

EBENEZER MUDGE (1683-1758)
 ABIGAIL SKINNER (1691-1765)

"Ebenezer Mudge, son of Micah and Mary (7-46), b. in Northampton, Mass., Feb. 26, 1683, and d. in Sharon, Conn., April 21, 1758, ae. 75 y. 1 m. 23d." ¹ As noted in extracts recorded in the above source he moved from Northampton with his family to Lebanon, Conn., when he was a boy of fourteen years of age in 1697. Eleven years later, while still living in Lebanon, he met and married Abigail Skinner who lived at Colchester Jan. 13, or 17, 1708. Ebenezer's father gave him a tract of land as a home-lot in Lebanon in 1711 and he and Abigail made their home there where they lived and had two of their twelve children before removing to Hebron, Conn., a town to the west about eight miles where all but one of their other children were born (map #5).

Ebenezer and his brother, Moses, worked closely with their father in the development of mills for new settlements and Hebron provided this kind of opportunity. Through land sales they acquired many parcels of land and built a mill on the home place of their father, Micah.

Ebenezer remained in Hebron until after the death of his father in 1724 and the death of his mother in 1728. Nine years later, 1737, they sold their properties in Hebron and the acreages that they had inherited from the Mudge estate, and moved to Sharon, a western outpost of promising advantages. Here Ebenezer settled as one of the original proprietors and stayed for the remaining twenty-one years of his life (map #14).

The Connecticut records say that Abigail was born in Malden, Mass. but in her father's history (7-50) it was found recorded that Abigail was twelve years of age when her parents moved from Charlestown, Mass., to Malden so it would appear that Abigail was born in Charlestown, Feb. 17, 1691. She was the youngest of eleven children. Her earlier life, before marriage, must have prepared her well for the tasks ahead, so the likelihood of a large family must not have alarmed her. Excesses of hard work was something to be expected and leisure came at a price. There was little time for leisure while Abigail provided the care and necessities of life for her twelve growing children. In that day such provisions did not come by making an easy trip to a super-market close by. Her day meant work that was more often drudgery.

The family lived a busy and varied life. The account of Ebenezer's many accomplishments, as he carried on the occupational traditions of the Mudge name, is worthy of our approval and praise. He went to assist in the development of new settlements; to help out especially in surveying services and in the building of mills that was so necessary for the survival and prosperity of the early settlers. The role of Abigail, too, was great, though simply the role of a supporting and dutiful wife and mother.

It is, possibly, well to bear out what has been said by inserting the extracts that Alfred Mudge has given us, taken from town records and preserved for us in his work "Mudge Memorials." Such extracts may not be interesting to some readers but to the immediate descendants they should be priceless.

"Sept. 1, 1711, Micah gives to his son Ebenezer, who is married, a home lot under certain

restrictions, which he afterwards discharges prior to its being recorded in 1714." 2

It was a lengthy deed which would, in effect, provide for the continuing of a residence and sustenance of Ebenezer's parents for their life-time. This deed was made before the family all sold their properties in Lebanon and moved to Hebron, Conn., in 1717.

"July 4, 1718. The selectmen of Hebron sell fifty-three acres of land belonging to John Goot for taxes due, and Ebenezer Mudge became purchaser, and quitclaims the same to Goot under same date." 3

"January 29, 1720. The selectmen of Hebron sell to Mycall Mudge for the sum of 16 lbs. severall parcells of Land; one parcell containing fifty acres on the road to Colchester on huckleberry hill next to land of Ebenezer Mudies on the north; next parcell containing ten acres south of Ebenezer Mudge - 3rd parcell uncertain as to number of acres situated between Ebenezer Mudge and the meadow lots." 4

These properties and others, we are told, was owned by Ebenezer's father until his death in 1724. His (Micah's) Will left these lands with the family and when their mother died in 1724, the land was inherited by Ebenezer and his brother, Moses. As shown by the extracts of land properties, they were a close knit family.

"May 16, 1728, Ebenezer sells twenty-four acres for 24 lbs. to Aaron Gillett, of Colchester. This lot he inherited from his father Micah. He buys and sells land in Hebron under several dates, till 1735, when he appears to be moving from that town.

"Along with other sales comes one on July 23, 1737, John Colfax for 5 lbs. quitclaims to Ebenezer Mudge his claim to a five-acre lot laid out to Mycal Mudge on the east side of west meadow where ye Micall Mudge, his dwelling house stood or stands, and under date of Aug. 10, 1737, Ebenezer Mudge, sells to Lawrence Powers his home-lot in Hebron, eighty acres, by estimation, for the sum of 300 lbs. when he removed to Sharon, Conn., and settled as one of the original proprietors . . . (map #14).

