

DEBORAH SAMSON

Written by Deborah's 3rd Great Granddaughter Pauline Moody

Late in October 1783, a youthful figure in an Army uniform sailed down the Hudson River in a sloop of war, took a packet to Providence, and then started to walk to Stoughton.

That figure was Deborah Samson. At West Point she had just been honorably discharged from the 4th Massachusetts Regiment by General Henry Knox, and commended by her officers for her bravery and good conduct while serving some seventeen months as a foot soldier in the American Revolution under the name of Robert Shurtlieff's.

Homeless the sturdy Deborah headed for the Cape Cod cottage of her aunt Alice Waters and Husband Zebulon in the Dry Pond section of Stoughton which was later annexed to Sharon. As the young woman strode along—she was almost twenty three—she must have wondered how she would be received where ever she went. She had joined the Army, leaving no clue for her mother and sisters and brothers in Plimpton or for the Thomas family in Middleborough, with whom she had lived eight years as an indentured servant.

Certainly it never entered the thoughts of a tall Deborah—she was five feet seven and one half inches when the average height of men was five feet four and of women four feet nine—that in two hundred years she would be unique in United States history as a forerunner of something called Women's lib.

The story has come down that the Stoughton relatives accepted Deborah's statement that she was her brother Ephraim (also a soldier in the Revolution) and soon she was working on their farm. The young woman knew all about Farm work.

Born in Plympton, Massachusetts December 17, 1760—the year George III became King of England—Deborah was one of seven small children Jonathon Samson Jr. had deserted before going to sea. Although well-to-do Jonathan Samson Sr had several daughters. There was only one son and his inheritance would have been sizable had he not felt a brother-in-law was mismanaging his father's estate, begun to drink heavily and then left Plympton. While old histories report Junior was lost at sea, there's evidence and some proof he lived in Maine long enough to have one and possibly two common law wives.

Though Jonathan lacked courage and will power, he was, nevertheless the great grandson of Miles Standish and John Alden. His wife Deborah Bradford was the great-granddaughter of Gov. William Bradford.

Butter was only six cents per pound, meat twelve, and whole Cod four. Yet without a helpmate Mrs. Samson could not feed Deborah, Sylvia, Ephraim, Hanna, Jonathan, Elisha and Nehemiah. She was forced to scatter some of them.

Deborah, rather plain in spite of her sparkling hazel eyes, fair skin and blonde hair, lived with a cousin, Mistress Fuller, until that relative's sudden death.

Then shelter was provided by a highly intelligent but elderly, ailing Madam Thacher, a minister's widow residing in Middleborough. By the time Deborah was ten, the patient required more care than the child could give her. She soon deceased and once again the little girl was homeless.

THE BOUND GIRL

Since child labor was accepted as a way of life in colonial times, there was nothing opprobrious in Mrs. Samson's obtaining a permanent home for Deborah by binding her out until she became of age. The new home was in the Thomaston section of Middleborough with farmer Thomas and his considerate wife. In their large household—there were ten sons—the bound girl was well fed and comfortably clothed.

The indentured girl help Mrs. Thomas do household chores, make candles and soap, fill feather beds and spin and weave. She thoroughly enjoyed outdoor life, however, and undoubtedly preferred working on the farm with the ten boys. She handled farm implements skillfully and could fashion baskets and other articles as needed. As Sharon poet (Mary) Josephine Folsom Lamprey wrote in *America's Woman Soldier Deborah Samson*:

In the field of dreams with men she toiled,
And though tanned her visage, her garments soiled
It was thus she gained the endurance great
Which her served so well in her future state.

Perhaps the girl couldn't be spared to go to school regularly; or Farmer Thomas may have agreed with the prevailing idea that women shouldn't be educated. But the plucky Deborah early formed a lifelong habit of solving seemingly unsolvable problems. She was determined to master the three R's or the time—reading, 'riting, and religion—and she did. Fortunately her mother had taught her to read; Mistress Fuller and Madam Thacher had encouraged her to continue; and Rev. Sylvanus Conant, pastor of the local Congregational Church, had awarded her a few precious books for learning the Catechism of the assembly of the Divines so well. Farmer Thomas gave her sheep and fowl with the understanding all

