

MICAH MUDGE (1650-1724)
 MARY ALEXANDER (1648-1728)

Two references were consulted in this sketch; the writings of Alfred Mudge in 1868 and Trumbull's "History of Northampton," 1898.

"Micah Mudge, son of Jarvis and Rebecca Mudge (7-45) was born in New London, Conn., in 1650; died in Hebron, Conn., in the early part of Jan. 1724, age 75 years." ¹

After the death of his father in 1653, when Micah was three years of age, his mother removed from New London to Wethersfield, Conn., with her four children. Wethersfield had been Rececca's home before her marriage to Jarvis Mudge. She married (3) Nathaniel Greensmith and this couple died in 1662 when Micah was 12 years of age. His brother, Moses, was 10 and they became separated at the time of their mother's untimely death; no-doubt, taken into the custody of separate families that drifted distances apart.

"Moses lived in Oyster Bay, Long Island, as early as Nov 11, 1664, he being then about 12 or 13 years of age. He became a shoemaker and was commissioned Lieutenant of Oyster Bay Company, N.Y. He married Mary _____, 1671, and had five children;

- (1) Jarvis Mudge; md. Jane _____
- (2) William Mudge; md. Ann Coles
- (3) Jane Mudge, was single in July 1741
- (4) Elizabeth Mudge; md. John Dusenberry
- (5) Mary Mudge; md. Waite Powell" ²

It is not very likely, considering the distance between Micah and Moses, that these two brothers ever were together again after being separated at so early an age.

"The first record of Micah appears on the town books of Northampton, Mass., (map #6), where he marries Mary Alexander, Sept. 23, 1670. Northampton was settled in 1654, and George Alexander, the father of Mary was one of the original proprietors." ³ (7-48) Mary was born Oct. 20, 1648, so she was nearing 22 and Micah was 20 when they were married. They first made their home in Northampton but a short time later were making plans with Mary's family, the Alexanders, to remove to a new area to the north.

New areas seemed to be an enticement to those who were mechanically inclined as was Micah who knew any new settlement would be in need of mills. They removed to what came to be called Northfield (see map #6). Of the first petitioners for the establishment of Northfield, all but three were citizens of Northampton. Micah acted as surveyor, and appears to have been one of the original proprietors of Northfield, Mass. This settlement was extremely attended with great difficulties as the Indians burnt the village and drove off the settlers in 1675, and Micah Mudge and George Alexander were forced to return to Northampton.

Northampton had not escaped the Indian atrocities entirely but the King Philips War of 1675 and '76 had sobered the enemy until the danger of attacks had been lessened.

"During the fall and winter of the year 1675, life in the Connecticut River Valleys must have been discouraging . . . In addition to the hardships attendant upon the King Philip War, winter set in with more than ordinary severity. The cold was intense, snow fell in unusual quantities, rendering communication with other towns very difficult, and some of the time quite impossible.

". . . Northampton citizens had enlisted in the various expeditions against the Indians and numbers of them had been killed; others had been slain within sight of their own firesides; many houses and barns had been burned; the town was filled with soldiers billeted upon the inhabitants; fugitives from the abandoned towns sought protection in Northampton and could not be denied. (The Mudge family were among those who were driven from Northfield when that town had to be abandoned and they too sought protection in Northampton where they had previously lived.) The meadows had been only partially planted; the slender harvest following an interrupted seed time, could not be wholly gathered; much of the hay and grain stored in the barns had been destroyed; and altogether the outlook was most discouraging. (Most of the able bodied men were engaged in military service.) Many of the inhabitants had furnished provisions to aid in carrying out the war . . ." 4

The suffering from privation with its unusual amount of tragedies had taken its toll. One of Mary's brothers, Daniel was wounded in the 1675 King Philip War.

Great distress prevailed in certain parts of New England for want of provisions and habitations, much property having been destroyed by the Indians. A public contribution for the destitute of Northfield was solicited from those who were in better circumstances.

