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THE NELSON FAMILY  
of  
PLYMOUTH  
MIDDLEBORO and LAKEVILLE  
MASSACHUSETTS

A Geneological and Biographical Record  
and  
Family History Story

by

W. RIPLEY NELSON

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DESCENDANTS of ABNER NELSON  
in the  
TENTH GENERATION of the NELSON FAMILY .

278. JOSEPHINE (10)NELSON (George F.(9), Lot Chessman(8), Lot Packard(7), Elias(6),  
Abner(5), William(4), Thomas(3), William(2), William(1).

Born in Portland, Me., Sept. 5, 1881, daughter by second marriage to Josephine  
L. Severn. She died Nov. 13, 1896. No other data determined.

279. BARBARA W. (10)NELSON (Lyman Howard(9), Lot Chessman(8), Lot Packard(7), Elias(6),  
Abner(5), William(4), Thomas(3), William(2), William(1).

Born in Portland, Me., April 12, 1893. No other data determined.

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PART 1V

MISCELLANEOUS

PAPERS - LETTERS - DOCUMENTS

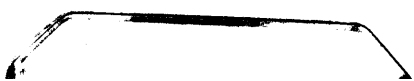
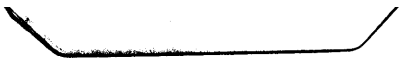
PART IVMISCELLANEOUS PAPERS, LETTERS, DOCUMENTS.FOREWORD.

In Part IV will be found copies of items which have come into the hands of the writer and which should be of general interest with respect to the Nelson family as a whole rather than just specific branches. Comments are made with respect to the various items.