profits were to be channeled to worthy causes. And she could have mastered “ciphering” by accounting for the profits. Although paper was in short supply, she managed to learn to write a good hand. Like Benjamin Franklin before her, each night she checked a list of the good and bad qualities she had expressed throughout the day. After Deborah’s indenture was completed, she was asked to teach in a schoolhouse two miles from the Thomas home. In spite of holding a pen peculiarly—possibly because of a felon on her finger, she drilled the pupils, especially the boys, in penmanship. She taught the girls to sew and knit. For teaching two summers she was paid \$12.00. Expert at spinning and weaving, she worked winters in Middleboro Homes like that of Captain Leonard’s family. Plus she worked as a spinner at the Morton, Bourne and Clark Households. And in this quiet little town with its many patriots, she also worked as a waitress at Sproats Tavern.

FOOT SOLDIER

No one will ever know exactly what prompted Deborah Samson to become a soldier. As a small child she must have heard again and again how war had affected her mother’s people, the Bradford’s. For instance Governor Bradford’s son William, commander of the Plymouth forces in King Philips War, had received a musket ball in his flesh which he carried the remainder of his life (Surely Deborah never dreamt she’d have a similar experience). Zebulon Waters of Stoughton, who married Deborah’s aunt Alice Bradford, had helped remove the Acadians from Nova Scotia. Simeon Samson, cousin of Deborah’s father, was already America’s first naval captain. All ten Thomas sons had enlisted, and news could have reached Middleborough that Margaret Corbin and “Molly Pitcher” Hays had rendered emergency services in the Revolution by taking over their husbands’ guns and fighting valiantly after the men were killed or disabled.

Not only was the soldier-to-be tall; she was also very masculine. When Mrs. Gardner Derry came to Sharon as a bride, her husband’s grandmother told her she had known Deborah and could understand how got away with being in the army. She had associated with the Thomas boys so long she was decidedly masculine in both mannerisms and appearance. Deborah enlisted first in Middleborough, as Timothy Thayer in Carver. The whole performance was more or less of a lark. She appropriated a suit of men’s clothing—after which the owner vowed he’d never wear it again.—signed up, received her bounty money, went to an ordinary tavern (perhaps Sproats Tavern) and spent some of it for liquor. It was not until “Timothy” failed to join the parting recruits that an elderly lady, carding wool in the room where the enlistment had taken place, admitted she had noticed how strangely “he” held “his” pen. Only Deborah Samson held a pen like that. The culprit was excommunicated from her church because of her unchristian behavior in the Tavern. The Thomases forgave her. The members of the third Baptist church were less tolerant. On coming to Middleborough, Deborah attended the Congregational church. There she listened spellbound while the Declaration of Independence was read—It was read in every church and copied in the records of every town in the Commonwealth. After the death of the beloved pastor, Rev Sylvanus Conant, a series of revivals attracted the girl to the Third Baptist Church, and she joined it in November 1780. Rev Asa Hunt was the regular minister. But reverend Noah Alden great grandson of John and Priscilla and native of Middleborough, often came over, from Bellingham, to exchange pulpits with him.

The young woman in men’s clothing took herself out of Middleborough before she enlisted again. First she signed up on a Privateer at anchor in New Bedford, but vanished as soon as she heard that the captain mistreated his men. Then she tramped for days often over wretched roads and through sparsely populated area’s finally arriving weary and penniless in the Crimville section of Bellingham.

“I have a hunch” writes historian John Lundvall of Mendon, MA, “that she came up to be in Bellingham because she knew Rev. Noah Alden, and also to be with Baptist friends. This would give her a chance to prove her ability to conceal her sex and also to survey the area for a higher bounty in exchange for her services. Surely Rev. Alden knew who would pay the highest bounty around there—he had been around the countryside preaching. It seems he helped her in that manner and when she signed up in Bellingham that he took her to Uxbridge where Noah Taft completed the deal.”

John Adams Vinton explained in one of his excellent footnotes in the edition of *The Female Review* he edited and which he published in 1866

The male population of every town capable of bearing arms, was at that time divided into classes and each class was obliged to furnish a soldier for the army. The class sometimes paid a very considerable bounty. Deborah enlisted and was accepted for a class in Uxbridge. Bellingham is separated from the town of Uxbridge by the town of Mendon. The man who enlisted Deborah is called a speculator, because he withheld from her a part of the bounty-money which she was entitled.

