

**HEROIC WILLARDS OF '76; LIFE AND TIMES
OF CAPTAIN REUBEN WILLARD OF
FITCHBURG, MASS., AND HIS LINEAL
DESCENDANTS, FROM 1775 TO DATE;
PROFUSELY EMBELLISHED WITH AUTHENTIC
PORTRAITS NOT HERETOFORE AVAILABLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649748266

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JAMES ANDREW PHELPS

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Life and Times of

Captain Reuben Willard

of Fitchburg, Mass.

And his lineal descendants, from 1775 to date

Profusely Embellished with Authentic Portraits
Not Heretofore Available

Register of Willards in the Revolution, and Other Wars

Chronology of the George Willards

Compiled by
JAMES ANDREW PHELPS

1917
Issued by the
GENEALOGICAL BUREAU
56-58 Pine Street
NEW YORK, N. Y.

1164537

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By JAMES ANDREW PHELPS, 1917

Printed by

The Arthur H. Crist Co., Cooperstown, N. Y.

COMMENCEMENT

The records herein were initially gathered for personal satisfaction, and to furnish occupation for one who, according to present-day practice, had passed the period of usefulness in business pursuits; which eschews experience, as being less submissive to authority; and probably more critical, as to questionable methods—introduced to secure excessive gains.

Having become convinced of the futility of attempting to overcome the ironclad dictum, which has established arbitrary age-limits; and being unwilling to enter a state of quiescent nonentity, and self-effacement; or dormant dry-rot; a determination to make "a place in the sun" despite advancing years; supervened.

Seeking then an object worthy of attainment, through possible, continuous, effort; my thoughts reverted to the dear old grandmother, (of blessed memory;) the incarnation of kindly solicitude, and maternal affection; debarred from former activities, by uncontrollable circumstances, and the infirmities of age; and hence relegated to a fixed position, permitting only a twirling of thumbs, and lingual exercise.

Spontaneously these questions arose; From whence came she? and from whom? Possessed of slight knowledge as to the first; and none regarding the last; a problem was discerned which demanded solution. Neither thumbs nor tongue, as occupation, were attractive; wherefore, discovery of the facts underlying the problem, became at once both pursuit and diversion.

The material gathered having overflowed the bounds originally contemplated; its apparent value for succeeding generations, affords an excuse for unloading it, on a JOB-like, ever patient, public; and it is therefore launched upon the everflowing stream of books; of which it has been said "there is no end."

Compilation of the facts herewith submitted, has furnished occupation for a lengthy period; and caused constant appeals to the courtesy and goodwill of a multitude of correspondents, to the most of whom the work is indebted for cheerful and painstaking replies to requests for information, not otherwise obtainable.

Especial recognition is due to Col. Asa Bird Gardiner, U. S. A., retired: for laying aside other important and remunerative matters, to contribute the results of previous investigations, not now possible; without which much that is of vital importance, in a historic sense, would be lacking.

Regarding the Revolutionary record of our mutual Ancestor, the following communication is conclusive:

ORRELL MANOR FARM

Suffern, June 19, 1915.

James A. Phelps, Esq.,
Dear Mr. Phelps:

When I was Professor of Law, at West Point, I went to Boston to the Secretary of State's Office, and saw the original Lexington Alarm Roll, of Capt. Jonathan Davis' Minute Men; and the Secretary in showing it to me, at first did not notice Reuben Willard's name, but soon discovered it interpolated in same ink and handwriting.

Before that I did not know whose Company he had served in, but thereupon made my memorandum. That is how I came to have it. Later the Secretary of State gave me a Certificate which is among my papers, for which I paid \$1. My notes were made in the Secretary of State's Office, in July, 1875, and confirmed what Reuben Willard had told his daughters: who told me.

(You see he was not a regular member of the Company, and when the Roll was made up, Capt. Davis who recalled that Reuben Willard had served—interpolated his name.)

I spent many days in Washington, over General Washington's papers, in the State Department, and saw that record of his promotion to Ensign while stationed at Winter Hill, and noted it at the time. Later I found, after diligent search, the date of his promotion. Capt. Jones in whose Company he became Ensign, was continued in service on reorganization, and with his regiment was in the campaign in Canada before Quebec, and in the retreat; the Division then being under Brig. Gen. John Sullivan.

Now adieu, always dear friend,
Faithfully yours,
ASA BIRD GARDNER.

By the way, I have constantly much to do with historical research, especially of the Revolutionary period, and never accept tradition as to service.

Through the voluntarily generous co-operation of Mrs. Duncan McNee of San Francisco, Cal., success became attainable; and Mr. Charles W. Walker, of the Willard Family Association, also rendered appreciated assistance.

Perfection being impossible of attainment, and error everywhere present, deficiencies are to be expected. It is therefore hoped that such as may be discovered will be accorded leniency, and be attributed to human frailty, rather than to lack of truthful purpose.

And as the student, (before whom a new phase of existence is opening,) ends his collegiate experiences at Commencement; now that the period of research is terminated; my labor closes, under the same seemingly incongruous title.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

JAMES ANDREW PHELPS
4-20-1835