, something short of justice will be meted those whose performances have been substantial rather than showy. Examples are Henry Clay McNitt and his son Earl, who won deep respect. We may be quite sure there was drama in the fight to save the bank at Cadillac, not only for the benefit of its largest depositor, but also for the sake of scores of plain, hardworking people whose anxiety Earl McNitt took satisfaction in relieving. Men who build their communities and serve on boards and in Legislatures often do not nor make the history books, but they are the steel and concrete of the national structure, hidden behind glossy marbles and terra cotta tiles and glass bricks.

In turning back to the young men centered around Port Byron in Cayuga County — and this interior village was called a port because it was beside the Erie Canal — we may give a moment's heed to one of their neighbors. In Port Byron in the 1820s there lived a young man who did odd jobs: repairing machines and doing carpenter work and the like for a dollar a day. His name was Brigham Young, and so quiet was he that no McNitt dreamed he ever would become one of the militant heads of the Mormon Church, and the husband and father of many, many persons.

Stephen McNitt, who bought 100 acres from his brother Elijah in 1817, married Nancy Goff. Their son Joseph, born in 1823, married Lydia Sanders in 1848, and lived in the township of Cato, across the Seneca River to the north. Joseph and all his brothers changed their surname to McNett. Next in Stephen's family was Alonzo (1826-1912), who married Lucinda Petty in 1852. They had a daughter, Josephine, who married Charles Ferguson. Alonzo and Lucinda had no son; they adopted William Adelbert, son of their friends John and Lydia Lurch.
Other children of Stephen and Nancy McNitt were William, Candace, Mary, and Anson. That practically completes the direct male line of Stephen McNitt; no available records prove his sons William and Anson married.

Stephen’s son Alonzo was a Union soldier in the Civil War, and strikingly enough was recorded in the 1870 census by the original family name of McNaught. Alonzo’s adopted son, William Adelbert (Lurch), married Mary Elston in 1887. Three sons are living: Fred McNett, born in 1889, farmer in Cato Township, who married Emma Dickerson, a teacher, in 1915; Anson, born in 1892, who married Vera Chaffee and lives in Mexico, Oswego County; Howard, born in 1893, who married Marion Clarke and lives also at Mexico. A daughter Agnes died young. None of the three sons of William Adelbert, adopted by Alonzo and Lucinda McNett, has a son of his own.

Daniel McNitt, the Deacon’s namesake, married Jane Moore; their children included John, Samuel, William, and Daniel, and several daughters, one of whom was Polly. This family removed to Ohio, and several eventually settled at Ravenna, Muskegon County, Michigan. John, eldest of the sons, born about 1827, had a family of eleven children, including four sons: Samuel, Daniel, William, and John, Jr. The latter removed to Washington, D.C. and spent many years in the Postoffice Department. His sons John and Arnold McNitt took medical degrees and are practicing physicians in Washington.

The second son of Daniel and Jane McNitt was Samuel, who married his cousin Cordelia and lived for many years on a farm at Trent, Michigan, twenty miles east of the city of Muskegon. He spent his later years at Ravenna and lived to be nearly 100. He had one son, Charles, who lived in an adjoining house at Trent with his wife Ida. They had one daughter, Vera, who married Charles Ives.

Benjamin McNitt, eldest of the four young men from Salem who bought farms around Port Byron, married Rebecca Worden. She was a great-grandmother of whom I like to think as a woman of character and mental and physical energy. A nephew of hers was the Lieutenant Worden who commanded the single-turreted Monitor — the “Yankee cheesebox on a raft” — in the famous engagement with the Confederate ironclad Merrimac in Hampton Roads, Virginia, in 1862. This was the battle that revolutionized naval construction and warfare. Students of history will recall that when the baffled Merrimac withdrew from the encounter, the final blast from one of her guns seriously injured the eyes of Lieutenant Worden, who was directing the Monitor from a small pilot-house on the bare deck.
Benjamin and Rebecca McNitt had sixteen children, all of whom lived to maturity but two: little Joseph, and a baby whose name has been lost. The others were Sylvester, Sylvanus, Peter, Elijah, Andrew, Hiram, Pardon, Franklin, Cinderella, Margaret (sometimes called Margot), Jane, Mary, Cordelia, and Emily.

Cordelia has been accounted for: she married her cousin Samuel and lived with him across the street from my childhood home at Trent. She and her sisters Emily and Margaret left their home in Niagara County, New York, in 1853 to visit their brother Sylvester at Hartford, Michigan, and perhaps to do a little prospecting for beaus. The three found their men. Margaret married John Warren, a widower, and Emily married his son Benjamin. Of the other sisters — Cinderella, Jane, and Mary — we have no records.

Benjamin McNitt, head of this large family, was a man very much like his father Daniel: sergeant in the Revolution, buyer of lands forfeited by Tories, and responsible citizen. If Benjamin cherished the traditions of Presbyterianism, as he evidently did, he was the last in his line to do so for a while; a long period of indifference was to follow. This may be partly explained by an incident involving his son Elijah, to be narrated in the next chapter.
A weather-worn old house a scant mile from the hamlet of Shawnee, between Niagara Falls and Lockport, is a symbol of much history. The coming of Benjamin McNitt and his large family to this place is a part of the story of fabulous land speculations after the Revolution: a story of the development of the Republic now much neglected.

Few members of the family tarried in Niagara County longer than twenty-five years, but in that quarter-century strongly individual traits developed, often sharply antagonistic. Son differed with father and brother with brother, always in insistence upon ideals that had strangely dissimilar aspects for each. The fiery hue of some of their disagreements is still discernible after more than a century.

The old house, where the aging widow of Adam Flach now lives alone, was built by Benjamin McNitt on eighty acres of land for which he paid $400 to the Holland Land Company on October 1, 1830. It was a very good house then, carefully planned with interesting detail in the interior woodwork, and with fireplaces adorned with well-designed mantels. According to the building practice of the 1830s, the house points the gable of its main section toward the highway it faces on the north. It still has the old parlor entered by the front door, with a considerably larger living room behind it. Next the living room in a wing of a story and a half is the combined dining room and kitchen. Back of this room is another which may once have served as a summer kitchen,
GROUP OF STUBBORN IDEALISTS

or a pantry or milk-room. There is a bedroom on the main floor, and room for four more upstairs. The house is not as large as the one Benjamin’s great-grandfather, Barnard McNitt, built at Palmer, or the one his brother James built near Salem, New York, but it is none the less interesting in itself.

Two visits to the old place have revealed its steady decline. The first was in October 1917; the second in August 1950. After the interval of a third of a century the house gave the same impression as when first seen: that it was waiting, unaltered except by the elements and by careless use, for someone to come back to it. No owner since 1855 has changed it, and there it stands in a kind of mute discouragement, as though its real owners had gone away temporarily and had forgotten to return, while strangers passed in and out, feeling they had no right to disturb the arrangement of the rooms.

Benjamin painted his house white, and it is evident no one ever has painted it since. Most of the same small panes must still be in the windows. The odd bits of farm hardware hanging on nails on the woodshed wall look as though they had been there since Benjamin put them up for convenient use. The barn at the rear also seems unchanged except for the process of decay through a century.

To this once pleasantly substantial home my grandfather Frank McNitt brought his bride Martha Smith from Ohio about 1850, and it was here my father was born on Christmas day, 1854.

All the land in western New York, bounded by a line running north and south a little to the east of the present city of Batavia, once was owned by the Holland Land Company, formed by a group of bankers and other investors in Amsterdam. The land earlier had been the Massachusetts Reserve; Connecticut had the land south of Lake Erie in northeastern Ohio, called the Western Reserve.

Robert Morris, the rich Philadelphia merchant who helped more than any other to finance the Revolution in its darkest days, had visions after the war of a speculative fortune to be made in trading in new lands beyond the frontier. With two partners he bought the Massachusetts Reserve — or most of it — and other lands including great stretches in what we know as the District of Columbia.

Because he had staked his own fortunes in the Revolution period and come through successfully, Robert Morris thought he could safely risk everything in times of peace, when vast areas of good land could be had at a few cents an acre. He undertook more than he could manage, for he had heavy taxes and interest to pay. One partner turned dishonest.
Morris sought to borrow large sums from the Dutch bankers who had profited from buying up State debts later assumed under Alexander Hamilton’s plan by the Federal government. Theophilus Cazenove agreed for the Dutch bankers to put up £75,000 for one million acres, and to advance £37,500 against half a million acres more. Morris had desired a loan, but the deal turned out to be a sale, with the Amsterdam investors gaining a small empire at approximately a shilling and sixpence per acre. Cazenovia, near Syracuse, was named for Cazenove.

Robert Morris, often compared for his financial genius with Washington as military leader and Franklin as statesman of the Revolution, lost his whole fortune. Quickly forgotten by most as a broken speculator, he was thrown into a debtors’ prison by the action of a small creditor, and remained there three and a half years.

The Dutchmen completed their deal with Robert Morris at the end of 1792, and then spent several years in getting ready to sell their land. At the outset, half-townships and whole ones were offered in blocks; before long, small tracts were made available to farmers at from $2 to $5 an acre. The Amsterdam company established an office in the little settlement named for the Dutch town of Batavia, in a stone building that is now a museum. In 1827 David E. Evans became the last managing agent; within ten years he sold the remaining land. Paul Evans wrote the history of the Holland Land Company not many years ago as a thesis for his Ph. D. degree at Yale, and his work was published as Vol. xxviii of the Buffalo History Society Publications.

Benjamin McNitt bought eighty acres from Robert Morris’ empire from David Evans in 1830, and on April 28, 1835, he bought seventy acres more for $395.75. Benjamin’s second cousin, John Wilson McNitt, lived in the small neighboring community of Sanborn and traded in lands throughout the period. He may have initiated purchases from the Holland Land Company, and dealt in farms after newcomers had grown tired of them. Possibly he was instrumental in persuading Benjamin to leave his first farm of sixty acres in Cayuga County to try his fortunes on a new tract to the westward, to be had for about $5 an acre.

The virgin land was not troublesome to break to the plough; it was almost as level as a floor. It lay twelve miles east of Niagara Falls. When his neighborhood was cut away from Niagara Township to form the new township of Wheatfield, Benjamin was the second to be elected town supervisor and member of the county board. His eldest son Sylvester, who married Susan Brown in 1838 and bought fifty acres out of his father’s farm on the day after Christmas in 1840, was elected supervisor for several terms.
We shall return to Sylvester presently. In order to keep the chronicle in the line of events as they came along we had better have the beginning of a story related by Mrs. Eva McNitt Eggers, youngest daughter of Elijah McNitt, one of the strongest-willed of Benjamin's sons. Mrs. Eggers was the only person of her later period to remember all the details she related for this chapter: a story that would have been lost but for her telling it shortly before her death in 1949. Her daughter Florence, a high school teacher at Sand Springs, Oklahoma, transcribed her recital. It opens thus:

At some time in the 1830s, Peter, Pardon, and Sylvanus McNitt, sons of Benjamin and Rebecca Worden McNitt, migrated westward from Niagara County. They settled at Walnut in Bureau County, Illinois, about a hundred miles west of a little place called Fort Dearborn, now known as Chicago. In 1843 they were joined by another brother, Elijah, who was my father. Elijah's coming was the result of an unhappy incident. He had been attending a medical school in New York up to the time he came home to his father's house for the Christmas holidays in 1842, a tall young man of twenty-two. On Christmas eve the Presbyterian minister joined the family festivities. In the course of the evening — evidently unused to drink — he became intoxicated and behaved in a manner my father Elijah thought most unbecoming. As outspoken as all the McNitts, Elijah criticized the minister sharply to his face.

His tongue loosened, the minister had made disparaging remarks about the morals of some of the women of the community. His language was so plain it was even obscene. Elijah would not allow women to be attacked in his presence without making hot objection.

But his father Benjamin was of the old school that believed ministers could do no wrong; he thought them entitled to deference. Perhaps he made allowances because a generally good man had gone wrong from drink served in his own house. [Hard cider then was the wine of the country.] He commanded Elijah to apologize to the minister. Young Elijah refused. That same night he mounted his horse and left to join his brothers in Illinois, leaving his medical course unfinished.

Elijah arrived at Walnut, Illinois, in the spring of 1843. On Christmas day of that year he married Francina Montgomery, and they made Bureau County their permanent home. Elijah used his medical training to help the sick in the community. He was a cabinet maker and carpenter as well as a farmer, and several buildings he erected are still standing at Walnut.

We shall make a pause in Mrs. Eggers' story to observe that the clash on that unhappy Christmas eve did not turn others against the ministry. Hiram McNitt, one of Elijah's younger brothers, became a Baptist minister in Ohio; nothing more than that is known of him. One of Sylvester's granddaughters, Lillie McNitt, was to be ordained a minister.

Elijah never wrote to his father from his new home in Illinois. Late
in 1851 he learned that Benjamin had suddenly been taken very ill with congestion of the brain, and realizing at last that he wished a reconciliation he went back to Niagara County. He was too late. His father, a hale sixty-six at the time of the unexpected illness, had died on December 19. Could Elijah have reproached himself for allowing the feud to sadden the closing years of his father's life?

Sylvester was appointed administrator early in 1852, and he divided the personal property, buying from other heirs for $1,800 their respective interests in the remaining 100 acres of the farm. The heirs retained by a specific clause in the deed a perpetual interest in the private cemetery of the family: a plot sixty-two feet square lying on a low knoll to the left rear of the house, 200 yards or more away. With the lot they retained lasting rights to a lane eight feet wide, leading from the cemetery to the highway.

Among the items of personal property listed in the inventory of Benjamin's effects were a spinning wheel, a walnut table, six flag-bottomed chairs, a plank-bottom settle of windsor type, blue tableware, a cherry bureau, a cherry candle-stand, one "furniture wooden clock" (probably tall), andirons, a Bible, an arm chair, and several candlesticks. The list also mentions three horses, several cows, a number of sheep and pigs, carriages, wagons, and farm tools.

After Sylvester had settled with the other heirs he and his wife Susan deeded forty acres to Franklin and Cordelia, his brother and sister, for $1,280. Frank bought ten acres on March 18, 1853 from William M. Worden, husband of Cinderella McNitt, and on December 22, 1854 he bought his sister Cordelia's interest in the forty acres for $300. Restless and ambitious, Frank soon decided to try his luck in Michigan, whither some of the family already had gone: Sylvester, Cordelia, Margaret, and Emily; on April 3, 1855 he sold his fifty acres to Daniel Duffenbacher for $2,250. Then with his wife Martha and their two babies, Alice and Henry, he moved to the township of Bowne in Kent County, Michigan. Later he set up a permanent home in Lisbon, sixteen miles northwest of Grand Rapids. The family grew with six more children: Clara, Seward, Edith, Dora, Eva, and Werner. More will appear later about the eight, of whom only Eva survives.

Sylvester, the eldest brother, had not waited as long as Frank to remove to Michigan. He had been an active trader in real estate, buying and selling many farms, but no doubt believing he had exhausted the possibilities he sold out and moved westward early in 1853 to Hartford. The country was new, and as a surveyor he helped lay out the frontier township.
Samuel McNitt, a lively patriarch at ninety-six, called up memories of his cousin Sylvester when I last saw him in Ravenna, Michigan, in 1917. The story conveys a great deal.

"There was a man," he declared with emphasis. "When I visited Sylvester once, he showed me a stack of notes an inch thick. Every one of them had been given him on an accommodation loan to some friend who needed money badly. He didn't expect to get anything back on most of those notes, and he wouldn't dun anybody. He liked helping people in trouble."

In 1844 Sylvester bought a family Bible — six years after his marriage — in which records of births, marriages, and deaths were entered for many years. The Bible is still cherished in one of the Hartford homes, and from it Cecil Hoover Lightner has provided the account to follow:

Sylvester, eldest son of Benjamin and Rebecca Worden McNitt, b. January 11, 1811, m. on January 18, 1838 Susan Brown, b. March 12, 1819, d. February 12, 1896; he d. November 7, 1864. Their children:


2. Evaline Isabel, b. February 12, 1840, m. on February 18, 1858 Valentine Stratton; four children: Mrs. Eva Stratton Smith, Mrs. Ellen Stratton Walker, and two who died in infancy: Flora and Walter.


5. Emily Angeline, b. January 26, 1843, d. September 8 of same year.

6. Livera Marion, b. March 24, 1844, m. on February 20, 1884 Kate Barrett; three sons: Frank, Edward, and Harold McNitt.


8. Thaddeus Theodore, b. October 18, 1846, m. on December 4, 1879 Emma C. Charles; one daughter: Mrs. Carrie McNitt Bayliss; Thaddeus d. April 15, 1921.


10. Jane Ann, b. May 13, 1849, m. 1st Herman G. Adams; four children: Mrs. Maude Adams Dillenbeck, and Archer, Len, and Bert Adams; m. 2nd — Hubbard and had son John.


12. Alpheus Augustus, b. December 16, 1851, m. Emma Havens; three children: Dr. Leslie McNitt, Dr. Nellie McNitt Warren, a graduate chiropractor active for forty years, who specializes in after-treatment for polio victims, to whom regular physicians often send patients because of her skill in restoring use of arms and legs; and finally William McNitt. Alpheus d. May 28, 1922.


15. Sylvester Franklin, b. January 13, 1856, d. as a little fellow of three and a half on July 18, 1859 by falling into the well. He was named for his father, and likely for his uncle Frank McNitt.

Mrs. Nellie Warren of Hartford, Michigan, relates a story of her grandfather not likely to be forgotten. The husband of Sylvester’s eldest daughter Evaline — Valentine Stratton — was invalidated home in 1864 from service in the Union Army, with a fever that developed into typhoid. When Sylvester heard of it he dropped his work to care for Valentine himself. So excellent a nurse was he that he saved the life of his son-in-law, but in doing so he fell a victim to typhoid himself. His condition grew worse as the presidential campaign of 1864 advanced. A State Rights Democrat, Sylvester deplored the war, and was embittered by Valentine’s illness and his own. While news of the election outcome was awaited, Sylvester said wearily on the eve of November 7: “I don’t want to live until sunrise if Lincoln is elected again!” He died before dawn.
Except for Andrew and two or three daughters who had married and continued to live in the Shawnee neighborhood, virtually all of the family of Benjamin McNitt had taken flight westward by 1855. Before we return to Mrs. Eggers’ narrative for a further account we shall pause for a little story of the two visits to Benjamin’s home in 1917 and in 1950.

The crossroads hamlet of Shawnee comprised in 1917 scarcely more than a tiny country store and postoffice — a museum piece that must have been there from the beginning — besides a blacksmith shop, a schoolhouse, and a few dwellings. The farm was reached by driving half a mile south and a scant half-mile to the west. Facing north toward the road stood the neglected house. At the back was a willow tree, once tall and spreading but now crippled through the loss of branches broken off by storms. At the left side of the house was a gnarled and twisted old quince tree, laden with yellow fruit. On the other side was Benjamin’s apple orchard, in a late stage of decrepitude. Beside the orchard stood another and smaller dwelling, untenanted, that may have been built for Sylvester when he married. It still was waiting for the white paint no doubt promised when it was erected.

A woman was digging potatoes in the garden near the house. She explained that her husband, Adam Flach, had only recently bought the farm from Miss Sarah Hittle, and that under the press of wartime conditions in 1917, they had been unable thus far to make the repairs and improvements they planned. She pointed to a small and very neglected clump of undergrowth on the only knoll in the landscape. There was the private family cemetery. When her husband bought the farm, Mrs. Flach said, the deed given by Miss Hittle had stipulated that the little plot and the lane to the highway were reserved in perpetuity to heirs of the McNitt family.

For many years the cemetery had been unvisited and untouched. The neat white picket fence had fallen down when the posts decayed, and the sections had been allowed to remain where they fell. Thick bushes had grown up. Amid the tangle, standing erect in the center of the plot, the visitor found a marble slab with this inscription:

BENJAMIN McNITT
Died December 19, 1851
Aged 66 yrs., 11 mo. & 10 D’s
Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

All about were smaller headstones, some of them leaning, some of them fallen to the ground. Here Benjamin, born January 9, 1785, had
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buried his wife Rebecca, children and grandchildren. The quick and energetic had gone away and forgotten them all.

On the return in 1950, Shawnee was found to have prospered in the intervening thirty-three years. The tiny store had gone to make room for a busy gasoline station and provision shop, and the smithy had disappeared. Homes had multiplied in numbers. But the old farmhouse was almost the same as before, except older and lonelier-looking. Mrs. Flach had been a widow for several years.

She volunteered to show the interior of the house to her visitors. The parlor and living room still had their original fireplaces, standing back to back and venting into the same chimney. No doubt cheerful fires were blazing in both on that Christmas eve in 1842, and the warmth of the rooms quickened the intoxication of the minister unaccustomed to drink. Amid friends the preacher had said things impossible for him to say at other times. From this warmth and cheer the son Elijah had gone abruptly, never to return in his father’s lifetime.

Out of doors, the scene had changed but little since 1917. The big willow tree was still alive but hardly more than a tall and shattered stump. Only three or four of the apple trees remained. The quince tree had been cut back, and with renewed life was beginning with vigor a fresh career. The unpainted small house was missing. It had been removed to an adjacent plot, set on a masonry foundation above a basement, and painted. Then in the succeeding years the white paint had grown old. As for the little graveyard, it looked wilder than before, and may not have been visited in thirty-three years. What may one expect? The plot belongs to the McNitt family; passing owners of the farm may wonder at the neglect, knowing they themselves are not responsible for it.

We now are ready to resume with the narrative of Mrs. Eva McNitt Eggers, transcribed for us by her daughter Florence:

When Elijah had completed his visit to the old home after the death of his father, his sisters Emily, Cordelia, and Margot accompanied him on his westward trip as far as Hartford, Michigan, where they stopped with their brother Sylvester. All three married soon afterward. Margot married her husband John Warren, and later went to Illinois to live near her brothers.

Sylvanus was a soldier in the Mexican War, I believe, and so got to know Texas. Some time later he settled at Lampasas and operated a lime kiln. When the Civil War broke out he became a Captain in the Confederate Army. Sylvanus was a larger man than his tall brothers, with red hair and blue eyes, but unlike some of them he was slow in speech and motion. He was married to his cousin Phoebe Worden. They had three children, Andrew, Benjamin, and Helen, and descendants still live in Texas.
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Pardon did not remain in Illinois; he moved to Michigan and all trace of him was lost by the others. From pictures of him I have seen, I believe he was tall and blond. The family said he was a shy man, not fitted to frontier life.

When the Civil War began, Peter McNitt organized a company in his neighborhood for service in the Union Army, and was its Captain. He fought all through the war, and at the close returned to his homestead at Walnut. A Republican, Peter disagreed (after the manner of McNitts) with his brother Elijah, a State Rights Democrat, in their arguments over the war and politics. Elijah never had been in sympathy with the war and had stayed at home, caring for Peter's farm as well as his own. He was at the head of the Democratic party in Bureau County when it represented only a very small minority.

I have heard him quote: "He is but a slave who dare not be in the right with two or three." He was so sure he was right that he had not cared when neighbors called him a Copperhead.

Peter, who had fought for the Union, was equally sure he was right. His disagreements with his brother Elijah were so painful that he sold his farm and left, estranged, to buy a farm at Red Cloud, near the Republican River in southern Nebraska. Contact between the families of Peter and Elijah was kept up by Manley McNitt, Peter's only son, and Charles McNitt, son of Elijah.

On the death of his first wife, Deborah, Peter took a second wife who was much younger. Then followed a break with his son's family, and Peter and his new wife moved into the territorial Southwest. Later he returned to his son's home in Nebraska to die.

Here Mrs. Eggers' narrative must be interrupted to tell more of Peter McNitt learned from my father, and from his sister, Mrs. Eva McNitt Freeman. In addition to managing his farm at Red Cloud, Peter conducted a kind of tourist camp for settlers moving westward in covered wagons, some of them headed no doubt for California. After my father reached his majority he attended the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876; then thinking life on the plains might improve his health, he accepted a bid from Uncle Peter to come out from Lisbon, Michigan, to Red Cloud to help run the tourist camp and trading post for a while.

Of his uncle's party spirit, he recalled Peter's saying humorously: "I would vote for a yellow dog if he ran on the Republican ticket." If some of us are now opinionated, we may recognize an old family trait. When Peter grew older and became a widower, according to my father's version, he arranged to give his farm to his son Manley with the understanding he might live with Manley and his family and be cared for the rest of his life. But Manley's wife did not like farming, and so persuaded her husband to sell the farm his father had given him, move into the
village of Red Cloud, and buy a store. Manley also became postmaster and held the office for years.

Peter was unhappy in Manley’s new home; he felt unwanted. He married a young wife for consolation, and trouble naturally followed. According to Mrs. Freeman, who had the story from her father, Peter and his new wife went soon to New Mexico, almost without resources. My grandfather Frank became concerned about his brother and went to visit him. Finding Peter almost destitute in a shack without furnishings, Frank bought some of the things needed to live with a degree of comfort. Then as Mrs. Eggers has related, Peter eventually gave up the struggle to make a new life and returned to his son Manley to be reconciled and to die. You shall learn more of Peter McNitt in his earlier and more vigorous years as we continue with Mrs. Eggers’ narrative:

All the McNitts in my father’s generation were well educated, but I do not know where they got their learning. [They were inveterate readers.] There were two distinct types, physically, and these types have a tendency to reappear from time to time in succeeding generations. Type one is the tall man—over six feet—rugged and muscular, perhaps described as rawboned, with high forehead, large, prominent features, blue eyes, and red or sandy hair.

Type two is shorter and may be described as “square”: square head, square jaw, cleft chin, and broad, square shoulders; erect in bearing with quick, elastic step, and with blue eyes and light or sandy hair.

My father Elijah belonged to type one and looked so much like his cousin Samuel McNitt of Trent and Ravenna, Michigan, that they could have passed for twins. He was six feet two inches tall and never weighed more than 180 pounds. He was a champion wrestler and like Abraham Lincoln he had a “no fall” record. The ambition of his sons and nephews was to throw Uncle Lige, but they never succeeded though they tried shortly before the time of his death in 1888 at the age of sixty-eight. He had dark red curly hair and rugged, prominent features.

Earlier, a Dr. Bayard had come to Walnut from Cayuga County, New York, and my father assisted him in the practice of medicine for some time.

I never saw my father without a full beard, and at sixty-eight his teeth were firm and white. His personality commanded utmost respect and admiration from his children, and while his authority was unquestioned, I never heard him raise his voice in anger. He was an idealist, positive in his opinions, and a leader in civic affairs.

His brother Peter was just as idealistic and just as positive in his convictions, hence the rift between them. Only those who lived in the period after the Civil War could appreciate the bitterness over political ideals.

Peter McNitt was of the square type physically, with blond hair and very blue eyes. He was always clean-shaven, and wore his Civil War uniform with dignity. He was known in our part of Illinois as “Captain Mac.” He was a fluent debater, and conducted lyceums and singing schools in the
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

neighborhood. [And he always carried a tuning fork in one of his pockets in later years, ready to lead in group singing.]

In winter he taught in schools where the big boys had been in the habit of throwing out the teachers. But no one ever threw out "Captain Mac."

As I remember Uncle Frank, he was a middle-aged man a few years younger than my father when he came to visit us in 1883 with Aunt Cordelia and Aunt Margot. [Elijah was born in 1820; Frank in 1827.] Uncle Frank was a very active man, not quite as tall as my father. He had bushy, sandy hair turning white. He and my father had endless discussions on all manner of subjects, seldom agreeing, but always amiable. Father told him about the estrangement with Peter, which was heavy on his heart. I do not know what they said, but I know that after talking it all over with Uncle Frank, Father seemed relieved in spirit.

The Fourth of July came along during this visit. One very vivid memory is of my father playing the bagpipe, while Aunt Margot, then a heavy woman but light on her feet, danced the Highland fling. Just a little girl then, I thought it would be fun to explode a firecracker under Uncle Frank's chair as he leaned back in it, sitting on our porch. He was so startled he fell backward to the ground, but wasn't hurt. I was in disgrace with my family for a while after that.

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I have a feeling that Uncle Frank never quite approved of the free and easy life in our home. Of a more serious type and more conservative, he seemed not quite to understand the freedom of speech and the gaiety of our home life, and the hosts of friends and neighbors coming and going.

Thus ends Mrs. Eggers’ narrative. Knowing my grandfather, I am sure he enjoyed the life in his brother Elijah’s home and by no means disapproved of the gaiety. But like others of us, he may not have been at ease with strangers and may have kept silent while the friendly neighbors were trooping in and out. Nor can I believe he disapproved of the little girl who honored him with the attention of an exploding firecracker under his chair, though he may have had momentary misgivings. His wife at home kept a very decorous household, and while the young people in it had gay times, Grandfather had most of his fun visiting his relations and arguing with them.

Elijah’s youngest daughter Eva married Charles Eggers when he was twenty-one and she was still younger. They sold the farm given them by their families and used the money to get more education. When the money was used up both had first grade teachers’ certificates—the highest required for teaching in public schools. Both taught through school years and attended Valparaiso University in Indiana in summer. Meanwhile they were raising their first daughter, Jessie, who is now Mrs. C. A. Peterson of Helena, Montana.

On January 1, 1904 they entered the U. S. Indian Service as teachers, and were assigned to the Chippewas in northern Minnesota. After eight years there, broken only by a visit to Florida where their daughter Florence was born, they were transferred to Oklahoma. There Charles Eggers was in charge of an Indian boarding school, while his wife taught. Except for three years with the Sioux in Montana, their work was with various tribes in Oklahoma. In the last ten years of his service, Charles Eggers was in administrative work, and when he retired in 1933 he was superintendent of the Shawnee Indian Agency at Shawnee, Oklahoma. He had been ordained a Baptist minister while in service, and after retiring he became pastor of the Council Valley Church, north of Cushing. Because of failing health he gave up the ministry in 1946, and died March 27, 1948. Mrs. Eggers taught Bible study classes in Cushing for over ten years. Her daughter Florence lived with her until her death in 1949 at nearly eighty.

Elijah McNitt, born August 13, 1820, married Francina Montgomery of Wheelersburg, Ohio, on Christmas day, 1843, and died November 6, 1888, at Dixon, Illinois. The children of Elijah and Francina included
seven daughters and four sons. Mrs. Eva McNitt Eggers, with whose story we are now acquainted, was the youngest of the daughters. The sons were Charles J. McNitt, Peter, Franklin, and Stephen.

Elijah had a great deal of family sentiment mixed with his stubbornness. Because of the bitter estrangement with his father on account of the inebriated minister, he pointedly did not name his first son Benjamin, and chose the name Charles instead. The other sons were given family names. Peter and Franklin were named for two of his brothers, and Stephen was named for an uncle.

This youngest son, Stephen D. McNitt, was born January 22, 1864; he married Delia E. Warren (1864-1927) in Muskegon, Michigan, and returned to Illinois, where for several years he was a salesman for the Singer Sewing Machine Company and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, living in Rock Falls. In 1905 he removed to Ravenna, Michigan, where he bought 240 acres of land and engaged in fruit-growing and dairy farming until his death on April 7, 1942. Stephen and Delia had one daughter: Mrs. Emily Frances McNitt Cryderman, who lives near Ravenna.

Elijah McNitt and his brothers made up a group of men as individualistic and as rugged in their convictions as can be found anywhere. Each insisted upon his right and duty to make manifest his passionate idealism and to stick with it regardless of grieves. None was influenced by any of the others. Two of them, Northern Democrats, refused to have any part in the Civil War. Two others, Republicans, were in uniform: one as a Captain and one as a private. A fifth brother was a Confederate Captain.

With opportunities for higher education lacking in a family so large, Elijah came near a medical degree and practiced informally on the frontier anyhow; Frank had a natural inclination toward medical science and experimentally doctored himself to advanced old age. Peter had a strong liking for music, and with modern opportunities he could have developed his flair into that of a cultivated appreciator, at least. And Elijah played the bagpipe.

They were men of vivid personality. They were amiable though contentious; when ugly error raised its head, each in his own way sought to smite it down. No compromise with error! They were potential ruling elders in the disguise of agnostics. Two hundred years earlier they would have ridden with the stern horsemen in the Pentland Rising and at Bothwell Bridge.
In writing of the arrival of Frank and Martha McNitt and their six young children in Lisbon, Michigan in 1861, my mind is crowded with memories of the stage-coach village that couldn’t die. It was a little gem of a country town with 200 or more residents when my grandparents came to it from Bowne, in Kent County. Today Lisbon is a ghost town. Remaining are the schoolhouse, built by my grandfather in 1861, two or three decrepit, long-empty store buildings, and a few houses. Gone are the Baptist and Methodist churches, the postoffice, the grist-mill, the saw-mill and basket factory, the drug and general stores, the shoe store and the meat market.

Mining camp ghost towns in the Far West still evoke a kind of romantic curiosity. In the Central East a ghost town occasions a different and perhaps sadder regard. The mining towns expected to live only until the veins of ore were worked out. Lisbon and similar villages now deserted anticipated long life. Now their avenues once deeply shaded by tall maples and elms are nothing but country roads. Lisbon’s wooden sidewalks rotted and vanished long ago, and farms edged in to bring a pastoral hush to streets once familiar with stage-coaches and smart carriages. New England has a few such villages.

What can be meant by “the village that couldn’t die”? Lisbon is dead. But Peter H. Harvey, who wrote a long story about it for the Grand Rapids Herald of April 10, 1949, discovered that efforts to
surrender its charter, begun in 1904, never came to anything. So here remains an incorporated yet empty village, kept alive by a sort of legal fiction. Perhaps the spirits of the departed, still loving it, have willed that it shall live — in memory at any rate. I dwell on these things because Lisbon was my birthplace.

When Frank McNitt came, he bought a farm on the northern edge of the village, on which stood a log house. He lived on the east side of the main road, in Kent County. Across the street in Ottawa County lived Curtis Pintler, son of the founder of the community, John Pintler. In early times the place was called Pintler's Corners. When it achieved a postoffice, it was assigned the name Lisbon. Now the farmers get their mail by rural delivery.

One of the first building contracts awarded Frank McNitt was that for erecting the schoolhouse in 1861. His bid was a little higher than one or two others, but the school board was convinced he would do the work better and so found a way to give him the contract. His first care in hiring carpenters was to make sure three of them were willing and able to play pedro and other card games with him in odd hours. The schoolhouse is one of the few buildings left in Lisbon.

When Frank had finished his war service in the Union Army he began thinking of a better house. In 1873 he told his very small daughter Eva: “Now I'm going to start building.” Then he took a shovel and began digging. She was mystified: she thought buildings always went up, not down. He made a large house of it, with a sitting room, parlor, dining room, a big kitchen, six bedrooms, and basement. A brick chimney remains today to mark his work. The house burned to the ground after the place was sold early in the present century and all the family had moved away. It is remarkable how many houses burn in a dying town.

Lisbon was on the stage route between Grand Rapids, sixteen miles to the southeast, and the lumber-milling town of Newaygo, about twenty miles to the northward. It was the natural place for a coaching inn, about a day's drive from each terminal point, so Lorenzo Chubb built a frame hotel on simple, modified New England lines. It was called the Chubb House, and sometimes the Half-Way House.

The hotel stood on the slope of a hill, overlooking a fine lawn. Because of the slope, the ground floor was a basement at the rear; it contained the office, with a bar at the back. A wide flight of steps at the front of the building led up to a long, wide veranda, beyond which were the parlors and dining room of the main floor. Upstairs on the second floor was a large ballroom. On the two floors were about a dozen sleeping rooms. At the back and sides of the building were or-
chards and fine shadetrees. The Chubb House had an imposing site, and it was a gracious place. Well below, and across the street, stood a group of three barns: one for horses, one for hay and grain, and one for coaches and carriages.

Lorenzo Chubb's inn was a community social center, as well as a resting place for travelers. At not infrequent intervals in the winter, festivals of dancing were held, and lively couples came to remain for two to four days and to rollick in the quadrilles or square dances of the period. We have a revival of square dancing now, but the modern version does not equal for jollity the merriment of the old days when this form of the dance was as familiar as breathing to the high-spirited young. Nor can the discreet calling of present-day masters of ceremonies match the devil-may-care singsong of the boss fiddler, who called the figures of the dances with tireless good nature when he was not bowing his own instrument. Those country fiddlers! They may not have been musicians and they wouldn't have called themselves violinists. But they could impart an electrical joyousness to the tunes they played and they could keep going for hours.

After a long evening of dancing the women and girls retired to the bedrooms for rest, while the men bunked down on the ballroom floor. After a few hours of sleep and a good breakfast, the party would return to the ballroom, where the fiddlers were waiting in their tilted-back chairs, making weird noises as they tuned up their strings.

Then at a hush, the boss fiddler would sound the welcoming call: "Choose your partners!" Then, "First four couples this way!" And so on through the day and far into the night, with intervals for dinner and supper. The meals were bounteous and good: ham and eggs and griddle cakes with maple syrup and pots of coffee for breakfast, and roasts and pounded steaks, fried chicken and chops, pies and cakes and more coffee for the midday dinner, and much the same thing with preserved fruits for dessert at the evening supper.

Quadrilles weren't the invariable rule; there would be polkas and waltzes and schottisches at intervals to provide variety and to give the caller a chance to rest his larynx. Thus the festival continued until all were satisfied or exhausted. There were no cocktail lounges in those days, and ladies didn't drink. But the young blades slipped downstairs to the bar when they could, while their partners nervously awaited their return. The Chubb House had no tradition of boisterousness, but the bar had a good trade.

Grandmother McNitt probably thought ill of the bar, and may have sniffed at the prolonged dancing, for she was a good Puritan and had a
large family to bring up right. And in her gentle way she did bring up her boys and girls right. They were a lively lot, with keen interests in all sorts of things. The high school course included algebra, geometry, English classics, world history, astronomy, physics (then called natural philosophy), with spelling bees and practice at public speaking thrown in. Singing teachers came occasionally to hold special classes, and there were instructors in town to train youngsters in playing the parlor organ. The McNitt household had its organ, and the rooms rang with song.

There were eight children in the family. Alice, the eldest, was born in 1853; Verner, the youngest, in 1875. Between them, named in the order of their birth, were Henry, Clara, Edith, Seward, Dora, and Eva.

All of them had their father's vitality and mental urge, and their mother's gentleness. Only one of them survives as I write: Aunt Eva, who as a girl of eleven when I was born in the house, elected herself to be my deputy mother and who watched over me for years, wherever I might be.

I have never been able to catch up with the stories of courtships and young love affairs in a household with five bright and pretty daughters, each with well-marked individuality. Dora was the odd one; she didn't have many beaus, for she had some of her father's eccentricity. She became a teacher, saved her money with utmost shrewdness, and presently kept a millinery, drygoods, and notions store in nearby Sparta. Her thrift amazed everybody.

A designing farmer named Chapin Clute, a widower with grown sons, offered a bleak promise of romance when Dora neared middle age. When at the end of six weeks of marriage Dora discovered his only yearning was for her money, she sent Verner a distress signal, and he came with horses at the gallop. Clute and sons offered resistance, but Verner brushed them aside, loaded his sister's belongings into his light wagon, and drove with her rapidly to the old homestead.

Thereafter Dora mentally adopted the whole tribe of her nieces and nephews, and spent the rest of her life working, saving, and planning the disposition of her estate. At her death, it was found no one had been forgotten; the size of the bequests varied according to favor and to need. Her modest legacy to me was made the starting fund to provide for the financing of this book. So in a sense this history should be regarded as a memorial to her: a belated tribute to a starved but not unhappy life.

It is most improbable that any of Frank McNitt's young people ever consciously strove for what we call culture, but they were full of energy and the urge to self-expression. Amateur theatricals offered something
interesting to do, and many plays were produced by the younger set in Lisbon. It appears they were well done, too, considering everything. Nothing too heavy or ambitious was tried; just the things that would be fun, and could be carried off light-heartedly. Sometimes the amateur players ventured into other communities with performances.

My father was one of the ring-leaders among the village thespians, playing the heavier roles and assisting in management. He continued with this interest for years and helped to organize and direct plays in which he also acted. George S. Chubb, son of Lorenzo, had many light comedy parts. He was the best actor in the lot, with voice, good looks, personality, lack of self-consciousness, and natural gaiety. The girls had fun with romantic parts and with their costumes.

Before we approach another form of self-expression of the period, another family should be introduced. Among the friends of the McNitt sisters were Emma and Myrtle Koon, daughters respectively of Dr. Charles Koon and Dr. Sherman J. Koon: physicians who adorned the community and served faithfully the countryside for many miles. They and their brother Chauncey, who practiced in Casnovia, six miles to the north, were among the earliest graduates of the medical department of the University of Michigan. They went on horseback to answer calls that might keep them away two days at a time, and then on returning, might remount after a hasty bite to ride far away again. The two Lisbon doctors also kept a drugstore.

Their sister Martha married John Potter Cook; a son, William W. Cook, rich and eccentric lawyer in New York, presented his alma mater, the University of Michigan, with the Martha Cook dormitory for girls and the Law Quadrangle, a magnificent group of Gothic buildings that now houses the Law Department.

Myrtle always was regarded as the bright girl genius of Lisbon. After professional training in Detroit she practiced elocution, and could do what we of later years have seen Cornelia Otis Skinner do: delight an audience for an evening with impersonations and readings from plays. She could amuse with folksongs too; perhaps no one has surpassed her in “On Wilbra’ms Mountain There Did Dwell.” After a few years of married life in Grand Rapids the widowed Myrtle Koon Cherryman went on with her public appearances, conducted a department for the Grand Rapids Press, and engaged in civic enterprises. Her son Rexford Cherryman became a successful actor, well known to Broadway in leading parts in “Madame X” and “The Trial of Mary Dugan.” Emma Koon married Alexander Stock, brother of Frederick Stock, long conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Emma and Myrtle, vital
elderly ladies, lived together in Hillsdale many years. Myrtle died in June 1950.

All these personalities and enterprises are mentioned that various grandchildren may know something of the background of family life sixty to seventy-five years ago, in a good little village now vanished.

Myrtle Koon’s success as an elocutionist may have stimulated my Aunt Eva to try her own abilities, or elocution may just have been in the Lisbon air. It may have been an outgrowth of the amateur theatri¬cals. Eva had a sweet and flexible voice — what we call a cultivated voice — and she did very well with her readings. At our big family gatherings she always was called upon to contribute to the entertainment; she was especially good at things that pleased children or made them bug-eyed.

She also tried her hand at painting in oils. She will not forgive me, perhaps, for describing one of her girlish works of art. On a pie-tin she painted a moonlit scene; on the edge of the tin at the lower right she glued a twig, and on the twig she stuck two small peanuts, which she painted to represent owls. The family observed the result, pronounced it good, and hung the finished work in the parlor, along with the Victorian walnut furniture, the wax flowers under a bell glass on the marble-topped table, and the framed pictures decorated with pampas grass.

Alice, the eldest daughter, left the home circle early and so missed some of the youthful fun. At the age of fifteen she was captivated by a handsome young man named Joseph R. Harrison, and married him in 1868. The Harrisons kept general stores in Sparta and Lisbon for many years. The children of various marriages will be accounted for later, with other family data, but before reaching this tabulation I am moved to tell something of the good and ill fortunes of individuals.

Erwin, first of the children in the Harrison family, married and became a printer. Life developed unhappily for him and he died at twenty-eight. Charles, a handsome six-footer, was a pharmacist in Lisbon when he married Madeleine Sliter, an unusually pretty and charming young woman. After a few years as a pharmacist in Grand Rapids, Charles removed to Seattle, where he entered business as an employing engraver and lithographer. Two sons, Webster and Clay, became six-footers like their father. The family enterprises came to include mining in Alaska, two picture theaters in Seattle, and a sawmill in Oregon. Zella, christ¬tened Rosella, emulated her mother and on her sixteenth birthday mar¬ried Jay Hodgins in Sparta. She is and always has been one of the gentlest of a family of gentle, warmhearted women. Glenn, the youngest, be¬came a rancher in Montana.

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Zella’s husband Jay was a central figure in one of the exciting events of my boyhood. An excellent amateur baseball team in the nearby town of Ravenna for a season or two defeated every other amateur team for many miles around. The name chosen for their team by the enthusiastic, slim young athletes was the Ravenna Pets. They caused heartburnings among the sports lovers of Casnovia, the capital of our township. Pets indeed! It seemed time to tame these rampageous Pets. The Casnovia contingent decided to organize a new team, and to challenge the Ravenna outfit to play one game. The challenge was accepted, and the game was set to be played at the Casnovia circus lot in midsummer.

Surreptitiously the Casnovians recruited a team of professional and semi-pro players, the best to be had in western Michigan. Their choice for pitcher was Jay Hodgins, our cousin, who was a semi-pro for years, and known to be good. No relief pitcher was even considered. On the great day most of the men of the entire region were on hand. My brother Hal and I drove to town for an event so great that you perceive I remember it vividly after many years.

The challenging team bore the name of the Casnovia Corkpullers: a name possibly derisive of the Pets. The Corkpullers were arrayed in white as spotless as a bartender’s apron, and each player wore a big red C on a white bib or dickey attached to his shirt.

The lithe young amateurs who actually lived in Ravenna found themselves matched against voracious professionals from all over. If the tragedy of Mighty Casey who struck out once only, so far as we know, was worth a deathless poem, the sufferings of the Ravenna Pets should be worth the space given the story here, and something besides. Hitters perhaps nearly as good as Casey waved their bats helplessly at Jay’s bewildering pitches.

Not to spin it out, Jay pitched the Corkpullers to a thirty-one to one victory. Hardly a Pet got past first base. It was a disaster. Perhaps Jay, who lived until 1949, remembered the game in his octogenarian years with as much amusement as his younger cousins did.

Henry, the eldest son in Frank McNitt’s family, went to Red Cloud, Nebraska, in search of health as a young man. There he found a wife, Adeline Pontzius, who came back with him to Lisbon in a covered wagon. Once or twice when he was ill and unable to do it, she lowered to the ground by rope and tackle the small cookstove they had with them. Chickens and other provisions were bought from farmers along the way, and they had a chicken dinner every Sunday. Henry became a teacher locally famed for his mastery of rebellious big boys, after the manner of Eggleston’s Hoosier Schoolmaster. Then he bought a farm.
at Trent, in Muskegon County, with his father’s aid. He was school
director in his district and a justice of the peace for many years. At
sixty-four he retired to live in Muskegon Heights, but instead of being
finished, he was just at the entrance to a new career which gave him
great satisfaction. Almost immediately elected a local magistrate, with¬
out seeking the post, he continued until very near the end of his long
life of eighty-one years.

Clara, the second daughter, married William Purd Sessions, a jeweler
and member of the firm of Hubbard & Sessions in Port Huron, Michi¬
gan. He was always Purd to the family. He was a young man of spirit
and high vitality, and before marriage had been an athlete and sports¬
man. Perhaps he had burned himself out. When his two children were
very young, it was necessary to take him to a hospital.

In one of those revealing old letters that came into my hands only
recently, I found that Grandmother had written her daughter Eva that
she had dreamed Purd had come home again, as full of fun and jokes
as ever. But Purd never came home; he died in the hospital. Clara, his
widow, moved to Northville to keep roomers in a large house and rear
her children. And she voluntarily took me in, to help her a little, and to
enable me to get the final two years of high school training. Later she
removed to Ann Arbor, where nearly all the members of the family
were converging; object: privileges of higher education for the younger
generation.

Edith married George S. Chubb, the most personable young man in
Lisbon. They may have continued operating Lorenzo Chubb’s inn for
a while, but not for long. When some years before, the Chicago &
West Michigan railroad (now part of the Pere Marquette system) had
been built from Grand Rapids northward through Sparta and Newaygo
to Traverse City, the stage-coaches stopped running to Lisbon and
Newaygo, and Lisbon began gradually to die. The pine forests along
the Muskegon River and around Newaygo had been disappearing into
the sawmills, and the great areas of empty slashing now were attracting
few but the berry-pickers who came in summer. When nearby Sparta,
a mile north and four miles east, became the transportation center, Lis¬
ton started languishing. In 1894, when I was invited by my grand¬
parents to live in their home for the first two years of high school, Lis¬
ton was charming and somnolent under its great maples. Everyone
supposed it could go on always like that, for only two or three of the
old stores then had been closed. Another railroad had come along and
managed to miss Lisbon by a mile: a branch of the Grand Trunk, run¬
ning from Muskegon to Owosso and Saginaw. A small business com-
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munity grew up around the station one mile to the north, first called North Lisbon, then Gooding. Progress in the form of railroads didn’t do our little town any good at all.

George Chubb was a peach-grower and gentleman farmer, at a time when a large but not wide area just east of and parallel with Lake Michigan was widely known as the Fruit Belt. The closing of the Chubb House to paying travelers marked the beginning of a kind of manorial life in the big house, with friends coming often in their carriages from Grand Rapids and other places to enjoy a spacious hospitality. There visitors were entertained in groups by George’s readings — then called recitations — and frequently by the sparkling talents of Myrtle Koon. There were books on the shelves and magazines on the table, and always much good talk. George Chubb endeared himself to nieces and nephews and other small fry by reading aloud to them from Tom Sawyer and similar works.

When the two daughters, Agnes and Lynne, were old enough for lessons a piano was brought up from Grand Rapids. In a short while the girls were picking out the notes and singing snatches from the operetta Erminie. Those were the days of the great popularity of light opera, and often members of the family were in Grand Rapids enjoying performances at the Powers Opera House. There they saw also the best plays, more available on tour then than now.

In summer the Chubbs and some of the McNitt family repaired for vacations with entertainment to the Island Park Assembly at Rome City, near Kendallville, Indiana. The Assembly was in plainer terms one of the chautauqua enterprises. These have sometimes in recent years been mildly jeered at by the sophisticated as ventures in culture for villagers. They are gone now; the automobiles killed them off. With the passing of the chautauqua the American middle class in the interior lost something valuable. Does anyone suggest that the movies and television have adequately replaced all the varieties of entertainment and self-expression they have driven out?

When I was nine I was invited by my aunts — and I suspect Aunt Eva was at the bottom of it — to go with the family group to Island Park. It was an all-day ride by rail (and a thrilling ride) to glamorous Rome City, which I hardly noticed in the ecstatic walk from the station over a wide, banner-bedecked wooden bridge to the small island where a cottage and a tent awaited us, in a colony of neat summer residences. A modern child probably would be less impressed by a visit to Paris. On this enchanted park-like island in Sylvan Lake were an auditorium, flower-gardens and fountains, a big refreshment store with the first
FRANKLIN McNITT AT 57, BEFORE REMOVING BEARD
MRS. MARY McNUTT PECK. — See p. 241

MRS. EDITH McNITT CHUBB

MRS. EVA McNITT EGGERS
See p. 107

MRS. EVA McNITT FREEMAN, IN THE AGE OF ELOCUTION
soda-fountain I had ever seen, and at a small landing an excursion steamer
that puffed its way around the lake. About a mile out from the landing
was a tiny, low-lying fairy isle, with tall trees and grass.

The Assembly had classes in singing and other kinds of training, and
in the evenings, concerts and lectures. I kept secret the fact that as a
young music-lover, my heart was captured by a girl violinist hardly
older than myself. Her name was Helen Blakesley. She never knew of
my admiration from afar, and no one else has known of it until now.

For my sin of running on and on like this, I offer the plea in mitiga¬
tion that this story may be a slight chapter of Americana. Fifty-eight
years after that blissful fortnight, I paused while on a motor trip from
New York to Los Angeles to see what fate had befallen the Island
Park Assembly. As for Rome City, my chickadees, it is not a city and it
does not resemble Rome; it is a little place with gas stations, a few stores,
and a railroad depot. When I inquired about the Assembly almost no
one knew what I meant. Finally an old resident responded:

“Oh, yes; that became a beer garden about the time automobiles came
in. The place is called Kerr’s Island. When the beer garden faded, the
owner tried selling the land for building lots. You can get over to the
island by following that road.” And he pointed. This is what the modern
Rip Van Winkle found:

The wide bridge had given place to a low causeway of muddy clay.
On the island were a few nondescript houses amid rough knolls and
gullies. No gardens, no fountains, no auditorium, no boat landing. But
standing at the marshy spot where once was a pier for the steamer, I
discovered again, out in the lake, the fairy isle of my childhood, un¬
changed and beautiful. And I was grateful.

I might linger on the big family gatherings at my grandparents’ home
and at the big house of the Chubbs, but already I have lingered too
much. Especially at Christmas the family was happy in an atmosphere
charged with kindness and loyalty; none of the many children ever felt
overlooked.

In a world of change, the Fruit Belt of western Michigan lost much of
its fruitfulness. The soil may have become exhausted or the climate may
have changed a little. George Chubb’s peach orchards became less profit¬
able; fruit trees will grow old. By contriving, and by trying other things,
it might have been possible to maintain the old manorial life on a lesser
scale. But at this time another thing happened: the Chubb daughters
were finished with the ten grades in the Lisbon schools, and a younger
brother, Ralph, was coming along.
A choice had to be made. Should the Chubbs remain in quiet Lisbon, or should they for the sake of education for the children sell out and start over again on a new level in an entirely different kind of life? No doubt Aunt Edith made the hard choice for the family. In 1897 a large house in an excellent hilltop neighborhood in Grand Rapids was rented, the girls entered high school, and a dozen or more lively students of a kindergarten training school were taken in to board. Life was still pleasant and gracious. Weren’t there old friends in Grand Rapids who had enjoyed the hospitality of the Lisbon home?

Alas for Aunt Edith; these former guests knew her no longer. They would not countenance socially a family that kept boarders. It was no doubt hard to take; among people of our kind, friends are always friends, and any kind of useful effort is worthy, and makes no difference. “The rank is but the guinea’s stamp; the man’s the gowd for a’ that.” Here is where real Scottishness began appearing so plainly that it was at once dominant. Instead of quailing, Aunt Edith resolved more firmly than ever that education and opportunities for the young transcended all else. After two years of seeing the girls through high school and mothering the incipient kindergartners, she moved on to Ann Arbor and made ready to serve student boarders on a large scale. She was committed to education, not only for her own children, but for any and all young people she could help. She had only $25, but Grandfather Frank supplied her with capital; within a year she was established.

Readers are to bear in mind two outstanding traits in Scotland at and after the time our family left: the passion for learning, and the free spirit of democracy that recognized the logic of equality in the days when the country was poor. Aunt Edith took the lead in being a good Scot, and her influence drew others of the clan around her. In grace, breeding, and womanliness she had no superior in Grand Rapids or Ann Arbor, but she didn’t meet professors’ wives! She was too busy, and she didn’t care anyway. She took genuine interest in helping the students who came to work for her as stewards and waiters, and cheered them through hard days.

The eyes of many successful lawyers and physicians and teachers, and no doubt of judges and members of Congress, light up today when her name is mentioned. She was kind to them when they were young and struggling. Her tables were served with food of the same manorial quality that once had brought the high-toned visitors from Grand Rapids to Lisbon. Her house became the largest, most popular, and most successful in Ann Arbor.

Her sisters were women of the same fine type, but because she took
the initiative in the hard ways she did, I nominate Edith McNitt Chubb to a special place of honor with another brave woman of the clan: Nicola McNaught of Galloway. She drew young people from farm and village into the great world.

Aunt Edith’s later years were not easy. She became nearly blind from cataracts. Left to her own resources with her radio, she developed two strong new interests: baseball and politics. The Detroit Tigers had no more enthusiastic partisan than she, and at the same time she developed an almost startling dislike and distrust for the New Deal. She believed in rugged self-reliance; didn’t her life work entitle her to scorn what she thought namby-pamby paternalism? Her mind was keen! She lived to be eighty-eight, revered to the last as a gentlewoman.

Next in the family came the second son, Morrison Seward McNitt, who dropped the first name before any of his nephews and nieces ever knew he had it. He sold sewing machines before he became a clerk in a general store at Byron Center, near Grand Rapids. About the time he became proprietor he married Flora Bacon of Ellis Hill, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. Their two sons are Rollin Lee and Reginald DeKoven; the latter obviously owes his name to his mother’s fondness for music and her admiration for the composer of the operetta Robin Hood. The name Reginald was dropped early.

Seward had a character like good steel and a personality like silk. When his health declined and outdoor work was recommended, he sold his store in 1898 and engaged in farming until he removed with his family to Ann Arbor in 1900. There he bought a house and lived the rest of his life.

Dora’s story already has been told. The next sister was Eva, who at the age of twenty subordinated her interests in elocution and painting to marriage to Charles C. Freeman; he was ten years her senior and principal of schools at Lake Odessa, Michigan. After many years there, the Freemans moved to Ann Arbor. A son was born to them April 4, 1911, and when it became apparent he could not live, an infant girl born two days earlier was adopted. She was named Grace.

Presently Verner moved to Ann Arbor and bought a dairy farm just outside of town, southward from the football stadium; on November 18, 1905, he married Flora Mills. Their daughter Ruth was born in 1909. Verner was the youngest of his family and barely more than six years my senior; he seemed like an older brother, and some of his outgrown clothing was passed on to me in childhood. I also came into ownership of his tricycle, which I liked better. As a young man he drove the smartest span of horses in Lisbon; later he owned the best
automobile he could get and drove it fast. In my high school days in Lisbon he was always singing about the house, Irish ballads mostly. After working hard all day he would play croquet by moonlight. Flora is not the only one who mourns his untimely death by heart failure in 1940. She remembers the past in company with most of the walnut furniture from the Lisbon parlor, its horsehair covering replaced by modern fabrics.

With almost all the family removing to Ann Arbor, Grandfather and Grandmother finally sold the Lisbon home and moved there too. Only my father and his sisters Alice and Dora held out. The departure of the Chubbs from Lisbon in 1897 marked the beginning of the last phase of the town’s decline. The great house and the three barns mysteriously burned to the ground a few years after the Chubbs sold; thus the finest landmark in the center of the village disappeared.

What the railroads began, the automobiles finished. Here and there about the country there must be many who cherish memories of the good little town that wouldn’t die. Lorenzo Chubb’s wife, Cordelia Meech, had a sister Nancy, whose granddaughter, Adelaide Frost, attended the school in Lisbon. She is now the wife of Colonel Eddie Rickenbacker.

The family of Franklin and Martha McNitt of Lisbon:

I. ALICE FRANCES McNITT, b. July 28, 1853, m. on December 27, 1868 Joseph R. Harrison (1848-99), d. May 16,1937. Their children:

1. Erwin T. Harrison, b. February 27, 1871, m. on December 18, 1889, Jessie Laraway, d. August 20, 1898; two children:
   1-a, Archie, b. September 15, 1890;
   1-b, Helen, b. January 18, 1894.

2. Charles L. Harrison, b. April 9, 1873, m. on May 21, 1893 Madeleine Sliter, d. November 5, 1946; two children:
   2-a, Webster, b. December 29, 1894;
   2-b, Clay, b. January 14, 1896. Degrees, and names of wives and children of both are lacking.

3. Rosella Harrison, d. June 20, 1875, m. on June 20, 1891 J. C. Hodgins; Zella lives in Sparta, Michigan; four children:
   3-a, Gladys, b. April 24, 1892, d. April 13, 1902;
   3-b, Robert E., b. August 22, 1893, is with Hudson Motor Co. in Detroit;
   3-c, Merle R., b. September 13, 1902, lives on Scenic Drive on White Lake between Muskegon and Whitehall and builds boats;
   3-d, Alton L., b. December 23, 1905, lives at Fremont and is field supervisor for Everwear Aluminum Co. directing large sales force;
FRANK McNITT'S LISBON FAMILY

3-e, Frank, b. June 16, 1907, was named for his Lisbon grandfather; d. November 24, 1917 by breaking through ice and drowning while skating on Bass Lake, near Peacock, Michigan.


II. HENRY ALLEN McNITT, b. December 25, 1854, m. on February 8, 1880 Adeline Pontzius (1858-1936), d. February 1936; four children:

1. Virgil V., b. January 15, 1881, educated at University of Michigan and became newspaper man, m. on June 12, 1909 Marie Florence Bellows, b. December 7, 1882, educated at Oberlin and at Stanford University; children:
   1-a, Robert Bellows McNitt, b. January 10, 1911, A.B., Yale 1933, m. on June 20, 1936 Mary Dyer, d. December 22, 1941 by fall from moving train; one son, Robert Bellows McNitt, Jr., b. June 16, 1938. Robert wrote a column for the Yale Daily News and was business manager of the Yale Literary Review while in college; after graduation he became reporter for the Evening News of Southbridge, Massachusetts, then city editor and managing editor, then managing editor Knoxville Journal 1938-39, editor McNaught Syndicate in New York thereafter.
   1-b, Frank McNitt, b. December 5, 1912, attended Yale School of Fine Arts four years and Art Students League, New York, one year. The self-portrait he painted at age twenty-one in 1934, shown in one of the illustrations here, was accepted for hanging in the annual show of the National Academy of Design in New York, when only one in every eleven submitted was selected for exhibit. Frank m. on October 1, 1936 Virginia Collins, b. June 1, 1916; she also studied painting at Art Students League as pupil of Alexander Brook; three children: Jean, b. October 3, 1937; John Barnard, b. August 14, 1939; Benjamin Alexander, b. July 3, 1945. Frank was a painter in New York and Woodstock several years, then was feature writer for Evening News, Southbridge, 1937-41; since then has been managing editor and then editor Westwood Hills Press, Los Angeles; markedly espoused causes of displaced Japanese-Americans at outset of our entrance into second World War, and other minorities, and opposed imposition of special test oath on faculties of University of California, demanded by Regents in a search for Communist teachers. Lecturer UCLA School of Journalism from February 1951. Is vice president McNaught Publications, Inc., Los Angeles and of Southbridge Evening News, Inc.

2. Ethel L. McNitt, b. February 28, 1882, m. on December 25, 1901 Edward C. Bearss; they live in Ann Arbor; one daughter:
   Vivian, b. November 8, 1902, m. on February 7, 1923 Clinton H. Good, b. October 26, 1901, A.B., Michigan 1925; three children:
   (a) Clinton Robert Good, b. June 9, 1924, took pre-medical work at Yale, M.D., University of Cincinnati 1948, m. on January 1,
1947 Margaret Flores, b. October 25, 1927, B.M., University of
Cincinnati 1948; their two children: Clinton Arthur Good, b.
March 19, 1948, and Robert Bruce Good, b. May 10, 1949. (b)
Leslie Edward Good, b. March 19, 1929, m. on August 6, 1947
Marie Ann Foglia, b. June 21, 1929; one child: Leslie Ann Good,
b. October 6, 1948. (c) Betty Jean Good, b. June 10, 1934. Clinton
H. Good is vice president of McNitts, Inc., in Cleveland, in charge
of production.

1909, m. on June 17, 1916 Margaret Austin, b. January 8, 1896;
two children:
3-a, Jean, b. May 28, 1917, m. on February 24, 1940 Eugene Brand,
b. June 1, 1909; two children: Margaret, b. July 15, 1941, and
Barbara, b. May 17, 1944.
3-b, Harold Austin McNitt, b. December 6, 1924, A.B. “with dis-
tinction,” Michigan 1949, also Phi Beta Kappa; entered Air Forces
training 1943, commissioned Second Lieutenant and was preparing
to go overseas in weather reconnaissance on a B-25 when war ended;
m. on June 8, 1946 Roberta Frank, b. June 26, 1925; Austin is now
completing work for Master’s degree at Michigan and plans to
teach.
Harold Anson McNitt, his father, is the founder and president of
McNitts, Inc., engravers, printers, and publishers of the annual
Bluebook of College Athletics in Cleveland. He practiced law in
Grand Rapids for several years after graduation, and then became
editor and manager of the Central Press Association.

4. George E. McNitt, b. November 25, 1886, attended Michigan State
College, m. on February 10, 1909 Effie Nielson, b. April 25, 1889;
four children:
4-a, Hazel, b. May 21, 1910, m. February 10, 1934 Wayne Ohl, b.
December 15, 1909; no children.
4-b, Roland McNitt, b. May 11, 1912, educated at Harvard, m. on
February 20, 1936 Nathalie Morey, b. April 1, 1911; one daughter:
Katherine, b. July 9, 1940. Roland is a divisional manager for the
Blue Cross with office in Boston; Nathalie conducts a private school
in Lenox, and Roland commutes.
4-c, Gerald McNitt, b. June 27, 1915, m. on September 15, 1939
Mary Alley, b. April 10, 1916; two sons: Gerald, Jr., b. May 11,
1943, and George Richard, b. April 25, 1946. Gerald McNitt is
employed by the American Optical Co. in Southbridge, Massa-
chusetts.
4-d, Eleanor McNitt, b. November 14, 1917, m. August 25, 1943
Clarence J. Payne, b. June 5, 1912, who was First Lieutenant in
Field Artillery in second World War; son Paul Douglas b. June
3, 1944.
George E. McNitt, father of this family, is with the Evening News
in Southbridge, and serves as liaison man in production between
newspaper’s mechanical department and the McNaught Syndicate in New York.

III. CLARA JANET McNITT, b. May 3, 1857, m. on September 29, 1887 William Purd Sessions, b. August 22, 1855, d. May 1, 1895; Clara d. January 13, 1919; two children:

1. Charles C. Sessions, b. September 10, 1888, attended University of Michigan, was an officer in first World War, m. on April 5, 1935 Carolyn B. Garten, R.N.; no children.

2. Marguerite Sessions, b. September 21, 1890, m. on May 12, 1920 Edward J. Roxbury, who as a Brigadier General was killed in action in second World War; Marguerite d. January 3, 1933; two children: 2-a, Clara Janet Roxbury, b. August 19, 1923; now married with two children.

2-b, Edward J. Roxbury, Jr., b. August 20, 1925; at last account was a Lieutenant with the U. S. Army in Japan, living there with wife and one son.

IV. EDITH LOIS McNITT, b. July 2, 1859, m. on December 23, 1880, George S. Chubb, b. September 14, 1850, d. August 1932, Edith d. June 1947; three children:

1. Agnes Ethelberta Chubb, b. December 7, 1881, attended University of Michigan, m. on September 7, 1904 Luther Fiske Warren, b. September 20, 1885, M.D., Michigan 1909, d. January 17, 1937; Agnes now lives in Westport, Connecticut.

Dr. Warren’s career will receive our attention before we go on to the children. He was an instructor in clinical microscopy and in clinical medicine in the Michigan Medical Department 1910-11, then removed to Brooklyn, New York to practice. He held and was advanced in following posts in Long Island College of Medicine, Brooklyn: Assistant Professor Internal Medicine 1912, Associate Professor 1915, Acting Professor 1917, Professor 1918; was Director of Medicine in Long Island College Hospital 1918-37; Physician-in-Chief St. John’s Episcopal Hospital and Director of Medicine Brooklyn Home for Consumptives, 1932-37. Also he was Consulting Physician Harbor Hospital, Methodist Hospital, Brunswick General Hospital, Lutheran Hospital, Coney Island Hospital, and Southside Hospital; member Board of Governors American College of Physicians 1931-34, and a Regent of the same 1933-37; examiner in medicine for New York State Board of Medicine 1930-33; president State Board of Medical Examiners 1933-37; president Kings County Medical Society 1930; organizer and first president of Brooklyn Health Council 1934-37; member Board of Directors and chairman of Public Health Committee, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce; member Board of Trustees of Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute 1924-37, and of Board of Packer Collegiate Institute 1927-37; member New York Academy of Medicine. He carried on a heavy private practice and was an expert diagnostician. The four children of Dr. Luther and Agnes Warren:

Dr. Charles Ford Warren served his internship with the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston 1931-33, had graduate education under Dalton Research Fellowship at same hospital 1933-35; has taught at Long Island College of Medicine as instructor 1935-42, associate instructor 1942-45, Assistant Clinical Professor since 1945; at Long Island College Hospital: assistant attending physician 1935-46, associate attending physician since 1946, Chief of the Medical Clinic since 1946, Chief of the Arthritic Clinic since 1946. Arthritis is his field of specialization. Was clinical assistant at St. John’s Episcopal Hospital 1937-39, associate attending physician since 1945; assistant visiting physician at Kings County Hospital 1935-46; associate attending physician at Brooklyn Thoracic Hospital since 1935; in collaboration with Dr. Walter Bauer and other physicians has contributed articles on researches in medical science to the American Journal of Pathology, the American Journal of the Medical Sciences, the American Heart Journal, and other publications. He is a member of the American College of Physicians, American Medical Association, Kings County Medical Society, New York Medical Association, Association of the Physicians of Long Island, American Federation for Clinical Research. Shares a suite of offices with his brother Dr. Robert at 200 Hicks Street, Brooklyn.

1-b, Robert Fiske Warren, b. July 7, 1908, A.B., Michigan 1929, M.D., Harvard 1933; m. on July 2, 1936 Lucy Marie Sinclair, b. November 20, 1911; trained in pathology and general surgery seven years, finishing with a residency at Long Island College of Medicine Service at Kings County Hospital; is specialist in orthopedic surgery after training with Dr. Arthur Steindler of Iowa City, Iowa; Major, Medical Corps, A. U. S., stationed at Hoff General Hospital in charge of orthopedic service 1942-45; certified by American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons 1949; fellow of American College of Surgeons; member American Academy Orthopedic Surgeons, New York Academy of Medicine, Brooklyn Surgical Society, American Academy Compensation Medicine; Assistant Professor of Clinical Orthopedic Surgery, Long Island College of Medicine (now known as State University of New York, Medical Center) since 1948; either chief attending, or attending, associate, or visiting Orthopedic Surgeon at following hospitals: St. John’s Episcopal, The Brooklyn, Carson C. Peck Memorial, Brooklyn Thoracic, Veterans, Kings County, Long Island College, Kingston Avenue, House of St. Giles the Cripple, and Sea View Hospital; secretary Medical Board St. John’s Episcopal Hospital 1947-49 and of Board of the House of St. Giles the Cripple since 1949;
member Entrance Committee Long Island College of Medicine since 1948; orthopedic advisor to the following: Visiting Nurse Association, Department of Welfare, and Department of Public Health; member Committee on Trauma, American College of Surgeons since 1947; member Comitia Minora, Kings County Medical Society since 1949; orthopedic consultant for Industrial Home for the Blind since 1947. How he does it we cannot guess, but he has a heavy private practice besides. Dr. Luther Warren taught his sons to work and bear responsibility. The two children of Dr. Robert and Lucy Warren: Cicily de St. Croix, b. January 14, 1941, and Luther Fiske, b. October 13, 1939.

1-c, Edith Lois Warren, b. November 15, 1911, m. 1st on July 29, 1937 Kent Rhodes, b. February 5, 1912; three children: Jocelyn Rhodes, b. February 3, 1939; Warren Rhodes, b. December 4, 1940; Cherry Rhodes, b. June 28, 1943; m. 2nd on April 12, 1950 Frank Christian Hanson.

1-d, John Collins Warren, b. November 4, 1913, d. July 17, 1921. Had little John lived he would have gone as far as his two older brothers.

2. Edith Lynne Chubb, b. July 23, 1883, attended University of Michigan but interrupted her course to m. in November 1901 Mott G. Spaulding, b. January 1878, LL.B., Michigan 1901; she entered Michigan with class of 1903, and returned after husband's death in 1921 to win her A.B. with her daughter Virginia in 1924; two children:

2-a, Virginia Marguerite Spaulding, b. October 29, 1902, A. B., Michigan, 1924, m. on June 16, 1924 Louis Gess, B.S., Michigan, Engineer 1924. Mother, daughter, and bridegroom received their degrees on the same day, as was noticed in Detroit newspapers; one son: Richard Spaulding Gess, b. July 31, 1931, member class of 1953 at Michigan; has played football, weighs 190, and aspires to make the Michigan team before he graduates; represents third generation of family at the University. Louis Gess, Richard's father, is Chief Application Engineer with the Brown Instrument Co. at Jenkintown, Pennsylvania; has been with company twenty years.

2-b, George Chubb Spaulding, b. February 19, 1907, m. in June 1933 Vivian Mack; they have an adopted son Allan Newton Spaulding, b. December 18, 1945.

3. Ralph L. Chubb, b. August 18, 1887, B.S. in Chemical Engineering, Michigan 1909; has held various engineering positions, among them operating engineer for Wilputte Coke Oven Corporation 1916-21, TNT superintendent for Grogan Powder Co. 1942-43, and research engineer for Bureau of Agriculture and Engineering Chemistry since 1943, working on guayule rubber production at Salinas, California. Ralph m. 1st on December 6, 1909 Hattie E. Distel; 2nd on September 5, 1916 Zella B. Farrar; three children:

3-a, Edith Alice Chubb, b. November 26, 1917, attended Michigan
two years, then for two years was a professional dancer; m. in September 1937 Fred G. Bowser, their three children: Bonnie, b. November 26, 1938; Susan, b. June 11, 1943; Cheryl, b. July 22, 1945.

3-b, Elizabeth Ann Chubb, b. August 5, 1920, attended University of Michigan two years, m. in July 1941 Roy E. Kimball, now Captain in U. S. Air Forces in Canal Zone; their two children: Roy, b. March 24, 1943, and Ralph, b. March 25, 1946.

3-c, Ralph L. Chubb, Jr., b. March 24, 1924, course at Michigan interrupted by war service as Ensign in the Navy, under-water demolition branch; received degree as Mechanical Engineer in 1947; was member of Michigan football squad in seasons of 1944 and 1946 and participated in big games as a halfback; also was a member of the swimming team 1944-45; now is an erecting engineer for Babcock & Wilcox Boiler Manufacturing Co.; m. on March 12, 1949 Joy Harris.

Ralph L. Chubb, Sr., m. 3rd on July 6, 1943 Gladys L. Burge (nee Wagner).

V. MORRISON SEWARD McNITT, b. May 2, 1861, m. November 2, 1887 Flora Bacon, b. March 10, 1864; he d. March 24, 1909; two sons:

1. Rollin Lee McNitt, b. November 23, 1890, LL.B. Michigan 1912, m. on August 20, 1908 Marjorie Elizabeth Hilton, b. September 30, 1890. Admitted to Michigan Bar in July, and California Bar in September 1912; was admitted to practice in all California courts and in Federal courts, including United States Supreme Court; has conducted litigation in all of them. On arriving in Los Angeles in 1912 he joined editorial staff of L. D. Powell Law Book Co. and wrote law nearly six years; also was assistant to editor-in-chief of the Standard Encyclopedia of Procedure until he resigned to practice law. In 1916, in addition to practice, he began teaching at Southwestern School of Law; was Dean from 1918 to 1940, now is Dean Emeritus; still teaches courses in constitutional and labor law. Was member of board of education and city attorney of suburb Eagle Rock before its annexation to Los Angeles. Shortly afterward, was appointed member of the Board of Planning Commissioners of Los Angeles, and served eighteen months as its president. Has several times acted as Judge pro tem of Superior Court in Los Angeles by stipulation of counsel. Member of American and Los Angeles Bar Associations and of Lawyers' Club of Los Angeles, of which he was president in 1943. In 1942 was named member of Hudson-Corbett Committee headed by Judge Manley O. Hudson of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and took active part in drafting Statement on International Law of the Future. Has taken vigorous part in politics as Democrat; active in State campaigns and as delegate to national conventions; was chairman of Los Angeles County Central Committee from July 1945 to August 1948.
FRANK McNITT'S LISBON FAMILY

1948. Has served four-year term as trustee of Pasadena Congregational Church, and has served on numerous civic committees. Rollin Lee and Marjorie McNitt have one son:

Rollin Lee, Jr., b. January 11, 1916, m. September 4, 1937 Elizabeth May Church, b. July 5, 1914, A.B., Stanford 1936; he took A.B. degree at Stanford in 1937, LL.B. 1940; admitted to California Bar January 1941. At outbreak of war in 1941 he applied for service in U. S. Navy and was commissioned Lieutenant j.g. He retired in autumn 1945 as a Lieutenant; began work in December as executive vice president and manager of Whittier Building and Loan Assn.; he is now director and treasurer also, and lives in Whittier, suburb of Los Angeles. The children of Rollin Lee, Jr. and Elizabeth McNitt:

1-a, Robert Clyde, b. July 28, 1940;
1-b, Roger Lee, b. October 1, 1942;
1-c, Marcia, b. January 1, 1945;
1-d, Margaret Elizabeth, b. March 11, 1947;
1-e, Evelyn Louise, b. May 26, 1948.

2. Reginald DeKoven McNitt, b. July 22, 1895, m. December 15, 1915 Lillian Zanella; B.S., Michigan State Teachers College 1925, M.S., Michigan 1926, Ph.D., Michigan 1930; was teacher and research assistant in psychology and education in colleges and at Michigan 1924-32; Professor of Social Science at Wilmington College in Ohio 1934-44; chief, personnel testing section, Dayton Signal Corps Supply Agency 1944-45; director, personnel testing program, Air Materiel Command, Wright Field, Dayton, 1945-47; afterward Professor of Personnel Management and Psychology, AAF Institute of Technology. Is now consulting psychologist with office in Dayton. No children.

VI. DORA McNITT, b. February 7, 1863, m. Chapin Clute May 15, 1898, d. December 19, 1943. No children. Her story has been related.

VII. EVA McNITT, b. Jan. 31, 1870, m. October 12, 1890 Charles C. Freeman; infant boy died soon after birth April 4, 1911; Grace, b. April 2, 1911, was immediately adopted; she is now Mrs. Addison E. Klophel of Springfield, Illinois. Eva McNitt was a teacher before marrying Charles C. Freeman, principal of schools at Lake Odessa, Michigan. Widowed for years, she now lives in Ann Arbor.


Frank McNitt, the shagbark, cardplaying builder who was progenitor of this long procession, doubtless was pleased enough to give her inheritance in advance to his daughter Mrs. Edith Chubb. With her $25 and his money to help, she made the first payment on a big house on
South Ingalls Street, Ann Arbor. The young doctors, engineers, lawyers, and others of his great-grandchildren who may not have known before of the part he played are only a little behind me in learning of it. He never mentioned it himself.