Signed up as Robert Shurtleiff to serve three years in the Continental Army, Deborah received a bounty of sixty pounds and gave Noah Taft a receipt dated “Worcester May 23, 1782.” Soon Robert was one of some fifty recruits marching the long, dusty route from Worcester to West Point. There he was assigned to Captain George Webb’s Company, in Colonel William Shepard’s 4th Massachusetts Regiment, and General John Patterson’s Brigade. Early in 1783 Colonel Shepard

Was promoted to Brigadier General and Colonel Henry Jackson was given command of “his” unit.

The uniform issued to the female soldier is described as consisting of “a blue coat lined with white, with white wings on the soldiers and cords on the arms and pockets, a white waistcoat, breeched or overhauls and stockings, with black straps about the knees; half boots, a black velvet stock, and a cat with variegated cockade on one side, a plume tipped with red on the other, and a white sash about the crown.” She needed certainly her “endurance great” to carry, along with other things, a good firearm, bayonet, hatchet, cartridge box and cartridges, buck shot and leaden balls, flint and powder, jack-knife, canteen, haversack, and blanket.

The Female Review: or Memoirs of an American Young Lady by Herman Mann, a book about Deborah published in Dedham in 1797, contains glowing accounts of her action at Yorktown when Cornwallis surrendered in October 1781. And its incredible that so many years of research— and numerous hassles and misunderstandings—passed before Jan Lewis Nelson recently thought of a way to determine whether or not Deborah was at Yorktown.

In the Massachusetts State Archives, Mrs. Nelson consulted the “*Muster Roll of Captain George Webb’s Company of Light Infantry in the 4th Mass. Regiment in the service of the United States commanded by William Shepard Esq. Col. From the first of February to the last of November 1781. Inclusion being 10 months.*” Robert Shurtleiff’s name is not on it. His name is on Captain Webb’s muster roll made up in Worcester, November 17, 1782.

Seemingly this is what happened. With the British occupying what is now New York City before and after Yorktown, the Infantry scouted in Westchester County to spy on the movements of the enemy. Inevitably there were skirmishes with Tories. When Deborah and her comrades came head on with Tory Colonel James De Lancy and his forces near Tappan Bay, between Sing Sing and Tarrytown, the patriots would have been routed had not Colonel Ebenezer Sproat and his 2nd Massachusetts Regiment come to their rescue. (Of course the Colonel did not recognize Deborah among the rescued, although he had often seen her spinning in his fathers tavern in Middleborough.)

Years afterward Deborah Samson Gannett swore she was wounded at Tarrytown. She received a Sabre slash in the head and a bullet—perhaps more than one, in her thigh. It has been reports that in a hospital she managed to keep the surgeon’s attention on the Sabre slash. After his departure she found a silver probe and extracted a bullet herself. There’s also a legend she remained alone in the woods, removed a ball from her left leg with a penknife, and rested until able to rejoin her company. Prolonged suffering much later would indicate at least one shot was never removed.

The jig was up when the soldiers sex was discovered. Unpaid soldiers mutinied in Philadelphia and threatened Congress so drastically, that George Washington dispatched troops to protect them. Among those dispatched was Deborah. She had not been in Philadelphia long before she was in a large hospital called the “Bettering House” with a raging case of Malignant Fever. She was unconscious when a Dr. Barnabas Binney placed his hand over her heart and did not see him recoil, with utter astonishment, as he felt binders about her breasts. The Doctor, a native of Boston, was so concerned about this girl from Massachusetts, he is said to have had her removed to his home for her convalescence.

Eventually the fever receded and Dr Binney gave her a sealed letter to deliver to her commander as she returned to her West Point or her Cantonment Camp in Rye Huts, New York. On her way back to West Point, Deborah was terrified of what lie ahead, because of her deception, than she had been of gunfire. Her fears were groundless though, and words which survive to this day, from her Major General, George Patterson, sum up the mood of the military’s reaction after he read the commending letter about Deborah, who at the time was also his “waiter”, when he said “why this is truly theatrical”. The war was essentially over, and he saw not need to punish this woman who fought so gallantly for her new country. She was given an honorable discharge and sent home.

