

**MEMOIR OF
CHARLES
WENTWORTH UPHAM**

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Memoir of Charles Wentworth Upham by George E. Ellis

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GEORGE E. ELLIS

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Charles W. Upham.

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BY
Edward
GEORGE E. ELLIS.

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CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, though he was not born within the limits of the United States, had every other claim to its full and honored citizenship. Here he passed all but the early boyhood of his life; and here, in several forms of high service, he discharged a larger variety of trusts than is often assigned to the most favored of those born on our soil. He came of a family among the original English Colonists of Massachusetts Bay. A line of five generations between his first ancestor here and himself gives us the names of those who were trusted and serviceable in all the ordinary and emergent offices, calling for able and faithful men, in the development of communities and States.

The first of the family in Massachusetts was John Upham. His gravestone, in the old burial-ground of the town of Malden, implies that he was born in England, in 1597, near the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He emigrated hither at the age of thirty-eight, with wife and children, and settled at Weymouth. He was admitted a freeman — signifying his being in church covenant — Sept. 2, 1635; and was repeatedly deputy or representative from that town in the General Court. Before the year 1650, he had removed to Malden; serving the town and the court as selectman and commissioner, and in the municipal trusts then committed to the worthiest citizens. He died in 1681, aged eighty-four; having been for twenty-four years a deacon of the church.

A son of John Upham, who would seem to have been the first of his children born in the colony for the defence of which he was to give his life in Indian warfare, was Lieutenant Phineas Upham. He died in Malden, October, 1676, at the age of forty-one, from wounds received in the Great Swamp Fight with the Narragansetts, in Philip's war, Nov. 19, 1675. Just previous to the breaking out of the war, which disabled him for nearly a year afterwards and brought

his life to a close, he had been engaged in the first enterprises for the settlement of Worcester.

The eldest son of the lieutenant bore his name; and died in Malden, in 1720, at the age of sixty-two, after having served as selectman, representative, and deacon of the church.

A third who bore the name of Phineas, and the eldest son of him just named, was the progenitor of a numerous family connection; which, including the subject of this Memoir, offers us a long list of men widely known over our extending country, eminent and honored in all professions and pursuits, — in trade, in law, in medicine, in scholarship, and philosophy, in the churches and colleges, and in the senates of the States and the nation, — and of women, also, as wives, mothers, and matrons in the best of our households.

One of the sons of the third Phineas Upham was Dr. Jabez Upham, who went to Brookfield, Mass., and there practised his profession as a physician till his death, in 1760. His son, Joshua Upham, was the father of the subject of this Memoir; and because of a special interest attached to his life and experience, connected with the early fortunes of his son, the writer of these pages must anticipate a matter in the line of his narrative.

The last, and it may fairly be said the most genial and the most felicitously wrought, labor of the pen of our late associate was his Memoir of Colonel Timothy Pickering, soldier and statesman, Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General of the army of the Revolution, and Postmaster-General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State, of the United States. In his later years he was a much honored and esteemed parishioner and intimate friend of Mr. Upham, then minister of the First Church in Salem. There was still another tie between the venerated Pickering and his biographer, which the latter felt to be a warm and strong one, as the patriot statesman had been in Harvard College the classmate and chum, and continued to be the friend, of Mr. Upham's father, though their ways in troubled times divided their interests and fortunes. The reader of the admirable biography of Colonel Pickering will notice that, among the incidental episodical discussions in which Mr. Upham allows some liberty to his own pen, always adding charm and vigor to his pages, is one on the treatment of the Loyalists, or so-called Tories, on the first outburst of the spirit of liberty in Massachusetts and the other Provinces. It might seem as if the biographer's prompting in this plea was a somewhat personal one, as he was himself the son of an exiled and proscribed Loyalist. But his plea and argu-

ment may be allowed to stand on their own merits of pertinency and cogency. His views and his judgment in the matter wholly coincided with those of Colonel Pickering. And it can hardly fail to strike the reader that the course which Mr. Upham thinks would have been a wiser one in the treatment of our Loyalists was precisely that pursued by our own government on the close of the War of Secession, in restoring to all their former political and social rights even the foremost leaders of the Rebellion.

Joshua Upham was born in Brookfield, Mass., in 1741. He graduated at Harvard College in 1763. In view of the agitations and alienations which were to be so painfully active among the members of that class when, after their pleasant fellowship in the College, they in a few years should find themselves at variance in the entrance of their manly careers, it is interesting to note the many names on the list which are associated with a remarkable personal history on both sides in the Revolutionary strife. There stand the names of the honored patriot, Josiah Quincy, Jr., prematurely called from the good service which he was so nobly rendering; of Nathan Cushing, Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; and of Timothy Pickering, just mentioned. These are conspicuous names on the winning side. There, too, is the name of a neutral or a mediator, — that of John Jeffries, who returned from his medical studies in Aberdeen, just as our strife was opening, in the British naval service; went off with General Howe, as surgeon to the forces in Nova Scotia, and also in Charleston, S. C.; returned to England, crossed the British Channel to France, in a balloon; and came back, in 1789, to practise his profession in Boston. The names on the college catalogue were then arranged in the order of social rank. After the name of Upham come those of Jonathan Bliss — afterwards Upham's brother-in-law — and of Sampson Salter Blowers, these three being all refugees in the war. Upham and Bliss became Judges of the Supreme Court of the Province of New Brunswick, Bliss being the Chief Justice; and Blowers, Chief Justice of that of Nova Scotia. The last-named lived beyond one hundred years before he was starred in the catalogue. Similar divergences may be traced in the fortunes of members of the classes preceding and following that of 1763. They contained many prominent men, whose careers on either side were fond subjects of interest and study to the subject of this Memoir, as they illustrated history and character.