As long as we can remember the quality of initiative and the nature of the devoted hard work of Mrs. Edith Lois McNitt Chubb and her sisters, the less likely are we ever to be tainted by snobbery.
So many references have been made in earlier chapters to the migration of members of Barnard McNitt’s family from Palmer to Nova Scotia in 1761 and afterward that we need not pursue further this phase in the lives of the transplanted New Englanders. A later account of the man who set them in motion — Alexander McNutt of Virginia — will provide ample background.

William McNitt and his wife Elisabeth Thomson took three children with them when they went to Onslow, about seventy miles northeast of the Basin of Minas. Their descendants are very numerous. Most remain in Nova Scotia, but many are now living in and around Boston, and some are far inland. The surname McNutt, we recall, was adopted by William. The change meant nothing in particular at a time when any variant of the name McNaught could be selected and used at will. The children of William and Elisabeth were:

1. Abner, b. at Palmer Aug. 29, 1756, m. Mary Morrison, had six sons and six daughters.
2. Sarah, b. at Palmer June 20, 1757.
3. Eunice, b. at Palmer October 21, 1759, m. in 1781 John Lynds, d. March 1835.
4. May, b. in Onslow, as were all to follow.
5. Gideon, b. September 22, 1766, m. 1st in 1801 Elizabeth Thompson, m. 2nd in 1806 Jane Lynds, who bore six sons and five daughters. A son by the first marriage was John Murray Upham McNutt, b. July 26, 1802, m. October 28, 1828 Jane C. Hawkins. Their son Joseph Gideon, b. October 1833, m. on January 6, 1859, Laetitia Scott of Richmond, Indiana. Their two sons, Albert and Francis Augustus, will be accounted for in later chapters.
6. Phineas, b. August 11, 1768, m. on November 12, 1789 Jaorma Howard.
7. William, 1769-1841, m. on January 13, 1797 Isabel Dickson. They had three sons and three daughters. The third son was Alexander McNutt, b. July 21, 1813, m. Esther Barnhill. Their son Edward Everett (1860-1940) m. Annie Faulkner; children included Everett, Frank, Mabel, and Roy Douglass McNutt. The latter was b. December 14, 1894, and m. Janet Farquharson; of him more later.
8. Samuel, b. November 5, 1770, m. 1st, on May 13, 1790 Ann Dickson, who bore a daughter, Isabel, who m. John Blair; m. 2nd, on March 8, 1792 Margaret Savage, who bore fourteen children; the eldest son, William, b. April 25, 1794, lived to be eighty; he m. on April 13, 1820 Mary Johnson, who bore twelve children. The ninth was Dr. William Fletcher McNutt of San Francisco, who will be noticed further.
9. Rufus.
10. Mary.
We have accounted for forty-six grandchildren for William and Elisabeth Thomson McNutt, without knowledge of how many more may have been provided by six of the ten children of whom we know scarcely more than their names. Eunice and Phineas married, and should have brought the total of grandchildren to sixty at least. Sarah, May, Rufus, and Mary, may not have done so well.

Roy Douglass McNutt, William's great-great-grandson, was educated at Dalhousie University at Halifax, where he was editor of the student newspaper. After going on to an LL.B. degree, he continued at Harvard to win a degree seldom encountered: that of Doctor of Juridical Sciences. He entered the practice of law in New York and was for some time associated with Elihu Root's law firm. Then he left to develop a private practice. He has been one of the most loyal members of the Canadian Club in New York, and gives evidence in his speech of the lasting traces of the Scottish tongue in Nova Scotia. Up in Evangeline's country, it is noticeable, they go "oot" and "aboot," which is a pleasant traditional custom. Mrs. Janet McNutt is of the old Farquharson clan of Scotland. Nearly all the sons- and daughters-in-law of William and Elisabeth, it is worth noting, were born with Scottish names.

Mention has been made of Dr. William Fletcher McNutt, grandson of Samuel, and great-grandson of William and Elisabeth. William Fletcher was born March 29, 1839 at Truro, Nova Scotia. He first attended the Presbyterian Seminary of Dalhousie University at Halifax, then the University of Vermont, where he was graduated in 1862. He began medical studies at Harvard, and attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York in 1862-63. He was in the United States Navy as a physician in 1863-64, and then continued his medical studies in London, Paris, and Edinburgh in 1864-65. Edinburgh University gave him his M.D. degree.

Dr. McNutt went to San Francisco to practice on April 18, 1868, and subsequently was Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine at the University of California for a considerable period. He was author of a work on his specialty: Diseases of the Kidneys and Bladder. Dr. McNutt maintained a private hospital for many years in order to give his patients close attention. He ranked high in California medical circles.

Dr. McNutt married Marie Louise Coon, only daughter of Henry Irving Coon, at the time mayor of San Francisco. They had two sons and two daughters. All four were very well equipped with the mental qualities that made their father outstanding. Maxwell McNutt, a leading San Francisco attorney, was one of defense counsel for Thomas J.
Mooney, the labor leader accused of planting a suitcase bomb that caused a number of casualties in the 1916 Preparedness parade. Mooney was convicted—some said on “framed” evidence—and spent twenty years in prison. He was considered a martyr by some all the time he was behind bars, but after his release his martyr’s halo faded out almost immediately.

Maxwell McNutt was attorney for the complainant in another case highly celebrated in California. After the death of a wealthy man named James Flood, a woman who said she was his daughter brought suit for a large share of his estate. The defense maintained that the lady was in no way related to James Flood, but Maxwell McNutt pressed her claim so successfully that a settlement was made that provided well for her. Mr. McNutt died several years ago. His widow now is a real estate and insurance broker in Redwood City, a few miles down the peninsula from San Francisco. There is a son, Maxwell McNutt, Jr., who has chosen not to follow his father’s footsteps.

Another son of Dr. McNutt was William Fletcher, Jr. born May 24, 1876. After graduation from Harvard he studied medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in London, and at Edinburgh University, where he won his M.D. degree. He returned to San Francisco in 1900 to join his father in practice. He married Linda Mullane in 1916, and died ten years later. Mrs. McNutt lives in San Francisco. Her elder daughter, Linda, is the wife of Frank H. Thames, a chemical engineer. The younger daughter, Mary Louise McNutt, remains at home with her mother.

The two daughters of Dr. McNutt, Sr., were Mayne and Ruth. The former, who could speak fluently in eight languages, became the wife of Ashton Potter. Ruth married Darcey Brown of Denver. Neither of the sisters is now living.

In the chapters to follow we shall become acquainted with another descendant of Palmer and Nova Scotia, who was as different from his kin as anyone imaginably could be. Before we consider Francis Augustus MacNutt, and for contrast, we should welcome to our long story one of the most loyal of all those who belong in the New England family.

“Young man,” exclaimed a nice old lady stranger with bright eyes, “you’re a McNutt! I don’t know what your name is, but I know who you are.” She thought she could tell a McNutt for his sandy hair, blue eyes, and forehead, brows, and nose of a certain pattern, and she was right. A very tall, personable young man he was, too — and still is.

The object of her interest was Charles H. Hendrickson, a sergeant with the Metropolitan Police of the Boston area, whose home is in Medford. He was born August 15, 1889 at Cambridge, and was a dental
technician before he joined the police. He served in the Army Air Force in the first World War, and married on October 26, 1924, Ruth Ellen Bjorklund of Abington, Massachusetts. Their children are Charles H., Jr., born February 13, 1927, and Robert Fulton, born January 5, 1933.

Something more than a century ago there lived in Springhill, Nova Scotia, Daniel and Kate Gilroy McNutt. Their relationship to William and Elisabeth, originally of Palmer, remains to be cleared up, and their great-grandson Charles Hendrickson will live to do it. Their daughter Martha Ann, born January 28, 1833, married on October 26, 1858, Samuel Warren Crowe of Upper Economy, Nova Scotia (1833-1900). The Crowes’ daughter Ellen (1868-1899) married on September 5, 1888, Charles L. Hendrickson of Cambridge, Massachusetts (1860-1916); they were the parents of the handsome sergeant accosted by the nice old lady.

It would make a long story to tell all that Charles H. Hendrickson has done to solve the mystery of Daniel McNutt’s relationship in and to a family so numerous. His quest has brought him a great deal of knowledge of the Nova Scotians, which he has made freely available, and very usefully.
FRANCIS AUGUSTUS MacNUTT AT 16 AND AT 50
J. SCOTT MacNUTT, PAINTER.—See p. 188

HIS PORTRAIT OF HIS SON FRANCIS
HENRY JAMES could have created Francis Augustus MacNutt. When we consider what a character Francis could have made in a Jamesian novel and go on to recall the background and tastes of the novelist, we perceive arresting similarities. Both Henry James and Francis MacNutt had wealthy grandfathers of Scottish descent whose families had come to America by way of Northern Ireland. Both were votaries of beauty, both craved the elegant and exquisite in the appointments of daily living, both considered life in their native land to be dismal, both sought patrician society, both became expatriates.

So Francis Augustus MacNutt could have been portrayed with understanding in a novel by Henry James. Only, however, when James felt equal to a work of epic dimensions. In Francis' expatriate life in Mexico, London, Constantinople, Madrid, Rome, Vienna, and the Austrian Tyrol he felt more of the Jamesian aspirations, met more dowagers and diplomats, princes and court ladies, Cardinals and Popes, than even James himself might have thought credible enough to include in a work of fiction.

The grandson of Barnard McNitt in the fifth generation was what the scientists would call a “sport” — a complete departure from the norm. He could have been a study for another novelist — a fellow-Hoosier named Booth Tarkington — who would have been entertained by his aspirations for European society and his avidity for brilliant ceremonies and spectacles.

This descendant of the rugged Massachusetts farmer was born in Richmond, Indiana, on February 15, 1863. His father was Joseph Gideon McNutt, son of John Murray Upham McNutt, both lawyers in Ohio. The former was a Captain in the Quartermaster Corps of the Union Army when his second son was born at the home of maternal grandparents: Andrew Finley and Martha McGlathery Scott. Their daughter Laetitia lived only a week after the baby Francis was born; they gladly undertook the care of the child and of his brother Albert, not quite three years older.

John Murray Upham McNutt, the paternal grandfather, was born in Nova Scotia on July 26, 1802. He was a grandson of William, son of Barnard McNitt of Palmer, who had married Elisabeth Thomson in the new Ulster-Scottish community in Massachusetts and welcomed three children before joining Alexander McNutt of Virginia in 1761 in the colonization of Nova Scotia. John came down to New Jersey as
a youth to finish his education, moved to Ohio in 1821, and was admitted to the bar in Preble County in 1823. He married Jane Hawkins of a Virginia family in 1828. In his brief but active life of thirty-five years he served two terms in the House, and two in the Senate, of the Ohio Legislature. He had a taste for literature, and the library of fine books he left, including works in French and Spanish, was a source of pride to his grandson Francis.

Andrew Finley Scott, the maternal grandfather, was typical of the Ulster Scots who peopled the Valley of Virginia. His grandfather, Andrew Scott, came from Ulster to the vicinity of Lexington and was a neighbor of the McNutts of Virginia. Andrew’s son Jesse was a Jeffersonian Democrat who disliked slavery and freed the few slaves he owned when the abolition movement became a stirring issue. Jesse’s son Andrew Finley, born in 1811, moved to Indiana and became a successful banker and man of affairs, as well as a staunch leader in the United Presbyterian Church.

The wife of this greatly respected Richmond banker was Martha McGlathery, also of the race of Ulster Scots. Her grandson Francis wrote of her in later life that she loved her two grandsons passionately; that “passion” was the only word to describe accurately her various moods in her relation to others. She had a temper she did not try to control, and her husband Andrew kept his calm by a habit of silence when under fire at home, and by devoting himself to blameless interests outside.

“His manners were uniformly urbane and simple,” Francis wrote of his grandfather. “Under his apparent gentleness, there lay a strong will and tenacity of purpose that amazed any who inadvertently ran foul of his convictions and decisions. Noting the firm line of his mouth in repose and the keen look in his blue eyes, deep-set under beetling brows, a close observer would have divined that Andrew Scott was not all sweetness. Never have I known anyone so indifferent to, so quietly defiant of, public opinion.”

Grandmother Martha had been beautiful as a young woman, and still was slender and straight in carriage. As a means of escape from family discords, “traceable, directly or indirectly, to her unhappy disposition,” she devoted herself to flowers and animals, which responded glowingly to her care.

This rapid sketch of the background of Francis Augustus MacNutt is necessary to an understanding of the manner in which his life took shape, and became what he made of it. He must have been handsome as a boy; his photographs in later life are those of an unusually good-looking man.
In youth he had a kind of insolent charm, and the bearing of a patrician. It is clear that he felt himself in every fiber a patrician, and entitled to a place in the world's aristocracy.

When Francis Augustus grew old enough to inquire into his origins and to analyze them with reference to his idea of what he stood for, he became apologetic for his covenanting ancestors and wholly disinclined to pride in what they had done. He turned rather to the Hawkins family: his grandfather John Murray Upham McNutt had married Jane Hawkins, of a family that had left Devonshire for America when Catholics were placed under disabilities by severe laws against their religion.

It may be that the Hawkinses adhered to the spirit of the Cavalier tradition, though they may not have been of it precisely. Their scion who found himself enmeshed in a quite different tradition, regretted that they had frittered away "the precious heritage of the Catholic faith." They may have begun their frittering long before they left England, through neglect and intermarriage with Protestants. But for Francis they had Virginia glamor: "Of the men, those who were not soldiers turned to the law, and all of them were high-spirited and given to good, possibly the best, living." Of Jane's father, Joseph, it was said in his day: "When Hawkins snuffs, the county sneezes."

Toward the end Francis Augustus MacNutt wrote an autobiography — *Six Decades of My Life* — a readable work written in a warm and often brilliant style that came from experience in writing and editing several books that had preceded it. Reference is made to it here because it has been a helpful guide in the preparation of these chapters.

A central fact in the life of Francis Augustus was his instinctive turning to the Catholic faith in childhood, despite the objections of his Presbyterian grandparents, and his passionate adherence to it through all his years. He was a Catholic of Catholics; probably he became far more deeply absorbed in matters of creed, dogma, canon law, traditions and ancient customs than most others whose families had been Catholic for many generations. His creed meant far more to him than loyalty to family and country.

By his own account he was not pious, nor was he in the least devout in the spiritual sense. From childhood he hungered for beauty; in the ritual of the Mass, the ceremonials and processions, the lights, the music, the vestments, the sacred objects of the altar, images and statues, stained glass windows, and stately architecture — all hallowed by the usage of centuries — he found a kind of beauty that he craved. When the consecrated work of the priesthood was offered him, he resisted. He had
no vocation for it, he confessed honestly. Eventually glamorous work useful to the Church was found for him, that gave him great satisfaction for a while.

We are reminded of another youth from a Presbyterian home who was charmed by the Catholic manner of worship: James Boswell of Auchinleck. But Boswell lingered only at the threshold and never entered; his inner compulsions were different.

Whence the spontaneous call to which the child responded? Answering this question in later life, Francis Augustus asked himself another: could it have been “the workings of an atavistic force transmitted, untainted, through perverted Protestant channels from some devout Catholic ancestor?” Perhaps the Calvinist doctrine of predestination had something to do with it, he decided. But perhaps the circumstances governing his early home life had an influence he didn’t measure.

His grandmother’s acerbity kept the home atmosphere taut and uncomfortable. Perhaps the boy felt ill-adjusted: always groping for warmth and beauty. When he was about six he wandered one day through the open door of a plain little Catholic church near his grandfather’s home: the church of St. Mary’s, where a congregation of poor Irish people worshipped — families whose men worked on railroads and in factories. Father McMullen must have been surprised when the grave youngster rang the doorbell of his house and announced he had come to call. Francis saw the kindly priest several times, and the priest explained to him the uses of objects employed in the services.

One day on leaving the church he encountered two nuns, Sister Mary Carmel and Sister Mary Ildefons, who took him through the parish school and to their house. Both were kind, but Sister Mary Ildefons was beautiful in the boy’s eyes, with “bright blue eyes, nice teeth, and the sweetest dimples imaginable.” He visited them many times; they answered his questions without asking any; perhaps they gave him cookies. Now we may find here a simple answer that Francis never published, even though he may have thought of it: the gentle nuns may have supplied the warmth craved by a motherless boy, and thus have influenced the whole course of his life.

As time went on, Francis obtained from a Catholic bookshop a crucifix, two candlesticks and candles, and a rosary, and with a discarded desk in the attic for an altar, he went secretly at night to tell his beads and commune alone. When Father McMullen learned he was a grandson of Andrew Scott, he explained to the boy that it was improper to come without his grandfather’s knowledge, and directed him to come no more. The visits with the nuns were continued; the sisters would not
turn the boy away. When Francis was about eight or nine, Father Mc-
Mullen conscientiously told the grandfather.

Andrew Scott was kind, but firm in telling the boy he must not visit
Catholic churches; perhaps he explained the Protestant view of the
veneration of images and of ceremonials in Latin, and the emotional
problems of a celibate clergy denied the normal outlet of love for wives
and children. The boy listened but did not obey; he visited Catholic
churches whenever he could when he was away from home.

Francis’ father came for an occasional visit from Eaton, Ohio, where
he had his law office. On one of these visits, the grandmother sought to
put the boy to shame by telling at table of his secret explorations in
Catholicism. Joseph McNutt, himself an Episcopalian, amazed all by
saying after a moment’s scrutiny of his son that it was a pity all were
not Catholics; that the Reformation had been a calamity. He concluded
by saying: “Catholicism is the aristocracy of religions.”

“The aristocracy of religions!” The words rang chimes inside the
boy’s mind. The phrase pleased him: “I hoarded it up for future medita-
tion and use,” he afterward wrote. But his grandmother was irritated,
and he had never seen his grandfather “so visibly vexed.”

Devoted grandparents are often at the mercy of children in their care,
especially if they have money, as the Scotts did. A child can take accu-
rate measure of the limits to which he can go, and press an advantage,
if he chances to have a mind set upon a maximum of gratification and a
minimum of responsible effort. Andrew Scott could give his spirited and
handsome grandson good counsel, but he never could control or even
influence him in the use of money. Consequently Francis indulged
princely tastes as he grew older, and his plain-living grandfather paid
all the bills.

Francis was started in school at eight, and after a little he was placed
in a Quaker academy. He had several music teachers, who could not do
much with “a lazy, refractory boy who refused to practice.” But Pro-
fessor Ruhe won his admiration and taught him the meaning of music,
and appreciation of the masters. Finally he said: “Frank, you are ambi-
tious; if only you were poor and diligent you might become a great
artist.” This perhaps was the most poignantly revealing thing ever said
to him about his relation to work and life. The poor and diligent often
reach heights not accessible to the darlings of fortune, though the latter
may believe until their final stock-taking that having lived richly they
have followed the better course.

When Francis was thirteen his grandfather took him to the Centen-
nial Exposition in Philadelphia. Less than a year later, in March 1877,
his father died in the Richmond home after a long illness that had taken him to Colorado for relief, and to the South in winter. The hidden qualities in Mrs. Scott came into evidence as she nursed her sick son-in-law with affection and devotion. Writing later of this bereavement Francis said: “I had no strong affection for my father. I hardly knew him.” Brother Albert came home from school: “I hardly saw him and this death did not draw us nearer together.”

In 1879 Francis entered Phillips Academy at Exeter. A photograph made at the time shows a straight-nosed, strong-jawed youth of sixteen who could look the world defiantly in the eye. The academy at Exeter, then as now, maintained scholastic standards not excelled elsewhere in this country, and a boy who could get through comfortably was certain to have no trouble in any university if he kept on working. Francis made friends and enjoyed himself. Here he developed a new interest: on half-holidays he often hired a horse and trap (the liveryman may have called it a buggy) and searched the neighboring country for antique furniture and china with which to deck his room. Thus began a collection.

English literature and United States history interested him; he subsequently concluded that the history texts contained “misleading nonsense.” He came to understand what Latin meant, and this knowledge became useful later. At the end of his second year he was unable to pass his examinations, and that terminated his experience with Exeter. During the summer vacation at Richmond he went dutifully with the family to the Presbyterian church, enduring “dreary hours in the unlovely conventicle, listening to dull, endless sermons,” unrelieved of course by any kind of pageantry.

Harvard was next. He couldn’t enter the college because he hadn’t passed his final examinations at Exeter, but he could enroll in the Harvard Law School. He had no slight wish to be a lawyer, but a year or two at Harvard, he thought, would provide interesting experiences while he considered what he might later do. His furniture and bric-a-brac had been sent over from Exeter, and Grandfather Scott had a look at the collection when he came with Francis to Cambridge before the autumn term opened. Andrew Scott said plainly that the rooms didn’t look like those of a student. Francis was glad when his grandfather left, after arranging to pay for books and tuition and to supply $1,800 in expense money.

Well, that was quite a year for Francis. From his own account we learn that he developed into an embryo dandy, and accumulated a wardrobe. When his pockets were empty he could get easy credit, and when
bills pressed, he could find a money-lender. Or when he wanted another suit, he could take to a second-hand shop some clothing that had been new a few weeks before. Boston is a haven for collectors, and diligent exploration of antique shops resulted in vast accumulations to crowd his rooms. His collection of colonial teapots alone expanded to thirty-seven examples.

The most memorable event of the year was a visit from Oscar Wilde to Boston on a lecture tour. Oscar was famous as a wit, and as much so as an exquisite, and it was bruited about Harvard that the character Mr. Bunthorne in Gilbert and Sullivan’s light opera “Patience” was a caricature of him, with perhaps some reference to James McNeill Whistler. Bunthorne the esthete always carried a lily, presumably because Oscar Wilde was said to be fond of carrying a lily. A group of Harvard wags conceived the idea of getting two rows of seats immediately in front of the platform for the Wilde lecture, attending decorously in the garb of disciples, carrying lilies and sunflowers. Francis accepted a bid to join the group of sixty in the rite of mock worship.

On the day before the lecture, Wilde was entertained at tea in Cambridge, and Francis was one of a party of about eight student guests. The young men were charmed. Oscar wore his hair a bit long; otherwise he seemed as other men, with no lily, but with a delightful flow of brilliant conversation. After he had gone, those who had undertaken to bring ridicule upon him at his lecture were embarrassed. It seemed not the sporting thing to do, but they had promised, and they went, hoping the celebrity from England would not recognize them.

News of the prank got about in advance; perhaps having heard a rumor, Wilde did not appear in silk knee breeches and braided coat as expected, but in conventional evening dress. Francis was seated in the middle of the front row, not more than six feet from the lecturer’s desk, feeling vastly uncomfortable. When Wilde came to the front of the platform in the midst of welcoming applause, he smiled down amiably at the group in burlesque outfits, and gazing directly into Francis’ eyes he said: “Et tu, Brute?” When the audience became quiet, Wilde began: “I have but one prayer to offer this night — Lord, deliver me from my disciples.”

Next morning Francis received an invitation to lunch with Wilde at the Hotel Vendome. He had been singled out for special favor; no other student was among the men present at the luncheon. Wilde seriously urged Francis to visit England and Oxford, asked him to send word when he would be coming, and promised to help him get to see Oxford at best advantage. The visitor was of course pleased at having turned
the tables on the sixty students, and spoke appreciatively of Harvard and the hospitality shown him.

Toward the end of the academic year Francis found he was approaching an economic collapse; a tailor had sued him, and bills continued pouring in. Theater parties, supper parties, sleighing parties, and livery hire all had cost money, and a piano had come to live among the antiques. "It seemed to me," he wrote in later life, "an endless horde of vulgar people was pestering me for money which I did not have."

A friend he called Jim, dropped from Exeter, begged him to join in a year's stay in Europe with a Belgian tutor who was expected to coach him in preparation for the Harvard entrance examinations. Would Grandfather Scott pay off the bills and finance a quiet, studious year in Belgium? It seemed hardly likely. The bills amounted to more than $13,000 in excess of the $1,800 allowance.

Let us make brief the sad story of Grandfather Scott: he agreed to pay off the bills, and after first positively refusing, consented to back his young prince for a year in Europe. We cannot help wondering whether he believed it would be a quiet and studious year. When he consented he lost all prospect of further control; he was but wax in strong young fingers, and Francis knew it. Andrew Scott let him go because he did not know what else to do with him.

Back in New York before sailing, Francis emerged one day from Delmonico's restaurant to walk into Oscar Wilde. On learning of the trip, Wilde proposed giving him letters of introduction, and asked his New York address. A packet arriving that evening contained letters introducing him to James McNeill Whistler, Alma-Tadema, and Rennell Rodd in London, and to Philip Burne-Jones in Oxford. A note urged Francis to use the letters, as Wilde meant to write to all four, announcing his coming.

The young man had done some reading on architecture and English literature between whiles at Harvard, and felt quite at home in England. He attended plays, and opera at Covent Garden, and visited the art galleries while awaiting a propitious time to use his letters. Alma-Tadema asked an account of Oscar's escapades in America, and the young visitor was at pains to explain he had seen little of him; that all he knew was what he had read in the newspapers. Rennell Rodd took him to see Whistler, who insisted upon doing a sketch of his head. It was for the "Augustan forehead," Rodd explained to him. The week at Oxford was delightful.

Next came a brief stay in Bruges, and then Brussels, where Francis studied French for two months under Jim's tutor. The tutor's mother
died, leaving him a competence, and he quit his work immediately. Jim notified his father, who replied that he would come to Europe and bring his son back home with him. Before they separated, the two young men journeyed in a leisurely way to Cologne, Lucerne, and Geneva; then on to Turin, Milan, and Venice. Thence to Verona, and over the Alps to Munich, Dresden, and Berlin.

On arriving at Berlin, Francis found waiting a letter from a young Richmond friend: Ida (not Daisy) Miller, who was studying German in Hanover. He joined her and took up the study of the language himself, having discovered the need in his travels. Ida Miller was a Catholic, and while in her company Francis decided the time had come for him to be received into the Church. The only place for him to take the step, he determined, was in Rome, the fountainhead of his faith. He wrote his grandfather of his decision, and set out on his pilgrimage by way of Genoa, Florence and Pisa.

The entrance to Rome in January 1883 gave him a feeling of homecoming; the city enchanted him. On February 15 he reached his twentieth birthday, and soon thereafter he set about his great undertaking. After a three weeks' retreat in the Passionist Monastery of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Celian hill, Francis was received into the Church without hesitations on either side.

In Rome he encountered again an Irishman of striking personality he had met in Bruges: Monsignor de Stackpool. He seemed a kind of special personage, with undefined clerical functions, and a great deal of interest in society and in important visitors to the Holy City. He concluded Francis was a young man of fortune and was instrumental in getting him introduced to persons of rank. He even talked of the youth to the great Leo xiii, and introduced him to the Pope at a semi-public audience. Whatever the Monsignor may have been saying, he persuaded an important circle that here was an "interesting case."

Francis sought to correct the impression he was a millionaire, and when a dismayed letter from Grandfather Scott almost threatened to cut him off with a shilling, he told Monsignor de Stackpool of his embarrassment. The Monsignor then spread the word among friends that the youth had bravely risked his inheritance for the sake of his faith.

Then followed a season of exploring St. Peter's, the catacombs, and the more beautiful and interesting churches and monasteries of Rome. Also: "I attended endless religious ceremonies, some of them stupendous, pompous festivals, in which gorgeous processions moved amidst clouds of incense over weighting the air already laden with the scent of burning wax and the bitter-sweet odors of crushed laurel and ilex leaves,
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while the too-dulcet strains of the decadent music then in favor were rendered by the celebrated choirs of the Sistine and the Lateran. Every manifestation of religious faith interested me."

While the grandparents sat in the United Presbyterian church in Richmond and grieved over the apostasy of the young wanderer, Francis made his triumphant way in the Catholic society of Rome. Sponsored by Monsignor de Stackpool and Lady Herbert of England, he made his bows in the salons of Princess Altieri, Princess Piombino, Duchess Salviati, and Marchesa Serlupi. He was immensely pleased with the spacious grandeur of the Roman palaces where he was so kindly received. He met several Cardinals of the Roman aristocracy, and others who were not Italians; titled persons, and rich women of fashion from his native land.

Francis was confirmed on the Feast of the Assumption in the chapel of the English College in the presence of a few distinguished persons summoned by the Monsignor; a supper in the Stackpool apartment followed. Soon afterward he left for Venice, Vienna, Budapest and Munich, thence to Bayreuth for a season of Wagnerian music. He next saw Paris, "not without profit," but he always deprecated Paris in writing about the city, with the implication that its wickedness chilled him.

On reaching London he made use of two letters of introduction he had carried from Rome; they had been received from Bishop Chatard of Indianapolis, member of "a good old colonial family of Maryland." One letter was to Father Antrobus of the Oratory in Brompton Road. The other was to Cardinal Manning.

There was something in the bearing and personality of the young man that won for him unusual consideration from his elders. Cardinal Manning’s secretary received the young man from Indiana, and invited him to come to dinner that afternoon at one-thirty. The Cardinal had several other guests; after speaking with them he took Francis by the arm and led him to the dining room, seating him next at the left. The young stranger was greatly impressed by the ascetic countenance of the Cardinal, as well as by the shabbiness of his dress. Cardinals in Rome had looked gorgeous; here sat the most illustrious of all with the red silk of his sleeves worn threadbare.

After soup and the reading of verses from Scripture, the Cardinal turned to Francis and asked about his travels. When the party broke up after prayers in a chapel next the dining room, His Eminence requested Francis to join him upstairs after a few minutes. In his library the Cardinal pressed Francis for the story of his entrance into the Church, and all the circumstances that had led to it. When the guest
was about to depart, Cardinal Manning gave him a book entitled *The Love of Jesus for Penitents*, saying:

“This little book, the smallest I have ever written, may commend itself to you by its brevity.” On the title page was inscribed: “F. MacNutt, from H. E. Card-Archbishop Oct. 4, 1884.”

As Francis was leaving with his treasure the Cardinal told him kindly he must never visit London without coming to call; that if he ever needed a service he must not fail to let it be known. Then, “Remember that I am your friend.”

Francis now had been away from home for a long time: the quiet year of study in Belgium to which his indulgent grandfather had consented in the summer of 1882 had been extended to more than two years of brilliant experiences. What should he do with his life? What was he fit for? “I had not the means to lead the life of a man of leisure,” he afterward wrote, “besides the insignificance of such a life was repugnant to me.” He wanted something else, something more. What was it? He did not know. He could find no answers to his own questions.

So he went back to Richmond, Indiana, sailing from Liverpool late in 1884. His grandfather, he learned, had proudly caused to be printed in a home newspaper parts of his letters telling of his travels. The domestic atmosphere to which the prodigal returned seemed intolerable to him. His grandmother spoke eloquently and often of the ingratitude of children and grandchildren. Francis wanted to go away, and no one urged him to stay. He thought he would like the South; his grandfather’s half-brother Jesse Scott lived in New Orleans; that was a city to see.

After the glories of Europe, life in his own country seemed dull to the young traveler. On the journey by river from Cincinnati he found the boat shabby, food poor, service wretched. “Sitting in the upper deck, I could hardly believe that the vast stretch of muddy water, flowing turgidly between the low, featureless banks, was the great Mississippi, the river I had been assured was the largest, the most beautiful in the world. It was neither the one nor the other.” Could he have forgotten, when he wrote these words, the turgid, muddy waters of the Tiber, the Po, and the Danube?

New Orleans did not long detain the wanderer. Observing pictures of Mexican scenery in a steamship office, he bought a cabin ticket on a boat soon to leave for Vera Cruz. Jesse Scott applauded his judgment.

In Mexico his spirits rose again as he viewed the grandeurs of scenery that made the Alps seem insignificant to him; Mexico City was wonderful in his eyes. He received from his faithful grandfather a letter of introduction to the American Minister, which opened the way to new
acquaintances. Then came a singular friendship that was to influence his life for years.

One night in the Hotel Iturbide an Indian servant called him to the side of a man in another room who seemed to be dying. At the bedside he looked down at an "emaciated face of singular beauty and refinement, framed in thin, curly, silky black hair." The man's eyes opened, the most wonderful eyes Francis ever had seen, he thought. The face had an expression of "limpid, saint-like innocence." In a whisper the sufferer said he was English, a priest, the chaplain of Cardinal Manning; his name was Kenelm Vaughan. Francis had left Cardinal Manning only a few weeks before; Father Kenelm was a brother of one of his friends in Rome.

The young man hurried out to look for help; an hour passed before he could return with a priest. He found a friend of the sick man had come with a physician, and so departed. Next morning he returned to the room to find it empty; Father Vaughan and his luggage had vanished. But an hour or so later, in the street outside, Francis met Father Vaughan, who was carrying a small terra cotta figure of the prophet Jeremiah. Then began the unusual friendship.

The ascetic priest, who appeared to be about forty, explained he had been traveling up and down Latin America in an undertaking to found a new secular congregation in what he called the Work of Expiation. He planned a central house in London, and had been organizing a society of founders, each member of which contributed £50. No smaller gifts were accepted. His work had the approval of the Pope, he said, and he carried a letter from Cardinal Manning.

The two men were immediately drawn to one another, and after Father Vaughan had heard Francis' story he insisted that the young man become a priest and join him in a penitential life in expiation of the sins of mankind. Francis demurred that he had no vocation, but he was soon in the tutelage of the Abbé Fischer, curate of San Cosmé, a fashionable suburb of Mexico City. The Abbé, born in Germany, had been associated in Mexico with the Archduke Maximilian at the time Napoleon III had proposed that he become Emperor of Mexico. It was he who had prevailed upon Maximilian not to flee from Mexico when the intervention of the United States made the imperial scheme hopeless. Remaining to face death at the hands of republican-minded Mexicans, Maximilian had entrusted to the Abbé a bundle of papers and correspondence bearing upon the ill-fated project.

Now came a course of instruction in a number of subjects that lasted for months; the Abbé was an excellent tutor. But he did not care for
what he heard of the Work of Expiation. He told Francis the plan was chimerical and expressed the opinion Father Vaughan was a visionary; he also came to the conclusion the young man was not adapted to the priesthood. After he had become acquainted with Francis' inclinations he advised him to choose the career of historian, and encouraged him in the work of translating into English the letters of the Spanish explorer Cortes to Charles v.

The Abbé Fischer became so deeply attached to his pupil that he offered to sell his library and collection of rare coins, together worth a considerable amount, to provide means to finance the early years of historical work. He went even further. The collection of Maximilian papers he had stored in London was desired by the Austrian court because certain of the letters would prove embarrassing if published; the Abbé had been offered in exchange for them a considerable sum of money, a pension, and the privilege of spending the rest of his life in an Imperial castle on the Dalmatian coast. Now he proposed to accept the offer, surrender the papers, invest all the cash proceeds in property that would provide a steady income for Francis, and assist in historical studies in Europe. The Abbé then could retire to the Dalmatian castle. Furthermore, he would make the young man his sole heir.

After learning of the disapproval of Grandfather Scott in Indiana for Father Kenelm's project that Francis become a priest in the Work of Expiation, the Abbé Fischer began a correspondence with Andrew Scott. Francis learned afterward of this, and of his grandfather's agreement with the Abbé that the idea of the priesthood must be discouraged.

The Abbé clearly had become devoted to his pupil, and frankly said the youth's coming had changed the whole nature of his lonely life. But Francis was uneasy. A contest had developed between the Abbé and Father Kenelm for ascendancy in his companionship, and the Abbé's plan for developing his talents as historian cut squarely across other plans Father Kenelm had been unfolding. The Work of Expiation as he perhaps outlined it to Francis was not to be altogether expiatory for the sins of mankind. It was to include a number of interesting trips, sojourns in archepiscopal houses, and varieties of exciting adventures.

In this rivalry over Francis the younger priest won. Francis announced that he would go away for a while to visit Mexican friends, and then would return home to Richmond, but already he had engaged to meet Father Kenelm soon again in New Orleans. All the generous offers of help toward historical scholarship were refused. The Abbé Fischer was desolated at the final parting, when he presented Francis with a small framed portrait of St. Francis Xavier by Murillo. Thus ended sadly for
the older man a friendship that was only one of a series of remarkable ones in Francis' life.

In his own account of his rejection of the Abbé Fischer, Francis attributed his coldness to what may have been only a chance remark on the part of his mentor. Various suspicious Mexicans had concluded Francis was a long-lost son of the Archduke Maximilian, supposed to have died in infancy. Francis was credited with having a Hapsburg chin, and this fancied resemblance, together with the Abbé's interest in him, encouraged fear that the Abbé was bringing along an aspirant who meant to be monarch of Mexico. When the Abbé said of the story, "Too bad it isn't true," he planted the seed for a later rank growth of speculation regarding his possible plans for another coup d'état in Mexico, to put Francis on a throne.

This seems absurd. The Abbé was old and without power. Francis preferred the company of Father Kenelm, and the chance remark gave him an excuse for following his inclination. But he relished, no doubt, the wide belief he was a scion of the House of Hapsburg though he took pains to contradict it. His later attachment to Austria and the cause of its royal house may have flowered from his reflections on his Hapsburg chin, and musings on an impossible throne in Mexico.
Andrew Scott cast about in his mind for some useful occupation for his grandson Francis MacNutt that might be fascinating enough to attract his interest and hold it. Banking in Richmond would not do at all; Francis already had outgrown Richmond at twenty-two. The diplomatic service! Exactly the right idea, he thought; the lad had savoir faire and yearning for the great world. Andrew Scott knew important men in politics who liked and respected him. He would see.

Grover Cleveland had been elected President in 1884, and Andrew Scott was a good Democrat. He wrote his grandson in Mexico that he might be able to help him get a secretaryship in some legation or consulate. Francis already had planned to meet Father Vaughan in New Orleans soon and in Europe later; a post in the diplomatic service might fit in well with his general plans. After a final sight-seeing trip in Mexico, he went on to New Orleans and the Cotton States Exposition, and more comradeship with Father Vaughan.

By the time he arrived in Richmond his grandfather had secured for him the promise of a secretaryship to the newly-appointed Minister to Sweden. The thought of Scandinavia chilled him. He preferred a Mediterranean country, with warmth and color. But he visited the Minister to please his grandfather, and a half-hour interview convinced him the Minister would not do at all.

In the autumn of 1885 Andrew Scott accompanied Francis to Washington and introduced him to Senator Vorhees of Indiana, who took him one morning to see President Cleveland. We do not know what Cleveland thought of Francis, but this is what Francis wrote of Cleveland: “He produced no impression whatever on me, and there was nothing to suggest to me that I was in the presence of the chief of a great nation.”

Senator Vorhees told Francis quite frankly it would be wasted effort to try to get an appointment for one of his immature years and inexperience; there were ten applicants for every job. Andrew Scott had to swallow his disappointment; perhaps it was not so easy for him as for Francis, who already had other plans.

Parting from his grandfather, he went to Baltimore to rejoin Father Vaughan, who was staying in the Archbishop’s house. There he met Archbishop Gibbons, later to become a Cardinal, who invited him several times to dinner. Francis had resolved to go to Madrid to continue with his work on the Cortes letters, while Father Vaughan was bound
for the Dominican Convent of Notre Dame de Prouille, near Fanjeaux in France, and also near Toulouse and Carcassone. There he was to spend some time with his spiritual director, Père Doussot, who was acting as chaplain for the nuns of the community.

On his way to Spain Francis stopped in London for a while, and was kindly received several times by Cardinal Manning. When he finally left he carried a number of useful letters of introduction, including a very special one from the Cardinal, addressed to the Catholic hierarchy and asking for favors and assistance as needed.

One afternoon at tea at the American Legation in Madrid he met a famous man of the Church: the Nuncio and Archbishop — later Cardinal — Rampolla. With him was his secretary, Monsignor della Chiesa, who in later years was to become Pope Benedict xv. He was constantly meeting dignitaries who were helpful to him. One of them was Señor Zarco del Valle, then librarian at the royal palace, who assigned him an alcove in the library for use in his Cortes researches.

After a period of these endeavors Francis toured the principal cities of Spain, and then made his way to the Convent of Notre Dame de Prouille to rejoin Father Vaughan. He was given a room in the presbytery next that of his friend, and the two proceeded in preparation for the Work of Expiation. On a low hill in a nearby vineyard was a small, unused tool-house of one room that Father Vaughan had made into an oratory. The two painted Latin inscriptions on the walls, and on brackets they placed plaster images of the saints chosen as patrons and protectors of their work. The little building they called l'Hermitage de St. Jeremie.

A pit four feet deep had been dug in front of the entrance at the direction of Father Vaughan, and in this the two friends made a penitential practice of sitting, after the manner of Jeremiah, and reciting the lamentations of the prophet. These devotional rites excited curiosity; the neighboring clergy did not much care for novelties, and wondered whether heresy might be afoot. Whatever conclusions may have been reached about the pit-sitters by those who visited them, nothing was done to interfere with them.

Presently Father Vaughan proposed a journey, and the two made a long, rambling trip with neither scrip nor purse that took them as far as Barcelona. In these days we would call it hitch-hiking. After their return, Père Doussot proposed a stay at a monastery in the Pyrenees for Francis; we do not know just why, unless for punishment, or to separate him from his companion. It proved a cheerless place, and Francis was allowed to go to another, which was just as austere. He was happy when a letter arrived from Cardinal Manning, summoning him to Lon-
ondon to assist in the purchase of a house for the Work of Expiation.

The desired house at 28 Beaufort Street was owned by Lord Cadogan, a staunch Protestant, who it was presumed would not allow it to be sold for Catholic purposes. Therefore Francis was delegated, in the guise of an ordinary American, to buy the house. This done, Father Kenelm, his brother, Father John, and Francis moved into the place. Their only helper was a country boy of eighteen. The desire for penitential living was realized here; Francis later wrote that the food was plain and ill-prepared, and the house was cold and dirty.

Father Kenelm covered the walls with primitive religious paintings he had gathered in Latin America: they represented “naïveté, terror, and frivolity.” There were scenes of “painfully realistic crucifixions, flagellations and martyrdoms, also startling representations of the sufferings of purgatory and the tortures of hell. Alongside these were doll-faced madonnas, in crinolines, flowered silks... holding in one hand a dainty lace handkerchief and in the other a Child Jesus... Some of these pictures fell under canonical censures and would not be tolerated in any church, not even in Latin America, so it may be imagined the impression these unfamiliar works of debased, baroque art produced upon English beholders.”

Among the relics for veneration were the bones of the benediction fingers of the Blessed Julian Lazarte, which had been presented to Father Kenelm by a bishop in Latin America after he had discovered the skeleton in some walled-up enclosure.

Efforts to enlist other priests in the Work of Expiation did not succeed. The young men who offered themselves were found not suitable. After a time Cardinal Manning tactfully closed the house for alterations and brought the Work of Expiation to an end.

Francis then was invited, in the spring of 1887, to become a member of the Cardinal’s household and for some time he remained, doing researches in the libraries and going on occasional journeys for His Eminence. Cardinal Manning sometimes read aloud to him, and engaged him in discussions of literature. Francis introduced him to Poe by reciting “The Raven”; afterward they read a great deal of Poe together. When the great man criticized the work of Elizabethan and Restoration dramatists as wholly bad and spoke of the coarseness of Shakespeare, the youngster audaciously retorted: “And how about the Bible?” The Cardinal shook a finger and said: “Now I have discovered your vocation; you are destined to be the Devil’s Advocate.” Evidently Francis was regarded as a good companion, as the Cardinal often had him in his carriage on drives.
Callers included Anglican clergymen presumed to be heading toward Rome; these the Cardinal received, but “never at table.” A young rector with a correct Oxford manner who came frequently was an object of special interest to Father Kenelm, who now was living in the Cardinal’s house. Not over-strong in theology, “Father Kenelm’s religion was all fire and flame from the heart.” Fiery exhortations did not please the rector so much as quiet talks with the Cardinal, and the rector came less frequently. We read in the MacNutt autobiography:

After an interval he reappeared, but the Cardinal did not see him. As he was descending the stairs, he met Father Kenelm, who stopped him and asked him point-blank what was the obstacle that still stood in his way. Embarrassed by this direct question, fired at him like a pistol-shot, and with me, a stranger, standing by, the clergyman murmured something vague about not being willing to take such a step as long as his mother lived, as it would give her such pain. Something, call it what one will, second sight, perhaps, flashed a message to Father Kenelm. With a look on his face I shall never forget and which visibly startled the clergyman, he exclaimed: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. You make your mother the obstacle to your conversion and she will be taken from out your path.” Within ten days we read of the lady’s sudden death.

Whether this striking incident aided Father Kenelm in completing the rector’s conversion is not stated.

Cardinal Manning thought it would be well for Francis, after a further period of pleasant jaunts and experiences, to attend the Accademia Ecclesiastica in Rome, for studies leading to the priesthood. The final decision rested with Pope Leo XIII. Only two Americans had been admitted before that time. Francis went to Rome and met Monsignor Satolli, president of the Accademia, who one evening took him to see the Pope.

After waiting alone for half an hour in a dim antechamber he was admitted, to find the Pope seated in a chair, with Monsignor Satolli standing beside him. Francis knelt at the other side, and while His Holiness was not speaking in Italian with the Monsignor, he asked questions in French of the applicant. On reaching a favorable decision the Pope placed a hand on the young man’s shoulder, looked at him directly in the face, and told him he must first learn Italian; that on his next visit to the Vatican he must be able to speak in this language. “Be obedient to your president and study hard. We shall see.”

For two years Francis continued his studies in the Italian language and literature, philosophy, and theology, not working as hard as he should, he afterward confessed. His best friend in the Accademia was
another student, Monsignor Merry del Val. He continued making ac-
quaintances with the great men of the Church, and exploring the sacred
buildings and the lore that pertained to them. Occasionally he had a
kindly word from Leo XIII.

In the summer after he entered he made a vacation trip through Russia
and Poland. Russian soldiers in Poland previously had fired a Catholic
church full of people and had shot down those trying to escape. No one
known to be connected with the Church was allowed to cross any fron-
tier into Russia, and mail was censored.

In order to make the trip, Francis obtained a passport and visas as an
American student, without reference to his studies for the priesthood.
He did a leisurely tour through the most interesting cities and regions
in Russia, and went from St. Petersburg through Poland. Then he re-
turned safely to Rome in October.

Later it became known that some confidential messenger had brought
to St. Petersburg from Leo XIII an autographed letter for the Czar telling
of the massacre, supplemented by documentary proofs. The Czar had
been kept in ignorance of the persecutions by bureaucrats, and he im-
mediately caused consternation by punishing the guilty. An agent who
had deceived him committed suicide rather than face an inquiry.

Francis was ever afterward suspected by Russian diplomats of having
been the carrier of the Pope’s letter to the Czar. His autobiography is
reticent on this point. It doesn’t say yes and it doesn’t say no. We cannot
escape the feeling that Francis was in fact the Pope’s messenger, and
that he gave a pledge of eternal secrecy before undertaking the impor-
tant mission.

At the end of his second year in the Accademia he became certain
once more he had no vocation for the priesthood, and believed it would
be dishonest to continue. Monsignor Satolli was chagrined, and directed
him to report to Leo XIII. The Pope listened to him gravely, and then
agreed it was best for him to leave the Accademia. It may be regarded
as an evidence of consideration that Leo XIII ordered him to carry mes-
sages to Paris and Brussels, and to leave immediately on the errand. Thus
Francis was sent away, but with a mark of favor. It was a serious matter
for him to deny vocation — it wasn’t done — and he had to be dismissed
from Rome on the spot, but the Pope’s kindly way of mitigating the
sting impressed Monsignor Satolli and all the rest.

On his return to London Francis had to explain his defection to his
sponsor, Cardinal Manning. He didn’t anticipate severe censure, and he
didn’t receive a scolding. The Cardinal said: “I never expected you to
The New Englanders

become a priest at all.” “Then why did you encourage me?” “Well, dear boy” — and the Cardinal went on to explain he had wished to keep Francis out of worse hands; away from Kenelm Vaughan, perhaps. The time in Rome hadn’t been wasted, and so they continued with their discussion. Finally: “And now, Francis, I will read you ‘The Bells.’”

Francis never again was to see Cardinal Manning, whose long life was soon to end. It was a singular friendship the young man was permitted to enjoy with the venerable prelate, who must have found pleasure in the vital youth of his protégé.

On the homeward trip to Indiana the wanderer dallied for a few weeks in the elite society of Lenox, Massachusetts. It would appear from his own account that all his life he divided his time between two major interests — the Church and aristocratic international society. Whether he planned it that way or not we do not know, but he achieved a great deal of success in both spheres by setting his engaging personality at the task of cultivating persons older than himself. He was undoubtedly sincere in his liking for personages like the Abbé Fischer and Cardinals Manning and Gibbons, and in his veneration for Leo XIII. Elderly men and women are warmed by the devoted attentions of keenly intelligent young people: the young usually are prone to give scant attention to the old. So the great churchmen rewarded Francis, as one promising in the faith, with the wealth of their kindness and with golden opportunities. Society dowagers, gratified in their own way by his attentions, opened innumerable doors to him.

Back in Richmond again, he found his grandfather living contentedly in a home reorganized by the inclusion of the family of his younger son Augustus. New grandchildren had come along, one of them named for him. But Francis was not pleased with the alterations that had followed his grandmother’s death.

“For the first time,” he wrote in his autobiography, “now that it was absent, I realized what a forceful, all-pervading personality my grandmother’s had been. The house without her was, for me, like an empty picture frame or a broken mirror. . . . I visited her grave, next to my mother’s and father’s, and sat there long, reflecting on those ended lives and on my past, feeling singularly near in spirit to that stormswept, passionate soul which in life I had never understood, though in our way we had loved each other very dearly.”

In the autumn a Plenary Council of American Bishops was held in Baltimore, presided over by Archbishop Satolli, head of the Accademia Ecclesiastica when Francis had so recently been dismissed. Francis was present during the closing days; he called at Cardinal Gibbons’ house,
and was invited to the grand reception and dinner that closed the sessions.

Tables were arranged in the form of a great horseshoe, with the chief dignitaries at the center and head. Inside the horseshoe were other tables for lesser guests; as one of these, Francis found himself near the head. President Benjamin Harrison and Secretary of State James G. Blaine were at the dinner; the former was to respond to a toast from Cardinal Gibbons, and Mr. Blaine was to reply to a toast by Archbishop Satolli, now the Papal Legate.

Learning he was to answer an address to be delivered in Latin, Secretary Blaine confided uneasily to Cardinal Gibbons he would be at a loss what to say. Observing the presence of Francis, the Cardinal gave him a sign to approach, while telling Mr. Blaine this young man could give him a running translation of the Archbishop's Latin address. The Secretary welcomed the aid gladly, and made room beside him. As the Latin speech flowed on, a smoothly rapid translation was given him in a low voice. Francis knew his Latin, and he was entirely familiar with the Archbishop's manner of delivery.

The outcome was that Secretary Blaine warmly invited Francis to his office, and then to his home, in Washington. When he found the young man was versed in several modern languages as well as in Latin, he suggested a post in the diplomatic service. How would he like Brazil? Francis was not very sure he would, and the subject was dropped.

Not a great while later, Mr. Blaine sent word of his appointment as secretary to the Minister to Turkey, Solomon Hirsch, of Oregon. This was accepted with gratitude. At last he was to be in the diplomatic service and his grandfather's ambition for him was to be realized. The experience in the legation in Constantinople went along comfortably with a chain of social activities that made life agreeably exciting. He met and captivated the Sultan, Abdul Hamid. Then in the course of time the young secretary was transferred to the American legation in Madrid, after a blameless course in helping Protestant missionaries straighten out their troubles in Turkey.

The year was 1892 and Spain was celebrating the 400th anniversary of the sailing of Columbus for America. Our Minister had recently been recalled, and as head of mission and chargé d'affaires Francis was called upon to represent his country at celebrations and festivities. He felt somewhat out of place, believing his country should have been represented by a man of highest rank, rather than by a young secretary whose lack of seniority placed him at the foot of the diplomatic line. Nevertheless he enjoyed all the spectacles, and the people he met.
Within a short space three important things happened. A new Minister came to Madrid, Grover Cleveland was elected President again over Harrison, and Francis involuntarily got into difficulties. When the new Minister went away for a while on leave, he sent Francis a voluminous dispatch with instructions to look up the details of an issue that had long been pending between the American and Spanish governments.

A considerable time before this, a dispute had risen between Spain and Germany over the possession of the Caroline Islands. Prince Bismarck had submitted the matter for arbitration to Leo XIII, who had awarded the islands to Spain. When Spain took them over, a native insurrection occurred; the Spaniards blamed American missionaries in the islands for exciting it. The insurrection was put down, property of the missionaries was destroyed, and the missionaries were deported to a distant Pacific island.

The United States government demanded of Spain that the missionaries be permitted to return to their labors, and that they be indemnified for their losses. Spain had expressed willingness to pay indemnities, but was entirely unwilling to allow the Protestant missionaries to come back under any circumstances.

This is what Francis found on investigating; he recommended to his Minister that the Spanish terms be accepted. Because the fact of his adherence to the Catholic Church was well known, Francis was immediately suspected of bias to the disadvantage of his own country and people, and in favor of Catholic Spain. Despite the fact that the Spanish terms were ultimately accepted, in accord with his recommendations, Francis long suffered from blame. The animus against him lasted into the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, who thought Francis had put his country into a difficult position, from which it had been impossible to emerge with satisfaction.

The Minister who had resented his secretary's recommendation, set about trying to get the issue of the missionaries adjusted in accord with the State Department's desire, and failed. Grover Cleveland had again been elected President in 1892; before Harrison's term expired Francis was ordered in February 1893, by cable from the State Department, to report in Paris for duty in connection with the approaching Bering Sea arbitration conference between the United States and Great Britain. Not until thirteen years later did he learn that the Minister had written to Washington that Francis had refused to obey instructions, and that his loyalty was to be doubted.

But Francis knew anyway that his work in Madrid was finished, for he was out of favor, and an incoming President would in any case make
many replacements. In May he received notice from Washington of his
dismissal for cause, but even earlier than that the Minister in Madrid
had lost his post.

At loose ends again, Francis wandered from Paris to Munich, and
then to Brixen in the Austrian Tyrol for a visit with friends of long
standing: Baron and Baroness Schönberg. Thence back to Indiana, by
way of Washington, where he collected the last of his salary. His grand-
father urged him to attend the Columbian Exposition in Chicago; after
ten days of that he went on to Bar Harbor in Maine, a place where sum-
mer society always pleased him. Washington called him next: the only
large city in the country where he found the social atmosphere wholly
congenial. He liked his club, the Metropolitan, and he felt a natural
affiliation with the Virginians he knew there.

The spring of 1894 found him dissatisfied. What was he to do with
his life? The Orient interested him, and presently he began a trip that
took him round the world. When Francis reached Port Said, he took a
steamer to Jaffa. Christmas was approaching, and he resolved to spend
it in the Holy Land. On Christmas eve he drove from Jerusalem to
Bethlehem in crisp, cold air under the stars, and attended three Masses.
In the days following he visited the Jordan, the Dead Sea, the site of
Jericho, and each evening he climbed the Mount of Olives to await the
sunset and the shadows.

Now it was the beginning of 1895, and Francis went to Cairo to find
a kind of society life that he enjoyed. He established contact with the
American Consul General, Frederick Penfield, and met the Khedive
and the Sirdar, then Sir Herbert Kitchener, and Lady Cromer. On the
18th of March he received a cablegram from home: his grandfather had
died the day before. He sailed at once, and on arriving at Richmond he
found Andrew Scott had provided well for him in his will; that the last
word on his lips had been the wanderer’s name.

Francis found also that his brother Albert was in a military hospital in
hopeless condition; he had suffered sunstroke while doing some hard
work at an Army post in the Southwest, and paralysis had followed.
The grandfather had provided equally in his will for Albert and Francis.
The latter’s autobiography gives more than a hint that Albert was
viewed dimly by his brother. For one thing, he had married a girl whose
father’s fortunes had declined, and though an Army officer, he had not
the plumage of his brother.

In September Francis sailed again, and in Paris he saw Jim, the only
remaining friend of his early youth, who was far gone from a complica-
tion of wasting diseases resulting from alcoholic excesses, and who was
soon to die. Then on to Schloss Pallaus in the Tyrol for a visit with Baron Schönberg and his American-born Baroness; thence to Rome to renew acquaintance, and then to Cairo again. During this winter season in Egypt he met the family of Robert Hall McCormick of Chicago, and through the pleasant months of spring in 1896 he lingered on, enjoying museums and reading Egyptian history.

In this period he received news that he had been appointed a Chamberlain at the Papal court. The appointment did not call for immediate attendance, but for the satisfaction of preliminary requirements. Two years later he was to enter into active performance of duties at the Vatican. In June he departed for America by way of Venice and London.
Of his meeting in Cairo with Mrs. Robert Hall McCormick and her daughters, Francis MacNutt was later to write: "Had I liked them less, I should have repudiated my long-lost relatives, but as it was, I was happy to discover and claim them."

The relationship was too remote to repudiate, but as it was, Francis had special reasons for wishing to claim the McCormicks, and to establish for himself the best lineage and background he could. In a spirit of idle inquiry we may speculate whether he was ready to repudiate any of his kin who happened not to please him, perhaps because of lack of social rank. The presumption must lie against him.

When notification of appointment as Papal Chamberlain was given him, it perhaps already had been intimated to him through friends like the Schönbergs that two things would be requisite to his advancement in Rome. First, he must supply evidence of good ancestry and good social background. Second, he must marry a wealthy woman. It is beyond question that he received such intimations, and that he acted upon them. Hitherto he had seemed indifferent to young women and to marriage, which may not seem very strange when we recall he had been associated so much with celibates.

A blank book in board covers, in which is written in longhand a genealogical account of the McNaughts of Kilquhanity, remains as evidence of the service performed for Francis by a professional genealogist in Great Britain, engaged by him for the purpose of supplying one of the requirements of Rome. The sketch is brief, but accurate enough as far as it goes. It has nothing on the part taken by McNaughts as Covenanters, when several brought decrees of treason against themselves by fighting against the royal cause. Such omissions were preferable in the circumstances.

The genealogist's account, showing Francis to be a descendant of a family with armorial bearings, evidently satisfied inquiries in Rome. Then Francis set about an effort to establish direct relationship with the Virginia McNutt and McCormick families. In the minds of the elite of Europe, Virginia seemed the one State in the American Union that had an aura of aristocratic beginnings. To accomplish his purpose, Francis had to overlook or ignore his descent from Barnard and Jean McNitt of Palmer, Massachusetts through their son William, who went to Nova Scotia in 1761.
Robert Hall McCormick was a son of Leander J. and Henrietta McCormick, and a nephew of Cyrus H. McCormick, who perfected the reaper that his father Robert had begun to develop in a small blacksmith shop on his farm in the Valley of Virginia. Henrietta was a daughter of Elizabeth McNutt Hamilton, and a granddaughter of Alexander and Rachel Grigsby McNutt of the Lexington neighborhood. All these Shenandoah Valley McNutts and McCormicks were plain, unpretending Scots Presbyterians of real ability but with no fancy ideas about themselves. They did not share in the glamor of the Tidewater tobacco aristocracy, nor did they care for glamor of that kind.

Mrs. Henrietta McCormick, at the time Francis was grooming himself for Roman and Vatican society in 1896, was working on her Genealogies and Reminiscences, which she published in the following year. Without any doubt Mrs. McCormick was a fine woman with honest intentions about her work. Her portrait shows her to have been a stately, even a beautiful, woman with a face full of character.

To her, Francis offered his services as collaborator. To him is due much of the criticism later bestowed upon the book by scholars for its inaccuracies regarding the early history of the family. Had Francis made even a superficial study of the McNaught family in Galloway — and we know he did just that — he should have perceived the untruth of this footnote, which he probably wrote or suggested:

There have been descendants of the family who alleged that their ancestors were Covenanters and left Scotland on account of religious persecutions. No warrant for this can be found, however, and it would seem rather that the family adhered to the Stuarts....

No social prestige comes from the Covenanters, who were unfashionable rebels; there may be some in proved descent from those who gave allegiance to the Stewart dynasty, which was romantic and colorful. The MacNauchtans in Argyll were loyal to the Stewarts for generations, but we have seen that the last chief was put under bond in the Killing Time to restrain possible Whiggish impulses.

The most picturesque character in the Virginia McNutt family was Alexander the colonizer, and with Francis' aid, Mrs. McCormick made a great deal more of a soldier of him than he actually had been. Then William McNitt of Palmer, Francis' direct male ancestor who took the name-form McNutt in Nova Scotia, was torn from old Barnard's family circle and made a brother of Alexander McNutt, the Nova Scotia colonizer.

That gave Francis the appearance of direct relationship with the
Virginians instead of with the men of the Massachusetts house — all of whom actually were of the same rugged sort.

Then Francis went further. He had discovered the armorial bearings of the McNaughts of Kilquhanity and he adopted the coat of arms, without benefit of authorization from the Lyon Court in Edinburgh. The old motto he did not like; for *Omnia Fortunae Comitmo* (I Leave All to Fortune), he substituted *Non Est Tantum*, which in free translation means “We’re Not So Much.” This was an amusing touch of false humility.

When Francis later established himself in a palace in Rome, his male servants were liveried in silver and azure, derived from the inescutcheon of the armorial device of the McNaughts of Kilquhanity. All his household silver was engraved with the McNaught arms.

In 1915 Francis caused to be inserted in *Colonial Families in America*, a set of volumes compiled and edited by George Norbury MacKenzie, a sketch of the McNaught (McNutt) family that is completely erroneous in its account of the departure of four brothers from Scotland to Ulster in 1667. There is no record of the precise dates when any of the McNaughts migrated to Ulster. In this sketch Francis planted the legend of his Virginia descent.

Further to establish history as he wished it to appear, Francis persuaded the Venerable Archdeacon Raymond to write a monograph on the life and colonizing career of Alexander McNutt, for the Royal Society of Canada. This in fact proved an excellent work, except for several bits of misinformation given by the instigator to Archdeacon Raymond.

As a frontispiece to the monograph in the large bound volume of *Proceedings* of the Royal Society for 1911, there appears in full color the McNaught coat of arms with Francis’ motto: *Non Est Tantum*.

When the errors he had been led into making were pointed out to him, Archdeacon Raymond wrote another paper for the Royal Society, which was published in the *Proceedings* of a subsequent year, in which he deprived the colonizer of the title of Colonel, and erased his imaginary exploits with Gates at Saratoga and DeKalb in the South.

The various efforts of Mrs. McCormick and Francis Augustus McNutt to gild the honest but modest fame of Alexander McNutt caught the censorious eye of Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, D.C.L., who as a loyal Canadian was jealous of the integrity of Nova Scotia’s history. Another chapter deals with the paper Dr. Eaton wrote for the magazine *Americana*, in which William McNutt was returned to the Massachusetts family where he belonged. This publication must have
ruined a day or two for Francis and others who wished roots in Virginia instead of in Massachusetts, if they saw it.

If Francis was disturbed by the Eaton article it was not for long. When he wrote his autobiography a decade later “Colonel Alexander McNutt” was still his “versatile ancestor.” He owned that remoter ancestors in Galloway “were neither illustrious nor history-makers,” though he rejoiced in unauthorized use of their coat of arms.

At some idle moment he elected to go to Shelburne in Nova Scotia to have a look at McNutt’s Island. It seemed a dismal spot of rocks to him, clothed with scrub evergreens. Someone told him McNutts still were living in Onslow, but he felt no urge to look them up. He might have chosen to repudiate them had he seen them, for they still spelled the name McNutt. In his mind, Mac connoted land-owning, while the abbreviated Me to him may have betokened a low social state. While Mac is the original form, the difference in meaning between Mac and Me today amounts to the difference between Mister and Mr. Those who like traditional usage are partial to Mac and that is that.

Roy Douglass McNutt, New York lawyer and member of the Nova Scotia family at Onslow, relates that while the brief visit of Francis Augustus MacNutt caused quite a stir in Shelburne, the verdict following his departure was unfavorable. The good people of the town had meant to show respectful honor to one claiming descent from the colonizer, and he had high-hatted them with patrician disdain, rejecting friendly overtures.

When in Boston not long after the publication of the Americana article, I found Dr. Eaton, a keen little man, in a third-floor back room of a rooming house on Beacon Hill. When I remonstrated with him a bit for twigging the colonizer so roughly, he insisted that the family had Francis Augustus MacNutt to thank for setting up an image he had felt it his duty to modify.

Francis deluded a number of the Nova Scotia McNutts living in the United States with his legend of descent from a brother of the glamorous colonizer. One of them was the late Dr. William Fletcher McNutt of San Francisco, who wrote me a long letter in 1917 endeavoring to support the myth. The vital records of Palmer, Massachusetts, make all such efforts futile.

What does it matter anyway? All are related in some degree to all the figures in the story, and all in the McNaught line derive from the same worthy Covenanters in Scotland, who became tenant farmers in Ulster, and whose sons were sturdy immigrants to the American colonies. Francis Augustus MacNutt’s vagaries were amiable: he didn’t mean to
harm anyone by his little prank of identifying himself and near kinsmen with Virginia, and he didn’t harm anybody by decorating his family tree with extra candles he thought might beam more brightly: enough more brightly to make it resemble a Christmas tree.

In the end, in the days of his disillusionment, he admitted the truth. In his autobiography he moved with the lightness of an angel’s breath through the inconspicuous statement that the Virginian Alexander McNutt picked up William McNitt in his Massachusetts home and took him along to Nova Scotia. The colonizer’s father Alexander, he conjectured very reasonably, was a brother of Barnard McNitt of Massachusetts.
Francis MacNutt spent the latter half of 1896 and all of 1897 in his own country, preparing for a career in Rome. Washington was the city he preferred as a base; summers were spent in Bar Harbor, and in the autumn he went to Virginia. While at Bar Harbor in 1897 he met Margaret Van Cortlandt Ogden, member of an old and wealthy family. Her paternal great-grandfather, Benjamin Moore, had been the second Episcopal bishop of New York; Clement C. Moore, who wrote the beloved Christmas poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," was her grandfather.

Francis married Miss Ogden — eight years his senior — on January 4, 1898, a few weeks before his thirty-fifth birthday. Within a year Mrs. MacNutt voluntarily entered the Catholic Church, perhaps moved to do so after meeting a number of her husband's friends in Rome, and taking account of his responsibilities. For it was to Rome they went after a tour.

Soon after their arrival they were received in private audience by Pope Leo XIII. His Holiness reminded Francis he had been appointed a Papal Chamberlain, suggested that he remain in Rome to serve the
Church, and proposed a meeting with Cardinal Rampolla, Secretary of State. Señor Merry del Val, Spanish Ambassador to Austria and father of the Monsignor, urged his younger friend to accept the Pope’s suggestion as a command. Madame Merry del Val also urged the need of a house where distinguished visiting Catholics from abroad could meet what then was called the Black society of Rome. She intimated that the MacNutts might help usefully by setting up an establishment for brilliant entertaining.

After Italy had gained freedom and the House of Savoy had assumed government in Rome in 1870, the Pope had lost his temporal power. A number of aristocratic Roman families had remained faithful, politically, to the Pope, refusing acceptance of the Italian government, abstaining from voting and holding office, and boycotting the court socially. This was the Black society. Ultimately it became a losing game as the royal court grew in influence and attracted more and more of the aristocratic families. Black society still held aloof; Madame Merry del Val assured the MacNutts it was disintegrating; that it would cease to exist unless something were done to revive it. The chief families originally had received their titles, palaces, and fortunes as gifts from earlier Popes, who liked to do handsomely for their kin.

Perceiving that even the Pope himself might wish it, and liking the rôle proposed for them, the MacNutts took a long lease on the Palazzo Pamphili, located on the Piazza Navona not far from St. Peter’s. This palace, built in 1646-7 by Pope Innocent x for use of his brother, Prince of Valmontone, and his ambitious wife, had long been in a state of decline when Francis MacNutt leased it from Prince Doria. It had been divided for use by a wholesale cloth merchant, by the Palestrina Society, and by tenants of at least fifteen small apartments.

For the work of restoration, Prince Doria supplied the labor and the MacNutts the materials. With the palace cleared of tenants, the great rooms were brought back to their former glory, and the frescoes by famous artists were cleaned and repaired. When all had been finished, and draperies and furniture had been installed, Francis and his wife congratulated themselves on having one of the finest palaces in Rome.

All of this required more than two years of time, before the palace could be thrown open for the great functions intended. Meanwhile, the MacNutts lived in a part of it that had been first restored, and spent a summer in the Tyrol with the Schönbergs. At Brixen they presently were to buy the Schloss Ratzötz as a summer retreat.

When the Palazzo Pamphili was ready, Mrs. MacNutt began receiving regularly on Thursday afternoons. Her salons became the fashion
in Black society, and often as many as 150 persons attended. Twice each year a great ball was given, in a gallery half the size of that at Versailles, with a fine orchestra. At least once each winter an evening reception brought Cardinals, foreign dignitaries, and the diplomatic corps attached to the Vatican. These receptions must have made rather splendid spectacles, with all the men wearing their decorations, and the women dressed in their finest. Luncheons and dinner parties, with guests always limited to sixteen, were given throughout the season for the entertainment of visiting royalty, churchmen, and persons of wealth and social distinction from the United States, England, and all the Catholic countries.

The MacNutts were doing their part and doing it well, according to the wishes of the Vatican. Their function was to provide a bright social center and meeting place for resident aristocracy, Cardinals and other churchmen, and foreign visitors. They did not regard it possible to rebuild Black society, although they may have reanimated it for a while. The cause of those who waited and hoped for the restoration of the Pope's temporal power, lost in 1870, now seemed to have less than a dim chance.

What of the personal satisfactions gained from association with the glittering personages who came, received entertainment, and went? Francis MacNutt wrote near the end of his life:

"With the great majority of these passing acquaintances our relations were, and necessarily remained, superficial. Many of them we might be said hardly to know; it was enough that we knew who and what they were and why they were in Rome; for the rest, just the time necessary for closer relations was wanting. Of very many, I have forgotten even their names, as they doubtless have forgotten mine."

Very soon after returning to Rome Francis MacNutt went seriously about his duties as a Papal Chamberlain. The Chamberlains were of three classes: the first numbered only four, and in 1898 two were Romans, one was a German, and one a Belgian; the second class included all the others regularly active at the court; members of the third class were honorary appointees including many important and titled men from all over Europe, who often served temporarily while in Rome.

Francis entered the second class, and because of his knowledge of modern languages he was given the first vacancy in the first class. This advancement over the heads of several others, he related afterward, caused the beginning of lasting jealousies.

The active Chamberlains wore uniforms of black velvet, with plumed hats or bonnets of the same material; around the neck was worn a white ruff; a staff of office was carried. The Chamberlains were attendants of
the Pope; they escorted visitors, and served as ushers at formal ceremonies. They formed part of the pageantry at the Vatican, along with the Noble Guards, the Swiss Guards, and the ecclesiastics who had special duties at the court. "The lay element," Francis afterward related, "was completely separated from the ecclesiastics, who were in the majority, were of superior importance and held themselves aloof behind barriers of etiquette and formal politeness, than which nothing is more effectual." Francis may have felt chilly at times.

The pages of the autobiography are packed with the names of great figures who came and went in Rome in those days, and who visited the Papal court. "No court is comparable in majesty and sheer beauty with the pontifical," MacNutt wrote. "It is the perfect product of the best thought of the greatest artists. The court costumes and the uniforms have undergone but insignificant modifications since the days when they were designed by Michael Angelo, Rafael, and other lords of beauty, in the palmiest days of the Renaissance."

One of the visitors was King Edward vii of Great Britain, who rode in the elevator because he was too heavy to climb the great staircase in the Vatican. A brilliant procession escorted him into the Throne Room as Francis MacNutt watched from his post at the door of the secret antecamera. Francis' undeniable quality as a writer is seen in his characterizations:

His squat, corpulent body seemed literally bursting within the Field Marshal's uniform into which it was tightly laced. Above the stiff collar, too high for his short, fat throat, rose a flabby, sensual face with mottled cheeks, pendulous under-lip and watery eyes that drooped sleepily under bagging eyelids. He was entirely bald, and his scalp was blotched with unwholesome red patches. Breathing stertorously, the majesty of England passed before me and, as I raised my head from the profound obeisance with which I saluted him, my eyes beheld a truly startling tableau, typifying Spirit and Matter, this world and the other.

In the center of the secret antecamera stood the diaphanous figure of Leo xiii, about whose ascetic form the dead-white robes fell in stately folds to the floor. On one pallid hand blazed a huge sapphire. On his white breast, the pectoral cross of stupendous diamonds, presented in 1888 by the Republic of Colombia, seemed to catch all the light in the room, sending back prismatic rays of resplendent brilliancy. Hardly less brilliant were the Pontiff's black eyes that gleamed like somber jewels set in the face of an ancient ivory idol, framed in locks of silvery white hair. What an unforgettable picture!

Not a great while after the visit of Edward vii, the venerable Pope came to the end of his days. Cardinal Sarto was elected to succeed him; he took the name of Pius x. A complete change in the Vatican household
was to be expected on the accession of a new Pope, but Francis MacNutt was asked to continue as Chamberlain.

Bellamy Storer, Ambassador in Vienna, was sent by President Theodore Roosevelt to Rome to negotiate a matter relating to the Church in the United States. He was unsuccessful, and wrote the President that as long as MacNutt remained at the Vatican, nothing could be accomplished. “The President raged. Who was I to stand in the way of plans he was promoting?” Francis’ attitude toward the Vatican and the President of the United States, and the character of his loyalties, are expressed in this remarkable paragraph:

“Be he otherwise what he may, a President of the United States is, politically, the chief of a successful party representing, possibly by a mere fraction, the majority of voters in a given election. He occupies for a fleeting period of years a lofty and responsible office. But to the personal wishes of such an ephemeral ruler, the Vatican, of which even the temporal policies deal with eternity, would give little serious heed.”

That the President of the United States also may be the instrument of a great tradition and an eternal institution, Francis MacNutt could not perceive.

On the death of Leo XIII, Rome had hoped for the elevation of Cardinal Rampolla, a very distinguished man who would have been expected to maintain the formal traditions of immediate predecessors. The adverse vote of a Polish Cardinal, representing the veto power of Austria, had brought about the election of Pius X, described by Francis as a man of peasant origins, with simpler ideas. Very early the new Pontiff set about making peace with the House of Savoy, and re-establishing relations with the estranged Roman aristocracy. This portended the end of the attenuated Black society, and implied vanishing need for the social activities of the Palazzo Pamphili.

The dinner parties continued for a while, until things became uncomfortable for the Chamberlain. Now that the atmosphere of the Vatican was changing with a new regime, and the favor of Leo XIII no longer protected him, Francis MacNutt found he had made enemies. No matter how much he may have tried to cover himself with the veneer of a bland aristocracy, Francis was unable to divest himself of those strong inborn characteristics that marked him indelibly. He spoke his mind plainly, like so many of the rest of us.

So he resigned as Chamberlain at the Papal court, and there is no evidence that any protest was made in any official quarter. Many friends rose to console him, but his bright days in Rome were ended. Reflecting on the close of this chapter in his life he later wrote: “A sense of humor
does much to tide a man over life's troubles and I was fortunate in having one. As an offset to that worst of handicaps, a too keen sense of the ridiculous, I needed it."

The Palazzo Pamphili presently was surrendered to Prince Doria, and with it reverted all the improvements Mrs. MacNutt's money had made possible. Francis and his wife went home to the United States. It was not a very happy return, because the scrappy Theodore Roosevelt and the State Department were stirring the embers over Francis' part in the affair of the Protestant missionaries in the Carolines. David Ogden, Francis' brother-in-law, organized a board of lawyers to investigate the charges, but the President was unwilling to allow access to the State Department files. Mr. Roosevelt was hostile; he said: "you may tell MacNutt from me that if he thinks he can use my government to white-wash his character, he is mistaken. I won't have it."

So the board of investigating lawyers received no official recognition. It got at the State Department files, which showed nothing discreditable. It obtained a denial from Francis' former chief in Madrid that he had ever made damaging accusations, and declarations from former President Cleveland and his Secretary of State, John Foster, that they remembered nothing of any blameworthy action. John E. Parsons, president of the Bar Association and chairman of the investigating board, and his associates drew up a statement of findings that exonerated Francis MacNutt. The statement was circulated in the MacNutt social circle and among Catholics abroad.

William Dudley Foulke, like Francis from Richmond, Indiana, assured his friend the President that he had been misled and misinformed about MacNutt. Mr. Roosevelt then asked the Apostolic Delegate to inform the Pope that a message he had sent to the Vatican had been based upon information he had later discovered to be false, and that he wished to withdraw it.

Francis had resigned his post at the Vatican early in 1906 after active service as Chamberlain for nearly eight years; after his return to the United States a year was required to get his vindication. Then in the summer of 1907 he returned with his wife to their castle at Brixen in the Austrian Tyrol. He was without occupation now, but in looking through papers in his library he found work to do: his unfinished manuscript translation of the letter of Cortes to Charles v, begun many years before, now invited completion.

So he assembled books on his subject, and after visits to Rome and Cannes, he was in London early in 1908, where he could work in the library of the British Museum. Putnams undertook publication of the
work, which appeared that year in two volumes. Invited to do a short life of Cortes, Francis complied; the book was published by Putnams before 1908 was over. Subsequent works included *De Orbe Novo*, of Peter Martyr, translated from the Latin, and *Bartholomew De Las Casas*, published by Putnams; *Three Plays*, published by Laurence J. Gomme, and *Four Plays*, privately printed in Austria in wartime.

It was while at work in London that Francis MacNutt met again an old friend: Father Kenelm Vaughan, whose *Work of Expiation* had been deemed unrealizable by Cardinal Manning. Father Vaughan’s unquenchable spirit was unchanged; in his house in Hatfield Francis found a number of the bizarre Latin-American paintings he had seen before, and noted that the walls of his sleeping room were painted black. His bed was a coffin. After hearing the full story of Francis’ career as Chamberlain and host at the Palazzo Pamphili, ending sorrowfully in his resignation, Father Vaughan assured him he had been shown the folly and vanity of his life in Rome. Now he must perceive he still had a high spiritual destiny to work out. But Francis could not be convinced.

The early autumn season of 1908 was spent by Mrs. MacNutt at Bar Harbor and Newport; nowhere else in the world, Francis previously had decided, were people so spontaneously, so genuinely hospitable as in Newport. Perhaps his heart was still sore from disappointments; perhaps the controversy over his loyalties had disaffected former friends; instead of going to the places he had once enjoyed, Francis traveled alone to Mexico and the ruined ancient cities in Yucatan. Then he made the hurried trip to Nova Scotia previously mentioned. In this general period he joined some patriotic organizations: the Society of the Colonial Wars, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Loyal Legion. Learned societies admitted him to membership: the American Historical Society, the Hispanic Society of America, and the Virginia Historical Society. He was looking for compensations, no doubt. Then followed several peaceful years of travel and social contacts: summers spent in motoring about Europe, and one winter in New York while *De Orbe Novo* was being completed.

When war broke out in the summer of 1914 the MacNutts were in Austria. Francis felt even more neutral in spirit than President Wilson asked, and so he remained until the end. His sympathies were with Austria, where he had many friends and where he found life delightful. In the spring of 1915 Francis conducted his wife to Genoa and put her on a steamer bound for home; they had decided one of them must look after their interests in the United States while the other remained with Schloss Ratzötz.
Pope Pius x had died in 1914. During his reign the Canon Law had been recodified, Church music had been restored to the function of interpreting the liturgy, and the Pontiff's wish for a deeper spiritual life had led him to attack modernism as heretical. Pius x also had abolished the use of the veto in the election by Cardinals of future Popes; he himself had been elected over Cardinal Rampolla because of the veto exercised for Austria by Cardinal Mathieu of Poland.

Cardinal Giacomo della Chiesa, Archbishop of Bologna, was chosen to succeed Pius x; he took the name of Benedict xv. Francis MacNutt had known him years before in Madrid when he was secretary to the Nuncio, Archbishop Rampolla, and afterward in Rome when Cardinal Rampolla was Secretary of State and Monsignor della Chiesa was his under secretary. Of the new Pope, somewhat remote in manner and essentially a lonely man, Francis wrote in his autobiography:

"In person he was undersized, of a sallow, bilious complexion; he had an impenetrable mat of thick, coarse, black hair, prominent teeth, and everything about him was crooked: nose, mouth, eyes, shoulders — all were out of drawing. Despite these blemishes his bearing was dignified, his manners courtly though a trifle stiff, and he could never be mistaken for other than what he was — a gentleman. . . . My relations with him were unbrokenly good."

Returned to Austria from the Genoa trip with Mrs. MacNutt, Francis learned from a friend close to the Vatican that Pope Benedict had asked while the two were walking together in the garden: "And MacNutt, where is he? Why does he not come to Rome?" To this the friend had replied that MacNutt would be happy to come if he knew he would be welcome. "Tell him to come!" the Pontiff urged.

It was impossible to go directly from Austria to Rome, so Francis went by way of Switzerland, arriving two days after Italy had entered the war on the side of the Allies. He was bidden to assist at the Holy Father's Mass on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul on June 29, 1915, and invited to a private audience at 4:30 in the afternoon. As he ascended the broad stairs leading to the Sala Clementina in the Vatican he heard a word of command, and a sound of rattling, as the Swiss Guards sprang to attention to present arms. This was like the old days! After the Mass, for which he had been seated in the second row from the altar rail, Francis left the chapel and the building. On the way out, the Swiss Guards again presented arms. Why this mark of respect?

Returning for the audience at 4:30, MacNutt was escorted into the Pope's library, and found Benedict standing only a few paces within the door. Offering both his hands in welcome, the Pope led his visitor by
the arm to a sofa, saying: "Well, well, MacNutt, old friend, how are you?" When they were seated he continued: "Do you remember our first meeting?" "Yes," Francis replied, "in Madrid, in 1885."

Pope Benedict continued: "So many are dead since then, I was thinking just before you came that there is now almost nobody in the world whom I have known as long as I have known you." Then he went on to indicate he had given orders for the salutes by the Swiss Guards as the first sign of new recognition in Rome, and said that on the next visit, another step would be taken.

"But I do not intend ever to come to Rome again," Francis replied, evidently still smarting in spirit from the slights and insults that had caused him to resign as Chamberlain.

"You will return within a year," the Pope insisted, "because I tell you to do so, and I expect you to obey me." Then the conversation turned to other matters, and the Pope presently was recalling the old days at the Palazzo Pamphili, where he had been entertained. He thought the MacNutts should return, reopen a grand house, and resume their former life. Nothing could induce him to do that, Francis assured him.

On his return to Brixen, MacNutt found German troops established in the community. As the entrance of the United States into the war came nearer, Francis eventually found his movements becoming more restricted. Through 1915 he had no trouble. Planning another visit to Rome before sailing for America early in 1916, he busied himself with a project to bring about a reconciliation between the Holy See and the Italian government. He did not write of the details of his plan in his autobiography, but it is evident he proposed restoration to the Pope of a symbol of the old temporal power, by which the Pope had ruled several Papal States in former days. He did not remain to see the project realized, but after Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy, a concordat was reached by which the aim was accomplished. Vatican City was set up as an independent small state, over which the Popes were to be rulers thereafter.

Whatever his plan may have been, Francis gained Austrian approval for it. In Rome again, he called upon Monsignor Samper, Maestro di Camera at the Vatican, who promised to let him know when he could have another audience. The Pope, he said, had told Cardinals Gasquet and Vannutelli as well as himself that he proposed the MacNutts should return to Rome, reopen their house and resume their former life; he believed that little by little everything would come right. But Francis had to explain again he wouldn't consider it, and to beg that the subject remain unmentioned at the audience.
On the evening of January 6 Francis was received again by Pope Benedict, who seemed worn by the problems of war and the pressures that had been brought upon him. He listened attentively to the plan for a reconciliation with the civil government of Italy, and agreed that it sounded genial, and possibly feasible. Francis was satisfied with the impression he gained of the effect of his plan upon the Pope's mind. During the audience of forty minutes the subject of the return of the MacNutt to Rome was not mentioned.

After a few months in New York, Francis was back in Austria. Invited by the Duchess of Parma to the Palace of Schwarzau, he spent a number of weeks there in the autumn as a guest, enjoying friendly relations with members of the Austrian royal family. He returned by invitation for Christmas. The American Ambassador, Frederick Penfield, came with his wife for a brief visit. Penfield and Francis were old friends, from their days in Cairo. A little later the Ambassador was able to sell to MacNutt a carload of provisions not needed by diplomatic and consular representatives and their families, from a cargo shipped from home for their supply. These provisions MacNutt brought to Brixen and used in feeding the poor.

The German military police were bent upon interning Francis as an enemy alien, but local opposition was too strong. The town council passed unanimously a resolution accepting responsibility for him, and the Prince Bishop independently sent notice to the Germans that the diocese would provide guarantees.

Toward the end of 1917 an Austrian Foreign Office representative came to Francis at Schwarzau and told him that a declaration of war by the United States against Austria might come any day; that he was free to remain if he liked without danger of internment, but that if he chose to go, the Foreign Office would arrange for his safe departure. He decided to leave on December 3 for Switzerland. He was not to see the Tyrol and the Schloss Ratzötzt again for nearly three years.

His friend Baron Schönberg promised to look after the property, and Francis left with him something more than 70,000 crowns to be used for the purpose.

For more than two years MacNutt remained in Switzerland, much of the time in Berne, and part of it in great country houses. He mixed in the tangle of international politics at the capital, and attended weddings of royal personages who had sought refuge in Switzerland. When it became known that the Allies had promised South Tyrol to the Italians, Francis represented the United States, at the direction of the Legation, to work with Lord Acton for the British and Monsignor
Brulay des Varannes for the French in conferring with a Tyrolese delegation wishing to get protests before the coming peace conference.

President Wilson was of the opinion that the South Tyrol was populated mostly by Italians. Actually, the majority were Austrians. But Italy wanted the territory and eventually gained it. So that would diminish the pleasure of the MacNutts in their Schloss Ratzötz; they would no longer be living in Austria.

Mrs. MacNutt came over to Europe in 1919 and rejoined her husband; they stayed a while in Paris and then went to Cannes for the winter. For three summers they stayed at Brixen, but things were greatly changed. Old Austrian friends had died or become impoverished by the war; others did not care to cross the border. Rome was in the past now, and so were Bar Harbor and Newport, so far as Francis was concerned. Baron Schönberg had been degraded by detection in scandalous conduct. Francis still felt comfortable in Virginia when he visited there one winter. But life on the whole was sadly changed and dimmed.

Near the middle of the 1920s I had an exchange of correspondence with Francis MacNutt. He wrote as a frustrated man who seemed convinced his life had been a failure. Moreover, he thought none of his clan ever had come to much or accomplished anything worth mentioning. What was the matter with us? The pessimistic things he wrote to me were repeated in the opening pages of his autobiography; doubtless he had written them already.

He sent me a copy of his *Four Plays*, which he had printed privately at Meran in Austria during the war. I tried to read the plays; they seemed foreign in style and quite unrealistic; I judged them to be the work of a dilettante. They were related to events in Austria in 1809, during the course of the Napoleonic wars.

What I did not know was that Francis MacNutt was suffering from intestinal cancer, and refusing relief in opiates. He lived until December 30, 1927, and died with the feeling that his life had been of little use; that he had failed in great undertakings. His last interest had been the completion of *Six Decades of My Life*, to appear in two thick quarto volumes, privately printed in Austria in only forty sets. His last satisfaction was in scanning bound copies placed in his hands a few days before he died.

Though he did not realize it, his autobiography was to provide refutation of his conviction of failure, for despite excessively numerous typographical errors of printers unfamiliar with English, it is a work of literary art. Sometimes a single book may justify a life. For though we may regard a large part of the work as the self-made patrician's
chronicle of social activities akin to what may be found in court memoirs, and doubt the wisdom of his course in early life and as an expatriate, we find that he had a vivid career, crammed with interesting experiences. His story is written in a style so excellent that we cannot escape the conviction he could have been a successful author had he begun early and devoted himself to subjects of interest to a wide field of readers.

If only he had been "poor and diligent"! Then, as his music teacher had said in his boyhood, he could have gone far as an artist, for he was ambitious and had a good mind.

The Rev. John J. Donovan, then Procurator for St. Joseph's Seminary at Dunwoodie, New York, a good friend, saw in the privately-printed autobiography a work he thought should be read and enjoyed by as many Catholics as possible. He talked of it with Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, who agreed. Arrangements were made with Longmans, Green & Co. to publish a somewhat abridged edition for the Catholic Book Club, handsomely illustrated, printed and bound. Cardinal Hayes provided a foreword, Gilbert K. Chesterton wrote the preface, and the Rev. Father Donovan contributed an editor's note, in which he said:

Francis Augustus MacNutt was that multiple "man of letters, manners, morals, parts," whose genius invited the admiration and won the friendship of three Popes, of Cardinals, Prelates, Kings, and Princes. An intellectually versatile, irresistible person of the greatest possible charm, who could talk entertainingly in several languages on almost any subject, he could just as naturally kneel before "the everlasting light" and meditate on the days when he had hoped, as a priest, "to kindle his spirit at that supernatural flame."

The book was published in 1936 with the title: A Papal Chamberlain: The Personal Chronicle of Francis Augustus MacNutt. Its generous editor in effect pronounced a benediction on the closing of a singular life. Like Chesterton, Francis is valued because he forsook the faith of his fathers to turn to Rome.

At the outset of this account it was said that Francis was a figure worthy of a novelist, and it cannot be surprising that a fictionized account of his life appeared in September 1950. The author is the Rev. Father John Louis Bonn, S.J., a graduate of Boston College and a teacher there. The book was published by Doubleday & Co. for the Catholic Book Club.

Father Bonn never met Francis MacNutt. For factual material he relied upon the Decades and some unidentified sources, but neglected information supplied by J. Scott MacNutt, nephew of Francis. He drew
upon his own knowledge of Church history, and information gained from research.

The title of the novel, *House on the Sands*, foreshadows some of the author's conclusions about the manner of life his subject lived. In general, the story contains a considerable part of the detail narrated in my four chapters. A reader who cares to study closely the life of Francis MacNutt would do well to look up *A Papal Chamberlain* in a library, and obtain also a copy of *House on the Sands*. It will be evident that Father Bonn, in using the novelist’s prerogative, heightened colors in dealing with some phases of his subject’s life, and softened or omitted entirely certain other aspects.

The central figure in *House on the Sands* most admired by the author appears to be Father Kenelm Vaughan — “the only person in his life, he [Francis] knew, whom he had ever loved.” The strange innovator of the Work of Expiation is described as a figure of beauty, with “innocent and saintlike eyes,” “over which drooped long hyaline lashes”; he had “rather long silken hair,” and “delicate precision of the lines of chin and cheekbones.”

It will be recalled from the earlier narrative that Father Vaughan had a remarkable fascination for Francis, and that the two sat in a pit together at Fanjeux in France while reciting the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah. In the novel, Father Bonn has Pere Doussot join in these exercises in the pit, though actually the two sat alone together. One wonders why Pere Doussot is added to the party.

Abbé Fischer, remembered in Mexico as a lonely old man with his life’s work closed, welcomed Francis as a pupil. Francis related in the *Decades* that Abbé Fischer advised him against joining Father Vaughan in the Work of Expiation, perceiving he had no vocation for the priesthood, and encouraged him to become a writer of history. In the novel, Father Bonn pictures the Abbé as a sinister figure with harmful schemes likely to endanger Francis’ future.

One senses that the author thinks ill of those who tried to keep Francis away from Father Vaughan. In London, Cardinal Manning closed out the Work of Expiation and arranged to have Francis become a student at the Accademia Ecclesiastica in Rome. When Francis eventually gave up training for the priesthood and returned to London, the Cardinal told him it was well; that he had been kept from worse hands by his studies in Rome. That is, the hands of Father Vaughan. The author of *House on the Sands* regards all this with disapproval, and indicates distaste for Cardinal Manning who, it is implied, used Francis as a tool and spy in London. An impartial reader of Francis’ autobiography may
have a different view of the Cardinal, and regard him as one of the kind¬
est and sincerest of all the friends Francis ever had, as well as one of the
greatest and most spiritual of the high churchmen he knew.

MacNutt seemed indifferent to marriage. In the novel he is quoted as
saying: "I hate children!" The Schönbergs thought he could better his
position by taking a wife, and in House on the Sands we read that the
Baron prepared for him a list of forty rich eligibles. Every name was
scratched off the list but that of Margaret Ogden, with whom Francis
was not then acquainted. Subsequently he met and married her.

Roman dowagers encountered in the novel discuss Francis as of good
family but a terrible snob. The dowagers, however, were glad to attend
the receptions and dinners in the Palazzo Pamphili. It is made to appear
that Francis was coldly indifferent to working people and social inferiors.

Francis' downfall as a social leader and man of position in Rome, it
will be recalled, followed the death of Leo xiii and the accession of Pius
x. The new Pope sought peace with the House of Savoy, thus dooming
the Black society. Also he simplified the music at the Vatican by re¬
turning to earlier forms. This change was a blow to composers and it
threw musicians out of work. Without the favor of Leo xiii, and with
entertainments at the Palazzo Pamphili no longer needed, Francis was
open without protection to the sneers and slurs of those who previously
had controlled their dislike.

In the preparation of his novel, Father Bonn appears to have made
thorough research to discover the manner in which things went wrong
with Francis in his days of decline.

Musicians out of work formed a mob and demonstrated outside the
Vatican. Members of the Palestrina Society remembered they had been
turned out of the Palazzo Pamphili to make room for the MacNuts. Due
to the simplification of music, a Roman music publisher had re¬
fused to go on with recent compositions, and threatened to discontinue
publishing breviaries. The MacNuts were rich. Let them supply the
cash to take the compositions off the hands of the Roman publisher,
who then might continue with the breviaries. Their money could cure
every hardship resulting from the changes made by Pius x.

In the novel, Francis encounters Cardinal Satolli at a reception, and
it is evident the Cardinal is displeased because Francis has not already
unsheathed his checkbook. He coldly asks the Chamberlain:

"But don't you admit that it's a common accusation that Americans
are only interested in amassing wealth?"

At this, Francis becomes again an American and a McNaught, and
retorts:
“In America, Your Eminence, amassing wealth is an ambition, but in Italy it is a passion.”

Whereupon the Cardinal stalks out of the party, creating a scene. Father Bonn has Baron Schönberg say to Francis: “You have made a very bad enemy, Franz.”

Another reason for Francis’ loss of favor is attributed to his amused recital in company of someone else’s remark about the late Leo XIII. Francis had a story that a comment on the Pope’s sprightliness even in old age had elicited from another person this rejoinder: “Oh yes. He reminded me of a white rabbit on vacation.” The effect of repetition was to pin upon Francis the authorship of the remark he had only quoted. It was considered bad form for him to be so cutting about the Pope who had befriended him in life.

The novel introduces other examples of Francis’ bits of mordant wit during his later period in Rome, when his temper was fraying in adversity and he was approaching the time when in despair he must resign as Chamberlain. The novel helps us to perceive why Francis refused so positively eight years later to return to Rome and resume his former position when Benedict XV, his old friend as Monsignor della Chiesa, so kindly urged him to do so in recollection of past friendship. Bitter was the realization he had been used in Rome because of his wife’s money.

We read in House on the Sands that Francis was tempted by an Austrian proposal that he give up his American citizenship to become a subject of Austria, and to be rewarded by advancement to the rank of Baron von und zu Brixen. His good wife talked him out of that idea, we are informed. Nothing in Francis’ writings confirms this story. In spite of numbers of passages that show Francis in a poor light, the total effect of the novel is to shed a great deal more romantic glitter over his life and actions than we can accept as probable, even though he lived much in glamor.

The novel deals a bit unkindly with Andrew Scott, the indulgent grandfather who supplied Francis with money until he married a wealthy woman, and who left him a sixth of his estate. The MacNutt autobiography relates that Francis’ paternal grandfather, John Murray Upham McNutt, accepted as a lawyer’s fee a tract of wild land in Michigan. Everyone forgot about the land in the passing of years until Andrew Scott received a bill for delinquent taxes. As executor of the estate of Joseph McNutt, Scott sold the land and divided the proceeds between Joseph’s sons: Francis and Albert. From his share, $10,000 was invested for Francis; the rest he used for current spending. The novel tells the story otherwise.
The Michigan tract becomes an entire township, and Andrew Scott is shown as a grasping old party who managed the lands to his own advantage. A great city had grown up on the forgotten land, and while the property yielded $10,000 a year to Francis, it also was made to provide Grandfather Scott with "enough to live on for the rest of his days." This is manifestly unfair to the honest old Presbyterian banker.

My present readers may reach this conclusion about Francis MacNutt: try as he would he could not escape from his rugged ancestry. His natural heritage and traits were at war with the artificial life of show and ceremony he had chosen, and in Rome he was living amid scenes where the malicious would gladly have destroyed him. The blood and spirit of the Galloway rebels were still in him, however much he might try to disguise his origins, and under painful pressure the old Scot in him came to the surface and spoke out sharply. He would have fared better in far different enterprises in his native land, no doubt. If only his mother had lived to warm and guide his youth! She might have spared him in childhood from listening to so many sermons. A sound Presbyterian sermon is the product of a fine, sinewy intelligence, and may seem formidable to childish minds.

In his dying hours as described in the novel, Francis is made to confess to his wife Margaret that he has built only a house on the sands. His dying thought, we are told, was of the distantly absent Father Kenelm Vaughan, to whom "his last words were said. . . . 'I want to receive Holy Communion once more.'" How can a novelist know the last thought of an actual person? That the greatest attachment of his whole life centered upon Father Kenelm Vaughan is an assumption with which members of Francis' family may wish not to agree.

The author of the novel concludes that there was One Who took the house built on the sands and set it firm upon a rock. For toward the end Francis had performed a great service; he had made the plan that led to the creation of Vatican City through a concordat agreed upon with Premier Mussolini. Thus was restored the symbol of temporal power to the Holy See, and with the restoration of this dignity, the Pope was released from the necessity of considering himself a prisoner in the Vatican.

Many others had their part in bringing about the concordat, but we can perceive that the initiative of Francis MacNutt in this matter so highly important to the Church won for him the gratitude that Father Bonn makes evident in *House on the Sands*. To Catholics this was the crowning achievement of his life, and a great one.
A successful painter is so uncommon in this family of engineers, soldiers, professional men and farmers that Joseph Scott MacNutt of St. Louis may be the only example. We are entitled to at least one painter, with the record of a career.

He is the son of a soldier: Albert Scott McNutt, elder brother of Francis Augustus MacNutt of Richmond, Indiana, Rome and the Tyrol. Albert was born May 25, 1860 and was graduated from West Point in 1881. On February 20, 1884, he married Helen, daughter of John and Eliza Patterson of Ridgeway, Pennsylvania.

Their son Scott Patterson, whose name later was altered to Joseph Scott and who today signs letters and paintings as J. Scott MacNutt, was born on January 11, 1885 at Fort D. A. Russell (now Fort Warren) in Wyoming. That is where the First Lieutenant in the U. S. Infantry was then stationed. Six years later Lieutenant McNutt was directing a party of men engaged in tearing down a building at an army post in Arizona that had been ordered abandoned. The summer weather was hot and the Lieutenant worked too hard. He suffered sunstroke, followed by paralysis, with the consequence that he became a patient in a government hospital in Washington through a lingering illness that ended in death on May 8, 1901.

When Albert's grandfather Andrew Finley Scott had died in 1895 his will had provided a bequest equal to that left Francis Augustus, so the family of the stricken officer had economic security. The son who now lives in St. Louis has one completed career in his past: that of a sanitation engineer. How he worked from that into his present vocation will now appear.

His uncle Francis Augustus had no son, and after 1901 Scott had no father, so it was natural enough that a bond should be established between the two, with the younger man influenced in some degree by the elder.

J. Scott MacNutt was graduated from Harvard in 1906 with the degree of A.B. cum laude; then from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1908 as a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Public Health. He was engaged with the Pittsburgh Typhoid Fever Commission in association with the Russell Sage Foundation in 1908-09, and was Health Officer of Orange, New Jersey, from 1910 to 1913. He was a lecturer at M. I. T. in 1914-15 while carrying on research and writing in the field of public health. One of his books, A Manual for Health Officers, was
the first of its kind and a standard text for many years. Another book was The Modern Milk Problem, published in 1917. In the first World War he was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the U. S. Army Sanitary Corps and served from 1918 to 1920.

Back in 1915 he had taken up painting with the idea that a career as an artist might afford more satisfaction than that of a sanitation engineer. After his service with the Army he studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and privately in Paris, in 1920 and 1921; then he specialized in portrait painting. He was an instructor in the St. Louis School of Fine Arts at Washington University in 1927-28; member of the staff at Woodbury School, Boston and Ogunquit, Maine, in 1928 and 1929, and Associate Dean of the School at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1929-30.

He established himself as a portrait painter in St. Louis in 1921, and has remained there since except for his engagements as noted, and for several trips abroad, and summers in Ogunquit. On May 27, 1924, he married Agnes Cady of St. Louis (b. November 12, 1887), who had been having a career of her own as a dance director. Daughter of Marshall and Clara (Romyn) Cady, she had been educated in the St. Louis schools and had taken her professional training in New York and Cleveland. Then she taught at the public school playgrounds of her home city and directed the annual dance pageants of school children for a number of years. She was also directress of dancing at the Community Center, St. Louis. The newly-wed Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott MacNutt found quite easily that their interests in the arts were mutual. Their children, Francis Scott and Margaret Alexandra, will appear later.

Mr. MacNutt has painted many portraits in Europe and the eastern United States, and many more in St. Louis. Of his success and rank we find a glimpse in an article entitled "Solid and Changeless" that appeared in the Harvard Alumni Bulletin of February 26, 1949:

During St. Louis Art Week, held early in November, eighteen new portraits by J. Scott MacNutt, '06, were on exhibit at the galleries of the Artists' Guild. Especially loaned from the Grand Hall waiting room of the Union Station was MacNutt's painting of the late Philip J. Watson, president of the Terminal Railroad Association. Of the exhibit, Howard Derrickson of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote:

"Compared to the over-night celebrities and the imitators of the modernists MacNutt is as solid and changeless as the pyramids. . . . It's restful and reassuring to a man to know that his portrait is going to be an excellent likeness, with perhaps some appreciative insight into his character, with no danger of a Picassoesque displacement of the eyes, or an attempt to present him in full face and profile at one and the same time."
His first painting of a Harvard alumnus was the portrait of Professor Walter R. Spalding, '87, which hangs in Paine Hall of Harvard's Music Building. MacNutt later painted George T. Moore, '95, and the late George D. Markham, '81, but no alumni names have appeared recently in the portraits he has executed of many outstanding citizens in the Middle West.

Nowadays MacNutt is so busy with his commissions, the presidency of the Artists' Guild, and the chairmanship of the advisory board of the Vandeventer Place Association in St. Louis that he says he has time to use his early engineering training only on an occasional leaky faucet!

No present reader would be satisfied without some account of the relation that existed between the painter nephew of St. Louis and the picturesque uncle of the Schloss Ratzötz in the Tyrol. When Francis Augustus MacNutt realized in 1925 that he had incurable cancer he wished to see J. Scott again and invited him to come with his family. From a copy of the account the painter wrote a few months ago at the request of the Rev. Father Bonn, who wished more light on the expatriate's closing years, the following paragraphs have been extracted:

In his later years I believe Uncle Francis came to see that many of the things he had valued or striven for were, after all, the husk rather than the kernel — the artificiality rather than the art of life....

When my uncle was undergoing his illness, I with my wife and infant son Francis visited Ratzötz but once, staying there about three months in the summer of 1926. We passed the winter of 1926-27 in Paris and returned to the United States in June 1927....

Uncle Frank was always a reserved man, even when he appeared to be most frank and open. Even with myself, who was a kind of foster-son, he was never really intimate, and it was somewhat so, I suspect, in his relation to Aunt Margaret. He never got over the habit of playing a part on the stage of life, and it seems to have been only with certain minor characters in his drama that he allowed himself that freedom of intercourse which might lead to confidences. My wife was one of these....

Uncle Francis had very little fortune of his own, but he was of great help to Aunt Margaret in the use of her wealth. Whether it was in the enlargement and adornment of Ratzötz according to his rather baroque taste, or in benefactions to the Church or individuals, she relied very largely on his judgment. They paid the cost of building, or reconstructing, the Diocesan Museum, in which a wealth of historic material, folk arts, etc., was installed. [Also portraits of Francis Augustus and his wife Margaret, painted by their nephew.]

He always liked motoring [in a big Isotta-Fraschini touring car].

Francis Augustus MacNutt, according to his nephew's account, selected his own burial place at the foot of the tower in the churchyard of the nearby Millan parish church, and probably arranged also for the
plain marble slab with simple inscription, to be placed later on the top of the tomb. He died at the end of December 1927 in the Castle Ratzötz, a few days before his sixty-fifth birthday. In his will, everything was left to his widow, with instructions to pay various legacies, to servants, local religious houses, and to the Prince Bishop of Brixen for the poor. A portrait of Anne Carter of Shirley, mother of Robert E. Lee, was bequeathed to Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Margaret Ogden MacNutt survived her husband only a few years and was buried beside him. And that completes the nephew's story of them.

Mr. MacNutt has his studio on the top floor of his home, one of the great old houses in Vandeventer Place, St. Louis. On both sides of a narrow park intersected by one street are the mansions that were new perhaps in the 1890s, built so well and strongly that age gives them distinction and no air of faded grandeur. This is particularly true of the houses below the intersection, which never can be shabby so long as they are as well kept as now. Vandeventer Place is a little like Gramercy Park in New York or Louisbourg Square in Boston, in that it is a quiet retreat surrounded by a tumultuous city that has crowded all sorts of diverse elements about it. A community association guards its welfare, and in its counsels the painter has a part. Vandeventer Place perhaps may be seen most appreciatively under the mellow sunshine of an October afternoon, with fallen leaves lying on the grass or skittering before a breeze. Autumnal colors go well with the old houses of an earlier day which collectively, with their strip of park, almost persuade a visitor he has stepped back half a century in time, at least.

To the house at 72 Vandeventer Place return the son and daughter of the household, whose childhood rooms retain their books, the collections they made, and the pictures they drew when they were youngsters full of bounce and the early urge to self-expression. The two are named for the uncle and aunt who have filled the preceding chapters.

Francis Scott MacNutt, born in St. Louis on April 22, 1925, educated in the Community School and the John Burroughs School, completed pre-medical studies at Washington University, and won an A.B. cum laude at Harvard in 1948. He had entered with the class of 1946, but served in the recent war as Surgical Technician (T/5) in the United States Army. At Harvard he was on the staff of the Lampoon, and a member of the Ornithological Club, Junior Varsity baseball team, Cross Country squad, and his House baseball team. He held Harvard College scholarships, and won second prize in the Boylston Oratorical contest in 1948. His field of concentration was English.
The young man’s father takes a degree of pleasure in a story printed in *The Deacon’s Testament*, yearbook of Kirkland House at Harvard for 1947-48. Headed “It’s the MacNutts” it says:

With the baseball season just three games old, the rest of the [inter-House] League fervently wished it had never heard of Kirkland. For the Deacons had already smothered Lowell, Adams, and Dunster . . . [behind the superb pitching of Frank MacNutt] . . . Lowell didn’t have a chance as MacNutt yielded but two hits. The Adams game was much tighter but MacNutt slammed the door on any Adams House hopes as he pitched a no-hitter . . . to the final 2-0 count . . . Dunster House managed to look more like the Keystone Kops than a baseball team . . . McNutt allowed only one hit.

“That’s *nothing!* Nothing at all!” says the young man of these inter-House games, but a no-hitter is a no-hitter in any league, thinks a father who sets store by the maintenance of the old vigor.

After Harvard, Francis Scott went on to postgraduate studies in Speech and Drama at the Catholic University of America in Washington, leading to a Master’s degree in June 1950. His special interests there were theater, writing, and music. And baseball. The Washington *Star* of May 10, 1950 reported a game which Catholic University had won from American University by a score of four to three. The winning pitcher was a tall and thin young man with a mop of long hair allowed to grow because he was about to play a gangster in the spring musical show, “Lucky Day.” He was Frank MacNutt, six feet three, 150 pounds, who had a no-hitter for seven innings. Then he relaxed, but not too much.

Margaret Alexandra, born January 1, 1929, attended the Community School and the John Burroughs School; then Wellesley College for two years. She might have gone longer but chose to marry on June 11, 1949, J. Richardson Usher, a son of Roland Green Usher of Washington University, a well-known teacher, writer, and commentator in history. In childhood Alexandra had a passion for drawing, evidenced by examples preserved at home, that developed into interests in art and music. She has given many performances, in person or by radio, singing folk songs and ballads to the guitar. They call her Alexandra out of respect for the Virginia colonizer. Mr. and Mrs. Usher live in Ithaca, New York.

With the parting remark that J. Scott MacNutt is a member of the St. Louis Art Commission, this chapter on the portrait painter of Van deventer Place ends. Despite differences in environment and occupation, he is like other great-great-great-great-grandsons of old Barnard of Massachusetts in essential ways. Steady and responsible, neighborly, and pleased with his children.
BOOK SEVEN

PENNSYLVANIA

1722 TO PRESENT TIME
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK SEVEN

ALEXANDER McNITT, who came with his wife JEAN and three children from the Laggan in Ulster to Pennsylvania in 1722; his son was

ROBERT McNITT, who warranted 400 acres of land in 1738 and established a family of five sons, with lands in the Kishacoquillas Valley in the present Mifflin County; these sons were:

ALEXANDER McNITT, who served in the Revolution, and whose son ROBERT was stolen by Indians in 1777;

WILLIAM McNITT, also a Revolutionary soldier, who built in 1788 a stone house still held in the family;

JOHN McNITT, another Revolutionary soldier who built another stone house, and whose son ROBERT inherited his childless uncle WILLIAM's farm and stone house;

ROBERT McNITT, who was the fourth brother to serve in the Revolution; and

JAMES McNITT, the youngest, who became dissatisfied with his farm, left his violin with his brother JOHN and disappeared to become a frontiersman in Kentucky; is presumed to have served in an Indian war and in the Revolution; his name is associated with the worst Indian massacre in Kentucky history.

JOHN McNITT 2nd, who served with COMMODORE PERRY in naval battle of Lake Erie in 1813.

ROBERT J. McNITT, great-grandson of the pioneer brother JOHN, who was a cavalry Captain in the Civil War.

JAMES DAVID McNITT, another great-grandson of the pioneering brother JOHN, who became a bank president in Logansport, Indiana.

ROBERT JOSEPH McNITT, eldest son of JAMES DAVID, who won an engineering degree at Cornell, invented new processes and designed and built manufacturing plants; lives in Perth Amboy, New Jersey; his sons ROBERT, JAMES DAVID 2nd, EDWARD, and DOUGLAS served in second World War; ROBERT won Navy and Marine Corps medal for heroism and a citation from FLEET ADMIRAL NIMITZ.

WILLARD CHARLES McNITT, second son of Logansport banker, who became a lawyer and manufacturer of fruit juice-extracting machinery; his sons WILLARD 2nd, ROBERT, and JOHN GLASGOW served in Navy and Air Forces in second World War.
For interesting variety we discover a McNitt family generally inclined to “stay put” and to remain steadfastly Presbyterian. A few in this group have removed from the Kishacoquillas Valley in Central Pennsylvania to Indiana and Illinois, but the majority have remained.

In consequence of this steadiness, McNitts are living today in solid old houses of masonry on lands obtained by their pioneer forefathers nearly two centuries ago. There are advantages in taking root and becoming identified with local traditions, holding the respect of neighbors who know that far in the past the predecessors of these men and women helped to settle a new country and remained to conquer the wilderness and make it blossom.

We are now to consider another Alexander McNitt, noting as we begin how often the baptismal name Alexander was worn by men who dared do things in Scotland, who made themselves known in Northern Ireland, ventured to cross the ocean as pioneers, and showed their adventurous spirit in the New World. The “given” name Alexander may deserve reviving.

The Alexander about to be introduced and his wife Jean or Jane arrived in Pennsylvania from the Laggan with three children in 1722, and established a branch whose members have contributed measurably to the store of colorful tales. Alexander and Jean made their home in Donegal Township, in what is now Lancaster County, among a number of settlers of their own kind who had been coming from Donegal and Londonderry Counties in Ulster since 1718. The first arrivals had landed at Newcastle on the Delaware, a port of entry much used by migrants to Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Of the children of Alexander and Jean McNitt, family records account for only three: 1. Margaret, born 1710, married Hugh Wilson, died 1797. 2. Robert, born 1711, married Catherine ——, and warranted 400 acres of land in 1738, in Pennsboro Township, Lancaster County. Through subdivision of large counties and name changes, Robert found his land — beginning in 1750 — was in Lurgan Township, Cumberland County. There he died about 1765. 3. Jean, born 1712, married Patrick Hays in 1729, died in 1792.

The son Robert forms a center of interest for us, because he was to be the father of five vigorous men and thus the founder of a line. All five of these sons were to be landholders and Revolutionary soldiers; the fifth, more restless than his brothers, was to win a degree of fame in
regional history as a frontiersman and scout among hostile Indians.

The name Robert, which has recurred steadily in generations of the Pennsylvania family, suggests that Alexander McNitt (who arrived in 1722) may have been a son of Robert McNitt of Aghadacor in Mevagh parish near Londonderry, whose name appeared on a Hearth Money Roll in the period of 1665. The Ulster Robert may have been a brother of the Alexander McNitt who came to Massachusetts with his son Barnard in 1720. The name Barnard appeared in Pennsylvania once or twice, though spelled Bernard. The close relationship of all branches stemming from Ulster and Galloway may be regarded as assured.

The surname was treated just as lightly in public records in Pennsylvania as elsewhere. Men of Robert's family were variously styled from time to time as McKnight, McKnitt, and McNutt. It was generally presumed all varieties of the name came to the same thing.

Alexander and Jean and their neighbors in Donegal Township had come to Pennsylvania in response to an invitation from William Penn “to the oppressed of all nations.” Penn had provided a refuge for fellow Quakers, who settled in the eastern part of the province, and who by honest diligence were to prosper exceedingly. Regarding themselves as eligible under Penn's specification, such great numbers of Ulster Scots came that many more of them settled in Pennsylvania than in any other American colony. Their descendants became so relatively numerous that they influenced materially the development and the characteristics of that part of the Keystone State lying west of the region held by the Quakers and thrifty German settlers.

The attitude of the Quakers toward the Ulster Scots was much the same as that of early English colonists in New England and Virginia. It was something like this: “Come if you will, but please move on beyond our frontiers. You Irish may go into the Indian country and conquer the wilderness.” It was the rôle invariably assigned to newcoming Scots, all the way from New England to South Carolina, to set themselves up on the outer edge of civilization as human barriers against the Indians. The term “Irish” was not used in any respectful sense, and neither was the later appellation: “Scotch-Irish.” These rugged intruders just had to show the Quakers the stuff they were made of, to win a degree of respect. In time, they had a great deal to do with the War for Independence, with building and running the Pennsylvania Railroad, with founding the steel industry, and making the cities of Harrisburg and Pittsburgh what they are.

Carlisle was one of their towns. Chambersburg was named for one of them: Benjamin Chambers. The Ulster Scots made Pennsylvania a
citadel of Presbyterianism, and under the leadership of their university-trained ministers they established schools immediately, and started building colleges out of nothing but their poverty and their determination to advance learning. It is apt to compare their characteristics and the nature of their rough wilderness assignment with those of the United States Marines. Assuredly the men were the leathernecks of their day!

The Quakers didn’t like them very well. They were so different! The non-belligerent Quakers were kindly toward the Indians, who didn’t bother them, well inside the frontiers as they were. The Ulster Scots were impatient, temperish people who were as likely as not to retaliate with severity when Indians scalped their wives and children.

When the settlers appealed to the provincial government for help to stop the depredations, the Assembly feared such help might antagonize the Indians. According to W. F. Rutherford, in a paper he read before the eighth Scotch-Irish Congress that met in Harrisburg in 1896, the Assemblmen looked upon the Presbyterians as they had been described by one of their members: “a pack of insignificant Scotch-Irish, who, if they were all killed, could well enough be spared.” This naturally was encouraging to the Indians.

At the time of the first arrival of Ulster Scots the Quakers had set the limits of their western frontier at Conestoga Creek in Lancaster County. The newcomers pushed a few miles beyond to found the new Donegal community along Chicques Creek and its tributaries. In 1722, the year Alexander McNitt arrived, the community was set up into a township; the Donegal Presbytery was established ten years later. The congregation had been organized in 1721, and was served by supply ministers until the summer of 1726. Then came the Rev. James Anderson, a native of Scotland who had been educated there, and who after a year of trial was regularly installed.

Alexander and his neighbors early had a choice between two saw and grist mills, and two taverns. On Sundays they listened to long and sinewy sermons, preceded by prayers that often lasted an hour. Alexander and Jean must have been as excited as their neighbors when in 1739 the evangelist George Whitefield came to Pennsylvania, and in time to their neighborhood, and held open-air revival meetings. His more exhilarating style of preaching attracted a great many Presbyterians and worried the Donegal parson, Mr. Anderson, who feared loss of his flock. He followed Whitefield from place to place; when he tried to speak from the same platform, the evangelist refused to debate with him, and the audiences cried him down.

Thus there was a flocking to the New Lights, but since a steady
Presbyterianism has continued through generations of the Pennsylvania McNitt family, it must be apparent that Alexander and Jean remained steadfast with the Old Lights and their pastor.

As a small community productive of energetic men and movements whose influence extended far, Donegal Township may be compared with the Laggan, the Protestant lowland area in northern County Donegal whence so many had come to the new settlement. Today a place of pilgrimage for many is the early Presbyterian church, a plain, gambrel-roofed building without a spire. Though Alexander died in 1740, some member of the McNitt family may have been in the congregation one Sunday in 1777 when an incident illustrative of the strong-willed spirit of the community took place. The minister at the time was the Rev. Colin McFarquhar, graduate of Edinburgh University and only recently arrived from Scotland. Samuel Evans related the story in a paper on the settlement of Donegal which he read at the Harrisburg congress in 1896:

He did not fully sympathize with his congregation in their hostility to Great Britain. He must have been greatly astonished on the 16th day of June, 1777, when as he was holding service an express arrived from Philadelphia to Colonel Alexander Lowrey, calling upon him to muster his battalion and march to the Delaware, to aid in preventing the capital of the province from capture by General Howe and his army, who were supposed to be marching through Jersey.

The congregation adjourned without waiting for the benediction, and formed a ring around the old oak tree in front of the church; and placing Mr. McFarquhar within the circle made him take off his hat and shout for the success of the patriot cause. Joining hands, they pledged their faith to each other in their determination to fight the British to a finish.

In the course of the Revolution the township of Donegal contributed to the colonial armies seventeen officers with the rank of Colonel, as well as many other officers and men in the ranks.

Germans from the Palatinate had been coming to Pennsylvania to escape oppression, and their milder temperament made them more acceptable to the Quakers than the more aggressive and turbulent-spirited Scots. As the latter moved westward to obtain larger allotments of new lands in the Cumberland and Juniata Valleys, the Germans bought their farms. Travelers through Lancaster and York Counties today may see the most beautifully developed farming region in the United States: one of the fairest countrysides in the whole world. Generations of Germans who have been content to stay in one place and who have known how to make the best use of excellent soil, have tilled with enduring
KISHACOQUILLAS VALLEY

patience, living in houses of stone and storing their crops in great barns ornamented with hex signs to ward off evil, and following the precepts of their Mennonite and Amish faiths.

Robert McNitt, son of Alexander, removed early to Lurgan Township in the neighborhood of Carlisle in Cumberland County. Carlisle is the chief town of the beautiful Cumberland Valley, which lies between mountain ranges and extends from the Susquehanna River to the Potomac, a distance of about sixty miles. Its width measures from ten to twenty miles. Below the Potomac River the Shenandoah Valley begins, and continues southwestward through Virginia between the same ranges of the Alleghany and Blue Ridge mountains. Down the thoroughfare of the two valleys Ulster-Scottish settlers eventually made their way in great throngs to develop western Virginia and North Carolina, and in time, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Robert did not confine his efforts to his original land grant of 400 acres. He took out a warrant on September 8, 1755 for 100 acres of land in the eastern end of the Kishacoquillas Valley, in what is now Armagh Township in Mifflin County. All of his five sons drew lands in the same general area, the combined holdings running to more than 1,000 acres. The farms averaged 200 acres each in size. Their mother Catherine drew 400 acres.

It will not be feasible in this general account to follow the partition of Cumberland County and the formation of Northumberland, Bedford, Franklin, and Mifflin Counties. The latter was established in 1789. Nor will it be necessary to detail all the acquisitions of lands and their growing areas, and the sales from one member of the family to another. It may be sufficient to say that the McNitt brothers warranted lands on Shavers Creek in what is now Bedford County in 1763, and other lands adjacent to Kishacoquillas Creek in 1767. They were entirely within Cumberland County until several years after the close of the Revolution.

Much of our information about Robert’s five sons, their military services, and the members of their families, comes from The Pioneers of Mifflin County. We are not sure of the order of the ages of these sons, but guided by the dates when they were first assessed for taxes we may list them as follows:

I. ALEXANDER, b. perhaps in 1737 or 1738, obtained grant of 250 acres in Armagh Township, first taxed in 1770; m. Ann Williamson in 1771; served in the 5th Battalion of the Cumberland County Militia 1777-79, and in the 8th Battalion 1780-82; d. 1793. Children: i. Robert, b. 1772, kidnaped as child by Indians, m. his cousin Jane Taylor December 25, 1792, d. in May 199...
I. SAMUEL, m. Elizabeth Brown, d. 1844. 3. Mary, m. Francis Boggs. 4. Catherine. 5. William, m. Mary Brown.

II. WILLIAM, birth date not known, first taxed 1770; m. November 17, 1771 Elizabeth Power; note in family Bible says he "bilt the new hous 1788"; served in 5th Battalion of Cumberland Militia 1777-79 and in 8th Battalion 1780-82, also received pay for service with "Rangers of the Frontiers" 1778-83; served in 5th Battalion of Cumberland Militia 1777-79 and in 8th Battalion 1780-82, also received pay for service with "Rangers of the Frontiers" 1778-83; held office as constable and road supervisor; died in 1812 without issue; left his farm to nephew Robert, son of John mentioned below, whose descendants still live there. They occupy the 1788 stone house with thick walls and deep windows, illustrated on an adjacent page, to which a frame addition was joined before 1839 by Robert's son John. Robert had objected to what he considered the unnecessary expense of enlargement.

III. JOHN, b. 1739, first taxed in 1772; m. before 1772 Mary Brown; served in the 8th Cumberland Battalion in 1780-82; held office as constable and overseer of the poor; d. 1822. Children: 1. Alexander Brown, m. Nancy Sterrett, built stone house illustrated elsewhere, d. 1843. 2. Catherine, never married, d. 1859. 3. John, served under Commodore Perry in naval battle of Lake Erie in 1813, d. in Illinois without issue. 4. Robert, m. Sarah Glasgow, inherited uncle William's farm (see above), d. 1840. 5. Jane, m. Alexander Wilson. 6. Daughter, m. James Glasgow.

IV. ROBERT, b. 1746, m. Elizabeth Scott about 1772, first taxed in 1775; served in 5th Cumberland Battalion 1777-79, and in 8th Battalion 1780-82; d. 1820. Children: 1. James, b. 1774, d. 1850. 2. William, m. Esther McCoy. 3. Elizabeth, b. 1780, d. 1844. 4. Mary, m. John McCoy. 5. Ann, b. 1786, m. cousin John McNitt, d. 1878. 6. Susannah, b. 1793, m. John Ross, d. 1868.

V. JAMES, date of birth not known, is said to have married and had children but data eludes us, was taxed in 1774 on a horse and a cow; sold his land on Shavers Creek in 1777 after nicknaming it "Misnomer," evidently thinking it not worthy of being called land; lived for a while with his brother John; was listed as a member of the Cumberland Militia in 1782. Obviously was restless and came and went; had exciting life as Kentucky frontiersman.

The story of James McNitt, Robert's youngest son, is one of the strangest and most romantic of any that may be told of his family in America. It is the tale of a disappointed young man, a frustrated violinist, who was so unhappy about his estate "Misnomer" that he got rid of it and went away to fight Indians. Mrs. Isabella Reed, a teacher at Reedsville, whose husband James A. Reed was a great-grandson of the first Alexander Brown McNitt, has given me what information she could find about James' young manhood while assisting materially in making clear all the relationships in Robert McNitt's family of five sons.

According to Mrs. Reed, James was an enthusiastic musician. The others may have thought him an aimless fiddler who cared more for music and country dances than for solid effort on his baffling "Mis-
nomer.” On concluding his brothers had all the better of the land grants and that the Kishacoquillas Valley had no future for him, he shouldered an axe and departed. It would be odd if he didn’t have a rifle too, but tradition stops with the axe.

The violin, which may have been the subject of family arguments, he left behind in the home of his brother John, where he had been living. It gathered dust for many years, and then is presumed to have been broken up and used for firewood some time after 1868, when a housewife needed a lively fire for baking bread.

Until research for this book began, nothing more was known in the family of the fate of James McNitt, except that a distant kinsman in St. Paul, Minnesota, had knowledge that James led an active life in Kentucky. In 1780 a Pennsylvania McNitt, presumably James, appeared in Louisville after escaping from Indians who had held him captive. Positive proof that James did all the things to be related in the next chapter cannot be had, but with the family story, and by a process of elimination that excludes everyone else, we may feel safe in believing that the central figure of the McNitt Massacre in Kentucky in 1786 was none other than the disappointed violinist.

A James McNitt enlisted in Botetourt County in the Valley of Virginia in 1774 for service in Lord Dunmore’s War against frontier Indians that began in summer and ended in October. This Indian war is unknown to virtually all except historians; it was a land-grabbing exploit. The Virginia branch of the McNaught family always has used the surname McNutt, and there is only the remotest possibility that the James McNitt of the Indian war could have belonged with the McNutt family. It appears that James was in the Cumberland Militia briefly in 1782. He may have returned to Pennsylvania for a while after escape from captivity by Indians, and then disappeared again for more frontier adventure.

After the senior Robert McNitt took out a warrant for land in the Kishacoquillas Valley, and especially after his sons began settlement there, one of the chief cares of the settlers was to keep marauding Indians from undoing their work and killing all. Neighbors joined in building a fort of the stockade type on the younger Robert’s farm, near a spring to provide fresh water in time of siege. The danger was constant for years.

We come now to the story of a little boy of the family carried off by Indians that may interest younger readers. The sources of information are Mrs. Reed of Reedsville, *The Genesis of Mifflin County* by John Martin Stroup, and *The Juniata and Susquehanna Valleys in Pennsylvania*, published by Everts, Peck & Richards in 1886. The published
accounts are a bit fuzzy, but when all three versions are merged, a fairly sharp picture appears. Now for the story:

Little Robert McNitt was about five years old when one summer day in 1777 he went to the field to play while his father and the men harvested rye. His parents were Alexander and Ann McNitt, and they lived near Milroy on the Back Mountain Road. He was a great-grandson of the first Alexander in Pennsylvania and his wife Jean.

A band of Indians crept up quietly, and when the harvesters were not looking, stole Robert and carried him away as fast as horses could run. When the father discovered Robert was missing he knew what had happened, and he must have felt very sad indeed when he went to the house and told Ann.

Indians were not always kind to children. Alexander must have known the story of a boy captured not so very far away a few years before who had been compelled to gather pieces of wood and pile them at the foot of a small tree. When he had finished, the Indians tied him to the tree by a long, strong cord. Then they set fire to the pile of wood, and forced the boy to run around the tree until the cord was all wound about the trunk, so that he was drawn into the fire and burned to death.

Little Robert’s father and mother were almost distracted with anxiety. Alexander McNitt inquired everywhere for news of his lost son, and while serving in the Revolution he kept on asking everywhere he could if anything had been seen of a white boy held by Indians.

Three years or more passed. Finally Alexander heard that a boy resembling his son had been rescued from a trading post in Canada. He packed some things and jumped on his horse and rode away as fast as he could to the distant home of a man named Lee. Mr. Lee’s little daughter also had been stolen by Indians, and he had found her in Canada. She had a playmate in captivity, a boy of about eight who said his name was “Nitt,” and she told her father she didn’t wish to come home unless he brought the boy also. Mr. Lee obliged, and then advertised for the parents of young Mr. “Nitt.” When Alexander appeared to prove parenthood, Robert didn’t know his father, but recognized his horse.

When Robert arrived home he was as much like an Indian as when his father found him. He was so shy his mother couldn’t induce him for a long time to come to the table with the rest to eat, so she had to set a pan of food outside. He didn’t know anything about the use of knife, fork, or spoon, but ate with his fingers just like an aboriginee, until Mother Ann finally was able to persuade him to come inside at mealtime. Gradually he learned table manners with his brothers and sisters: Samuel, Mary, Catherine, and William.
STONE HOUSE BUILT IN 1788 BY WILLIAM McNITT, NOW OCCUPIED BY JOHN B. McNITT AND SISTERS MARGARET AND MARY BROWN McNITT

HOUSE BUILT BY THOMAS BROWN McNITT, GRANDSON OF ALEXANDER, ONE OF FIVE PIONEER BROTHERS; NOW OCCUPIED BY JOSEPH GOURLY McNITT
HOUSE OF STONE BUILT BY ALEXANDER BROWN McNITT I, NOW OCCUPIED BY ALEXANDER BROWN McNITT III AND FAMILY

WILLIAM McNITT, FRUIT-GROWER

ALEXANDER BROWN McNITT III
On Christmas day in 1792 Robert married his cousin Jane Taylor, whom he undoubtedly called Jeanie. A Robert McKnitt, Jr. was a Captain in the Mifflin County Militia in 1793; he may have been the same man. In May 1797 Robert was killed by a falling tree; his daughter Ann then was three years old.

On March 15, 1783, four brothers, Alexander, William, John, and Robert McNitt, signed the call to the Rev. James Johnston to become the first settled minister of the united congregations of the East and West Kishacoquillas Presbyterian Churches. That James had gone away again — now for the last time — is evident in the absence of his name from the call.

The census of 1790 produced information about the family that need not detain us, except for one thing: William McNitt and his brother John each owned one Negro slave, which probably made them the only slaveholders of the clan living in the North.

The family continued to live in growing numbers in or near Armagh Township, on farms adjacent to Milroy, Siglerville, and Reedsville, and within a few miles of Lewistown. The three chief homesteads are still occupied by descendants of the pioneer brothers. The McNitts intermarried with other Ulster-Scottish families with the names of Brown, Reed, Sterrett, Glasgow, Ross, and Taylor. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, the descendants of Presbyterians from Ulster persisted until the middle of the nineteenth century in living as neighbors in closely-knit groups in their own communities in various regions of the country. Consequent intermarriages and the frequent marriages of cousins had the effect of continuing well-marked racial traits.

It is not practicable to account here for the families of all the five McNitt brothers of the Kishacoquillas Valley. William had no children, and James disappeared into the wilderness. We shall be content to follow the line of John, the third son of Robert McNitt, who married Mary Brown before 1772. John and Mary had three sons, and after charting their descendants, we may proceed at leisure in subsequent chapters with the stories of those who have added more color and luster to the annals of the family.

I. JOHN McNITT 2d, b. October 1789, m. cousin Ann McNitt; served as private in Captain George Record’s company, Colonel Rees Hill’s regiment, Pennsylvania Militia, May 5 to November 8, 1813, in the War of 1812 with Great Britain. He also served with Commodore Perry in the naval battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813, and was one of a number of men from his State to receive medals awarded by the Pennsylvania government.
THE PENNSYLVANIANS

for their part in Perry's victory. John also received $214.89 as his share of prize money. He settled in McLean County, Illinois about 1852. He had no children.

II. ROBERT McNITT, b. ——, m. Sarah Glasgow, d. 1840. Children:

1. William, m. Nancy Naginey; their children: (a) Robert J., of whom more later; m. Margaret Thompson; (b) James C., m. Ada Kessler; (c) Samuel B., m. Margaret McDowell; (d) Wilson M., m. Elizabeth Kyle; (e) William.

2. John, m. cousin Mary Jane McNitt, built in 1839 the addition to supplement the pioneer William’s 1788 stone house his father Robert had thought good enough. (His grandson John B. McNitt now lives there.)

3. James Glasgow, b. November 5, 1810, d. May 2, 1847, m. February 14, 1832 Jane Naginey, b. 1812, d. 1856. Their children: (a) Sarah Margaret, m. James Benson; (b) Mary Jane, m. James Gourley; (c) Robert, m. Margaret Gray; (d) Charles, m. Isabelle Wheeler, their children: (d-1) Laura, m. —— Talbot, issue: Arnold and Dorothy; (d-2) William; (d-3) Maude, m. Ziba Norris; (e) William, m. —— Rogers. (f) James David, who became bank president at Logansport, Indiana, of whom more later; m. Mary Ellen Uhl. Children: (f-1) Caroline Naginey; (f-2) Mary Ellen; (f-3) Sarah Miriam, m. Siegfried Gruenstein; (f-4) Robert Joseph, who became chemical engineer and lives in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, m. Dora Waring; more later of him and his four sons; (f-5) Willard Charles, m. Jennie Louise Richardson, became lawyer and manufacturer in Chicago; more later of him and his three sons; (f-6) Helen, m. Arthur M. Sturdevant; their daughter Mary Ellen m. Robert W. Foster, issue: James and Patricia Sturdevant; second daughter, Elizabeth, m. John Ashton. (f-7) Esther, became librarian at State capitol, Indianapolis.

III. ALEXANDER BROWN McNITT inherited the old homestead near Siglerville on which after 1800 he erected a substantial stone dwelling (now in possession of his grandson Alexander Brown McNitt 3d). He married Nancy Sterrett, b. in Armagh Township, daughter of David and Elizabeth Sterrett. Their children:

1. Elizabeth, m. Samuel Sharp; they removed to Logansport, Indiana and spent rest of their lives there.

2. Mary Jane, m. John McNitt, son of her uncle Robert and his wife Sarah Glasgow; they spent their lives on the homestead near Salem church.

3. Sarah, m. Robert Ross; they lived at Spring Mills.

4. Brown, m. Vesta Marston; lived on farm adjoining his father's.

5. Margaret, m. Samuel I. Mitchell; their lifetime farm home near Vira was inherited by their son John.

6. John, b. 1824, m. in 1858 Nancy Martha Cummings (1837-1907); children: (a) Agnes; (b) William A.; (c) Jane McElheny; (d) Martha Alice; (e) Rhoda Henry; (f) Janet McElheny; (g) Sarah Cummings; (h) Margaret Mitchell; (i) David; (j) Laura; (k) John Arthur. John
d. December 9, 1900, on farm of 200 acres in Brown Township near Reedsville he had bought just after marrying Nancy Cummings.

7. David, lived with brother John, did not marry.

8. Agnes, m. Sterrett Cummins; they lived in Stone Valley, Huntington County.

9. Catherine Ann, m. Robert Cummins; they lived in Stone Valley. James A. Reed of Reedsville was their grandson.

10. Martha, m. John Mitchell; they lived in Dry Valley.

11. Alexander Brown McNitt 2d, b. November 28, 1837, in the stone house at Siglerville, m. December 21, 1865, Sarah Reed, b. 1839. After the death of his father he bought out other heirs to the homestead and purchased adjoining lands; also owned other lands in Armagh Township and in Center County. A Republican, he did not desire office and even declined election as elder of his Presbyterian Church. Several of his sons engaged in lumber and limestone enterprises. Children: (a) Abner Reed, b. 1867, d. 1870. (b) David Sterrett, b. 1868, m. December 22, 1892, Catherine Ann Cummins; member several lumber firms, elder of Lewistown Presbyterian Church, d. in accident at quarries of National Limestone Co. at Shrader January 25, 1913. (c) Nancy Margaret, b. 1870, did not marry, d. 1939. (d) Andrew Reed, b. November 1, 1871, was graduated from Bucknell 1891 and from Princeton 1895, engaged in lumber business with brother David, lived unmarried at Bellefonte, d. March 25, 1929. (e) Rhoda McKinney, b. 1872, educated at Bucknell, d. 1948. (f) Alexander Brown, b. March 16 and d. October 2, 1875. Name passed on to next child: (g) Alexander Brown McNitt 3d, b. May 24, 1876, lives on pioneer John McNitt's farm in stone house near Siglerville. (h) Mary Taylor, b. May 2, 1879, m. the Rev. William E. Steckel of Doylestown, now living at New Ipswich, New Hampshire. (i) Ogleby James, b. January 19, 1881, educated at Bucknell, m. Helen Gourley June 10, 1926, lived in Reedsville and engaged in lumber and limestone enterprises, d. January 21, 1943. (j) Robert Cummins, b. March 7, 1882, educated at Norristown Academy, engaged in lumber business, m. May 31, 1919 Florence B. Vincent; two sons, Andrew Reed and Ogleby James; d. in Mifflintown January 2, 1944. (k) John Reed, b. December 5, 1883, d. August 29, 1884.

Because of space limitations many children and grandchildren remain unaccounted for in this chapter. Time has been lacking to uncover the stories of several of the general family who came from Ulster to Pennsylvania after 1722. The Archives of Pennsylvania, the 1790 census roll, and various military and church records reveal family names not identified closely with the central line. The 1790 census discovered Matthew McNitt in Derry Township, Westmoreland County, head of a family containing two males over sixteen, and one female. Also John McNite in the eastern part of Cumberland County with a wife and three children, and William McNite in the same neighborhood, with a family comprising two females and himself. Still another Alexander McNitt was found by a census-taker in Washington County, Maryland, with a family consisting of three males over sixteen, one
under sixteen, and three females. In the same county lived Hannah McNitt, a widow with three sons under sixteen and three daughters.

A history of Adams County, Pennsylvania, mentions Francis McNitt as a taxpayer in 1799 in Menallen Township (then part of Butler) with an assessed valuation of $1,652.

The Pennsylvania Archives, 5th series, Vols. iv-v, show Alexander McNutt from Virginia, listed as from Columbia County, Pennsylvania, who drew depreciation pay for service with the Cumberland County Militia in 1777. On page 296 of Vol. vi appears the name of Anthony McNitt as a member of the 6th company, 4th Battalion of Cumberland County Militia.

Later comers were Alexander and Isabella (McBride) McKnight, who emigrated from County Down, Ulster, to Franklin County, Pennsylvania, about 1790. Once again we find the head of an ocean-crossing family with the name Alexander. In 1795 he became owner of lands now known as the McKnight farm on Crooked Creek, Washington Township, Indiana County. That he had settled in an Ulster-Scottish community is evident in the names of persons whom sons and daughters married. James, the older son, married first Jane McNutt, and second, Jane McComb. Children of the first marriage included William and Alexander; the latter, born in 1810, lived to be only twenty-seven, but in his short life he became a teacher, a militia Colonel, and county treasurer. James Jr., son of the second marriage, moved as a young man to Texas and became mayor of Galveston.

The second son of Alexander and Isabella was Alexander Jr., who inherited the McKnight farm, and married Susannah Cummins in 1816. Their two children were William, born 1819, and James, born 1821. William McKnight was a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1846-47, and became wealthy as a farmer and real estate operator. Alexander and Isabella had three daughters; Alice married John Ross, Isabella married Joseph Shields, and Margaret became the wife of David Cummins. Fuller information about this family may be found in a history of Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, written by Dr. William James McKnight and published in Chicago in 1917 by J. H. Beers & Co. Dr. McKnight was a physician, druggist, coal mine operator, and a member of the Pennsylvania Senate from 1881 to 1885.

The narrative has been interrupted to include mention of collateral kin because of possibility that discovery by a reader of a single name or date may reveal a clue that would help to solution of some old problem of relationship. A small fact sometimes may help to solve a large mystery. Many such minute discoveries added together have made possible the construction of long stretches of narrative in this book.

It is time now to return to James McNitt, the thwarted violinist turned Indian fighter and frontier scout, whose adventures will be related in the next chapter.
PEWTER TRENCHERS FOUND AT SCENE OF McNITT MASSACRE; AT LEFT, TRENCHER ENGRAVED WITH NAME OF SARAH McNUTT

BURIAL GROUND OF MASSACRE VICTIMS
HILLTOP WHERE MASSACRE TOOK PLACE; MONUMENT MARKS SPOT WHERE LAST CAMPFIRE WAS MADE
The early history of Kentucky is fascinating in its blood-stirring, hair-raising excitements. Before the Revolution the Kentucky country, then part of Virginia, was the Wild West, abounding in dangers. The rugged Cumberland mountain range — now the boundary between the two States — imposed an almost impenetrable barrier against exploration, and even today there are not many through highways.

Far down in the southwest of Virginia, in the long, narrow toe, is the single pass that permits easy entry from the East into Kentucky today, as it did in the beginning. There amid magnificent scenery is Cumberland Gap, the gateway used by the Indians and all who have followed.

This is the story of James McNitt, who gave up farming in the Kishacoquillas Valley in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, to be a frontiersman like Daniel Boone. His name is associated with the worst massacre in the history of the early settlement of Kentucky. How he led a party of homeseekers through Cumberland Gap in 1786 and what came of the expedition must await telling until we have surveyed the scene a bit.

First to venture into Kentucky were the hunters; then came straggling land-seekers and surveyors sent by ambitious speculators. The most notable of the early adventurers was Daniel Boone, searching both for deer and for land, who risked perils to range over a great part of the country.

That the Indians didn’t kill him is something of a marvel. They regarded the game as farmers regard their cattle: personal property. Hunters they considered thieves, and when Indians discovered a store of Boone’s deer-skins they confiscated the lot, warning Dan’l to go home and stay there. But Dan’l never heeded the warnings. He had a great many fights, and when occasionally captured he talked himself out of torture and death. The biography by John Bakeless, published in 1939, rewards reading. In it we learn that, contrary to folk tales, Boone disliked coonskin caps and never wore one: always a hat.

Boone was living in the 1760s in the Yadkin Valley in Rowan (now Dickinson) County in North Carolina. One of his friends was Judge Richard Henderson, man of property, who may have staked him for some of his long hunting trips into Kentucky. Both wanted land. Boone wished a bigger and better farm, and Judge Henderson — also called Colonel — had visions of an empire. Dan’l made it his task to sound the well-disposed Cherokee Indians to learn whether they would be willing to sell their vast claims in Kentucky. In 1774 he had a big land deal
ready for Colonel Henderson and his partners, who had formed the Transylvania Company. The plan, we learn in Collins' History of Kentucky, was to give the Indians £10,000 worth of trading goods — blankets, axes, trinkets, and the like — in exchange for about 20,000,000 acres of land in central Kentucky and northern Tennessee between the Cumberland and Kentucky Rivers. A committee of 1,000 Cherokees, including one squaw, examined wagon-loads of samples. The deal was completed in March 1775, and was celebrated with a big rum party.

To open the Transylvania empire it was necessary first to have a trail. Boone and a crew of thirty armed and mounted axemen set out on March 10 from a spot near the present town of Kingsport, Tennessee, to blaze a trail to Martin’s Station, eighteen miles east of Cumberland Gap, thence through the Gap, over the Warriors’ Path to Flat Lick, and northwestward past the present site of London to a point on the Kentucky River since known as Boonesboro.

The trail, afterward known as Boone’s Trace, was completed by April 1; in three weeks Dan'l had traversed 200 miles of wilderness, and had come 130 miles from Cumberland Gap. On March 25 Indians had attacked the party before dawn near the present site of Richmond in Madison County, killing one man and mortally wounding another. No sentries had been posted that night; frontiersmen were too proud to admit fear of successful attack. Altogether, blazing the trail over the paths of buffalo and through thickets of undergrowth in so short a time was a great feat. Virginia and North Carolina subsequently voided the land deal with the Indians, but gave Colonel Henderson’s Transylvania Company 390,000 acres of land in western Kentucky and eastern Tennessee as consolation. The Boone Trace was supplemented in 1796 by a rough wagon route called the Wilderness Road, penetrating the same region.

At the close of the Revolution many settlers were in Kentucky, pitting their opportunities to buy good land cheaply against the risks of Indian attack. The risks were very real: incoming parties often were murderously beset at night, and land purchases were chancy, too. In some of the best areas, claims overlapped like shingles on a roof. Land warrants given veterans of Indian wars and to Revolutionary soldiers were coming into the market. But still there were vast unsettled spaces, beckoning to the adventurous who wished to test their luck and their courage.

Now we have the setting for our story. In the summer of 1786 a party of about sixty settlers was organized in Rockbridge and Botetourt Coun-
ties, Virginia, with perhaps a few from North Carolina, ready to set out after the harvest for new homes beyond the mountains. They chose as leader James McNitt, who had been scouting and adventuring among the new settlements and the Indians. That he could have been a McNutt of Virginia is a possibility far too remote to detain us. Because of his experience as a frontiersman he was counted a dependable guide. The party now is known in Kentucky history as the McNitt Company.

Among the group were several members of the McNutt family of Rockbridge County. The only other family names that have escaped oblivion are those of Barnes and Ford.

In addition to the leader, the McNitt Company had chosen a treasurer to guard the money brought by the settlers. Everyone had plenty to do as the cavalcade on horseback wound its way through Cumberland Gap into the somewhat frightening wilderness land along the Boone Trace. The cattle and hogs that had been brought along needed constant herding lest they dart off into the woods, and always there was the thought of Indians. Pack-horses carried all the household equipment, supplies, and tools.

If we will recall that the McNitt Company must have been aware that two years before, on the night of October 3, 1784, a similar but smaller party had been butchered on the Boone Trace in what was known as the Moore Massacre, we can understand the anxiety that must have haunted the timid. The men had their rifles, of course, but Indians always chose their own times to strike!

According to various accounts the McNitt Company pursued its way with great caution along the Boone Trace, setting guards at night. A great lightening of spirits came when on October 3 the party reached at the end of the day's travel what must have seemed an ideal camping spot. It was on the level top of a rather high wooded hill, looking directly down into the narrow valley of the Little Laurel River and affording a wide view. The Boone Trace crossed a shoulder of this hill, and evidences of the trail may still be seen. The present town of London is four miles to the northward.

The McNitt Company had now come about fifty-six miles from Cumberland Gap, and had known the fatigues and anxieties of a march through the wilderness with rain falling part of the time. The new settlements at Crab Orchard were about fifty-six miles further ahead, and Boonesboro was perhaps seventy-five miles away.

Thus far no Indians had been seen. A surge of confidence in their prospects of safety and a desire to relax and celebrate drove away all thoughts of caution. The moon was already up when the company
reached the hilltop, and it shone brightly that evening. It was to reach the full four days afterward.

A fire to cook the evening meal was built on the northern edge of the hilltop, only a few feet from the sharp drop down into the narrow valley. Utensils, spoons, cups, and pewter trenchers and plates were unpacked. After supper, thoughts turned to release from tension and to a quest for gayety. No guards were posted; we have already seen how Boone and his trail-blazers scorned caution when they were exhausted. Who was afraid now? What these settlers did not know was that they were very near a route followed by Indians coming northward from the Tennessee country, now approximated by U. S. Highway No. 25. And they had forgotten that on a similar moonlit night exactly two years before, Indians had massacred the Moore party on the Boone Trace.

It is tradition that many of the company engaged that evening in singing, dancing, drinking, and playing cards. This account has been given point by a journal entry made by the pious Bishop Francis Asbury, who passed that way four years afterward, on his way to a Methodist conference in Kentucky. He heard the story, and concluded these settlers were an abandoned lot. Since he mentioned only card-playing, the other vices attributed to the careless pilgrims may be subject to discount. The good bishop certainly would have overlooked no sins. Singing? No doubt. Dancing? A diversion of happy people, not easy on a wooded hilltop. Drinking? Probably there was drinking; it was common enough.

The light of the moon shone down on the card-players, who were so intent upon their games that they did not at first hear a rustling in the woods. Then Chickamauga Indians were all around them. Grimly the savages fell upon men, women, and children, slaughtering all within reach, and snatching scalps from their victims.

Many fled into the woods, with Indians in yelling pursuit. A number escaped, but scattered bones found long afterward proved that some had been overtaken and killed. Not far from the scene of the last supper a hollow tree was pointed out for decades as the hiding place of a mother with a young child, who escaped death. Tradition has even gone so far as to say the mother gave birth to her child inside the hollow tree.

Estimates of the numbers of the McNitt Company killed where they sat have varied, but there is now common agreement that twenty-four were slain on or near the spot, in addition to others killed while trying to get away. It is said that no member of the McNutt family from Rockbridge County, Virginia, survived. The Indians carried away a few captives, including five girls, and took with them the settlers' horses, cattle, and home-making equipment.
In Kentucky, the massacre is often called the McNitt Defeat, though the surprise was so complete there could have been no resistance. Without a fight there can hardly be a defeat in the ordinary sense of the word, but in Kentucky usage, all the massacres of settlers came to be called Defeats. The scene of the moonlit tragedy is called the Defeated Camp.

Settlers from Crab Orchard presently came to the scene, gathered the bodies of the victims, and dug two trenches, one about twice as long as the other. It is supposed that the bodies of about sixteen men and boys were buried in the longer trench, and those of eight women and girls in the shorter. Perhaps twenty or more persons escaped. Fifty armed horsemen set out in pursuit of the Indians, but did not find them.

The story of this worst of all Kentucky massacres has in the course of time been pieced together from many sources. The best contemporary narratives are preserved in the Draper Manuscripts in the Kentucky Papers in the library of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison.

Credit for the greatest service in gathering all the accounts of the massacre into a body of folklore, and in commemorating the massacre of October 3, 1786, belongs to Russell Dyche, editor of the London Sentinel-Echo. From the available materials he wrote a long article for his newspaper, June 11, 1942, later reprinted in a pamphlet. He also printed articles on the Boone and Skeggs Traces, the Wilderness Road, and other subjects related to the settlement of his part of Kentucky.

Mr. Dyche was one of the early promoters of a project to establish a State park to include the scene of the McNitt Massacre, which has flowered into a highly successful development embracing 1,315 acres. Of this more will appear later.

Our interest in all the accounts of the massacre may be captured first by what the good Bishop Asbury wrote in his journal. Without specifically naming the company or the scene, he jotted down:

"I learned that they had set no guard, and that they were up late, playing cards. A poor woman of the company had dreamed three times that the Indians had surprised and killed them all; she urged her husband to entreat the people to set a guard, but they only abused him, and cursed him for his pains. As the poor woman was relating her last dream the Indians came upon the camp; she and her husband sprang away, one east, the other west, and escaped. She afterward came back and witnessed the carnage. . . ."

The bishop’s concluding sentence deserves a kind of immortality: "These poor sinners appeared to be ripe for destruction."

Whether James McNitt, leader of the company, deserved blame for the failure to set a guard may be subject to debate, but no criticism of
him has been discovered. He may have had authority to direct the others only when the company was on the march. Aversion to discipline is a strong trait among American frontiersmen, and we may suppose that when the party halted at its last camp, the will to eat, drink, and be merry was too strong to be restrained.

We find a reference to McNitt in an interview with William McClelland of Fayette County by John D. Shane, recorded in the Draper Manuscripts. McClelland related to Shane:

“The fall before we came out [1786] a company had been defeated. A good many of them were from Botetourt and Rockbridge [Counties in Virginia]. They [the victims] had been covered up under a log, but they were torn out by animals, and their bodies lay scattered over the ground. A good many of them were wealthy, and those that escaped always accused [Captain William] Martin, who owned the station, of bringing the Indians on them. McNitt and Barnes were among them. Barnes was a neighbor of my father. Had a little boy who didn’t want to go: said the Indians would kill him. He wanted to stay with my father. The Indians did kill him.”

McNitt and Barnes, McClelland said, were among those who escaped and who blamed Captain Martin for inciting the Indians to attack the company. Martin’s Station, a trading post, was east of Cumberland Gap in Virginia, but Martin was not that far away when the massacre took place. The possible connection of Captain Martin with the massacre always has remained a tantalizing mystery; we shall return to it in a moment.

Another interview by Shane is preserved in the Draper Manuscripts; it was with a woman in Louisville: a daughter of a frontiersman named Campbell, who had led a group of pioneers from Maryland in 1780. She told him how “one McNitt,” who had been captured by the Indians and had escaped, had come to Louisville a day or two before her father’s party had arrived in May, “and brought word that the Indians meditated an attack on Louisville, and to sweep the country.” She said McNitt was known to her mother in Pennsylvania, but she offered nothing to indicate she knew whether the man who had escaped to Louisville after captivity was the same McNitt who led the company in 1786.

It appears McNitt knew what he was talking about when he gave the warning. “The August after this,” Miss Campbell continued in the Shane interview, “one Baird, a British officer, led a great army to Martin’s and Riddle’s Station. These were McNitt’s Indians.” That is to say, the Indians McNitt had said were plotting mischief. Miss Campbell overlooked telling Shane what resulted from the attack.
When McNitt and Barnes accused Captain Martin of inciting the Indians to butcher the McNitt Company they must have given the reasons for their suspicion, but what they said was not recorded. It was currently gossiped in the neighborhood that Martin had been present at the massacre.

Martin's Station was established as a trading post by the Captain's father, General Joseph Martin, before Daniel Boone opened the trail to the Kentucky River in 1775. It was the farthest point to which wagons could be driven; it was the jumping-off place where men mounted their horses for their further penetration of the wilderness. Here Colonel Henderson of the Transylvania Company had left his wagons when he followed Boone into Kentucky to establish claim to the land bought from the Cherokees.

The McNitt Company undoubtedly had stopped at Martin's Station, and there may have been some trouble. After the massacre, the region buzzed with angry talk of Martin's possible guilt. Five months later, on April 12, 1787, the *Kentucky Gazette* in Lexington published this letter from William Cocke:

To the good people of Kentucky and Cumberland [Middle Tennessee then was called Cumberland]:

_Gentlemen: I think it my duty to inform you, that about the time that some families was barbarously murdered, by the name of McNitt and Fords, and others, to the number of 22, as I have been informed, Capt. William Martin tired [lamed] his horse in Powels Mountain, came into the neighborhood I live in, and hired a horse of one of my neighbors to ride to the Cherokee Nation; at the same time told Capt. Lock Stubblefield, and William Owen, 2 of my neighbors, that the above murder was done by the Indians._

_Sometime about the first of the present year, a report was current here, that a number of people in Kentucky suspected the said Martin to have been present, & aided the Indians committing that horrid crime. When I heard of the same report I was in company with James Bunch, Capt. Stubblefield, and William Owen, and a number of others, and I expressed myself to be of the opinion that Capt. Martin was innocent of the murder, when James Bunch replied to me to prove that he [Martin] was at my house at the time he tired his mare 4 days before the murder was done, and at the same time he hired big red Meradays horse. Capt. Stubblefield immediately replied to Bunch and said, at the very time Martin told him of the murder of the Fords and McNitts and said he would swear to it. Owen told Bunch he would swear the same, on which Bunch remained silent._

_These things must be mysterious, and acknowledged to be so by the candid. Why should Capt. Martin apply for evidence to acquit himself, before he was accused, the tiring of his mare so bad that he was obliged to leave her in 12 or 15 miles from the place he set out from. Had he set out from the Valley Station, which is the place he said he had, it is not very_
probable that Capt. Martin could tell Capt. Stubblefield and Owen of the murder 4 days before it was committed, the names of the persons murdered at the place &c is hard to make the judicious part of the world believe.

