

COL. DANIEL WHITING OF DOVER, MASSACHUSETTS.

BY FRANK SMITH.

Daniel Whiting, son of Jonathan and Anna (Bullard) Whiting, was born on his father's farm in Dover (McNamara place on Springdale avenue) February 5, 1732. He was descended in the fourth generation from Nathaniel Whiting, the founder of the Dedham family. Nathaniel Whiting first appeared in Lynn in 1638. He was admitted to the Dedham Church in 1641, and was made a freeman in 1642, being then about 33 years of age. He was by occupation a miller, and with John Elderkin, built the first corn mill in Dedham, for which enterprise they were made liberal grants of land. This mill was located on East Brook, and was built previous to July, 1641, as shown by the fact that the town at that time appointed a committee "to lay out a cart way to our water mill." By 1655 Nathaniel Whiting had acquired the entire ownership in this property, which remained in the Whiting family until 1823. Nathaniel Whiting was a public benefactor, in being with his associate the first to operate a water mill for the grinding of corn in Dedham, a facility for which the town stood in great need, as the nearest corn mill was at Watertown, which was many miles away by water.

Jonathan Whiting, the great grandson of Nathaniel, settled in the Dedham Springfield Parish, (now Dover) in 1725. He married the same year Anna, daughter of William and Elizabeth (Avery) Bullard, and here they commenced their married life. Jonathan Whiting had a large estate in the centre of the Parish, which adjoined the early settled farms of Nathaniel Chickering and Eleazer Ellis on Haven street. He added to farming the business of a tannery, which was located on Spring brook. Here a flourishing business was carried on for many years, the vats being remembered by

residents of a former generation. Mr. and Mrs. Whiting had a family of 11 children, six sons and five daughters, all of whom grew to maturity and reared families. Daniel Whiting, the subject of this sketch, was the third son and fourth child born to Jonathan and Anna Whiting. He attended, with his brothers and sisters, the Parish School on Haven street, where he acquired a good common school education, as his letters and papers show. In his youth and early manhood he worked on his father's farm and in the tannery.

The Springfield Parish finished its meeting house in 1761. This was the most important institution in the Parish. The same year Daniel Whiting completed the needs of the Parish, in the erection, on Dedham street, of the tavern, a structure which is still standing, and is of great interest as the last one of the pre-Revolutionary taverns in this vicinity. Like all early tavern keepers, Daniel Whiting was a prominent man, and in his life and deeds reflected credit on the Parish. He continued to be the proprietor of this tavern until the breaking out of the Revolution, and during the contest he sold this property and loaned every dollar to the State, without security, so great was her necessity. The Revolution had no greater heroes than those who did such things. There was a small dance hall, and a bar-room in this tavern, and it is believed that he also had a small store in connection. In the bar-room of Whiting's Tavern the "Sons of Liberty" assembled and discussed those mighty questions which came up for consideration before the breaking out of the Revolution, and after the war was over the old soldiers assembled here for many years and fought their battles o'er.

Daniel Whiting married in 1761 Mehit-

able, daughter of Daniel and Mehitable (Haven) Haven of Framlingham, who was a frequent visitor at the home of her uncle, Dea. Joseph Haven, on Haven street. Five children were born to them in the old Tavern as follows: Mehitable, Paul, Fanny, Roger, and Nancy. Mrs. Whiting died in June, 1775, and her husband remained single during the remaining years of his life. Daniel Whiting was a gentleman of the old school, commanding in manner, six feet in height, and reputed the handsomest man in the County. He was very erect, light complexioned, and was said to bear a remarkable resemblance to General Washington, who was to be his commander-in-chief in the Revolution; he was born in the same month and year as Washington. Mr. Whiting was loved and respected by everyone.

Although left with the care and responsibility of five young children, yet it did not deter him, as it would have done a less brave and patriotic man, from entering the service of his country, and giving six years of efficient service. During this period his children were widely scattered, having been put into the homes of relatives.

Daniel Whiting engaged in the last French and Indian War, and in that service learned the use of firearms and the value of discipline, all of which he put to good use in the war that followed with the Motherland. He went on the Crown Point expedition in 1755, and served in Capt. William Bacon's Company from Sept. 15, 1755, to December 16, 1755. He was an ensign in Capt. Nathaniel Bailey's Company from Feb. 26, 1760, to Dec. 6, 1760, and in this service he went into the New York campaign. He has been credited with being a lieutenant in Capt. William Bacon's Company, but the fact is not established by the records in the State Archives. He was probably a lieutenant in the militia. In 1759 Capt. Joseph Richards delivered to Daniel Whiting 29 bayonets with scabbards and other belongings of his company in Dedham.

