

REMINISCENCES OF JOHN DAVIDSON, A MAINE PIONEER

Communicated by ALFRED JOHNSON, Litt. D., of Brookline, Mass.

[Concluded from page 171]

In Sept. 1778 we had a report brought by two friend indians From canida to our field oficers that indianes and tories commanded by britich officers ware coming Down on three rivers viz. St. Johns Penobscuts and Cannebeck and they were coming so numirous as to take and Drive all before them that would not take the oath of alejence to king gorge and they would be amungst us by the time the leaves of the trees would be as large as a man thumb nale the next Spring, we the inhabitants of Belfast had conjectuered that if Such forces were comin on such buiseness there would be a fleet to meet them at the mouth of the rivers to Eade and asist thine [sic] land forceses with what they stood in need of aecording to what we had thought of when we saw the fleet of English vessels in the harbour before us and the land forses on our becks and we though to [w]eak and few in number and no whare to fly to, we four fammilyes Shiped our Selves on board a Small two mast boat thinking to come to long island rother then to stay on the mane land to be mescreed by the indians lor[blot] and I know not what but the wind Drove us back and we went to Mr nichols to garrison for the house was made of larger logs and would turn a musket ball better,

we Did not stay there meny Days, for we heard some of the men of Belfast had been as a flagotruce to know what they wished for thir answer was, they wished to have what we could Spare of provision and they would pay the money for for it what they wisht for further that we would lie as nuterls [15] And not fight for nor against them, this Story Pleased us so well so we went to colectting our pots kittles and putter from where we hid them, we began to think by this time all the newes we had received were Tory news, and so we went to work tho that Did not last long for the next thursday I received a proclamation that all the male members must come on Board our Ship and take the oath of alegians to king gorge or abide the consequence what that would be I knew not, what could I do I took the proclamation the Sun being about two hours and a half high at night I felt resolved that every man in town should see or hear this paper before I slept, and lucky I was, when I came to the personage I found two men there, that belonged to too other Different parts of the Town and by our taking a little trouble on us that evening and Desired we Should be at the pasnage as soon as posable after Breakfast to try to conclude on what is best to Do in respect of Moets proclamation, in the morning, in the first place we met to a man and what to Do we knew not, in the s[e]cond place there was no road to treavel on for between thirty and forty miles if there had been a roads we could not have come that way for we had large famillys of women and children and we could not carry provision to serve us on the road, and it was not to be had on that way, for there was neither, folk, victuels, money, nor way to treavel on, and we continued there till about noon and nothing Done nor like to be, I spook and said I had a log canoe and before I would go and take the oath of alegence I would take my wife and 3 little children into it and try to com away so so Capt Solon Stephenson said if you go in that way I will go with you, we will Start, in the night, can we not by what David Miller and your son calib can Do help us so as to Drive our horned cattle away and so we concluded to come away in the next night from Belfast

so I went home and informed my family of what I had in view or thoughts of doing was from one o'clock Friday till almost Dark next Day and then

Started on our Expected tedeous Journey or voige, the young men Did not moov the cattle till next morning and then they could not com along till they hired a man to help to Drive them, and as we were runing of my canoe from Ductrap harbour we Discovered the young men coming on, to the beech to cross a large cove as the tide was out [16] Cap Said he would Stay and see how or wheather they had all the Cattle with them or not, you had best keep along and i will soon overtake you, so I laft him and soon after Dailight was veanished and gone there arose a black and windy clowd and we out to sea and we without a pilot and herbour, how happy I should have been, to have been out of sound of the Swelling Billowes bursting on the flinty rocks tho the Sound was all I Knew at that time I had to keep us from being Dashed and so to have had watery graves, if such a canoe load of passangers were ever at sea and continued so all night untill morning, and then come ashore all Safe and well, I cannot be a judg of the feelings of others no better then what I have before Experienced, therefore I think I never can thank and prays him anough for his Protecting arm that Did not let that night be our last night, but is yet pertecting and preserving and upholding me and mine and how undeserving we are of all these marcies he is bestoing on us every Day of our lives.