Should Capt. Martin be innocent, the people of this country would be glad his innocency could appear, but if guilty, it is shameful to pass over such crimes unnoticed, it is therefore but just that a proper enquiry be had into the matter.

I am Gentlemen your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM COCKE.

March 25, 1787.

Summarized, this letter implies Captain Martin told a group of men about the massacre of the McNitt, Ford, and Barnes party four days before it happened. Captain Martin’s reply was published in the Kentucky Gazette on December 6, 1787. His letter began:

To the people of Kentucky:

A publication has appeared in the Kentucky Gazette, of the 12th of April ult. replete with misrepresentations, and falsehoods, addressed to you by William Cocke, which obliged me to defend myself against an aspersion which can only be equalled by the baseness of the heart that dictated it. I at first intended to answer his as he had stated them, but finding that he adopted as proof the most vague conjectures, as ever a whimsical and malicious imagination formed, I now think he will be better refuted by informing the Public where I was, and my business, at the time of the perpetration of the enormous crime he has charged me with....

Then followed a detailed account of Martin’s movements for two weeks preceding the massacre. The laming of his mare at the foot of Powells Mountain, the walk to John Bunch’s house, and the hiring of David Meredith’s horse are recounted, and the dates appear to tally with those in the Cocke letter. What of the report that he had told of the massacre four days before it happened? He didn’t deny it; he ignored it. On the night of the tragedy, he said, he was far away with two other men at the ford of the French-Broad river, watching for horses that had been stolen from his father. He offered to give himself up if wanted for trial. That was the end of it; no move was made to prosecute Martin. The suspicions may have appeared baseless, and probably were.

The Wilderness Road for wagon travel was opened westward from Cumberland Gap in 1796, four years after Kentucky was admitted to statehood. Shortly afterward John Freeman, a Revolutionary soldier, settled on lands that included the scene of the McNitt Massacre. The log house he built was inherited by his daughter Rebecca, Mrs. Levi Jackson. In October 1887, just 101 years after the massacre, Mrs. Jackson took members of her family to the burial ground and solemnly told
them a story that had for some reason been kept secret. This is her story, as told by Russell Dyche in his London newspaper:

An Indian chief, members of whose tribe committed the massacre, though he was not present at the time, later visited the site and told his story to John Freeman. According to this Indian chief, his people had come to that particular spot on a night of a full moon in October 1786, as was their custom, to observe certain religious ceremonies. They were greatly angered by the presence of the white people who desecrated their shrine by camping there, and fell upon them, killing with a savage vengeance.

The recently-learned story of the Indian chief adds significance to another story. On the steep hillside below the tower is what has been supposed to be an Indian grave, marked by a stone and mound. Thomas Wooton a few weeks ago was telling Uncle George Owens of Barbourville about it. Mr. Owens, who all his life has studied the life, manners, and habits of the Indians, tells me it is not a grave but that probably it had been an Indian altar, over which the Indians greeted their moon god as he appeared over the hill on the full moon. I have written the U. S. Weather Bureau in an effort to learn if there was a full moon on October 3, 1786. If there was, then I will be convinced that we have here a really honest to goodness story.

Mr. Dyche later was advised by the Meteorological Bureau that the moon was four days short of full on that fateful night, and thus sufficiently bright. This helped to make credible the story of the chief that the Indians had come to worship and remained to slay.

On one incident in her father’s story of the chief’s visit, Mrs. Jackson had required her family to remain silent, and so Mr. Dyche let it pass without mention in his newspaper article. Now it may be told.

When the Chickamauga chief had given John Freeman his account of the massacre, he asked that the forest on the hilltop and the surrounding land be preserved as a memorial. It was in respect for the chief’s request that Freeman commanded that the virgin forest be left standing. When he willed the hundred acres of land to two daughters, Mrs. Levi Jackson and Mrs. John Ohler, Freeman imposed the condition that not one tree should be cut. Not until after Mrs. Jackson’s death on June 4, 1897 was John Freeman’s wish disregarded.

Mention has been made earlier of the treasurer of the company, who carried all the money in a leather pouch. When the Indians fell upon the camp the treasurer, Mr. Dyche relates, “probably considering saving the money of paramount importance, ran through the woods and deposited it at a place where he thought it would be safe, and where he could find it. He escaped the massacre and returned to recover the money but could neither find the money nor be certain of the place he had left it. This, possibly, accounts for the rumor that has persisted.
throughout the years that large sums of money were buried with the bodies, and the consequent desecration of the graves by the youth of most every generation."

It may account also for the rumor that some of the unfortunate settlers were wealthy. People of wealth were not engaged in the perilous enterprise of pioneering in Indian country, but it may be true that members of the McNitt Company were above the poverty line.

Various small belongings of the victims were picked up after the massacre and sold for the benefit of survivors. Many years were to pass before all the relics of the expedition came to light; one was a pewter trencher with the name Sarah McNutt engraved on the back. Again we refer to the story in the London Sentinel-Echo of June 11, 1942:

In 1909, Alex and Nathan Byble cleared the hillside above the Defeated Camp, when their plow brought up two large pewter platters that had been turned upside down over a pile of charcoal, evidently to smother a fire. Also a number of other and smaller utensils were plowed up, and it was immediately surmised that this was the place where the McNitt Company had eaten their last supper on the fateful night of October 3, 1786.

This idea was further strengthened when on the back of one of the plates was found the engraved name of Sarah McNutt. The plate without the name was damaged by the plow and was taken by Nathan Byble, who gave it to the Mountain Life Museum when it was first opened in the Levi Jackson Park. The plate bearing the name was taken by Alex Byble, who sold it to John McTeer of Louisville, who has since placed it in the same museum, where they point with certainty to the exact location of the McNitt Massacre.

On placing this plate in the museum, Mr. McTeer told me that he was quite certain he was a direct descendant of the Sarah McNutt whose name it carries. His maternal grandmother was Margaret McNutt, and in tracing the family in the libraries of Kentucky and Virginia, he learned that both McNutt and McNitt are corruptions of McNaught, the true family name.

The plate or trencher with the name Sarah McNutt engraved on the back is thirteen and three-eighths inches in diameter, and the touch marks show it was made soon after 1760 by Robert and Thomas Porteus, pewterers in Gracechurch Street, London. The Porteus brothers were successors to Richard King, and both the Porteus and King touch-marks may be seen. The trencher obviously went to Virginia in a shipment of pewter tableware, where it was bought by Sarah McNutt. The other pewter trencher, lacking a maker's touch mark, is fourteen and a half inches wide, and may also have belonged to Sarah McNutt.

It is part of the tradition of the Virginia family that a son or grandson of Sarah and Alexander McNutt was killed by the Indians, but no detail
of the story has survived. It is believed in Kentucky that a McNutt family, including father, mother, and children, carried the trenchers and other household articles from the old home on their trip into the wilderness, and that all lost their lives.

Now we come to the flowering of the interest in the McNitt Massacre, which had been growing for nearly a century and a half. After attending the dedication of the Dr. Thomas Walker State Memorial near Barbourville in the summer of 1931, Lee B. McHargue and Charles A. Chandler returned to London with a fresh idea. Why not a State park as a memorial? They kindled the interest of Nat B. Sewell, Henry Poynter, and Russell Dyche, the editor. The five approached the State Park Commission in Frankfort, and the owners of the land where the massacre took place: Colonel Dave Jackson and his sister, Miss Ella Jackson. They were very modest in their request for land; they thought six or seven acres including the hilltop camp site would do.

"Six or seven acres!" exclaimed the Jacksons, evidently generous-minded people; "take 300 acres." They didn't say it that quickly, or in so few words, but almost. Colonel Jackson had lost a daughter stricken with infantile paralysis a few years before, and he felt moved to give the land for her sake. On December 5, 1931, they deeded to the State of Kentucky more than 300 acres to be devoted to the creation of the Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park. Both the Boon Trace and the Wilderness Road pass through the tract, about a quarter of a mile apart. Several hundred acres more were added by purchase from funds contributed by public subscription, or by individual offerings of land. The whole London community wished to have a part. Then on September 27, 1938, Miss Ella Jackson deeded to the park her undivided interest in about 700 acres more, to carry out the wish of her brother, expressed before his death in Florida. The park with its 1,315 acres is considerably larger than Van Cortlandt Park in New York City; it is a place of great natural beauty.

On October 3, 1933, the 147th anniversary of the massacre, a C.C.C. camp was established in the park to develop it. Down beside the south bank of the Little Laurel River a stone wall was erected around the burial plot of the Indians’ victims. On the hilltop a circular wall was built around the stump of the hollow tree said to have sheltered a mother and child.

The National Park Service became interested, and moved to a prepared site in the park the early log house of the Hopkins family, which had long stood on a spot three miles away. This house of two rooms with a chimney between, became the Mountain Life Museum; one room was
made a replica of an early Kentucky kitchen-living room, with four-poster cord bed, fireplace, and utensils; the other was devoted to a collection of articles used by the pioneers.

Hundreds of other Kentucky antiquities were offered the museum by interested people, and the collections overflowed into a smoke-house adjoining. Then a "two pen" log barn was built to house the ever-growing store and especially to make room for the larger pieces: such things as an old lynch-pin wagon and early farm implements. The Sarah McNutt pewter trencher, loaned by John McTeer in 1941, is one of the valued pieces in the museum because of its association with the massacre. It is displayed with the unmarked trencher and an old Spanish coin found at the site of the burial plot.

General Bailey P. Wooton, then Director of State Parks, became interested in 1937 in a project to make the Levi Jackson Park a center for the preservation of home arts and industries practiced in the region in its first century of development. A loom-house, a smoke-house, and a reproduction of the McHargue water mill were completed in 1939. The loom-house was operated for a while by the Wilderness Road Weavers; then war came and interest declined. The grist-mill did custom grinding for farmers, and provided meal and flour in sacks for sale on the premises and in London stores. Then demand slackened, and the mill beside the Little Laurel River at the entrance to the park was closed.

The interest of Russell Dyche has never flagged. While some have tired of the effort of building a great State park, the London editor has kept steadily at the project and enlisted the enthusiasm of other helpers willing to aid. He has gathered a unique Library of Mountain Millstones—a collection of fifty-five sets of grinding stones from old mills, and twenty-two single stones: 132 millstones in all. No doubt it was he who arranged for the erection of a monument of native stone at the site of the last campfire on the hilltop, with this inscription:

MCNITT DEFEAT
OCT. 3, 1786
KENTUCKY'S WORST
INDIAN MASSACRE

KENTUCKY
SESQUICENTENNIAL
1792-1942

While preparations were being made in 1950 for the Laurel County Homecoming, a festival of song held each year at the weekend of the
full moon in August, Mr. Dyche passed out to those who might be interested a frank typed statement of his aspirations and efforts for the park and of his occasional discouragements at lack of coöperation. He recommended a self-supporting golf course with clubhouse. He pointed out that the observation tower of creosoted wood near the scene of the massacre needed replacing, and suggested that a steel tower be erected. For the tower he proposed a carillon. He had made provision in his will, he said, for the allotment of a very considerable sum from his life savings for a chime of bells and other good things for the park, but an implication was plain that he might change his mind unless the county and State did their part within his lifetime.

He had been appointed Director of State Parks in 1944 and had served until December 1947, and in his statement he said some had intimated he had been rather too energetic and a bit partial to the new Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park. Well, if someone doesn't invest some energy in the development of a new park, it never will come to much.

The park has come to a great deal already. It has been admirably developed for picnickers, with tables and benches and other conveniences. A number of campstyle buildings have been provided for administrative offices, the needs of caretakers, and other essential uses. Programs of community singing have on summer Sundays brought as many as 15,000 persons with picnic lunches to participate and to enjoy the natural beauties of the place.

Perhaps Mr. Dyche was the motivating force behind a long-cherished project that came to reality on Friday evening, August 25, 1950, when the McNitt Massacre was re-enacted in a pageant intended to be repeated annually. It had been planned to hold the pageant on the hilltop where the massacre occurred, but rain in the afternoon compelled a change in arrangements. The auditorium of Sue Bennett College was crowded when a cast of 100 persons, representing the McNitt Company and the Chickamauga Indians, made to live again the events of the October night in 1786.

The editor’s efforts have not been wasted; they have produced results that will be more greatly appreciated in future years.

Of James McNitt, nothing more of a definite nature ever has been learned. The records of early land grants in Kentucky show that a James McNitt established himself on 400 acres of land on the Elkhorn River, about three miles from Leestown in Franklin County. This man may have been the leader of the McNitt Company in 1786. Certain it is
that James never returned to the Kishacoquillas Valley in Pennsylvania.

Fragmentary records from which little may be made show James McNitt was not the only member of the general family to choose frontier adventure in Kentucky. In the year 1776 Joseph McKnitt marked and set out to improve 1,000 acres in an undisclosed locality. That he died in the same year, childless and intestate, was stated by his brother Bernard in an action in the Superior Court in 1808 to have himself declared heir to the lands. The name "Bernard," so like that of Barnard McNitt of Massachusetts, indicates the close kinship of various branches. Bernard and Joseph McKnitt came from Hanover, Pennsylvania, and doubtless were among the Ulster Scots who adopted the ringing Hanover Declaration of 1774, to be found in Appendix A. Bernard was a soldier in the Revolution.

Thus ends the story of the frustrated violinist. The flight of James McNitt from the Pennsylvania farm he called "Misnomer" took him a long way from monotony.
The best narrator of war stories in the Pennsylvania family, his younger cousins and nephews were certain, was Captain Robert J. McNitt of the Union Cavalry. He told not only of service under General Phil Sheridan, but also of harrowing experiences as a war prisoner of the Confederates. His namesake and second cousin, Robert J. McNitt of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, remembers from boyhood days how vividly he imagined the discomforts of a prisoner who could have nothing much to eat but beans, and not very good beans at that.

Captain McNitt was born at Milroy in Mifflin County on April 13, 1833. He was a great-grandson of John McNitt, one of the five pioneer brothers in the Kishacoquillas Valley; his parents were William and Nancy Naginey McNitt. He was living at home, unmarried, when the War Between the States began. He enlisted on April 1, 1861 in Company C, 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry, under Captain John P. Taylor. The regiment was at the outset with McCall’s Division, assigned to the Army of the Potomac; later it was transferred to Phil Sheridan’s Cavalry Corps in Gregg’s Division.

Robert had risen by several promotions to the rank of First Lieutenant; then for gallant service at the battle of Cedar Mountain he was made a Captain on August 9, 1863. At Whitehouse, Virginia, on June 21, 1864, Captain McNitt and two other officers, with twenty-eight men of their Division, were captured by the Confederates and taken to Libby Prison in Richmond.

Libby Prison was a name which caused old veterans to set their teeth and shiver a bit when they heard it mentioned long after the war. Those who hadn’t been confined in it had dreaded it, because of its reputation for poor and scanty food and severe hardships. The North probably had some uncomfortable prisons, too. After forty days in Libby Prison, Captain McNitt and others were transferred to a camp in North Carolina, and later to Columbia, South Carolina. Following brief imprisonment there, they were removed to Macon, Georgia; thence to Savannah, and then to Charleston, South Carolina. “Join the Union Army and see our prisons,” seemed to be the Confederate warning to young men of the North.

Captain McNitt and about 500 other Union prisoners were confined in the central part of Charleston during a bombardment of the city, and were not only exposed to shellfire but endangered by fires breaking out near them. This lasted more than a month, and not until Union com-
manders retaliated by exposing Confederate prisoners to similar dangers were they moved to safety at Columbia, South Carolina.

From this captivity Captain McNitt managed to escape on November 25, 1864, in company with John R. Kelly of Juniata County, Pennsylvania, and John Chittin of the 5th Indiana Cavalry. They were fugitives for seventeen days; then they were found on the Savannah River near Augusta. The Captain remained a prisoner until March 12, 1865, when he was paroled at Wilmington, North Carolina. He had kept well all through his fighting days, but hardship while a prisoner so reduced his health that the Confederates were relieved to get rid of him, so he always related. He was mustered out of service at Annapolis, and was in Washington at the time President Lincoln was assassinated.

Then Captain McNitt returned home to Milroy. His father died in 1868 and he inherited the farm. On December 16 of that year he married Mary Thompson, eleven years younger than himself. They had two sons, William and Harry, who eventually married sisters named McCoy, and a daughter, Mary Margaret. From The Commemorative Biographical Encyclopedia of Juniata Valley, published in 1897, we get these additional crumbs of information about the old cavalryman: "He made many improvements and the farm is one of the best in the community. A lifelong Democrat of Jeffersonian type, he served as County Commissioner for three years." William McNitt lives in the brick house on his father's farm, now devoted to fruit-growing. A good Presbyterian, he will sell no fruit on Sunday.

The rest of the stories in this chapter have to do with the family of James David McNitt, banker, of Logansport, Indiana, in the line of John McNitt of the five pioneering brothers. After John came a second John, then Robert (father also of the cavalry Captain), whose son James Glasgow McNitt married Jane Naginey and became the father of the boy destined to become a banker after proving himself in a series of hard struggles. Thus James David McNitt was the great-great-grandson of the first John, and he could have added two more greats to define his relationship to the ocean-crossing Alexander of 1722. The young men of the family who did so well in the second World War, grandsons of the banker, may add still two more greats — making six in all — and count themselves eighth generation Americans.

James David was the youngest son of James Glasgow McNitt, who removed his family from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania to Cass County, Indiana soon after the son's birth on July 3, 1845. The father died of fever on May 2, 1847, and the mother, Jane Naginey McNitt, died from over-exertion in fighting a prairie fire on May 6, 1856. Life was not easy.
WILLARD CHARLES McNITT

HIS FATHER, JAMES DAVID McNITT
James David McNitt knew a great deal of hardship as an orphan boy. He was reared in a log cabin — two rooms with attic — built by his father on a farm in Jefferson Township, about ten miles west of Logansport. He attended a few terms of district school; then he had a year at Burnettsville Academy, and a term at Hall’s Commercial School. He taught in a country school and then in Hall’s; for a time afterward he was a bookkeeper for the Manhattan Sewing Machine Co. He married Mary Ellen Uhl December 12, 1872.

To say only of a man that he is or was a banker is to do ill by him; are not bankers presumed by the envious to be the chilly darlings of fortune? Observe now the struggles sometimes required to reach the modest eminence of a wide desk and leather chair in a private office in a bank in a town like Logansport.

After his marriage James ran a grocery store, and shipped wool to eastern markets. He overworked, lost his health, and quit to go into farming and livestock raising, feeding, and shipping. In 1902 he became president of the Logansport Loan and Trust Co.; in that position he remained until he reached the age of seventy-nine in 1924. He moved in 1913 from the west side of Logansport to a farm of twenty-eight acres on the Perrysburg road north of the city. Still a farmer at heart he grew hay and grain and kept a small flock of sheep which he tended personally, getting up in winter nights even in his eighty-ninth year to care for the ailing in lambing time. He was for some time president of the Logansport Board of Education, and of the Cass County Historical Society. He died on July 25, 1935 at the age of ninety. This brief account tells the story of a hardworking man whose character and kindness won him the respect of his neighbors.

His family included five daughters and two sons; Caroline Naginey, Mary Ellen, Sarah Miriam (who married Siegfried E. Gruenstein), Robert Joseph, Willard Charles, Helen (who married Arthur M. Sturdevant), and Esther, who became librarian at the State Capitol in Indianapolis. Both the sons had unusual careers, which we shall scan.

The elder son, Robert Joseph — named for the cavalry Captain, was born September 16, 1879, at Logansport. He was educated at Lake Forest College (1898-1900), and at Cornell University, where in 1902 he was elected a member of the Alpha chapter of Sigma Xi, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Continuing at Cornell, he won the degree of Master of Engineering in 1904, and was an instructor in 1905-06.

Then began a long career as an engineering scientist and inventor.
He investigated and put to practical use the phenomena pertaining to the passage of electric current through gases, liquids, and solids. He developed various vacuum tubes, mercury vapor lamps, rectifiers, X-ray, cathode ray, and radio tubes, and secured many American and foreign patents.

Also he developed processes for producing metals and many chemical compounds by passing electric current through water solutions and molten baths, and for producing heat under controlled atmospheric conditions, by passing current through electric furnaces.

Since his processes required large amounts of cheap electric power, he designed, built, and operated plants where there was water power or cheap fuel, as at Niagara Falls or near the mountains of Italy, or in the heart of the coal and natural gas fields of West Virginia.

While Robert J. McNitt's ancestors used water power to grind grain, he used power to produce such things as aluminum, magnesium, barium, calcium, sodium, potassium, chlorine, chloroform, and carbon tetrachloride. He designed a plant to be built near Merano in the Italian Alps, near the Austrian border, to use water from melting snow to generate electricity and make Italy independent of Germany in producing chemicals for making dyestuffs, bleaching materials, insecticides, soaps, acids and caustics, as well as anti-knock compounds for high-octane fuel for the air forces.

When Chancellor Dollfuss of Austria was assassinated by Nazis the plans for this plant were cancelled. Mr. McNitt then designed, built and put into operation two plants: one in Lombardy between Milan and Lake Como, using electricity generated in the mountains at the west, and the other near Crotona in Calabria, using power generated in the Neapolitan Apennines.

Mr. McNitt helped Dr. Leo H. Baekeland develop the early commercial plastic called Bakelite, and served as superintendent and director of the General Bakelite Company. In recent years he has spent much time and money in studying matters pertaining to human nutrition, and hopes to see essential foodstuffs produced so cheaply in home and factory by scientific processes of synthesis of food elements, that no one need ever be made afraid by the threat of starvation.

Robert J. McNitt married Dora Waring at Perth Amboy, New Jersey on October 3, 1914, and has lived at Perth Amboy since May 1915. His wife died September 10, 1938. Perhaps because he has been much of the time alone since then, except for the fleeting presence of four sons, he has had time for reflection on the things that contribute to a useful and satisfactory life. They are good health, energy, education, and a
good marriage. More interesting to him than anything he himself has
done are the early achievements and the prospects of his sons: Robert
Waring, born July 29, 1915; James David 2nd, born July 13, 1917;
Edward Waring, born October 8, 1919; and Douglas, born November
7, 1921. What the four did in the second World War makes a series of
interesting stories.

Robert Waring, the eldest, was graduated from the United States
Naval Academy with a B.S. degree in 1938 and commissioned an En¬
sign. At Annapolis he won the Thompson trophy, and was a member of
the class ring committee. He was a member of the crew of the Vamarie,
which sailed for the Navy in the Newport to Bermuda race in 1938. On
June 2, 1941 he was commissioned a Lieutenant, junior grade; he be¬
came a Lieutenant Commander on May 15, 1944, and a Commander on
November 5, 1945.

These promotions came in consequence of efficient service in the
war. He served as assistant gunnery officer on the cruiser Chicago for
one year; as assistant engineer officer and engineer officer on the de¬
stroyer Rhind for forty-two months, in task forces on various missions
on convoy duty, and at the battle of Casablanca in North Africa.

When officers were needed for submarine service, Robert volun¬
teed. He was trained at the submarine school at New London, Con¬
necticut, where he was awarded the Lawrence Y. Spear prize for high¬
est merit. Next he served for sixteen months on the submarine Barb in
Asiatic waters, first as navigator and later as executive officer. We may
judge of the merit of his services from these awards: a silver star medal
with citation, a gold star medal in lieu of a second silver star medal, also
with citation, and the Navy and Marine Corps medal, with a citation
from Admiral Nimitz.

The bravest are often the most reluctant to talk about what they have
done, and are more likely than not to be bored when asked to explain
their medals. The story that follows was pieced together from chance
remarks dropped at odd times by the subject of it, augmented by an
account published in a New York newspaper. Here then is the record
in one action of the young Lieutenant Commander on the submarine
Barb:

On September 16, 1944, a Japanese transport was sunk by an Ameri¬
can submarine, on patrol station about 120 miles northeast of Formosa
and south of the area patrolled by the Barb. On surfacing, the crew of
the submarine observed many men clinging to rafts and light wreckage.
All who could be carried were taken aboard, and a call for help in rescue
work was made by the submarine’s radio.
The U. S. submarines *Queenfish* and *Barb* responded. The *Barb* was far away and twenty hours elapsed before it arrived, an hour and a half having been lost in sinking a 22,500-ton aircraft carrier and a tanker that happened to cross its course in the night.

When the *Barb* came up, the men still in the water were too weak to hold on to lines thrown to them. Volunteers were called for, to swim out and fasten lines to the helpless men in the water, so they might be drawn in and lifted to the deck of the *Barb*. Robert McNitt volunteered to lead the rescuers.

After 150 men had been saved, the rescue work was stopped by darkness and the onset of a severe storm. Those who could not be reached were lost. From the rescued men it was learned that the Japanese transport had been carrying 1,300 British and Dutch prisoners from Singapore toward Japan. These prisoners had been forced to build the Thailand-Burma railroad under brutal conditions, and although now terribly emaciated, weak, diseased, oil-soaked, blistered by the sun, and fainting frequently, the rescued were filled with indomitable spirit.

The sequel is the part of the story that Commander Robert McNitt does not tell. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal was awarded him, with this citation:

> In the name of the President of the United States, the Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, takes pleasure in presenting the Navy and Marine Corps Medal to
> 
> LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT W. MCNITT
> UNITED STATES NAVY
> for service as set forth in the following
> 
> CITATION:
> 
> For heroism in the performance of his duties as Officer in Charge of a rescue party while serving aboard a United States submarine in the Pacific. Through his inspiring leadership, able supervision and courage, he skilfully and efficiently assisted by swimming through rough water to exhausted survivors in hauling several of them on board his ship before heavy seas and an approaching storm prevented further rescues. His conduct and outstanding leadership were such as to inspire in his volunteer assistants an enthusiasm and spirit of self-sacrifice which were highly commendable. His courageous actions were at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.
> 
> (Signed) C. W. Nimitz,
> Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy.

On November 5, 1945, Robert was promoted to the rank of Commander. The war over, he took courses at the Navy Postgraduate School at Annapolis and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, receiv-
ing the degree of Master of Science in June 1947. After that he served as gunnery officer on the aircraft carrier *Midway* until December 2, 1949, when he was detached and ordered to the staff of the technical director of the U. S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory at White Oak, Maryland. He is now special assistant to the director.

Between cruises, Robert took time out to marry Barbara MacMurray at Metuchen, New Jersey, on March 10, 1945.

James David McNitt 2nd was elected a member of the National Honor Society for Secondary Schools while in high school at Perth Amboy; he attended Antioch College from 1935 to 1939, won a B.S. degree in chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1941, and a Master’s degree in chemical engineering practice. He served as an assistant director at the M.I.T. Practice School at Bangor, Maine, in 1941 and 1942. He was assigned to this work because of special fitness, instead of being permitted to enter armed service. Since March 1944 he has been engaged in designing, building, and operating equipment for the manufacture of penicillin and other biological products. At present he is plant manager and assistant vice president of Bristol Laboratories in Syracuse, New York.

James married Helen Louise Vollertsen on June 24, 1944, at Christ Church, Cranbrook, Michigan. James David McNitt 3rd was born at Syracuse on July 17, 1948.

Edward Waring McNitt, the third brother, also was made a member of the National Honor Society for Secondary Schools. He was graduated from Harvard in 1941 with a B.S. degree, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Army in June. He was a platoon commander in the Field Artillery at Fort Bragg in August; in July 1942 he was promoted to First Lieutenant at Fort Bragg. He became a Captain in February 1943, and was appointed an instructor in tactics at the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill. Next he became a battery commander in the 780th Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Bragg, in 1944.

Then he was ordered to Italy. He became a battalion survey officer in the 85th Division, battalion supply officer with the 34th Division, and battalion executive and gunnery officer with the 88th Division. This was in 1945 and 1946. At the close of the war he was Major McNitt. Then he went to the Harvard Graduate School of Business from June 1946 to October 1947, and was awarded the degree of Master of Business Administration “with distinction.” He was named a Baker Scholar by the faculty in April 1947.

Thereafter he went to work for Procter and Gamble in the soap-manufacturing plant at Quincy, Massachusetts, where after September
1949 he was supervisor in charge of all finished product processing and packing. Late in 1950 he was notified of early transfer to headquarters in Cincinnati.

On October 22, 1949 Edward was married at Christ Church, Exeter, New Hampshire, to Jananne Morse, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Adrian O. Morse of State College, Pennsylvania. Jananne was born May 21, 1923 and was graduated from Wellesley College in 1944. Her father is assistant to the president of Pennsylvania State College and is in charge of resident instruction.

Douglas McNitt, youngest of the four brothers, attended the University of Rochester in 1940-41, and left at the end of the academic year to prepare for the Navy Air Corps at the Casey Jones School of Aeronautics. He took the examinations and was given a certificate of proficiency by the Federal Civil Aeronautics Commission. Then he was field service representative in 1942-44 for the Eastern Aircraft Division of General Motors at Navy and Marine air bases in the United States. He enlisted in the Marine Air Corps in June 1944 as mechanic and flight engineer. After the war he entered Rutgers University and won his A.B. degree with the class of 1950. He is now learning all about the hardware and mill supplies of industry in preparation for selling.

Willard Charles McNitt, second son of the Logansport banker, had a life whose later years were charged with dramatic experiences. Born October 11, 1881, he won an A.B. degree at Cornell in 1904 after completing the usual course in three years; then went on to the Harvard Law School, where he received his LL.B. degree in 1907. He practiced law in Chicago, and in 1919 married Louise Richardson.

One of his clients offered him in settlement of a bill a patent on a device for extracting juice from fruits. The depression years had brought damage to real estate operations in which he was interested, and presently he welcomed an opportunity to try something new.

So he organized the American Utensil Company and became its president. Times were hard and progress was slow for a new firm with limited capital. At the beginning of 1938 Willard had accumulated a good backlog of orders for his juice-extracting machinery, and had persuaded suppliers of steel to extend liberal credit.

Then fate in the form of the Congress of Industrial Organizations intervened. The American Utensil Company had enjoyed good relations with the Machinists Union of the American Federation of Labor until the rival C.I.O. union proposed organizing the entire personnel. A jurisdictional fight ensued. Workmen partial to the C.I.O. demon-
strated with sit-down strikes. The home of a loyal employe was dynamited. Alarmed by the prospect of danger, many workmen quit and production faded out; orders could not be filled and the suppliers of steel began pressing for payment.

Through the spring and summer of 1938 Willard struggled against the storm loosed upon him in consequence of the political crusade against "economic royalists." He sought relief by visiting his sons at a summer camp. A short while later he collapsed from the strain and died from heart failure on October 11, 1938, his fifty-seventh birthday.

His brother, Robert J. McNitt, stood off a creditors' committee that proposed an action in bankruptcy, and arranged to have manufacture continued by a strong company at Niagara Falls, New York. Debts were paid, and royalties for Willard's family were generous enough to provide for the widow and educate the boys. Many big food processing companies now use the machinery Willard started to build.

Three sons were born to Willard and Louise, all of whom vied with their New Jersey cousins in useful service in the second World War: Willard Charles, Jr., born June 6, 1920; Robert Richardson, born March 1, 1922; and John Glasgow, born June 25, 1925.

The younger Willard, a broad-shouldered six-footer with the sandy-reddish hair so characteristic in the family since Galloway days, had quite a time for himself at Amherst College, where he was graduated with an A.B. degree in 1942. He played center and tackle on the Amherst football team, and also was active in the baseball and basketball squads. After a course in the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration he entered the United States Navy as a junior officer.

Serving in the Pacific area he participated in the Sitka campaign, and at Guadalcanal, Guam, the Solomon Islands, and around the Philippines. On a destroyer and then on a troop transport, he learned what the experiences of Japanese submarine and kamikaze attacks were like. He had thrills and narrow escapes.

As a Lieutenant he commanded a landing ship, tank, usually called an LST, in the Guam campaign. His LST was 336 feet long, with a complement of ten or twelve officers and 130 men, and capacity to carry a dozen tanks and up to 2,000 men. When the campaign to capture Guam from the Japanese was in preparation, Lieutenant McNitt was assigned to take an Infantry Colonel with 500 men and eight or nine tanks from a distant base to participate in the assault.

Anticipating a slow cruise and considerable boredom, the Colonel brought aboard a considerable stock of whiskey and other potables, and under the uneasy eyes of the LST commander he proceeded to
grow hilarious and to make considerable trouble on the ship. Lieutenant McNitt’s warning to go easy went unheeded. Then after the Colonel had indulged in an excessive spree, Willard ordered him to stay in his room until the LST reached Guam waters.

The Colonel blustered: “Do you realize I’m a Colonel, and you’re a Lieutenant? I’ll have you broke for this! I’ll report you!”

“Report all you like,” Willard told his passenger. “I’m commander of this ship, and I say you are to be confined to quarters for the rest of the trip!” And so he was. He probably was wise enough to make no complaint.

At the end of the war, Willard was offered a choice between $300 and promotion to the grade of Lieutenant Commander. He took the cash and let the credit go, and received his discharge from service in May 1946. Back home again, he took night courses in business administration at Northwestern University, looking to a Master’s degree, while cherishing another ambition. This was realized when on September 14, 1946 he and Charlotte Darrell Boyd were married. Willard McNitt 3rd was born December 31, 1948. When last heard from, the tamer of the Army Colonel was sales manager for Bowes Industries of Chicago, manufacturers of paper cups and similar products, and was living in Evanston.

Robert Richardson McNitt, second of the Chicago brothers, studied in the School of Journalism at Northwestern University and was graduated in 1944 with an A.B. degree. He had taken V-12 training for a commission in the Navy, and was a Lieutenant, junior grade, on an LST that carried troops and tanks on D-Day for the Normandy invasion. Subsequently he served as a public relations officer for the Navy in the British Isles.

After returning home at the end of the war he married Ruth Schiebel in March 1945. Diana Louise was born in July 1946. Soon afterward, Robert took his family to Portland, Oregon, where for a while he was advertising representative for the Spokane daily newspapers and for three farm newspapers. He is now an account executive for an advertising agency in Portland.

John Glasgow McNitt, youngest of the three, went from high school into the Army in 1943, and after training was assigned to the Air Forces. He was staff sergeant and waist gunner on B-17 bombers based in England, and made thirty runs over Germany. Living to tell the tale, he returned home after the war, and on June 23, 1948, married Mary-Ann Tudor. Feeling an urge to country life, John is now running a farm at Mundelein, Illinois, northwest of Chicago.
BOOK EIGHT

VALLEY OF VIRGINIA

1735 AND AFTER
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK EIGHT

ALEXANDER McNutt, possibly a brother of BARNARD McNutt of Massachusetts, who came with wife SARAH to Maryland in 1735 and to Staunton, Virginia in 1744; notable was their eldest son.

ALEXANDER McNutt, who helped to colonize Nova Scotia, and who tried to make the province the fourteenth American colony to seek independence; he brought from London a dress sword he prized all his life.

JOHN McNutt, brother of the colonizer, whose wife KATHERINE ANDERSON was something of a heroine; their great-great-granddaughter ELLEN GLASGOW became a noted novelist.

ALEXANDER GALLATIN McNutt, their grandson, who was Governor of Mississippi two terms and who died prematurely while campaigning for election to U. S. Senate.

HENRIETTA McNutt Hamilton, great-granddaughter of JOHN and KATHERINE, who married LEANDER McCormick of the reaper family and subsequently wrote a family history.

MARTHA McNutt, granddaughter of JOHN and KATHERINE, who married her cousin ALEXANDER GLASGOW and brought with her to his manor the sword of ALEXANDER the colonizer.

ALEXANDER McNutt Glasgow, Martha's son, whose home in the Valley, Tuscan Villa, was despoiled by Union cavalry raiders in 1864, who took the scabbard but left the sword.

WILLIAM McNutt, son of JOHN and KATHERINE, who was a ruling elder in Falling Spring Church and whose home is illustrated on opposite page; three of his sons became physicians:

ROBERT Blaine McNutt, who practiced medicine for fifty-one years in Princeton, West Virginia, and whose wife ELIZABETH inquired on an anxious occasion whether there were any gentlemen in the Union Army;

JOHN McNutt, his brother, who removed to Missouri to practice medicine; and

ELISHA GEORGE Baxter McNutt, who practiced in Madison, Missouri, until he became a bookseller and insurance broker; one of his sons was

JAMES HENRY McNutt, who was a wholesale and retail stationer in San Francisco; a son of his is

FRANK LASLEY McNutt, who is in the lithographing business in San Francisco and who married MARY JANE Wilson; they have a daughter,

IRENE McNutt, who became premier ballerina with the Metropolitan Opera Company.
We find a great deal of color in the McNutt family of Virginia. Not even a few glints of it came, however, from association with the aristocratic Tidewater region or with the earlier glamor of a colorful State. Independently the McNutts made their own color. Their line produced a number of lawyers, physicians, and army officers from the Revolution onward. It provided the unique Alexander who helped to colonize Nova Scotia; also a Governor for Mississippi. In every generation there have been men who made themselves felt.

In looking for the reasons for this attractive record of ability we discover these factors: rugged energy, favoring soil in the Valley, proximity in Lexington to Liberty Hall Academy that grew into Washington and Lee University, and marriages to fine women of character and quality. Whatever we may think now of the evils of slavery, we must perceive that ownership of a few slaves helped the McNutts upward. With Negro field hands to work the land, it was possible for the sons to go to college, while in the North their cousins had to toil with their fathers in the fields.

Slaves were not numerously held in the Valley of Virginia. The Ulster Scots had no ambitions to build an aristocracy on slavery; in their plain way they resented the airs of social superiority of the Tide-
THE VIRGINIANS

water. But it was a practical matter to own a few slaves; enough to make possible the advantages of education and a bit of added security.

The Alexander McNutt who appeared at Hagerstown, Maryland, with his wife Sarah in 1735 and who came to the Shenandoah Valley about 1744, may have been the eldest brother of Barnard McNitt, who came as an elderly man to Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1720.

The Virginia pioneer lived for a while at Staunton, and died in 1751. Opportunities to obtain lands from the Borden Grant of 92,000 acres, covering about a third of what is now Rockbridge County, attracted Alexander's sons to the region above Natural Bridge and east of Lexington. The distance southward from Staunton to these lands is about forty-five miles. The county in which the farms lay was originally named Orange, then Augusta; in 1778 the present Rockbridge County—named for the Natural Bridge—was carved from it. The first settlers had come to the region in 1737.

The Shenandoah Valley, blessed with a good limestone soil and noted now for its apple orchards, is an extension of the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania. Two long, parallel mountain ranges extend south-westerly from Pennsylvania all the way to North Carolina, and down this natural trough passed a stream of Ulster-Scottish and German settlers in search of better opportunities than they thought they had in Quakerland. Thus came the development of the Shenandoah Valley; thus is explained the presence of many Ulster Scots in North Carolina.

Virginia planters in the Tidewater region, long since grown rich by tobacco-raising with the labor of slaves and indentured servants, and by avid land-speculation, held in low esteem the back-country farmers of the Piedmont and the Valley. Their Anglican church was State-established and all taxpayers had to contribute to its support. Morison and Commager in their Growth of the American Republic say:

"Tidewater gentry might acknowledge that there were many roads to Heaven, but they were convinced that a gentleman could take only the Anglican way. Dissenting churches existed only by sufferance." At times the Anglicans tried (as in Ulster) to put the stain of illegitimacy on marriages not performed by their clergy. The Ulster Scots may not have liked much the label of "Cohees" pinned on all back-country men by the Tidewater "Tuckahoes."

If I am shattering some of the illusions of Virginia glamor, it may be that something better and more substantial may be found in their place. Let us see what was written by the historian John Fiske of the settlement of the Valley. In his Old Virginia and Her Neighbors he says:
This settlement of the Valley soon began to work profound modifications in the life of Old Virginia. Hitherto it had been purely English and predominantly Episcopal, Cavalier, and aristocratic. There was now a rapid invasion of Scotch Presbyterianism, with small farms, few slaves, and democratic ideas, made more democratic by life in the backwoods.

Jefferson is often called the father of American democracy; in a certain sense the Shenandoah Valley and adjacent Appalachian regions may be called its cradle. All parts of the United States have felt its influence powerfully. This phase of democracy, which is destined to continue as long as frontier life retains any importance, can nowhere be so well studied in its beginnings as among the Presbyterian population of the Appalachian region in the eighteenth century.

The first son of Alexander and Sarah McNutt was Alexander the colonizer, born about 1725. He never achieved a wife, but he might have been the better for one except that he would have taken fewer chances if married, and made a less spectacular career.

That the second son was Benjamin is accepted as fact by Nova Scotia historians, but family chroniclers seem to have overlooked him and substituted William McNitt of Massachusetts in his place. Benjamin went to Nova Scotia while young as one of Alexander’s colonists, and for a number of years after the Revolution the two men kept bachelors’ hall together on McNutt’s Island in Shelburne Harbor. Benjamin did nothing notable, and died on the island in 1798.

Next came John, whose romantic marriage could have made him and his wife famous if Longfellow had learned of it and chosen to celebrate their story instead of that of John Alden and Priscilla. We shall return to them in a moment.

Robert, the fourth son, inherited part of the family lands; he sold out in 1790 to one Berryhill and migrated with other Ulster Scots to Kentucky. He was married, and a son named James was living in 1848 near Grand View, Illinois.

Another son of Alexander and Sarah was James, who married Margaret McElroy and bought a farm east of Lexington. Their son James lived in the neighborhood all his life and was called Squire McNutt. Jane, the pioneer Alexander’s only daughter, went to Nova Scotia with her brothers Alexander and Benjamin, married Benjamin Weir of Newport, and had descendants who have done honor to their province.

There was still another son, or perhaps grandson, in the first family, whose name has been lost. According to the chronicle compiled by Mrs. Henrietta McCormick he was killed by Indians. That is all she could tell about him, and no tradition lingers in the present generation to afford any light at all on the story of the Virginia family group carry-
ing Sarah McNutt's pewter trencher, that was wiped out in the McNitt Massacre in Kentucky in 1786. “The McNutts were all killed” is the laconic story told in a bit of Kentucky legend.

An explanation of this gap in the chronicles of the Virginia family was given me by Dr. E. P. Tompkins of Lexington, who aided in obtaining material for this chapter. His comment in a letter adds a graphic note on life on the Virginia colonial frontier:

Massacres by Indians of single families, or the killing of individuals, was apparently so common that very little if any record was kept of such occurrences. Perusal of Chalkley’s *Abstracts of Augusta County* shows many casual references to such things — scores or even hundreds of such murders. In perhaps a few instances the perpetrators of such deeds were followed and reprisals were made, but for the most part the Indians escaped and were unheard-of afterward.

We may now return our attention to John McNutt. For some reason this son appears to have remained in Ulster for a while after his parents came to Maryland in 1735. That was not at all unusual — to leave a child or two behind with relations — when families were large and ocean travel was an ordeal.

After his parents removed to Staunton, Virginia, it was soon to be time for John to join them; he was a young man now. The story of the manner of his coming was found in notes attributed to Francis Augustus MacNutt; a brief recital of facts set down without evident realization of their great interest. In reconstructing the story here I shall not depart from the facts as set down.

John had a sweetheart, Katherine Anderson, whom he wished to marry and bring with him, but Robert Anderson of Killagorwen in Donegal, her father, was sternly set against allowing Katherine to go so far he would never see her again. He had no intention of migrating with other Ulster Scots and there is no record that he ever left home.

So John had to go sadly alone to the waiting ship at Londonderry to join the neighbors who were sailing to Virginia. Katherine was allowed to go with other friends who went to the wharf to say goodbye to those departing. Or perhaps she had slipped away and come without permission. It is not difficult to supply words for the girl who had been bidden to stay behind:

“Ah, John,” we can hear her murmuring, “I canna let ye go! I willna let ye go alone! You shall not go to Virginia without me!”

In the excitement of departure Katherine slipped aboard the vessel and hid herself. When the ship was so far from land that all danger of its turning back was over, Katherine crept from her hiding place and
went on deck to find John. We can imagine John’s happiness and the pleasure of friendly passengers at having their voyage begin with a romance. Almost every ship leaving Ulster for America in those days had a Presbyterian minister on board; if a minister was lacking the captain was always ready. Without loss of time Katherine became Mrs. John McNutt.

Unlike Priscilla Mullins, Katherine did not say: “Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?” When John could not speak, she did not ask: she acted. Why should not her descendants have as much pride in her as that felt by the men and women who claim John and Priscilla Alden as their ancestors?

Throughout her life Katherine fulfilled the promise of that shining day. She became the mother of a long line marked by her quality. A grandson, Alexander Gallatin McNutt, was Governor of Mississippi for two terms. A great-great-granddaughter was Ellen Anderson Glasgow, respected Virginia novelist. Young men in her line were graduated from Liberty Hall Academy and Washington College — numbers of them — to go out in the world as lawyers and doctors. A record of all her grandsons who became outstanding men would overcrowd this chapter.

When all her children had married and settled themselves, Katherine’s thoughts turned in her later years to her son Isaac, who had left in youth for Louisiana and never returned. When in those days a son left home to go far through the frontier his family usually had no expectation of seeing him again. But Katherine had ideas of her own: she climbed into a saddle and rode alone through wildernesses all the way to Louisiana. On her way she stopped for a while in Tennessee to visit another son, Benjamin.

We must recall that at the time of Katherine’s long trip Louisiana was by no means tame country with good roads. But Katherine was as patiently resolute as Evangeline in search of Gabriel, and by inquiry and nearly endless riding she at last found Isaac. After this unconquerable woman had spent a few weeks with her son she took to the saddle again and rode alone to her home near Lexington. Then she was content to remain with her family.

The best-remembered fact about her husband John McNutt is that he was known in the Valley as “Scotch Johnny.” Why they called him that we have to guess. He was too busy making a success of his farm east of Lexington and west of the Blue Ridge mountains to inspire any legends. Perhaps his romantic marriage with Katherine was the high spot in his life.
We can imagine the restlessness of Ulster-Scottish Presbyterians at being taxed to support the Established clergy. A petition presented to the Virginia Legislature in 1784, signed by 122 men in the Valley, has the typical ironic bite of an indignant Scots mind. Referring to the support of Anglican ministers by taxation upon all, the petition says:

“By a general tax, all [ministers] will be rendered so independent of the will of the particular societies for their support, that all will be infected with the common contagion, and we shall be more likely to have the State swarming with fools, sots, and gamblers, than with a sober, sensible, and exemplary clergy.”

John McNutt was one of the signers of the petition. He must have shared his neighbors’ opinion of some of the Anglican clergymen who indulged in the gay and easy life of the Tidewater gentry. These plain-spoken Presbyterians were loyal to the ministers they supported without State aid; they insisted upon having good ones, individually responsible to their congregations.

John and Katherine had nine children: John, Alexander, William, Rebecca, Margaret, Joseph, Benjamin, Isaac, and Robert. Two of the sons married sisters comparable with their own mother: tall girls of about five feet seven inches who became mothers of a line of men averaging six feet in height. Alexander married Rachel Grigsby, and William won her sister Elizabeth. They were the daughters of John and Elizabeth Porter Grigsby of Fruit Hill. At a later time a daughter of this able family, Mary Ann Grigsby, married William Sanderson McCormick; they were grandparents of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, publisher of the Chicago Tribune. When we consider the tenacity with which Colonel McCormick continues to fight for American independence from England we gain an idea of the indestructible spirit of the Shenandoah Valley people. The first Grigsby in Virginia arrived from England about 1660. John Grigsby, father of Rachel and Elizabeth, was a member of the Falling Spring Presbyterian Church, like the McNutts.

John, oldest son of John and Katherine Anderson McNutt, attended Liberty Hall Academy, married Mary Laird, remained on the old homestead, and extended his lands to 518 acres. He died without issue in 1818. To Mary he bequeathed eight slaves with other property; brothers and nephews he remembered with legacies.

Alexander, second son and the husband of Rachel Grigsby, was an outstanding member of his family. He was taxed for 296 acres on North River seven miles east of Lexington, near the site of the present village of Buena Vista. A Revolutionary soldier, he fought against the British at Cowpens and elsewhere. Alexander left no will, but an appraisal of
his property dated June 3, 1812 revealed interests as well as possessions. Listed were “a set of platting instruments” and a copy of Gibbons’ *Surveying;* also these books: four grammars, a dictionary, and texts on arithmetic, rhetoric, and astronomy. His personal property included twelve slaves, eight horses, twenty-one sheep, four cows “and a lot of steers, forty-eight hogs and shoats.” Other items: silver spoons and sugar tongs, two “big wheels” for spinning wool, three “small wheels” for flax, and a set of windsor chairs.

The tall children of Alexander and Rachel Grigsby McNutt, Mrs. Henrietta McCormick informs us in her book, *Reminiscences and Genealogies*, had blue or gray eyes and golden or light brown hair. Let us hope the girls had the golden hair, and that it was as naturally curly as they would have liked it to be.

Before we become confused by growing lists of names we had better begin tabulating. The children of Alexander and Jane McNutt, who came to Maryland from the Laggan, and then settled at Staunton about 1744 were:

I. Alexander, b. about 1725, d. 1811; colonizer of Nova Scotia; never married; later chapters will be devoted to him.

II. Benjamin, went to Nova Scotia in 1761 or after; lived in later years as a bachelor on McNutt’s Island.

III. John, m. Katherine Anderson on shipboard en route to Virginia; lived on farm east of Lexington; children will be enumerated later.

IV. Robert married, lived until 1790 near Lexington, then sold out and moved to Kentucky; little is known of this branch.


VI. Jane went to Nova Scotia with brother Alexander, m. Benjamin Weir of Newport; they had several children.

The family of John (III above) and Katherine Anderson McNutt probably was the most numerous and notable of any in the Virginia line. We shall make a fresh start with the children of John and Katherine:

I. John, Jr., educated at Liberty Hall Academy, m. Mary Laird, lived east of Lexington, died without issue Jan. 13, 1818, leaving his widow eight slaves.

II. Alexander, b. Dec. 10, 1754, m. in 1788 Rachel Grigsby. He was a Revolutionary soldier and fought at Cowpens; d. of pneumonia March 29, 1812. Issue:
THE VIRGINIANS


2. Margaret, b. July 8, 1792, m. Elisha Paxton; they had six sons and one daughter; an educated, successful family.


4. Anderson, b. March 24, 1796, bachelor sugar planter in Louisiana, freed 150 slaves at death in 1860 and left them legacies.

5. Martha, b. Jan. 11, 1798, m. March 9, 1815 her cousin John Glasgow; they lived at Tuscan Villa, near Buena Vista. Their children were Arthur, Rachel, (who m. Robert McDowell and died early), Alexander McNutt Glasgow (1820-1894), m. Laura Mackey, and Martha, who m. John C. Bell. The children of Alexander McNutt and Laura Mackey were (a) Alexander McNutt Glasgow II, b. July 4, 1875; (b) John Henry; (c) Elizabeth Vance; (d) Lucy Goodwin; (e) Mary Thompson; (f) Otelia McNutt. All are living except Rachel, Alexander II and John Henry.

6. Rebecca, b. Nov. 14, 1799, m. Hugh Hickman; they moved to Missouri.

7. Alexander Gallatin, b. Jan. 3, 1802, was graduated from Washington College at Lexington in 1821, moved to Mississippi in 1823, practiced law at Jackson and Vicksburg, m. in 1834 Mrs. Eliza A. Cameron; was Governor of Mississippi two terms, d. Oct. 22, 1848 while campaigning for election to U. S. Senate; no issue.

8. Katherine Anderson, b. April 19, 1804, d. unmarried.


10. Frances, b. Sept. 6, 1806, m. in 1825 James McChesney, a Captain in War of 1812; had issue, three sons, five daughters.

11. Joseph Porter, b. Sept. 27, 1808, was graduated from Washington College in Lexington 1827, practiced law in Vicksburg, d. from cholera 1833.

12. Benjamin Franklin, b. Aug. 6, 1810, was graduated from Washington College 1829, studied medicine in Philadelphia, removed to Vicksburg to practice. Drowned in shipwreck off coast of Mexico Feb. 1835.

13. Sarah Alexandra, b. June 15, 1812, m. in 1836 Ferdinand Sims, Vicksburg lawyer, removed to Galveston where she d. 1858; issue one son, two daughters.

III. Rebecca, daughter of John and Katherine McNutt, b. in 1755, m. John McCorkle, a Revolutionary soldier who fought in North Carolina under General Morgan. He was wounded in a thumb at the battle
of Cowpens Jan. 17, 1781, and died from lockjaw. Rebecca m. 2nd, Arthur Glasgow. The third child of this second marriage was John Glasgow, b. Dec. 27, 1785, who m. his cousin Martha McNutt, daughter of Alexander and Rachel Grigsby McNutt. (See under II, 5.)

IV. Margaret, b. 1757, m. Robert Rhodes, d. 1830.

V. Joseph, history unknown.

VI. Benjamin, removed to Tennessee; descendants later lived in Knoxville and Memphis.

VII. Robert, mortally wounded at battle of Cowpens, Jan. 17, 1781.

VIII. Isaac, was graduated from Liberty Hall Academy, and planned to become a Presbyterian minister. He settled in Louisiana while a young man and was there visited by his mother, who rode alone all the way from Virginia to find him.

IX. William, b. April 16, 1774, m. July 24, 1806, Elizabeth Grigsby (1776-1842), lived on farm one mile north of Falling Spring Presbyterian church, of which he was ruling elder, d. Dec. 1, 1836. Issue:
   2. John, b. Nov. 6, 1808, m. 1st Mrs. Wells, 2d, Elizabeth Steele, issue by 2d, son William and two daughters; removed to Missouri with younger brother Elisha George Baxter (see 8 below); both practiced medicine there.
   4. Reuben Alexander, b. April 21, 1812, educated at Washington College, m. Elizabeth Ruff in 1842; both died shortly afterward.
   5. Robert Blaine, b. Feb. 9, 1814, d. 1894. He was educated in medicine and practiced successfully 51 years in Princeton, W. Va.; m. in 1842 Elizabeth E. Peck; their children: (a) John W., m. Jennie Black; (b) Josephine, 1845-1862; (c) Joseph P., m. Jennie Adair; (d) Mary Grigsby, b. Nov. 12, 1849, m. Oct. 10, 1872 Col. James Barber Peck who left William and Mary College aged seventeen in 1861 to volunteer in Confederate army. Mary Grigsby McNutt Peck (see illustration) was mother of two sons and four daughters; died March 13, 1932 at Tazewell, Va.; (e) Charles R., m. Emma Baines; (f) Juanita.
   7. Elizabeth Trimble, b. March 28, 1818; accompanied older brother John to Missouri, where she married.
   8. Elisha George Baxter, b. Aug. 12, 1820, d. Nov. 29, 1883. Moved with older brother John to Missouri; was graduated in 1848 from Missouri Medical College, now a part of Washington University of St. Louis. In following October he m. Lucy James Holmes. Located at once in Madison, Mo., where he practiced medicine many years. Handicapped by partial deafness he gave up practice
and moved to Paris, Mo. During Civil War he was captain of home guard, sheriff, and custodian of public money. At times of raids by Col. Moseby and Clay Price gang he hid in wooded pasture with school, county, and bank funds; food was brought him by Mrs. Shelton Conyers who owned property. At end of war Dr. McNutt bought the Postoffice bookstore in Paris; later he conducted insurance brokerage business at home. He had a colorful personality and was beloved by his grandchildren. Dr. Elisha G. B. and Lucy McNutt had ten children: John William, Emma Frances, Martha Jane, James Henry, Elizabeth, Mary Lasley, Lucy Verbenia, Sally Belle, Robert Benjamin (who was a successful dentist in New York City), and Clyde Moss. We shall concern ourselves here with the fourth child and second son, James Henry (1855-1920), who removed to San Francisco about 1875. During his whole life he was engaged in the wholesale and retail stationery business, first with Payot, Upham & Co., largest firm of the kind on the Coast. In 1892 he began business for himself under the style of McNutt, Kahn & Co., at 304 Market Street. The 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed his business, as the insurance company couldn't pay its losses. He started over, but in 1915 returned to work for his old firm, now Isaac Upham & Co. On July 25, 1882, he had married Susan M. Lasley and established a home in Alameda.

The children of James Henry and Susan Lasley McNutt:

1. Blanche, died at birth in 1884.
2. James Henry, Jr., b. 1885, d. 1887.
3. Frank Lasley, b. July 25, 1887, m. in 1916 Mary Jane Wilson; is associated with Schmidt Lithograph Co. in San Francisco. Children: (a) Irene, b. 1917, became professional dancer in New York with the stage name Irene Hawthorne, was invited to become solo dancer in opera Carmen by Metropolitan Opera Co. in Feb. 1946; became premier ballerina with Metropolitan in 1946-47 season; m. in 1948 Kurt Adler, chorus master of Metropolitan; has danced successfully in operatic performances in Mexico City and elsewhere; (b) Frank Lasley, Jr., b. 1920, m. in 1941 Adele Peyton Kane in San Francisco; their children are William Conrad, b. in 1943, and Robert Blair, b. in 1944.
5. Mary, 1894-1896.
6. Russell, b. 1899, m. Ivah Rude, no issue.
7. Herndon Westover, b. 1900, m. Jeanette Brown, had issue.

That concludes our tabulated history of the McNutt family of Virginia. It isn’t complete by any means, but it will have to be sufficient because it covers the principal figures. We turn now for a while to a story of the Glasgow family, remembering that Rebecca McNutt
IRENE McNITT AS PREMIER BALLERINA WITH THE METROPOLITAN OPERA CO.
married Arthur Glasgow, and that their son John married a cousin, Martha McNutt. Another and older son of Rebecca’s second marriage was Joseph Glasgow, who was a cavalry soldier in the War of 1812. The little town of Glasgow, near Natural Bridge, was named for Joseph.

When Martha McNutt married John Glasgow, a sword Alexander McNutt the colonizer had brought from London and worn all his life was a part of her dowry; she carried it to the big brick manor house with white columns that John built near South River, in the vicinity of the modern village of Buena Vista, after their marriage in 1815.

Their children were Alexander McNutt Glasgow 1, born in 1820, and two daughters, Martha and Rachel. The son became a lawyer, and a planter on the estate of 640 acres, following the early death of his father in 1830. The daughters married, and the widowed Martha lived on in the big house with her son for many years; Alexander remained a bachelor until eight years after her death in 1866. He was fifty-four when he married.

Perhaps Alexander Glasgow did not feel the need of a wife in a house where his mother was a whirlwind of energy. “Aunt Patsy,” Mrs. McCormick wrote of Martha, “was noted for her currant wine and the neatness of her housekeeping. Her floors were equalled only by the brilliantly-waxed floors of Aunt Verlinda. On them a boy might skate; it was dangerous to walk.”

The War Between the States found Alexander McNutt Glasgow rather too old for active fighting service; the Southern cause could be better served if he remained at home and raised grain for the armies. Into the somnolent quiet of his valley there burst in April 1864 one of the Union raids that caused so much panic in the South and provided topics for reminiscent talk for generations. General Hunter’s cavalry had come to burn the Jordan iron furnace, and to despoil the Glasgow place. The furnace had provided ordnance for our armies in the Mexican War, and was now supplying Confederate forces.

When news of the approaching raiders reached the house, Alexander set out with slaves to drive the cattle and horses to safety in the woods of the nearby Blue Ridge mountains. Martha — now an invalid with rheumatism — remained undaunted with the house servants to face the troopers when they came roaring in, looking for loot. The Yankees demanded food, and while the cooks prepared hot bread and other things, soldiers raided the garden for young onions, destroying what they did not wish to eat. The hot bread pleased them; they loaded it with butter. They searched the house for what might please them, breaking locks and furniture. All the family silver was taken, except for
a few pieces that lay openly on the table. The silver afterward was sold to a family in Kentucky that now holds it.

The sword of Alexander McNutt was snatched from the wall; the scabbard was taken for its silver mountings and chains; the blade was left behind. After all this enforced hospitality the troopers made ready to burn the house. Then they took pity on Martha — old and an invalid — and spared the place. Hunter’s men departed then, but for nearly a week they camped between the house and the ruins of the Jordan furnace, waiting for Alexander Glasgow and Colonel Jordan to return, burning grain, and paying respects to Lexington. In that city they burned the home of Governor Letcher and the buildings of the Virginia Military Institute.

This is the story told by Miss Lucy Glasgow, Alexander’s daughter and the present mistress of Tuscan Villa. She will show a friendly visitor the bare sword and the overlooked pieces of table silver, and point out that traces of the blight caused by the raid still remain. The Jordan furnace is still in ruins, with tall grass crowning the broken walls.

After the raid life went on again as usual in the Glasgow home. Alexander married Laura Mackey in 1874; their children were Alexander McNutt Glasgow II (b. 1875), John Henry, Elizabeth Vance (who married Henry H. McCorkle), Lucy Goodwin, Mary Thompson, and Otelia. The elder son married Agnes Condon of Knoxville, and became wealthy as a dealer in marble and lime. His son Alexander McNutt Glasgow III, born in 1917, was educated at the University of Tennessee, and was an officer in the second World War. He lives in Knoxville, where he married a widow with two children.

The sons Alexander II and John Henry are no longer living; in the old home near the river are Lucy and Otelia. Mary is a teacher in Richmond; she comes home between terms. Miss Lucy is proud of the fame earned by her third cousin, Ellen Glasgow. When *Vein of Iron* was written, she relates, Ellen had in mind the locality only a few miles away where her own family had lived. The sketch-map shown in the end-papers of the novel includes a big house that was the home of her grandfather, Robert Glasgow.

All the family of McNutt has vanished completely from the Shenandoah Valley, and even the houses once occupied by leading members have disappeared, with the exception of the home of William and Elizabeth Grigsby McNutt, illustrated at the head of this chapter. But Knoxville has many of the McNutt name today; some may be descendants of men and women named in this chapter, while others are in the line
of George McNutt, who came from Ulster to the Valley in 1775 and
fought in the Revolution like his kinsmen.

Probably the latter was the grandfather of whom George McNutt
White later wrote: "George McNutt was one of the first bench of
elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Knoxville, Tennessee. He
was born in Ulster. When he landed in America he settled in Rock-
bridge County, Virginia, where he married Isabella Callison. He moved
to Knox County, Tennessee, and settled somewhere on the north side
of the French Broad River. Later he removed to a farm a short distance
below the junction of the French Broad and Holston Rivers."

An old photograph of Dr. Robert Blaine McNutt, who practiced
medicine for over half a century in Princeton, West Virginia, before
his death in 1894, tells a striking story of survival of family characteris-
tics and resemblances. Although their relationship was remote, Dr. Mc-
Nutt and my grandfather Frank McNitt looked so much alike they
could have been brothers. They had the same direct, piercing gaze from
under heavy brows, and when their faces were in repose their mouths
were set in the same firm lines. Both had shocks of hair, sandy or reddish
brown before they turned white, and both had blue eyes. And both
had very good-looking daughters with faces full of character. These
two men who looked so much alike may be regarded as tribal types.

Of the doctor's wife, Ellen Peck McNutt, there is told a story of the
kind relished by ladies of the South. During the War Between the
States a Confederate detachment was obliged to evacuate Princeton on
the approach of a larger Union force. The departing soldiers set fire to
the more important buildings in the town to keep them from use by the
men from the North; all civilians had been advised to evacuate. Mrs.
McNutt was unhappy at the thought of harm coming to her home, and
so with Uncle Billy, her Negro coachman and bodyguard, she drove
back into town and visited Union headquarters.

Approaching a group of officers — as she told it later — she inquired
with perhaps a little irony: "Are there any gentlemen in the Union
army?" A good-looking Lieutenant smiled as he replied: "I rate one
in Canton, Ohio, ma'am."

Thereupon Mrs. McNutt continued: "I suppose you'll be using my
home. I ask you upon honor to leave it as you found it, when you are
through with it."

"Why, certainly, ma'am," the young officer assured her. And when
the Union army had gone, and Mrs. McNutt came back home, she
found it just as she had left it, with nothing harmed. In relating her story
afterward, Mrs. McNutt was fond of telling of the gentlemen of the

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North who had made her house their headquarters: "The Colonel was Rutherford B. Hayes, the Captain was James A. Garfield, and the Lieutenant who was so polite to me was William McKinley!"

It would be ungracious now to trifle with this nice little story by inquiring whether all three of these men later to become in turn Presidents of the United States were in fact temporary residents of her home together. Of one detail at least we may be quite sure: the young officer who made good his promise to protect her home was William McKinley, of Canton, Ohio.

In our collection of stories of brave and resolute women and girls of the family we should include a little one about Irene McNutt, daughter of Frank Lasley and Mary Wilson McNutt of San Francisco. Irene's mother, with a romantic Spanish inheritance from her own distaff side, aspired to have her daughter become a dancer. So Irene was trained from childhood and was qualified to appear professionally while still young. The possibilities in San Francisco seemed limited, and Irene's eyes turned eastward. Her father was not enthusiastic over this ambition to leave home and venture far away, alone.

Presently an engagement in Salt Lake City was offered. Irene set out with $50 she had saved. After a success in the Mormon capital she moved on to Chicago, obtained and filled another engagement, and then advanced to New York. Dancing is one of the most beautiful of the arts, and Irene had perfected herself in it by the hardest kind of work, but dancing is a precarious occupation. The girl from California had a difficult time, and sometimes between engagements it seemed her last dollar would depart while she waited in idleness. But something always turned up in the nick of time, and she never had to ask her family for help, or to beg for money to get home.

In true story-book fashion, the Metropolitan needed in a great hurry a dancer for a solo rôle in Carmen. Someone knew this was one of the things Irene could do best, and she was summoned and hurried into rehearsal. Her first performance delighted everyone. Her own and her mother's dream had come true! In the following season she was the Metropolitan's premier ballerina, with the stage name Irene Hawthorne. Now she is the wife of Kurt Adler, one of the members of the Met's executive staff. She still likes to dance professionally, and goes occasionally to Mexico City and other places to appear in operatic performances.

So that is the story of how a member of the McNaught family of Scotland, with an assist from Spain, won her way to a career as an artist.
58. Alexander McNutt, Colonizer

**cherished** in a white-pillared brick manor house a few miles east of Lexington, Virginia, is a scabbardless dress sword with an ivory hilt. In Shelburne Harbor, Nova Scotia, is a small island with a few homes and a lighthouse whose lantern shines 125 feet above the sea. These endure as reminders of the ambitious and troubled career of a colorful man.

The sword was brought back from London by Alexander McNutt. He said George II had given it to him. The research scholars who have done him the honor of examining every scrap of paper in the archives of Canada and Virginia relating in any way to his exploits as soldier and colonizer, doubt his statement. It is possible the sword was given him in the King’s name by the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations in London, for he had willing ability that interested these gentlemen: he wished to help in the colonization of Nova Scotia after the expulsion of the Acadians. His critics may believe he saw the sword in a shop and bought it for himself. Anyway, he wore it proudly the rest of his life, especially when he called upon notables like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.

The little spot of land with the lighthouse in Shelburne Harbor: that is McNutt’s Island. It is surrounded now by legends of the eccentric,
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restless man who tried mightily to people Nova Scotia with Ulster Scots, and who spent several years on the island with his brother Benjamin in enforced obscurity after the Revolution, and after all his efforts had come to seeming failure.

The island and the sword, whose silver-mounted scabbard and chains were taken by General Hunter's Yankee raiders in 1864, are of course not the only evidences left to us. Half a dozen regional historians, fascinated perhaps by the controversial aspects of a rather singular life, have given us a sizable body of literature about Alexander. One in particular wrote of him with no little astringency in 1913: Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, Doctor of Civil Law and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. His long article on "Alexander McNutt, the Colonizer" was published in December of that year in Americana, a magazine then issued in New York by the National Americana Society.

Dr. Eaton's article is not to be questioned for its statements of fact, because it was written with scholarly care. If we choose to demur at the scornful treatment given Alexander, we may point out that objective fairness is largely a matter of emphasis and selection, the inclusion or exclusion of material favorable to the man under criticism, and the manner in which a point of view may be labored to make the victim's case look bad. Dr. Eaton offends my sense of fairness. He was a true-blue supporter of the royal tradition.

Alexander in a sense represented a departure from the norm in a family whose men usually were as steady as grandfather clocks. Or was Alexander really different except in his failure to find the right girl? The others could and did take fire, too, over issues of civil and religious liberties, but not one, before or since, could tell tall tales as Alexander could and did. He never had a wife to curry him down and part his hair for him and restrain him from exaggeration in telling about what he had done and could do.

He was born in Ulster — presumably in the Laggan — about 1725, and so was a boy of ten when his parents, Alexander and Sarah McNutt, took ship from Londonderry to Maryland. We have accounted for his brothers and his sister Jane in the preceding chapter. The family removed to Staunton in the Shenandoah Valley about 1744. Alexander McNutt in 1750 "purchased for £3 the lot of forty-eight poles adjoining and east of the present jail lot, where the Bell Tavern afterward stood." So says Joseph Addison Waddell in his Annals of Augusta County.

Which Alexander, father or son? The historian is silent on this point, but Dr. Eaton thinks it was the son, who in 1761 gave his brother John
a power of attorney to sell the land. Staunton must have been growing, because John sold lot No. 10 to Thomas Smith for £110; enough perhaps to finance Alexander’s trip to London that year. The senior Alexander died in 1751. Soon afterward the brothers Alexander and James bought tracts from the “Big Survey” from the executor of the estate of Benjamin Borden.

What Alexander ever did in the way of an ordinary gainful occupation is a mystery. His handwriting in extant documents is excellent, and he may have been a teacher in early life. He must have been quick to learn, and it is evident he read widely. Obviously he was a personable man with a gift of language, and a manner so persuasive that he had no difficulty in establishing connections with important men and making them believe in him. He was fundamentally honest, with a flair for embellishment; one like him now would make an excellent sales manager.

Alexander emerged into large events in the early part of 1756 when he served as a Lieutenant in an expedition commanded by Major Andrew Lewis, sent by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to punish a band of Shawnee Indians for scalpings and burnings beyond the Ohio river, and along the Scioto. This was the “Sandy Creek Expedition,” whose misfortunes are related in Alexander Scott Withers’ Chronicles of Border Warfare.

Before the little force had advanced far enough into the mountain wilderness to come within sight of the Indians it lost its provisions through the overturning of boats in crossing a turbulent river. The game that could be taken in the woods was insufficient to satisfy hunger. One day a detachment was fired upon by a party of Indians in war paint, and two soldiers were killed. Major Lewis decided then that the expedition could not succeed, and proposed returning home.

Alexander McNutt began his career in controversy at this hour; he joined Captain Paul in urging Major Lewis to press on and attack and defeat the Indians or perish in the effort. The Major ordered a retreat, and as a measure of caution he told his men they must neither discharge their muskets to kill game, nor build fires to prepare food or warm themselves, for fear that noise and smoke might betray their route.

Forbidden to hunt, the soldiers killed and ate some of their pack horses. A buffalo skin, left in a tree to dry on the way out, was cut in strips and eaten raw by the famished men on the return journey. Several died from cold and hunger before the little army could get back to the Virginia settlements.

With an enduring capacity for articulate indignation, Alexander resolved to protest. Withers relates what he did, in these polite terms:
"A journal of this campaign was kept by Lieutenant McNutt, a gentleman of liberal education and fine mind. On his return to Williamsburg he presented it to Governor Fauquier [Dinwiddie], by whom it was deposited in the executive archives. In this journal Lewis was censured for not having proceeded directly to the Scioto towns."

Some friends who knew of the journal said to Major Lewis: "Did you see what McNutt wrote about you?" Lewis replied: "No. What was it?" He was told. Then, according to Withers: "This produced an altercation between Lewis and McNutt, which was terminated in a personal encounter." It was a knockdown fight in the streets of Staunton. Withers was too considerate to tell the outcome, but Lewis was the larger man, if not the braver, and we may conclude Alexander lost the bout.

If we consider the probable feelings of a proud and humiliated young man who took a beating from a superior officer he regarded perhaps unfairly as the owner of a broad yellow streak, we can understand the mental processes that led to his subsequent actions. He smarted with resentment at the disgrace he believed had so unjustly fallen upon him, after he had tried so hard to make the expedition succeed.

He decided to go far away, and to stay away for a long time. Years afterward it was told that he had gone soon afterward to Governor Dinwiddie, confided to him that he wished to go to London, and obtained letters of introduction. That he was received with favor in England, and presented with the title and rank of Colonel and a dress sword by the order of George II.

This story has been ridiculed by his Canadian critics, who point to the absence of proof that he made such a trip at the time, or that he was made a Colonel. Probably Alexander didn't even think of going to London then; he may have invented the story later to explain his departure from Staunton and to repair his prestige with his old neighbors.

What he actually did was to remember his kinfolk in New England: the McKnights at Londonderry, New Hampshire, and the Barnard McNitt family at Palmer, and resolve to go to them and begin over again in a new and friendly environment. He went first to Londonderry, where on September 6, 1758, he was one of seventy "freeholders and inhabitants" to sign a memorial of thanks to Governor Benning Wentworth for refusing to permit an increase in tavern licenses granted in the town.

While he was debating with himself in Londonderry how he might get into service in the French and Indian war or discover some other large new adventure, Governor Charles Lawrence of Nova Scotia pub-
lished an announcement that fired his imagination. At the end of 1758 word was circulated that tracts of Nova Scotia land, made vacant by the expulsion of the Acadians three years before, would be made available to colonists on the easiest of conditions. Interested persons in New England were advised to apply to the Boston agent, Thomas Hancock, uncle of the more famous John Hancock. The announcement was published again in fuller detail on January 11, 1759. Alexander knew then he had found his work.

The province of Acadia, which in those days included the other maritime provinces of eastern Canada, had been ceded by France to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The French-speaking settlers were expected to turn their allegiance to the English, but when they found themselves unable to be loyal or even neutral in the French and Indian war, British commanders decided in 1755 they had better get rid of the whole 10,000 of them. Henry W. Longfellow has immortalized the touching story of the Acadians in the poem “Evangeline”; the tale of the people of Grand Pré herded together and loaded into ships, to be carried away while looking back toward the smoking ruins of their homes. Seven thousand Acadians were thus transported, many of them to the bayou regions of Louisiana. The rest were driven into hiding, or into territory still in the hands of the French.

When the rich Boston merchant Thomas Hancock sent inquiring delegations from Connecticut and Rhode Island to interview Governor Lawrence at Halifax and inspect the deserted farmlands, they chose to visit what was left of Grand Pré, in the region of the Basin of Minas. Had they cared to count, they would have found the burned ruins of 225 houses, 276 barns, eleven mills, and many outbuildings. Grand Pré means great marsh. The Acadians in the course of a hundred years had shut out the sea with dikes to protect the alluvial lowlands, where they had grown plentiful crops. The Connecticut visitors liked the prospect and arranged to bring settlers; for them the new township of Horton was set up to include what had once been the village of Grand Pré. Other new townships below the Basin of Minas were named Cornwallis, Falmouth, and Newport.

Advised by Thomas Hancock to see Nova Scotia for himself, Alexander McNutt went to Halifax in August 1759 with an eager promise to bring settlers if properly induced. The inducement offered him was gratifying: the township of Truro at the east end of Cobequid Bay and about seventy miles northeast of Grand Pré, for the colony he counted upon raising at Londonderry; also a township at Shelburne Harbor in the southwest of Nova Scotia for possible later development. He was
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couraged to great expectations, and his imagination soared. He thought of the Ulster Scots looking for opportunities to continue the migration from Northern Ireland, and assured himself that he could somehow find the ships to bring them.

The provincial government granted him time to organize his colony from Londonderry, and he needed time, for the Acadians and Indians came out of hiding, menaced the forts, and killed a few settlers. The Acadians took up privateering to discourage colonists, and Governor Lawrence wrote the Lords of Trade: “Your Lordships will be surprised when I assure you that these land-Ruffians, turned Pirates, have had the hardiness to cruise on our coast, and that sixteen or seventeen vessels, some of them very valuable, have fallen into their hands. I have represented this to Admiral Saunders who I presume will take proper measures. . . .”

William McNitt of Palmer accompanied Alexander on his first trip to Halifax, and with him explored the promised lands around the Minas Basin and Cobequid Bay. So we are informed in a monograph entitled “Colonel Alexander McNutt and the Pre-Loyalist Settlements of Nova Scotia,” written by the Venerable Archdeacon W. O. Raymond, LL.D., and read by him on May 17, 1911, before the Royal Society of Canada. The monograph may be found in the bound volume of Proceedings of the Society for that year.

Dr. Raymond was led into error by Francis Augustus MacNutt of Richmond, Indiana, and Rome, who had instigated the monograph: William was not Alexander’s brother, as Francis had told him, but a cousin. After his conferences with Thomas Hancock in Boston, Alexander had gone to the Barnard McNitt home at Palmer, disclosed his visions of colonial empire, and enlisted the support of his cousin William, then twenty-six.

After Alexander and William returned from the August 1759 exploratory visit to Nova Scotia, Alexander went furiously to work enrolling land-hungry men in New England who could be tempted by the prospect of selling their stony farms and getting new and fertile ones of 500 acres per family. What impelled Alexander was the hope of gaining 100 acres for himself for each family he induced to settle in Nova Scotia.

From Dr. Raymond’s monograph we gather that Alexander, in the rôle of an agent for Thomas Hancock, spent the autumn of 1759 in traveling about Massachusetts and Connecticut, spreading the tidings of free land, inspiring community leaders in New London and other places in Connecticut to investigate for themselves, and making the acquaintance of Governor Pownall of Massachusetts and Lord Jeffrey Amherst. Then he returned to Londonderry, New Hampshire, where
he obtained enough more signatures to bring his list of prospective adult male colonists to a total of 600.