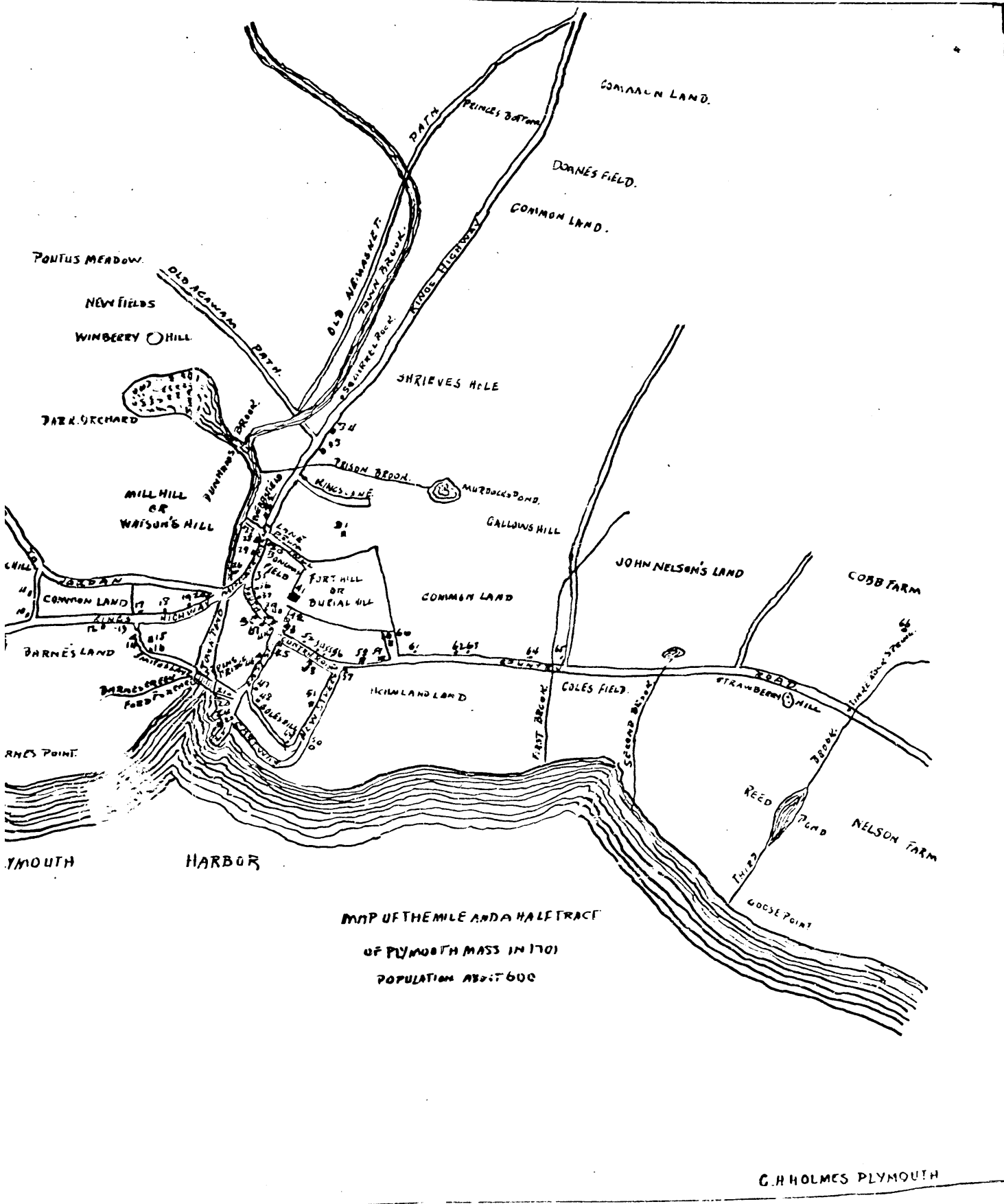
INDEX

Plymouth in 1701 - Map & Index	Page 191,192,193
Commentary on Last Will of William Nelson)	
Inventory of his estate (	Page 195
Inventory of estate of Martha Nelson )	
Copy Last Will William Nelson. )	Page 196,197,198
Inventory of his estate )	
Interpretation of Will	Page 199
Copy Inventory Estate Martha Nelson	Page 202
E.W.Pierce Letters-two	Page 204
Nelson Homestead, Lakeville	Page 213
"Bought from Indians"- a news article	Pages 214, 215
Two Thomas Nelson Heirlooms	Pages 217,218
Nelson Graveyard, Lakeville	Page 220









POITUS MEADOW.

NEW FIELDS

WINBERRY HILL

PARK ORCHARD

MILL HILL  
OR  
WATSON'S HILL

SHRIEVES HOLE

MURDOCK'S POND

GALLONS HILL

JOHN NELSON'S LAND

COBB FARM

COMMON LAND

FURT HILL  
OR  
BURIAL HILL

COMMON LAND

COLES FIELD

STRAWBERRY HILL

NELSON FARM

REED POND

GOOSE POINT

PLYMOUTH HARBOR

PLYMOUTH

COMMON LAND.

DORNE'S FIELD.

COMMON LAND.

OLD ACQUAMAN PATH.

OLD MARKET  
TOWN BRIDGE.

STURGE HIGHWAY

PURCHASE BROOK.

RINGS LANE

TRIMM BEDON.

COMMON LAND

BARNES LAND

RACE POINT

HIGHLAND LAND

FRONT BROOK

SECOND BROOK

THIRD BROOK

WATERBURY STRAINE

PLYMOUTH

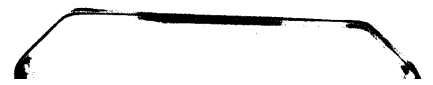
KEY  
to  
MILE and a HALF TRACT MAP NUMBERS.

- |    |                     |    |                                  |
|----|---------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| x  | Joseph Churchill    | 36 | Prison                           |
| 0  | John Rickard        | 37 | Richard Cooper's Blacksmith Shop |
| 1  | Eleazer Churchill   | 38 | Abraham Jackson                  |
| 2  | Robert Bartlett     | 39 | Nathaniel Thomas                 |
| 3  | Giles Rickard       | 40 | County House                     |
| 4  | Josiah Rickard      | 41 | Meeting House                    |
| 5  | Benjamin Bartlett   | 42 | John Murdoch                     |
| 6  | John Rider          | 43 | Nathaniel Warren                 |
| 7  | Thomas Doty         | 44 | James Warren                     |
| 8  | Samuel Harlow       | 45 | Ephraim Cole's Blacksmith Shop   |
| 9  | William Harlow      | 46 | James Cole, Jr.                  |
| 10 | Town Lot            | 47 | Joanna Cotton                    |
| 11 | William Harlow      | 48 | John Rickard                     |
| 12 | