

**SAMUEL GRANT
SIMPKINS:
A MEMORIAL**

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Samuel Grant Simpkins: A Memorial by Peter Thacher

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PETER THACHER

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A Memorial

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Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

George Herbert.

Who is the honest man ?
He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
To God, his neighbor, and himself most true :
Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpin, or wrench from giving all their due.

The same author.

"It is a becoming service to embalm the memory of those
whose lives have enriched the world in virtue and truth."

SAMUEL GRANT SIMPKINS.

SAMUEL GRANT SIMPKINS, of Boston, was born in Brewster, Mass., September 15, 1802. He was of Puritan descent, and could trace his lineage, in the paternal and maternal line, through successive generations, to the early years of the colony of Massachusetts Bay. Reference to his ancestry will show that some of the best blood of that and also of the Plymouth Colony flowed in his veins. There is little doubt that his first ancestor in New England was NICHOLAS SIMPKINS,¹ born in England in 1600.² He emigrated from London to Boston before 1634.³ In that year, he was appointed the first captain of the castle, on

¹ Savage's Gen. Dict., iv. 101.

² Swift's History of Yarmouth, 56.

³ Researches of Amos Otis, the antiquary of Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

Castle Island, in Boston Harbor.¹ In 1638-9, he removed to Yarmouth, where for some years he took a leading part in the affairs of the new settlement.² March 5, 1640, he is mentioned in the Colonial Records as one of a committee of four, the three others of whom were the original grantees of the township, to make an equal division of the planting lands among the settlers.³ He there became possessed of real estate, and owned the land where the wharves at Yarmouthport are now situated.⁴ A creek flowing by this land has ever since been known as "Simpkins Creek."⁵ He sold his plantation in 1646, and removed to Scituate.⁶ In 1649, he had returned to Boston; and in 1650 he had the distinction of being a member of the Artillery Company⁷

¹ Young's *Chronicles of Massachusetts Bay*, 358.

² Freeman's *History of Cape Cod*, i. 144, 145.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Manuscript account of the Simpkins family by George Winslow Thacher.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Swift's *History of Yarmouth*, 56.

⁷ Savage's *Gen. Dict.*, iv. 101.

founded in 1637, chartered in 1638, and attaining in 1700 the appellation of "Ancient and Honorable,"¹ by which the organization is still known. The researches of Dr. Savage brought him to the conclusion that Nicholas Simpkins was the father of Pilgrim Simpkins, of Boston, born, as he thinks, in Yarmouth.² Pilgrim Simpkins died December 3, 1720, aged ninety-six, and his wife, Catherine, April 7, 1721, aged eighty-six.³ The name of the son would seem to indicate sufficiently the religious and political principles of the father. One of the children of Pilgrim and his wife, Catherine Richardson, married November 27, 1661,⁴ was Thomas, born in Boston, May 30, 1671.⁵ To him is given the title of *captain*.⁶ He was of the Artillery Company in 1727, and was living in 1736.⁷

¹ Drake's History of Boston, 235, 236. Nicholas Simpkins is designated as *captain* in the Records of the Artillery Company.

² Savage's Gen. Dict., iv. 101.

³ Boston Records.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Manuscript account, above named, by George Winslow Thacher.

⁷ Whitman's History of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, second edition, 291.

Captain Thomas Simpkins, probably about 1690, married Margaret, or Margery, daughter of James and Margaret Barton.¹ James Barton had resided in Boston previous to 1688, and had there acquired a good estate. He had carried on the business of rope-making on a wharf on Ann Street, then and afterwards known as "Barton's Wharf." In 1688, he purchased a farm and other estates in Newton, and built his house just within the Watertown line, on the south bank of Charles River. His will is dated in 1729, and in that he is described as of Watertown. He died the same year, aged eighty-six. His wife died in 1731, aged eighty-seven. They were both interred at Newton,² where their gravestones, recording their ages, are still to be seen in the old Newton Centre cemetery. His estate was appraised at about £5,000, the income of which he gave to his widow for her life by his will,

¹Simpkins Family Record. This record gives the date of the marriage as 1696. But the Boston Records state the birth of Thomas, son of Thomas and Margery Simpkins, as Jan. 27, 1692.

²Jackson's History of Newton, 237.