While, we had any expectation of our pilot coming to help or Shoe us the way there Seemed to be sumthing to incourage us but we lost all that hope for we though[t] he was Lost at sea for his canoe was less than ours for he said he came about half the way thrugh he though[t] he thought we were Cast away and it apeared he would have his canoe filled and he had hard work to keep her above the water and he turned and went beck to Ducktrap and on the nex day he came with the young men and cattle O what joy and rejoising there was, Stevenson at the sight of seeing us and we at seein[g] him,

now we have to go to Ducktrap for what Stephenson left[?] in his canoe we were befriended So we obtained the loan of a two mast boat So as to run to D[u]cktr[alp] harbour which we went there in a very Short th[i]me tho it took us all night to rowe back against the wind and tide and after breakfast we gathered our teames together gat our loading on the Slad and all we advenced that Day was three miels to a Dutchmans house and we had So bad coming along that first 3 miles as we heard of a cart theree miles forward, the capt. and myself went to obtain the lone of it to Carry our load on to Georges river, our Desire was granted in the morning the capt took his oxin and went after the cart and I took mine and went after what he left when we left Camdom and we came together and put our loading on the cart [17] . . . and came as fer as gregories where it three miles it was very bad treaveling for man beast and cart, when we came to the barn Doar the owner was there and he Swong them open and lett us in it was in good Season for it then began to rain a good rain a good Shower and the barn capt us and our loading Dry and we Staid there all of us ten in number over night, and that Day we came Six miles to Mr John Dillaways Just such a man woman Fammily and place that our necessety caled for took our sixteen head of horned cattle put them into his pastuar turned his to the woods and as he informed me when I went after my cattle he said he had them to gather to wont them so we left with him six oxen and five cows and a few young cattle, we had to send the cart back to gregoryes, this the young men Did, and in there abcence we were helping to contrive to help to load a small vessel with wood that belonged to Boston and in a very Short time the young men retu[r]ned with the oxen, and we in a short time could be ready to come on board the small schooner and make a push for Boston, our younge calf being about old anough for a veal I thought, it to be a suitable time to take it along with us and perhaps it would do us as much good on board the vessel as it ever would, so we took it on board and we found it a good morcel to help to langthen out other provisions so we ten same [sic, ? came] on board the Schooner and came D[o]wne the river and put

to sea, but the wind being light and scant, we put into a harbour and we found in that harbour Capt. Harskill commandor of a large topsail sloop lat[er]ly from the west indian islands his vessel was loaded with wood and bound to Boston they had a good crue of hends four Sweets on board and amition and provision in plenty, the commanders of these two vessels being acquainted with Each other, Capt. Harskill was well prepared for war to what our Capt. McClening was notwithstanding he concented to keep by and Defend us from boats or from that of trifing force as we could not defend ourselves for we were of no force we came Down the river and then to sea havskijll perhaps towards that large sloop [18] . . . and in a few minnits we Discovered a swive Discharged and then another and then the Small armes, as soon as Haskill Desisted from fireing they Sprung to there owers and rowed of as quick as they could, tho while Harskill was fireing in on them they Dropt Down in the botom of the boat and then pooled away heartily

when We saw trouble ahead we put about and run into townseans h[a]rbour and Harskill came in after us and we all as one conjectured that the boat that Harskill beat off belonged to a vessel on the other side of the iland Sogwin and if we should attempt[?] to go by they would out and take us all, so we were all confined in townsead harbour for some Days and a good fair wind as we could have wisht for and after Staying for some time and could not here of enimies vessels being along Shoar we ventured to Sea and as we wear going from the harbour we Discovered three large vessels at a greate Distence from the land which we took to be Enemies vessels but being at so large a distance from the land that we thought we could clyng close by it and keep out of their way, it was clowdy when we went from the harbour it began to rain and continued So for some time and it was Dark wather that we could not see them till it cleared off a little and the first we saw of any of them was one of them so in our way it would have had us but Thanks to good Providence that Portland harbour was so neigh to us when we were chased by the enemy that we had Such a place of refuge to fly into, and kept us secuer in that place from thursday to the next monday evening which then we left it then for chiose,

