

**AUNT HITTY: BIOGRAPHICAL  
AND REMINISCENT NARRATION  
OF "AUNT HITTY" AND "UNCLE  
THOMAS" HASKELL**

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Aunt Hitty: Biographical and Reminiscent Narration of "Aunt Hitty" and "Uncle Thomas"  
Haskell by Maria Herrick Bray

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**MARIA HERRICK BRAY**

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MARIA HERRICK BRAY.

# AUNT HITTY

BIOGRAPHICAL AND REMINISCENT  
NARRATION

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"AUNT HITTY" AND "UNCLE THOMAS"  
HASKELL.

BY

MARIA HERRICK BRAY.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL AND REMINISCENT  
NARRATION**

—*or*—

**"AUNT HITTY" AND "UNCLE THOMAS"  
HASKELL.**

As I repeat the names of Thomas Haskell and Mehitable Haskell, two well-remembered and honored friends, this thought comes with unction to my mind: These once familiar names are growing dim, the ranks of their contemporaries are growing less, and after the lapse of a few more years, it will be difficult to obtain any data of these two lives, or find a record richly characterized by Christian virtues, and strong mental abilities. Inspired by this thought, moved by an influence which at once brought me into spiritual harmony, with my departed friends, I was conscious of my duty, to employ my pen, in the pleasant task of recording briefly, and so far as memory aids me, biographical notes and reminiscient recollections of two worthy people.

In sending this memorial booklet out among

friends and strangers, I do so in the hope and faith that older people will receive a new stimulus to reach up and out into higher and broader realms of thought and action, and children will read of these two noted people, receiving an inspiration that will lead them to improve every opportunity, large or small, to leave a record of fidelity to truth, honesty and all the cardinal virtues.

Mr. Thomas Haskell died in 1873 at the age of 82 years, and Miss Mehitable Haskell, the last survivor of the family, passed away Saturday, November 2, 1878, in her 90th year.

Aaron Haskell, their father, died in 1834, at the age of 83 years, and few Gloucester families have been more remarkable for general intelligence, originality of ideas and strength of character than the line of Aaron Haskell. Of his nine children, seven lived beyond the age of four score years, as did many of their ancestors and kindred, and it is very doubtful if any other family in the country can point to so many instances of longevity.



Sarah, a sister of Aunt Hitty, married James Riggs and for several years was my nearest neighbor, in whom I found a true friend and helpful companion. She was richly endowed with good common sense, sterling integrity, and an uncompromising fidelity to the great principles of truth, of justice and mercy. Mrs. Riggs passed away in the year 1877, aged 96.

Uncle Thomas and Aunt Hitty spent their long and useful lives among the peaceful shades and familiar haunts of their native village, honored and respected by old and young. Physical strength, unusual powers of endurance, life-long habits of thrift and industry were very marked characteristics and combined with strong mental powers of inquiry, research and study into the phenomena of nature, art and science, developed the careful students. Their moral and religious standards were above reproach. Their belief in the commandments, in the beatitudes and the teachings of Christ was firm, unwavering and deep-rooted. Honesty and justice governed their dealings with their fellow beings.

Uncle Thomas married, and outlived his faithful wife Hannah several years. His home was only a very short distance from Aunt Hitty's, and they were both very deeply interested in the anti-slavery movement, both members of the peace society, and of the Washingtonian temperance organization, identified themselves with the earliest advocates for the right of suffrage for women, and earnest advocates that both men and women should be judged by the same standard of morality.

Uncle Thomas was a shareholder for several years in Liberty hall after it was built out of parts and parcels of the old church, which was taken down. The old church was sold at public auction November 3, 1846, and my brother, Samuel Herrick, was the purchaser. This hall was always free to all denominations, and in the winters of 1847 and 1848 we used to hold meetings for discussion and debates, on the various important subjects which confronted the people at that time and Uncle Thomas and Aunt Hitty were two of the most prominent and interesting speakers.

Several years previous to Uncle Thomas' death he became very much interested in spiritualism, and after careful investigation, and to him convincing demonstration, he became a firm believer, and found sincere joy in the communications he received from departed friends, and this great source of happiness seemed to widen out, and grow more beautiful to him even to the very close of his earthly life.

If time would allow, a more extended and exhaustive paper could be written concerning the long and useful life of this original thinker, this honest, out-spoken, kindly man, of whom we can say, the precepts of Jesus were the essential elements of his religion, and in striving daily to live them out, he entered the Kingdom of Heaven while here on earth.

This brother and sister had great sympathy, one with the other, in their ideas of progress, and the vital questions of that time which in their adjustment and settlement would in some way, directly or indirectly, affect the civilized nations of