"Here he lived, served in various town offices, and himself and sons built and owned the first saw-mill, grist-mill and iron works of Sharon. He brought up a very numerous family; and it is said he had a family party, on which occasion they boiled a huge pudding by the side of Mudge Pond, and upwards of eighty children and grandchildren "did eat thereof." At his death his widow, six sons, six daughters and six sons-in-law and six daughters-in-law signed an agreement, as heirs, to settle the estate without administration, part of whom appeared before Roger Sherman, then justice of the peace, and acknowledged this fact. We here quote the record entire:

"Know all men by these presents yt. we the Subscribers heirs of the estate of Ebenezer Mudge shall have all the homestead Buildings, fruit trees and all the Priviledges therein contained, excepting the use of one third part of the Whole reserved for the use of the Widow at her discretion, during her life. The Widow having all the moveable estate at her disposal, Ebenezer Mudge to have the one half of the undivided lands, the rest to be equally divided among all the Heirs, and Jarvis Mudge is to honourably and carefully provide for and take care of our honourable Mother during her life, and pay all ye debts due from the estate of the late Ebenezer Mudge, decs'd.

"Which agreement, we the heirs and subscribers do willingly and jointly agree to, and do by these presents bind ourselves, heirs and assigns to abide by. In witness whereof we have hereunto severally set our hands and seals.

"Dated in Sharon, this 19th day of May, A.D. 1758. Signed -

Abigail Mudge	Abigail Prindle
Ebenezer Mudge	Josiah Skinner
Samuel Mudge	Sarah Skinner
Micah Mudge	David Goodrich
Abraham Mudge	Martha Goodrich
Jarvis Mudge	Oliver Tryon
Cornelius Hamlin	Deborah Tryon
Mary Hamlin	Thomas Skinner
Samuel Prindle	Elizabeth Skinner" 5

After the original paper was recorded in the Probate Courts and after each signer had personally acknowledged the signing of the agreement to be their free act and deed, it was printed for record. Alfred Mudge spent some time in the search among the probate papers to find the original copy that he might make a fac-simile of the same in lithograph, but it was not to be found; and as it was a private agreement, it was only presented for record, and taken away. Alfred Mudge goes on to state:

"All will perceive that it was a remarkable document, as not only shows the longevity of the family, but that all had a good education; for at that time many of the higher classes could not write, but in every instance here each signed their name, and no marks (X) were substituted. Each of the wives of the six sons married were living, so that when Ebenezer died he left twenty-five adults and their children. A part of the town of Sharon is now (1868) called "Mudge Town" and a beautiful lake one and a half miles long and three-quarters wide, is known as "Mudge Pond."

Children's listing:

1. Ebenezer Mudge, b. Oct. 23, 1709, Lebanon; md. Patience Fuller
2. Mary Mudge, b. Mar. 30, 1711, Lebanon; md. Cornelius Hamlin (7-37)
3. Abigail Mudge, b. Oct. 28, 1712, Hebron; md. David Skinner
4. Elizabeth Mudge, b. July 31, 1714, Hebron; md. Thomas Skinner
5. Sanuel Mudge, b. May 4, 1716, Lebanon; md. Eunice Skinner
6. Micah Mudge, b. Mar. 6, 1718, Lebanon; md. Eunice Skinner
7. Martha Mudge, b. Oct. 4, 1720, Hebron; md. David Goodrich
8. Joseph Mudge, b. May 28, 1722, Hebron; md. Jane Jarvis
9. Jarvis Mudge, b. _____ 1723, Hebron; md. Prudence Treat
10. Deborah Mudge, b. _____ 1726, Hebron; md. Oliver Tryon
11. Abraham Mudge, b. June 16, 1728, Hebron; md. Anna Gray
12. Sarah Mudge, b. _____, Hebron; md. Josiah Skinner " 6

Since five of the Mudge children were married to Skinners of the family of Nathaniel and Mary (Gillett) Skinner it seems a matter of coincidence and out of interest that the listing of the Skinner children is entered here. Nathaniel Skinner was a brother of Abigail (Skinner) Mudge. See listing of children #s 10 and 11 in (7-50). This fact reveals that the five marriages of mention were cousin marriages.

The listing of the Skinner cousins:

1. Nathaniel Skinner, B. July 10, 1707
2. Mary Skinner, b. July 10, 1709
3. Thomas Skinner, b. April 6, 1712; md. Elizabeth Mudge
4. Eunice Skinner, b. Dec. 15, 1715; md. (1) Samuel Mudge; (2) Micah Mudge
5. David Skinner, b. Jan 7, 1717; d. Jan. 31, 1717
6. David Skinner, b. Nov. 6, 1719; md. Abigail Mudge, at Sharon
7. Jonathan Skinner b. Aug. 15, 1721
8. Josiah Skinner, b. Apr. 30, 1724; md. Sarah Mudge, at Sharon
9. Joanna Skinner, b. Mar. 19, 1727
10. Jerviah Skinner, b. June 25, 1730⁷

The longevity of those on the Mudge line has been mentioned. Of the children above listed, of whom we have birth and death dates, one lived to be 100, three were in their 90s, three in their 80s and one 75 years old. Ebenezer himself was that 75 year old at the time of his death and his wife, Abigail, was 74.