on monday morning I began to feel as tho we ought to be a contriving to Set for the wes[t]ward and I Spoke to Capt Steph[e]n[s]on about it, he thought it would Do no good the masters of the vassels had been to the commanding oficers of the forts and fortifications, he said there is a chance, to take that canoe and chetch a few fresh fish my answer was you and the other two young men may go and try your lluck of fishing and I will go across the harbour and try what my luck will be, so I croosed the phery and I found the commanding [19] Oficer of the Place I endavoirered to inform him what I wist for, his answer was it is more then my commision is worth he said I would be glad to help you but it deth not tho you may go by land I told him we could not go so for we had womin and children and nothing to buy horses and carriages with I thought it was as well to be plain hearted as any way I said what would be the consequence sopose I Should agree with some one and come away privitly in the night and say but little about it, he said if you have a mind to try that you mist be pretty Still about it and not Express your mind to any but them you know to be your friends and espesial me for I am under oath he said he would be glad to halp me if he could, so I felt as much gratifyed by him as I Did Expe[ct] to be and more so, so I left him and came to where I found men Standing idle and no buisinesses going on for it was a little before that that Portland was burned it was a very malancoly time chimneys standing and houses burned and gone, by this time I thought it was time for me to say something about what I set out for as there was a considerable number of men I spake to them all in Jeneral and said can any of you inform me who has bread corn to sell the answer was no there is none to be had in town I sade why Do you not go to the westward and buy some, there was one young man

Seemed to answer me most I think his name is Joseph rigs I took him aside I asked him if he would Set out to go to the westward if there wes no imbargo in the way he said he thought he should I said and if you feel willing to start tonight before morning and run the venter of your Self and boat, and I will Rin the resk of myself and family and pay you what is reasonable when we come to Newburyport he said he would go and be back quick and he was as good as his word and so he returned and said he would endeavour to go, and said I will come here . . . to the boat by ten o'clock or as soon as the people begins to be still I told him I would endeavour to come at that time

[20] So I returned to my family and informed them we were a going to start in a boat about ten o'clock or as soon as people are still I told him I would endeavor to come at that time to the boat, or a little before and we set and waited till we thought it a suitable time and then we cast of from the wort and there we were, we had no wind to sail with but being heigh wather the tide saged us from the mouth of the harbour and abought Daybrak or about that time the wind began to blow and continued so at Northeast untill it brought us a little past portsmouth in the light of that Day, and when about opposet to Portsmouth we Discovered a Ship lyeing without the bar, as we thought but when we came neigher the bar we found She was inside and we knew not what to Do, while we thought she, the ship was outside the barr we flatered our selves we could all hands come on board the ship, Drop the boat as[te]arn the ship and all would be well but when we found the ship was within we knew not what to Do — we were afeared we would overrun our object but we had good knowing Men on board they got 4 oars into the rowlocks and four men hold of them, and one man Stood by and Steeded himself by the mast and another Stood on his Shoulders, he that was heigest he was to look out for breakers and he, all at once, Sang out breakers ahead, he said which way to brring her about She was runing on to the north breaker we rowed a little further Southardly and let run our grapling for we had not an anker to ride by, and there it was when the waves would burste in to the boat we had a wellrun* and a bucket and we would throw it out as fast as it came in and so we Stood it all night and in the morning we could See the way in over the barr and we arived to newburyport about Sunrise all safe only the women being seasick the Day and night before and had not got it heardly over the Day we run from Portland to newbury barr the women lost their bonets at Sea in Daylight the sea and the wind being high and rough we could not save them our boat we came in from Portland to newbury Port was a morses boat she had been cut intoo and made longer She had no Deck . . . She had a cuddy fore and aft [21] . . . this was the thirtieth Day of June 1779 . . . She was full of Dry fish before we fourteen of us pasengers came on board which I thought caused hur to be heavy loaded . . . if the Almighty had not been on our right and on our left hand the s[e]cond night after we left belfast and the night we lay at newbury barr it aperces there was nothind in the pour of man to help us . . .

we staid at newbury port from about sunrise till about noon and then mooved for neverhill and came no further then Russells pherrey and we Staid in the boat over night and it was a cold one the tide tur[n]ed against us and we could come no further till next morning and the tide turned in our favour and soon run [22] . . . to haverhill Town

I Steped up into the street to see if I could see any one from windham and I found Mr John Dinsmoor Esqr almost ready to start for Windham with an ox cart and no load to carry and he took us on board when we wished to ride and weated on us as far as Deacon Samuel Morrisons in Windham Range and we came there, and staid at old Mr Willims Thoms over night in the morning it was wet and lowring. I walked as far as My Fathers house and he took

* L. e., well room.