BRIDE

During the Bicentennial, it was discovered that a rather elegant two an a half story house on Bay Road was once the Cape Cod cottage to which Deborah came, following her discharge from West Point. She had lived there a year when intentions of Marriage were announced between Deborah Samson of Stoughton and Benjamin Gannett Jr., a farmer in Sharon. They were married in April 1785. Presumably they moved in with the grooms parents who lived in a small farmhouse Benjamin Sr. had built after coming from East Bridgewater about 1750. It stood opposite the present junction of East and Billings Streets—at that time there was no Billings Street, only Billings Lane.

Earl, Mary and Patience were born to the young Gannett’s, and with them they reared orphaned Susanna Baker Shepard. With a growing family and postwar prices exorbitant, in 1792 the ever resourceful Deborah petitioned the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for back pay. Her petition stated “Hitherto I have not received one farthing.” She was awarded thirty four pounds (which equals about \$152 dollars) for her 17 months of service and commended for her heroism.

LECTURER

A decade later, ignoring the disapproval of her family and friends, the individual who never lacked ideas, again trod what was then only a man’s path. She appeared on public platforms in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. In doing

Her own thing she was perhaps the first American female to earn money as a public lecturer. At a time when many women couldn't read, and counted on their fingers, she was her own business manager and press agent..

Astonished readers of the Columbian Centennial learned that Mrs. Gannett, the American Heroine of the American Revolution, would perform in the Federal Street Theatre in Boston March 20, 24, 27 and 29th, in the year 1802.

The ghost written narrative was little more than an apology for renouncing household duties to fight for her country and neglected to mention the exhausting marches the loss of her toenails after her feet were frozen, and the lonely hours on night duty. But Deborah delivered it clearly and flawlessly. Then equipped in complete infantry uniform, this middle aged woman of 42 years, went through the manual exercise so expertly "she could almost make the gun talk every time it came to the ground from her hand." The programs in Boston usually concluded with the signing of "God Save the Sixteen States."

The lecturer, having been successful in both Boston and Providence, left Sharon in July to exhibit in Worcester, Holden, Brookfield, Springfield, and Northampton, Massachusetts, before performing in Albany, Schenectady, and Ballston Springs, New York. She kept a diary throughout her tour. In it she described traveling by chaise, in private carriages, "with the mail," and once six days by wagon. Understandably, as the months passed and the mother continued her exhibitions, more and more the entries in the diary were about fatigue and illness. At one point she wrote, "God only knows how happy I shall be to see my Dear Children."

Deborah Samson Gannett also listed all but one of her lodgings. "At Sudbury one night I forgot the Land Lords name." If Deborah was a gust at Wayside (then The Red Horse Inn) the old Barroom is still much as she saw it. And she must have responded with a warm smile if she were told Dorothy Quincy spent a night at the Inn en route to Fairfield, Connecticut, to marry John Hancock. Hancock's bold signature graced the document awarding the ex soldier the thirty four pounds. Another matter of personal interest was that Dorothy was a sister of Edmund Quincy Jr., whose third wife was Hannah Gannett, Deborah's sister-in-law.

At last the weary woman arrived in Lisle, New York. Along the way she had been in Captain Webb's home in Holden. Now in Lisle another of her former officers, retired Major General Paterson, (now Judge Paterson) his family, and the neighborhood" entertained her for the entire month of November.

PENSIONER

Apparently the visit in Lisle was beneficial in more ways than one. For the next two years Judge Paterson was in the US House of Representatives. It is thought that he, with the assistance of Massachusetts Congressman William Eustis, to whom Paul Revere wrote on Mrs. Gannett's behalf, was largely responsible for having the female soldier placed on the federal roll of invalid pensioners.

The first pension of four dollars a month retroactive to January 1803, was increased to six dollars and forty cents. Years later, the invalid pension was relinquished for the eight dollars Congress voted, for soldiers who had served continuously nine months or longer, and were in need of financial assistance. Another, very influential, and powerful Federalist, named Paul Revere, had a soft spot for Deborah too. Coincidentally Paul Revere purchased the site of the old powder mill in Canton, just down the road from Deborah's home in Sharon, and "established a plant for the manufacture of Copper, Bell metal, ship fastenings, etc." A receipted bill for charcoal he and his son bought Sept 23, 1803, from Joseph Gannett, brother of Benjamin Jr. is still in Sharon. It was left when Joseph, his wife, and their numerous progeny departed for Pompey, New York, in a covered wagon drawn by oxen.