"At a meeting of the Council, July 13th 1676; in Hartford, the Council ordered that Micah Mudge should have ten shillings out of the contribution allowed them . . .

". . . He (Micah) returned to Northfield with others, afterwards, as appears from an order from the General Court, dated Boston, May 24, 1682, and he again became a settler there.

"The first deed from the Indians who sold the township is not on record upon the town books, but a deed without date is recorded, wherein 12 lbs more was paid to the Indians to make them satisfied, as some demurred at the first rate of purchase. In this deed Micah Mudge's name is listed with the grantees for the rest of the inhabitants. In this deed it is said, 'This to be in addition to the amount paid in the Original Grant, bearing date in the year 1671.'" 5

In spite of a long term recovery, the settlements of New England that had been ravaged by Indian raids, finally regained the stability and prosperity that had been lost. Northfield was soon to become the village it had once been. Homes were built and a mill was again in operation. Micah was always in either building or operating mills. After rebuilding the mill in Northfield, the Mudges returned to Northampton where they remained for several years.

James Russel Trumbull in his "History of Northampton," gives timely descriptions of conditions as they existed during the period of Micah's life. The habits and modes of the people were simple and frugal; and work was strenuous and exposure, severe.

"All attempts to make industrious men of the dusky warriors failed. The squaws were the working partners, planting the fields, carrying the burdens, and performing all the drudgery. The men detested menial labor, but would endure hardship, privation and fatigue with fortitude and courage while on the war path, or engaged in hunting. In some cases the settlers endeavored to make servants of the Indian but their service was seldom satisfactory . . .

". . .The chiefs, who claimed authority to sell land, readily parted with it, and their followers, who had no knowledge of the nature of a deed, occupied and used it nearly to the same extent as before. They mingled with the white men on the most friendly terms, erecting their wigwams, when permitted, upon the home lots of the inhabitants, and seeking their protection when danger threatened. . .

". . .While the white men scrupulously purchased the land and honestly paid for it, their dusky friends were regarded as heathen; too lazy to work improvident and wasteful, apt scholars in vice and obtuse learners in civilization. The Indians gained very little by contact with the whites. Though the pale face treated them as inferiors and had little in common with them, an even handed justice was sought to be established between the races. Not only were the Indians held amenable to the laws of the new comers, but the latter also were punished for crimes or trespasses against the aborigines.

". . .The Indians were not impoverished by the advent of the English. At first they were permitted to plant corn in the meadows, the whites plowing the land for them. Game was nearly as plentiful in the forest as ever, and a market was opened wherein they found a ready sale for their furs. They continued to live as children of nature, sustaining themselves on food to be had from the flesh of wild animals, fish from the streams and from wild fruits and nuts they could gather or the corn, beans and pumpkins that were planted and grown . . . Parched corn, beaten fine and mixed with fat, formed a substance called 'nocake,' and corn, pounded and sifted through baskets, and made into samp, was much used. They lived for today with little or no preparation for the future, feasting and carousing while food was plenty, only to endure the pangs of hunger and starvation when the supply was exhausted . . . The river Indians were frequently at war among themselves, and the settlers in the valleys suffered at times considerable inconvenience from their disturbances. They never knew when the savages might turn upon them in violent attacks of murder and burnings. These surprise raids would occur even when the whites were innocent, or not aware, of any provocative act.

"These constantly recurring wars did not promote the welfare of the people, and they joined heartily in all the efforts to secure and maintain peace. . .The English had their hands full in protecting themselves and striving to conciliate and keep the peace among the warlike tribes. Nevertheless the Indian war parties were a constant annoyance to the settlements. . ." 6

"Farming was the chief occupation of the people, and indeed everybody depended upon the product of the land for subsistence. Every householder was the owner and cultivator of of meadow land. With uncouth and heavy tools, many of them of wood, they carried on the agriculture of their day, and raised their crops which became at once their means of support and medium of exchange. They were hardy, industrious, God-fearing people, contented with their lot, and enduring the hardships of pioneer life without a murmur.