his two horses and came with me and helpt me with my family to his house, this was the ninth [?] Day of July 1779

perhaps you may think we have come past all our Trouble but now we have to begin the world anew and O if I had of my property I left at Belfast I should have a good beginning without the land, yea of farming utentials and househould furniture we had would with sheep and swineherd been a great Relieaf to us but what youse is it to repeat these thing over again and naver be recowled and nothng in lue for them When the Enemy came into Belfast harbour that was our trouble if we could have been transported to a land of peace and out of the way of war in a day or two we would have thought our selves happy but this was not the case for while we were on our flight we felt happy we were so much further from the Enemy and we hed not time to think of what we lost at the Eastward and so we laid it aside as much as we could, it being a good time of the year for the labouring man to have Employ and I could have as much of that as cept me in employ for the greater part of my time and so I Earned Sumthing in that way and when out of a Jobb I would go abord and buy Clooth and thread and whan I had taken in so as to be socifcent to go a pedling I would go abroad and sell and so I went on in these ways till Septbr.

then my Brother Jesse and myself bought a prety good lot of clooth and therad and hired a hors between us to go after my cattle to Tothomas town near georges River at Mr John Sillaways we could ride one at a time all the way Down and found the cattle all in good order and able for there journey all stood it well and I mad[e] as much as cleared the expence [23] Of horse I sold one for money and the other and calf I put for a hors Sadie and bridle he was a large and a good one called by the man I had had him off and so he was and as long as grass lasted but when that was Done he had to leave of work for he could not Eat hay the cowes I put to him was old and sumthing tiered of treavling and I hope we made somthing of an even tread, I brought four oxen two cowes to my Fathers in Windham and three heffers and the old horse that Did not turn to a very good account I had to Sell my largest oxen for paper money and when i recievied the pay for them it would not have brought more then one cow I lost in the value of two cowes in that tread by the Deprusiotion of money or his neglect of paying according to agreement I buught a pai of young cattle from Mr John hilinds Father and agreed to pay him for the oxen in about six monthe from the Date of the note according just as it reads in the face of the note the nominal sume and that halpt to make up Some of the former Deprusiotions good

The next Spring Apriel 1780 I bought a small Farm in Windham in goulding rowe and it cost me as much as five hundred and nine Dollars hard money the building were miserably poor tho we moovid into the house uncomfortable as it was and lived there we were between fourteen and fifteen years in the house we had three sons and two Daughters born in that house and wothout much r[e]lpair and there we were a very poor family and in debt for my land and could Scerly raise provision so as to Supply the fammly, to think of buil[d]ing would be vain but as necesity has no law, I was obliged to build a Small barn, and then I could co [sic, ? sow] better then before for we could Save what we raised.

after we built the barn I conjectured old Mr Brown must sell his farm soon and if I could buy his sixty acres as it lieth along by my forty and had the Name of being veery good land they two would make a farm we could Make a living on and I would Sell my land at the Eastward and not to go back to belfast as it is a place that will always b[e] exposed in time of war to trouble not a long time after this there was a vandow in [24] Pelhem not far from our house and I Atended and old Mr James Brittan esqr was master of the worke and a very good friend of mine I informed him in time of intermission of what

I had thought of Doing in respect of buying Broons ferm, so Do John you ought to have it it will Suit you and I will help you I said I would be glad to have it can you not come here and stay over night and try to see what you can Do in the morning he said he would so he cam and in the morning he went to See the old folks he the Sqr. said he would be gladd to have the money you owe me and and I D[o] not see but I must have it Broon said he could not pay it till he sold his farm Britton said you can sel it to Day if you wissh to John Davidson will buy it, so they sent for me, and we began and finished, writings and all were concluded before Dark,

now my friends by this time you are ready to say you have been very fortunate I think we have so fer, now, if we can be so fortunate to git out of debt as we have to git into Debt but we cannot expect that, Tho I think I am as willing to try as I was to go into Debt and you have come to your Fathers house and you have purchisued so much land and all very heandy to carry on I know I owe a large Some of money but it is not so bad as the I had not the vallue the Brownns lot costs Seven hundred and fifty Dollars hard money, one lot of meadow the first I bought of Thomas Willson I had it for about six acres for Ninteen Dollars Sixty six cents a sacond lot of meadow I bought of Thomas Willson there was not quite three acres and it coast me Sixty Dollars hard money, at that time I thought it best to take it although it was Dear

Now my Dear and imparshal friends as I hope, as I have given you a little scitch of my coming along in the world as to temperals but as to Spirituels I have been more silent, . . . [25] . . . sometime in the year 1777 I came to our Minister Mr Williams for Admision to join his church and was admited . . . we had our children Baptised . . . *

[28] In 1805 Rev. Saml Harrise was ordained Pastor of the church in windham and continued Minister of the people in that place for 17 years with little success to appearance although he preached the gospell in its Simplicity In Feb. 1822 he began to see sume of the fruits of his labour a few individuels began to enquire what they must do to be saved amongst the number was my son William and a happy time it prooved to be to him and the greatest part of the fammily, it appeared about that time we all had by Devine grace our eyes opened that we saw the evile nature of Sin, and the beauty there is in a holy life . . .