The war was not yet over though Louisburg and Quebec had fallen; the Indians and the remnant Acadians were still dangerous; New Englanders while keen for lands were not eager to rush prematurely into perils. Alexander thought that a way to get colonization started would be to lead men to Nova Scotia as soldiers and plant them there as settlers. He gained a commission as Captain and at Londonderry raised a company "out of Colonel Osgood's regiment for the reduction of Canada."

We find in Dr. Raymond's monograph this account of some of Alexander's activities in the weeks prior to his leaving with his company for Nova Scotia:

General [Lord Jeffrey] Amherst mentions McNutt in letters written at New York, April 17th, 1760. To Gov. Lawrence he wrote: "The bearer hereof, Mr. Nutt [McNutt], arrived here last night from New London with a letter to me from Gov'r Pownall setting forth your having wrote to him that as you supposed some part of the New England levies [of troops] would be sent to Nova Scotia; if they should, and I would agree to the measure, that the persons engaged as settlers might act as these troops." Lawrence it seems had requested Pownall to give McNutt 'beating orders' to raise recruits to go to Nova Scotia in the dual capacity of soldiers and settlers. Amherst did not like the proposal and advised that every effort should be made to induce the Massachusetts troops, then in Nova Scotia, to remain until the crisis at Quebec had passed.

Before leaving with his company on April 28, 1760, proceeding by land to Boston and then by sea to Halifax for garrison duty at Fort Cumberland, Alexander must have kept exceedingly busy. As a long-distance horseman he probably had few rivals in all the American colonies. We glean some brief, bright glimmerings of his activities at Londonderry from the diary of Matthew Patten of Bedford, an adjacent community.

Patten was one of the leading Ulster Scots of his section of New Hampshire; appointed a justice of the peace in 1751, he became Judge of Probate in 1776, a member of the General Court in 1776 and 1777, and a member of the Governor's Council in 1778. His diary, published by the town in 1903, is a rich storehouse of detail in its account of the ways of life of the early Ulster Scots in New England: of their industry and thrift, their energy at raising flax, spinning thread and weaving, their horse-trading and bickering, their passion for catching salmon for food, their reliance upon molasses, and in time of sickness or trouble, upon rum.
Alexander McNutt found an ally in Matthew Patten, who assisted in the colonization scheme and who himself engaged to take some of the Nova Scotia land. Dipping into the diary for the year 1760, we select these pertinent items:

Jan. 29th. I spent the afternoon and evening with Mr. Alex' Macnutt at John Bell Junrs Concerning his Township and monis and James Houston single shod my oxen he found the nails and came to my house and shod them and Charged me 1-10-0 old Tenor and I got a mare from John Macnight for 12 Dollars and I pd him 10 of them and he is to trust me the other two till next Derryfield fair.

March 5th. I attended on a meeting of Mr. Macnutt's Signers and was Chose Clerk and one of their Committees to go to Hallifax to Get the grant and Survey the Land & my wife got 22 yds of Checked that Guiles wife wove for us.

7th I spent in settleing with Gavin Riddel on his Constableship for the year 1757 this evening till four a Clock in the morning a writing for Mr MacNutt and Votes of the Society meeting held on the 5th.

8th Spent the day untill ¾ past 11 at Night drawing the schudle of names for him I entered besid myself and sons 94 names. [Of prospective colonists.]

May 24th I writ 9 advertisements for Mr. MacNutt for the men to go to Andover to pass Muster and I went to Litchfield to see the Provincial soldiers mustered and I borrowed £9 old Tenor from Robert Murdough.... [This was nearly a month after Alexander's company was mustered into service. The reference may be to additional recruits.]

June 10th I went in the forenoon to Hugh Riddels and Notified his sons to go to Halifax as they were enlisted....

July 24th I set out to go to Sunkook and Nottingham East pr Capt MacNuts order to Bring in some Desarters but my Mare was lame in her off for Leg or shoulder that I went no farther than Thomas Halls and Returned home again.

Aug. 25th.... went over to Londonderry and took Sam' Rankins Deposition for Capt MacNutt against James Mathies....

26th I got my bror Rob' Macmurphys mare and went to Swans Ferry to see Capt Macnutt and Came back to my mother [-in-law] Macmurphys. [Possibly Capt. McNutt had made a flying trip home to investigate his lag¬
gard recruits and "Desarters." Enthusiasm for the military adventure in Nova Scotia may have faded.]

Sept. 23d I recd a Letter from Capt MacNutt and I wrot one to him.

That concludes references in the diary to Captain McNutt in the year 1760, but other entries touching upon the homely affairs of the McKnight family of Londonderry repay reading. Captain McNutt's company returned from Nova Scotia by sea and was mustered out of service on November 30.
ALEXANDER McNUTT, COLONIZER

Early in 1761 Alexander rounded up his colonists still willing to go to Nova Scotia. Perhaps the stories told by returned soldiers dampened some spirits; maybe the enthusiasm first engendered had subsided at the prospect of tearing up roots. From the 600 pledged colonists, nearly 100 of them in the Londonderry area, only fifty families arrived at Halifax in May. Among them were William McNitt of Palmer, his wife Elisabeth, and their three young children; sturdily resolved to go through with the undertaking, they became one of the most durable families in the township of Onslow, next adjoining Truro, where the New Hampshire people settled. Their name became McNutt, and stayed that way.

William designed and built the first Presbyterian church in Truro; his descendants still flourish in the province and in the United States. The newly arrived settlers had a hard time during their first year; their fields of corn were withered by drouth and then killed by an early frost. With undaunted courage they kept on going and presently became regarded as among the steadiest and most useful of all the new colonists.

Surveyor General Charles Morris investigated conditions in the various new townships in 1763, and in October he submitted a report to the provincial government which said:

"Truro has about sixty families. These are Irish Protestants, mostly from New England, a very industrious set of people; have large stocks, and tho' they have been settled but two years, will this year raise grain sufficient for their support, except a very few families. None of these settlers have as yet any Grants of their land."

The final sentence gives us the first intimation of one of the causes of the later feud between Alexander McNutt and the provincial government. The Londonderry, New Hampshire, colonists, so enthusiastically invited by official promises, had to wait five years before they received confirmation of ownership of their lands. Once the desired settlers had come, they could await in anxiety the pleasure of their provincial rulers.

Alexander did not accompany his first fifty families to their new homes. When he had made the preparations, he set sail for England to approach the Lords of Trade in London with a new project: to recruit colonists from his native Ulster. He made his first appearance before the Commissioners in Whitehall in February 1761. Favorable reports from Governor Lawrence undoubtedly had preceded him, and armed with confidence he offered his proposal for raising colonists in Protestant Ulster persuasively. The Lords of Trade liked him so much that they approved his project on March 5, and agreed to allot to him 100 acres of land for every 500 acres on which he established settlers.

This in spite of the fact that Alexander spoke with extreme candor
of some of his dissatisfactions with the Nova Scotia government and advanced stipulations that seemed radical. He insisted that when each new township had fifty freeholders it should be allowed two representatives in the Provincial Assembly, and asked that an affirmation with uplifted hand should be accepted in court from a person wishing not to take oath. Remembering the harsh civil disabilities imposed upon Presbyterians in Ulster at the beginning of the century, he requested that no religious tests be required of dissenters that might bar them from office.

He objected to the existing requirement that every grantee must “clear and cultivate one-third part of his land within the space of ten years, another third part within the space of twenty years, and the remaining third part within the space of thirty years from the date of the grant.” No farmer, he pointed out, would be willing to agree to cut down all the forests on his place. The Lords appeared to assent to this plea, but failed to do anything to change the terms of grants. Civil and religious rights for all Protestants were guaranteed and maintained; “Papists” were excluded from Nova Scotia by the royal government.

It was easy for the Lords of Trade to seem to assent to all Alexander’s stipulations when they greatly wished colonists to fill the vacuum left by the banished Acadians, but Alexander eventually found that his independent-spirited Ulster Scots were to be denied their two legislators from each township.

At a later time Alexander argued vainly against another restriction imposed upon colonists: a provision that all pine trees twenty-four inches or more in diameter at the base must be reserved to the Royal Navy for use as masts, under pain of forfeiture of the farm should such a large tree be cut. In a memorial Alexander said:

“If there be any reservation at all, the land will be always liable to be forfeited at the pleasure of the informer, who may probably be a Knight of the Post, ready to swear anything and everything that may answer his purpose. . . . No doubt His Majesty will find people ready to take Grants of all lands to the North Pole, without making enquiry about the terms of the deed or privileges of the people; but those who propose to spend their all in the improvement of lands ought to be very careful what tenure they hold them by.” He pointed out that no farmer would allow a tree to stand until it reached twenty-four inches in diameter. The Royal Navy was sustained over the plea for the colonist farmers, however.

The decision of March 5, 1761, generally favorable to Alexander’s proposals, took the form of a recommendation by the Lords of Trade to the King in Council that Nova Scotia lands be granted to McNutt for colonization on the agreed terms.
ALEXANDER McNUTT, COLONIZER

When we remember that the British government was so anxious to colonize Acadia after taking the province from France that it offered baronetcies to gentlemen in Scotland, and later in England and Ireland, who would undertake to provide settlers or funds for the purpose, it would not seem very strange if the Lords of Trade had decided to give Alexander some modest encouragement.

Here was a determined young man of thirty-six with a head full of ideas and an amusing frankness in speaking his convictions. He promised well. The honorary rank of Colonel and a sword for a colonial Captain who had the energy to cross the ocean to see them would have amounted to a great deal less than the baronetcies that had been pressed upon indifferent gentlemen at home. We have no evidence, however, that they gave him his sword, or anything else.

McNutt went directly to Londonderry in Ulster, arriving there in April 1761 to begin recruiting. He first arranged with Arthur Vance and William Caldwell, merchants, to provide a ship and to assist in enlisting colonists. It is likely he chartered a ship and collected passage-money from those intending to make the voyage. He had advertisements or broadsides printed and circulated, and undoubtedly went among the people with papers to sign. No doubt it gave him a thrill to return to the land of his boyhood as the influential Virginian who could lead his old neighbors out of the bondage of tenantry into the ownership of fine, big farms.

Late in August 1761 Alexander shepherded 250 persons aboard the ship Hopewell at Londonderry, and sailed with them to Halifax. They had hurried to sell their belongings and settle their affairs. They were very poor, but they had courage and energy. Smallpox broke out on the voyage, and when the Hopewell reached Halifax on October 9 Lieutenant Governor Belcher ordered the passengers to be quarantined for several days on the island of Cornwallis, where there was no shelter for them.

Alexander McNutt’s good friend Governor Lawrence had died at Halifax on October 19, 1760, just as Alexander was finishing his garrison duty with his company at Fort Cumberland. Henry Ellis had been appointed to succeed him, but on account of poor health he did not come to Nova Scotia. Jonathan Belcher ruled the province as Lieutenant Governor. A choleric, irascible man with aristocratic ideas and small liking for impoverished Ulster Scots — whom he probably regarded as little better than beggars — Belcher was in the nature of things bound to have a clash of wills with the spirited McNutt and to form a low opinion of him.
Alexander was ready to fight at the drop of a hat for his colonists. He regarded them as his people; he was not exploiting them; he was trying to help them. As soon as he could manage it, he arranged to take some of the leading men of his new arrivals on a ship to Cobequid Bay, and there he succeeded in making provision to have his colony established in the new township of Londonderry. The season was too far advanced for settlement in 1761, so the colonists were provided for in Halifax. The government furnished food, and the men went to work at any jobs they could get, until all could move to their lands in the spring.

Thus far Alexander had not collided with Belcher. In a letter to the Lords of Trade of November 3, the latter wrote: “The spirit for extending the Settlements will be yearly increased by the example of Capt. McNutt. . . . The people he has already introduced to the Province, tho' not of Substance, have recommendations for Industry and Sobriety and will be satisfied with small distributions of lands. They have shewn their industrious dispositions by engaging in Common labor upon far more moderate terms than the poorer sort from New England, who have refused to labor under four shillings a day, while Mr. McNutt’s Settlers think themselves well rewarded with two.”

Belcher had promptly reached the conclusion that because of their relative helplessness, the Ulster Scots could be denied the large farms promised them and be made “satisfied with small distributions of lands.” Later it developed that he had in mind five or six acres only for each man. That would have meant tenantry — perhaps on some of his own holdings — or common labor at a price to break the labor market. No doubt he rubbed his hands cheerfully. But Belcher was well regarded by his superiors; later he was appointed Chief Justice of Nova Scotia and he held the post twenty years.

Regardless of other designs, the settlers from Ulster went to their new township in the spring, worked hard, and made good. The Council and leading citizens of Halifax hired a vessel to take them to Cobequid, and the government provided seed, tools and building materials, and a supply of foodstuffs. The attitude of the government and established citizens toward colonists was on the whole generous and helpful, in spite of streaks of meanness displayed by Jonathan Belcher.

Alexander made sure his group of Ulster colonists would get along, and then he sailed back to Northern Ireland to recruit another. As an illustration of his tendency to deal in exaggerated terms with his own achievements, he informed the Lords of Trade that his first group from Ulster numbered upward of 400 persons when in fact the total was about 250. With the aid of the Londonderry shipowners he gathered
ALEXANDER McNUTT, COLONIZER

200 more Ulster settlers and returned with them to Halifax in November 1762.

This time Belcher was ready to give him trouble. No official word had yet been received that the King in Council would ratify the land agreement made with Alexander by the Lords of Trade on March 5, 1761. It was not in fact confirmed until May 20, 1763. The Lieutenant Governor declared he had no authority to grant lands to the latest arrivals, demurred at the expense of maintaining indigent immigrants through the winter, proposed that five or six acres per man should be enough, and finally allowed the newcomers to be settled in the town of New Dublin. Since these colonists were from Ireland it may have been presumed that the name Dublin would be gratifying to them, when in all probability they would have preferred the name Belfast. Never very happy in the atmosphere Belcher created, most of these later settlers moved away when they could to other American colonies.
By this time a strong anti-McNutt cabal was busy in Halifax. Word was spread among the Ulster settlers that Alexander had misrepresented things to them by promising land he couldn’t deliver. They were warned against giving him notes for any provisions supplied them.

But Alexander had good friends who took his part. Four members of the Council were helpful: John Collier, Charles Morris, Henry Newton, and Michael Francklin. They sent a letter to Governor Henry Ellis in London in which they evidenced their displeasure with Belcher’s policies and expressed a tactful wish that Ellis would come to Nova Scotia and take charge of things. The letter related that the Council had decided to supply provisions for four months to the newest arrivals, and provide transport for those who needed it to the allotted lands in New Dublin. Continuing:

The Council were induced to advise this measure in order to retain in the Province such a number of valuable settlers, having experienced that the few Protestants from the North of Ireland, who had been previously brought over by the Colonel and settled on their lands, were likely, by their Industry and Frugality to succeed, and had incurred less expense to the Province than any other settlers that had been brought into it.

Then referring to Belcher’s latest idea of cutting the period of supplying provisions from four months to two, the letter went on: “We cannot help remarking that this unsteady and irresolute kind of conduct, which indeed tinctures the whole of the Lieutenant Governor’s administration, must necessarily give the new Inhabitants an unfavourable impression.” Belcher’s idea that no Irish settlers thereafter should be given more than five or six acres of land, the letter writers cited as proof that the Lieutenant Governor was raising all possible obstacles in McNutt’s way.

A further portion of the letter supporting Alexander McNutt deserves remembering because of the liberal philosophy of its judgment of the kind and quality of frugal laboring people — farmers — who had settled the other American colonies, and without whom nothing could have been accomplished. As for their ability or lack of it, opportunity in an expanding new world was to provide their answer. We read:

That people of ability and of easy circumstances only should be encouraged to come and settle here will be found a very impracticable scheme, and had the other American Colonies received such only, they would to this
day have been a wilderness inhabited by savages. The labouring people, who
work and live frugal, are in general not the people of Ability, but they are
the real riches of all countries, the foundation of all husbandry and manu-
factures. We could give many instances of people who have brought wealth
into this country and who, having by various means consumed it, have
quitted the Province, while labouring people with some little help at the
beginning are now able to support themselves, remain settled in the Province
and are very useful members of it.

Aware that Lieutenant Governor Belcher was about to attempt to
destroy his further usefulness as a colonizer, Alexander McNutt lost no
time after his arrival with his second shipload of Ulster colonists in
hurrying away to London to plead his own cause with the Lords of
Trade. He may have returned on the ship that brought him; he may
have carried with him the letter from the four members of the Council.

He had hardly left Halifax when on November 19, 1762, the rosy
Tory Belcher summoned the Council and disclosed his conviction that it
was undesirable to have any more colonists brought in who would need
support: “become a burthen to the Government.” The majority voted
agreement. According to Dr. Raymond, Belcher “thereupon declared
that he should construe their resolution as condemnatory of Colonel
McNutt’s proceedings, that he had already made a representation to the
Ministry in England against the schemes of McNutt and should do so
again.” A liberal member suggested that the Council request the Lieu-
tenant Governor to apply to the Lords of Trade for a fund to assist
indigent settlers on their first coming to Nova Scotia. “To this Belcher
replied that he would save the Council the trouble of giving him any
such advice by assuring them that he should not comply with it.”

While we leave Alexander on his anxious voyage to England, we turn
for a moment to still another colonizing enterprise instigated by him
that caused the testy Lieutenant Governor to belch his displeasure.
While traveling about Massachusetts in 1760 or 1761, spreading the
gospel of colonization at the behest of Governor Lawrence and Thomas
Hancock, Alexander had converted some people in Rowley, Essex
County. They formed an association and sent agents in 1761 to look
about Nova Scotia. Choice of land for a township fell upon a tract about
seventy miles up the St. John River in what is now New Brunswick. The
agents perhaps did not know that these lands had been recommended to
Lawrence for settlement by disbanded soldiers of the King. At any rate,
their colonists were mostly discharged officers and soldiers from Massa-
chusetts forces, so they may have concluded they had as good right there
as anyone.
Alexander had shown these Essex County men a document bearing the seal and signatures of the Lords of Trade, and told them he had authority to advise them to go ahead with the project. After selling their property at home, about 100 Essex County people moved to the St. John River site at a cost to them of nearly \( £1,000 \), surveyed the land, and then reported their presence to Halifax.

Belcher blamed McNutt for having been presented with a fait accompli. He called the Council to a meeting on June 19, 1762, when it was decided to let the Essex settlers stay on at their own risk. Belcher got off an angry letter to the Lords of Trade, complaining of McNutt's "percipitate and unjustifiable act" in getting the Essex people interested without reporting to him. Perhaps Alexander was hardly to be blamed so much; he had planted the idea, but the Essex men had developed it in their own way in perfect good faith.

The unfailing kindness of Nova Scotians other than Belcher came to the fore again. Surveyor General Morris and Henry Newton, both members of the Council, intervened to allay the anxiety of the Essex settlers, who had brought their farm stock with them, and who would have been ruined by expulsion. A memorial to the King in Council reciting the circumstances was drawn up and sent to Joshua Mauger, agent for Nova Scotia in London. Mauger bore the expenses of the appeal and succeeded in getting an order from the King in Council confirming the settlers in full ownership of their lands. In gratitude, the township was named Maugerville.

We return again to Alexander McNutt, last seen when he hurriedly took ship from Halifax in November 1762 to go to London. All the way over he must have been considering the plea he would make to the Lords of Trade, and it is evident he went to work immediately after arriving. His memorial, received and read on January 19, 1763, was tactful in its abstention from criticism of Belcher. It reviewed the engagements the Lords had made with him in 1761 when they authorized him to proceed with his colonizing ventures on fixed terms.

The expected order from the King in Council, confirming the agreement made by the Lords of Trade with McNutt, had never arrived in Halifax, he said, and Lieutenant Governor Belcher had accordingly been unable to carry out the arrangements for properly settling the second shipload of colonists from Ulster. Also, the memorial said, Alexander had been prevented from going further with his work; that he had suffered considerable losses; and that he had been embarrassed in his arrangements with the Londonderry shipowners. Concluding paragraphs read:
That in this situation your Memorialist is in Danger of utter ruin, being altogether unable to support so heavy a loss, without Your Lordships favourable Interposition.

Your Memorialist therefore Humbly prays that Your Lordships would please to take his Case into Consideration and to do therein as to your Lordships shall seem most fit.

Most members of the British government may have been dilatory, but it never can be said the Lords of Trade were ever less than considerate of Alexander McNutt. Now they were even compassionate, in their calm British way. The choleric complaints of Jonathan Belcher evidently had affected them not at all.

“What is the amount of your losses?” they asked Alexander. Constantly on the wing, he had kept no books of account, and his proofs were fragmentary and insufficient. He estimated his loss at £16,000, partly from the detention of four ships waiting at Londonderry. The Lords naturally concluded Alexander had made his estimate high. “Suppose,” they said in effect, “we grant you 10,000 acres of land in Nova Scotia in return for your lost expenses.” That was very acceptable.

The next step taken by the Lords of Trade was to jog the King’s elbow and secure the vitally important order to the Nova Scotia government to honor the agreements made with Alexander. After a delay of more than two years, the order was signed on May 20 and forwarded. Jonathan Belcher then had no choice but to do the handsome thing for McNutt’s Ulster colonists; it was the royal order.

But the Lords were not yet through. They advised Alexander that the Ministry was alarmed over the migration of the Ulster Scots from Northern Ireland; a year before in a representation to the King they had written: “If, therefore, Mr. McNutt’s plan should go beyond his present engagements, it must be submitted to your Majesty how far it would be prudent, in the present, or indeed in any situation, for Government to permit, or at least to encourage, any further migration from Ireland of great numbers of the most loyal and useful subjects your Majesty has in that Kingdom.” All of Mr. McNutt’s undertakings, the Lords assured the King, had been “ably and faithfully executed.”

The Ulster migration project was finished, by Ministerial order, the Lords of Trade told Alexander. Ulster needed these people more than Nova Scotia did. What other colonizing plans had he to propose?

Rallying from his disappointment, Alexander proposed several: the removal of French Protestants from England to South Carolina, for one. Do that, said the Lords, and we will add to your lands in Nova Scotia.
Alexander had at least ten agents in various American colonies, enlisting interest in Nova Scotia lands. He might have returned home and organized another group of settlers, but instead it is evident he took sabbatical leave and spent nearly a year in London. He probably had made interesting acquaintances, and it no doubt pleased him to seek in the glamorous capital some of the pleasures he had missed in his Presbyterian youth in Staunton. The theaters and coffee houses and the Pall Mall chocolate-shops invited him, with their gay throngs. Then there were the pleasure gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, public hangings at Tyburn, cock-fights in low quarters, and the excitements of looking out for pickpockets in dimly-lighted streets at night. Singing cheered the smoky atmosphere in the red-curtained taverns in the Strand, and painted ladies were about with their inviting glances.

Perhaps in his moral earnestness Alexander ignored such diversions and pored over volumes in the British Museum. A religious man all his life, he may have frequented the Scottish kirks in London. Probably he enjoyed browsing in the numerous bookshops whose names even yet are not forgotten. London was indeed exciting. In the very month when the King confirmed his colonizing agreement — May 1763 — young James Boswell of Auchinleck was achieving his heart’s desire in meeting Dr. Johnson. Alexander also had a taste for getting to know men of prominence, and he may have sought introductions in government circles. Meanwhile, he was trying without luck to convince Huguenots they should remove to South Carolina.

The nature of Alexander’s later work as a writer gives color to a belief he spent much of his time in London in libraries, reading John Locke and other political philosophers, and studying history and government. While Alexander dallied in London, the government of Nova Scotia changed. In September 1763 Montague Wilmot was appointed Governor in place of Henry Ellis, and Michael Francklin succeeded Belcher, who became Chief Justice. Wilmot was eager to bring in more colonists, but Alexander didn’t learn of it until later.

Finally his agents in the colonies urged him to come back; they had engaged thousands of families, they said, for the Nova Scotia adventure; he had work to do. So in September 1764 he arrived in Philadelphia and started offering Nova Scotia lands to men of substance. Chief among them was Benjamin Franklin, whom he may previously have met in London.

Franklin became very much interested. He had shrewd business sense, and he concluded that if he could obtain and hold a considerable grant he might find much profit in lumbering. He drew some of his friends
into the discussions with Alexander, and arranged with Anthony Wayne (the Mad Anthony of Stony Point in the Revolution) to go to Nova Scotia for him and survey such lands as might be obtained.

To anticipate a little, Alexander later obtained a reservation of 100,000 acres along the St. John River for Dr. Franklin, himself, and associates, on which they were to be obliged to plant 500 settlers in order to secure a confirmation of the grant. Anthony Wayne went to Nova Scotia according to plan, and in 1766 applied for 6,000 acres on the Petitcodiac River for himself. We may gravely doubt whether Dr. Franklin was able to fill his quota of settlers or cut timber before the Revolution began.

In March 1765 Alexander returned to Nova Scotia, in company with several men of means, and a number of families looking for homes. One of the aims of the Philadelphia men was to engage Pennsylvanian Germans to settle on lands they might obtain. Governor Wilmot received Alexander cordially, no doubt influenced favorably by the men of ability who had come with him as agents for associations in Philadelphia presumed to have wealth and influence. The name of Benjamin Franklin undoubtedly carried weight, too.

Although the royal order of 1763 authorized land grants to Alexander on his original terms, the rules of the game had been changed in the meantime. McNutt protested, and the Philadelphia agents continued to wait while Governor Wilmot explained he could not exceed his instructions from London. After five months of this, a compromise was reached. Grants were made under the new terms, with a provision that if Alexander could persuade the London government to restore the conditions originally allowed him, the new grants would be liberalized afterward by the provincial government.

It is evident that while Alexander was busy looking for Huguenot colonists in England in 1763 and 1764, the royal government was tightening its rules for the settlement of Nova Scotia, shortening the period allowed a colonizer to bring in settlers, and restricting somewhat the civil rights of such colonists as Alexander had brought in, including the right to representation in the Provincial Assembly. The terms of the compromise made certain another effort on Alexander’s part to persuade the Lords of Trade to intervene in his favor, as they had done in the spring of 1763. Of his appeal and the consequences, more will appear hereafter.

It must be remembered the royal government imposed the Stamp Act upon the American colonies in 1765 to raise some of the revenues needed to pay for the costs of the French and Indian war. Colonial resentment against taxation without representation in Parliament led to the first...
rebellious stirring that culminated in the Revolution. Alexander McNutt had for some time been regarded in Halifax as too independent in his republican principles and too contentious in supporting the civil rights of his Ulster-Scottish settlers. In short, he appeared a potential rebel against royal authority. All this must be kept in mind in considering what followed.

But in 1765 Nova Scotia was land poor: it had enormous empty spaces and relatively few settlers. Land without people is about as valuable as bales of money in the hands of a lone individual on an uninhabited island. Governor Wilmot and his Council desired the population that would create wealth in the province and give real value to the land. Alexander McNutt was a trial to them, but he had brought substantial men from Philadelphia: men they thought to be bearers of more promise than the frugal, struggling colonists he had previously brought. So they decided to include Alexander as a participant in the new reservations of land.

Within a few days in October 1765, the government gave fifteen tentative grants averaging over 100,000 acres each to various groups, in each of which Alexander was included. The aggregate was 1,745,000 acres, on which settlement must begin within a year in all the townships, and on which 8,275 persons must be established within four years to secure firm titles to the grantees. Failure to comply with the terms within the required period would void any of the grants; the lands then would be subject to escheat. The list returned to the Lords of Trade follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To whom granted and location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Settlers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Samuel Henderson, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (SW of tp. of Liverpool)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Samuel Henderson, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (At Pictou)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Samuel Henderson, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (NW of tp. of Liverpool)</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Alex’r McNutt, Arthur Vance &amp; Associates (Near Minas Basin)</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Alex’r McNutt, Esqr. (Port Roseway, Shelburne Harbor)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rev. James Lyon, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (SW of lands granted McNutt)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mathew Clarkson, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (On Petitcodiac River)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Benjamin Franklin, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (N side St. John river above Fredericton)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. John Leister, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (SW of lands granted Henzer Morris)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Rev. James Lyon, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (Eastward of Beaver Harbor)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Alex’r McNutt, James Lyon &amp; Associates (Little St. Lawrence)</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Alex’r McNutt, Jonathan Belcher &amp; Associates (NW of lands granted Col. Desbarres)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. David Rhea, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (Near Onslow and Truro)</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Samuel Henderson, Alex’r McNutt &amp; Associates (NW of lands granted Jon. Belcher and others)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Alex’r McNutt, James Clarke &amp; Associates (On Annapolis Basin)</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,745,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,275</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list as drawn from old records shows Benjamin Franklin associated with Alexander McNutt in securing 100,000 acres along the St. John River in what is now New Brunswick. The tract probably was well-wooded. It also shows Alexander in partnership with Jonathan Belcher, which suggests a reconciliation. Belcher may not have liked Alexander, but evidently he had faith in his energy. Samuel Henderson, associated in grants totaling 500,000 acres, must have been the most enterprising of the Philadelphia entrepreneurs.

The fifteen grants in the list above did not include all the lands assigned in the year 1765. Archdeacon Raymond says in his monograph:

On the 2nd of June a tract of 200,000 acres was reserved for the Rev. James Lyon, Alexander McNutt and thirteen others (principally residents of Philadelphia) of lands to the eastward of Onslow and Truro. At the same time 1,600,000 acres were reserved for McNutt and his associates at various places. Among the reservations was a block of 100,000 acres at Pictou, the same quantity at St. Mary’s Bay, at St. Mary’s River, and at Petitcodiac; also lands at Miramichi and 1,100,000 acres on the River St. John. The conditions were that fifty families should settle in each township every year until the whole should be completed, allowing 500 acres for each family. This would provide for the settlement of a township in four years. In case no settlement should be made during the first year the reservation of the township to be null and void.

Dr. Franklin and his associates sent the celebrated Anthony Wayne to Nova Scotia as a surveyor of their lands. A grant of 200,000 acres at Pictou was made on the 31st October to Rev. James Lyon, David Rhea and twelve others. It was known as the Philadelphia Grant. Adjoining this and including most of the water front of Pictou Harbor, was a grant of 100,000 acres to Alexander McNutt, William Caldwell, Arthur Vance, and Richard Caldwell. As the grantees were natives of Londonderry this was known as the
Irish Grant. It embraced the land on which the town of Pictou now stands. At one time an attempt was made to call it the Township of Donegal.

Vance and the Caldwells were the Ulster shipowners who had provided the vessels to bring Captain McNutt’s two groups of colonists from Londonderry; now he was assisting them to obtain lands on a good harbor that later became a seaport.

Some of the lands described in the excerpt above quoted from Archdeacon Raymond may have been included in the list of fifteen grants preceding, but probably not all of them. Governor Wilmot was allotting reservations at a dizzying rate in 1765, and nervous Nova Scotians feared he was overdoing it. They need not have worried: the Governor was gambling great stacks of chips while playing with a marked deck. Unless colonizing began almost immediately in a given township, the land reverted to the government. If settlement were not completed within four years, the lands were subject to escheat. The Governor thus could obtain either rapid settlement or the recapture of enormous tracts. In the end, most of the grants fell through.

It will be remembered that Alexander McNutt was unhappy over the new terms insisted upon by Governor Wilmot, and that leave was given him to appeal to the Lords of Trade for a reaffirmation of the terms established in 1761 and confirmed in 1763. Perhaps it was thought he would be satisfied with the enormous contingent grants given him in 1765 and make no further complaint. His critics intimate he would have been wise to control his urge to write memorials, and to get to work looking for more colonists. Archdeacon Raymond says of him: “he was quick to think, quick to act, quick to write.”

And so he wrote another memorial to the Lords of Trade in London, whom he regarded as his unfailing friends, that was presented in April 1766. Whether he carried it himself is to be doubted. He probably had already seen London for the last time.

In studying Alexander’s plea we should observe that he was concerned for the rights of his colonists as well as for fair play for himself. He was disappointed and angry, and in his indignation at what he regarded as favoritism and a disposition to be niggardly at the expense of settlers, he abandoned tact. His memorial may be summarized thus:

1. The Governor and Council had been partial in granting the choicest lands to their friends, to officers in the Army and Navy, and to themselves. He implied that the province was governed by men of “sinister and selfish views.”

2. He complained that the official set encouraged him to bring set-
tlers, and that when the colonists arrived, obstacles were placed in the way of their getting the lands promised them. He charged that when arriving settlers could not obtain lands they had no choice but to become tenants. In his fiery republicanism he wrote: “They cannot in that case properly be called by any other name than slaves, and will only continue with them [the landlords] until they are able to obtain better terms elsewhere.”

3. He protested against the new reservation for the Crown of mineral rights, and of the retention for the Royal Navy of all large pine trees. His view was that when a man obtained land, he gained all rights to everything on it, above it, and below the surface.

4. He asked 1,000 acres of land for each new family introduced instead of 500 acres, and demanded the right for each township to elect two representatives in the Provincial Assembly, and to choose town officers annually by ballot.

5. He requested that positive orders be sent the Governor and Council, directing them not to obstruct his future colonizing efforts, in order that his plans might “not be frustrated by the caprice or self-interest of those in power.”

The most indignant section of Alexander’s memorial was a complaint against the Nova Scotia government so serious that it may account indirectly for the resentment against him that persisted so long. Dr. Eaton chose to suppress any reference to Alexander’s charge, and the more kindly Archdeacon Raymond did not mention it in his monograph. We learn of it in Chapter iv, Volume 11 of History of Nova Scotia by David Allison, LL.D., published in two volumes in 1916 by A. W. Bowen & Co. of Halifax.

In brief, Alexander advised the Lords of Trade that Governor Wilmot and the Council not only had made grants of land to favorites considerably larger than they were authorized to give, but had also in 1764 voted themselves grants of 20,000 acres each, to be selected anywhere in the province. Settlement on these grants to favorites and to themselves need not begin within one year, as in Alexander’s case, but within ten years. The angry Alexander proposed that the members of the provincial government be required to surrender their land-grabs.

The Lords of Trade referred McNutt’s memorial back to Governor Wilmot and the Council. What had they to say? Dr. Allison, in referring to the lame but resentful answer sent to London on September 2, 1766, in a letter by Lieutenant Governor Francklin, comments that Alexander’s memorial “would only be parried by evasion and sophistry, which sometimes approximated very closely to absurdity.” Before we
examine the reply, we may observe that the Lords of Trade compelled
the Governor and members of the Council to scale down the grants to
themselves from 20,000 acres to 5,000 acres each.

The reply drafted by a committee and sent to London complained
that the charges in Alexander’s memorial were “false and scandalous”; that his proposals of restitution were “presumptuous”; “that several of
them if granted would be very injurious to Private Persons, as He pro-
poses to dispossess many of those Grantees of the Conditions contained
in their Patents.” Throughout, the reply was a scornful, stinging indict-
ment of Alexander McNutt. The provincial government had only been
following orders from London, the reply said; “that the obstruction
Colonel McNutt complained of from the Rulers of the Province since
the death of Governor Lawrence had proceeded from his own intem-
perate zeal and exhorbitant demands upon the Government obstinately
insisting from time to time upon terms of settlement that the Govern-
ment were by His Majesty’s instructions unable to grant.”

It will help to convey the pith of the opinion of Alexander conveyed
in the committee’s letter if we italicize some of its sarcasm:

“In all other respects he has had that indulgence and kind treatment
that any reasonable man could desire, not on account of his knowledge
or ability, but from a hope the Government had that his zeal and appli-
cation to make settlements in the Province might be a means of inducing
men of much more knowledge and ability to become inhabitants in it.”

As to Alexander’s plea for civil rights for his settlers, Wilmot and
the Council wrote that his proposals would, if granted, “be prejudicial
to the peace and good government of the Province, particularly that of
allowing two Representatives in General Assembly to every township
he might settle, more especially if those he might in future introduce be
of the same troublesome disposition with some he had already brought,
the Government having experienced more difficulty in keeping peace
and good order in the two little Towns of Truro and Londonderry,
settled by Colonel McNutt’s followers, than with all the other Settle-
ments in the whole Province.”

“These two settlements,” the letter continues, “are mostly composed
of persons from the Charter Governments [of New England, and for-
getting Ulster], who still retain so great a degree of republican prin-
ciples that they make it a point to oppose on all occasions every measure
of Government calculated to support the honor and authority of His
Majesty’s Crown and Dignity. The dangerous influence of this spirit
cannot be too much guarded against as the late unhappy disturbances
in America abundantly prove.”

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The "unhappy disturbances" so prejudicial to "the honor and authority" of "the Crown and Dignity" of His Majesty George III were of course the riots in Boston and elsewhere in protest against the Stamp Act. The beginning of rebellion brought down the curtain for colonizers.

A disturbing trait of the Ulster-Scottish communities of 694 men, women, and children in the townships of Truro, Onslow, and Londonderry that may have been giving the provincial government uneasiness in 1766 was the industrious spinning of flax and weaving of linen cloth. Lieutenant Governor Francklin discovered that they raised 7,524 pounds of flax in that year, and wove enough cloth to supply their own needs, and more to sell to neighboring settlements.

The British government was sternly opposed to manufactures in the colonies, and Francklin thought it advisable to point out that the Nova Scotia government had given no encouragement to the enterprise of weaving; that there was no evidence private persons had associated themselves for the purpose; that there were no professional weavers about. Purely a cottage industry, this, he emphasized in his effort to forestall royal displeasure.

The case of Colonists vs. Crown, quashed in Nova Scotia in 1766, was again to be stated at Philadelphia in 1776 by Thomas Jefferson, in a paper called the Declaration of Independence.

Alexander McNutt was beaten in 1766, but he didn’t know he was licked. When he tried in 1767 to settle some colonists on vacant lands a charge was made that he wasn’t clearing his operations properly in Halifax. Attorney General Nesbit was directed to prosecute Alexander, and a proclamation was issued forbidding unauthorized occupation of land, or cutting of timber. Penalties were threatened. At this point, Alexander seems to have realized he was finished as a colonizer. He was not prosecuted.

One of the grants given Alexander in 1765 was a township at Shelburne Harbor, and his thoughts turned now to founding a city there at Port Roseway, near Cape Sable. He memorialized the Lords of Trade again, submitting a plan and asking for a charter for a city which he proposed to call New Jerusalem. A few settlers came, but not enough to conform to the terms of the grant. The township of New Jerusalem, or Port Roseway, with its 100,000 acres of land, was advertised on January 11, 1775, for sale at auction at the house of John Rider in Halifax.

Ironically enough, Alexander had taken the pioneering steps in founding a city that was soon to become the refuge of great numbers of Loyalists.
coming up from Boston and other places when the Revolution turned against them. New Jerusalem took the name of Shelburne, and Archdeacon Raymond assures us that the tide of Loyalists developed a population exceeding in numbers the totals for Montreal, Quebec, and Three Rivers together. Only three cities in America were larger: New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Then when the Loyalists turned to other places, Shelburne dwindled to a hamlet.

There remained to Alexander one spot where he could live undisturbed on land he could call his own. The small island at the mouth of Shelburne Harbor, sometimes called Roseneath in those times, was left to him and there he lived for several years with his brother Benjamin. Joseph McNutt lived on the mainland, and they often crossed by boat to exchange visits. Years afterward, Joseph was drowned in a stormy crossing. A legend developed that it was Alexander who had come to the end of a disappointed life in the waters off what afterward was to be known as McNutt’s Island.

It has been assumed by Dr. Eaton and others that Joseph was a brother of Alexander and Benjamin, but proofs of that relationship are lacking. It is more likely he was a son of Barnard McNitt of Palmer, a son whose name appeared no more in the records of his home community after his marriage to Elizabeth Ward on November 7, 1761. Joseph’s disappearance from Palmer may have been due to his joining his brother William in augmenting the numbers of their cousin Alexander’s colonists in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Eaton and other Nova Scotia historians have assumed that John McNutt of Newport was Alexander’s younger brother. This belief is at variance with the records of the McNutt family in Virginia, which show that Alexander’s brother John lived in the Valley throughout his adult life. There is no conflict, however, regarding Jane McNutt, sister of Alexander and Benjamin. She married Benjamin Weir of Newport, and their son Daniel became a member of the Provincial Parliament. The Weir family grew to be one of the numerous and important clans in Nova Scotia.
DRESS SWORD OF ALEXANDER McNUTT

BRONZE TABLET ON WALL OF COURTHOUSE AT TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA. HONORING ALEXANDER McNUTT AND HIS ULSTER-SCOTTISH COLONISTS
CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE,
TRADE AND FISHERIES
OF
NEW IRELAND,
(Formerly known by the Name of NOVA SCOTIA)
AND THE
ADJACENT ISLANDS:
SUBMITTED TO THE
EUROPEAN POWERS,
That may be engaged in settling the Terms of Peace,
among the Nations at War.

Published by Order of the Sovereign, Free
AND INDEPENDENT COMMONWEALTH OF
NEW IRELAND.
The outbreak of the War for Independence found Alexander McNutt simmering in discontent on his island retreat in Shelburne Harbor. The exile from Virginia was in a dilemma. Should he remain in Nova Scotia or should he join the patriots at home? It is evident he decided he could do most for the cause he favored by going underground; that is to say, he found it useful to go quietly about among his friends and talk with them about a project to get Nova Scotia into the Revolution.

There are indications he circulated some pamphlets, too, but his efforts started no conflagration. Philadelphia, the seat of the Continental Congress, was far away, and Nova Scotia was too sparsely settled, too young and poor, and too closely guarded to break into uprising. Alexander's colonizing hopes were stone dead now, but he may have thought it best to remain in the province for a while in the hope of salvaging something, or of finding an opportunity to be useful to the patriot cause.

Any indecision he may have felt was ironically shattered on June 22, 1778. His island received a visit that day from a Boston-owned privateer, the Congress, of which Thomas Francis was master. To the raiders Alexander explained he was no Tory, but a genuine patriot from Virginia. He wasted his breath. When he and his brother Benjamin tried to stay the hands of the privateersmen they were soundly buffeted; then the house was looted.

Sore with indignation over being robbed by men who should have been his friends, Alexander determined to go to Boston to seek redress from the General Court. In the memorial which he submitted to the Council and Assembly in August 1778, he related that after the "armed ruffians" had despoiled him, he set out in a small vessel for Boston. A British frigate stopped this craft and took Alexander on board; then the captain decided to release him and set him on shore. He managed to proceed in a whaleboat to Falmouth, Maine, and from that point he continued on foot to Boston.

In his memorial, Captain McNutt told of the visit from "Armed Ruffians, who took and carried away by force a number of articles, Sword, Pistol, Firelocks, Powder, Ball, Shot and Flints, Drawing Box and Writing Stand, with their contents, superfine scarlet and Blew Cloaths, Books, Silver Spoons, Silver Buckles, Plain, set and Carved, Gold lace, Diamond Rings with a number of other articles." Alexander estimated his loss at
nearly £300, not counting books, papers, and records that money could not replace, or the things taken from Benjamin. It is highly probable that all the papers relating to Alexander’s land grants and colonizing projects were carried off; the papers themselves may have persuaded Thomas Francis that Alexander was hand in glove with the Royalists.

The Massachusetts General Court may have had a similar lack of sympathy, for no action was taken on his petition. After waiting nearly a year, Alexander submitted another memorial:

To the Honourable the Council of the State of Massachusetts-Bay.

The Memorial of Alexander McNutt, Humbly Sheweth,

That your Memorialist did present a Memorial bearing date 17 Aug’t last requesting redress for Injury done to his Brother and him by a Privateer from the Port of Boston. That Thomas Francis, the Master of the said Privateer was at that time in Boston, and Mr. Oliver, one of the owners, went with your Memorialist to the aforesaid Francis’ house and found several of the Articles in his possession marked with my name.

I had no time then to spare for taking care of the said Articles, and Mr. Oliver assuring me that he would not only take Special Care of what was there found, but use every Endeavor to find more before my return, and from my Application to the Honourable Council and Mr. Oliver’s promises I rested Content.

Upon my return waited upon Mr. Oliver who Informed me that the said Francis had Sailed for South Carolina and had carried all my Articles with him; this I must Confess is Treatment very Different from what I had a right to Expect. That the Villians who not only Robed me of my Property, but upon my resistance Insulted me with blows, should be permitted to escape with Impunity, seems very Extraordinary — and is such treatment as I should not have Expected from Either the Christian or the Gentleman, and what makes the Case still worse, that I cannot be permitted to pass and repass through the Country Unmolested, even tho’ I Injure no man, for on the 8th Inst., I was Arrested at Salem as a Doubtful Character.

How I can be Justly Considered in a Double Capacity and treated as both Whig and tory seems a Parradox to me. I have always spoke my sentiments Clearly, and would have readily added correspondent Actions, had I had a call in Providence so to do, being well Convinced that the Cause of God will admit of no Neutrality, and I Challenge even Enmity itself to produce one single Instance in which I have deviated from the Resolves of Congress since 1774.

Before I left Nova Scotia I had Sustained a Loss in my Property of upwards of Forty Thousand Pounds Str., and probably much more since, and Dr. Prince, with others of like kind applied to Britain for my lands (and of consequence for my Life) representing me as disaffected, which application was supported by Govr and Council at Halifax, as your Memorialist was Informed. The Inference I would make is that there cannot be two Contradictory Rights Equally true at one and the same time; if Dr. Prince with Britain Claimed a Right to Rob and Plunder McNutt on pretence of his
being a Whig, then Certainly the Privateer called Congress from this Port had not a Right to Rob me as a tory — yet so it is. The truth is, neither had a Right to what Providence gave me.

Since I first set out for redress have travel’d by Land and Water, on foot and on Horseback upwards of two Thousand Miles and have Expended above Five Thousand Pounds, and above thirteen months time without obtaining the least redress. I know it is not a proper time for individuals to give unnecessary trouble, and therefore shall make no remarks at present upon the treatment I have received but leave it to the Consideration of Your Excellency and the Honorable Council.

All which is most humbly submitted.

17 July, 1779. ALEX’R. MCNUTT.

Legislative bodies always have been averse to allowing claims for damages, and some have waited action by Congress for generations. Alexander got nothing. He was looked upon, perhaps, as a refugee from Nova Scotia, and his statements regarding losses, expenses, and distances traveled were amusingly exaggerated. He should have recovered as much of his property as he could when he went with Oliver to Francis’ house and identified it. He enjoyed writing memorials and judged he could do better by appealing to the Massachusetts government; in consequence of a bad guess he lost everything, including his time.

Alexander had hardly returned to Massachusetts when he began efforts to persuade Congress to try to make Nova Scotia the fourteenth American colony to seek independence. His first memorial was read before Congress in Philadelphia on September 29, 1778 and referred to a committee of three. The committee reported at the end of a month that after conferring with Alexander McNutt it had decided nothing could be done at the time about Nova Scotia. It recommended payment to him of $300 to cover his expenses in his efforts to be of service.

Alexander petitioned Congress again in January and March 1779. He was joined in the second of these memorials by Phineas Nevers, one of the Maugerville colonists, and Samuel Rogers of Sackville, also in New Brunswick. A committee appointed to consider the memorial reported to Congress on April 7 that, in their opinion,

It is greatly interesting to the United States of America that Nova Scotia should not remain subjected to the government of Great Britain, to be used as an instrument to check their growth or molest their tranquillity.

That the people in general of that Province have been thoroughly well disposed towards the United States from the beginning of the present war. That they made early application to Congress for direction how they might be serviceable to the Continental cause, offering to raise 3,000 men in ten days. That they have since repeatedly applied for countenance and
aid to enable them to assert their independence. That they have as often received friendly assurances from Congress, though circumstances prevented any vigorous efforts in their favor.

That they begin now to apprehend the United States will rest satisfied with their own independence, and leave Nova Scotia under British despotism. That the memorialists were sent forward by the people to obtain from Congress some assurances to the contrary, hoping they may not be reduced to ask for ammunition and a guarantee of their freedom in France or Holland.

That it would tend greatly to animate the well-disposed in Nova Scotia and to secure the Indians to the United States, as well as to promote desertion from the enemy and facilitate supplies of livestock to the eastern parts of the Union, if a road was opened through the country from Penobscot to St. John's River. That for such a work a body of faithful men strongly interested to accomplish it might be found among those who have been driven by the hand of oppression from Nova Scotia. Your committee therefore propose the following Resolution:

Resolved, That Lieut.-Col. Phineas Nevers and Captain Samuel Rogers be employed to lay out, mark and clear a road from Penobscot River to St. John's River in the most commodious line and in the most prudent manner. That they be empowered to enlist for such service a body of men not to exceed fifteen hundred. That fifteen thousand dollars be advanced to them for carrying on this work, for the faithful expenditure of which they shall become bound to the United States on a bond to be given the Continental treasurer.

As everyone familiar with our Revolutionary history knows, Congress at that time was desperate for money and General Washington had need in the Army for all the men he could get. Neither money nor men could be spared for the enterprise of drawing distant Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into the confederation; consequently no action was taken on the committee's recommendation. Under somewhat different circumstances, an interesting chapter might have been added to the history of the Revolution. On this subject history is now virtually silent.

Nova Scotia historians agree that very many of the colonists were sympathetic with the cause of independence and wished to join it. Considering the fact that the majority of them were from New England and Ulster, this is not strange. These historians also agree that Alexander McNutt was busy in the decade between 1768 and 1778, "fomenting rebellion" in Nova Scotia. The colonizer wished to be a liberator as well. It is no wonder that Dr. Eaton and other modern Nova Scotia writers have regarded Captain McNutt with a jaundiced eye, have tended to emphasize his eccentricities, and have found saturnine amusement in the sacking of his home by Yankee privateersmen. A rebel who succeeds wins respect; a rebel who fails is apt to be regarded as little better than a traitor.
When Alexander went to Philadelphia in the autumn of 1778 to intercede with Congress for the inclusion of Nova Scotia in the War for Independence, he began writing pamphlets to further his ideas. Furiously energetic, he appears to have talked previously with like-minded men among his colonists about his project for a new government for the independent State of New Ireland, as he proposed to re-name Nova Scotia. In Philadelphia he doubtless buttonholed as many colonial leaders as he could find willing to discuss his plan.

Robert Aitken of Philadelphia, then the leading printer in the colonies, was engaged by Alexander to print his pamphlets. A thin volume of them is preserved in the treasure room of the Widener Library at Harvard University: the copy presented by Alexander McNutt to John White of Salem, Massachusetts. "Cheaply bound" is Dr. Eaton's only comment on the physical appearance of the small volume. The typography is excellent for the period.

It is apparent that Alexander distributed his pamphlets as widely as he could among men of influence. Benjamin Franklin kept those he received, and they may be seen today in a bound volume in a collection of Franklin's books in the Mercantile Library in Philadelphia.

Alexander referred to himself as "one with authority" to speak for the Nova Scotia settlers, but did not sign his full name as author. At the end of the last pamphlet he signed the initials "A. McN. of J. P.," the latter meaning Jerusalem Pilgrim, his quaint name for the town now known as Shelburne. He called his first settlement on the bay New Jerusalem, and it is possible he meant to denominate himself as Pilgrim. An earlier pamphlet was signed with a cryptic string of initials in which he used a small figure of the sun in place of the Mac (son of) in his surname, thus: "A (sun) N. P. of S. J. A. & N. I." This has been taken to mean: Alexander McNutt, Pilgrim of St. John, Acadia and New Ireland. It doesn't matter much. The signature looked strange enough to Dr. Eaton, and easily convinced him that Alexander must have been crazy.

But Dr. Eaton does give Alexander a meed of grudging admiration in his Americana article: "In the governmental scheme for New Ireland that McNutt outlines, an intelligence in matters of government is manifested that would in any age stamp the originator as a man of unusual clearness of mind and consecutive judgment...."

The context of the pamphlets indicates that some sketchy kind of provisional government may have been agreed upon by Alexander and a group of fellow-revolutionaries before Alexander left Nova Scotia for Boston in the summer of 1778. Thus we read:
We have chosen and appointed a Council, consisting of seven Members, a Governor, Deputy Governor and Secretary, to conduct and direct all Matters, until Government be established, and have proposed that each shall have a proper Compensation for his Trouble with a Portion of Lands in Proportion to whatever Service he may render the State; for which Purpose, we apprehend ourselves sufficiently authorized.

In his later years in Virginia Alexander was sometimes referred to by friends as former Governor of Nova Scotia. Another evidence of pretentious vanity, Dr. Eaton and other critics have surmised. The provisional government was indeed a misty affair, as others have proved since. In Philadelphia, Alexander probably regarded himself as Nova Scotia's government in exile, striving mightily to induce Congress to make his New Ireland the fourteenth independent American colony and a part of the coming republic of the United States.

He was a visionary zealot, Canadian historians have quite reasonably concluded in the light of his ultimate failure. But suppose Congress and General Washington had found the means to implement his ideas, suppose material aid from France had come a little earlier, what then would have been the final judgment of history on Alexander? His project for a fourteenth State included all the territory in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and "the Islands adjacent, viz. St. John's, Cape Breton, Newfoundland, &c. &c." Canadians are not to be blamed for resenting the grand scheme that would have included in the United States their eastern coast as far as and including Newfoundland, dominating the entrance to the St. Lawrence river.

The first, second, and third of Alexander's numbered pamphlets have disappeared. They may have been underground papers circulated in Nova Scotia soon after the outbreak of the Revolution. The John White copy of collected pamphlets in the Harvard Library begins with Number iv, and has two main sections, each with a title-page. The first part, entitled "Considerations on the Sovereignty, Independence, Trade and Fisheries of New Ireland," runs to twenty-four numbered pages. The second part, "The Constitution and Frame of Government of the Free and Independent State and Commonwealth of New Ireland," includes thirty-nine pages and a closing "Advertisement" of five more pages.

Harking back to the discouragements of the Scots Presbyterians in Ulster: "Here are no griping and racking Landlords to oppress you: No avaricious Priests to extort from you the Tenth of all your Increase and Labours, and whom you must pay for the Liberty to come into the World, of being married, of having Children, in or out of Wedlock, and likewise of leaving the World, &c."
No slavery in New Ireland: "the Undertaker does not intend to either buy or sell any of the human Species." Nor need the poor be discouraged from coming, nor redemptioners and servants: "no Redemptioneer or Servant need be under any Apprehensions of being either bought or sold." But no riffraff are wanted: "No Person will be received, but such as can produce a Certificate of being a regular Member of some christian Society, or otherwise of a fair moral Character."

The closing Advertisement from which these quotations are taken is Alexander's proclamation to the world of his individual designs as a colonizer; he speaks here for no provisional government but for himself alone, as though he still had at his disposal the enormous tracts conditionally granted him before the Revolution. Alas for his dream! "We wonder again," Dr. Eaton writes of Alexander's faith, "whether the curious man who wrote these pamphlets was sane."

In his address to the peacemakers in pamphlet Number vi, Alexander presses the theme that Britain should quit all efforts to govern in America:

Dear bought experience has taught us to know, that the scalping knife and tomahawk are equally employed to butcher our innocent back settlers, while any nation possesses territory either to the eastward, or in any other quarter, on this side of the Mississippi. Canada, Nova Scotia, and Louisiana, in the possession of France or Great Britain, are alike hostile to America; and she could never be safe in the neighbourhood of either. . . .

No proverb more true than that, "He who injures, can never forgive," and Britain having once injured, can never forgive America. To live at peace, therefore, with each other, British power must be as far removed from us as her islands are. . . .

Alexander concludes this chapter with some reflections on the folly of aggressive war that anticipate our modern judgments on Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin:

Alexander the great and Julius Caesar were two of the most eminent conquerors perhaps to be met with in history, yet their victories and conquests were so far from being advantageous to them, that on the contrary they terminated in their death and ruin; the whole royal families of Philip king of Macedon, and of Alexander the great his son, were utterly extirpated within the space of thirty-nine years. . . .

Julius Caesar fought fifty battles without missing of success in any one of them, unless at Pharus, where he swam for his life; and once at Dyrrachium, and in these battles he is said to have slain one million one hundred and ninety-two thousand men; which proves him to have been the great cut-throat of the age in which he lived. What is the fruit he reaped from these victories? His own blood is shed in the senate, being slain there, even by some whom he had most highly obliged. . . .
I shall further add that neither Britain nor France can expect to hold any part of America, but by shedding of innocent blood and loss of the affection of the people.

The second section of Alexander's work, containing his draft of a Constitution and Bill of Rights, opens with an address "to the Good People of New Ireland." Interestingly enough, he gives his Bill of Rights precedence over the Constitution and plan of government. When we recall that our Bill of Rights, embodied in ten amendments to the Constitution, did not take form until our government had been in operation for some time, we may appreciate the principles enunciated in Alexander's work. The whole case for Alexander McNutt may be rested on his draft Declaration of Rights, in which he anticipated everything to be included later in our National Bill of Rights, with something over.

His first Article declares "That all men are born equally free and independent. . . . Slavery is a gross Violation of the natural Rights of Mankind, and shall not be tolerated amongst us." He stipulates freedom of religion, of speech and of the press, and of assembly, with the right to petition government for redress of grievances; the right to trial by jury with all the protections known in modern times; freedom from searches and seizures without proper warrant issued on oath; freedom of elections, with all free men entitled to vote and to be elected to office. Everything is there, including: "No post facto laws to be allowed of." He was a political reformer at least a century ahead of the times in his provision for the recall by majority vote of legislators "acting contrary to popular will."

He must have drawn ideas from the English Bill of Rights and from the works of political philosophers like John Locke. In short, he read widely; he didn't invent quite all those ideas embodied later in our Bill of Rights. He was a profound student and thinker, with ability to organize and express ideas.

His stern moral principles appear in his plan for a frame of government. No one but a member of some Christian society might hold office, and as for the manner of life prescribed for the people, consider this counsel of perfection:

Secondly. The more effectually to preserve the Morals of the People pure and uncorrupted, and for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, the Suppression of Vice and Immorality, no Stage Plays, Horse-Racing, Cock-Fighting, Balls and Assemblies, Prophane Swearing and Cursing, Sabbath-Breaking, Drunkenness, nocturnal Reveling, Whoredom, Cards, Dice and all other games whatsoever commonly called Games of Chance, (Lotteries ordered by the Legislature to raise Money for Public Uses excepted) shall ever be permitted. . . .
This may have sounded well enough to the clergy, but imagine the chuckles of Dr. Franklin as he conned the paragraph through his steel-rimmed spectacles! He may be imagined as saying: “Why, the man would deprive the people of all their simple pleasures!”

Alexander’s draft proposed barring lawyers from public office unless they suspended practice, proposed annual elections by ballot with fines for qualified electors failing to vote, forbade elections or sessions of court in taverns, and frowned upon the operation of taverns near churches. As for his draft Constitution for New Ireland, it is much too detailed for summary. The reader is advised when next in Philadelphia to look up the pamphlets Dr. Franklin read and kept.

Alexander proposed two public schools for every township at the outset, and for the support of higher education he made provision to exempt from taxation the estate of a person who might devise property or income “to the Use of the Commonwealth in erecting and supporting a University.” It seems likely he hoped to recover his forfeited lands and to be the founder of the University himself. His dreams outstripped his possibilities.

Had his dreams been realized through the successful intervention of Congress and the patriot forces, Alexander might have come to be known as the father of the fourteenth original State in the Union. Dr. Eaton may have shivered at the thought.
Some quite remarkable legends regarding the exploits of Alexander McNutt flourished in Virginia long after their hero had departed life, and found their way into the works of local historians. To Shenandoah Valley folk he achieved a strange posthumous fame almost as mythical as that of Rip Van Winkle.

One of these stories already has been noticed: that he went to London in 1757 with a letter of introduction to George II, who received him graciously, conferred upon him the rank of Colonel, and presented him with a dress sword. Alexander first visited London in 1761 and George II had died the year before.

Henry Howe wrote in his *Historical Collections of Virginia*, published in 1852, that in the Revolution Alexander “joined his countrymen in arms under Gates at Saratoga”; that he “was afterwards known as a valuable officer in the brigade of Baron de Kalb in the South.” Joseph Addison Waddell’s *Annals of Augusta County*, first published in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888, and re-issued in revised and enlarged form at Staunton in 1902, repeats the story that Alexander served with Gates and De Kalb.

In 1897 Mrs. Henrietta McCormick, wife of Leander McCormick of the harvester family and a descendant of Alexander’s brother, John McNutt, published privately in Chicago a volume entitled *Genealogies and Reminiscences*, in which she repeated as fact all of the legends that preceding historians had published as truth.

Alexander did not serve with Gates at Saratoga or in the South with De Kalb. Burgoyne surrendered to Gates in October 1777, and Alexander was at McNutt’s Island until the middle of 1778, when he left for Boston. At the time of his supposed service with De Kalb he was in Philadelphia writing and distributing his excellent pamphlets on a proposed form of government for Nova Scotia.

Who invented the saga of distinguished military service? Dr. Eaton and other Canadian critics suggest pointedly that Alexander beguiled his declining years with tall tales to amuse his admiring kinfolk in the Valley. They cannot prove, however, that the stories did not originate from minor gossip among friends and neighbors, that flowered gradually into a full-blown mythology. One statement by Mrs. McCormick that probably is beyond challenge is this:

“As long as this distinguished personage lived he wore the court costume of the reign of George II, with buckles and ornamental buttons
ALEXANDER’S CLOSING YEARS

of silver, and trimmings of gold lace, a cocked hat, powdered hair, and top boots. His sword never left his side.” George III was King when Alexander first visited London, but costumes doubtless were still the same.

A curiously old-fashioned figure Alexander must have become when he finally settled down for his twilight years in the family and neighborhood near Lexington, at the end of the century. After the close of the Revolution he had returned to McNutt’s Island, probably in 1784 or 1785, to live with his brother Benjamin. Perhaps he clung to the vain hope he might resume his useful career in Nova Scotia. We have some fragmentary records of his later stay, not more important than evidence that he was listed as a small, and sometimes delinquent, taxpayer. He was on a capitation list in 1794, and soon afterward he returned to Virginia to stay. His brother Benjamin was credited in 1793 and 1794 with the ownership of three horses and ten sheep. Always a bachelor, Benjamin died in September 1798, leaving his property to Martin McNutt, probably a nephew. This we learn from Dr. Eaton’s researches.

After his return to the Lexington neighborhood, Alexander diverted his restless mind to a new project he hoped might turn his Nova Scotia operations to useful account. It was the vain hope of an old and frustrated man who would not admit he had been beaten.

Washington and Lee University of our day was then Liberty Hall Academy at Lexington, a Presbyterian school. Alexander wished to help it, and he conceived the idea of conveying for its benefit 100,000 acres of land out of the huge grants given him by the Nova Scotia government in 1765. He must have known his grants had been escheated, but he may have thought a gift to an educational institution would be honored because of his services as a colonizer.

In 1796 Alexander deeded 100,000 acres along the St. John River in New Brunswick to the Synod of Virginia. It was considered better that he make his gift directly to the Academy, so on March 20, 1797 a new deed was executed. This deed is preserved in the University archives, and examination of a photoprint copy kindly supplied by Henry E. Coleman, Jr., of the Cyrus Hall McCormick Library has revealed something not pointed out before. Alexander gave the Academy an option to accept from him $50,000 instead of the land. This was only a grand gesture, as the trustees must have been well aware, for Alexander had little left. The deed was signed and sealed by Alexander McNutt and witnessed by Andrew Alexander, Conrad Speece, and Archibald Alexander. The description in the document relates that the tract meant to
be conveyed had been surveyed for Alexander in 1765 by Anthony Wayne and Messrs. Jacobs and Caton, and to make things more definite, and as much as possible to prevent disputes at any time hereafter, said 100,000 acres are to be laid off on the west side of St. John’s River between the village called St. Ann’s [now Fredericton] at or near the head of navigation, and the Falls of said river into the Bay of Fundy, in such part along the river between the specified places as may be deemed advantageous for promoting the ends proposed in said Academy, that it may always be able to give to youths a complete liberal education, especially in all branches of human literature necessary to qualify for the ministry of the Gospel, also to obtain necessary additions to its library and apparatus, and to support in said Academy lectures annually on human depravity by the fall of Adam and by men’s actual sins, also on their recovery by unmerited grace in Jesus Christ, and against the opposite errors.

There were two flaws in the deed that prevented the Academy from realizing anything more than the value of the document as a piece of paper; much greater now than in 1797, as a sale at auction would prove. The first was that the grants had been escheated. The second was that the lands formerly Alexander’s were on the east side of the river, not the west. Archdeacon Raymond says in his monograph that his lands were in “the township called ‘Franckfort,’ more commonly known as ‘McNutt’s.’ Its situation was a few miles above St. Anns on the Keswick Stream on the east side of the river.” Alexander had forgotten.

One solace was left to Alexander’s closing years. He visited Thomas Jefferson at Monticello occasionally, and it is not too difficult to imagine the subject matter of some of their conversations when the author of the proposed Declaration of Rights for New Ireland called upon the statesman who had asserted from Paris that he was indifferent to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States unless and until it embodied a Bill of Rights. Each of these Virginians had insisted that consideration of the Rights of Man must precede the adoption of a form of government, and that the framework of law must be built upon the foundation of established human rights.

That Jefferson was Alexander’s friend, and that the latter visited Monticello, is not disputed even by Dr. Eaton. Jefferson had so many friendly callers he had to go away to rest occasionally. We may readily picture in our minds the approach of the old Presbyterian in his quaint outmoded costume with silver buttons, faded gold lace, cocked hat, and knee breeches, the greeting on the veranda, and the earnest discussions at table or in the library. Remembering Alexander’s strict views on religious qualifications for office and his aversion to stage plays and
horse racing, we may conclude Jefferson must have chided him for lacking liberalism in such matters equal to his own. Regardless of such differences, they could always agree warmly on the principles of democratic government, and on the need to foster education. One founded a university; the other had wished to do so. And they could exchange their stories of Dr. Franklin.

Instead of encouraging myths regarding his military achievements, Alexander would have done better to leave with his family an authentic account of his talks with Jefferson. In those days, perhaps, Jefferson’s words were not given the weight they have today.

After passing the age of eighty-five Alexander McNutt died in 1811 and was buried in Falling Spring churchyard, near Lexington. His grave is unmarked.

Final judgments on the life and work of this unusual man have varied, but most Nova Scotia historians have set him down as a visionary who failed. Dr. Eaton regarded him as “the most remarkable adventurer ever seen on the North American continent.” Dr. Allison, fairer than the rest, wrote: “McNutt’s work was done in Nova Scotia and it abides. Its importance and value are beyond question.” Of the regard for him by his colonists Dr. Allison observed: “To the last he was held in the highest esteem and affection by the people of Truro.”

No man should be judged by the measure of the things he tried to do and couldn’t, or by his harmless vanities, but by what he stood for and actually accomplished. Every man is apt to dwell in his declining years upon his failures to reach goals set for himself and to count as nothing all the ideas he has liberated in frustrated causes. In this he is encouraged by the hostile, who continue their work of depreciation for many years after he has gone.

Alexander McNutt introduced nearly a thousand colonists into Nova Scotia; perhaps more than did any other one man. He fought for the rights of the humble, and published a Declaration of Rights and scheme of government in advance of the adoption of constitutions by our own States that marked him as an original thinker jealous for the welfare of the people. He achieved a personality; he was a picturesque character. In his energy, his will to take chances and to fight unceasingly against odds on a slender reserve of resources, and even in his eccentricities and in his trait of contentiousness for what he thought right, he typified the Ulster Scot in early America.
Alexander Gallatin McNutt was a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome man: a six-footer with brown hair and blue eyes. According to an anonymous admirer who wrote of him many years after his time in the Memphis Commercial-Appeal, he had "a strikingly intelligent, broad, massive forehead." He also had very pronounced views on financial issues that won him popularity with the rank and file, and made for him some bitter enemies.

If we study the personality of this man as we find it in contemporary accounts, we are apt to conclude that in some degree the Governor of Mississippi from January 1838 to January 1842 had characteristics that we of later years have observed in a President named Franklin D. Roosevelt. The problems with which they wrestled were quite different in magnitude, but their winning personalities and their ways with the electorate had points of similarity.

Alexander Gallatin was a son of Alexander and Rachel Grigsby McNutt of Rockbridge County in the Valley of Virginia. Born on
January 3, 1802, he was graduated with honors from Washington College in Lexington in 1821. After studying law, he moved in 1825 to Jackson, Mississippi to grow up with a new and rapidly developing country. Aspiring young men went from the middle States to Mississippi in those days, as the ambitious of later years moved from the East to the plains States or to California. In 1826 he established himself as a lawyer in Vicksburg, where his success attracted others of his family.

The first to join him there, perhaps at his urging, was his younger brother Joseph. Born September 28, 1808, Joseph was graduated from Washington College in 1827, and presumably went soon afterward to Vicksburg to learn the law in his brother’s office. He had not yet reached his twenty-fifth birthday when Alexander wrote this letter to Rachel, at home in the Valley:

Vicksburg, Miss., June 27, 1833.

My Dear Mother:

Joseph died of cholera a few minutes since. He was taken sick of fever ten days ago, and the doctors thought him out of danger day before yesterday. But the disease changed to cholera night before last. He was attended by three physicians, but all in vain. His last words were: “Gallatin, I’m going to die. I want Benjamin to have my little property during his life, and then it is to go to Sally. Say to my mother and sisters that my last thoughts were of them. Take care of me while I am in this world; God will take care of me in the next. Farewell.”

I cannot write more.

Your son,

A. G. McNutt.

Three years afterward, his sister Sally married Ferdinand Sims, another Vicksburg lawyer. Benjamin, two years younger than Joseph, also had come to Vicksburg to practice his profession after graduation from Washington College in 1829, and completion of medical studies in Philadelphia. Never too kind, fate was hard on Alexander’s younger brothers. Benjamin was drowned in February 1835 when the brig Vigne, on which he was a passenger, went down with all on board off the coast of Mexico between Vera Cruz and Tampico.

Life had more to offer Alexander. He married Mrs. Eliza A. Cameron, a young widow, in 1834, and moved on into active political life. According to “A. J. P.,” a Rockbridge County biographer, he was a Jeffersonian Democrat, in sympathy with the “hard money” views of Thomas H. Benton. A sound money Democrat was somewhat unique in those days of wild and whirling speculation resulting from the ill-starred fiscal policies of President Andrew Jackson. Let us dip for a moment into the sketch by an unknown writer published in the Memphis Commercial-Appeal:
It is said that, being a very talented and brilliant young man, he soon made an enviable reputation for himself throughout the State. His ability as a lawyer soon became appreciated, and he was elected a member of the State Senate and president of the body. [He served in the sessions of 1836-37 from Warren, then a Whig county.]

In 1837 he was elected Governor of the State for a term of two years, and was re-elected in 1839. . . . A man of very decided character, he was discreet in every step, and so determined was he to do whatever he considered right, regardless of consequences, that he sometimes, in carrying out his principles, incurred the displeasure of his friends.

Students of American history will remember that President Jackson, annoyed at the arrogant manners of Nicholas Biddle, whose United States Bank in Philadelphia was the depository of government funds, resolved upon a measure to humble the “money power.” He would have been smart to establish the United States Treasury in Washington, but leaving that for a wiser administration to accomplish at a later time, he withdrew the Federal deposits from Biddle’s bank and placed them in State banks about the country. It was an era when internal improvements were being promoted, and Jackson thought his measure would help develop the young country. Scattering of Federal deposits started a wave of borrowing and speculation. First there was a boom. Then later came a serious depression.

If Alexander Gallatin McNutt was a “hard money” advocate he could not have approved the financial orgy loosed by Jackson. As legislator and Governor he found himself in a vortex and some of the things he did to get his State out of trouble caused violent objection. “A. J. P.” gave in one sentence in an article published in an unidentified Virginia newspaper in 1891, a key that opens to view the source of all Governor McNutt’s difficulties:

“His chief political distinction came from his leadership in the repudiation of the Union Bank bonds, and in closing out the insolvent State banks.”

The fertile soil of the new State of Mississippi was so well adapted to the growth of cotton that rich slaveholders came down from Virginia and Maryland; then began the rush to import slaves from the upper Southern States that brought blame to those who divided Negro families long with them to sell them down the river. Men aspired to get rich quickly in a region so new that money and banking facilities were scarce. To make money available, the State gave charters to many banks that had no proper capital and that were allowed to go into business with funds obtained by issues of paper that had little back of them. As the paper depreciated, the wildcat banks languished.
The men who ran things decided that what was needed was a new bank whose bonds would be guaranteed by the State. In 1836 the Legislature voted a charter to the Mississippi Union Bank, with a provision that the guaranteed bonds to be sold to provide working capital must be disposed of at not less than par or face value. Provision was made also for the protection of the State in its guarantee of the bonds.

The constitution of 1832 had provided that no measure of this particular kind could become effective until passed by two successive Legislatures, so the Union Bank charter was brought up for second passage in the legislative session of 1837. The promoters and their friends had been thinking of ways to “improve” the charter. It was passed with amendments that weakened it generally, and that made the State fully responsible for the bonds it guaranteed, without indemnity in case of the bank’s default.

Then on August 18, 1838, the Union Bank sold $5,000,000 of State-backed bonds to Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia at a discount, not at par. Biddle sold them to investors in London and Amsterdam at face value for gold. When officers of the Union Bank had the proceeds of their bond sale in their hands, they went on to lend and squander recklessly until the money was gone.

The officers then asked for another sale of bonds, but Governor McNutt had been watching and concluding at last that all hands had been too easy-going. He refused another guaranteed bond issue, denounced the manner in which the $5,000,000 deal had been handled, and declared that the State must repudiate the bonds sold to Biddle. Less spectacularly, the Planters Bank had sold $2,500,000 of guaranteed bonds to put itself in funds, and this issue also was repudiated. Everyone hated Biddle when there was no more money to be had from him; he was the financial bogey man, the equivalent of “Wall Street” in those days. Repudiation was aimed at him, not at the foreign investors, at least at the outset.

Then, according to “A. J. P.,” a torrent of vituperation was poured upon the head of Governor McNutt. A question of his personal honesty was raised about the State by influential leaders like S. S. Prentiss. So great was the Governor’s popularity with average people, however, that his political career was not handicapped. What cared the average man for foreign investors, or for that matter, the credit of the State? Nothing. To resume with “A. J. P.”:

“Governor McNutt never wavered, but advanced his ground of attack beyond the necessities of the special case, insisting that one generation had no right to burden another without leaving something to show
for the expenditure involved, and pressing for the enactment of laws to close the insolvent banks by *quo warranto* proceedings. The people of the State sustained Governor McNutt by electing him for a second term."

Investors in London and Amsterdam did not concur in the result of this referendum in Mississippi. They sent interest coupons from the bonds to lawyers at Jackson, who brought suit to collect. The case was carried to the Supreme Court of Mississippi, which decreed that the interest must be paid and the bonds redeemed at maturity. But the repudiation stuck; no interest ever was paid. The matter remained a burning issue for many years. The constitutional conventions of 1869 and 1890 both denounced the bonds and prohibited the Legislature from recognizing them.

Anyone wishing to start an argument in Mississippi today can get one by declaring Governor McNutt was wrong in repudiating the bonds. And so in the financial district of London, one may get a redhot opinion of American civic honesty on any day he likes by referring to the repudiated Mississippi bonds.

When Britain couldn't repay in full its debt to the United States after World War I, and Calvin Coolidge sagely commented: "They hired the money, didn't they?" — irate Britishers wrote letters to the press reviving the story of Mississippi's perfidy. Since Governor McNutt was at the center of an international *cause célèbre* of astonishing durability, we should know more of the consequences of what he did. To pick up the "A. J. P." narrative again:

The practical consequence of the repudiation of the Union Bank bonds is that Mississippi has never attempted to negotiate any further bonds, and is now without any important public debt. Preparatory to his war on the insolvent State banks, and to relieve himself from the possible imputation of being moved by personal interest, Governor McNutt sold at a sacrifice his most valuable property to pay his debt to the Commercial and Railroad Bank of Vicksburg, that being his only bank debt.

Governor McNutt had but few other debts. However, . . . . McNutt was liable for large sums as endorser on the paper of his friends. These debts harrassed him during the remainder of his days. He refused to take advantage of the bankruptcy law in 1841.

He was kind and social in his personal relations, we are told. It was his habit to get to his office early, work hard until two o'clock, and then take a friend home for the remainder of the day, and a leisurely dinner made cheerful with good talk. He knew political history and he had an inexhaustible supply of anecdotes. He was a charming conversationalist.
and a magnetic public speaker, and his audiences were willing to stay with him as long as he cared to talk.

He had no children, but was very fond of young people and wished to have them around him. “His private secretary had orders,” “A. J. P.” tells us, “to hunt up all the sprightly young men who came to Jackson and bring them to his house.” There they always found pretty girls, shepherded by Mrs. McNutt, waiting in expectancy.

In 1848 he became a candidate for the United States Senate. Mississippi was solidly Democratic; the candidates canvassed the State to influence the election of legislators who would in turn elect a Senator. Since no political issues could rise among competing Democrats, campaigns were waged on personalities. Each aspirant made the most of his own gifts. Alexander was at his entertaining best, improvising humorous verse at the expense of an adversary named Foote, and engaging in light and gay sarcasms. He was so adept at this kind of campaigning that some of his admirers followed him from county to county to listen to his new inventions at the expense of the unfortunate Foote.

While on one of these trips, Alexander suddenly became ill, and died in DeSoto County in the midst of the campaign, on October 22, 1848. His age was forty-six. A granite shaft stands in a cemetery at Jackson to preserve his memory.

The judgment of all the world outside Mississippi is against the repudiation of those fateful bonds, but with the lapse of time the criticism of McNutt’s hastily-formed decision may be softened by the reflection that we may not know all the tangled circumstances. The State’s affairs were indeed in a dreadful mess, and ruin was stalking almost everywhere in the nation at the time in consequence of Andrew Jackson’s weird financial ideas.