"The pioneers of Northampton (where the Mudges spent the greater number of years) were many of them blessed with large families. Some of them had ten, twelve, fifteen and seventeen children. When new towns were projected this new generation of citizens were among the

original settlers, establishing political and religious institutions therein.

"The spinning wheel and loom were household articles and Mary and her daughters did their share, no doubt, not only to weave the cloth, but to wrought the cloth into garments to be worn by the members of the family.

"The early houses were nearly all built of logs and scantily furnished, containing little beyond the bare necessities of life. They lived quiet and contented lives, attending two services at the meeting house on Sundays, and town meetings regularly on occasional week days as the business of the community demanded attention. Their food was coarse, but nutritious. Corn, wheat and rye were the staples at every meal; meat was abundant, pork, beef, mutton, wild game and fish were plentiful; and garden vegetables were used to a considerable extent." ⁷

The children of Micah and Mary as listed in "Mudge Memorials" are:

1. Mary Mudge, b. Aug. 8, 1674; md. _____ Rust, at Northampton and had children, one of whom is named in the Will of Micah, to wit: "Grandson Rust, twenty shillings." She died in Northampton Nov. 3, 1706, ae. 35
2. Elizabeth Mudge, b. Oct. 10, 1673; md. Joseph Allyn
3. Sarah Mudge; md. John Palmer
4. Moses Mudge; md. Elizabeth _____
5. Abigail Mudge; md. William Phelps
6. Ebenezer Mudge, b. Feb. 26, 1683; md. Abigail Skinner (7-47)
7. Thankful Mudge; md. William Nichols, of Lebanon, July 19, 1714. There is no record of Williams death, and it is presumed he died without issue, as Micah, Thankful's father, provided for her only in his Will. She quitclaims her interest in her father's estate and removes to Sharon, Conn. with her brother, Ebenezer, where she died Apr. 20, 1741, ae. 56 years.
8. Susannah Mudge; we find no record of her marriage, but she had dau. mentioned in Micah's Will.
9. Martha Mudge; md. Isaac Tilden. ⁸

Later in life, prior to 1698, Micah and Mary Mudge, with a portion of their family moved to Lebanon, Conn., and was among the early settlers of that town "where he also served as a surveyor and assisted in laying out the town." The following extracts from the town books will be read with interest, showing the quaint style of keeping records in that day, as well as authenticating the position of our forefathers:

"The Record of Micah Mudge his land granted at Lebanon, thofe general parfells of Land Heare after expreft, to be to him his Heires and asfignes to have and to hold forever.

"firft one home lot Containing eighteen Acres and three quarter be it more or less Granted to him by Deacon Jofiah Dewey and John Woodward Sen. it being part of the ton (town) lots granted . . . and is thus bounded viz - buting upon the street westerly and againft John Jeweys and John Woodward's Land Southerly, etc, etc. . ." ⁹

The grant continued to allot Micah several other pieces of land, which, when considered, amount to several hundred acres. The grant was recorded in Lebanon Aug. 4, 1714. For one to locate the exact position of Micah's property

the full account of the grants would need to be consulted. (pages 35-37 gives the full text)

"Micah Mudge was one of nine persons who organized the First Congregational Church in Lebanon, Nov. 27, 1700 . . . and in 1702 the name of "Mary Mugg," wife of Micah, appears on the church record, being the only female till 1707.

"Dec. 22, 1704. Micah Mudge chosen "Ornary (Ordinary) Keeper," for one year. (Keeper of a public house or tavern.)

"Sept. 10, 1705," in the fourth year of Queen Anne," Micah Mudge sells lot of land for 8 lbs. to Joseph Tilden, being one hundred acres, sixty of which lay on Chestnut Hill.

"July 1, 1709. Micah Mudge deeds land to Capt. Joseph Saxton, of Stonington, for 40 lbs. in silver. Said land . . . being 66 acres with 40 acres that lay in the comon til the town sees fit to divide it.