[29] After having found Christ precious to my Sule my first inquiry was Lord what wilt thou have me to Do I felt it was time to begin to work for him as I was now more then three score years and ten and had Done nothing I, thought of my Brothers and Sisters and others of my years with whome I had been acquainted for many years in windham whome I feared had been living the Same way as I had So i could not rest Sattisfied until I had Seen and talked with those on that subject I therefore took my cane and walked from house to house until I had seen them all being absent most three Days I thought I could convince them of the error of their ways and show them the beauty there is in experimental religion but alass, how weak is man I shod my weakness and how little I could Do I found many of them as hard as adament and others I believe from that Did Set up family pray[e]rs who had neglected it for years I returned home I could only commend them to God whose Spirit alone is able to melt the hardest hardest heart —

nearly all those aged people with whome I convened with at that time are now in their greaves and I am still Spared a living monument of the goodness of god It is ten years Sence I hope I began to love Christ and his cause — I am 82 years four mon[t]hs old I have always been bleasd with good health generely as is the case now which is wonderfull for a person of my age I have a good appitite and my food rellishes well I sleep well and am in no pain I

* A long account (about 24 pages of manuscript) of Mr. Davidson's religious awaking, in the year 1822, has been omitted here.

have had kind friends always — amongst our hands of this world goods to be comfortably agreeable a family of children that are agreeable, all as I think are professesers of Religion but Scattered in allmost in every Deriction, my youngest is forty two years old I am now and has [sic] been living here almost thre years and I no not but I [s]hall continue to the end of my time here, She the beloved partner of my youth Died 5 day of January 1829 in litchfield we lived together Fifty of years her kindness I Shall never forgit I have liyed to See the work of god prosper I have seen many [30] In windham ten years Seince I came into the ofice of christ I have lived to see another revivel in that place and I have lived to see another a second r[e]livil in that place which was last year 25 fammilies began at last to joine in fammily prear about one time I have lived to see three Churches of the congregational order organized in this place [Lowell] containing 1000 members and all Since 1825 — I have seen many other churches gro[w] up in this place . . . J. D.

CONNECTICUT CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS

Copied by JOEL N. ENO, A.M., of Hartford, Conn.

[Continued from vol. 69, page 342]

ASHFORD

WARRENVILLE CEMETERY

Erected in memory of Mrs. Abigail, consort of Mr. Ira Bartlett who died Oct. ye 15th, A.D. 1814, in ye 43d year of her age.

In memory of Mrs. Deborah Bicknell, wife of Mr. Samuel Bicknell. She died June 27th, 1791, in the 55th year of her age.

Mrs. Mary, Relict of Mr. Samuel Bicknell died Mar. 1815. AE. 66.

In memory of Mr. Samuel Bicknell, who died Nov. 22nd, 1812, in the 88th year of his age.

In memory of Mr. Zachariah Bicknell, who died April 6th, 1798 in ye 75th year of his age.

In memory of Mr. Nathaniel Bosworth, who died March 12, 1827 in the 75th year of his age.

Also of Mrs. Mary Bosworth his wife who died Sept. 1826 in the 69th year of her age.

Amos, only son of Amos & Mrs. Hannah Brown died May 5, 1813. AE. 10 years.

Mrs. Wealthy wife of Mr. William Brown died April 29th 1825. AE. 29 years.

Here lies Hannah daughter to Edward Bugbe & Lydia. She dyed July ye 4th 1770. Aged 16.

Here lies the body of Nathaniel Bugbe. Age 4 years.

Here lies Sarah wife of Dea. Josiah Bugbe. She died November 30, 1755. Aged 71.

Amos Bugbee died Feb. 15, 1804 aged 54.

Martha his wife died Jan. 8, 1847, aged 89.

This monument is erected in memory of Mr. Josiah Bugbee and his wife: he died July ye 4th A.D. 1804 in ye 87th year of his age. July ye 23d

A.D. 1799 departed this life Mrs. Hannah Bugbee consort of Mr. Josiah Bugbee in ye 61st year of her age.

Here lies the body of Deen Josiah Bugbee [illegible]