Joshua Upham began the study of law in Brookfield, and had won much distinction at the Worcester bar; being greatly

honored in his profession, and greatly respected for public spirit as a citizen up to the painful crisis in his lot. It is remarkable that, while those who were driven to the royal side, as he was, generally accorded with the British policy in the suppression of manufacturing enterprises in the Colonies, he was very active in promoting such provincial industries. In March, 1768, a meeting was held in Worcester of those who, indignant with the prohibitory measures of England, were in favor of advancing manufactures. The famous Ruggles opposed the disloyal movement; but Upham approved it. He, with two brothers and other gentlemen, had built a woollen manufactory in Brookfield,* and he had made efforts to introduce the manufacture of salt at stations on the sea-coast. But he fell upon distracted times; and there can now be no harm in saying that, like many others in the country of a class of so-called Loyalists, who were at worst only timid, halting, or cautious, while sincerely upright, conscientious, and patriotic, he received unmerited harsh treatment. Committees of correspondence, of espionage and inquisition, became very active, sometimes overbearing and impertinent, in every town. The business which they assigned to themselves was to put to the question of King or People every citizen, especially the more prominent ones in place or influence. Hurry and dictation were offensive to some, who needed only time and freedom of action to bring them into accord with the popular movements. On receiving a somewhat imperious call from the committee of his town, for a statement of his opinions and purpose in the critical state of affairs, he replied by a letter, which is printed in Force's "American Archives," fourth series, vol. ii., page 852, dated May 20th, 1775. In this letter, he says he is pausing to decide on the position which he shall himself take, until, after free debate and a proper deliberation, the majority of the people have committed themselves to the one or the other alternative. He will not set up his private judgment against that of the people, but claims a right to express his own views and apprehensions to help in the decision of the question. Then he will acquiesce in the popular resolve, and take common part and lot in measures designed to save the country in resisting the royal government, though he may think such measures improper, and not likely to be successful. In the mean while, he demanded freedom of opinion, and security for person and property. But the intense feelings of the hour, and the humor of

* See Boston Evening Post, Oct. 10, 1768.

his fellow-citizens, would not admit of what seemed weak and cautious temporizing, and a timid mistrust of a hopeful cause. The coolness of treatment which he received, with threats or apprehensions of what might follow, drove him, as they did many others under like circumstances, to the protection of the royal sympathizers in Boston. This act decided his future for him. Without means of support for himself and family in a besieged town, he accepted from the British commander the office of supervision of the refugees from the country, and, soon after, an appointment as aid on the staff of Sir Guy Carleton, subsequently Lord Dorchester, between whom and himself there continued a warm friendship. The close of the war found him at New York in the British service as a colonel of dragoons. He was among the proscribed whose estates were confiscated by the State of Massachusetts in 1778; and nothing but exile was before him. Mr. Upham had married, first, a daughter of Colonel John Murray, of Rutland, Mass.; and, on her decease, a daughter of Honorable Joshua Chandler, of New Haven, Conn. The latter was the mother of the subject of this Memoir and of several other children. The stately mansion-house of her father was afterwards long known as the "Tontine" Hotel, in New Haven. A building of the same name succeeds it on the same site. Mr. Upham's fine homestead in Brookfield long served a similar use.

Colonel Pickering, who, as above stated, was one of those who disapproved of the summary measures pursued towards the so-called Loyalists, felt a sincere sympathy for his old college chum, Upham. In a letter which he wrote to a friend in March, 1783, he says that Upham had expressed to a correspondent in Boston, where he had left a daughter, an intention of returning there; and he adds, "Upham is a good-hearted fellow, and probably would not have joined the enemy but for his marriage connections." After the close of hostilities, and during the long delay in the evacuation of New York, Pickering, who had hoped to have a friendly interview with Upham, which the hurried departure of the latter prevented, wrote to him from West Point, Nov. 14, 1783, a most cordial letter of unbroken regard and sympathy. To this Upham, on the 18th, replied in the same spirit of kindness and esteem, saying, "I leave the country for the winter from pecuniary considerations, not from resentment."*

New Brunswick, which had been a county of Nova Scotia,

* Life of Timothy Pickering, Vol. I. pp. 405, 491, 492.