

**ESSEX FARMS, THE  
CRADLES OF AMERICAN  
HOMES: AN ADDRESS**

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Essex Farms, the Cradles of American Homes: An Address by Nathan M. Hawkes

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**NATHAN M. HAWKES**

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AN ADDRESS

BY

HON. NATHAN M. HAWKES,

OF LYNN.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

*ESSEX AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,*

AT

HAVERHILL, MASS.,

THURSDAY, SEPT. 21, 1893.

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## ADDRESS.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX  
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY:

Thoreau, the keen observer, the philosopher of nature, walking along the southern exposure of his neighbor's hill-top on a first day of March, noted in his journal

"It is spring there, and Minot is pattering outside in the sun. How wise in his grandfather to select such a site for his house."

The Essex Agricultural Society, the honored guild of the farmers of Essex, has had a corporate existence of seventy-five years, having been incorporated in 1818.

To-day occurs the seventieth annual address. The Psalmist says that "three score years and ten are the length of man's days." The unbounded vitality of our Society after seventy-five years of usefulness is a striking reversal of Shakespeare's aphorism "The evil that men do lives after them." We can say the good that men do lives after them.

At such a milestone perhaps we may rest for one day from learned discussions and philosophical essays and glance back over the way we have traveled and then forward to see what lies before us.

There is a fraternity of race blood in this Society which may not be apparent to outsiders. Strangers may

query why so many names appear as the authors of annual addresses who are not practical farmers. The point cannot be better illustrated than here in this ancient and historic Haverhill.

A few years since, an instructive address was delivered by your brilliant young District Attorney. Readers of the wonderful self-revealing "Diary" of Chief Justice Samuel Sewall—the brave Witchcraft Judge, who publicly acknowledged his error—himself an Essex man, will appreciate the interest which the sons take in the affairs of the old County. Sewall's "Diary" abounds in references to Brother Moody, and whoever bears in his veins the colonial blood of the Sewalls and Moodys must respond to the call for service from his kin.

Sewall's "Diary" also lovingly dwells upon many cherished visits at Brother Northend's. Hence a descendant of Brother Northend of the old stock, going out to Nature for strength for forensic toils, came to the Society with words of experience.

Another man of our own time, whose family lines run back to the planting of the colony, whose genial presence has been a benison to our annual gatherings—the beloved Sheriff—has been a welcome speaker.

Timothy Pickering, who delivered the first address and was the organizer and first President of this Society, may not be called a practical farmer, but every fibre of his being was in close touch with the men of the soil who made Essex County historic ground.

Before the tragic scenes at Lexington and Concord had startled the world, Col. Timothy Pickering and the men of Salem had made (February 28—1775) the first armed



resistance to British aggression at the old North Bridge. In February, the men of Salem and Marblehead struck the key note, which, in April, resounded from Middlesex.

Col. Pickering was Post-master General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State in the cabinets of Washington and Adams. Later, he was Chief Justice of the Essex County Court of Common Pleas, United States Senator, and Representative in Congress from the Essex District.

He rounded out a long and useful career by promoting and organizing the society under whose auspices we are assembled to-day. Under his call the first meeting was held at Cyrus Cummings' tavern, at Topsfield, on the 16th day of February, 1818. Ichabod Tucker was chosen moderator and David Cummings, secretary; these, with John Adams, Paul Kent and Elisha Mack, were appointed a committee to report a plan of organization. Timothy Pickering was chosen president; and William Bartlett, Dr. Thomas Kittredge, John Heard and Ichabod Tucker, vice-presidents; Leverett Saltonstall, secretary; and Dr. Nehemiah Cleaveland, treasurer. Timothy Pickering was annually chosen president for ten years, to 1829, when he again delivered the annual address.

Col. Pickering was followed by Andrew Nichols, the botanist, the beloved physician of Danvers.

Then came that liberal preacher, the Rev. Abiel Abbott, of Beverly, of whom President Monroe said that he was the best talker he ever knew.

From that day on, the clergymen have done their share of the talking, as was eminently fit in a society of Puritan descent. I shall not presume to speak of the living, so I

pass by the present pastor of the First Church (the Village Church), of Danvers, and mention his predecessor, the sturdy leader of Orthodox thought, the preacher of the faith of the fathers, the Rev. Milton P. Braman. And there is also recalled, that pious scholar, wit, and humorist, the Rev. Dr. Leonard Withington, of Newbury, who described himself as "a modified Calvinist."

The Bar has been drawn upon for its leaders from "the silver tongued" James H. Duncan, and his cousin, the courtly Leveret Saltonstall, to the time of Judge Otis P. Lord and General Benjamin F. Butler. Caleb Cushing obeyed your call, he, of whom Isaac O. Barnes wittily and truthfully said: "There is a living, self-moving cyclopaedia, from whom you can obtain information upon every question that has interested any people in any age of the world."

Gen. Henry K. Oliver, the versatile, the teacher, the sweet singer, the mayor of two cities, made his contribution and the fluent, ever ready Dr. George B. Loring was here, as everywhere among farmers, the popular favorite, for he delivered the annual address on three occasions.

This is not a catalogue of names of those who have addressed the Society, but I cannot refrain from naming two who were zealous in the cause of intelligent forestry. Ben: Perley Poore made Indian Hill a magnet that drew wits, savants, and practical men of affairs from the world over. Richard S. Fay made Lynnmere an earthly paradise. He created a forest which has become a profitable woodland. It is a stately memorial of the taste and genius of a man who was devoted to the development of agriculture.

The actual farmers who have followed the calling nearest to nature as a vocation to which other matters were mere avocations have been prominent.

Although honors came to such men as Hon. Daniel P. King, Gen. Josiah Newhall, and Hon. Asa Tarbell Newhall, enthusiastic devotion to and skilled direction of the farm were paramount and sufficient.

Hon. Asa T. Newhall is recorded as delivering the address in 1849, and again in 1884, but of course you know as well as I that it was not the old Squire who addressed you in the latter year, but his grandson of the same name and inherited talents, who now makes hay while the sun shines on the home farm. Verily, the sons find it pleasant to tread the paths of labor and of honor in the footsteps of respected sires.

These are but representative names in the galaxy of Essex men who have addressed this Society. Every address has been carefully prepared and a vast variety of interesting topics have been discussed.

A collection of the whole would make a valuable library for an intelligent household.

I should shrink from being added to this list, if I did not feel that the honor came to me, not as a personal one, but as a recognition of a family whose successive generations have tilled the soil on the intervalles of Saugus River, from the planting of the colony to the present day. Members of this family are active in the councils of the Society, and I am grateful to be allowed to link my name with those who have gone before me, as an active member of the Essex Agricultural Society.

This Society is old enough to have made for itself an enviable history, but Essex agriculture had a world re-