Extensive write-ups are given in "Mudge Memorials" (pp. 59-75) for each of the above twelve families of Ebenezer and Abigail Mudge's children. In following the lives of their six sons, referred to in the above source, one is struck by the consistency with which they all settled into the occupations that had consumed the Mudge men from the time of their immigrant ancestor, Jarvis Mudge, who built and helped maintain the first mill in New London, Conn. As one gathers together the words of the author, Alfred Mudge, the look is rather amazing for the sons of Ebenezer:

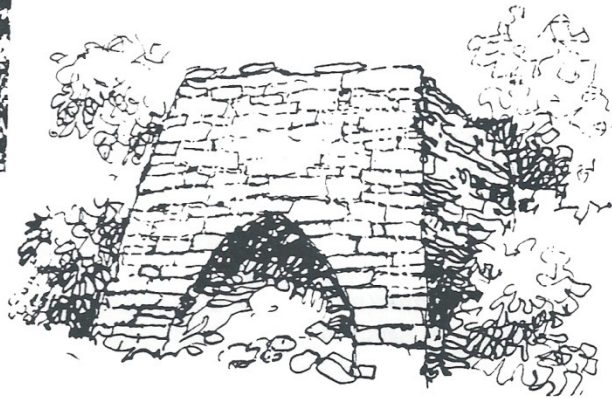
- (1) Ebenezer Jr. - millwright and farmer at Haddam, Conn., Lanesborough, Mass, Canaan, Conn., and New Ashford, Mass.
- (5) Samuel - farmer and miller at Sharon and Canaan, Conn.
- (6) Micah - millwright and miller at Sharon, Conn., Mt. Ephraim and Richmond, Mass., New Canaan, N.Y.
- (7) Martha's husband, David Goodrich - owned a grist mill and saw mill and an interest in the Sharon Iron Works
- (8) Joseph - millwright and miller in his father's concerns
- (9) Jarvis - millwright and farmer at Sharon, Conn., and New Canaan, N.Y., where he owned a grist mill and kept a tavern on the mail route from Albany, N.Y. to Boston, Mass.
- (11) Abraham - farmer and millwright, part owner with his father and brother in their iron works, saw mill and grist mill at Sharon, Conn.⁸

The old furnace, pictured on the following page can be seen in the area near Sharon, Conn. It sits within sight of the distant hills and the Housatonic River. The sight has been selected for an attractive park. The included ruins of this old iron works add interest for historians and antiquarians coming to see and learn more of New England's past.

The early settler's reverence for wood and his skill in designing ingenious tools tells us a valuable story about our forefathers and the great American heritage they gave us of craftsmanship.



Grist Mill



Ruins of a Historic Iron Furnace

Never was there a picture set in a more beautiful frame than that which mother nature gave to the town of Sharon, Conn. Mirrored lakes, green fields, wooded knowles, shady groves, winding lanes and happy homes combined in a symmetry of beauty with no part of it out of harmony. Such was the impression gained by this writer. Passing shady glens and babbling brooks, one suddenly arrives at the village of Sharon that sits enveloped in the green mantle of oak, elm and maple. Even the hills and mountains that surround it seem to blend into the oneness of this Garden Beautiful.

On the northern extremity of the town is Sharon's Twin Falls. It is no wonder that the Mudges took an interest in the place. There was water power to be had and harnessed at so many places and of course the building of mills became one of the settlements earliest endeavors, thanks to Ebenezer and his sons.

" . . . Abigail remained on the Sharon, Conn. homestead, at least until her son Jarvis, who had been charged with his mother's care, had sold his share in the Mudge mills at Sharon April 17, 1761, three years after his father's passing. He removed to New Canaan, N.Y. There he owned a grist mill that he erected at the celebrated Lebanon Springs. The water supplying the mill arose from this spring. The part of this town where he settled used to belong to Massachusetts, but later, in the marking of the boundaries between the two states, was set off to New York. Afterwards, that part of Canaan called New Lebanon was set up as an independent town in 1819. . ."⁹ (see map #14)

Whether Abigail went with her son Jarvis to New Lebanon or whether she remained in Sharon, Conn., is not determined. Some writers, including Alfred Mudge, insist that she removed from Sharon with her son Jarvis, to New Lebanon, where she died,¹⁰ and others such as Natalie R. Fernald, state that she died in Sharon, Conn.¹¹ Her death came seven years after that of her husband. Ebenezer died April 21, 1758 and Abigail died March 6 or 8, 1765.

1. #56 p. 51
2. ibid p. 38
3. ibid p. 52
4. ibid p. 40
5. ibid p 54
6. ibid p. 55, 56
7. ibid p. 55
8. ibid pp. 59-75
9. ibid pp. 54, 72
10. ibid p. 55
11. #57 p. 9