In the breaking out of the Revolution, Daniel Whiting marched as a first lieutenant in Capt. Ebenezer Battelle's Company of the Springfield Parish, at the Lexington Alarm. Having seen service in the French and Indian War, his promotion

was rapid. What was said of his neighbors and friends was not probably true of him, because of his war discipline, that "they were independent in their ways, as unaccustomed to discipline as they were averse to it, disposed to insubordination and only too ready to go off in order to attend to their domestic affairs and return in leisurely fashion when their business was done."

On April 24, 1775, he was made a Captain in Col. Brewer's Regiment. He took part, with 16 other residents of the Parish, in the Battle of Bunker Hill. The regiment was placed on the diagonal line between the breastwork and the rail fence. It is said that these soldiers conducted themselves with great bravery. Capt. Whiting was in the Siege of Boston, but it does not appear that he took part in fortifying Dorchester Heights. Nov. 6, 1776, he was made a Major in Col. Asa Whitcomb's Regiment, and served until Dec. 31, 1776, at Ticonderoga. Jan. 1, 1777, he entered Col. Brooks's regiment, Sept. 29, 1778, he was made a Lieut. Col. in the Massachusetts 6th Regiment, Col. Thomas Nixon's, and served until January, 1781, when he retired to take care of his five motherless children. After all the danger, privation, sacrifice, and suffering which he had endured, when returning from the Army he was obliged to borrow money of a resident of West Point to defray his expenses home, and which he was unable to repay for many years because of the failure of the State to pay him back the money he loaned her in her distress. (See Narrative History of Dover for petition made to the State in 1782).

Col. Whiting saw a long service in the State of New York. In the "Border Wars" against the Indians, Tories and British soldiers, Col. Ichabod Alden of the Massachusetts Sixth Regiment had command of the fort at Cherry Valley, where on the 11th of November, 1778, a fearful massacre took place. The attack was made at noon-day and "gave the settlement a complete surprise notwithstanding all our endeavors to the contrary," wrote Major Whiting. The officers of the regiment were stopping at the house of Robert Wells. The officers fled from the Wells' mansion as they saw the enemy approach, but Col. Alden, who

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tarried for a moment, was killed on the road by a tomahawk. Major Whiting fortunately reached the fort in safety, where he took command. Of this attack he wrote "had it not been for the great activity and alertness of the troops they had rushed within the line." Major Whiting held the fort against the Indians in a fearful engagement which continued for two days, the first attack lasting for three and a half hours. On the 13th of November, after the enemy had withdrawn, Major Whiting sent out parties to bring in the dead. Such a shocking sight of savage and brutal barbarity they had never before seen. The dead were mangled and scalped, some had heads, some legs, and some arms cut off, while others had the flesh torn off their bones by dogs.

It was the plan of the British to separate New England from the rest of the colonies; to blockade the coast and keep the Tories and Indians active on the frontier and so crush out the Continental Army. In 1779, Gen. John Sullivan was appointed by Washington to break the power of the Indian allies of the British, and he assigned to him a third of the Continental Army with which to do the work. A fortification was built by the Indians at Newtowne, near Elmira, where it was believed Gen. Sullivan would pass. It was strongly fortified, but under the command of Gen. Sullivan it was captured and the Indians and Tories routed. In this memorable battle, which is coming to be seen as one of the decisive battles of the Revolution, Col. Daniel Whiting commanded a part of the garrison under Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor, the Massachusetts Sixth Regiment.

On his return to civil life, Col. Whiting gathered his children around him and in

May, 1781, took up his residence in Natick. Six days later, May 28, 1781, was witnessed the curious custom of the times in warning, by the constable of the town, this prominent and distinguished soldier to depart from the town. In 1787 he had better standing, and was made one of the town "Wardens." Col. Whiting later returned to Dover, where he resided for a time. Like most officers of the Revolution he was a Freemason, but the lodge in which he was made a mason is not known. He was one of the petitioners in 1801, for the setting up of Constellation Lodge in Dedham, but he did not become a charter member of this lodge. Through some irregularity he was unfortunate in securing the bounty land which was granted by the United States Government to the soldiers of the Revolution, and through the fraudulent act of another, he lost this bounty which he had so laboriously and faithfully earned. Col. Daniel Whiting died in Natick, at the home of his son-in-law, Ebenezer Newell, Oct. 17, 1807, and was buried in the family lot in Highland cemetery in Dover. On Arbor Day, 1892, the pupils of the Sanger School in Dover, planted an elm tree, with appropriate exercises, in memory of Col. Whiting, which stands on the Common near the town sheds. Coming generations can rest beneath this tree and from the spot see a portion of the farm where he was born; the tavern which he built; and the place where he is buried. His commission as a Lieut. Col. in the Continental Army hangs upon the walls of the Dover Historical Society—Sawin Memorial Building—and a marker of the Sons of the American Revolution marks his grave, which is only a short distance from the old historic landmark, the Whiting Tavern, which he built.

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