In his saddlebags Revere may have brought Mrs. Gannett her money from the Boston office of the agent for paying pensions. Gossip relayed from generation to generation, has it the two occasionally for a cup of cheer at Cobb's Tavern. Deborah died April 29, 1827 in her son's home at 300 East Street, Sharon, MA and was buried in Rock Ridge Cemetery. The veterans agent in Sharon has no record of military funeral. Miss Marion K. Conant, former librarian of the Dedham Historical Society, did considerable research before reporting, "I have found no information about Deborah Samson Gannett's funeral. The Village Register of May 3, 1827 did print an exceptionally long obituary, but I can find no account of her funeral in that issue or later ones."

Benjamin, described at "lacking initiative" and also as "very upright and hard-laboring," was saddled with staggering medical expenses for his wife. His own health was "broken by constant labor and watching with the one he so dearly loved, for he seems to have been entirely devoted to her." At the urging of concerned friends, the elderly farmer petitioned for his wife's pension. Congress baffled by such an unprecedented request, hemmed and hawed so long that the announcement it had been granted reached Sharon after Benjamin was beside Deborah in Rock Ridge Cemetery. He died January 9, 1837. Years later Ripley, of Believe It or Not fame, drew a picture of a solemn Benjamin and gave it the caption "His Wife Went to War- He Received a Widow's Pension."

By special act of Congress the amount due the widower was divided among Earl Bradford Gannett and his sisters Mary Gilbert (Mrs. Judson) and Patience Gay (Mrs. Seth).

A FINE NEW HOME

Earl Bradford Gannett married Mary Clark. Mary's home was near Wolomolopoag (or Billings) Pond, and deeds to her family's property were signed by an Indian Chief. The Clarks ancestor Thomas arrived in Plymouth on a boat called The Anne, in 1623, along with Barbara Thorne, who succeeded her deceased sister as Mrs. Miles Standish, and widow Alice Southworth, who became Governor William Bradford's second wife.

Earl and his wife joined his parents and grandparents in the old farmhouse. Their first child, Mary, was born. According to notes left by another daughter, all the Gannett's in 1813 moved into Earls newly constructed mansion at what is now 300 East Street. Built on land Benjamin Jr. had purchased in 1786 and cleared recently the deed was given to the Sharon Public Library and subsequently to the Sharon Historical society, by the Cowell family descended from Patience Gannet Gay. It was several rods north of the old home and on the other side of the street. Well preserved and considerably modernized, today the house is diagonally across from the man made pond created for the Sharon Fish and Game Club. Beside another pond not visible from East Street, is a sign which reads: "Deborah Samson's Spring".

Benjamin Sr's farmhouse and some surrounding land was sold to butchers named Smith and French of Canton and the home was moved there for use as a slaughterhouse. The large stone front step to this old home was embedded in the wall skirting the front lawn of Earls new home..

The mansion was none too large. Patience, Deborah; Rhoda; Warren; Earl, Jr.; Benjamin; Thomas and Joseph Warren were born there. When their sister Mary was fourteen, she began teaching in the East District School, not far from Bay Road. She couldn't shield her brothers and sisters from their schoolmates' taunts about their "Old Soldier" grandmother. She should have given them deserved reward of merit for admirably accepting those words of summation from their peers. After the death of Earls son Benjamin in 1901, as newspaper noted changes in the stately old house: the substitution of modern chimney's for those containing the great fireplaces. The present hip roof in place of the original gable, and the addition of a verandah. It did not mention that the brick ends had been replaced with clapboards.

Passing out of the Gannett family more than a century after it was built, the spacious dwelling had a series of owners in rapid succession. During prohibition police were forced to shoot into it before they captured the bootlegger holed up there. And sometime in the course of those uneasy years, a fire destroyed the ell connecting the house and barn. The pantry was untouched and at ninety five, the late Mrs. Edith Leonard Johnson, Deborah's great-great granddaughter, relished memories of the molasses cookies kept in a jar behind the pantry.

Young Daniel H. Arguimbau, the present owner, takes as much pride in the mansion as if he had been one of the children who bounced their toys on its low windows sills. He is descended from Thomas Southworth, son of the widow who was the second wife of Governor Bradford.