Let us say that all of Governor McNutt’s official acts were wise and right except the major one. Perhaps his error is offset in the minds of Mississippi folk by a single fact. The people loved him.
BOOK NINE

NEW JERSEY

1740 TO THE PRESENT
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK NINE

John McKnight of Killeade parish, near Lisburn in Antrim, who was long an elder in his church, and who is said to have assisted in the defense of Londonderry and to have lost an arm in the Battle of the Boyne.

John McKnight, his son, who became a minister; next came his son, Charles McKnight, who removed to New Jersey in 1740, and who became a militant preacher, a trustee of the young college at Princeton, and a regimental chaplain whose defiant sermons so irritated the British that they burned his church and confined him in a prison ship; he had two sons who were equally active patriots:

Dr. Charles McKnight, leader of his class at Princeton, who served throughout the Revolution as an army surgeon, and who afterward was Professor of Surgery and Anatomy at Columbia College; one of his patients as a practitioner was George Washington; his wife was Mary Morin Scott, daughter of a patriot leader, who herself had been active in private counter-espionage.

Captain Richard McKnight, second son of the fighting parson, who saw active service in the Revolution; was betrayed to the British by a Tory neighbor while on leave and was flung into a prison ship.

John Morin Scott McKnight, only son of the Revolutionary surgeon, who inherited wealth and married three times, and spent later years with third wife at Saratoga Springs; his first wife was

Mary Bedlow DePeyster, granddaughter of a Colonel commanding a Loyalist regiment in the Revolution, who died before twenty in giving birth to a daughter, Mary Beekman McKnight, who later married Edmund Smith Bailey; a son of this marriage was

Dr. Theodorus Bailey, who practiced medicine in New York City and maintained the membership in the Society of the Cincinnati inherited from Dr. Charles McKnight.
Published biographical sketches of Dr. Charles McKnight of New Jersey and New York City emphasize the fact he was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati. They point out that his portrait in oils shows the badge of the society on his coat. Could his family have thought this membership gave chief evidence of his merit? Undoubtedly the doctor was glad to join General Washington’s officers in an organization intended to preserve the ideals for which the Revolution was fought, but he had been in no hurry about it; he let more than two years go by before seeking membership.

Perhaps when he consented to sit for his portrait, a lady related to him by marriage insisted that he wear his badge. He needed no decorations. Those who have distinguished themselves by unique services usually are thinking of something else when tags of rank are being passed around. This son of a Presbyterian minister earned distinction — perhaps without realizing it — by hard work, devotion to duty, and the application of an acutely active mind to the advancement of medical science.
Appointed a surgeon in the American Army in 1775, when he was barely twenty-five, he continued caring for sick and wounded soldiers until the war was entirely over, winning advancement to high responsibility without asking for it. We may be sure the medical facilities in that hard-up Army were few and rudimentary, and that the work in improvised hospitals was exhausting.

He had been graduated from Princeton at the head of a class of young men who were to make their own marks, and he left his training in medicine to apply himself to work that needed doing. Bothered after the war by a wound from which he couldn’t fully recover, and handicapped in health in consequence of exposure and other hardships that had lowered his vitality, he drove himself hard to perform difficult operations and accomplish all he could in the time he had. Judge him in the light of what follows, and think of him as a tall man—six feet two inches—spare in stature, thin of face, and dark in coloring. We leave him now for a little to inquire into the Ulster background that associated him with the other grandsons of Galloway.

In the Hearth Money Rolls for County Antrim for the year 1669 we first find the name of John McKnight, of Lisnetaylor townland, Killeade parish, Massareene barony, not far from the village of Lisburn. John was the great-grandfather of Dr. Charles McKnight. The latter’s grandson, Charles Scott McKnight, made some inquiries about the Ulster family, and in 1870 he received a letter from William Breaky, Presbyterian minister at Lisburn, saying: “I certify that Mr. John McKnight, or Mac-knight, was an Elder and member of Session in the Presbyterian Church at Lisburn, Ireland, from the year 1688 til 1730. — Extract from the records.”

Now this John McKnight was according to tradition a good fighting elder: he is said to have participated in the defense of Londonderry in 1689, and to have lost an arm in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. He had a son named John who became a minister, though he has not been identified with any parish. He may have been a supply preacher, going wherever needed. This entry in the old church records at Lisburn is believed to refer to him: “John McKnight and Margaret Scott were married March 18th, 1712.” Next in the line was preacher John’s son Charles, born about 1713 or 1714, who was educated for the ministry and who emigrated to New Jersey about 1740.

Miss Rosalie Fellows Bailey, a great-great-great-granddaughter of Dr. Charles McKnight, has written a history of her family with a great deal of care. For her account of McKnight origin she accepted the
earlier findings of Charles Scott McKnight, who in his time had accepted the written version left by Dr. McKnight himself. As others have done, Dr. McKnight drew conclusions from insufficient information. In short, he accepted “Sir Alexander” MacNauchtan of the Flodden story as a direct ancestor, and concluded that McKnight means “son of the knight” — “Sir Alexander” being the knight. Since his grandfather had lived in South Antrim, he associated his family with the Antrim descendants of Shane Dhu. Unfortunately for this theory, the Presbyterian elder John McKnight belonged with the Covenanters of Galloway, and not with the Macnaghtens of North Antrim, who were Anglicans.

Most impressive aspects of the young Rev. Charles McKnight were his moral earnestness and his unquenchable energy. When on June 24, 1741, he offered himself to the New Brunswick Presbytery as a probationary candidate for the ministry, he knew very well that a call would mean arduous effort for a horse and himself. He could not settle down in some agreeable small town and stay there; he would be obliged to serve two or three communities miles apart.

The New Brunswick Presbytery received the young candidate from Antrim on June 24, 1741, and examined him gravely in the languages, philosophy, and divinity, and in his Christian experience. He was adjudged fit, and was licensed soon after. Then came a period of preaching before congregations needing ministers. Calls came from the Forks of the Delaware, Staten Island, Baskenridge, Amboy, and Greenwich. Presumably the Rev. Charles McKnight visited them all, and chose none. On October 12, 1743, a joint call came from the congregations of Allentown in Monmouth County, Cranberry (later Cranbury) in Middlesex, and Crosswicks in Burlington County. He accepted in the following May, and was ordained on July 19. The minister who presided and delivered the sermon was the Rev. William Tennent, organizer in 1726 of the famous Log College at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, the only Presbyterian theological seminary in the region in those days.

The three communities to be served by the young minister were east and northeast of Trenton. The question as to which neighborhood he should live in was debated with the tenacity for which Scots always have been noted. Neither Allentown nor Cranbury would yield, and a committee appointed to investigate could not get an agreement. Cranbury was recommended, and Mr. McKnight offered Allentown the privilege of finding another minister. But Allentown waited, and Mr. McKnight went there a few years later to live on the parsonage farm of 220 acres.
Mr. McKnight was married on or about October 15, 1746, to Elizabeth Stevens, a girl of twenty and daughter of Richard Stevens of Upper Freehold. Their children were Rachel, born about 1748 at Cranbury; Charles, born October 10, 1750, and Richard, born about two years later.

Schools were few, and after worrying about the lack of educational opportunities for a while, Mr. McKnight joined the Rev. William Tennent, Jr. in opening the Mattisonia Grammar School in Lower Freehold. In 1757 he was chosen one of the trustees of the College of New Jersey, founded in 1746 by the Presbyterian Synod. He continued for the rest of his life in this relation to the incipient Princeton University.

Mr. McKnight gave up the Cranbury charge in 1756, after establishing himself at Allentown, and ten years later he resigned his pastorate there. Trenton immediately asked for him but without success; he already knew where he wished to go. Early in 1767 he accepted a call he had received a few days before he resigned from the Allentown charge in October 1766. The congregations of Shrewsbury, Shark River, and Middlesex Point (now Matawan), in the coastal region of Monmouth County, made up his new and far-flung parish. In addition to preaching in their three churches he undertook to hold services in homes in the little community of Squan in the far southeast corner of the county. He lived on a plantation at Tinton Falls, near Shrewsbury.

The outbreak of the Revolution revealed the Rev. Charles McKnight as a flaming and articulate patriot, as aroused against tyranny as any of his Covenanter forefathers. A McNaught under any name anywhere usually is a contentious advocate of some cause. What a parcel of rebels! Mr. McKnight became chaplain of the 3rd Regiment of Monmouth County militia, and near the thick of the fighting at the battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777, he received a sabre cut on the head at the moment when General Mercer was fatally wounded a few steps away.

Mr. McKnight took the issues of war into the pulpit with "fervid words and impassioned expressions"; his favorite theme was the rights of the people. It is tradition that he appeared never to have a doubt of the outcome, and that he assured his congregations that "God will take care of your liberty if you will only take care of the Redcoats." Of course the Redcoats wouldn't like that, when they learned of it from sedulous Tories, so in 1777 they burned the church at Middlesex Point. Moreover, they captured Mr. McKnight and several who were with him and flung them into a prison ship at New York. The minister was now getting old after a strenuous life of circuit riding, and his health failed rapidly in the foul ship. Preferring that he die elsewhere, his captors let him go just in time.
A visitor to Trinity churchyard on lower Broadway in New York may today observe at the immediate right of the front entrance gate three slabs of stone lying level with the ground. On one of them is carved these words: "To the Memory of the Revd. Charles McKnight, for many years a Beloved Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Monmouth County, New Jersey. He departed this life January 1st, 1778."

Son Richard married a neighbor girl, Elizabeth Hendrickson, on February 14, 1775, a few months before Lexington and Concord. He was soon a Lieutenant in the 3rd Regiment, and when his father-in-law Daniel Hendrickson succeeded Colonel Breese in command, Richard became Captain of a company. He was in active service in 1778; saw his house fired; worried over what might happen to his family in a neighborhood where Tories remained while patriots fled; broke parole when made a prisoner of war.

Then on the night of June 9, 1779 a party of New York Loyalists came over to Sandy Hook, joined some of Colonel Barton’s New Jersey Volunteers (also Tories), marched ten miles to Tinton Falls, and captured Captain McKnight and his father-in-law, Colonel Hendrickson. Again a prisoner of war, Richard was quartered on a Long Island family until exchanged. Hendrickson probably gained his freedom in the same way.

But Richard was not through with prisons, and worse was to come. Later, he obtained a leave of absence from his superior officer in order to visit his family. On the way home he met a Tory neighbor named Throckmorton, a former friend, who informed on him to British soldiers. He was surprised at night while with his family, and was carried to one of the prison ships in Wallabout Bay, where he had time to consider what would become of Elizabeth and their two little sons, Charles and Daniel. Well, even we do not know what eventually became of them, except that one of the boys later went to Philadelphia to study medicine. The account of Richard’s imprisonment written by Charles Scott McKnight says he “fell a victim” in one of the “floating hells.” That is, he died.

Below the memorial inscription to the Rev. Charles McKnight on the slab in Trinity Churchyard these words appear: “Also to the memory of his Son, Richard McKnight, Captain in the American Army of the Revolution.” No date is given, but it is believed he died late in 1780 or early in 1781.

Charles McKnight, another son of the Monmouth County minister, was graduated “candidatum primum” from Princeton in 1771 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Several of his eleven classmates became
famous: James Madison as President, Philip Freneau as a crusading journalist in the service of Thomas Jefferson’s cause, Gunning Bedford, Jr. as Attorney General of Delaware, and Hugh H. Brackenridge as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Three years later Charles was awarded a Master of Arts degree at Princeton, perhaps in recognition of his progress in the study of medicine in Philadelphia.

After graduation he had gone to prepare under Dr. William Shippen, Jr., who was Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the College of Philadelphia, later the University of Pennsylvania. War broke out before he had finished his studies, and there is no record of his winning the degree of M.D. In those days the degree was not requisite to practice; skill and character and ability to pass an examination were the essentials.

Very soon after Lexington and Concord the young doctor offered his services, and began duty as a surgeon at the Continental Hospital of Cambridge and Roxbury in Massachusetts on August 17, 1775. That was the neighborhood where the fighting began, and the sick and wounded were cared for in seven converted private houses. Dr. McKnight was surgeon at Putnam Hospital, located in one of the four houses used in Cambridge.

It is interesting now to discover the extent of medical preparation made for the oncoming war. The Continental Congress voted on July 27, 1775 to establish a “Hospital” — its name for a medical corps — and to provide for an army of 20,000 the following personnel: One Director General and chief physician at a pay of $4 per day, four surgeons and one apothecary at $1 1/2 per day each, and twenty surgeon’s mates at $2 1/3 per day each. Benjamin Church was the first Director General; he appointed the surgeons and apothecary, and the surgeons appointed the mates. Dr. McKnight was one of the first of these surgeons.

Shortly after Howe’s evacuation of Boston, the center of war moved. On June 3, 1776 Congress ordered the organization of a “Flying Camp” to comprise 10,000 troops from Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, and to serve until December 1 wherever the need for them might be greatest. The need was around New York and up the Hudson. Dr. McKnight presumably was attached to the Pennsylvania contingent. Congress was discovering it had provided too few surgeons for real war, so on July 17 it increased the number of surgeons and mates and raised the pay to $1 1/2 and $1 per day respectively.

After the defeat of the colonial forces on Long Island and at White Plains, and the retreat from New York, we next find Dr. McKnight at Peekskill. Distressed by the lack of facilities to care for the sick, he wrote General Heath on November 18 suggesting the use of the Fish-
kill Academy as a hospital. General Heath wrote at once to the Com¬
mittee of Safety that he had ordered Dr. McKnight to go immediately
to Fishkill to attend the sick. He remained in Fishkill for a while, and
may have been transferred to Princeton during the winter.

On April 11, 1777, Dr. McKnight was appointed Senior Surgeon of
the Middle Department, including all the war area between North
Carolina and Albany, either by his old teacher, Dr. Shippen, or by Dr.
Rush. Congress had just designated the two to be Director General and
Surgeon General, respectively. Then on February 21, 1778, at the urgent
recommendation of Dr. Shippen, who referred warmly to his ability,
rank, and integrity, Dr. McKnight was elected by Congress to be Sur¬
geon General of the Middle Department. He was stationed at the Gen¬
eral Hospital at Princeton during a part of this year. General Wash¬
ington wrote to him at Fishkill from his winter headquarters at Morris¬
town, New Jersey, on December 6, 1779, with reference to blankets
and a draft.

Congress reorganized the medical service on September 30, 1780, to
include all of the territory north of North Carolina. Dr. Shippen was
continued as Director General, and the title of Surgeon General was
discontinued. Dr. McKnight was appointed one of three Chief Phy¬
sicians (all were surgeons), with a pay increase to $120 per month and
various perquisites, including rights equal to those of a Colonel to draw
bounty land after the war. After the British surrender at Yorktown on
October 19, 1781, Congress began demobilizing the army and cutting
down the medical staff, enacting “that the chief physician and surgeon
in the army, eldest in appointment, be continued in service under the
title of Physician, with the pay heretofore allowed to a Chief Hospital
Physician, and that the number of surgeons in all the military hospitals
be reduced so as not to exceed fifteen.”

Dr. McKnight was among those retained in service, and on a subse¬
quent payroll he was listed as Physician and Surgeon General, pay to
commence from January 1, 1782 at $140 a month. The pay was cut
back to $120 a month later, and so Dr. McKnight continued until the
army was disbanded on November 3, 1783. We are not informed
whether he was present to hear Washington’s Farewell Address to his
officers. His certificate of membership in the Society of the Cincinnati
(organized in May 1783), signed by George Washington on December
10, 1783, and proudly preserved by his great-great-grandson, Dr. Theo¬
dorus Bailey of New York, states the rank to which he was promoted in
1777: Senior Surgeon of the Flying Hospital in the Middle Department.

Now this bare outline from official records leaves a great deal to the
imagination: the anxieties of the medical staff during the time of great battles and the winter at Valley Forge, and the sufferings of wounded, sick, and ill-clothed soldiers that the doctors tried hard to ameliorate with such scanty means as they had, or could get by dint of writing urgent letters to Generals. Instead of the score of illuminating stories I would like to tell you, only this can be said in summary: Dr. McKnight began in 1775 as a young surgeon, and at the end of the war was the chief medical officer of what remained of the Army.

When Dr. McKnight was appointed Surgeon General late in February 1778 he evidently thought his advancement justified taking a wife. He was married on April 22 to a pretty young widow, Mary Morin Scott Litchfield, probably at Old Hurley in Ulster County. Mary’s father was John Morin Scott, and her mother’s maiden name was Helena Rutgers. Although they had a home in New York, the British occupation of the city made it more convenient for them to spend part of the time at Old Hurley. Scott is said to have been a descendant of the first baronet of Ancrum in Scotland; he was a successful lawyer in New York, a founder of the Sons of Liberty, a Brigadier General of New York troops, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and the first Secretary of State for New York.

Dr. McKnight was twenty-eight at this time, and his bride was not yet twenty-five. Since a bridegroom always gets scant attention when a wedding is afoot, we yield attention to the holder of central interest. Mary had been married four months before her seventeenth birthday on March 4, 1770, to Lieutenant John Litchfield of His Majesty’s 16th Regiment of Foot, a son of Edward Litchfield of Northampton, England. Undoubtedly the Presbyterian church in New York was bright with scarlet coats that day when brother officers joined the Scott circle to witness the marriage of a Lieutenant of twenty-one to a damsels who later was to prove every inch a rebel. Not against him, but George III. Doubtless he was a handsome lad, and she was very young and carefree, and revolution did not then seem imminent. Three girl babies were born to them, two of whom died in infancy.

After five years of married life, Lieutenant Litchfield died in New York July 14, 1775 and was buried in Trinity churchyard. The inscription on his gravestone names him “Colonel.” More than once, as this chapter reveals, the composer of lines for the stonemason was able to rectify the oversights of a careless world by awarding posthumously those degrees and ranks aspired to but not actually gained in life.

After the death of her English Lieutenant, Mary blossomed as a rebel. Miss Bailey relates in her study of the McKnight family this engaging
REVOLUTIONARY ARMY SURGEON

bit of tradition: “As the widow of a British officer Mary was able to obtain through her many influential friends in New York for her father General Scott and for Governor Livingston, with whose daughters she was in constant correspondence, information which considerably aided in preventing the execution of certain military movements of the enemy, especially in Westchester County late in 1776 and early in 1777.” We’d like to know more about this minx!

So the young Surgeon General Charles McKnight and Mary of the counter-espionage were married on April 22, 1778. With a husband conspicuous in the patriot cause, Mary naturally could do little more among the Loyalists and the English, so she took to the womanly art of bearing and rearing children. Within a year, on January 29, 1779, came Mary Scott, to be followed by four sisters and a brother. The latter, John Morin Scott, was born April 20, 1784.

Perhaps Mary and the earlier children lived with the Scott family during the war, but when finally discharged Dr. McKnight settled in New York and lived successively at 17 Dock Street, 50 Smith (now William) Street, and 9 Maiden Lane, near the Oswego Market. He began practicing medicine and surgery, and recognition came rapidly. He was appointed Port Physician of New York on May 21, 1784, with the duty of inspecting incoming vessels and looking out for cases of illness requiring quarantine.

Then he became a Regent of the University of the State of New York on November 26, 1784. In the following year he was appointed Professor of Surgery and Anatomy at Columbia College, a post he held the rest of his life. Two years later he became a trustee of Columbia. There could hardly have been a busier man in New York than he, for his private practice was so heavy that he was compelled to adopt the novel device of keeping a carriage in which to make his rounds.

In the first biographical sketch of him, published in 1814 in the American Medical and Philosophical Register, Dr. David Hosack wrote that he was without a rival in his profession except for Dr. Richard Bayley. William Alexander Duer went a little further: in his Reminiscences of an Old New Yorker, published in 1867, he said that “McKnight was the most eminent surgeon of his day, and possessed a very extensive practice as a physician especially among the Whig families, and was esteemed equally skilful in both branches of his profession, dividing the best practice of the city with Dr. Bayley. The latter had been a Loyalist and a surgeon in the British army, so the division of clients undoubtedly had a political basis.”

Dr. McKnight performed a successful Caesarian operation, said to
have been the first in America; so interesting for those days that it was discussed at a meeting of the Medical Society of London. He even took time to respond to calls from Philadelphia; an obituary article in a Philadelphia newspaper quoted by Miss Bailey stated that as a surgeon and oculist he was perhaps unequalled in America, as attested by the many uncommonly skilful and difficult operations he had performed in both the large cities. An oculist too!

George Washington became very ill in New York on May 10, 1790, and Dr. McKnight was called. An entry in the journal of William Maclay dated May 15 indicates he had been asking the doctor about the outlook. In the rather elegant locution of those days he wrote in his diary that “Dr. McKnight said he would trifle neither with his own character nor the public expectation, that Washington’s danger was very imminent and every reason to expect that the event of his disorder would be unfortunate.” Dr. McKnight pulled him through, although convalescence took several weeks.

The war pay of a surgeon was very moderate, and so slow in coming that Dr. McKnight did not receive the last of his before 1788. The promised bounty lands were yielded in time, but slowly. A warrant for 450 acres in Ohio was given him on September 25, 1790; this he later sold. In 1791 Dr. Charles McKnight and others gave power of attorney to Jasper Hopper to obtain warrants for land due them from the government, and when obtained, to transfer them to the Surveyor General for the use of the people of the State. This appears in Land Papers of the State of New York, Vol. LI, p. 50. After becoming a widow, Mary renewed pleas for bounty lands due; her claim was filed on August 10, 1792 and is recorded in Vol. LIII, p. 47. On November 19, 1794, a map was filed, showing lands allotted to Charles McKnight and others amounting to 1,463 acres. (Vol. LXI, p. 150.) Eventually the widow received warrants for her share, probably less than 1,000 acres, possibly in the neighborhood of Cazenovia, New York.

The doctor who had saved George Washington and many others could not save himself. It may almost be said that he gave his life for others, for in his intense application he must have neglected his own health. The effects of the wound and of fatigue and exposure in wartime ultimately brought on a lingering illness, from which he died on November 16, 1791 at the age of forty-one. Charles Scott McKnight later wrote that his grandfather died from a “pulmonic affection,” which moderns might more frankly call tuberculosis.

On the second of the reclining slabs just inside the entrance to Trinity churchyard is this inscription: “Here Lies the Body of Charles Mc-
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Knight, M.D., Senior Surgeon in the American Army of the Revolution, and late Professor in the Medical Department of Columbia College, a most eminent Surgeon, a skilled Physician, and a Zealous Patriot. He died November 16th, 1791, Aged 41 Years."

Now Mary was left with a brood of young children: Elizabeth Litchfield and five of her second marriage. She had property left her by her father as well as her husband, but apparently little money, so she began selling. Dr. McKnight had bought in 1784 from the State of New York, in its sale of estates forfeited by Tories because of collaboration with the British, 710 acres in Queensberry Township and 165 acres of farmland in Bedford. He also had bought a number of lots of the forfeited DeLancey estate in New York City, which Mary sold. She also sold land in the Out Ward left by her father, and in 1794, two lots and a dwelling on Maiden Lane next the East River. Dr. McKnight's last address was 9 Maiden Lane.

A visitor who cares to pause a moment in front of Trinity church may peer through the tall iron railing and read the inscription on the third of the reclining slabs: "In memory of Mrs. Mary McKnight, Relict of Doct. Charles McKnight, Late of this City, Physician. Nat. 17 July 1753, Obt. 19 Sept. 1796. Ætat 43 years & 2 months."

John Morin Scott McKnight, only son of Dr. Charles, attended Yale with the class of 1805, but left in his junior year to study medicine. Yale gave him the degrees of A.B. and A.M. forty-two years later, in 1846. He continued in the Columbia Medical School until 1808, but did not graduate. The letters M.D. did, however, appear ultimately on his gravestone. He was admitted on examination to the practice of medicine in April 1808, and was regarded as equal in ability to any other of the young doctors. His great-great-granddaughter, Miss Bailey, writes: "After his marriage, having ample wealth, he largely retired from practice, pursuing his profession for an occupation and as a means of charity to the poor. He was connected with several hospitals."

He was married at the age of thirty-seven on November 5, 1821, to Maria Edgar, then thirty-four. She was a daughter of William Edgar, an Ulster Scot from Belfast who came young to America and made a large fortune in the Canada fur trade and in merchant trading with China and India. He was treasurer of the Mutual Life, one of the first of the large insurance companies, and a director of the Bank of New York. One child resulted from the marriage, Charles Scott McKnight, who was born January 2, 1827. John McKnight was a stout six-footer, and dark like his father. He cherished the Cincinnati and was one of the founders of the St. Nicholas Society.
Perhaps reflecting upon the consequences of wealth and ease, John ended the will in which he left all his property to his only son Charles, with an exhortation "to avoid an idle life, to select an active pursuit, render himself a useful member of society and be dutiful and affectionate to his mother." Charles won an A.B. degree at Columbia in 1846 and then studied at the College of Physicians and Surgeons into 1847. After that, according to Miss Bailey: "He had no business, his main avocation being the study of the family genealogy."

No doubt he was dutiful and affectionate to his mother because he had family piety. If he made a full-time job of research, he didn't do too well at it. He by-passed the McNaughts of Galloway and the Covenanters who got themselves hunted for treason, perhaps feeling with Francis Augustus MacNutt that the less said of them the better. Or possibly he failed to discover them; he was very busy with cemeteries and gravestone inscriptions.

The MacNauchtans of Argyll suited him better, and he fixed his attention upon "Sir Alexander," reputed to have fought and died at Flodden. We know that Alexander was not a knight and that he did not perish in 1513, but Charles may not be blamed too much for taking the word of Crawford, Douglas, and the rest. Anyhow, he accepted his grandfather's conclusion that the surname McKnight means "son of the knight," and that the knight from whom his family got its name and descent must have been "Sir Alexander." He could hardly have been more mistaken, and it is a pity he gave his lifetime to the production of such futile results.

Charles Scott McKnight married three times. First, a very pretty girl named Mary Bedlow DePeyster, a granddaughter of Colonel Abraham DePeyster of New York and New Brunswick, who was Captain of American Volunteers (Loyalists) in the Revolution, and later treasurer of New Brunswick. Poor Mary Bedlow died in 1852 before she was twenty after giving birth to her only child, Mary Beekman McKnight, and was buried in the First Presbyterian churchyard. Subsequently her remains were removed to Rural Cemetery at Poughkeepsie when Charles moved to that city with his third wife.

The second wife was Adalina Louisa Champlin, who bore three children: Charles, who became an M.D., married, and had one daughter; Louisa, who married James Samuel Porteous; and Annie, who died in her fourteenth year. Adalina died when thirty and was buried in the First Presbyterian churchyard in New York. Later her remains were disinterred and placed beside those of Mary at Poughkeepsie. The third wife was Julia Haddock of Buffalo, who had no children of her own,
and who may have spent idle hours in placing flowers on the graves of Mary and Adalina while waiting to join them.

After spending some of his earlier years in New Windsor and Newburgh, Charles bought several lots in Poughkeepsie in 1866 and built a home at what is now 101 South Hamilton Street. Then in the 1880s he became interested in Saratoga Springs, at that time the summer capital of the fashionable world of racing and gaming. He established his family there, and sold the Poughkeepsie home in 1890. Loyal at the last, he returned to Poughkeepsie, died there in 1895, and went to take his place beside his first and second wives in Rural Cemetery. Whether Julia later chose to join the family group, or to repose alone in a Presbyterian churchyard, I have no idea.

Mary Beekman McKnight, whose mother Mary Bedlow lost her life in giving her birth on January 1, 1852, was reared mostly by maiden DePeyster aunts in New York. On April 7, 1874, she was married in the First Presbyterian church, Poughkeepsie, to Edmund Smith Bailey, only son of Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey. One of their two sons, Dr. Theodorus Bailey, practiced medicine in New York City until recently. The surgical instruments and other memorabilia of Dr. Charles McKnight, and the membership in the Society of the Cincinnati handed down by the Revolutionary surgeon, reposed with him. He had no son. One of his six daughters is Rosalie Fellows Bailey, compiler of the genealogical story of the McKnight family that appeared in the issues for April, July, and October, 1936, of the *Genealogical and Biographical Record*, published in New York. Hers is a piece of solid work, flawless in technique; if she meant to make it available as source material she accomplished a useful purpose. Any conclusions drawn from her recital of facts are my own, for which she is not responsible.

So here then ends the story of the young Charles McKnight who came from Antrim to New Jersey in 1740, and his son the surgeon. Miss Bailey accounts for no man or boy living today, of this particular line, with the name McKnight. Two small sons of Captain Richard McKnight, who died on a British prison ship in the Revolution, survived to manhood, married and had sons. What of the families of these men? Though overlooked by Miss Bailey, these McKnights may be numerous today.

At or about the time the Rev. Charles McKnight came from Antrim to New Jersey there was another arrival: Lewis McKnight. Regarding him the biographers of Dr. McKnight’s family have remained silent. Some of Lewis’ descendants, who published years ago a book entitled
The McKnight Family Circle, were of opinion that Lewis and Charles were brothers and came over together.

Lewis McKnight, we are told in this work, lies buried near Freehold, New Jersey. Robert, the son who provides greatest interest, was born in 1745 at Freehold; the other sons were Lewis and Joseph. At the close of the Revolution Robert moved to Bordentown, New Jersey; then to Charlton, Saratoga County, New York. In 1799 he bought a farm of 550 acres at Truxton, Cortland County, and built a log house on Jeffrey Brook opposite the schoolhouse on the east side of the old turnpike. He died in 1826. His children: Sarah McKnight Roberts, Rebecca McKnight Brown, Ann McKnight Lawrence, and sons Lewis, Joseph, John, Thomas, and Charles.

Two sons of Charles, last named above, were John D. and William H. McKnight, who settled at Springfield, Massachusetts and became real estate operators on a large scale. They bought a tract of nearly 125 acres directly east and northeast of the Springfield Armory before the turn of the century and developed what is known still as the McKnight district. It was entirely built up years ago, and the city has grown beyond it.

The McKnights have disappeared from Springfield, just as the McKnights of Washington Township, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, have vanished from the region whence so many sons entered Revolutionary armies. They may be represented now by McKnights living in many States.
BOOK TEN

POST-REVOLUTION ARRIVALS

1796 AND ONWARD
PERSONS IN THE STORY
IN BOOK TEN

PAUL V. McNutt, who became a Major in first World War, national commander of American Legion, dean of University of Indiana law school, Governor of Indiana, High Commissioner to the Philippines, Federal Security Administrator, and who narrowly escaped Democratic nomination to vice presidency in 1940; subsequently was first U. S. Ambassador to the Philippines.

REV. GEORGE L. McNutt, who gave up a Presbyterian pulpit to work four years at common labor in factories in preparation for successful career as a lecturer on workingmen's problems.

WILLIAM S. McNutt, elder son of the lecturer, who prepared himself through many hardships to become a war correspondent and a successful writer of magazine stories and screen plays.

PATTERTON McNutt, his younger brother, who served in an ambulance corps in the first World War, and became successively a newspaper writer, play producer, screen writer, and contributor to magazines.

WILLIAM McNEIGHT, who removed from County Down in Ulster in 1849 to Wisconsin, and who corrected surname to McKnight; notable among his grandsons is

WILLIAM LESTER McKnight, who rose from a job as salesman to head the company in St. Paul that manufactures Scotch Tape and many other unique products.

DANIEL MACNAUGHTON, who lived in Glasgow and who, somewhat insane, proved how hard it is to get a MacNaughton into a prison to stay.

F. F. McNaughton, publisher of a daily newspaper in Pekin, Ill., who made New York take notice of his shrewd analyses of the unsoundness of various political expedients.

JAMES MacNAUGHTON, who was for years president of the Calumet and Hecla Consolidated Copper Company.

CLARENCE JOHN McNitt, official in the Union Pacific railroad system, whose inability to tell anything but the truth caused no embarrassment to E. H. Harriman.

GORDON McNitt, his son, who maintains the tradition of frank speech in San Diego.

GOVERNOR SIDNEY S. McMath of Arkansas, who has proved how far a former officer of Marines may go in fighting corruption and building up a State.

DRS. SARAH and JULIA McNutt, who were among early successful women practitioners.

JOHN HUGH McNaughton, poet and composer of the Genesee Valley.

H. STEWART McKnight of Great Neck, N. Y., a community-builder.

DR. HIRAM EUGENE McNutt, son of a country doctor of Warrensburg, N. Y., who proved his mettle as a pioneer physician in South Dakota.

RANDOLPH McNutt, his younger brother, who helped forty young men through Dartmouth, left half a million dollars to the college in addition to many other benefactions, and whose name has been given to a Dartmouth building.

ROBERT McNaught, typical of younger generation, who is beginning a career in Maine.

BAILIE WILLIAM C. MacKnight of New Galloway, Scotland, who takes all McNaughts back to the place where they started.
Much that was written a decade ago of Paul Vories McNutt seems to have been inspired by envy or some equivalent emotion. A few of the writers for the press viewed his rapid rise, his often brilliant successes, and his handsome person, with a degree of reserve that suggests partial failure of appreciation. Was he then the victim of a tacit conspiracy of the jealous and censorious? And if so, why?

One might suppose, by way of illustration, that the author of a long and humorously ironic article about him published in the magazine Life on January 29, 1940, Jack Alexander by name, was a bald and homely fellow with sharply opposed political ideas. Mr. Alexander must have had bitterness in his soul when he put into his typewriter a ribbon tinted and flavored with blue vitriol and banged out his article on the Gentleman from Indiana. Paul McNutt then was a confessed candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency — in the event Franklin D. Roosevelt chose not to seek a third term. Observe these caustic words:

Behind the Mister America façade of McNutt lies a dynamic, arbitrary intellect and deep in his lifeguard chest stirs a craving for the presidency that is hard and cold and touched with fire. As a natural phenomenon, his yen is beautiful to behold; as a barefaced display of climbing, it is embarrassing to sensitive persons. . . . Since young manhood, McNutt has been a super-salesman who has tirelessly plugged one commodity — Paul V. McNutt. In the histrionics of self-promotion he has few equals. . . . He is conscious of his bodily grandeur — his six-feet-two of height, his 195 lbs., his pale blue eyes and umbrageous black brows — and has got more out of a head of platinum hair than any other American, barring possibly the late Jean Harlow.

We may be sure even after the lapse of years that Jack Alexander didn’t intend Paul McNutt to enjoy reading this characterization and all that followed; we may be equally certain he expected Franklin D. Roosevelt to be delighted. Mr. Roosevelt would have been ungrateful indeed if he hadn’t read and chuckled. Magazine articles like that, though, lose their sting when the partisanship that inspires them has evaporated. Jack Alexander, the reader may care to know, was with the editorial staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch before he blasted Paul McNutt in Life; afterward he became a staff writer for the Saturday Evening Post.

With the moral indignation of a Scot — explained by his name — Mr. Alexander held the ownership of white hair at forty-eight to be a sign
of vanity. Absurd! Early frosting of hair to white has been a characteristic of Mr. McNutt’s clan, recurring occasionally but with marked definiteness, in all branches and in the most remote degrees of relationship.

Now that he has been out of active politics for quite a while, Paul McNutt must be enjoying his happier and less turbulent style of life. No one minds now if he is very successful in a quiet way as attorney for large insurance companies operating on a stratospheric level, with vast suites of offices in New York and Washington. He isn’t competing in the political rat-race now. He isn’t challenging the ascendancy of heaven-sent leaders with ambitions greater and more formidable than his own, fortified by popular schemes for snaring voters in masses, and building power, that he himself perhaps wouldn’t have dreamed of using. He has found peace, he must tell himself as he looks out over Central Park from the windows of the Fifth Avenue apartment house where he lives. And if he doesn’t tell himself that, no doubt his wife tells him.

He has come a long way from the one-story cottage of five rooms in Franklin, Indiana, where he was born July 19, 1891, the son of John Crittenden and Ruth Neely McNutt. His father was a lawyer, and an aspiring Democratic candidate who in spite of a predominance of Republicans in his area was elected to a term as prosecuting attorney in 1888. Later he was elected an appellate judge. He had begun as a teacher at the age of seventeen, after a boyhood on the farm of his father, James McNutt, and after graduation from the high school in Morgantown, Indiana. Five years at teaching were followed by law studies in the office of an uncle, Cyrus F. McNutt of Terre Haute, and with S. D. Luckett of Bedford. He was admitted to the bar in 1884. He was always a hardworking lawyer, who would have appreciated election to the Supreme Court of Indiana. What he could not achieve for himself he wished to make possible for his son and only child, Paul McNutt, herself of Ulster-Scottish descent, shared in the hard work and the ambitions.

Paul McNutt’s great-great-grandfather, Alexander McNutt, made a belated departure from Ulster as compared with many of his McNaught kinfolk whose migrations to the American colonies long before the Revolution have been recounted in earlier chapters. Alexander McNutt came to Ohio before 1800, perhaps in 1796. Most of what we know about his line was contributed to the Indiana Magazine of History, issue of December 1939, by M. N. McNutt, evidently a cousin in some degree of Paul McNutt. Both had James and Cynthia McNutt as grandparents. From this informant it is learned that Alexander’s son John
married Mahala Hensley, of an old and good Virginia and Kentucky family, and moved from Adams County, Ohio, to Johnson County, Indiana. The children of John and Mahala McNutt were Reuben, James, Cyrus F. (the Terre Haute lawyer), Elizabeth, and Isaac. James (1836-1867) married Cynthia Jane Hunt on January 20, 1859; one of their sons was John Crittenden McNutt, born May 25, 1863, who married Ruth Neely on July 7, 1886. Their son Paul was given the middle name Vories in honor of one of the father's clients.

Thus we find the subject of this chapter related to the covenanting McNaughts of Galloway and the refugees from hardship and oppression who found homes in Donegal, Antrim, and Down. Longer residence of this particular branch in Northern Ireland gave opportunities for further annealing experience with the conflicts of that troubled region. It may have added toughness and temper to the family metal, but in most essentials the characteristics of the later comers held to the general pattern. Like their forerunners, they came to the American frontier to own land and be farmers.

Allowing for asperities, let us dip a little further into the Life article:

Paul McNutt's strange intuition that he had a rendezvous with history developed before he was out of knee pants. He was a pretty boy and an only child and was delicate from an early attack of diphtheria. His mother liked to send him to parties dressed up in a Lord Fauntleroy suit. These things made him a target in a town like Martinsville. The ruffian element at parties had more fun dog-piling on Paul McNutt and tearing off his lace collar than in pinning a tail on a donkey. After grade-school classes, the same hoodlums amused themselves by chasing young McNutt all the way home in a shower of mudballs.

Against this treatment, the victim, in the privacy of his room, balanced the praise of his teachers, which was unanimous, and of his parents, who were afraid that his ego might be crushed. . . . By the time he was well along in Martinsville high school, a suspicion which young McNutt had been nurturing, that his judgments were impeccably correct, hardened into conviction. He clinched debates by planting his feet firmly in the center of the platform, delivering dogmatic dicta on world problems and saying: 'I have investigated and I know.' The phrase got to be habitual with him. And whatever Paul McNutt said went. He was president of his class and pitcher on the baseball team. He organized a dramatic club and dealt himself the leading roles. The school had no yearbook and the school authorities did not want one. McNutt founded one anyway and named it The Nuisance, after an epithet the principal had used in expressing his distaste for the venture.

When McNutt entered Indiana University in 1909, the college dramatic society was in a rut. He reorganized it and no one contested his right to the best parts. The campus submitted to McNutt's leadership as if it had been

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foreordained since the granting of the charter. At various times he was
editor of the daily, president of the Student Council, class president, and so
on and on. He made Beta Theta Pi, the most aristocratic fraternity, and in
the Beta house enjoyed the distinction of wearing the biggest shoes (12s)
and the biggest hat (7 ½). At the head of a small fraternity clique, he dominated campus politics,
which always has been especially flagrant at Indiana. His chief rival was an
undergraduate named Wendell Willkie, who was leader of the non-fraternity
or barbarian faction. Willkie . . . . was looked upon as a wild-eyed radical
at college. He chewed tobacco, wore a turtle-necked sweater, and let his
hair fall in his eyes. McNutt, today’s self-nominated spokesman for liberalism,
was strictly a conformist and conservative. Slim and handsome, he
dressed well and was something of a snob.

Tendencies to be dogmatic in debate and to push ahead aggressively
to make the most of one’s abilities are racial, and thus ingrained. But the
facility at becoming a social leader and a big man on campus generally
was entirely Paul McNutt’s own. The youths who flower early as
campus celebrities very often fade into relative obscurity afterward.

But Paul McNutt appears to have been different in more than one
particular. He was among the leaders in a fortunate group, with politi-
cal, journalistic, and class activities. His group no doubt monopolized
the prettiest and liveliest coeds, too. How then may we account for his
being elected to Phi Beta Kappa? The idea must simmer into the most
unwilling minds that Paul actually had something, and may still have it. How many students can keep up an A average while romping through
the most enticing of the extra-curricular activities — athletics excepted
— and how many Phi Beta Kappas have had time to enjoy student life?

After graduation from the University of Indiana in 1913, Paul Mc-
Nutt took a law course at Harvard. His father borrowed money to help
him, and he earned some himself, working for the Legal Aid Bureau at
Harvard and acting as correspondent for a press association. He had
been a law student only a year when in 1914 he was admitted to the
Indiana bar. Just before he received his LL.B. degree in 1916 he was
notified that the Democrats of his home county had nominated him for
prosecuting attorney. After a hard campaign, he missed election by only
five votes. Then for a few months father and son practiced law together
at Martinsville in the firm of McNutt & McNutt. In March 1917, when
a law professor at the State University fell ill, Paul was invited back to
Bloomington to take his classes.

The United States entered the World War in April, and that summer
Paul entered an officers’ training camp at Fort Benjamin Harrison. He
was transferred to the artillery school at San Antonio, and at a dance
in the Texas city he met and liked Miss Kathleen Timolat, daughter of a manufacturer. It was the fortune — good or ill — of a number of young officers suited to teaching to be kept at home camps as instructors and so to have no combat experience overseas. Paul was designated to be an artillery instructor at Camp Stanley, South Carolina. Before he left San Antonio he and Miss Timolat were married. From then until the end of the war he was kept at his duties as an instructor, finishing in 1918 as an artillery Major at the age of twenty-seven.

After the armistice Mr. and Mrs. McNutt returned to Bloomington, and within a year a professorship of law became available. The Life article conveys an impression of happy days in Bloomington: "Without half trying, the McNutts soon took the spotlight in the faculty social circle. Mrs. McNutt had a metropolitan charm that fascinated academic Bloomington. A certain aura hung over her husband from his college-hero days and his success in becoming an Army Major at twenty-seven had inflated the school's pride in him. Erect from his military training and beginning to show maturity in his god-like features, he was the most glamorous figure the bucolic campus had ever seen. As a local boy, educated by the State, he was the personification of Indiana Triumphant."

So far, and for a few years longer, Paul McNutt's career was a story of almost romantic progress and success, untouched by bitterness. What happened next might befall any ambitious young man eager to make the most of his abilities and push his way upward. No one who gets his head and shoulders conspicuously above the crowd ever escapes unpleasant attentions. He becomes again the target for the mudballs of the envious. Considering the bilious nature of the accusation made by some others that Paul McNutt plotted to overthrow and supplant the dean of the Indiana Law School, Jack Anderson's nippy account seems fair enough:

The goal of McNutt and all the other professors was, naturally, the post of dean. Two obstacles stood in McNutt's way. One was his lack of seniority; he was outranked in service by all of his colleagues. The other was the dean himself, Dr. Charles Hepburn, an elderly scholar who had held the job with distinction for many years and had no intention of giving it up. Hepburn was tactless and without skill as a faculty politician. He was ultra-conservative and he had built up a faculty whose key men were of the same mental cast.

Hepburn's habit of speaking his mind played into McNutt's hands. Caustic criticisms which the dean had made of legal ethics in Indiana had angered prominent members of the Bar Association and they had already brought pressure upon the Board of Trustees to force him into retirement. Hepburn
might have withstood the heat indefinitely had not McNutt, in casual conversations with some of the trustees, talked up the necessity of liberalizing the law school. When the pressure from the bar got too strong for the trustees, they turned to the man who had a program, Professor McNutt. In the summer of 1925, Dr. Hepburn went out and Professor McNutt, at thirty-four, went in — the youngest dean the law school had ever had. McNutt shook what he considered dead wood out of the faculty and substituted energetic pedagogs of his own age and beliefs .... put the law school on a new and more efficient footing.

Hardly had Paul McNutt been appointed dean when he began noticing other opportunities. As a law professor he had played blackjack with Bloomington cronies in a room over a motion-picture theater. Like himself, these cronies were members of the local Burton Woolery Post of the American Legion. In October of the year in which he was elected dean — 1925 — he also was elected commander of the local Post. One year later he went to the State convention at Marion with three friends to buck the machine and make a fight for the position of commander of the Indiana Legion. The candidate of the ruling group was a distiller named O'Shaugnessy, who was promoting himself by serving whiskey in his headquarters, from punch bowls, with tin cups. He was also passing out pint flasks for hip pockets. Paul McNutt was elected by a plurality of thirteen, in a vote totaling about 600, but it took a lot of high-powered doing. Legionnaires are not usually squeamish about generosity with flasks.

During his year as State commander Paul McNutt traveled 40,000 miles to address Legionnaires in eighteen other States. The national convention of 1928 was held in San Antonio, and since Mrs. McNutt was popular in her home town, the newspapers naturally spoke favorably of her husband as a candidate for national commander. The election was close, with a number of favorite sons in the race. Paul McNutt came up from behind, with the help of second-choice votes, to win.

Then he emerged into national attention. He made speeches in nearly all the States. His salary as commander was increased from $7,200 to $10,000, and he had a $10,000 allowance for traveling expenses. He also was president of the American Legion Publishing Corporation during the year, and a director until 1931. “His term ended in the month of the 1929 stock market collapse, a debacle which put Republican officeholders everywhere on the skids. Old Tom Taggart was dead and Indiana Democracy was groggy and leaderless.”

Paul McNutt gave the keynote speech at the Indiana Democratic convention in 1930, and it is likely that after hearing him, party members felt they had a new leader. The quality of his oratory was summed
up for me not long ago by Robert E. G. Harris, then chief editorial writer for the Los Angeles Daily News, who had known him in Indiana:

“When Paul McNutt spoke on some subject in which he was deeply interested,” Mr. Harris said, “his intensity was so great that the air seemed to quiver, and the platform under his feet vibrated. He is one of the most powerful speakers I have ever heard.”

In the Democratic year of 1932 he was nominated for Governor almost without opposition, and he carried Indiana by an even greater vote than was given Franklin D. Roosevelt, who won the State by a landslide.

No surprise should be caused by the statement that Paul McNutt was a very good Governor in a very difficult period. The depression had hit Indiana hard. The economic situation was rather desperate, the banks were shaky, and State finances were in a bad way. McNutt went to work as a liberal Democrat, not as a New Dealer, but his methods were as forthright as those of the new President in Washington. His determination to get things done, and in a hurry, caused some grouching and crabbing, and it is amusing to observe now that those who criticized his methods as “czarlike” were often those who praised and admired the “rubber-stamp” administration in Washington.

One of the chief objects of blame was the Two Percent Club, a device by which salaries of party officeholders were assessed to support the State organization. The fact seems to be that a fund-raising practice managed with quiet secrecy everywhere else was carried on openly and without apology under the McNutt regime in Indiana.

One of the new Governor’s early moves was to reorganize and simplify the State government—something worse needed and still neglected in Washington. McNutt merged 102 bureaus into eight departments and reduced the State’s payroll, without neglecting to find some jobs for deserving Democrats. Jack Alexander related perhaps grudgingly:

Most of the McNutt legislation was progressive and Indiana was plucked from a bad economic and civil crisis. Labor got its first breaks in twelve years. Months before the New Deal came to the rescue, the State’s skidding banks were bolstered and public relief was instituted. After that the new laws tied in with those of the national administration. An inherited deficit, which threatened to close schools all over the State, was remedied by the imposition of a gross income tax and the treasury had a surplus when McNutt left office. If there was any large-scale graft — and the opportunities for it were vast — the opposition never was able to supply convincing proof of it.

On July 22, 1935, a general strike broke out at Terre Haute. Local labor chiefs lost control of the walkout when maverick agitators from Chicago and St. Louis muscled in and led mobs up and down Wabash Avenue. Banks, stores and newspaper plants were closed and transportation was
halted under threat of violence. Food and milk trucks were stopped at the city limits. With Terre Haute paralyzed, the city authorities appealed to Governor McNutt to send in troops. By nightfall the town was under martial law and 1,000 National Guardsmen patrolled the streets. A week later, after order had been restored, the troops were withdrawn except for an officer who remained as military ruler for six months. While outside commentators generally denounce the sending of troops to Terre Haute as a coercive act, sentiment in Indiana, even among the calmer leaders of both labor factions, is that it was fully justified.

Paul McNutt had resigned as dean of Indiana law school when he took office as Governor. He served two terms, ending in 1937, and his record made him a national figure of such dynamic possibilities that he could not be overlooked by the party strategists in Washington. The greatest of them all — the President — realized that the case required some handling. Paul McNutt must be identified with the administration in some way, but in such a way that his allegiance could be secured without permitting him to become dangerously popular. The solution was a master stroke. Paul McNutt was appointed High Commissioner to the Philippines almost at once, and thus was removed far away.

A small incident at a dinner in Manila in that same year — 1937 — was given a play in this country that just possibly was encouraged in Washington. In offering toasts, the Japanese Consul General with perhaps a trace of subtlety had passed over the High Commissioner of the United States and toasted first the Philippine president, Manuel Quezon. This was an infraction of protocol, as Paul McNutt pointed out when opportunity offered. The courtesy he requested was not for himself, but for his government. The incident was played up at home as though the High Commissioner had out of personal vanity upset the comity of nations. In another connection, without reference to this incident, Jack Alexander remarked of McNutt that “the young leftists of the New Deal hate him.” Some of the young leftists have been in hot water since for going so far to the left.

In 1939 Paul McNutt was recalled from the Philippines to become Federal Security Administrator. By this time he must have established his loyalty sufficiently to be regarded as “safe,” for the new job of managing the recently created social security system was an important one. He may by this time have revised his social philosophy and his ideas of what has since been called the “welfare state.” He may have been speaking from real conviction back in Bloomington when in the Faculty Club an associate and fellow-lounger read a passage from The Nation contending that the government owed the citizen much more
REV. GEORGE L. McNUTT, D.P.M. — See p. 326
paternal care than he was getting. "Doesn't owe him a damned thing!" Professor McNutt commented, according to the later recollection of his faculty colleague.

Paul McNutt continued as Federal Security Administrator until 1945, and during the second World War he was given other tasks besides. He was director of the Defense, Health, and Welfare Services from 1941 to 1943, chairman of the War Manpower Commission from 1942 to 1945, a member of the War Production Board, and also a member of the Economic Stabilization Board. The junior New Dealers presumably cared no more for this busy man than they ever had, but as their chief had remarked, "Dr. New Deal has given place to Dr. Win the War." And Paul McNutt had kept regular in order to be useful. The story of his regularity in the 1940 presidential campaign has elements of the dramatic.

As President Franklin D. Roosevelt's second term drew near a close, aspiring Democrats believed the tradition against a third term would give them a chance at the nomination. James A. Farley was one of the aspirants; he had organized victory for Roosevelt in 1932 and thought himself due for return favors. John N. Garner of Texas, who had been Vice President for two terms, considered the party owed something for his own strategic withdrawal in the 1932 convention at the suggestion of William Randolph Hearst: a withdrawal that broke the deadlock and gave the nomination to Mr. Roosevelt. Paul McNutt announced he would be a candidate for the nomination at the 1940 convention in case President Roosevelt declined to seek a third term.

Throughout the early months of 1940 Mr. Roosevelt remained inscrutably silent about his intentions. He was accommodated in this sphinxlike attitude by the German blitzkrieg that swept through Belgium, Holland, Norway, and France and held this country breathless with anxiety. The waiting candidates couldn't do much but go on waiting.

When the Democratic national convention assembled at the Coliseum in Chicago in mid-July, Senator James F. Byrnes of South Carolina appeared as spokesman for those intending to draft Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Byrnes announced to the press that this was to be an unbossed convention; that the delegates would be permitted to express their free choices. This may have been partly wishful thinking. Mr. Byrnes was known to be receptive to nomination for Vice President; it also was known that President Roosevelt favored Henry A. Wallace, then his Secretary of Agriculture. At least a dozen other candidates for the running-mate position, including Speaker Bankhead, Sam Rayburn,
and Senator Brown of Michigan, hoped with Senator Byrnes that the convention would be unbossed.

It was almost immediately apparent that President Roosevelt was willing to be drafted. The delegates made no trouble; they knew what they had to do and they did it, except that a number of them stayed with Jim Farley’s candidacy to the end. But there was a great deal of open discontent. Their unbossed convention was expected to nominate Henry Wallace for Vice President whether the delegates wanted him or not. And they did not. They knew he was a New Dealer, but they were sure he was no Democrat.

Paul McNutt’s provisional candidacy for the presidential nomination had faded automatically, of course, when it became known that the draft-Roosevelt movement not only had been sanctioned in the White House, but probably had originated there. The Federal Security Administrator, who had been High Commissioner to the Philippines, was playing the game.

It seems possible that when the Life article was published about six months before the convention, with its sardonic and even blistering comment that Paul McNutt’s “craving for the presidency” was “hard and cold and touched with fire,” the Roosevelt partisans may have feared the man from Indiana might conceivably capture the fancy of the country, and particularly the favor of delegates who were regular Democrats, partial to the no-third-term tradition, and cold to the party ascendancy of New Deal politicians. The article may have been expected to damp down any inclination toward the man who had given Indiana a good administration and left office with a surplus in the treasury. Mr. Roosevelt had done no better as Governor of New York, and had run up a deficit of a hundred million dollars.

I was present at the Democratic convention of 1940, as I had attended the national conventions of both parties since 1912, with a small corps of special correspondents. All that happened I saw and heard. Before we enter an eye-witness account of what occurred at the climax, let us observe a portion of a story in the New York Times of July 19, 1940, telling of the stirrings after Mr. Roosevelt had been nominated a third time, and before the convention acted on the vice presidency:

Opposition to Mr. Wallace gathered fast, despite the efforts of the leadership. That he was the choice of Mr. Roosevelt there was no doubt. . . . The New Dealers seemed powerless to cope with the opposition in any other manner than to assert their full force. They kept in close touch with the White House for whatever aid they could receive from that source. At one time during the evening word was passed around, credited to the
President's son, Elliott Roosevelt, that the White House would accept any one of three candidates. One of the convention managers immediately called Washington and came back with the information that the President might not accept renomination himself if his request for a running mate were not met and Mr. Wallace nominated.

Such was the atmosphere in a rebellious convention when Senator Alben W. Barkley, the permanent chairman, ordered the secretary to call the roll of States for nominations to the vice presidency. In a brief time Delaware was reached, and Delaware yielded to Oklahoma. Don Wells, speaker of the House in the State Legislature, took the rostrum to announce that his candidate did not wish his name presented. “But there is precedent in this convention for drafting a candidate,” he went on with spirit, “and I propose that we draft the former Governor of Indiana, the Honorable Paul V. McNutt. Oklahoma takes great pleasure in offering him as its candidate for the nomination for Vice President of the United States.”

The demonstration that followed was unusual. Virtually all outbursts of convention enthusiasm are carefully planned and laboriously staged. They are kept going by sheer determination to outlast rival shows. Except when a nomination grates harshly on the nerves of management, the convention band whips up emotion by blaring out a State song and other heart-stirring music.

But the band did not play “On the Banks of the Wabash” for Paul V. McNutt. It didn’t play at all. No marchers appeared in the aisles with placards and big pictures; no march had been planned. The action of the Oklahoma delegation no doubt surprised most of those present in the big convention hall. It was an act of rebellion, but it delighted delegates and spectators alike. Weary of domination, the convention was ready to fight. It not only wanted to reject Wallace: it wished also to choose a man Mr. Roosevelt didn’t want. And it knew that of all the outstanding men in the Democratic party, the President least wanted Paul McNutt as a running mate. He was too strong, too able, and too independent for close company.

While Chairman Barkley ineffectively pounded his gavel as though to split the block beneath his blows, and the musicians kept their hands in their pockets, delegates, alternates, and gallery spectators burst into a mighty and spontaneous roar. In many years of convention experience I have never seen anything quite like this torrential call to a man to assume a rebel leadership. The uproar continued for twenty minutes.

There is a tide in the affairs of men. . . . What would Paul McNutt do? To a spectator it appeared that if he remained quiet and let the con-
vention follow its own bent, he would certainly be nominated in spite of White House pressure and the efforts of New Deal lieutenants on the spot. Paul McNutt knew exactly what the possibilities were, and he must have considered all the discomforts of running with a leader who could not tolerate the advancement of strong men not accepting all his views, to places within measureable distance of the presidency. Mr. Roosevelt guarded succession to the White House as medieval Kings guarded their thrones. Please remember that I am writing of the politician, not the statesman Roosevelt.

As the convention kept on with its clamor, Paul McNutt made his way to the rostrum to speak. Most of the 15,000 persons present were seeing for the first time the man whose face had become familiar in newspaper and magazine illustrations. The crowd liked him and yelled harder. He was as tall and handsome as he had been represented, and his hair was very white under the blazing klieg lights, for a man who would be forty-nine next day. Here, for the convention rebels, was a strong, exciting personality. As the roar of shouting rose in crescendo, drops of moisture ran down the face of the man waiting with hand upraised. They may have been beads of perspiration. The New York Times reported next morning what followed on the evening of July 18:

Cries of “We want McNutt” continued, as Mr. McNutt stood patiently waiting for order. The convention knew he wanted to withdraw, and sought to prevent it.

“Please, please let me speak,” he said, and a moment later:

“In the first place I want to express” — and again he was cut off.

“Will the convention grant me the privilege of speaking?” shouted Mr. McNutt.

“No!” it shouted back.

Finally, getting attention, Mr. McNutt said he wanted to express thanks to those giving him support.

“I would be ungracious if I failed to give them some recognition,” he went on. “. . . Our party stands on the record of the past seven years. It goes to the people under the leadership of the greatest peacetime President in the history of the nation. America needs strong, logical, liberal and able leaders in the kind of world we live in today. We cannot take chances now. A nation, if it makes a mistake, is lost. We must have leaders who have demonstrated they can take the nation through fire. Franklin D. Roosevelt is such a leader. He is my leader, and I am here to support his choice for Vice President."

Here Mr. McNutt was interrupted by boos.

“I therefore ask in all sincerity that my name be withdrawn,” said Mr. McNutt, and the delegates shouted “No, no!”

One might gather from reading the Times correspondent’s account
that Paul McNutt delivered his self-abnegating speech in firm and cheerful acquiescence to President Roosevelt’s decree that Henry Wallace must be nominated. His manner conveyed no such impression to one in the press section. The convention had been paying him the greatest honor within its power: it had in effect been imploring him, in an almost overwhelming testimonial of regard and faith, to forget the obligations of appointive office and become its candidate. Moreover, he appeared the only candidate — actual or potential — for whom the 1940 convention had any genuine enthusiasm. The moment was one of intense and very real emotion.

The speech declining the honor was in fact delivered with more than a little sadness. Paul McNutt must have been considering the careful manner in which he had been led into obligations by appointments to prevent his emergence at just such an hour as this. He must have seen that the delegates would nominate him if he gave them the chance — at the cost of great inflammation within the party. So he refused his great chance, and thus confounded critics who had promoted legends of his ruthless ambition.

His speech concluded, the convention settled down in disappointment and frustration to complete its work. In effect, Paul McNutt had paraphrased for it the lines of an old popular song: “I can't get away to marry you today; Mr. Roosevelt won't let me.” In the end, Wallace was nominated.

Had Paul McNutt been nominated in 1940 instead of Henry Wallace, it is fantastic to think Mr. Roosevelt would have refused his own nomination. And had McNutt been nominated and elected, it is probable he would have gone along on Mr. Roosevelt’s fourth trip to victory in 1944, and succeeded to the presidency in 1945 instead of Harry S. Truman.

President Truman followed precedent in 1945 and sent Paul McNutt out of the country and away to the Philippines to be High Commissioner again. There was more honor in this appointment than in the first one: the Philippines needed reconstruction with United States aid, and the island dominion was about to become a republic. When independence came, Paul McNutt was appointed our first Ambassador in 1946. He remained in Manila for a while, far from the turbulence of home politics, until he decided to give up the game and take up the practice of law in New York and Washington.

This chapter began with attention to a journalistic study of Paul McNutt published a few months before the Democratic national convention of 1940. A little more than eight years afterward and shortly
before another convention — on April 3, 1948 — the New York World-
Telegram published an article by Daniel M. Kidney, one of its Wash¬
ington correspondents. It bore the caption: "What Happened to Paul
V. McNutt? — Transplanted Hoosier Still Eyes White House." This
article had no acid content, but it had overtones. Mr. Kidney related
that Mr. McNutt had recently visited Shanghai and Nanking as head
of the United Services to China, an agency sponsored under the general
program of the United Nations to aid children through funds privately
raised. Before returning he had been a luncheon guest of Chiang Kai-
shek at Nanking, and on his way home he had stopped for several days
in Manila to visit his old friend, President Manual Roxas. "In fact, he
likes heads of States," Mr. Kidney wrote, and then continued:

He has President Truman's portrait over a great marble mantel in his
Manhattan offices whose twenty-three rooms occupy the entire seventeenth
floor at 84 William Street. In the inner sanctum of his eight-room suite in the
Barr building here [Washington], the President's picture also is in the place
of honor. Beside the President there is also a portrait of Chief Justice Fred
M. Vinson of the Supreme Court.

Furnishings of both offices are rich in leather, marble, and fine woods.
For Mr. McNutt represents such substantial clients as the United States Life
Insurance Co. and the American International Underwriters. The Under¬
writers firm is the export branch of American insurance companies, afford¬
ing Mr. McNutt offices in London, Paris, Rome, and other capitals.

During the House Un-American Activities investigation of Hollywood
people, Mr. McNutt appeared here [in Washington] with Eric Johnston as
counsel for the movie industry.

While waiting to see Mr. McNutt or one of his six associates in New York,
clients may bemuse themselves by looking at numerous framed original car¬
toons that reflect the Indianan's career during fourteen years in Democratic
politics in his State and nation.

If President Roosevelt hadn't turned thumbs down on the idea, Mr. Mc¬
Nutt would have been in second place on the third-term ticket rather than
Henry A. Wallace. The 1940 Chicago convention wanted him. Had he been
chosen, he might be President today. For while Mr. Roosevelt traded Henry
Wallace for Harry Truman for the fourth term, that probably would not
have happened with Mr. McNutt — a regular Democrat.

"I've done my share," he said recently. "I'm happy in what I am doing
now."

When reporters asked him if he would take second place on the Truman
ticket, he replied somewhat equivocally, but smilingly: "I've been taught by
experience that the President is the one who picks his own running mate,
not the convention delegates."

When he was High Commissioner to the Philippines before the war, Mr.
McNutt saw a lot of General of Army Douglas MacArthur. The two men
got along fine. Both take the pomp of office seriously. They love rank and
precedent and are patrons of the most exacting protocol.
It has been suggested that if the two old parties want to put on a glamor contest this fall [1948] — just let the GOP nominate General MacArthur and the Democrats Paul V. McNutt.

Some of the most valued judgments of men come from the universities when they confer honorary degrees. Paul McNutt was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws by Notre Dame and the University of Indiana after he became Governor in 1933, by Bethany College in 1936, by the University of the Philippines in 1939, and by the University of Maryland and American University in 1941. Florida Southern College made him a Doctor of Humanity in 1939, and Boston University awarded him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law in 1942.

From *Who's Who in America* we learn of various decorations and honors: the Medal for Merit of the United States, the Distinguished Service Star of the Philippines, Commander of Polonia Restituta of Poland, Commander of the Legion of Honor of France, and the Grand Cordon of the Order of Cambodia, of Indo-China.

From the same source the interested may be informed of the details of a military career leading to the rank of Colonel in the Field Artillery Reserve in 1923. Here also is a list of top-grade fraternities and clubs. Finally, to get down to plain terms and everyday matters familiar to the rest of us, Paul V. McNutt is a Methodist, a thirty-second degree Mason, and an Elk. He has a very attractive daughter, Louise, who was born June 27, 1921, and who was educated at the University of Indiana.

In the Union building at the University may be seen a bronze bust of Paul McNutt, in academic gown, mounted on a marble base. A plaque beneath the bronze figure shows it was erected while he was Federal Security Administrator; the inscription recites his achievements until that time. Space was left for two more lines: not enough to include the other high positions he has held since. Perhaps nothing, however, can make up to him for the lack of sons and nephews. He is the last of his line.
65. A Minister and His Sons

The fame won by William Slavens McNutt and his brother Patterson McNutt as playwrights and magazine writers has tended to overshadow that of their father. Now that the stories of all three are to be told here, the reader will have opportunity to judge a rather unusual man.

His photograph reveals the Rev. George L. McNutt as the physical embodiment of the characteristics of the men of his widely-dispersed clan. In appearance he was typical of all, with the straight, high-bridged nose, blue eyes with intent gaze, and a face that in repose was serious almost to the point of austerity. Not all the descendants of the covenanting McNaughts have had the crusading spirit — many have been of the moderate, mediating type — but the Rev. George L. McNutt was a reformer with a capacity for moral indignation that moved him to try to make the world better.

Withal, he was a pleasant, friendly man, and by no means a radical or a fanatic. Like so many others of former generations he may have seemed eccentric to conventional eyes. The intense individuality of many of these men (and we still find examples), with an inner urge fighting for expression, led to unique activities.

Mr. McNutt was a Presbyterian minister. He had to work very hard to become one, and after he had safely arrived, he turned his back on the pulpit and became a lecturer, because he was too independent in spirit to be managed by his session. Before we go into that, let us place him in the general family.

George L. McNutt was the son of William G. McNutt, born in Indiana in 1833. William's father was John McNutt, a carpenter, who was born in Hamilton County, Ohio, in 1811. He moved to Franklin County, Indiana, in 1825, and thence in 1852 to Johnson County — the same county where Paul McNutt's father and grandfather were born. John McNutt was a son of Charles, born probably in Ulster in 1784, who arrived with his parents in Adams County, Ohio, in 1796. Charles' father quite likely was Alexander McNutt, the great-great-grandfather of Paul V. McNutt. While such information may not fascinate the general reader, it may be of real interest to those who care to know about their background.

William G. McNutt married Abigail Bradford at or near Vevay, Indiana, and took his bride to Tuscola in Douglas County, Illinois. At the age of only twenty-seven, William died on September 11, 1860,
when George was four. The boy did the work of a man in the cornfield at nine, in the harvest field at twelve, and as a teacher at seventeen.

One of the circulars issued by the Redpath lecture bureau years afterward says he prepared for college in the schools in winter, and in the furrows in summer, "holding the plough with one hand and a book in the other." This may have been his own metaphor. Further, "he was always original, inventive, a bit stubborn, tremendously in earnest, and a terrific worker."

He entered Princeton University with the class of 1880, practically without funds, and so badly behind in some subjects that he was only permitted to stay and try, through the intervention of General Karge. He won second place in the class in the Christmas exams, and Tutor Coyle told him he could stay, with all his conditions removed.

Money failed after a while, and George was before the president, Dr. McCosh, to say he must leave Princeton. In his patriarchal way "Jamie" said: "Mr. McNutt, I command you not to leave town." But Mr. McNutt couldn't obey; he went West. In Missouri presently he married Louise Slavens, the daughter of a lawyer. Then for a year he studied with Dr. Patton in the Northwestern Seminary, where he gained "a little theology and a great deal of inspiration and intellectual freedom." Next he entered Wabash College at Crawfordsville, Indiana, with the class of 1882. He became honor man in scholarship and oratory, and taught there for a while. He wished to be a minister, and though offered the chair in Greek, he chose to be ordained by the Crawfordsville Presbytery.

In June of 1883 the young minister went to the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Illinois, to preach a trial sermon. The congregation liked him but couldn't then afford a full-time minister, so arrangements were made for him to preach on alternate Sundays at nearby Homer. Urbana paid him $550 a year, and Homer added $350 to make a stipend of $900. At the end of a year the Urbana congregation felt equal to $900 for so good a minister, and engaged his entire attention. The first child, William Slavens McNutt, was born in 1885.

The young minister pleased his people. The church historian wrote of him: "Mr. McNutt was a brilliant speaker with a magnetic personality, and the attendance at church services under his ministration increased rapidly. Through his efforts the church was at last freed from the debt which for years had hung over it like an old man of the sea." Thus Thomas Arkle Clark in his History of the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Ill.

Mr. McNutt learned in January 1885 of the remaining debt of $866.50
and resolved to get rid of it. He adopted a plan of taking collections at Sunday evening services for debt reduction; by the first of July the congregation had frugally contributed $24! This would not do. On the next Sunday morning he announced that if the congregation could scrape together $500 by Tuesday afternoon, he could get the rest from an unnamed friend. That afternoon the trustees appointed him and another to canvass the membership; by Tuesday the money had been pledged.

Then in November Mr. McNutt accepted a call from the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis. He could raise money to pay off the church debt, but he couldn't keep his family on $900 a year. We do not wonder. On May 3, 1894, the Urbana church voted to invite Mr. McNutt to return at a salary of $1,200; the congregation hadn't been thriving without him. "Aunty" Russell had been circulating a subscription paper and had done so well in coaxing pledges for the new salary that the officers of the church bought her a chair out of gratitude. A parsonage seemed due Mr. McNutt, and after he had returned to Urbana he was given the liberty to solicit funds to build one, with such aid as he could get. Mrs. Russell helped again, and what they could not raise was borrowed from the Citizens Building and Loan Association. The lowest bid for erecting the parsonage was $1,587. The minister was to be charged rent, to be paid out of his meager salary, and he had the obligation of begging to pay off the debt besides!

Mr. Clark's account of what followed, taken from his history of the church, seems to exhibit a surprising degree of harshness on the part of the trustees, and a lack of sympathy for the financial woes of their thriftily-paid minister. We read:

There was a good deal of agitation during the second period of Mr. McNutt's regime. Much that happened it would be neither kind nor helpful to repeat. The situation might be explained, possibly, by saying that Mr. McNutt was a rare genius and a remarkable pastor without a balance wheel. He had no idea of the limitations of money. The trustees attempted, unasked, to manage his financial affairs for him, and were informed that he wished to be allowed that privilege himself. For a time, part of his salary was paid to him directly, and the remainder applied upon his debts. This procedure was naturally unsatisfactory both to the trustees and to the pastor.

"I must respectfully insist," he wrote the trustees, "that while I remain pastor of this church, my personal relations in the community cannot be a matter of discussion or action in any way whatever, by any organization of the church."

On June 13, 1898, at a joint meeting of the session of the church and the board of trustees it was resolved that a proposition which Mr. McNutt had presented to the board regarding his future salary could not be accepted. It
was further voted that the salary of the pastor be fixed at $1,200 a year to be paid as follows: $20 a month to the Loan Association in lieu of rent; $50 a month in cash to the pastor, and the balance to be paid at the end of the year either in cash or its equivalent, and that the pastor shall render such service as the session of the church shall direct. This arrangement was intended to help Mr. McNutt more and surely to meet his financial obligations.

This proposition was not satisfactory to Mr. McNutt, and he submitted his resignation.

Not all the Presbyterian martyrs suffered in Scotland; Mr. McNutt was one who suffered in Urbana, Illinois. Patterson McNutt at this time was two years old, and William Slavens was thirteen. Indignant at the proposal that rent money be deducted from his $100 monthly salary to pay off the parsonage debt, that he accept $50 a month to keep his wife and children, and that he wait until the end of the year to discover whether or not he would receive the remaining $360 in cash or “equivalent,” he quit.

One of the issues with the session had risen from some aspect of the minister’s proposal to make a drive to draw into the congregation the workingmen employed in the nearby Big Four railroad shops, and their families. With that behind him, Mr. McNutt decided to become a workingman himself in order to understand the lives and problems of those who carried dinner pails to work. He proposed to become a factory hand, and then a lecturer; after four weary but exciting years he was ready to take the platform.

During the period of his studies he returned for a time to Indianapolis, and the following comment appeared in the Indianapolis News:

A smooth-faced, strong-looking man, about forty years old, wearing a workingman’s clothes, this week in the city has not been generally recognized as a former well-known citizen. Neither old acquaintances nor strangers would take him to be Rev. George L. McNutt, but it is he, pursuing knowledge in his own chosen way. . . . In his pastorate of the Fourth Presbyterian church in this city, he organized the first Christian Endeavor Society, and secured the funds to erect the present Y.M.C.A. building, at a time when the building project was about to be given up as a forlorn hope.

Mr. McNutt began his career on the lecture platform in 1902 and continued until the closing months of his life, which he spent in retirement on a ranch in the San Fernando Valley near Los Angeles. One of his favored lecture topics was “The Dinner Pail Man.” His purpose was to tell polite audiences some of the things they did not know about the lives of men who toil. He was not a pleader for the cause of organized labor; he was of course more effective as a narrator of what he had seen.
and experienced as a wage-earner. Workingmen liked him. The Bridgeport \textit{Farmer} reported that an audience of 3,000 filled Poli’s Theater, and half as many more were turned away. A Toledo blacksmith commented: “That man’s got the right kind of stuff in him. He knows what he is talking about. Means what he says and knows how to say it.”

In Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the Berkshire \textit{Eagle} reported: “An immense audience thronged the Academy of Music yesterday afternoon to hear Rev. George L. McNutt on ‘The Dinner Pail Man.’” In Cambridge, the \textit{Chronicle} said: “… One of the most impressive and inspiring addresses of the season. The speaker before the Cantabrigia Club was Rev. George L. McNutt, the minister-workingman. His enthusiasm and consecration made a deep impression.” The Boston \textit{Globe} characterized him after another appearance as an “eloquent speaker, with rapid, clear utterance, homely but expressive.” A report of a lecture at Elkhart, Indiana, thus described him: “Voice strong and resonant; enunciation clear, plain language well chosen, with a suggestion of the [Theodore] Roosevelt style in clenched fists and set teeth. Intense earnestness is the secret of his masterful hold on the audience.”

New York was glad to listen to him. Robert Erskine Ely, Director of the League for Political Education, said of him: “Mr. McNutt has had a unique experience, and he has a message along the line of sane democratic thinking and living which is of much value. Moreover, he delivers this message with humor and a gift of expression which make him a popular speaker in the best sense.” After a men’s mass-meeting in New York, Special Secretary Powlison of the West Side Y.M.C.A. conferred upon him the honorary degree of D.P.M. — “Dinner Pail Man.”

Some of his ten other lecture topics were “If I Were a Woman,” “Why Pews Are Empty,” “Color and Character,” “Woman in the Home — Sweetheart or Slave?” and “The Kitchen Route to Social Redemption.”

Asked for his recollections of Mr. McNutt for inclusion here, C. E. Backman, manager in Chicago of the western department of the Redpath Bureau, wrote:

“I remember Mr. McNutt as a successful speaker. He was a rugged personality. He wasn’t afraid to speak his mind. At the same time his approach was always friendly. His audiences liked him personally. The managers liked him because he made good and was so cooperative. Few lecturers had more return dates than he had. The lyceum season was from October to May, and the chautauqua season from June until September.”
How hard he worked will appear in his son William's recollections. Now we perceive why ministers' sons are so often successful men. The discipline of early years builds hardihood.

William Slavens McNutt, who wrote a great many short stories for the Saturday Evening Post, provided that magazine with a brief biography of himself written in the third person. He had a buoyant style and a light touch. He didn't invite anyone's sympathy for the hard years of his youth when he told the story thus:

His father was a Presbyterian minister, which explains much. He had a hate on public schools and educated his son at home. . . . When young McNutt was thirteen his father went to work incog in an Indiana factory, to find out what people did between Monday morning and Saturday night. He expected to continue this investigation for only the duration of a few weeks, and so, just for a lark, took his son with him.

The lark lasted four years. Just prior to his fourteenth birthday young McNutt went to work as a finishing boy in a lamp-chimney factory in Alexandria, Indiana. His ex-preacher father was picking them up and laying them down in a tin-plate mill.

Four queer years of working and bumming all over the country. Factories, farms, box cars, flop houses, Salvation Army wood yards, jungle camps, back doors, railroad bulls, park benches, etc. Intermittent study with his father meanwhile.

At the end of that time McNutt, Sr., went to chautauqua, and McNutt, Jr., went to a private preparatory school in Hartford, Connecticut. Not so hot. He stuck the year out and then began entering colleges. Again not so hot. He entered several in the space of a few months and then went back to work as a carpenter near Boston. The following fall he drifted into the Emerson College of Oratory in Boston. He had seen something of lyceum and chautauqua and thought he might grow up to be a reader with a quartet, or a Swiss bell-ringer or something.

This is excellent capsule biography: it implies a great deal that it doesn’t actually tell. For example: the father's unique ideas about educating a son, while the mother and younger son remained at home. If young Bill McNutt couldn't get into a college and stay, it appears he learned things in the end that no college could have taught him. To resume with his biography:

There was a dramatic course at Emerson. Plays and everything. McNutt fell for that hard. Move over, Mansfield! Here comes a real actor! Two years at Emerson. Three years acting. Road shows, vaudeville sketches, stock. Terrible!