"Sept. 1, 1711. He gives to his son Ebenezer, who was married, a home lot under certain restrictions, which he afterwards discharges prior to its being recorded in 1714." 10

The deed, in its entirety, is lengthy and could be considered Micah's last Will and Testament for it provides for the care of his wife after his decease but leaves his land in the care of his son Ebenezer who becomes the sole owner of all properties, with certain stipulations mentioned.

"Moses, his eldest son, appears to have resided with his father and owned land jointly with him; for, in selling out, in order to remove to the new settlement of Hebron, their deeds run in both names." 11

The properties given to Ebenezer were made separate from the joint ownership of Micah and his son Moses.

"April 9, 1717, Micah sells thirty acres of land . . . He, with his family, remove to Hebron some time before September. In Hebron he also served as surveyor, and he and his sons owned a mill on his home lot which was situated near Hebron on the road to Colchester." 12 (map #5)

Here in Hebron the Mudge's purchased large tracts of land which can be located by consulting the deeds of Hebron town records as printed in "Mudge Memorials" pages 39-40.

"He resided in Hebron until his death, which occurred, as above noted, early in 1724. (His Will recorded pp. 41-42) His daughters Mary and Elizabeth were married, and always remained at Northampton, Mass. His daughters Sarah and Abigail were married and settled at Windsor. His daughters Thankful and Susanna remained with him as did his two sons till his death . . ." 13

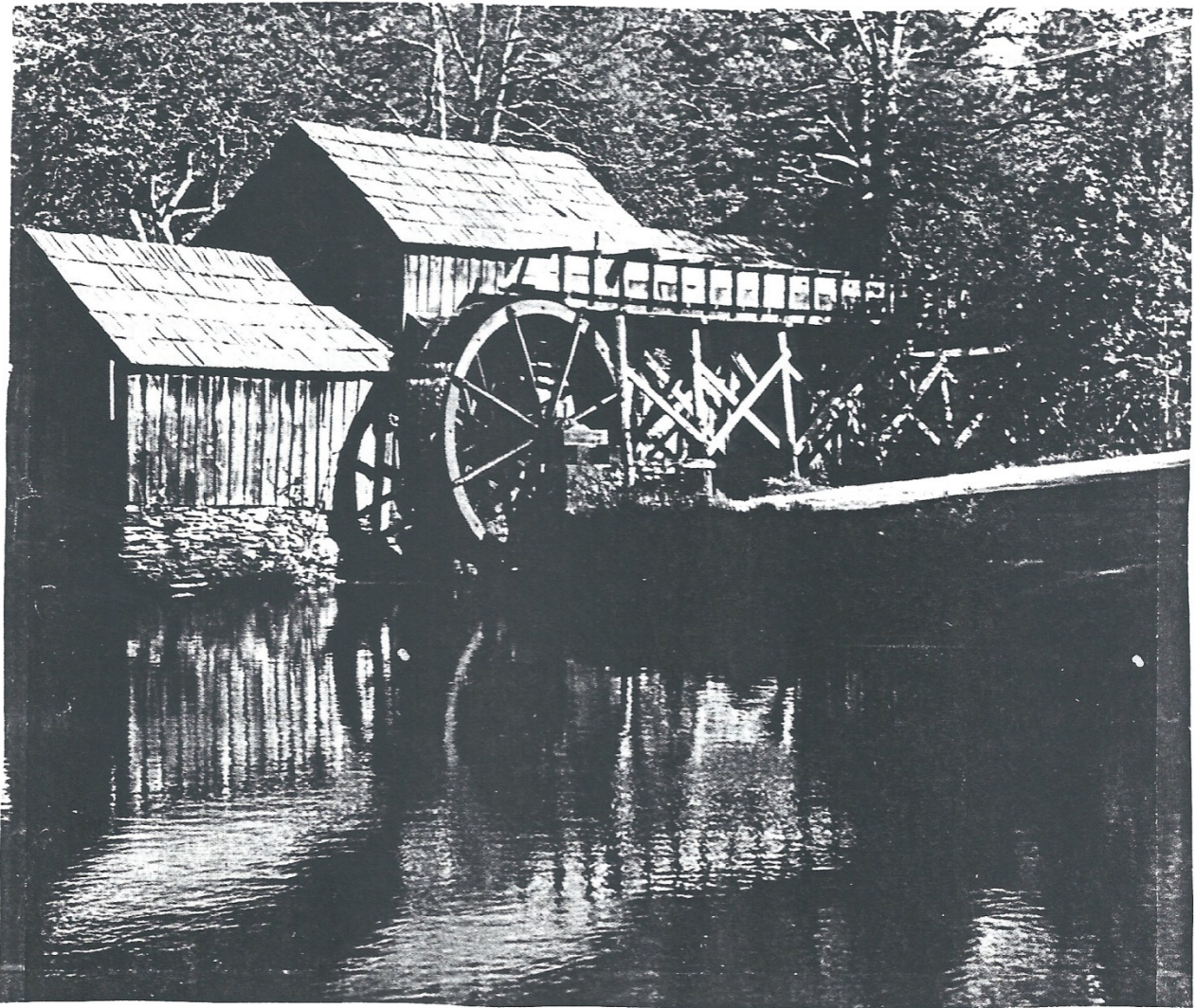
A copy of his signature, as shown on his Will is his own handwritten sealing.