RECOGNITION

The Town of Sharon voted in 1860 to "accept the report of the selectmen in laying out a road over the land of H.A.Lothrop &G.R.&W.R.Mann"—land donated by these gentlemen. Thus a lane became a street, and it was a local historian Solomon Talbot who suggested it be named after Deborah Samson. Occasionally the question is asked if land along that street was given to the soldier in addition to her pension. The National Archives reports that Deborah Samson Gannett received no land from the government.

Historian Talbot had a memorable background of his own which links him to the Samson clan. On his mothers side he was descended from one of the three Hessian soldiers settled in Sharon. The founder of his fathers family was a knight who fought in the battle of Hastings. Also in that battle was Albertus Greslet from whom Col. Richard Gridley was descended. Since the Samson ancestry dates back to Ralph de St. Samson, chaplain to William the Conqueror, the Talbot, Gridley and Samson forebears may have been acquainted.

"I love my God, my country and my fellowman as myself" is on Gridleys tomb in the Canton Corner Cemetery. Dis-grace is worse than death is the translation of the motto on the Samson Coat of Arms.

THE MONK PAPERS

Rodney Monk (Born: 1/19/1883 (Sharon, MA)...Deceased: 2/25/1975 (Groton, MA), lived a long life, to 91 years of age. His parents were (Loring Morton Monk and Emma May Mann), Grandparents were (Elisha W. Monk and Rhoda C. Gannett), Great Grandparents were Earl Bradford Gannett. and Mary Clark, and his G.G. Grandparents were Benjamin Gannett Jr. and Deborah Samson).

Groton, Mass May 26, 1966

My Dear Miss Moody (Pauline)

Your letter asking for information about Deborah interested me. I will give you what information I have, but, I know it leaves much unanswered. I feel sure about some things, as I have notes I made November 1901 from a talk I had with my grandmother Monk, she was the older sister of Benjamin Gannett Monk. (this needs to be checked re Benj. Gannett as he must have been a grandson of Deborah Samson). She was Rhoda Gannett Monk, born 1820 in Sharon. Married Elijah W. Monk 1844, died 1905 Stoughton. She was 7 years old when her grandmother (Deborah) died, 1827. She remembered her grandmother well, it was always interesting to talk about our ancestor, from the Revolution, because she never called her grandmother Deborah "Grandmother" but always called her "the old soldier".

This is what she told me about the old house and the new one. Her father Earl Gannett built the new house (where the Arguimbau's now live) in 1813. There was no house on that spot before. (This is the property sometimes referred to as "the Farm" in Sharon, and is the house where Deborah died. My Grandmother's older sister Mary was born in the old house, in 1812. She was the only one of those children to be born in the old house. The old house stood on the east side of East Street almost opposite the end of Billings Street. Back then Billings street did not exist. The cellar hole is still there about on the line of what is now called "The Fish and Game Club" land. (this was also called the Geisler farm. The old house was sold to Sumner & White of Canton. They were butchers in Canton, and moved the old house to Canton. They used the farm land to pasture young cattle. That is the farm later owned by Geisler. There used to be a Willow tree in the front yard of the Arguimbau place. That they say Deborah planted. My Grandmother Rhoda, used to comb her grandmother's hair & she had two chine cups made without handles, and a small pewter porringer that Deborah gave her. After my grandmother died these three articles were given to her 3 children. Uncle Gus Monk received one cup, Aunt Abbie French, another cup and my father the Pewter porringer.

I expect Edith Seibert has the pewter porringer now. What became of the cups is unknown, as a cousin of my uncle Anna Monk, widow of Uncle Gus had all that property. Those cups were marked as having belonged to Deborah. Grandmother Monk had an older sister, named Deborah, born in 1819. She died 1821, and was buried, or put in a tomb that stood in the field on Bay Road. Its north (toward Canton) from East Street, on the Stoughton side of the road. In the letter I wrote to Mrs. Arguimbau, November 1964, I sent some records of Gannett history, and others, as you saw. But in answer to your questions; I have been told by my grandmother that the school "East" that she attended was on the west side of East Street, opposite the present building, but about 200 feet south. A house is there now. The old School house burned, and the house was built on the spot. Then the present, abandoned, school building was built. Mary Gannett the oldest daughter of Deborah taught there when my grandmother attended school there. "I have some "Records of Merit", given by Mary Gannett to Rhoda Gannett in 1826, '27 and '28.