At liberty, by request, in the West, he went up to Northern British Columbia and Alaska. Back to hard work. Lumberjack, rough carpenter, long-
AFTER SEVENTEEN NINETY-SIX

shoreman, mucker, timber toter, and so on. [He was a big man, and varied
in weight from 190 to 258.]

a year. Short stories. Ran dry. Back to Alaska for material. Got callouses
instead. Stowed away to Seattle. Happened to have stories in five different
magazines on the stands at the same time. Showed them to the city editor of
the Post-Intelligencer and talked him out of a cub job at $10 a week. Great!

Two years on the Post-Intelligencer. Short stories on the side. Written
after midnight in the city room. Back to New York in 1914. Three years of
short stories and novelettes. Got all smoked up about the war. Went out to
Camp Upton when the first draftees arrived and wrote a piece about it.
Finley Peter Dunne, then editor of Collier’s, sent him to France as a war
correspondent on the strength of it.

With the American army through the war and the first of the occupation.
Came home the spring following the Armistice, having enthusiastically writ,
Fed and lied for his country for the duration of the Great Propaganda.

Four years of magazine articles and newspaper syndicate reporting. Fights,
politics, golf, strikes, baseball, gang wars, border troubles, bootlegging, con-
ventions, soldier-settlement matters, and so on. Back to fiction. Short stories.
Double the ouch!

Likes all sports from polo to ping-pong; craps preferred. Likes to listen to
gabby taxi drivers, mouthy hustlers, windy fight managers, confidential
waiters, sport-wise barbers, egotistic vaudevillians, humorous crooks, big
gamblers, little suckers, and all women who work for a living.

One might conclude from his own account of himself, and his
“ouches,” that he was “not so hot.” But it was reported later in the
newspapers that he was the best writer of screen dialogue in Holly-
wood. No wonder; he had talked much with many people of every kind,
and he knew life. He was a leader in Screen Playwrights, Inc., started
by writers who broke away from the Screen Writers Guild when they
thought it was beginning to act like a labor union.

He was teamed for a while with Grover Jones, who knew movie
technique from long experience. McNutt had imagination, the creative
gift, and the art of popular writing. With Jones and others he wrote
screen plays so outstanding that they will be long remembered. Among
them were “Lives of a Bengal Lancer,” “Tom Sawyer,” “Huckleberry
Finn,” “Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch,” “I Cover the Waterfront,”
“So Red the Rose,” “Rhythm on the Range” (for Bing Crosby), and
“Ladies of the Big House.” His last script was “Stolen Honeymoon”
for Ginger Rogers and Charles Boyer.

During the latter part of 1937 his health was poor and he took a vaca-
tion of three months from the RKO Studios. He was ready to return in
January, but before going back he took a special newspaper assignment
to write about the Paul A. Wright murder trial in Los Angeles. That was his last work.

The newspapers of the United States carried dispatches from Hollywood dated January 26, 1938, with long biographical stories beginning thus:

William Slavens McNutt, fifty-two, playwright, war correspondent and scenarist, died last night from bronchial pneumonia at his San Fernando Valley home after a long illness. His wife, Louise, was at his bedside. . . . Besides his wife, he is survived by his brother, Patterson, also in the movies as a writer and producer, and his father, George McNutt, who lives on a nearby ranch. He had no children.

The father lived but a few months after his son's death.

Patterson McNutt, the younger brother, made his way by his own efforts, in a career almost as varied, to high rank as playwright, producer, screen writer, and contributor of stories to the Saturday Evening Post. After his childhood in Urbana he was educated at Valparaiso University in Indiana. Attracted like his brother to the stage, he played a juvenile rôle with Otis Skinner in "Mister Antonio." In the first World War he served two years with Section 511 of the United States Army Ambulance Corps with the French armies. With that behind him, he worked in the drama department of the New York Sun; then as a theatrical press agent for a while, until he became motion picture editor of the New York Globe. His next move was to the World as a sports writer.

This completed his experience as a newspaper man. In 1924 he collaborated with Anne Morrison in writing "Pigs," which was produced in New York by John Golden. In the following year he produced "The Poor Nut," a play by J. C. and Elliott Nugent, which was staged by Howard Lindsay. His next venture was a revival of Ibsen's "Ghosts," starring Minnie Maddern Fiske, with Charles Coburn as co-producer. His next production was "Cloudy with Showers," in 1931. Thomas Mitchell was leading man, and the producer had a small part for himself. Following came the production of a revival of Noel Coward's play, "Hay Fever," with Constance Collier as star.

That seems to have ended his activities as a Broadway producer. The deepening depression may have had something to do with his going to Hollywood in 1934, where he began a new career as a screen writer. He collaborated in "Curly Top," starring Shirley Temple; "Spring Tonic," "Way Down East," "The Gay Deception," "Everybody's Old Man," "The Return of Sophie Lang," and "Vacation from Love."
Others included "Come Live with Me," starring Hedy Lamar and James Stewart, "A Gentleman After Dark," and "Jam Session." One of his later efforts was "Pardon My Past"; in this he collaborated with Harlan Ware and was associate producer with Fred MacMurray, who starred.

After twelve years in Hollywood, Mr. McNutt returned to New York in 1946 and began writing short stories for the magazines; seven of these were published by the Saturday Evening Post. After spending the summer of 1948 at Dallas, Pennsylvania, he returned to New York, and was living at the Players Club, of which he was a member, when he was taken ill. He was removed to Beth David Hospital, where he died after a brief illness on October 23. Like his brother, he lived only to the age of fifty-two.

Although neither William Slavens McNutt nor his brother Patterson had time to realize his mature possibilities, both had lives crowded with bright achievements. Patterson McNutt married Mildred M. Coughlin, an artist and illustrator. A daughter, Patricia, (Mrs. William Donegan), lives at New London, Connecticut. A son, Bradford Hale McNutt, attended Princeton University with the class of 1950. This only grandson of the Rev. George L. McNutt will be expected to contribute on his own to a distinguished family record.
66. D’ye Ken Scotch Tape?

This is the penultimate chapter of a long book full of stories of trials and struggles, and even yet we are not finished with the theme of fighting against obstacles. We have now the story of a young salesman whose sandpaper wasn’t good enough, and who found too many competitors selling the same kind of thing, only generally better. First he insisted that his factory improve its sandpaper. Then by the application of common sense he reasoned out a conclusion that the best way to success is through the production of superior goods, generally useful, of such unique character as to have no competition.

Then by tenacity he made his formula work. It took years to do it, but he had durability. He came to command laboratories and employ scientists by the scores to continue the research he began himself, in furtherance of the quest for useful new products. Each must be unlike anything already in the market.

In writing of William Lester McKnight of St. Paul, Minnesota, I may characterize his particular bent by saying that if soap hadn’t existed when he got up steam for his career, he undoubtedly would have invented and developed soap, patented it securely, and supplied the world.

And what could have been more appropriate? The name McKnight is the only one of the various surname forms of the general clan that embodies the Celtic root-word *nig*, with which we began. Readers who still can remember my first chapter will recall that *nig* means to wash, to be clean. Perhaps some remote and ingenious Caledonian hit upon the device of softening tallow with a little lye from wood ashes, and using it in his bath in the river Tay. And so won a nickname that stuck.

If William L. McKnight came too late to introduce soap, he did the next best thing possible to him: he brought Scotch Tape to a waiting world. Who that has used the handy spool of gummed cellophane could do without it? Before we inquire into that, we had better observe Mr. McKnight’s relationship to all the rest in a quick survey of his background.

Early in the nineteenth century William McNeight and Mary McCullough were married in Longholm, County Down, in Northern Ireland. The bridegroom was a member of the old covenanting McNaught family of Galloway in Scotland, so many of whom had migrated in troubled days to the Laggan in Donegal and to Londonderry, Down and Antrim. The bride’s family also had come from Scotland to Ulster.
William and Mary McNeight had one son, William, and three daughters. The son was born at Newry in County Down in 1826. He married Elizabeth Ann McGoffin at Bainbridge in Donoghmore parish in 1846. Three years later William sailed to America with Elizabeth and his now widowed mother, and located near Waukesha, Wisconsin. Of fifteen children, eight sons and three daughters lived to maturity.

As late as 1852 the family kept to the variant surname McNeight. As remote kinfolk in Scotland already had done, the family chose to use the better form McKnight. The first child in the newly-arrived family, Joseph William McKnight, was born on May 25, 1849. When he was twenty-eight he married Cordelia Smith, formerly of Belmont, Wisconsin, at Winona, Minnesota. Joseph and Cordelia removed at once to Dakota Territory, where they took up a homestead near the little village of White. Here was born William Lester McKnight.

Before we go on to learn more about the chief subject of this chapter, let me note for later reference that the fourth son of William and Elizabeth was Charles McKnight, who married Cora Blair; their children were Earle and Pearl. Earle, born June 2, 1889, married Elizabeth May Pippy, and is now a Methodist minister in Moore, Montana.

Returning to the homestead near White: three children were born at well-spaced intervals. Edith Lisle, born November 2, 1878, married Calvin H. Doughty on March 15, 1902, and died childless on her fifteenth wedding anniversary. Milton McKnight was born April 22, 1883; he is now a general merchant at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota; he is married and has a son and daughter. The third child, William Lester McKnight, was born at White on November 11, 1887. He remained at the family home until graduated from the local high school. For all this information we are indebted to his cousin, Mrs. George Wells.

This brief recital of family history, in which all the names in the young man's ancestry with the possible exception of Smith are as Scottish as heather, will be seen to have a bearing on one of the main topics of this chapter.

When William had finished high school, his sister Edith and her husband, Calvin H. Doughty, were living in Duluth. Through their influence the younger brother was persuaded to come to Duluth and take a course in a business college. When that was completed he got a job as bookkeeper in a Duluth bank. He had hardly done more than establish himself there when the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co. asked the Duluth Business College to recommend a conscientious, industrious, capable young bookkeeper. William McKnight was nominated, but he was loath to go. He thought the bank had done him a
D’YE KEN SCOTCH TAPE?

great favor in making a place for him when he was inexperienced and jobless. Finally persuasion overcame his scruples.

For more than twenty years, until the spring of 1950, he was president of the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co.; now he is chairman of the board and of the finance committee. Let no one say: “Ah, an easy formula. Start young, stay on, and by the process of seniority get to the top.” There has been nothing easy about building the success of the company with the long name commonly abbreviated to 3M, or for that matter, in saving it from failure. The task required years of resourceful effort, to say nothing of a remorseless drain imposed by circumstances upon a liberal backer in the early lean years: Lucius Ordway, a St. Paul plumbing supply manufacturer.

One of the company’s officers remembered to say to the writer of an article for the magazine Fortune (March 1949): “There were times when it seemed as if the only reason we were in business was to milk poor Mr. Ordway.” But the Ordway family trusts benefited in the end with securities now worth $18,000,000. Somebody had to work and think to put value into the paper.

There is a legend that the stock was once a medium of exchange in saloons. Not long after 3M was founded in 1902, “the common was informally quoted at two shares to one shot of whiskey. A barkeeper who stashed away two shares, and watched them split into sixteen, could unload today for about $1,100.” The company began with what it thought a carborundum deposit on the north shore of Lake Superior near Crystal Bay. It intended to work the deposit and sell the material to manufacturers of industrial abrasives, but it turned out that the deposit was only fluorspar, not suitable for the intended purpose.

Then 3M decided to try making ordinary sandpaper with its fluorspar. The material wasn’t good enough, and so the company had to buy abrasives from others in order to stay in the sandpaper business. Years later it began making masking-tape, used by automobile manufacturers to cover surfaces intended not to be reached by paint-spray. This tape goes on rapidly and comes off easily. From sandpaper and masking tape the company has gone on to develop many products in the coated abrasives and pressure-sensitive tape lines.

Mr. McKnight began as a bookkeeper in 1907 at the age of twenty. After a while he was transferred to the sales department, and his contacts with customers brought him realization of the troubles involved in keeping up sales of sandpaper that often failed to satisfy. Instead of slogging along and making the best of things as they were, he bent his energies upon improvement of quality and the maintenance of high
standards. That, we must perceive, was early evidence of the young salesman's fitness for going places. He went into research to improve quality, in order to give customers coated-abrasives that would answer all purposes fully and honestly.

Research for quality led to research to develop new products, which could be patented and developed for sale in new markets. The 3M company now has scores of such products, most of them introduced into fields where there was no competition, and all nailed down with patents. A very large research department, employing about 500 men, carries on the inventive, exploratory work begun by the young salesman. At the beginning of 1949 the research staff was working on no fewer than sixty-four projects that gave promise of developing into useful and marketable products. The obvious advantage in the restless search for new things to make and sell is that 3M should always be moving far ahead as old patents expire and old lines fall into declining demand.

Mr. McKnight became general manager in the early 1920s, and in 1929 he was elected president of 3M. It was at the end of the 1920s that masking tape was introduced to the market. With a sharp eye to production costs, the tape was first made with adhesive on the two edges only and with none in the middle. When a sample was shown the superintendent of the paint shop in an automobile factory, he pointed to its bare middle and inquired: "If you're so stingy with your adhesive, why don't you call it Scotch tape?"

When this pointed jest was reported at the home office it likely brought a laugh at the expense of the cost-watching executive. Scotch? Why not? The boss was Scotch and he had made 3M a Scotch company. Why not capitalize on it? So that was the beginning of a trade-name that in itself may be worth millions. Early in the 1930s the narrower cellophane tape, wrapped on a spool and mounted in a tin dispenser, was placed on the market with the name that has become a household word everywhere: Scotch Tape. It may not be quite as essential now in homes and offices as soap, but it is about as well known. It is good; it does the work. It binds things together with as close an attachment as that of the proverbial Scot for his sixpenny bit.

The essential good quality of the tape does not lie in the fact that it is narrow cellophane with very fine quality stickum on it. The really commendable thing about it is that it will unwind, and that it is easy to use for a thousand purposes. The tartan plaid in colors used on the dispensers and larger packages was carefully designed to avoid exact resemblance to the tartan of any one clan. It looks a little like the MacNaughton plaid, with the addition of a yellow thread running through
the pattern at intervals, crosswise. It also looks a bit like the Wallace tartan, with a change in the color scheme.

A similar cellophane tape called Texcel has been on the market for some time, with red and white candy stripes taking the place of the tartan. It is produced by another company under license from 3M, so is practically the same. But Scotch Tape always is likely to have the call even after patents expire; the name is more familiar than any other can become, and it has another quality: it suggests tenacity — the never-let-go spirit.

There are now 110 varieties of Scotch Tape for various purposes, most of them unfamiliar to the average consumer. A sound-recording tape (without adhesive) is made for transcriptions used by radio broadcasting stations. The trade-name has been adapted to two other products: Scotch-lite, a rubbery sheet used in road-signs to reflect headlight beams, and Scotch-top, a wall finish applied with a hose to surfaces of wood, cement, or masonry. It replaces plaster and paint at a saving of about seventy-five percent. It's thrifty!

Another process or product that automobile owners know about is Underseal, sprayed on frame, chassis, and the inner sides of hoods to prevent squeaks and rust. The whole list of 3M products would exhaust a reader; there are 32,000 forms of coated abrasives, without taking into account all the commercial adhesives, roofing granules, paint pigments, and automobile tires. A small Chicago tire factory was bought during the second World War for its rubber quota, and tires are still made there.

Chairman McKnight, it will not be surprising to learn, works from Monday through Saturday in his teakwood-paneled office in the limestone administration building in St. Paul. It takes energy to start things and find like-minded men to keep them growing and multiplying. He says he is slowing down — he spends some of the winter months in Florida — but the younger men say they know who is boss.

When Mr. McKnight became president in 1929, sales for the year exceeded $5,000,000 for the first time; in 1948 they passed $108,000,000. Scotch Tape in its 110 forms accounted for $37,000,000 of the total. The 3M company is one of five in the Twin Cities to top the $100,000,000 mark; the other four are Great Northern, Northern Pacific, General Mills, and Pillsbury. Mr. McKnight's company operates nineteen factories from Bristol, Pennsylvania, to Los Angeles, besides three quarries, sixteen sales branches and warehouses, and five subsidiary companies.

Richard Carlton, the executive vice president in charge of manufacturing, engineering and research — now president — explained things this way to the Fortune writer: "We've made a lot of mistakes. And
we’ve been very lucky at times. Some of our products are things you might say we’ve just stumbled on. But you can’t stumble if you’re not in motion.”

In 1948 the net earnings after taxes was twelve cents for each dollar of sales. Mr. McKnight reserved seven cents for development and let the stockholders have the other five cents. They couldn’t complain. He watches costs but is not stingy in research: five cents in the sales dollar was allotted to that department. In the last decade or so, $13,000,000 has gone into research.

The homestead farm boy turned salesman, who wanted his sandpaper to be the best, is, according to the Fortune article, “a matter-of-fact man with a gift for a dry sort of understatement. He has spent forty-two of his sixty-two years with 3M, and has a respectable fortune to show for it. He and his wife hold about fourteen percent of 3M’s common stock; the market value in late January [1949] was $18,000,000.”

William L. McKnight married Maude Gage of St. Paul on October 9, 1925. Their only child, Virginia, is the wife of a St. Paul lawyer, James H. Binger; they have a son and two daughters.

Mr. McKnight appears to have a little time to spare from 3M for a few other things. He is a director of these corporations: First National Bank of St. Paul, Anchor Casualty Co., Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Co., Durex Corporation, Northwest Bell Telephone Co., and the Great Northern Railway Co. He belongs to these club at home: Somerset Country, Minnesota, St. Paul Athletic, and the White Bear Yacht Club. In Chicago: the Union League and Chicago Clubs. At Miami Beach: the Surf Club and the Indian Creek Country Club.

It would be hard to think of him seriously as what is called a clubman. Perhaps, if he had a little more time to spare, he would feel as much at home on a cracker barrel among old neighbors back in White, South Dakota, as in a beach chair at the Surf Club. He has done well because he wanted to do new and original things better, and because he has never quit trying. It may appear that he has made uncommon use of qualities common to his race.

Perhaps he and some others have had the good fortune to come to a realization of the unspoken aspirations of a line of oldtime Galloway farmers: hopes for distant grandchildren beyond their own attainment. What were those hopes? Not for riches; security and material comfort would have satisfied their desires. If this chapter be regarded as a success story, what do we mean by success?

Simply this: the full development of one’s capacity in creative, useful work that effectively aids society and contributes to well-being. The
It is a cheering thought, in concluding the story of a man nearing his restful years of life, that younger cousins are giving evidence of similar restless, inventive energy. Earlier we had a brief reference to the Rev. Earle McKnight, Methodist minister at Moore, Montana. He and his wife Elizabeth have three children: Charles Leonard, born November 16, 1918; Marian, born July 2, 1920; and William Earle, born April 10, 1925. We shall begin with the last-named.

William was inducted into the war in September 1943, and served overseas in the 102nd or Ozark Division in the 9th Army. He used a bazooka to fire rockets at German tanks, and then was a radio operator. Discharged in April 1946, he entered Montana State College and was graduated in 1949 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering. He is now with the Rural Electrification Service in Montana. His sister Marian is living in San Jose, California.

Charles was graduated in 1940 from Montana State College as a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering. Since then he has been employed in electronic research in the Engineering Division, Headquarters Air Materiel Command, United States Air Forces, at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at Dayton, Ohio. During the war he met Lucille Draper of St. Louis, who wished to be useful to her country, and who was employed at the Base as an engineering aide in electronic research. They were married on April 20, 1946.

It is not permissible to tell what all the electronic research will accomplish in increasing the effectiveness of our Air Forces. It may be said, however, that on his own time young Charles L. McKnight has invented and developed an electric signal system for controlling traffic approaching road intersections, in such a manner that drivers may expect to find a green light awaiting them if they regulate their car speeds as directed by illuminated signs.

To eliminate the irritation caused by red traffic lights would be something of an achievement. It takes time to get such devices marketed, and before — or perhaps after — the day when we need never stop for red lights at country intersections, Charles may invent, patent, and introduce some other useful thing. The simpler and more generally needed it is, the better. Something akin to soap or Scotch Tape.
For the final chapter have been reserved stories of several of the general clan whose far-back relationships have not been unraveled. These last are by no means the least.

Proofs of earlier chapters already in type when this is written have been read by the lady member of the team of artists that enjoys merited fame for the production of fine books from a buff-colored printing office beside a parkway under a hill, with flower-boxes on the window sills. After she had finished with the chapters in Books i and ii the lady remarked with a simulation of concern:

“This book hasn’t enough sinners! Are you sure you have combed the penitentiary records as you should?”

To those who wish books to show life honestly with none of its frailties ignored, assurance is due that the search has been thorough. It is verra, ver-ra deeficult to get a MacNaughton into a penitentiary or to keep one there. Just how difficult it is to keep a MacNaughton locked
up may be illustrated by a quite unusual story as true as all the others.

Late in 1842 a distraught young man named Daniel MacNaughton, somewhat less than thirty years old, left his work in Glasgow to go to London. He felt he must act resolutely to free himself from persecution. He had an obsession that oppressive Tories hated him and craved his heart’s blood. His only way out was to track down the Tory Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, and shoot him.

On the afternoon of January 20, 1843 Edward Drummond, private secretary to the Premier, was walking through Whitehall on his way to Downing Street. He is said to have had some physical resemblance to his chief, and was mistaken for Sir Robert by Daniel MacNaughton. The young man shot Drummond in the back with a pistol, and then was overpowered by police and locked up.

“The MacNaughton Case” was long discussed in magazine articles and books because of its subsequent legal aspects, and finally in an article by J. A. Lovat Fraser in the quarterly Law Magazine and Review of London, in the issue of November 1914. Whether the victim of the shooting had lingered in great suffering, or only a little, was still not clear in 1914, but in any case he died on January 25, according to Mr. Lovat Fraser.

When Daniel MacNaughton was tried for murder, witnesses from Glasgow testified he was a young man of rigorously temperate habits: a person of caution, shrewdness, and thrift who employed others in his lathe shop. He had saved £750 “by the most vigilant industry.” But beyond doubt he had killed Edward Drummond.

“The prisoner was acquitted,” Mr. Lovat Fraser says, “on the ground of insanity, to the great indignation of the outside public.” Though clearly insane, he went scot free. How did the expression “scot free” originate? In some such case as this?

The acquittal came as a result of English sensitiveness for absolute justice: the belief that no person should be executed for a crime the nature of which he did not comprehend because of defective mind. Disposition of the MacNaughton case became a standard by which subsequent crimes committed by insane persons were long judged. In his article Mr. Lovat Fraser says the House of Lords asked the judges to lay down rules governing cases involving insanity. This was the ruling they made:

“No act is a crime, if the person who does it is at the time when it is done prevented by any disease affecting his mind (a) from knowing the nature and quality of his act, or (b) from knowing that the act is wrong.”

So Daniel went back to Glasgow and other obsessions, though he
never harmed anyone afterward. Four or five years after acquittal he went on a hunger strike in protest against some fancied injustice. He had to be fed by force in the hospital where he was taken. He was the only crazy MacNaughton of whom we have ever heard.

Now it may be said that the full record, so far as known, will be in the book, without suppressions. It has been impossible to include all who have interesting stories, and when the volumes are within covers and the readers get hold of them, I shall be hearing of my omissions.

Undoubtedly there is a good story in James MacNaughton of New York, a young scene designer and television expert employed by the American Broadcasting Company, who is praised for his ingenuity in overcoming the limitations of the small video stage and creating wide pictorial effects for the camera lens within a studio.

Another James MacNaughton is the top-flight New York tailor, considered so distinguished in appearance that he was invited to pose anonymously for the first of the magazine ads in full color, showing "Men of Distinction." It was he who led the way, groomed to the eyebrows, holding a tall glass of rye and soda amid smartly impeccable surroundings. Another handsome tailor, who like the first might consent to make up a smoking jacket in the clan tartan for any of us, is Jerry O. McNaughton of Cleveland, Ohio.

Frank McNaughton, member of the Washington staff of *Time*, was co-author of a biography of President Truman. Felix McKnight is managing editor of the *Dallas News*, leading newspaper of Texas, and Charles A. McKnight is editor of the *News* of Charlotte, North Carolina. Newspaper work is a natural occupation for fact-hungry Scots and descendants of Scots, and many other members of the general clan are doubtless engaged in it.

One of these is F. F. McNaughton, publisher of the Pekin *Daily Times* of Pekin, Illinois, who directs an incisive intelligence against the waste of public money in the benevolences of a benign Federal government. Harry S. Truman was re-elected President in 1948 by the votes of pivotal farm States that formerly had been Republican. Mr. McNaughton saw the reason, and wrote a letter to the news-magazine *Time*, published on December 6, 1948, with an illustration that showed why the farmers had given Mr. Truman another term. His letter:

"May we correct your statement that 'no government loans can be made on crops stored on the farm.'... The crib of Nelson Roth, east of Pekin, was sealed today [with] Seal No. C-48-5 of the Secretary of Agriculture of the U. S. ... Sealed in this farm crib are 5,400 bushels of
1948 corn on which the government has loaned $1.42 a bushel. If this corn had had to be sold when cribbed, it would have brought $1.25. Thus Mr. Roth is $918 ahead by sealing it. If the price goes above $1.42 before September 1, 1949, Farmer Roth can sell it and pay his loan. If the price remains below $1.42, Roth will simply deliver the corn to the Commodities Credit Corporation on September 1, 1949 in full payment of loan. Many such loans as this are being made. All that is required is that the crib be suitable to keep the corn in good condition until September 1, 1949."

The editor added a note of comment on the letter: "Reader McNaughton is right as rain. In explaining the big Democratic vote in normally Republican farm areas, Time failed to point out that many U. S. farmers were not as lucky as Farmer Roth. Those who did not have enough government-approved storage of their own could qualify for government loans on their grain surplus only by storing it in government bins. When the Republican 80th Congress refused to appropriate funds to build additional government storage space, many farmers were unable to get crop loans on their surplus, and voted the Democratic ticket in protest."

Mr. McNaughton's letter arrested attention, for it told in a paragraph why Harry S. Truman was re-elected in 1948. Perceiving that this small-city newspaper man from Illinois ought to have more home truths to tell, the managers of the annual Forum conducted by the New York Herald Tribune, invited him to address the opening session on October 23, 1950. Mr. McNaughton did not disappoint; his talk was pointed. Emphasizing his "small-town" approach to economic problems, he urged investment of excess earnings, an end to feather-bedding and profiteering on the part of "you city folks," and willingness of everyone to "fall to and do a full day's work."

Inflation, he said, means inability to build badly-needed schools, hospitals, and churches, and to expand small factories and construct homes. The Herald Tribune next morning quoted him further:

"You don't have a strong America if you have children going to school in barns, mothers having Caesarian operations in their homes, and Sunday school children looking at empty holes in the ground because costs have outrun the ability of the community to pay. We country folk have a slow burn at those responsible for the sharp rise in prices with the outbreak of Korean hostilities. . . ."

Canada is the home of a great many MacNaughtons: more than it has been possible to discover for this work. We couldn't possibly overlook John MacNaughton & Co. of Montreal, who have advertised exten-
After Seventeen Ninety-Six

ressively in magazines and newspapers that they are bottlers and distribu-
tors of a mild Canadian whiskey.

Over in Biddeford, Maine, Roy MacNaughton is manager of the
McKenny & Heard Company, dealers in hardware, mill supplies, sport-
ing goods, and farm equipment. He likes finely-printed books and per-
haps collects them.

A very able man was James MacNaughton, for years president of the
Calumet and Hecla Consolidated Copper Company. It has been said that
under his leadership and because of the confidence that other mining
and financial leaders had in him, Calumet and Hecla for years had a
standing in industry out of proportion to its copper production.

Son of Archibald and Catherine MacIntyre MacNaughton, he was
born on March 9, 1864 at Bruce Mines in Ontario, Canada. When he
was three months old his parents removed to Hancock, Michigan; three
years later they went on to Lake Linden. He attended the public school
in the little town, and when he was eleven he began his working career
as a water boy during summer vacation at the Calumet and Hecla docks
at Lake Linden. Five years later, when he had finished his preliminary
education, he got a regular job as a stationary engineer.

After three years of this, he entered Oberlin College in the fall of
1883. One year at Oberlin was followed by two at the University of
Michigan, where he studied in the engineering department. Possibly
economic reasons caused him to drop out in 1886 to go to work for
Calumet and Hecla as a surveyor and draftsman. The University of
Michigan was pleased in 1907 to award him the degree of Bachelor of
Science in Civil Engineering, as of 1888.

In 1889 James MacNaughton left Calumet and Hecla to take a posi-
tion as mining engineer with the Chapin Mining Company at Iron
Mountain, Michigan; in May 1890 he was appointed assistant superin-
tendent; in March 1892 he was made general manager. Under his direc-
tion the Chapin mine became the largest producer of iron ore in Michi-
gan, equally famous for its efficiency and its low cost of operation.

Then on July 1, 1901 he returned to Calumet and Hecla as superin-
tendent, succeeding S. B. Whiting and S. D. Warriner; somewhat later
he was appointed general manager and vice president. He was elected
president of the company in December 1926, and continued as general
manager. For forty years after his return to Calumet and Hecla in 1901
Mr. MacNaughton had full responsibility for operations. My informant
at Calumet says "he guided the destinies of the company through an
expansion period from the operation of a single mine to an integrated
company with mining territory extending throughout three counties and employing more than 12,000 men.”

Efficiency was his guiding rule, says a story published in the New York Herald Tribune of May 27, 1949. After his introduction of the one-man drill in copper mining, the miners quit work in protest in July 1913 and stayed out until winter. It was necessary to call out the Michigan National Guard to keep down rioting. After it was all over, Mr. MacNaughton said he had learned two important lessons from the strike, the newspaper account relates.

“One was that it had been a mistake to hire strikebreakers; he had found them even more inefficient than the strikers. The second lesson was that in a large industrial organization efficiency is served by letting the ‘big boss’ be accessible to workers to hear their minor grievances. ‘These injustices may not be serious in themselves,’ he said, ‘but in the aggregate they hurt morale. That is why, on Tuesday of every week, any man in Calumet and Hecla may see the company’s president.’”

Recognition came in the form of an honorary degree of Doctor of Science, conferred upon him in 1930 by the Michigan College of Mining and Technology. On February 20, 1935 he was presented with the William Lawrence Saunders Medal for outstanding achievement in the field of high-cost mining, bestowed by the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, of which he was a member.

Mr. MacNaughton was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in St. Louis in 1896, and was a delegate-at-large from Michigan to the party’s National Conventions held in Chicago in 1908 and in Kansas City in 1928.

Mr. MacNaughton and Mary E. Morrison were married at Calumet, Michigan on August 27, 1892. They had two daughters: Martha M., who became the wife of Endicott M. Lovell, and Mrs. Mary M. Chandler, who died in June 1933. Mrs. MacNaughton died on March 20, 1922.

On April 1, 1941, Mr. MacNaughton resigned as president and general manager of Calumet and Hecla at the age of seventy-seven. After several years of illness he died at eighty-five on May 26, 1949. He was succeeded as president by his son-in-law, Endicott M. Lovell. By the constant application of a keen engineering and administrative mind, Mr. MacNaughton typified the true genius of his clan at its most effective level.

From copper mines we turn to the Union Pacific Railroad and two brothers who may have stemmed from the McNitt family of Pennsylvania: Clarence John and Allen R. McNitt. Their father, E. W. McNitt,
removed from Pennsylvania to Columbia County, Wisconsin, where he was a merchant and a member of the State Legislature during the years of the Civil War. His wife was Rhoda Boutwell.

Clarence found a job with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1876, when he was nineteen; in 1887 he married Mary Cooley in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Their children were Albert, Helen, and Gordon McNitt. Presently Clarence was in the accounting department of the Oregon Short Line, a division of the Union Pacific system. He rose to the post of auditor, and his office employed eighty clerks.

It is told of him by his son Gordon that he was respected by E. H. Harriman for his inveterate honesty; he was simply unable to tell anything but the truth. When the Union Pacific approached trial of a suit over disputed coal mines — a case with some ticklish aspects — the confidence in Clarence McNitt’s unflinching probity was so great that it was deemed convenient to keep him off the witness stand, and instead to send him on a general auditing errand to the Orient, where the company had shipping interests. When he returned to Salt Lake City in the course of months, the court-room shooting was safely over. Then he regretted he had not taken his family along with him; the business assigned to him for his leisurely trip had not pressed upon him very seriously.

Clarence McNitt was a member of the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Salt Lake City. We glean another idea of him in a little story of dissatisfaction among members of the congregation, who thought it time for the Rev. Louis S. Bowerman to go. A meeting was held to talk over grievances and vote the minister out. When all the disaffected had relieved their minds and all seemed over but the ousting, Clarence McNitt took the floor in behalf of the worried minister. If any record of his talk had been kept, part of it at least would have deserved a place here. When he had finished speaking, the congregation voted to retain Mr. Bowerman.

Allen R. McNitt, his brother, was general freight claim agent for the Oregon Short Line in Salt Lake City for a number of years. He was one of those patient, reasonable men so likely to do well in adjusting claims. Later he was promoted to be general freight claim agent for the whole Union Pacific system.

Clarence J. McNitt’s son Gordon, born July 14, 1895, was for years a real estate operator in Salt Lake City. In 1933 he became disbursing officer for the Home Owners Loan Corporation in his city, handling loans for twenty-one counties in Utah below the line of Salt Lake. He confesses now that his general lack of respect for the New Deal, added
to the old McNaught penchant for free-winging speech, may have annoyed somewhat the party men who were running the show. He quit in 1936 without a blemish, and afterward engaged in building enterprises. He now lives with his wife in comfortable retirement in San Diego, but native energy keeps him restless. Gordon McNitt has two sons: Gordon, Jr., born in 1920, who is a railroad engineer in Salt Lake City and married, and Paul Hubert McNitt, born in 1921, who is with the telephone company in San Diego, and also married.

Before one meets Gordon McNitt for the first time one may expect him to talk as directly as all of his kinsmen do. Sure enough, on such a meeting in San Diego in 1950, he did. With eyes twinkling and with humor bubbling, he launched within a space of minutes into a completely candid statement of his preferences and dislikes, with pungent reasons, and didn’t spare himself in his truth-telling.

Members of the Baptist Church he and his wife had joined on his coming to San Diego, he said, had proved totally and hopelessly unreasonable when they neglected to heed his counsel and stop their squabbling, so he had pulled out and joined the Presbyterian Church, where he could be with reasonable people, at least of his own kind. He thought he was right, anyway, in joining the church of his forefathers, as of course he was.

Many chapters back we encountered the McMaths of Scotland: on the lands of Dalpedder in Dumfriesshire, and as successful merchants in Edinburgh. To the all-knowing Crown officials of the early seventeenth century they were indistinguishable from members of the McNaught family.

The liveliest and most exciting McMath of the present time is no doubt Sidney Sanders McMath, Governor of Arkansas. He is “Sid” to his friends and doubtless would be pleased if readers of this book were to think of him as Sid. He is that kind of young man. In the year 1950 he was only thirty-eight, with a record of thrilling war service in the United States Marines and of political fighting in Arkansas already established. The particular point to remember about him is that while a boy in Hot Springs and an individual menace to the Japs in the Pacific islands, he burned with an ambition to clean up the corruption in his home town and to make Arkansas a State deserving of greater and growing respect. That he has made a fine start is due measurably to the fact that his leadership has commanded the two-fisted support of other war veterans with similar ideals.

The appearance of McMaths in America is accounted for in Memo-
AFTER SEVENTEEN NINETY-SIX

rials of the McMath Family by Frank M. McMath, a book of about 240 pages published in Detroit in 1898. Archibald McMath emigrated from Scotland to Northern Ireland and there lived somewhere near Londonderry. His eldest son Alla, born January 11, 1738, removed in 1756 to Philadelphia, and went to work for James Wilson, a farmer in Chester County, Pennsylvania. In or about the year 1769 Alla married Mabel Kelsey, a granddaughter of the worthy Scot, and subsequently went to live in Turbut Township, Northumberland County.

Alla McMath had a young neighbor and remote kinsman, James McKnight, who in 1791 removed to New York and took up 600 acres of land on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake in the township of Romulus, in Herkimer County. Alla followed in 1794 with his large family and bought 400 acres of James McKnight's land at $2.50 an acre. Two years later he produced 1,000 bushels of wheat: a very fine performance.

Alla McMath was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and lived until October 17, 1804. James McKnight died in his forty-fifth year in 1808, and his widow and three children — Andrew, Washington, and Mary — went to live near Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Other McMaths doubtless came over from Northern Ireland; records of all such arrivals in various branches are far from complete. It is not known when the first McMath removed to Arkansas; members of the family there were regarded as steady and respected people. Sid McMath was born June 14, 1912 in a log cabin in the hills back of Magnolia. It was called a dog-trot cabin because its two rooms had a roofed-over space between them, where the hound dogs could trot through. In tonier ranch-type houses today the open space is called a breezeway.

Hal McMath, Sid's father, was a farmer and horse-trader whose luck was bad. He removed presently to the Smackover oil fields, had more bad luck, and then with the horses and wagon he had left he drove with his family to Hot Springs to become a barber. In periods of depression he drank heavily. His son Sid loyally said of him later: "He was not a weak man; he was a strong man with a weakness."

Under the title "He Wants to Make Something of Arkansas," Joe Alex Morris wrote extensively and well of Governor McMath for the Saturday Evening Post of February 18, 1950. In the opening paragraph he characterizes his subject as an "ambitious and photogenic young war hero who has been running for office ever since he was knee-high to a razorback hog." Continuing: "So far, he hasn't lost an election since he emerged, in overalls and cotton shirt, as a man of destiny in a campaign for the presidency of the freshman class at Hot Springs high school.

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“‘Sidney,’ remarked Mrs. Hester Stall, who presided over the civics class, ‘you are becoming quite a politician. I wonder if I could manage your campaign when you run for the presidency of the United States?’

“‘There was a twinkle in Mrs. Stall’s eye, but she didn’t get a laugh out of Sid. ‘Well, Ma’am,’ he answered, ‘I figure a fellow would have to be Governor first.’

“‘That’s too bad,’ scoffed Mrs. Stall. ‘Everybody in this class knows the Democrats won’t let a Governor of Arkansas run for President. It’s not good politics.’

“I’ve heard that,” Sid replied earnestly, ‘but I figure that they might change their minds if a fellow really put Arkansas on the map.’”

After that Sid went on being elected president of his class throughout high school, as well as Most Popular Boy, Most Handsome Boy, and president of the Student Council. We are reminded of Paul V. McNutt of Indiana in all this and in the further fact that he had the leading roles in all the high school plays except one. He declined the part because “he said he didn’t want to portray an insincere character.” His classmates didn’t seem to mind all these successes, but when he left for college with $2.50 in his pocket his mother said to him: “Now you just let some of the other boys be president part of the time.”

Mr. Morris says that Sid entered Henderson State Teachers College, and transferred in his first year to the University of Arkansas. He was elected president of the freshman class in both. He continued as president in his sophomore year, became business manager of the student annual in junior year, and president of the student body as a senior.

And all the way up he had worked hard. He became an earner at the age of seven by picking cotton, he sold papers after school to help the family, he did all sorts of odd jobs while in high school, and while in college he washed dishes to earn his board. Should this book chance to have readers in Scotland who may wonder how the grandsons of migrants of their race have managed to emerge and get to high places, it may be said to them: this is the way. Just as in Scotland.

Sid McMath was graduated from the law school of his university in 1936, honor graduate of the Military Training Corps with a reserve officer’s commission. The commandment said he was the finest natural soldier he had ever trained, and Sid had to make good on that as an officer of Marines in the Pacific. After a year as a recruiting officer in Philadelphia, Sid returned to Hot Springs and opened a law office with a partner. Then he married a high school sweetheart, Elaine Braughton, who after bearing a son given his father’s name, died within a year of nephritis.
In the second World War, Sid helped plan the Bougainville invasion as operations officer for the 3rd Marine Regiment. When there seemed danger the Japanese would smash the assault, Sid McMath and his Marines landed at Cape Torokina under enemy fire — as related in the official report — and advanced "unprotected through hazardous areas to the foremost elements." At one time he was in an observation post hit by fifty Japanese shells; then he initiated a new attack that "contributed in large measure to the success of the operation." For all this he was promoted in the field to Lieutenant Colonel, and decorated with the Silver Star and the Legion of Merit.

Invalided to the States with malaria he was assigned to Washington, where he worked so many hours daily that he hardly had time to court Anne Phillips, a Mississippi girl who was secretary to a Congressman. It was a relief to him when his whirlwind campaign won an acceptance of his proposal of marriage for, as he said to Anne, "now I can go home and get some sleep." In one account it is related that in his rush he forgot to kiss Anne goodnight. This may be a libel. They now have two sons, Alexander and Philip McMath.

Like some other health and pleasure resorts, Hot Springs for years had been a wide-open town which tolerated gambling and sheltered mobsters. Before he returned home Sid McMath developed a plan for getting rid of Mayor Leo P. McLaughlin, the local boss, and enlisted the help of other returning veterans. The McLaughlin machine was so tough that business men and other old residents had feared an uprising would bring reprisals against them, but the young veterans were not afraid. Sid McMath ran for prosecuting attorney, and several of his friends became candidates for county offices.

The campaign was a fierce one, and the machine resorted to fraud in buying up poll tax receipts for use in illegal voting. Guns were carried, but no one was shot. McMath toured Garland County, making speeches and showing combat films that proved to the people that war veterans were able to stand up to trouble. On primary day the young men were out in force with guns and cameras, looking for repeaters. All of their candidates were beaten in Garland County.

But the judicial district included adjoining Montgomery County, and Sid McMath got enough votes there to elect him prosecuting attorney. As soon as he could manage it, he got McLaughlin indicted on fifteen counts of bribery and malfeasance. He couldn't get a jury that would vote to convict the boss. However, he had broken the machine's power. His associates who had lost in the primary, went into the next general election as independent candidates and were swept into office.
Mr. Morris relates that Sid McMath had to leave most of the work of the prosecutor’s office to his result-getting assistants; he was busy running for Governor against two wily vote-getters, Jack Holt and Uncle Mac MacKrell. The latter is described as “a persuasive talker, a repentant sinner, and a deep bass voice in a gospel quartet.”

In the primary Sid McMath received 87,829 votes, to 60,313 for Holt and 57,030 for MacKrell. The latter threw his support in the run-off election to Holt, but McMath won by about 10,000 majority.

This was in the summer of 1948, when President Harry S. Truman’s stock was low with many in his party, particularly in the South. A former Governor was working to organize Arkansas for the Dixiecrats, or conservative Democrats who disliked the President’s civil rights program. Sid McMath was advised to keep out of that fight, but didn’t. He took the President’s side, fought the conservatives to a standstill, and kept Arkansas out of the Dixiecrat movement. For this, Harry Truman has shown his gratitude. He went through a snowstorm to attend unannounced a dinner in Washington given in Sid’s honor by the Arkansas Society, and he later took time out to visit the Governor and his family in their Little Rock home.

While Sid McMath is called a Liberal in the South, he is regarded as a moderate Democrat by the New Deal wing of the party in the North. Genuine progressives in both the big parties have considerable in common.

The candid Mr. Morris wrote that Sid McMath was handicapped at the outset by lack of executive experience, and that in his first campaign for the governorship he promised more jobs than he was able later to deliver. One of his defeated opponents then referred to him sourly as Governor McMyth. In his earlier days in the office he sometimes changed his mind and his plans between editions of the newspapers, and so had the correspondents guessing as to what he might do next.

But he had a program, and he settled down to put it into effect. In education, Arkansas had stood forty-seventh in the list of States, and Sid McMath wished to elevate it to twenty-fifth place at least. Better education in the public schools was his first big objective. Arkansas had been spending about $82 per pupil per year, while the national average is $155. Half its 5,000 school buildings needed repairing or rebuilding, and facilities to provide 125,000 children with a chance to attend accredited high schools simply didn’t exist.

Governor McMath induced Dr. A. B. Bonds, Jr., a native of the State, to leave the Atomic Energy Commission’s educational division to accept appointment as Commissioner of Education for Arkansas. Then
came a program for improving equipment and buildings, consolidating schools, paying better salaries, and providing equal opportunity for Negro students. These projects were bound to require more money, and some of the taxpayers began to shudder. Persuasion was to be needed.

Those who knew him already had agreed that “if you give Sid ten minutes he can talk anybody into anything.” He demonstrated such ability when in the fall of 1949, against the advice of his political counselors, he persuaded the Governor of Missouri to call a conference of interested Governors to try to get settled the strike on the Missouri Pacific Railroad that was causing much hardship, particularly in Arkansas. The States have left too much to an overly-strong Federal government, he thought, and he believed State executives should demonstrate their willingness to tackle their own social and industrial problems. The conference was held, and Governor McMath’s “initiative, persistence and firmness in negotiations that ended the strike were widely acknowledged.”

Arkansas taxpayers needed persuasion if better schools were to be had, and with legislative sanction Sid and Dr. Bonds began a campaign. They loaded fifteen trucks and thirty buses with the newest type of school equipment — movie projectors, green blackboards, new desks and seats, better lights, and all the other things needed — and headed by a sound truck emitting martial music, the cavalcade moved from community to community through the State, with demonstrators explaining to the people the practical uses of such new equipment.

In consequence, ninety-six percent of the school districts voted to increase the tax rate for schools. A drive the Governor sponsored resulted in voluntary reassessment of property for tax purposes through most of the State. The tax increases were moderate enough, but they provided an additional $4,400,000 for school purposes in the 1950 school year, looking to a total of about $42,000,000 for the schools in the year to follow. Expenditure per pupil has risen to $100 a year.

Some objected to abandonment of the little district schoolhouses, but 423 centralized schools in as many districts have replaced 1,600 small ones. Bond issues amounting to $18,000,000 have been voted for construction and repair. Every boy and girl in Arkansas now may attend an accredited high school.

Another of the Governor’s objectives is a good roads system for Arkansas. He proposed a $28,000,000 bond issue for roads as part of an $80,000,000 program to cover four years, and the voters put it through. Mr. Morris said in February 1950 that the road program might disap-
DALPEDDER IN DUMFRIES-SHIRE. Ancient Home of McMath Family in Scotland.
point and backfire in the election in the summer. Governor Sid had plenty of tough opposition when he ran for re-election in mid-1950, but he defeated an old-fashioned Democrat two to one. His veteran buddies stood by him, and it must be the majority of the people had come to like him very much.

People like a young man who says "I'll not give up" when things look black, even if he does make a mistake now and then, and even if he fails in some of the things he tries. Governor McMath tried to get an anti-lynching bill passed, and failed. He has not yet got rid of the poll-tax. His progress in providing equal opportunities in education for Negroes has not endeared him to the lily-whites. "His revenue commissioner, former FBI agent Dean Morley," says Mr. Morris, "has cracked down on liquor-law violators in an effort to eliminate politics in that department, and has consequently ruffled important political feathers."

Certain business elements, including the Arkansas Power and Light Company, watch costs and tax rates warily.

Grandmother McMath read in a newspaper that so many friends came to the capitol to shake hands with a winner that Sid had a swollen right hand. She sent him a telegram that read substantially as follows: "Read about your swollen hand. I won't worry so long as it's not your head."

Sid McMath actually has done a great deal to give Arkansas a brighter spot on the map. If he "wants to make something of Arkansas" he is succeeding. Could he be nominated for President? Neither Democrats nor Republicans ever have put up a candidate from a relatively small, non-pivotal State. But Sid McMath isn't going to be satisfied when he quits being Governor. He might settle for a chance to represent Arkansas in the United States Senate for a while. Who knows?

We may leave him now with a little story that helps to explain his popularity and his hold on a large part of the electorate. Mr. Morris relates that on a day after he was first elected Governor he appeared before an overflow meeting of women voters. "The Governor addressed our luncheon today," a clubwoman told her husband that evening. "He was wonderful." "What did he say?" her husband inquired. "Oh, I have no idea," she replied. "We all just sat there and sighed."

It is pleasant to remember that of the women who have adorned the medical profession, two of the gamest, brightest-eyed, warmest-hearted, and most purposeful were Doctors Sarah and Julia McNutt. During their later years they lived in a house on the main road to the west, six miles out of Albany, practicing their profession until very old.
Dr. Sarah must have been well over eighty when we met in the 1920s, but no young woman could have been livelier. She could have been the one who told Charles L. Hendrickson of Medford she knew he was a McNutt. Neither she nor her sister married, and it appeared they had no close living relations. She was proud to tell that a direct ancestor, William McNutt, had come to New Hampshire in 1718 with one of the earliest waves of migration from Ulster.

Dr. Sarah McNutt was graduated in 1877 from the Women's Medical College of the New York Infirmary, and specialized in women's and children's diseases. She began her career as a teacher at the New York Postgraduate Hospital, and was one of those instrumental in founding a babies' ward there. Women physicians were rare in those days.

Dr. Julia McNutt was just as active. She founded the Training School for Nurses at the Postgraduate Hospital, and Dr. Sarah was one of the incorporators. After useful careers in New York City, with offices in Lexington Avenue, the sisters removed to Albany. Dr. Sarah died there on September 10, 1930, at the age of ninety-one.

James McNaught, son of George and Mary McNaught, was born at Lexington, Illinois, in 1842. He was graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1863; then he became a lawyer in 1864 and settled in Seattle. He was in time general solicitor and then general counsel for the Great Northern Railway system; also president and director of the Great Northern Construction Company. He was president of the Manitoba Land and Improvement Company of Canada, of the McNaught Land and Investment Company of Washington State, and first vice president and director of the Great Northern Railway of Canada. Late in life he removed to New York, lived on West End Avenue, had a law office at 35 Nassau Street, and enjoyed membership in the Lawyers, Lotos, Reform, Colonial, and Marine and Field clubs.

Thomas MacNutt, son of Charles S. McNutt, was member of the Dominion House of Commons for Saltwoods, Saskatchewan, for a number of years beginning in 1908. Peter McNutt was minister without portfolio for a time in the provincial government of Prince Edward Island. His grandfather, James McNutt, came from Londonderry, Ireland, to Prince Edward Island in 1770 as secretary to Governor Patterson.

W. G. MacNaught, Doctor of Music, of Annandale, Woodside Park, Finchley, England, was born March 30, 1841, a son of Donald MacNaught of Greenock, Scotland. He was editor of Musical Times and School Music Review, and he prepared a song book for British soldiers for use in the first World War.
Reference to song brings reminder of John Hugh McNaughton, born July 1, 1829 in Caledonia, New York. His parents, John and Margaret Cameron McNaughton, were natives of Perthshire who joined the new Scottish community in western New York in 1826. John Hugh was educated in academies, and in 1851 he married Katherine Christie, a Scottish lass. His achievements are outlined in the *Biographical Review of Livingston and Wyoming Counties, New York*, published in Boston in 1895.

From “his secluded retreat” “in the beautiful Genesee Valley,” we read, “he sent out his first considerable literary work, a *Treatise on Music*.” He was conversant with several instruments, and already had contributed papers on harmony to music journals. He wrote popular songs with such titles as “Faded Coat of Blue,” “Belle Mahone,” “As We Went a-Haying,” and “Love at Home.” His sheet music sold to a total of 450,000 copies. Mr. McNaughton’s first collection of poems — he also wrote poetry — was published in 1864 with the title “Bubble Brook Songs.” A copy that reached Henry W. Longfellow brought a letter saying: “Your poems have touched me very much. Tears fell down my cheeks as I read them.”

John Hugh McNaughton’s crowning work was a metrical romance, *Onnalinda* — a story of “romance, stratagems, plots and adventures in the Genesee Valley.” The book went through eight editions with a total of 40,000 copies, 4,000 of which were sold in Great Britain. The eighth edition of 10,000 copies was published in September 1890. The *Biographical Review* article says Mr. McNaughton had appreciative letters “from Lord Lytton (Owen Meredith) and John Bright.” The former wrote of the captivating power of the story, “holding the attention alert through its 230 pages to the end.” So fleeting is a minor fame that the story of the composer-poet John Hugh McNaughton might have been forgotten but for its revival here.

Three with the name McKnight, living in widely-separated places, next invite our interest. The first is a young Ensign in the second World War, Skipper Henry Turney McKnight of Philadelphia, who on December 14, 1942, took command of a new LCI vessel (Landing Craft Infantry) at the George Lawley shipyards in Boston and piloted it 15,000 miles to Cape Gloucester in New Britain in the Pacific war theater. John Hershey wrote of the voyage, which provided many anxious moments for the young skipper, for the magazine *Life*, issue of March 27, 1944. The front cover shows a picture of one of the LCI craft, 158 feet long, 400 tons, with quarters for twenty-five crewmen.
AFTER SEVENTEEN NINETY-SIX

and 210 soldiers. Ensign McKnight is an advertising man in civil life.

A plump, black-haired girl of twenty, student at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, phoned her mother in Aurora, Illinois, and announced proudly: “Mother, I have something to tell you. If you will tune in on February 3, you will hear Anne McKnight singing in opera under Toscanini.” That was in 1946. Anne McKnight was heard in the broadcast by a great many that day, for it was the occasion when Maestro Arturo Toscanini was performing Puccini’s opera “La Bohème” in commemoration of its fiftieth anniversary. He had conducted the first performance in Turin in 1896.

Anne sang the part of the mischievous Musetta, with Licia Albanese as Mimi, and Jan Peerce as Rodolfo. The magazine Time, issue of January 28, 1946, relates that Toscanini had tried out thirty women for the part of Musetta and had been satisfied with none. Wilfred Pelletier, Metropolitan opera conductor, suggested Anne, one of his pupils at the Juilliard School. Toscanini played the piano for the tryout, when Anne sang the waltz song from the second act. All he said was, “Your Italian is very funny,” but next day he engaged her. An official of the National Broadcasting Company asked Anne what fee she would charge. “Am I going to be paid?” she asked in surprise. We may meet Anne in opera again.

H. Stewart McKnight, born in Jackson Hall, Pennsylvania, in 1865, was graduated from Gettysburg College; he studied law at Columbian College, now George Washington University. Then he set up practice in Charlestown, West Virginia, and presently ran for district attorney as a Republican. Defeated, he concluded Charlestown was no place for a Republican and so removed to Long Island. He had better luck in Nassau County, when he was elected justice of the peace in Flushing in 1894, at the age of twenty-nine. Two years afterward he was elected to the New York Assembly, where his second term was interrupted by the Spanish-American War. He served as a cavalryman in Puerto Rico. Then he went into real estate as head of the McKnight Realty Company. Early in the 1900s he established a home in Great Neck, and in 1914 he was defeated in the Republican primary when he ran for Congress, only after he had won a reputation as “the epigrammatic candidate.” He was appointed county attorney in 1917 and served seventeen years until he resigned in 1934.

Mr. McKnight was active in many civic matters; he drafted the Nassau County Police Act, the incorporation papers for fourteen villages, and the county’s first zoning law in Great Neck Estates. He opposed a charter for the county that was voted upon in a referendum

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in 1925; it was defeated, and he helped draft another charter that was adopted. After he resigned as county attorney he practiced law until he was eighty-three; on July 18, 1949 he died at his home, 1 McKnight Drive, Great Neck, at the age of eighty-four. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Frances O. McKnight; a daughter, Mrs. Frances Mears; and two sons, J. Oakey McKnight and Major Maxwell S. McKnight. He was an Episcopalian. Judge McKnight, as his friends called him, was declared by J. Russell Sprague, one of the most prominent of them, to have “participated more than any other single person in drafting legislation and local laws that shaped the county’s future.” As “the epigrammatic candidate” in 1914 he may have told the voters “what they ought to hear, rather than what they wished to hear.” If so, we discover in him the common kinship rather to be expected.

The surname McKnight is encountered more frequently in the United States than any of the other forms used by divisions of the general clan. The name McNaughton is next most numerously to appear, with McNutt third, McNaught fourth, and McNitt and McNett least used.

A visitor to Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, if not in too great a hurry to get to a football game or to attend a winter festival, hardly could escape observing Randolph McNutt Hall. This building was named by vote of the trustees in 1930 in honor of a Buffalo philanthropist who had died on July 22, 1927, leaving something like $500,000 to Dartmouth.

If the visitor should be staying in the hotel erected some time ago primarily for the accommodation of parents visiting their student sons, he might be casually interested in knowing that Randolph McNutt gave $60,000 to the fund raised to erect and equip the building. This man had no sons or daughters, but he was a loyal son of Dartmouth.

Perhaps the visitor might be even more deeply interested in the information that Randolph McNutt helped forty young men to education and degrees at Dartmouth, and that he paid the expenses of at least one or two young women who after showing promise went abroad to continue the study of music. Rather unusual is the fact that Randolph McNutt gave himself a kind of gleeful satisfaction in keeping his benefactions as secret as he could. It was not until after his death that bits of information from various sources were added to accumulated knowledge of large gifts that couldn’t be wrapped in mystery. Then finally it became known just what sort of man this manufacturer and distributor of school furniture and opera chairs had been.
Some on first meeting might have taken him for an austere and rather
exacting man, who used neither liquor nor tobacco, and who didn’t care
much for young men who did. On longer acquaintance it was found
he was gentle in spirit with all but wrongdoers, with a lively sense of
humor. Though economical with words, he was apt frequently to ex-
press himself in a sly, indirect, pawky humor that was relished when its
meaning filtered through. Before we pursue further his innumerable
acts of generosity, it will be well to look into his antecedents and become
acquainted with his family.

His father, Hiram McNutt, was a country doctor in Warrensburg,
Warren County, New York, a little town in the Lake George country.
Hiram had married Rebecca Knight Rexford, whose nephew, Eben
Rexford, wrote the song “Silver Threads Among the Gold.” It is quite
possible that Dr. McNutt’s migrating ancestors came over from Bally-
bay in Ulster with the Rev. Thomas Clark and his Presbyterian con-
gregation, discovered earlier in this work in the new settlement at Salem,
New York, in 1766. Warrensburg is only a relatively short distance
from Salem.

Dr. Hiram and his wife had two sons: Hiram Eugene, born Septem-
ber 21, 1848, and Randolph, born in 1851. The elder of these was gradu-
ated from Dartmouth, and then went on to get an M.D. degree. He
married Delia Louella Snow in Albany, and went to Huron, Ohio, to
practice; there he remained until 1883, when he went to Aberdeen,
South Dakota, to take up a claim near Warner, nine miles away. While
“proving up” on their land to establish final ownership as homesteaders,
Dr. McNutt and Delia lived in a sod house. With this accomplished the
doctor and his wife removed to Aberdeen, where diligence in practice
and thrift permitted the building of four houses: one to live in and three
to rent.

The only child in the doctor’s home was a daughter, Fanny, who in
time married John A. Tolmie and lived for years in Huron, South
Dakota. Her home at present is in Brownwood, Texas, but when she
supplied information for this chapter she was visiting a son in Chicago,
helping to welcome a new grandson: Randolph McNutt Tolmie. At the
time of his death in 1927 Randolph McNutt had no other near living
relative than his niece, Mrs. Tolmie, now the only source of out-of-the-
way information about two remarkable men.

Mrs. Tolmie tells stories of her father’s energy: of his service to
Aberdeen as an alderman, when he was instrumental in securing many
improvements for the town including a very good fire department with
a well-equipped fire house. A Republican, he was pressed numbers of
times to run for Mayor or Governor, but like so many of his kin, he shrank from the race for office. Perhaps he was so independent in spirit he didn’t care to submit himself to the whims and judgments of the electorate. For several years he was secretary of the State Board of Medical Examiners, and during one session of the Legislature of South Dakota he spent three months in Pierre, the capital, securing the enactment of a bill prescribing the requirements for the practice of medicine in the State.

Dr. McNutt was always fair, and always insistent on fairness from others. His daughter recalls that at the end of the first World War a man living in Warner asked him to provide a birth certificate for his son, a soldier who wished to marry a girl in France. The doctor replied that he would, on receipt of $15 in payment of the neglected charge for delivery when the soldier son was born. The bill was paid.

With a thought for the reluctance of some modern specialists to be disturbed outside their office hours, Mrs. Tolmie relates a story that illustrates her father’s way. On a day in winter when the snow was deep and the cold intense, Dr. McNutt started out in a cutter, with hot bricks at his feet and a buffalo robe to keep him warm, to visit a patient many miles away. The horse took fright at something, ran away, and overturned and smashed the cutter. Dr. McNutt caught the horse, and continued his freezing ride on the animal’s back. Then the horse stumbled into an abandoned well on the prairie. Somehow the doctor helped him out, and kept on going until he reached his patient.

“Many are the times,” Mrs. Tolmie says, “Father not only did not get his fee, but after dark would take my childhood sled and haul a sack of flour, or potatoes, or sugar, to leave on the doorstep of the patient.”

Dr. Hiram McNutt, a man to be remembered, died in 1923 at the age of seventy-five.

Randolph McNutt, the younger brother, attended the Warrentsburg Academy and was graduated from Dartmouth in 1871 with the degree of Bachelor of Science. Two years later he was graduated from the Albany Law School. His only public office was school commissioner of Warren County from 1877 to 1880. At some time in this general period he married Evelyn Marihew; later he removed to Buffalo.

Perhaps it was his interest in schools and education that led him to begin the manufacture of school furniture and to found the Randolph McNutt Company. He had the canny, practical sense of his race and grew wealthy. His home was in the Markeen residential hotel, which he owned. Robert W. Bingham, secretary of the Buffalo Historical Society, has provided the information that besides the benefactions already men-
tioned, he donated $20,000 for a scholarship fund for the University of Buffalo, and established a $15,000 library at the Nichols Schools in Buffalo in memory of his wife, after her death in 1924.

Harold G. Rugg, assistant librarian at Dartmouth, has written me that after Mr. McNutt left half a million dollars to Dartmouth — the residue of his estate after the directed purchase of annuities for several of his old associates — the trustees voted on April 28, 1930 to give the name Randolph McNutt Hall to the building used by the Tuck School of Business, previously known as Tuck Hall. The building was taken over for the McNutt Fund at a valuation of $125,000.

Mrs. Tolmie has added intimate information in detail about her uncle Randolph McNutt's way with his benefactions. Young men he was financing at Dartmouth were informed of their benefactor's standards of conduct, and if they disregarded them, his help stopped immediately. One young man was offered an opportunity to go along on a motor trip to the Pacific Coast, with a stop in South Dakota when Fanny McNutt was to be married to John Tolmie. The protegé became a little careless, and Randolph McNutt learned of several lapses, including the smoking of cigarettes. Expense money for an immediate train trip to Buffalo was handed the young man, with the direction to get moving. The youth had been passing worthless checks. Randolph McNutt made good on every check, and after his return home by motor from the Pacific Coast, he prosecuted the ungrateful wretch who had disappointed him. "He was a very kindly man," his niece tells me, "although a rigid disciplinarian. He brooked no nonsense from anyone."

"No one will ever know my uncle's kind deeds. He found his pleasure in secrecy in his goodness. He loved to write to someone connected with the family, or among his business associates and employees, enclosing a check for railroad fare and expenses for a trip he thought might give pleasure; or for a basket of groceries, or clothing, or house rent, or something of the kind for the needy."

Like others of his general kin, he may have found it natural to conceal his liberal impulses under a veneer of simulated gruffness. The Randolph McNutt Company has disappeared from East Swan Street in Buffalo, but many Dartmouth men no doubt will long remember the founder.

Departure of McNaughts from Scotland on their way to the New World did not end in the seventeenth century, or in the eighteenth. William McNaught, born in Glasgow, married Isabel Kyle, native of Edinburgh; they removed after 1850 to Norwood, Massachusetts, where their son Thomas J. McNaught was born. Thomas, long em-
ployed in a Navy Yard near Boston, married Caroline Hobbs of Norwood, and they now live in Dedham. Their son Robert, who signs his letters as “Bob,” is the last to appear in this long series of personal histories.

Bob McNaught entered the United States Navy in the second World War, played baseball with a Navy team at the Fore River yards at Quincy, and served in the North Atlantic until discharged in 1944 because of a disability. He entered Colby College at Waterville, Maine, in 1945, and played football until the disability forced him to drop out in his second year. He had played semi-pro ball for three years after leaving high school, and for a while had a semi-pro basketball team.

After majoring in history and government, Bob was graduated from Colby in 1949 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Then he began teaching and coaching the basketball squad in the high school at Phillips, Maine. The team had its most successful season in seventeen years. In September 1950 he began teaching and coaching in football and basketball in the much larger high school in Winslow, Maine. His next step will be to return to Colby to begin work for a Master of Arts degree in educational administration. A letter in mid-1950 said:

“I am married to a wonderful girl I met at Colby [Lorraine Ross]; she too has Scottish ancestry. She is a tall, beautiful redhead. Our pride and joy, Robbie, Jr. [born June 28, 1949], is a fine, rugged little feller with reddish-brown hair and hazel eyes. He has a vocabulary of approximately fourteen words and walks. We are expecting another in about six weeks. Our family has for years attended the Scottish picnics at Caledonian Grove, West Roxbury, Massachusetts. We see some of our greatest athletes at these meetings, and enjoy the games and food.”

In about six weeks Bob nearly lost his wonderful girl in childbirth, when Kathleen Elaine was born on August 7. Happily enough, the anxiety passed when the young mother rallied, and then recovered her health. It was Lorraine herself who wrote on November 9, 1950 about the new daughter:

“She is a typical McNaught. She and Robbie look exactly alike. Robbie idolizes her and is too sweet for words with her, although he can’t quite fathom why he isn’t allowed to take her bottle away from her. He is forever stealing it and running like mad to hide with it. She too has a small dimple at the left side of her mouth, which I guess is going to be a characteristic in our family.

“Bob is doing very well this year, according to public opinion. He has developed a line that ‘has never been seen before.’ They think he is a terrific coach.”
This is a good point at which to close, with a look ahead through the shining eyes of all the young people who have their careers before them, who will rear the children who will grow up and do things to provide the stories for someone else to put into another book at some later time. The beautiful redheads and the vital brunette and blonde girls who marry the young men of the Clan MacNaughton will fulfill the promise of more lawyers, doctors, engineers, educators, editors, and Army and Navy officers like those we now know.

We ought not close, however, without a final look at Galloway in Scotland, where so many of the fathers of old worked the soil and argued over the last field-preaching or the most recent sermon in the kirk, clad in hodden gray, sometimes with jackets of shepherd’s check, and capped in blue bonnets. It is now nearly three centuries since they left for Ulster — so long ago that Scotland may have forgotten all about them.

In Castle Douglas today the chief drygoods store is that of A. McNaught & Co., one of the leading advertisers in the *Galloway News*. The founder, perhaps named Alexander, died some years ago. In the nearby town of New Galloway one of the respected citizens is Bailie MacKnight, whose photograph is shown in an illustration. A column of death notices in the *Galloway News* of August 6, 1949, contained this:

MacKnight. — On 4th August, 1949, at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Andrew, dearly beloved eldest son of William Callander MacKnight, High Street, New Galloway. Funeral on Monday, 8th August, leaving New Galloway at one p.m. for Barrhill Cemetery, arriving 2:30 p.m.

In nearby Dumfries, MacKnight & Co., Ltd., sells Ford cars and tractors. Frequently appearing in the *Galloway News* are little items about children named McNaught or McKnight who have taken part in school exercises and won prizes, and their elders who have had parts in amateur plays and other neighborhood doings like gymkhanas. Occasionally a young McNaught emerges as a star football player. All these are members of a family resident in Galloway for seven centuries.

“The family tradition was always strong in Scotland,” says the Scottish author Neil M. Gunn in the leading article, illustrated in color, of the December 1950 issue of the magazine *Holiday*. “Beyond the family was always the clan” — the group of related families. “In fact the word clann in the original Gaelic means children, and is used in such expressions as ‘the children of the Gael’ or ‘their children’s children.’ . . . But the basic idea was the family, and even when it became a very big
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family it tended to hang onto the family name or surname. This gave a warmth to life, a social cohesion; it made a man feel that he belonged somewhere, that he was of account, and, consequently, that he would find his highest fulfilment in giving a good account of himself.”

A poignant illustration of the depth of feeling for home and family is found in one of the old ballads often included in anthologies: the “Lament of the Border Widow.” A raiding, feuding borderer in the South country of the Scotts, Armstrongs, Johnstons, and Elliots, had been summarily executed, and after carrying his body alone to the grave she had dug with her own hands, the widow composed her Lament:

My love he built me a bonnie bower,
And clad it all with lillie flower;
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see,
Than my true love he built for me.

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
With ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart forevermair.

Though feuds, border raids, and quick punishments belong to the remote past, the Lament remains a cherished symbol of sentiment that is seldom expressed directly in words. The women — bless them! — always have been more articulate in such things than their more reticent men.
THE APPENDICES

A
THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION AND THE HOAX

B
HISTORY OF THE BARNARD McNITT FARM

C
REDISCOVERY AND RESTORATION
John McKnitt, newly arrived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1684, would have been surprised had some card-reading gypsy told him a grandson, John McKnitt Alexander, and a great-grandson, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, would become figures in enduring controversy. For 130 years or more the grandson has been accused by many of fabricating a Declaration of Independence which, according to the record he preserved, was adopted by a convention held in Charlotte, North Carolina, on the night of May 19-20, 1775. It is still maintained by respectable scholars that John plagiarized this Mecklenburg Declaration from Jefferson's National Declaration of July 4, 1776, after reading and admiring it.

Dr. Ephraim Brevard, graduated from Princeton in 1768 and thirty-one years old in 1775, has not suffered so much censure from critical historians. While he is credited with heading the committee of three that drafted the May 20 resolves, so much disputed, he also was the secretary of a Committee of Safety that adopted a long set of resolutions on May 31, 1775. The latter document was published in North Carolina newspapers at the time.

On the other hand, the May 20 Declaration guarded by John McKnitt Alexander was not published in any newspaper until 1819. This long delay, and the fact that certain of its phrases resemble closely some of the ringing expressions in the National Declaration, have been held by scholars to justify suspicion, pointing with almost damning certainty to faking and plagiarism.

Two facts make difficult the task of clearing away doubts of the honesty of John McKnitt Alexander and the genuineness of the May 20 Declaration. The first is that original and draft copies of the resolves adopted that night were lost, perhaps before 1800. The second fact is that the minute book kept by John McKnitt Alexander, in which he entered an account of the May 19-20 convention as its secretary, was burned when the house in which it was kept was damaged by fire in April 1800.

Controversy has raged with varying degrees of heat since 1819. The people of Charlotte and of North Carolina generally believe today in the genuineness of the May 20 Declaration. Their faith is supported by numerous writings of Dr. Archibald Henderson, biographer of George Bernard Shaw and retired Professor of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Henderson is the only scholar of rank to uphold the authenticity of the first Mecklenburg Declaration. He has published various pieces of conclusive evidence uncovered by diligent research. His chief contributions to better knowledge of the subject have been made in a pamphlet published in Charlotte in 1916: The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and the Revolution in North Carolina in 1775; in his history: The Old North State, and the New (two volumes, Chicago, 1941); and in various articles for magazines and newspapers.
Dr. George W. Graham published in 1905 a popular work, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*, which contains a great deal of interesting information about the action and the persons in the Mecklenburg story. The general public in North Carolina has continued to like the book, but according to contemporary standards of scholarship, it is inadequate in evidence and therefore fails to prove the case for the May 20 Declaration.

Scholars in North Carolina and other places, with the lone exception of Dr. Henderson, continue to regard John McKnight Alexander as guilty in some degree of perpetrating a hoax. How they have withstood so long the positive evidence produced by Dr. Henderson often seems puzzling. They have relied upon a monograph (published by Putnams in 1907) by William Henry Hoyt, now a New York lawyer. In his year of graduate study at the University of Vermont, before he went on to the Harvard Law School, Mr. Hoyt wrote his book, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*, as a thesis leading to the degree of Master of Arts. He wrote with honesty and scholarly care; but as we shall see later on, he wrote without having seen the most crucial and decisive of all the documents bearing on the subject: the Davie Copy of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775. Nor was he able to discover and examine other original Mecklenburg papers.

Other books have dealt with the subject, and numberless magazine and newspaper articles have been printed in the past century and a quarter. The literature is now so vast that an effort to deal with all the interesting phases within this chapter would be out of the question. Perhaps the story will be more readily understood if kept short and simple.

Diligent as previous investigators have been, they have not uncovered all the facts. It remains now to bring new light to the controversy. The hoax of the Mecklenburg Declaration — and there has been a hoax — was not the work of John McKnight Alexander but of the man chiefly responsible for shaking faith in him. As for the charges of plagiarism so long heard, it must appear that study of those ringing expressions and their origins has not been sufficiently deep. Jefferson did not coin them, and neither did the authors of the Mecklenburg Declaration. Some of them were ancient even in 1775.

One of the convictions which readers may come to share is that the Mecklenburg Declaration was largely the work of two young graduates of Princeton. The College of New Jersey, as it was called when founded by Presbyterian ministers and elders, was not known as Princeton University in Revolutionary times, but it will serve our purpose to refer to it here as Princeton. Information about the two, and a third who was active with them, has been supplied by Anne G. Vandewater, writing from the office of the secretary of the University:

"Waigsttill Avery, Class of 1766, the son of Humphrey and Jerusha (Morgan) Avery [of Norwich, Connecticut], was prepared for Princeton by the Rev. Samuel Seabury in Connecticut. At Princeton he took first honors and was the Latin Salutatorian. He roomed with Oliver Ellsworth, afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

"Hezekiah James Balch, also of the Class of 1766, was one of the founders of the Cliosophic Society, one of the two debating societies in Princeton. He received an honorary A.M. from Princeton in 1774."
“Ephraim Brevard graduated from Princeton in 1768, but we have no record of his undergraduate activities.”

Ephraim, one of the eight sons of John, Jr., and Jane McWhorter Brevard, was born in Maryland in 1744. His father's parents were John and Katherine McKnitt Brevard. Katherine was a sister of Margaret McKnitt, who married James Alexander and became the mother of John McKnitt Alexander. The father of Katherine and Margaret was John McKnitt, who arrived on the Eastern Shore from the Laggan in Ulster in 1684. Ephraim's parents removed to North Carolina in 1746 or 1748, and when the boy was old enough they sent him to study in small private schools in Virginia in preparation for Princeton. After his graduation from college in 1768 he taught school for a while in the old home neighborhood in Maryland while he studied medicine with Dr. Ramsey. Next he removed to Charlotte, North Carolina, to begin practice as a physician. He married, but his wife died early.

It has been the fashion among disbelievers in the first Mecklenburg Declaration to maintain that Charlotte was a backwoods community, where one would hardly expect to find educated men. It may surprise some to learn of the three young Princeton graduates who helped give direction to the independence movement in Mecklenburg. The county was peopled mostly by Ulster Scots who had come down the valleys from Pennsylvania and Maryland, and by a lesser number of Germans from Pennsylvania.

Waightstill Avery, who began practicing law in Charlotte in 1769, and Hezekiah James Balch, who became a Presbyterian minister in the neighborhood, were earnest advocates of the causes of the mainly Ulster-Scottish community. Mecklenburgers had three chief grievances against the Crown government. Devoted to education, they had established Queen's College in Charlotte. When the British government refused to ratify a charter, the school was kept going nevertheless, with its name changed oddly to Queen's Museum. The King had refused the charter to Queen's College, Dr. Henderson stated in a Phi Beta Kappa address at Chapel Hill on May 17, 1950, because, “as reported to him by the Board of Trade, the college under such auspices would prove to be merely a seminary for the education and instruction of youth in the principles of the Presbyterian Church.”

Another grievance was the set of laws which imposed punishments upon Presbyterian ministers if they performed marriage ceremonies, and required every taxpayer regardless of religious affiliation to pay ten shillings a year to support the Establishment regardless of whether there was an Anglican church in the county or not. A third grievance was the general corruption in the administration of laws and the collection of fees in the province. The well-to-do English planters of the Tidewater region had all the advantages, and the men on the frontiers had most of the discontents.

Waightstill Avery wrote for the Mecklenburgers in 1769 or soon afterward a petition to Governor William Tryon, the Governor's Council, and the House of Burgesses, asking for the repeal of the Vestry and Marriage Acts. After the preamble the petition continues with spirit:

“We would inform that there are about one thousand freemen of us, who hold to the established church of Scotland able to bear arms, within the county of Mecklenburg.” After declarations of loyalty to government and courts the petition goes on:
"We think it as reasonable that those who hold to the Episcopal church should pay their clergy without our assistance as that we, who hold to the church of Scotland, should pay our clergy without their assistance. We now support two settled Presbyterian ministers in this Parish; we, therefore, think it a grievance, that the present law makes us liable to be still further burthened with taxes to support an Episcopal clergyman: especially as not one-twentieth part of the inhabitants are of that profession. We think that were there an Episcopal clergyman in this Parish, his labours would be useless. . . .

"We conceive ourselves highly injured and aggrieved by the marriage act, the preamble whereof scandalizes the Presbyterian clergy, and wrongfully charges them with celebrating the rites of marriage without license or publication of banns. We think it a grievance, that this act imposes heavy penalties on our clergy, for marrying after publication of banns by them made, in their own religious assemblies, where the parties are best known.

"We declare that the marriage act obstructs the natural and inalienable right of marriage and tends to introduce immorality. We declare it subjects many to various inconveniences, one whereof is going into South Carolina to have the ceremony performed. . . ."

Mark the words "natural and inalienable right."

The troubles of Boston after the Tea Party and the Massacre, the closing of the port, and the occupation of the town by British troops, greatly excited the Mecklenburgers in 1774 and 1775. Already with grievances of their own, they met frequently and talked of independence. A convention was called, with two representatives of each of nine militia companies and several other leading citizens to meet in the Charlotte courthouse on the evening of May 19, 1775. Among the leading spirits were numerous Alexanders, and one of the most popular men of the community: Colonel Thomas Polk, commander of the county regiment of militia. These men derived from the Laggan in Ulster and from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and their families had been associated for generations through intermarriage. Ezekiel Polk, a kinsman of the Colonel, was a grandfather of President James K. Polk.