Micah Mudge

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His Will and inventory of his goods shows that, although a well-to-do farmer and mill-wright, the family lived in extreme simplicity and placed a firm and solid value upon the good earth which they had come to possess. Micah died 1748. His wife died four years later, early in the year 1728, ae. upwards of 79 years.

The included documents provided by Alfred Mudge does not give us a full picture of life as it was but from these extracts we know that Micah moved his family to new areas at least five times; that they suffered the misfortunes incident to the Indian War of 1675, losing all that they had; that each move took them where they could help start a new settlement. His skill as surveyor and, like his father before him and his descendants after, his adaptiveness to setting up mills along waterways in each of the settlements, furthered the progress of his family and neighbors. When a new settlement began he and his sons were there to build the needed mill and to survey the home and farm plots for the settlers. His endeavors make a clear picture of his industriousness and foresight. He was ever ready to go where his talents were needed.



To describe the situations in any one of the settlements of New England portrays the conditions, generally, of all. Equally harrassed, equally burdened, none escaped the peculiar trials and perplexities of the times, and though some suffered in a less or greater degree, all had grievous anxieties and trials to overcome. Life was not easy, no one could afford to be lazy. Every day brought its responsibilities. Only on the Sabbath, did they pause from daily work to give thanks to their Maker for His goodness to them and for preserving their lives.

Of Micah's nine children only two were sons. These sons, Moses and Ebenezer, worked closely with their father in his endeavors as a millwright, surveyor and farmer. They followed in his footsteps and became large land holders.

Ebenezer was a boy of 14 years when his father removed to Lebanon in 1697. He was married to Abigail Skinner (7-47) and they acquired property of their own before selling to accompany Micah to Hebron in 1717 or before. Ebenezer and Abigail became the grandparents of Abigail Hamlin who married Zephaniah Babbitt, (7-4) linking an ancestry of many distinct lines.

Moses had only one child, Ruth, so the Mudge name was carried on by Ebenezer who had six sons, through whom the posterity of that surname became numerous in America.

1. #56 p. 34
2. ibid pp. 47, 48
3. ibid p. 34
4. #131 p. 287
5. #56 p. 34, 35
6. #131 pp. 171-175
7. ibid pp. 284-287
8. #56 p. 47
9. ibid p. 35, 36
10. ibid pp, 37-38
11. ibid p. 39
12. ibid
13. ibid p. 40
14. ibid, p. 42