A year ago I stopped in Plympton Town Hall to see the Town Clerk, and was told he was only there Saturday P.M. I had hoped to look up some records of Deborah, as Sat P.M. (at least in the summer) is a poor time to be on the road to the Cape. I doubt if I'll ever get to see him.

Regarding Deborah's mother; I have no record of her death or of her father. Deborah's mother was Deborah Bradford, daughter of Elisha Bradford and Bathsheba de Brock. There were 6 sons and 7 daughters, some by first wife Hanna Cole and some by 2nd wife Bathsheba. This family lived in Kingston, MA, where most of the children were born. Later they moved to Friendship, Maine and the parents were killed by Indians in 1756. Some children were taken to Canada. Evidently daughter Deborah did not go to Maine, but married Jonathan Samson and lived in Plympton. Another daughter (Alice) who was two years older than Deborah Bradford, married a Waters, of Sharon, and according to "Mitchell's History of Bridgewater", published in 1840, Alice had C=Governor Bradford's family Bible. If that could ever be found, it would be one of the most valuable books in the country. I have not been able to find "Alice Waters" in any of Sharon's Vital records.

One of the old Waters place's that I know of is on Moose Hill. It was a stone house on the old road going to Moose Hill Street, from Walpole Street, out of Sharon about 1 mile from the railroad. When I was a boy a stone mason named "Scotty" Smith lived there as I had to drive up there to get him and do some stone work for my grandfather. That was

THE MONK PAPERS

continued

about 1895. A few years later F. Irving Cole, a real estate man lived there.

Sanford Billings, who lived at the corner of Cottage and Billings street, married a Waters from that place. She has a brother Joe who lived there . She was married about 1895 or so. According to some records, Deborah Samson, after serving in the Army came to Sharon (called Stoughtonham at the time. to visit her aunt Alice, and so met Benj. Gannett. Some records say that Deborah taught school in Holden before she enlisted. If she did, she may have visited Jonathan Samson, of Harvard, that was only about 10 miles from Holden, Jonathan was a cousin of her father. He was son of Pelig, who was the brother of her grandfather Jonathan, all of Bridgewater.

Regarding Benj. Gannett Sr. & Jr.. Both served in for Militia in the Revolution, as well as Joseph Gannett, a cousin of Benj. Jr. He lived where Mrs. Eaton lives on East Street. I have a picture of that house taken about 1860. The house was probably built about 1750. My grandmother told me much about that family. They moved to Pomfrey N.Y. about 1810 or 1815, in a covered wagon drawn by oxen. They had 10 daughters and 1 son. My grandfather (George H. Mann) bought the place 1831. I have no record of Deborah's brothers or Sisters. The family seems to have been scattered. Her father either deserted the family or died.

Regarding cellar holes in Sharon, I know little. There is or was one on the back side of the lot that the Lawrences live on. On east street, opposite my old home, later the Seiberts. That cellar had a large red cedar tree in it in 1900. The tree was probably 100 years old then. I asked my grandmother Monk about it She knew of it, but never knew who ever lived there. A sister of her great grandfather Gannett (Hannah) born in 1751 married Edmond Quincy in 1767 and had 2 sons , she later married Jacob Jordan and had two daughters. They first lived on what is now the Sharon Golf land Earl Gannett served in the Army in 1812 as a Captain. Regarding Mr. Tappan; I knew him well, had him for a Sunday School Teacher about 1897-1898. He started the Sharon Historical Society, a most energetic man, dies when about 65 years or so. Doctor said, "just worn out". He had 3 sons and one daughter. I knew them well, but I do not find it since then. You might be interested to know I have a granddaughter Deborah Monk, now about 4 years old. Our son's daughter. The have two other girls (Nancy and Ruth). Our son was a Captain in the 2nd World War...lives in Concord New Hampshire. His name is Bradford. We also have a grandson Bradford Myrick of Connecticut. These old names seem to run in our family. We have this son and 5 daughters, 12 granddaughters and 10 grandsons.