On the day set for the convention an express rider brought the first news of the engagements at Lexington and Concord exactly one month before, on April 19. Dr. Henderson produced evidence of this in his 1916 pamphlet. The air was full of excitement as the convention opened in the evening, with Abraham Alexander as chairman and John McKnitt Alexander as clerk. A resolutions committee of three men, who undoubtedly had been working on drafts beforehand, was appointed. It is generally accepted that the three were Dr. Ephraim Brevard, the Rev. Hezekiah Balch, and William Kennon, a lawyer from Salisbury, forty miles distant. If Waightstill Avery was not a member of the committee it may be surmised, because of his strong patriotic views, that he had some part in earlier drafting. William Kennon, an experienced lawyer, was a good patriot. It would be easier to believe that he drafted the long set of resolutions of May 31 than that he had a very active part in writing the spirited resolves of May 19-20.

The minute book kept by John McKnitt Alexander, containing the record of the convention of May 19-20, 1775, was burned in April 1800. Many
THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION

who dispute the authenticity of the Declaration always have insisted that when the minute book was burned, every paper and record was destroyed with it. This happens to be untrue. Other papers bearing on the subject, including a good copy of the May 20 Declaration, escaped the fire and now may be seen among the papers of the Southern Historical Collection in the library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Henderson says McKnitt Alexander had more than one house; that the minute book was kept in one, and that various important papers were kept elsewhere.

The copy of John McKnitt Alexander's record of the meeting, including the resolutions adopted, was in another's handwriting. Revisions in John's well-known hand indicate the genuineness of the text, which evidently had been transcribed by a friend either from the minute book or from a copy.

Here then is John McKnitt Alexander's narrative from the pre-1800 copy, with his text of the Mecklenburg Declaration he has so many times been accused of plagiarizing from Jefferson:

"No. Carolina, Mecklenburg County. Declaration of Independence May 20, 1775.

"In the spring of 1775 the leading characters in Mecklenburg County, stimulated by that enthusiastic patriotism which elevates the mind above considerations of individual agrandisement & scorning to shelter themselves from the impending storm by submission to lawless power, &c, &c. held several detached meetings in each of which the individual sentiments were 'that the cause of Boston was the cause of all; that their destinies were indissolubly connected with those of their Eastern fellow-citizens — & that they must either submit to all the impositions which an unprincipled & to them unrepresented parliament might impose — or support their brethren who were doomed to sustain the first shock of that power, which if successful there — would ultimately overwhelm all in the common calamity.'

"Conformably to these principles Col. Thos. Polk thro solicitation issued an order to each Captain's company in the County of Mecklenburgh (then comprising the present County of Cabarrus) directing each militia company to elect 2 persons & delegate to them ample powers to devise ways & means to aid & assist their suffering brethren in Boston, & also generally to adopt measures to extricate themselves from the impending storm & to secure unimpaired their inalienable rights, privileges, & liberties from the dominant grasp of British imposition & tyranny.

"In conformity to said order on the 19th of May 1775 the said delegation met in Charlotte town vested with unlimited powers, at which time official news, by express, arrived of the battle of Lexington on that day of the preceding month. Every delegate felt the value & importance of the prize & the awful & solemn crisis which had arrived — every bosom swelled with indignation at the malice, inveteracy, & insatiable revenge developed in the late attack at Lexington. The universal sentiment was, let us not flatter ourselves that popular harangues or resolves — that popular vapour will avert the storm, or vanquish our common enemy — let us deliberate — let us calculate the issue, the probable result, & then let us act with energy as brethren leagued to preserve our property, our lives, & what is still more endearing, the liberties of America.

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"Abraham Alexander was then elected Chairman & Jno. McKnitt Alexander, Clerk. After a free and full discussion of the various objects for which the delegation had been convened it was unanimously ordained

"1. That whosoever directly or indirectly abetted or in any way, form or manner countenanced the unchartered & dangerous invasion of our rights as claimed by G. Britain is an enemy to this County — to America & to the inherent & inalienable rights of man.

"2. We the Citizens of Mecklenburg County do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the Mother Country & hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown & abjure all political connection, contract, or association with that nation who have wantonly trampled on our rights & liberties & inhumanly shed the innocent blood of American patriots at Lexington.

"3. We do hereby declare ourselves a free & independent people — are of right ought to be a sovereign & self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God & the general government of the congress, to the maintainence of which independence civil & religious we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual cooperation, our lives, our fortunes, & our most sacred honor.

"4. As we now acknowledge the existance & controul of no law or legal officers, civil or military, within this County, we do hereby ordain & adopt as a rule of life, all, each & every of our former laws — wherein nevertheless the crown of great britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities, or authority therein.

"5. It is also further decreed that all, each, & every military officer in this County is hereby reinstated in his former command & authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz. a Justice of the peace in the character of a 'Committee-man' to issue process, hear & determine all matters of controversy according to sd. adopted laws — to preserve peace, union & harmony in sd. County & to use every exertion to spread the love of country & fire of freedom throughout America untill a more general & organized government be established in this province. A selection from the members present shall constitute a Committee of public safety for sd. County.

A number of bye-laws were also added merely to protect the association from confusion & to regulate their general conduct as citizens. After sitting up in the Court house all night, neither sleepy, hungry, or fatigued, & after discussing every paragraph they were all passed, sanctioned & decreed unanimously about 2 o'clock May 20th. In a few days a deputation of sd. delegation convened, when Capt. Jas. Jack of Charlotte was deputed as express to Congress in Philadelphia with a copy of sd. resolves & proceedings, together with a letter addressed to our 3 representatives there, viz. Rd. Caswell, Wm. Hooper, & Joseph Hughes, under express injunction personally & thro the sd. State representation to use all possible means to have sd. proceedings sanctioned & approved by the general Congress. On the return of Cap'n Jack the delegation learned that their proceedings were individually approved by the members of Congress, but that it was deemed
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premature to lay them before the house. A joint letter from s\textsuperscript{d} 3 members of Congress was also received, complimentary of the zeal in the common cause & recommending perseverance, order & energy.

“The subsequent harmony, unanimity & exertion in the cause of liberty & independence evidently resulting from these regulations & the continued exertion of s\textsuperscript{d} delegation, apparently tranquillised this section of the state & met with the concurrence & high approbation of the Council of safety who held their sessions at Newbern & Wilmington alternately & who confirmed the nomination & acts of the delegation in their official capacity.

“From this delegation originated the Court of Inquiry of this County who constituted & held their first session in Charlotte. They then held their meetings regularly at Charlotte, at Col. James Harris' & at Col. Phifers alternately, one week at each place. It was a civil court founded on military process. Before this judicature all suspicious persons were made to appear, formally tryed, & banished or continued under guard. Its jurisdiction was as unlimited as toryism, & its decrees as final as the confidence & patriotism of the County. Several were arrested & brot before them, from Lincoln, Rowan, & other adjacent Counties. Booth & Dunn (lawyers) were brot from Salisbury, tryed, convicted, proscribed & banished. &c. &c.”

So ends the pre-1800 account of the May 19-20 convention, the text of the Declaration, and the record of what followed. Observe the sequence of events. “A selection from the members present” that night met as a Committee of Safety on May 31 and adopted twenty resolutions supplementing the May 20 Declaration of Independence. Captain Jack was sent to Philadelphia. A Court of Inquiry was set up. All these acts were consequent upon decisions reached at the May 19-20 convention.

McKnitt Alexander — his friends dropped the name John and I shall hereafter — did not preserve a list of the delegates at the May 19-20 convention, apart from the minute book, and did not try to call up the names from memory. A committee of the North Carolina Legislature made up the lack in 1830, probably from the memories of survivors. After the authenticity of the Declaration had been challenged by Jefferson in 1819 and a controversy had raged for a few years, the Legislature determined to issue a pamphlet containing the text of the Declaration and the written accounts of men who had been present when it was adopted. The State pamphlet of 1831 contains this list of delegates:

Colonel Thomas Polk, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, the Rev. Hezekiah James Balch, Waightstill Avery, John Phifer, James Harris, William Kennon, John Ford, Richard Barry, Henry Downs, Ezra Alexander, William Graham, John Queary, Abraham Alexander, John McKnitt Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, Adam Alexander, Charles Alexander, Zaccheus Wilson, Sr., Benjamin Patton, Matthew McClure, Neil Morrison, Robert Irwin, John Flenniken, David Reese, and Richard Harris, Sr. The name of John Davidson, elected a delegate with McKnitt Alexander from the same militia company, was overlooked in compiling the list, and belongs in it. Richard (or Robert) Harris was not actually present at the convention, it has been said.

At 2 a.m. of May 20 the convention delegates were ready for rest, and as attested in various accounts it was decided to wait until noon (it then

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was Saturday) to have the new Declaration read to the people from the courthouse steps by Colonel Thomas Polk. General Joseph Graham, an eye-witness then aged fifteen, many years later wrote for the 1831 pamphlet a lively account of the night’s work and the enthusiasm of the big crowd that threw caps in air when Colonel Tammas read the paper from the courthouse steps. General Graham’s account is so sharply clear that only the captious could doubt its value as evidence.

If genuine, then why was the May 20 Declaration not published at once in the two weekly newspapers of North Carolina? Rough notes made by McKnitt Alexander, discovered in his house after his death, give a strong impression that the action of the convention was followed by sobering thoughts. The notes allude to a cooling-off period, and imply that the adoption of the resolutions was regarded by some as a “rash act”; that the more moderate Whigs were not represented in the convention. The more conservative patriots were startled, and any Loyalists about must have been blazing. By June 1, leading men in adjoining counties were denouncing the treasons and conspiracies of “designing men,” as Dr. Henderson has pointed out with direct quotations. It is not remarkable that the Charlotte leaders offered no copies of their Declaration to the two newspapers of the Province.

The Committee of Safety appointed on May 20, of which Dr. Brevard was clerk, met in Charlotte on May 31, eleven days after the convention, and adopted twenty resolutions. It was the day of a militia muster for the county. These resolutions now seem cautious, but they were in fact bold, considering the temper of the rest of North Carolina. The resolves, published soon after in three newspapers — the North-Carolina Gazette at New Bern, the Cape-Fear Mercury at Wilmington, and a paper in Charleston, South Carolina, constitute what the accusers of McKnitt Alexander call the real Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

It may be said that these resolves would excite no jealousy in the hearts of partisans of Thomas Jefferson. It is quite tenable to suppose that McKnitt Alexander was referring to the twenty resolutions when he wrote in his account: “A number of bye-laws were also added merely to protect the association from confusion and to regulate their general conduct as citizens.” He made no other reference to them. Although the May 20 resolves and the manner of their adoption were cherished in the memories of all who took part, the May 31 document was as completely forgotten as though it had never been written. The controversy begun in 1819 had raged for years before scholars exhumed the twenty resolutions from old newspapers. Then the accusers of McKnitt Alexander were sure they had the one and only Mecklenburg Declaration.

The May 31 resolutions from the fourth to the seventeenth, inclusive, prescribe rules for local government, the selection of officials, collection of debts and taxes, holding of courts, and punishment of offenders. The system was never made effective. The document is written in legalistic language, and the author must have been a lawyer, who could hardly have been Waightstill Avery. The beginning and closing resolutions are of real interest, especially the eighteenth, which provides in advance for repeal of the Declaration in the event the British Parliament “resign its unjust and arbitrary Pretentions with Respect to America.” It was a provisional, or tenta-
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tive Declaration, which some of the cautious members of the committee may have thought would supersede the May 20 resolves. McKnitt Alexander made it his life's work to preserve the record of the convention and the integrity of the first Declaration. No wonder North Carolina forgot the May 31 paper, and no wonder its anniversary is not celebrated by the people.

“Charlotte Town, Mecklenburg County, May 31, [1775].

“This day the Committee met, and passed the following RESOLVES:

“WHEREAS by an Address presented to his Majesty by both Houses of Parliament in February last, the American Colonies are declared to be in a state of actual Rebellion, we conceive that all Laws and Commissions confirmed by, or derived from the Authority of the King or Parliament, are annulled and vacated, and the former civil Constitution of these Colonies for the present wholly suspended. To provide in some Degree for the Exigencies of the County in the present alarming Period, we deem it proper and necessary to pass the following resolves, viz.

“1. That all Commissions, civil and military, heretofore granted by the Crown, to be exercised in these Colonies, are null and void, and the Constitution of each particular Colony wholly suspended.

“2. That the Provincial Congress of each Province, under the Direction of the Great Continental Congress, is invested with all legislative and executive Powers within their respective Provinces; and that no other Legislative or Executive does or can exist, at this Time, in any of these Colonies.

“3. As all former Laws are now suspended in this Province, and the Congress have not yet provided others, we judge it necessary, for the better Preservation of good Order, to form certain Rules and Regulations for the internal Government of this County, until Laws shall be provided for us by the Congress.

“18. That these Resolves be in full Force and Virtue, until Instructions from the General Congress of this Province, regulating the Jurisprudence of this Province, shall provide otherwise, or the Legislative Body of Great-Britain resign its unjust and arbitrary Pretentions with Respect to America.

“19. That the several Militia Companies in this county do provide themselves with proper arms and accoutrements, and hold themselves in constant Readiness to execute the commands and Directions of the Provincial Congress, and of this committee.

“20. That this committee do appoint Colonel Thomas Polk, and Doctor Joseph Kennedy, to purchase 300 lb. of Powder, 600 lb. of Lead, and 1000 Flints; and deposit the same in some safe place, hereafter to be appointed by the committee.


“Signed by Order of the Committee.”

The May 31 resolves are both broader and milder than those adopted at the convention of May 19-20. While the latter had declared only Mecklenburg County to be independent of Great Britain, the subsequent resolves of May 31 declared the rule of King and Parliament annulled and vacated in all
the American colonies. However, the imperial rule might be restored at any time, if King and Parliament became less arbitrary.

The May 31 resolves were printed in the North-Carolina Gazette on June 16, and in the Cape-Fear Mercury on June 23. Three words were added to the eighteenth resolution as printed in the Mercury, that had not appeared in the Gazette the week before. In the later publication, the May 31 Declaration was made to remain in effect until "the legislative body of Great Britain resign it’s unjust and arbitrary pretentions with respect to America and no longer." Someone had wished to make sure of a time limit. But all this caution was wasted on Josiah Martin, royal Governor of North Carolina, who had fled for safety from his palace at New Bern to Fort Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. A copy of the Cape-Fear Mercury of June 23 was smuggled to him, and the twenty resolutions made him boil. He wrote his superior in London that they "surpass all the horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirits of this Continent have yet produced," and promised that the authors would get his attention whenever his hands were sufficiently strengthened. He may have planned some first-class hangings, but he never recovered his lost authority.

The Mecklenburgers decided to send their resolutions to the three North Carolina delegates to the Congress in Philadelphia, as McKnitt Alexander relates in his account. Captain James Jack made the trip. He may have taken both sets. When he reached Salisbury, the resolves were read at a session of court at the suggestion of William Kennon, one of the authors. Two lawyers present, Booth and Dunn, proposed interference with the messenger. Captain Jack offered to fight with anyone who cared to take him on, but nothing happened. He continued to Philadelphia, where Congress was mulling over an olive-branch message to the King. The message was dispatched, to no ultimate avail, and about the same time General George Washington was appointed to command the patriot forces at a salary and expense allowance of $500 a month.

The North Carolina delegates, Hooper, Caswell, and Hewes (or Hughes), thought it inadvisable to call the Mecklenburg resolves to the attention of Congress, but it is hardly likely they would have omitted showing the document to some of their friends from neighboring colonies. Though disappointed in his errand, Captain Jack had an opportunity to watch General Washington ride away toward Cambridge at the head of his staff on June 23.

William S. Alexander, another Mecklenburg man, was in Philadelphia at the time on mercantile business and encountered Captain Jack on that day. So he related several times afterward to members of his family, three of whom, Alphonse, Amos, and Joseph McKnitt Alexander, testified in a joint statement published in the State pamphlet of 1831. Captain Jack had told him, William reported to his kinsmen, that he had come to Philadelphia as agent or bearer of the May 20 Declaration, "with instructions to present the same to the Delegates from North Carolina."

Before Dr. Ephraim Brevard left Charlotte to become a surgeon with colonial forces in the South, he had living with him in the autumn of 1776 a younger brother Adam, then a student in Queen’s Museum. On July 13, 1824, Adam Brevard wrote an account of events following the adoption of the Mecklenburg Declaration, which his grandson, Dr. J. M. Davidson, sent
from Quincy, Florida years later to *The Southern Home*, a paper published in Charlotte. The account was printed on July 5, 1875.

Adam Brevard wrote that while looking over some old papers in his brother’s home he came across what appeared to him to be the May 20 Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. When he asked Dr. Brevard about it, he was told the papers were the rough drafts from which he had written the resolutions. The editor of *The Southern Home* added that Adam Brevard kept the papers for many years, then handed them to his brother, Captain Alexander Brevard, for Colonel James Dickinson, who proposed to have them published. Nothing more was heard of them, and the editor presumed the papers to have been long lost.

Dr. Ephraim Brevard, surgeon in the Revolution, was captured by the British and confined at Charleston, until allowed to go back to Charlotte an invalid. McKnitt Alexander took him into his home and cared for him until he died in 1781.

As for McKnitt Alexander’s further service, he represented Mecklenburg County in the Provincial Congress of North Carolina in the August and September sessions of 1775. Then according to Dr. George W. Graham he went to Philadelphia, visited Dr. Franklin, and told him about the Mecklenburg Declaration. On April 4, 1776, he was present as a delegate at another session of the Provincial Congress held in Halifax, along with Waightstill Avery, John Phifer, and Robert Irwin. On April 12 a committee brought in a resolution which was adopted unanimously: the first legislative recommendation from any colony that Congress declare independence. Virginia followed on May 15. The dates May 20, 1775, and April 12, 1776 long have been on the State flag of North Carolina.

When the Revolution came, General Davidson established an encampment near Charlotte and named it Camp McKnitt Alexander. When General Nathaniel Greene was scurrying around in 1781 to head off raids by Lord Cornwallis’ soldiers in efforts to recover British prisoners taken at Cowpens, McKnitt Alexander used his knowledge gained as a surveyor to guide parties sent to destroy ferryboats on the Yadkin and Dan Rivers. In addition to these details, Dr. Graham adds that in 1777 he was elected a trustee of Liberty Hall Academy, known as Queen’s Museum before the war.

After the Revolution McKnitt Alexander made copies of his accounts of the May 19-20 convention and of activities of a Court of Inquiry for various persons. In 1787 he supplied a copy to Dr. Hugh Williamson, who proposed to use it in writing a history of North Carolina. When the history finally appeared, it oddly stopped short with the year 1774. Governor Stokes of North Carolina testified in 1831 he had seen McKnitt Alexander’s copy in Dr. Williamson’s possession. Unfortunately this copy was lost.

The fire in April 1800 destroyed the minute book, but a number of old pamphlets and papers, including a copy of the Declaration record and some rough notes, were safe in McKnitt Alexander’s “old mansion house,” Alexandriana, north of Charlotte. Early in September Alexander carefully wrote a new copy for his friend General William R. Davie, one of the founders of the University of North Carolina, using the copy he had kept from harm. The new one, now celebrated as the Davie Copy, is preserved
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with other Mecklenburg papers in the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill. It was written on three pages of a four-page sheet of foolscap paper. The upper half of the first leaf was unwittingly torn off by one of General Davie's daughters, but all that remains corresponds closely with other copies made at various times. It is the document that reveals most and throws greatest light on the remarkable efforts made to discredit the May 20 Declaration.

John McKnitt Alexander died on July 10, 1817 at the age of eighty-four. He could not have guessed that within two years the validity of the Declaration and inferentially his own honor would be challenged by Thomas Jefferson.

It would require a book nearly as long as this one to tell in detail the full story of the Mecklenburg Declaration and the controversy about it that has lasted since McKnitt Alexander's narrative was published in the Raleigh Register of April 30, 1819. A son, Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander, had provided the copy in response to public inquiry for the facts. He added clarifying notes, explaining he had found among his father's old surveying papers and various pamphlets, that had escaped the 1800 fire, a copy of the May 19-20 convention record and Declaration, written in an unrecognized handwriting and revised by his father, and a torn half-sheet containing rough notes that had been written by his father. Because there were so many Alexanders around Charlotte, the Doctor had dropped his surname to avoid confusion. His statements for the Raleigh Register he signed as usual: J. McKnitt. His father before him had occasionally signed in the same way.

All the text provided by the Doctor son was reprinted in many newspapers, among them the Essex Register of Salem, Massachusetts. John Adams saw the text of the Mecklenburg Declaration in the issue of June 5, 1819, and sent a copy of the paper to Thomas Jefferson, with a letter saying of the May 20 Declaration: "The genuine sense of America was never so well expressed before, or since." He said other things calculated to nettle the pride of the author of the National Declaration.

Adams' letter began the controversy, because it offended all of Jefferson's loyal partisans. Jefferson sent Adams a reply on July 9, 1819, in which he said he never had heard of the Mecklenburg Declaration: "And you seem to think it genuine. I believe it spurious." There is not enough space here for all of Jefferson's irritated letter, which ends with this paragraph:

"And if the name McKnitt be real, and not a part of the fabrication, it needs a vindication by the production of such proof. For the present I must be an unbeliever in the apocryphal gospel...."

Jefferson's friends almost immediately began accusing John McKnitt Alexander of forging the May 20 Declaration, and some in North Carolina were unwise enough to suggest Jefferson had borrowed expressions from Dr. Ephraim Brevard and the other members of the resolutions committee in Charlotte who drafted the May 20 resolves. Proud North Carolinians celebrated on May 20, 1825, the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of their Declaration. Then when Jefferson's Works appeared in book form in 1829, with the 1819 letter to John Adams, Governor Stokes and the Legislature moved to publish a State pamphlet containing the text of the Declaration.
and other documents, and the stories of men on the scene in 1775. Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander, wishing to clear his father's name, worked diligently in gathering written accounts provided by men who remembered the May 19-20 convention.

Publication of the documentary evidence did not end the controversy. In 1838 Peter Force discovered the preamble and the first four of the long-forgotten May 31 resolutions in an old copy of the *Massachusetts Spy*, published at Worcester, and revealed his find in the December 18, 1838 issue of the *Daily National Intelligencer*. In 1847 the full text of the twenty resolutions was discovered in a copy of the *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal* of Charleston, dated June 13, 1775. Then the critics of John McKnitt Alexander were sure they had evidence of his guilt as a faker and forger of a spurious Declaration not adopted on May 20, 1775, whether a convention was held at the time or not.

The real character and reputation of John McKnitt Alexander never have seemed worthy of the attention of his critics. Born in 1733, he was apprenticed to a tailor in youth, and was about seventeen when his parents removed from Maryland to the vicinity of Charlotte. He became a surveyor, was very active in the new county, and was rewarded with large tracts of land north of Charlotte in the Hopewell community. In 1759 he married Jean Bain of an Ulster-Scottish family from Pennsylvania. He built a large house on his plantation and named it Alexandriana. He became a man of substantial influence and an elder in the Hopewell Presbyterian Church.

In politics he was later a Federalist, at a time when the Federalists in North Carolina advocated progress and higher education. The early Democrats of the time feared the educated would get the upper hand. He was described in 1813 in a letter written by a neighbor, D. G. Stinson, as a man of medium stature, dark in coloring, with "a good, intelligent face." He was "dignified, sensible, and neat and tidy in dress." Israel Pickens said of him in a letter to General William Lenoir dated March 23, 1823, that he was "proverbial for his scrupulous accuracy in recollecting and detailing events." He had two sons, William Bain and Joseph McKnitt Alexander. The latter was educated at Princeton. Two daughters married Presbyterian ministers, and a third married Colonel Francis A. Ramsey. McKnitt Alexander was never doubted in his lifetime by patriot neighbors.

The most powerful denouncer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20 was Charles Phillips, Professor of Mathematics at the University of North Carolina for a number of years. His father James Phillips, son of an Anglican rector, had removed from England to New York when a young man, and had married Judith Vermeule, a young woman of Huguenot and Dutch descent, who adhered to the Presbyterian Church. James Phillips became a member of the faculty at Chapel Hill, and others of the family have since been professors; there was intermarriage within the faculty circle. The Phillips family has won deserved prestige at the University of North Carolina. The Physics and Mathematics building erected in 1920 is named Phillips Hall.

Charles Phillips, graduated with distinction from North Carolina in 1841, studied theology at Princeton before he became Professor of Engineering
at his alma mater, and occasionally spoke from Presbyterian pulpits. In time he became Professor of Mathematics, and then a Doctor of Divinity, a few years after he fired his first resounding shot at John McKnitt Alexander. For convenience I shall refer to him here as Dr. Phillips. He was a man of very strong convictions and inflexible will, and when he began a crusade he stayed with it. Grandson of an Anglican clergyman in England, he once described himself in a letter to Dr. Lyman C. Draper as a “high-church Presbyterian,” whatever that may mean. As late as 1875 he still wrote of “neighbours” and “parlours,” and indicated to Dr. Draper he thought “true men” simply couldn’t have wished independence from England in 1775.

Dr. Phillips set out to demolish belief in the May 20 Declaration by writing an article for the *North Carolina University Magazine* that was published in the issue of May, 1853. He borrowed from the university president, David L. Swain, the Davie Copy transcribed by McKnitt Alexander, that Dr. Swain then had in his possession. His task was to demonstrate the worthlessness of the document as evidence, and to discredit the man who wrote it. Now for the first time his method will be made to appear, though others must have observed it.

Dr. Phillips opened his article with the mellow phrases of a minister: “. . . . Now seems to be the month of May, wherein what has been sown is promising abundant harvests, and what is yet needed may still find time for development and maturity. There will be a season of repose wherein all trees and plants are steadily growing for the harvest — and then the end shall come — when the great white throne shall be set, the angels be sent forth to separate the tares from the wheat, and all, according to their works, shall receive unerring praise or blame. . . .” And so on, with much more. “So in the moral world, the past should be revived, that the present may be understood, and the future be saved from the errors of vague speculations.”

Now it would appear that one assuming the role of an angel from the great white throne, “sent forth to separate the tares from the wheat” and to award “unerring praise or blame” was about to inflict an almost painless death on the legend of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

When Dr. Phillips came to the third page of the Davie Copy, and the end of McKnitt Alexander’s account of the May 1775 proceedings, he could not possibly have escaped seeing this underscored line in McKnitt Alexander’s handwriting: "Thus far from the Journals and records of 6th Committee." This sentence told him, as it tells the present reader, that the narrative and the text of the Declaration came from existing documents. What did Dr. Phillips do about it? He ignored the line. The angel was looking for tares. Dr. Archibald Henderson was first to call attention to this determining sentence, in newspaper articles he published in 1939, and he reproduced John McKnitt Alexander’s statement in photographic facsimile in *The Old North State, and the New* (Vol. 1, p. 296), so that all might see the truth.

Examination of a document evokes sharper understanding than thousands of words of comment or exposition. The third and final page of the Davie Copy appears in reproduction beside a page from Dr. Phillips’ article, adjacent to this text. The significant underlined words will be found in the seventh line from the top.
After leaving a bit of space on the paper to mark the close of his old record, McKnitt Alexander proceeded in the Davie Copy with a paragraph telling of subsequent harmony, unanimity, and exertion. Then he left another space and began a statement regarding the activities of the Court of Enquiry. After this short narrative he conscientiously added in closing a bit of qualification to his account of the Court's activities:

"It may be worthy of notice here, to observe that the foregoing statement [regarding the Court of Enquiry], tho' fundamentally correct; yet may not literally correspond with the original records of the transactions of s'd Court of Enquiry; as all those records and papers were burnt (with the house) on April 6, 1800: but previous to that time of 1800, a full copy of said records, at the request of Doctor Hugh Williamson, then of New York: but formerly a representative in Congress from this State, was forwarded to him by Col. Wm. Polk in order that those early transactions might fill their proper place in a history of this State, then writing by s'd Doctor Williamson in New York."

This statement says clearly enough that the records of the Court of Enquiry were burned with the minute book. It does not say that all papers relating to the May 19-20 convention were burned.

If the reader will examine the third line of the final paragraph in the reproduction of the third page of the Davie Copy, he will observe that McKnitt Alexander scratched out two words: delegation &. Unwittingly to have left those unintended words in the text would have established an implication that the "foregoing statement" included the entire document, by saying: "tho' fundamentally correct; yet may not literally correspond with the original records of the transactions of s'd delegation & Court of enquiry; as all those records and papers were burnt...." It was the "delegation" that adopted the May 20 Declaration.

He intended to convey no such meaning, and when reading over and revising the paper, he scratched out the words to make clear he meant to say that the "foregoing statement" related only to the Tory hunt.

Believing the two erased words supply the key to solution of the long controversy, my son Frank McNitt and I visited Chapel Hill in April 1950 to inspect the Davie Copy and examine the manner of erasure of the two words. We found the erasure in the same unfaded black ink used by McKnitt Alexander in writing the whole paper. To us it was apparent the words had been erased at the time of writing.

We observed also the annotations on the Davie Copy made by Dr. J. McKnitt Alexander in or after 1819. The ink he used was lighter in tone and has since faded. He drew a hand with pointing index figure to mark the line: "Thus far from the Journals & records of s'd Committee.," and wrote in the space below: "here the copy of the record ends." Alongside the concluding paragraphs, at the left of the page, he wrote: "This is from recollection & as to Dunn & Booth is incorrect as to time. J. McKnitt."

Dr. Phillips did a curious thing in writing his magazine article in 1853. In quoting the final paragraph of the Davie Copy he restored the two erased words, and thus changed the intended meaning completely. It was no slip, no error. One may carelessly omit words while copying for a magazine article, but there could have been no carelessness in replacing words that
had been erased. A scholar convinced that the May 20 Declaration was a fraud would hardly have resorted to such a device to discredit it.

In this single act we find the hoax of the Mecklenburg Declaration. Generations of writers since have taken Dr. Phillips' version for granted, without comparing his text with the Davie Copy.

After reworking the final paragraph to make it suit his purpose, Dr. Phillips went on to render his verdict, which he delivered in mellow words: "From this certificate it is clear that Mr. Alexander never intended to set forth the 'Davie Copy' as containing any more than the substance of what was resolved at Charlotte, in May, 1775." Ever since then, various writers have been taken in by the hoax. Mr. Hoyt accepted and quoted Dr. Phillips' version of the closing paragraph in writing his monograph.

Perhaps the critical writers should not be blamed too much: the Davie Copy was lost to view for many years after Dr. Phillips wrote his article. Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander's family, after his death in 1841, had turned over to the State all the Mecklenburg papers. Dr. Swain had custody of them until his death in 1868. The carpetbag government that came into power earlier in 1868 so disabled the University that it was forced to close until 1875. In or after 1875 the Mecklenburg papers were deposited with the North Carolina Historical Society; later they were transferred to the Southern Historical Collection, and now repose with other documents in the University library.

J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, long associated with the Southern Historical Collection and now consultant to the director, Dr. James W. Patton, has written me this additional information about the Davie Copy:

"From the very late nineties or early nineteen hundreds it was misplaced, Dr. Kemp P. Battle, the custodian of the collections of the North Carolina Historical Society, having placed it in a package of papers that had no relation to the copy. I found it in 1917 and announced the existence of it in the State press, which seemed advisable since the story had gone out that it had disappeared."

Dr. Battle, custodian of the papers, gave assistance to Mr. Hoyt - a recent graduate of Fordham University - when he was writing his monograph on the Mecklenburg Declaration, as a thesis for his Master's degree at the University of Vermont (published in 1907), but he did not mention that he had the Davie Copy in the collection. He may have forgotten he had it. Had Mr. Hoyt seen and examined the Davie Copy, he undoubtedly would have reported what it actually said, for he was a conscientious investigator. His conclusions had he been able to examine the original Mecklenburg papers might have been considerably different, and not that McKnitt Alexander perpetrated a fraud, a hoax, and a swindle. Mr. Hoyt wrote that the Mecklenburg papers apparently had for the most part been lost after the death of Dr. Swain in 1868.

Dr. Lyman C. Draper, who made a great and valuable collection of historical manuscripts now in the library of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, wrote in 1875 to Dr. Phillips for information on the Mecklenburg Declaration. He intended, he said, to write a paper on the subject himself, but he never found time for it. Between May 25 and July 31, 1875, Dr. Phillips sent twelve letters, aggregating nearly 15,000 words, to Dr.
A paragraph from a document reads: "The delegates, being summoned to meet at the seat of the government of the United States, on the 3rd day of December, 1802, accordingly assembled; and after a short address, the reading of the constitution of the United States, and the proceedings of the preceding congress, the president then proceeded to address the assembly, as follows:"

"The president then proceeded to address the assembly, as follows:"

"The president then proceeded to address the assembly, as follows:"
have been. We have not the letters which asked for the recollections of these gentlemen. Perhaps they contained leading questions, and suggested dates, events, names, &c., &c. Some of these witnesses were suddenly called on to testify to what they saw and heard forty-five and fifty-five years before, and when they had become old, and as some of them say, their memories not infallible. Of the fifteen witnesses, six omit to mention the day of the month, contenting themselves with saying that the meetings were held during the month of May. Not one of them mentions having heard two such Declarations read, and not one seems to have been asked which of the two we now have, he heard. There is a variance between the recollections of these gentlemen. Some say that John McNitt Alexander was secretary of the convention; others give this honor to Ephraim Brevard, while others share it between them. Mr. John Simeson asserts that what he heard contained a long string of grievances, a Declaration, and an order that Col. Polk, John Phifer, and Joseph Kennedy should secure all the military stores for the county’s use. He seems to have recollected “The Resolves” only.

3. Of the age of the “Martin copy” we have no knowledge. The oldest edition of the “Davie copy” was furnished by John McN. Alexander to Gen. Davie, then a resident of South Carolina. The age and the degree of reverence to be given to its contents are unanswerably fixed by this conclusion to the manuscript: “It may be worthy of notice here to observe that the foregoing statement though fundamentally correct, yet may not literally correspond with the original record of the transactions of said delegation and court of enquiry, as all those records and papers were burnt, with the house, on April 6th, 1800; but previous to that time of 1800, a full copy of said records, at the request of Doctor Hugh Williamson, then of New York, but formerly a representative in Congress from this State, was forwarded to him by C. L. Wm. Polk in order that those early transactions might fill their proper place in a history of this State then writing by said Doctor Williams in New York.

Certified to the best of my recollection and belief this 3d day of September, 1800, by

J. McN. ALEXANDER.

Mecklenburg County, N. C.

From this certificate it is clear that Mr. Alexander never intended to set forth the “Davie copy” as containing any more than the substance of what was resolved in Charlotte, in May, 1775. It originated in a patriotic effort to preserve from oblivion the worthy sentiments and actions of himself and his neighbors. He candidly declares that it must be received with due deference to what he furnished to Doctor Williamson; but he makes no mention of having then given a copy to Judge Martin. Judge Martin’s History of North Carolina was published in 1829, and his copy is evidently a polished edition of the “Davie copy”—polished, because its guardians knew that this was not an extract from original records, and therefore felt no particular reverence for it.

4. Abundant confirmation of this position may be derived from a comparis-
MONUMENT HONORING MEN WHO ADOPTED MAY 20, 1775 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, STANDING BEFORE COUNTY COURTHOUSE IN CHARLOTTE
Draper. The letters are all in the Draper collection now, and every one of them has significant interest.

Dr. Phillips wrote Dr. Draper that he had become famous abroad and infamous in North Carolina through his crusade against the May 20 Declaration, whose centenary had just been celebrated at Charlotte. He gave permission to identify him as author of the unsigned magazine article of May 1853, while suggesting that his name be used as little as possible. Asked by Dr. Draper where the Davie Copy was at the time, he replied that it was believed lost, that Sherman's troops may have burned it with other property, that he himself may have been the last "eye-witness" to examine it before it disappeared. It is clear from the context of several letters that Dr. Phillips was somewhat nervous about the Davie Copy, which he naturally might hope would not appear again, and anxious that Dr. Draper concur in his verdict.

Dr. Phillips wrote disparagingly of Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander, accused him of a "suppressio veri" or suppression of the truth, and related gossip that the Doctor had been stingy, refusing a dram in a tavern because he wished not to stand treat in return. Of Adam Brevard's 1824 memorandum published in 1875 in *The Southern Home*, Dr. Phillips ventured to say Adam must have written it while still under the influence of the liquor he drank to celebrate the 4th of July. He wrote of his efforts to set the Brevards of North Carolina against the Alexanders, perhaps unaware of the family relationships going back nearly 200 years. He thought the publication of names of men presumed to have adopted the May 20 Declaration "was an injury to true men, who were as prudent as they were true. These men did not in 1775 vapour about 'lives and sacred honour.'"

As to the "suppressio veri," Dr. Phillips censured Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander — who published the pre-1800 record in 1819 — for not publishing the final paragraph of the Davie Copy, as altered by Dr. Phillips twelve years after Dr. Joseph's death!

Evidently Dr. Draper was pleased with these epistolary attentions and the enormous verbiage, for he sent one of his photographs to Dr. Phillips. The latter showed his pleasure in a letter dated June 22, 1875: "... thanking you for the Photograph. It is in my wife's album near to Govr. Swain & Govr. Graham and Govr. Vance. When I get near a photographer I may ask you to condone my wife's notion about me." Dr. Draper may have received a copy of the photograph reproduced in these pages.

Dr. Phillips' wife was Laura Battle, an aunt of Dr. Kemp P. Battle, who misfiled the Davie Copy in a package of unrelated papers, where it was lost to view for years.

It is evident that Dr. Phillips wrote letters to other correspondents, especially those concerned with history, and to editors of New York newspapers, all tending to discredit the May 20 Declaration. His persistent effort was successful, in so far as it influenced the judgment of scholars for nearly a century. An invalid in his later years, he died in 1889. Dr. Phillips was revered by his family, though his fine sister Cornelia wrote of him that as a youth he was "not a little inclined to be overbearing." When he became a teacher, "he lacked deference, amiability, insight." His photograph suggests he may at times have resembled John Bull in a bad humor.
Now it may be pointed out that nothing already disclosed has tended to clear up the question raised by similarities of expressions in the May 20 Declaration to certain ringing phrases in the National Declaration of July 4, 1776. What of the charge that McKnitt Alexander plagiarized Jefferson’s Declaration in writing later an entirely false one?

The dynamic phrases in the July 4, 1776 Declaration that McKnitt Alexander has been accused of cribbing were not written by Jefferson — with one or two exceptions — but by Richard Henry Lee. A Virginia convention held on May 15, 1776 had instructed Lee to press action for independence before the Congress, and on June 7 Lee introduced a short resolution that was quickly seconded by John Adams. The opening sentence and the one important to this discussion follows:

"Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved...."

By vote of Congress, the Lee resolution was incorporated into Jefferson’s Declaration before it was adopted. Jefferson closed his draft with the sonorous pledge of “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” The Charlotte Declaration of May 20, 1775 had these words: “we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual cooperation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.” How came the similarities?

Dr. Carl Becker and others who have written of the National Declaration have said candidly that Jefferson used ideas and expressions that were not original with him, and Jefferson himself said he made no claim to complete originality. What makes Jefferson’s Declaration a great document is the loftiness of its ideas, the felicity of its expression, and the force and logic of its indictment of the British Crown. It is worth while to trace the real origins of expressions common to the Charlotte and Philadelphia Declarations.

Let us begin with “are and of right ought to be,” which is one of the most impressive. In my researches I came across Vol. 1 of the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1902, in which appears a short article by Professor William A. Dunning of Columbia University entitled “An Historic Phrase.” (Pp. 82-85.) The author points to a passage in the Drapier’s Letters of Dean Swift, in which it is said the people of Ireland “are and ought to be as free a people as their brethren in England.” But Dean Swift was not the first to use the words. Professor Dunning reminds us that thirty-odd years before Swift wrote, the English Bill of Rights of 1689 declared that William and Mary “did become, were, are, and of right ought to be by the laws of this realm our sovereign liege Lord and Lady.” Back in 1621 the House of Commons in protesting against a lecture from James I — an habitual scold — declared that “every member of the House of Parliament hath and of right ought to have freedom of speech.”

Professor Dunning offers other uses of the phrase in 1583 and 1571, and then goes all the way back to 1300. In that year King Philip the Fair of France claimed to be independent of all human authority. Pope Boniface VIII replied to this with force and directness: “Let not the French say in their pride that they have no superior. They lie. Quia de iure sunt et esse debent
sub rege Romano et Imperatore.” That is to say: “For of right they are and ought to be subject to the Roman King and Emperor.” Professor Dunning desisted in his search at this point, surmising that the phrase may have been used by the Egyptians and Assyrians in the years of dimmest antiquity.

Another good phrase used in both Declarations is “the inherent and inalienable rights of man.” This sounds like John Locke, but likely enough it antedated his profound studies in the philosophy of government, and his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Jefferson as well as other colonial students of government read Locke. Jefferson said “we hold these truths to be self-evident.” Locke had held certain axioms to be self-evident.

Returning to “the inherent and inalienable rights of man,” it was an esteemed phrase that appears in the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, written mostly by Samuel Adams, and again in the first paragraph of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man: “the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man.” Jean Jacques Rousseau may have used the phrase in his writing. Waightsill Avery used a similar phrase in or soon after 1769, as we know.

Expressions like “absolved from all allegiance” and “dissolve the political bonds” are secondary in dynamic quality to the others, and there is not room here to trace them back to their first uses.

But what of Jefferson’s most telling line: his pledge of “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor”? On June 17, 1776, a little more than two weeks before Jefferson’s Declaration was read aloud to a throng in Philadelphia, two Ulster-Scottish communities in New England — Palmer, Massachusetts and Peterborough, New Hampshire — adopted resolutions amounting to regional declarations of independence in which the same pledge was used in slightly different words. The Palmer town meeting commended the issue of independence to the “honorable, wise and good” men in Congress, and its resolves closed with this ringing sentence: “And if they shall unite in a separation from Great Britain, we do unanimously determine and declare we will support them with our lives and fortunes.” At Peterborough on the same day this resolution was adopted:

“We, the subscribers, do hereby solemnly engage and promise that we will, to the utmost of our power, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, with arms, oppose the hostile proceedings of the British fleets and armies against the United Colonies.”

The same pledge had been made in Charlotte, we recall, about thirteen months earlier. The Ulster-Scottish Presbyterians were well ahead of the more reluctant English colonials in showing their teeth to Britain. Another such community was Hanover, Pennsylvania, where Bernard and Joseph McKnitt must have been among those who voted on June 4, 1774, to adopt this set of resolutions, brief, pointed, and without time-honored phrases. It was resolved:

“First, that we resent the action of the Parliament of Great Britain as iniquitous and oppressive.
“Secondly, that it is the bounden duty of the people to oppose every measure which tends to deprive them of their just prerogatives.
“Thirdly, that in a close union of the colonies lies the safeguard of the liberties of the people.
"Fourthly, that in the event of Great Britain attempting to force unjust laws upon us by the strength of arms, our cause we leave to heaven and our rifles.

"Fifthly, that a committee of nine be appointed, who shall act for us in our behalf as emergencies may require."

Whence first came the consecrational pledge of lives and fortunes that adorned the Declarations of Charlotte, Palmer, and Peterborough before Jefferson’s Declaration appeared? For the present we need go no farther back than the first Covenant of Scotland, adopted at Leith (adjacent to Edinburgh) in 1557 when the early Presbyterians dissolved the bonds that had held them to the Church of Rome. The Lords of the Congregation pledged “our health, power, substance, and our very lives, to maintain, set forward and establish the Most Blessed Word of God, and His Congregation.”

Again, in the National Covenant of 1638, the signers “protest and promise with our hearts... with our goods, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ his Evangel, Liberties of our Country, ministration of Justice, and punishment of iniquity, against all enemies within the Realm, or without...

In 1643 the signers of the Solemn League and Covenant pledged to “endeavour with our estates and lives mutually to preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the Kingdoms [of Scotland and England].”

Jefferson may have read the Covenants, which certainly were known to Hezekiah Balch, one of the founders of the Cliosophic Society at Princeton, to his classmate Waightstill Avery, and to another young Presbyterian at Princeton, Ephraim Brevard. We may scarcely doubt that the dynamic phrases common to the Charlotte and Philadelphia Declarations were oft-used currency in the debates at Princeton when the three young men later to be associated with the Mecklenburg Declaration were students there.

Should any still be disposed to agree with Dr. Phillips that McKnitt Alexander did not present a true record of resolutions adopted on May 20, or to insist no Declaration at all was adopted that May night, the issue must remain for the doubting a question of credibility. Whom shall we believe: McKnitt Alexander with the “good, intelligent face,” and all his supporting witnesses, or Dr. Phillips?

It is worth pointing out that in 1858, five years after publication of his magazine article, Dr. Phillips had an entirely different culprit to blame for the “forgery.” In a letter to Henry S. Randall, a biographer of Jefferson, he charged that Dr. Joseph McKnitt Alexander, less “honourable” than his father, had on coming home from Princeton concocted the May 20 Declaration, “but was mistaken as to date and form.” Before Dr. Phillips turned back to his original accusations of the father — which he impressed upon Dr. Draper in 1875 — he apparently had convinced several of the truth of his temporary story that Dr. Joseph was the hoaxer, with great resulting harm to the reputation of an honest and conscientious man.

It must be remembered that Dr. Phillips was taken seriously; he was a Professor of Mathematics and a Doctor of Divinity, inferentially with the influence of the University of North Carolina behind him. One of those
to take up and expound the second — and early abandoned — accusation was Alexander Samuel Salley, Jr., for years secretary of the State Historical Society of South Carolina. Mr. Salley wrote extensively and with extreme severity in attacking the son, whose activities had been confined to gathering the documents that now comprise many of the Mecklenburg papers in the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill.

Perhaps the unreliability of their chief accuser helps most to vindicate McKnight Alexander and his son, who surely deserve final vindication after all the years of hostile suspicion. As for the Ulster-Scottish Presbyterians who believed in them and supported them, it is agreeable to observe that even Dr. Phillips gives them credit, first for establishing Queen's College, then for helping to found the University of North Carolina, and then for going on to create Dickinson College, a denominational school.

Seemly indeed is the circumstance that all the papers and documents that support the story of their Declaration of Independence repose in the library of the first State University in our country. A student of history wishing to examine for himself the source material for this story would do well to visit Chapel Hill in the time of the blossoming of the redbuds and the dogwoods in the month of April.

In cherishing the story of the Mecklenburg men and their service to North Carolina, we shall remember warmly the three young graduates from Princeton — the lawyer, the minister, and the doctor who gave his life in the Revolution — who were so actively interested in the Mecklenburg Declaration that the father and son preserved. One of the brightest of these figures was Waightstill Avery, leader of the class of 1766 at Princeton, who in 1778 became the first Attorney General of the new State of North Carolina.
Appendix B

HISTORY OF THE BARNARD McNITT FARM

The Palmer Journal of February 10, 1916 published a history in five columns of Barnard’s farm under successive owners from the time of John Moor to the period of ownership by Dwight C. Hathaway. The article was contributed by Oliver Perry Allen, a local historian and antiquarian, who had spent a great deal of time searching county records to obtain names and dates of transfers. The article is reprinted here, with the omission of details already covered in the chapters relating to Barnard McNitt. Clarifying notes appear in brackets.

By Oliver Perry Allen

As a fitting subject to illustrate some of the varied phases connected with farm life in Palmer during the past two centuries, the farm long known in our early days as the Barnard McNitt place, later as the J. H. Keith homestead, and now owned by Dwight C. Hathaway, just beyond Blanchardville on the road to Warren, has been selected as a type of unusual interest. First, because it was one of the very earliest farms settled in our territory after that of John King; and second, because the main portion of the original farm still retains its identity, although a number of slices have been carved off from time to time. [These slices have mostly been restored to the farm, with enough adjoining land to bring the total acreage to 320.]

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Among the first eight or ten families who came to settle in our district was John Moor with his aged mother Jean, wife Mercy and brother James. At the time of his advent there was said to have been a welcome opening in the virgin forest in the shape of a narrow meadow, hard by the Bay Path, through which flowed a perennial brook, opposite the present O'Neil house [since torn down]. Tradition has it that long years before the coming of the white man a few families of Indians had been in the habit of pitching their wigwams here during the summer season; they planted the meadow with corn, fished in the well-stocked stream or hunted in the nearby forest. On the approach of winter they hied to warmer retreats.

Our knowledge of Indian customs teaches us that the clearing had been made by building fires about the bases of the large trees until they were ready to be toppled over by the wind, and then later reduced to ashes by repeated fires. The foregoing tradition has a strong semblance of truth, as Springfield having been settled eighty years before Palmer, its people could often have seen the Indians here in the summer time, for which reason the stream was known as Wigwam Brook. This sunlit spot in the wilderness proved so attractive to Moor that he halted here and erected his humble cabin from the convenient trees at hand and established his new home. Here for nearly a dozen years Moor wrought without molestation from the Indians, while the extending acres of cleared land gave evidence of his industry, which had won for him a desirable home in the wilderness.

As we find no record in the Registry of Deeds in Springfield that Moor purchased the land where he lived, it is assumed that he arranged with Lamb & Co. of Hardwick for it, as they were then claimers of the Elbow District. [Then follows an account of the sale to Barnard McNitt on January 24, 1732.] Moor located at the present Old Center, near the present schoolhouse [removed since 1916], and his house was the place for the Sunday meetings prior to the erection of the little church....

Barnard McNitt was a man of more than ordinary ability whose efforts proved of great value in settling the tangled affairs of the new plantation with the General Court, in having the land titles of the settlers amicably arranged in 1733, when he also had the hundred-acre lot confirmed to him which he had purchased of John Moor, as well as assignment of land to other settlers. On the second division of lands in our district, May 16, 1746, he was granted another hundred acres, adjoining his home lot on the west and northerly side, located on sides of Tamar Hill.

In the fall of 1748 McNitt was chosen as agent to represent The Elbows in an endeavor to have the territory set off as a town, and again in the following year he served in the same capacity and succeeded in so far as to move the Court to pass a bill to form the territory into a district with full powers pertaining thereto. But the Crown having instructed the Governor not to grant any more such privileges in the colony, because of the growing independence of the people, the bill was vetoed. But such a favorable impression had been made by McNitt that a final Act was passed January 30, 1752, making The Elbows a district with the full powers of a town save that of electing a representative.... It will be noted that the people of The Elbows were indebted to the persistent efforts of Barnard McNitt for the legal recognition of our district....
After his death the farm seemed to pass from hand to hand in rapid succession for a time. [Then follows an account of the sale by John McNitt to Andrew, and by Andrew to Seth Adams in 1776.] After conducting the farm for two years Seth Adams sold 100 acres, or all of the portion of the farm lying north of the old Boston Post Road — which ran through the center of the farm at that time — to Captain Sylvanus Walker for £500, on December 1, 1778. As no mention is made in the deed of any buildings on the land, it is fair to assume that there were none; and therefore that Captain Walker soon after built the house now located a few rods east of the Hatha-way place. [The house burned after 1930.] Here he spent the remainder of his life.

He was born in Brookfield January 8, 1728. It is not known just when he came to Palmer, but probably about 1756, when he is credited as from Palmer in the expedition for the reduction of Crown Point. In 1759 he had the rank of Captain in another Crown Point expedition. Some time prior to 1775 he had a lease of the place known in later years as the Deacon Brainerd farm, where he conducted a tavern for some years. In 1775 he was authorized as Captain to enlist a company of Minute Men, and proceeded at once to execute the order. He served with honor in the Revolutionary war, and was urged by Washington to remain in the army and accept a commission as Colonel. On account of ill health he was obliged to decline the honor and return to his home in Palmer, where in 1780 he, with others, was appointed on a Committee of Safety....

On February 4, 1793, Captain Walker sold fifteen acres of land on the westerly part of his farm to William Mason, who came from Spencer, with certain rights in the water of Wigwam Brook, which flowed on the eastern side of said land. The price paid was £18. Mason conducted a tannery here for many years with great success. The house built by Mason in 1793 contained, besides living rooms, space in the basement for dressing the tanned hides, and room in the attic for storage when finished. The large wheel used for elevating the hides still remains in the attic. Mr. Mason continued in the tannery business with marked success until 1820, when he disposed of the property to his son William and bought the farm near the schoolhouse on the hill, where he died in 1843. The son also prospered in the tanner’s trade until after 1830, when he became fascinated with the new silk industry. He indulged in a few succeeding years in trying out the scheme, which for a time promised well, but in the end culminated in a complete failure. Mr. Mason then sold out and moved West about 1840.

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[The fifteen acres and the 1793 house were bought and restored to the Barnard McNitt farm by the present owner. In a misguided hour the quaint little house, where a tannery and a cottage silk industry were operated, was torn down. The foundation walls remain, with the stonework of a double fireplace in the basement. The wheel once used for hoisting tanned leather to the low attic is now kept in the attic of the garage on the McNitt farm.]

The tannery trade discontinued, the [fifteen-acre] farm passed through the hands of various owners, including Daniel Converse, John Fenton, W. D. Mason, John Dadman, Cyrus Merrick, and Lewis Sholes, until John O’Neil purchased the place in 1862 and continued in possession till his death January 24, 1899, at the age of eighty-seven. His daughter, Margaret O’Neil,
was the next owner until her death, March 28, 1912. The estate remained unsettled for several years until sold in 1915 to Justin Rouvellat, formerly of New York City. [Mr. Rouvellat later sold the place to the present owner.]

On October 10, 1796, Captain Walker deeded to Gideon Abbott, who had married his daughter Mary, a small lot of forty square rods, located on the brook and highway just east of the Mason farm. Mr. Abbott erected a dwelling house but resided there only a few years; he sold the property on August 24, 1799, to Joseph Converse and in due time the land reverted back to the old farm. [The house disappeared a century ago.]

On October 11, 1796, Captain Sylvanus Walker, doubtless with the thought of the approaching end of his life, sold the remaining eighty-four acres of his farm to his son, Sylvanus, Jr., for $350. This tract surrounded the Mason [tannery] farm, running along the sides of Tamar Hill, and was bounded on the south by the old Boston Road, and on the east by the Converse farm. Captain Walker died January 9, 1797.

In January 1800, Sylvanus Walker, Jr., sold eighty-one acres of the land he had purchased of his father to Isaac Warren of Palmer for $500, reserving three acres with the buildings thereon for himself. It does not appear he remained long on the place. Some years later the place was occupied by Dr. Ebenezer Robinson, father of the late Judge Robinson, and still later by Josiah Brooks for many years. It finally came into the possession of the Blanchards, from whom it was purchased by Frank D. Warner of Springfield, by whom the place [three acres and buildings] was sold in 1914 to James Mitchell of Suffield, who is the present owner; it is occupied by Mrs. Richard Wright, who holds a life lease of the property. [This bit of land never has been restored to the Barnard McNitt estate. The next owner after Mitchell was Leo Chouinard; the house burned down one day while he was absent. A post-Revolutionary house, it was of definitely later design than Barnard's house.]

We will now go back a few years and take up the history of the other portion of the McNitt farm on the south side of the Boston Road, which we left in possession of Seth Adams, who died about 1786. His estate of about ninety-six acres was sold by his widow, Ann Adams, to Stephen Baldwin of Dorchester, Mass., for £114, 8s. Stephen Baldwin sold to Andrew, son of the late Seth Adams of Palmer, for £150 on December 29, 1789. By him the farm was sold to his brother, Benjamin Adams of Palmer, for $1,000 on October 21, 1796. In 1801 Isaac Warren sold the eighty-one acres he had purchased from Sylvanus Walker, Jr., to Benjamin Adams for $666. By this sale nearly all the original McNitt farm on both sides of the old Boston Road became united in one farm again.

On September 2, 1802, Benjamin Adams sold the united farm, with the addition of about 100 acres in North Monson [across the Quabaug River] to Timothy Holton of Ellington, Conn., for $4,000. . . . Timothy Holton sold the farm with the Monson addition to John Holton of Palmer for $4,000 on April 28, 1807. The farm soon changed ownership by its sale to Benjamin Merrick, who came from Brimfield and paid $3,900 for it, on April 11, 1808. He died on the Palmer farm October 25, 1811. His son Benjamin, then in his nineteenth year, came into possession of the farm in due time.
Benjamin Merrick, Jr., was born in Brimfield in 1793; he married in 1810 Lucina Cooley, daughter of Zadock. Their children were all born on this historic farm; all survived their father, who died on the old farm April 8, 1832. In the settlement of the Benjamin Merrick estate, Zadock Cooley [probably as administrator] sold the home farm to his son, Merrick Cooley, for $3,075, on May 15, 1834. On the same date the widow, Lucina Merrick, and heirs sold Pliny Cooley the lot of twenty-six acres bordering south on the highway, who transferred the same to Harvey O. Hancock in 1845 for $300. He built a residence and lived there until his death in 1891. The place is now owned by Mrs. Jane Coburn. [The Coburn place of twenty-six acres, lying between the old Boston Road and the present Boston Road to the southward, is another part of the original Barnard McNitt farm still in other hands.]

On March 6, 1844, Merrick Cooley sold the Palmer and Monson property to his brother-in-law, John Ward of Palmer, for $4,000. Mr. Ward held possession of the property but a short time, for on November 2, 1844, he disposed of his interest in the Palmer portion of the Merrick farm to William H. Bradway of Palmer for the sum of $3,000. Mr. Ward's interest in this property was due to the fact that he had married Charlotte Cooley for his first wife, and after her death had married her sister, the widow Lucina Merrick.

A notable change occurred in the history of the farm in Palmer when on February 24, 1845, W. H. Bradway sold the Merrick place to the town of Palmer for a poor farm for $2,200. Prior to this date the town had farmed out the poor who were unable to care for themselves among different families at a certain rate per week, or to the lowest bidder. Joseph Hawley Keith was appointed warden of the poor farm in 1855 and continued to act in that capacity with deserved favor till April 1, 1863, when he purchased the farm for $2,200. A new poor farm was located at the Old Center.

About 1868 Mr. Keith removed the unsightly stone chimney from the center of the house, which added much to its improved appearance. [Who can be sure of its unsightliness? It must have been an interesting feature. The house brook was constructed in that period.] Mr. Keith remained for thirty years on the farm after its purchase, and conducted it with a good degree of success. His two youngest children were born there, William and Dr. Silas. [Charles, an older son, was father of Frank S. Keith, now trust officer of the Palmer National Bank.]

Desiring a change, Mr. Keith sold the farm March 17, 1893, to George H. Powers of Palmer for $2,500. From this date down to 1906 the ownership of the ancient farm passed so frequently from one to another that it is often a tangled problem to find just how the matter stands. The following statement seems to present the facts fairly:

On October 8, 1896, George H. Powers sold the farm to Frank D. Warner of Springfield for $3,000. On the same date Warner placed a mortgage on the farm. On December 4 of the same year the property was sold by O. W. Studley to Mary J. Plympton for the nominal price of one dollar. On May 19, 1897, Mary J. Plympton sold the same 120-acre farm to Sarah E. Norton for one dollar. On December 13, 1897, Sarah E. Norton sold or mortgaged the same farm for $1,500 to Hermann Jungmann and Frederick Dersler of
New York City. On April 16, 1900, Dersler sold his rights in the farm to Jungmann for one dollar and other valuable considerations. On November 21, 1901, Jungmann sold the farm to Andreas N. Johnson for $2,500. On November 1, 1902, Johnson sold to Nellie M. Greer of Palmer for $2,600, and finally, on August 18, 1906, Nellie M. Greer sold the farm to Dwight C. Hathaway, who came from Chicopee, for one dollar and other considerations. . . .

[These $1 sales indicate trades for other property, but we cannot be sure. Mr. Hathaway sold a strip of land across the south end of the farm to the Southern New England for $2,600, and the rest of it to the present owner on January 1, 1922. The right-of-way strip was recovered at a tax sale for $550. The farm then included 100 acres. Other tracts were added, which extended the farm well beyond the original boundaries, but which failed to retrieve two or three small pieces. The place now extends a mile northward from the Boston Road.]

Men of action have dwelt here from the time the pioneer John Moor laid low the giant pines, and the brainy Barnard McNitt with Scotch persistence and persuasive arguments won the victory at the General Court for town rights, so much desired by our growing community. We also had the intrepido Captain Walker, the hero of two wars, who won the friendship and admiration of Washington because of his valor. . . .

Now about 100 acres are left of the original farm, which includes the fine old eighteenth century mansion, a pleasing feature which we trust will long remain to bind the fleeting past with the present. . . .
Many good magazine articles and perhaps a book or two have been written about the excitements of discovering an early New England farmhouse, semi-abandoned but still fundamentally sound, and of buying, restoring, and furnishing it. Those permitted such adventures have considered themselves not only fortunate in gaining homes with backgrounds, but also in adding their contributions to New England’s store of ancient treasures. They have saved something worth saving.

Should the old house turn out surprisingly to be the former home of one’s own family, built and occupied nearly two centuries before and lost to memory for a hundred years, the interest naturally must be even keener.

Thus was Barnard McNitt’s Palmer home discovered anew in 1917. When it was learned sons from his home had gone to the French and Indian War and the Revolution, and that a colonizing cousin from Virginia had come here to recruit settlers for the Acadian country in Nova Scotia, it appeared likely the old house had a great deal of history behind it. This work has told of the history and the associations. This chapter is for those who because of kinship with the place would like to visit it.

The old house looked forlorn in 1917; it had received hard treatment from a long procession of owners since 1776. Only one man after Barnard had owned it for as many as thirty years. He was Joseph Hawley Keith, who bought the place in 1863 after managing it as the town’s poor-farm for
eighteen years. Then he gave up caring for the indigent elderly and began developing it, removing the big central chimney and digging a branch brook to supply water for the house. After his day the farm passed rapidly and even confusingly from one owner to another; no one seemed able to make a living there, and a big house and scenery couldn’t make up for insufficient tillage land and unseasonable frosts.

The house and 100 acres of the old farm were bought from Dwight C. Hathaway at the beginning of January, 1922, by a great-great-great-grandson of Barnard McNitt. Restoration had to wait until the summer of 1927, and was not completed until the end of 1928. In the meantime a small brown cottage, built across the street in 1922, had been occupied by the family in summer seasons.

The wing of the old house, too far gone to be saved, was reproduced in the same dimensions to make a home for the caretaker, in advance of the main job. Restoration was directed by Howard T. Clinch, member of a firm of Boston architects skilled in the problems of early New England architecture and familiar with period detail.

The date of original building has been set approximately at 1760. A schoolhouse authorized at a town meeting in 1762 was built with similar details in exterior trim. Barnard’s son William, who went to Nova Scotia in 1761 and who soon afterward designed and built a Presbyterian church at Truro, may be supposed to have had a hand in building his father’s house, though other men of the family were good carpenters for generations. Asked some time after he had restored the house to suggest the date of original building, Mr. Clinch wrote:

“It would appear to me to date from about 1750 to 1775. My judgment is based on the general construction and the details of the original woodwork which remained at the time of restoration. In the districts somewhat remote from the more urban developments, the style of the architecture was apt to be somewhat earlier in period than in the larger towns where the newer trends were first introduced, which makes it difficult to confine the date within too limited a period. The fact that another house not dissimilar in general style was built in the vicinity of the Barnard McNitt house in 1750 would seem to lend probability to the belief that the latter was built at a not far different date.”

Two houses in the neighborhood, in fact, appear to have been built in or about 1750. Barnard’s neighbor on the east was Samuel Shaw, another Ulster Scot, and his house — long disguised in modern times with a front porch — has been discovered by pleased new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth T. Park, to have all the evidences of 1750 construction. After Samuel Shaw, Jr., moved away the place became known as the Converse farm. Until recently it was the home of the Justin Rouvellat family. The other 1750 house is at Palmer Old Center; it was built by Captain John Thomson, father-in-law of young William McNitt. This large house is now in disrepair.

The aim with Barnard’s old house was to make the restoration conform in essential detail to the original design, and to keep added features in general harmony with the type and period. The main house is forty feet long and thirty wide, and the wing on the east end is thirty-two feet long by twenty-eight feet wide. The building looks to the north.
In addition to the house and barn, a clutter of small outbuildings stood in the tall grass at the rear. These were promptly removed to make way for lawn and garden, long before restoration was begun. A young and recently-married neighbor, Norman Griffin, offered his services as caretaker and gardener in 1922. Norman was found to be an independent-spirited Yankee, very industrious, and very well qualified because of his handiness at all sorts of crafts, his knowledge of the soil, and his artfulness at transplanting trees and making things grow. He knew the lore of the forests, could name dozens of varieties of trees and wildflowers growing on the place, and could tell of the deer, the foxes, partridges, quail, and the many smaller birds that shared the premises. He was also a skilled but reticent fisherman. Though he angled trout from the brook for many a family breakfast, he wouldn’t tell why he was so much luckier than others.

In 1923 another bedroom and a bathroom were added to the brown cottage, and running water was piped from the branch brook flowing along on higher ground beside the road leading to Palmer Old Center. Summer weeks were spent in the cottage for several years. On the whole, these vacations of simple living while the two boys were young, in the days when it was fun to pick blueberries, explore the upper reaches of Wigwam Brook, and rummage in the woods, may have been the best of all. Whippoorwills sound best, and fireflies glow most brightly, for a young family.

A few years before 1917 the Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada had started building a line to tidewater at Providence, and an embankment had been thrown up across the southern end of the Barnard McNitt farm. There it stood ugly, trackless, and abandoned; the scheme had been given up when the Grand Trunk bought the Central Vermont. The right-of-way across the place was bought at a tax sale, and Norman set out a screen of young white pine trees along the side of the embankment facing the rear of the big house. The young trees were transplanted from the woods; not one of them failed to thrive. Today these sturdy pines stand far higher than the top of the embankment, and with occasional white birches for contrast they serve the landscape well.

The north mowing was swampy across the center. Norman laid a blind drain of tile in a trench six feet deep and nearly 1,000 feet long, which solved that problem. Down in the hollow at the foot of the long westward slope from the big house, Wigwam Brook ran through a small swamp full of trees and rocks. Norman removed the trees and rocks, excavated widely, built a dam and spillway, and behold: a pond for swimming and for trout instead of a cathole. The spot is named Tamar Hollow on the ancient maps. The old stone walls along the roadsides had fallen down, and undergrowth had become dense in the fence rows. Norman cut the brush and built up the stone walls so they became as neat as they ever had been.

The branch brook starting at the forks up in the woods, constructed nearly a century ago to bring water to the house, was failing because a long stretch of its bed on a side hill had been washed away. Norman built a small aqueduct to restore the flow of water.

The tangle of high grass on all sides was subdued with a scythe, the ground was smoothed and seeded, and a power lawn-mower was set to whirring over a wide expanse of grass. Young trees were planted, flower gardens were
established, and Norman debated learnedly with the mistress of the place about the values of various annuals and hardy perennials. When fruit trees were proposed he was pessimistic; he argued that frosts lingered too long in spring and came too early in autumn. He was overruled; unfortunately he was proved right. The deer ate the foliage and bark off the apple trees anyway, and also the cabbages in the garden. The deer have a way of coming down from the woods into the north mowing, and standing when observed like statues, or the iron deer that once decorated Victorian lawns. It has not been uncommon for a party of six deer to visit near the house, unafraid.

The mistress of the place thought mountain laurel would look well on the hillside above the cottage to the east, so Norman found laurel bushes in the woods and transplanted them. They lived, and blossom every spring, some in pink, and some in white. He knew a spot in the woods where trailing arbutus grew, and though he brought bits of the blossoming vine he never would tell the location. Perhaps he thought it would be a betrayal of the arbutus as well as the trout to let others get at them. His knowledge of woodcraft he did not keep secret; he taught the boys all they wished to know, and showed them how to make things with their hands.

Frank aspired to cut a trail through the woods and brush above the blueberry patches to the top of Cedar Mountain. It was a heavy task for a boy, and after he had struggled manfully at it and found himself tired out and still quite a way from the summit, Norman finished the job for him in a surprisingly short time. With a brush scythe he was a formidable force. He cleared a space in the woods near the cottage for a picnic ground and table, and kept on in the following winter to clear away all the undergrowth on either side of the northward road for more than a quarter of a mile. He was as competent at clearing as he was at making grow every tree and shrub and flower that he touched.

Sketches of the original floor plan of the main section of the old house show what the work of restoration entailed. The scheme was characteristic of the period of 1750 and after, with a large central chimney permitting the use of fireplaces in adjoining rooms. The front entrance hall was tiny; just large enough for doors on either side opening into a sitting room and a parlor, and for a staircase with two turns and two landings that led to a narrow hall opening into the front bedrooms on the second floor. Since the entrance hall and staircase had to be fitted into the space between the central chimney and the front door, the use of the space had to be calculated to the inch.

As in most colonial New England farmhouses, the rooms were small. The sitting room, parlor, and four bedrooms upstairs were approximately fourteen and a half feet square. At the back of the first or ground floor were a kitchen, a dining room, and a small bedroom. The original wing, entered from the kitchen as well as from the front, was a woodshed in 1917. Earlier it had contained two or three bedrooms. Reconstructed, the wing contains a roomy kitchen, a living room, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. It served as a home for the caretaker's family until a separate white cottage was built in 1932; now it is reserved for domestic helpers.

Mr. Clinch recommended a modification in design. The big central chimney had been removed many years before, so he advised a central hallway,
with a chimney at each end of the building. This arrangement permitted the staircase to rise without turns to the second floor hall, and allowed for the convenient placing of bathrooms, cupboards, and closets.

When Marie discovered the attic was high and roomy, she proposed two large bedrooms, with a hall between them, and a bathroom. Her plan was found to be practical, with the setting of dormer windows into the roof to provide ample light and ventilation. So the house was to have a third floor, for boys. The staircase from the second floor to the third was to be erected above the main stairway and was in effect to be a continuation of it in design.

The original framing was of heavy hewn timbers, mortised and braced, and held together with large round wooden pins. The rafters were of smaller timbers, hewn on the upper side only, where the roof boards were nailed. The upright timbers of the main frame were so large that they projected into the rooms at the corners, and were enclosed in box-like casings. This method of covering timbers that otherwise would project into rooms was commonly used in pre-Revolutionary houses. It is an interesting point that the upright framing timbers at the corners were not of the same dimensions all the way up, but were hewn in conformity to the tapering of the logs. The smaller ends were placed on the main sills, and the taper of the box-like enclosures in the corner rooms reveals that the hewn logs were stood on their heads when the heavy frame was erected. This placing of butt ends of timbers at the top, to support the framing on which the roof was erected, no doubt was done to insure greater strength.

Well, Barnard's house was built to endure. Only the sills needed replacing with new timbers resembling the old, and most of the rafters were sound. New sills meant new joists for the main floor, as a matter of precaution. More than a century and a half of service had worn out floor boards, and they also needed replacing. Most of the original doors were in good condition, including the one at the front entrance. White china knobs had been mostly used to replace the old thumb latches; these were now to go so that thumb latches of the original period might come back. The original doors may be detected by the plugs of wood smoothly inserted to fill the holes made for the china knobs. Though panelled, the old interior doors are thinner than those used in modern construction.

These details were found to establish the date of original building in the period after 1750: 1. The rectangular sawed brownstone blocks used in the foundation at the front. 2. The design of the front entrance. 3. The handmade wrought-iron nails used to fasten the clapboards to the studding. 4. Design of the stairway, with newel posts, rails, and bannisters almost exactly like those of many other houses known to have been built at that time. 5. The decorative scrolls of wood at the outer ends of stair risers. 6. The design of window and door frames, with mouldings more elaborately detailed than was customary in farmhouses of later periods. 7. The dimensions of windows designed for sash with small panes.

The architect found not only in these details but in the whole manner of construction familiar evidence of the methods of builders in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. He resolved to retain every bit of the old detail that remained good, and to carry on the design in restoration and extensions.
Window trim that obviously had been altered after Barnard's day was replaced to conform with the woodwork that remained. Although the stair-case had to be changed, the detail was kept exactly the same, and old banisters and scrolled riser-ends were retained.

New foundation walls were necessary, and the basement was extended beneath the whole house, to join the one under the new wing. The gravelly knoll on which the house stands has a sharp slope to the rear, so the basement opens out on the grounds at the back of the house. The basement is so high, light, and dry, that it affords space for a game room with pool table, a servant's room, bath with shower, a laundry room, furnace room with oil heater, pump room with a motor drawing water from a driven well into a pressure tank, fruit room, and storage for cords of logs for six fireplaces. Barnard's basement was dry, too, but it was dark and had no cement floor.

The corner sitting room at the front and west end of the main floor was extended across the west end of the house alongside the central hall. Its fireplace has a mantel from an old house in Salem, Mass. The front parlor became a dining room, and later it became a library when discovery was made that the original kitchen, provided with a big fireplace, and with walls sheathed in wide, feather-edged pine boards, offered a more informal and sociable room for dining. Across a facia board beneath the mantel-shelf of the wide fireplace in this room is carved an inscription from these lines by Robert Burns:

To make a happy fireside clime to weans and wife —
That's the true pathos and sublime of human life.

For this room, Norman Griffin built from a good design a hutch table with a circular top sixty-six inches in diameter, capable of seating ten persons if some of them are grandchildren. He made the top of wide pine boards that he found in an old building on the premises. The table was finished to match the mellow color of the walls and an old pewter cupboard from New Bedford, and the top was waxed and polished so that it reflects the light of candles in their brass candlesticks.

Years before the work of restoration was begun, New England antique shops and auction sales were visited to gather furniture and other household items of the period of the house; these were stored until the rooms were ready. The first purchase was a grandfather clock with a cherry case, bought in 1924 from a Darby and Joan in Barre. The clock remained in their shop for nearly five years. It now stands in the main hall, crowding the low ceiling, and ticking away placidly. A banjo clock with the name of Aaron Willard on its face hangs on the wall at the far end of the living room, above a Connecticut gateleg table. Inside the clock was found a card with this inscription: "This clock formerly owned by Gen. John Stark of New Hampshire — dicitur." That is, it is said that Gen. Stark, victor at Bennington, once owned it. Anyhow, it keeps accurate time.

It was fun to prowl all over New England. In New Bedford were found brass thumb-latches and a curly maple candle-stand besides the pewter cupboard; on the Cape, Hepplewhite arm chairs and a sewing table; in Springfield a tambour desk for the mistress and a Governor Bradford desk with serpentine front for the study; in Marblehead ladder-back Chippendale

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chairs; in Ipswich hooked rugs; in Boston an old Windsor arm chair and other things. Wherever she could find them Marie picked up opalescent mirror knobs for curtain tie-backs at the windows.

And so on. Those who have furnished a house in like manner will understand. Days like those before the great depression are no more, and the burden of other enterprises taken up since makes it seem fortunate that Barnard’s old house was restored and plenished before the crash of 1929 ushered in an era of austerity that was prolonged through the second World War.

Reclamation of the old homestead has been assisted by cheerful friends whose part deserves remembrance. Very soon after frequent mowing of grass began between the house and pond, robins came more numerously in the early springtime. Perhaps there were a dozen at the outset. Each year they have increased in number, always in pairs, with older robins returning and bringing others. Now the robins are almost beyond counting. Observing them, one may learn what robins like. They are especially active on the days when the lawn-mower is at work, following the fresh swath and pecking away in the close-clipped grass for food.

The robin colony is permanent because of the mower that makes foraging easy, and the house brook that flows through the lawn to the pond, providing fresh water for bathing and drinking. The robins believe the place is theirs. They build nests in the pine trees and the lilac hedge, introduce their young to good hunting in the lawn, and the running spring water, and make their plans for the coming season before flying away at the outset of drouthy weather. Should the summer prove comfortable with frequent rains, they stay on.

One mother robin for several years had her own hemlock tree for her nest, on the far side of the pond, and she laid claim to a patch of damp ground beside the water, where the hunting was especially good. Should another parent attempt to gather food from her garden, Mistress Robin drove off the intruder with angry cries and pecks.

Robert Duckworth, a caretaker in recent years, has a robin story of his own. He relates that he heard a great commotion in a small evergreen tree, and observed a mother bird hauling a blacksnake away from her nest with bill and claws. Is this believable? Bob got out his shotgun and dispatched the snake; for his story he has two credible witnesses. Never underestimate the power of a mother! There are no other snake stories: not enough snakes to count.

The robins are not the only resident birds. Barn swallows build their nests of mud and twigs under eaves and on projecting woodwork on the back porch. They are not afraid. In the spring of 1949 a pair of swallows sealed up the porch door by building their nest on the doorstop of the screen. A census of the migrant bird population visiting the premises shows other varieties, more shy than the robins and swallows and not so chatty around the house, but still fond enough of the woods and streams to come often.

Among those who come and go are cardinals, bluebirds, Baltimore orioles, bobolinks, red-headed woodpeckers, bluejays, humming birds, killdeer, meadow larks, red-winged blackbirds, woodcock, ruffled grouse, pheasants, sparrows, scarlet tanagers, catbirds, downy woodpeckers, blue herons, and
brown thrushes. Sometimes wild ducks pause to rest on the water of the pond. Occasionally there may be a hawk or an owl.

An oriole’s nest hung lately by its four cords from one of the lower branches of the great elm behind the house. Among the most beautiful of the birds are the wild canaries: small, swift, and brilliant in coloring, with black wings and tails setting off the rich deep yellow of their bodies. They flash among the elms, and fly away too soon.

The constant apprehension in late autumn is that hunters will disregard posted signs and take shots at the partridges, quail, and deer. The hunters swarm the woods from the first morning of the open season, and it is possible the deer are fewer now than they were four or five years ago.

Apart from the time of flowering of iris, narcissi, oriental poppies, lilacs and peonies, the most beautiful season is in early October. After the sharp frosts have nipped the maple and oak leaves and given them all the colors from golden yellow to deep scarlet: then is the time to see the place at its mellowest. It offers a serene welcome.
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