About 1923 my family lived in Sharon for a few months, while I was between jobs. Our two oldest children, daughter and son attended school. The Moody girls went home from school and told their mother "there are some new children in school that look just like us.

I have rambled on long enough. Hope I have answered some of your questions. We generally get to Sharon, at least on Sunday in August. Always call on Edith Johnson on Pond Street. Used to call on Esther Odiorne and Frank Glover on Cottage street, but have lost them. We will stop and see you if you care to see us.

I would have answered your letter sooner, but as I work 5 day's a week in cold storage of apples, also keep milking goats hens, and have a garden, don't have too much time to write. Am interested in Church and Grange also. Being a rainy day I couldn't work in the garden so tried to finish this letter to you.

With kind regards,
Rodney Monk

THE MONK PAPERS

continued

August 1970

To: The Gilberts.

Sj: Deborah Samson Gannett

Deborah's mother died at Duxbury, according to 1824 Vital records. There have been a number of articles in Worcester papers, about Deborah, saying that she taught school, in Holden, MA. But its rather hard to get facts. When she served in the Army the Captain of her Company was Captain George Webb, of Holden. The only officer from Holden to serve with her in the Army. If she did teach school in Holden she no doubt with to Harvard, MA, only about 10 miles away to visit her fathers brother Jonathan Samson. He had a large family. Christopher Monk from Stoughton was in Captain Webb's Company. Col Henry Jackson was the commanding officer of the Regiment with the 4th Massachusetts Regiment that Deborah was in.

There is no doubt the Deborah came to her Aunt Alice (Bradford) Waters home at the Dry Pond section of Stoughton after the War. Her Aunt Alice, was her mothers sister. There was also another aunt living in Stoughton named Bathsheba, who married David Hunt. Also another of Deborah's mothers relative Carpenter Bradford, who married May Gay of Stoughton.

Her aunt Alice Waters, had her husband, Zebulon Waters, and 3 sons in the Revolutionary War. One son, Daniel, died in Springfield, MA at age 15. years.

A banquet was held in the Sharon Town Hall, April 3rd 1902 to honor Deborah Samson. There were 14 descendents present, one grandson Myron Gilbert of Stoughton, age 72 years, was there. My Grandmother Rhoda Monk age 82 years would not attend.

Susie Moody, a great granddaughter read some from Deborah's Diary. Mrs. Mary Livermore a prominent woman suffragist spoke. She said among her remarks. "That Deborah shared her secret with no one. She held her tongue at all times. And if there is anything I admire it is a woman that can hold her tongue" (there was great laughter) I attended that banquet.

There is no doubt that Deborah was married at her Aunt Alice's home at Dry pond. That place was just south of Dry pond Cemetery. The cemetery association have lately bought the land to add to the cemetery. Deborah was married by George Crossman, town clerk of Stoughton.

The first Gannett house Benjamin Gannett Sr. built in 1752 on land on East Street opposite the end of Billing Street (which was just a trail back then). The present Gannett house was built in 1812. The old house was later sold, moved to Canton, and made into a Barn.

Benjamin Gannett Sr. brother named Joseph Gannett owned the house on East Street where Mrs. Eaton lived lately. It was a Cape Cod styled house, with 1 story. My grandfather Myron, lived there when a boy, and his brother William, remodeled it about 1880.as it is at present. Joseph Gannett, brother of Benjamin Sr. had 4 sons and 2 daughters. His son Joseph Jr., continued to live there, and he had 2 sons and 9 daughters. He moved his entire family to Pomfrey NY, about 1810.

Benjamin Gannett Sr. adopted Patience Payson. Her parents died when she was very young. She was born (according to Vital Records) 1767, but the record on the gravestone gives birth as 1775. She always lived in the Gannett family. Deborah named her 2nd daughter Patience Payson Gannett. The older Patience Payson died in 1855 and is buried beside the Gannett's in Rock Ridge Cemetery in Sharon. The Susan Shepard that Deborah brought up was probably born at the farm near the circle of East Street and Bay Road south corner.

Her mother died soon after she was born, and her father remarried in Canton. Soon after, Susan married a nephew of Deborah's named Asa Waters of Dry Pond Stoughton. Susan was born in 1796 and married in 1840. I hope this gives you a little information about Deborah, and her family.

With kind regards,
Rodney Monk: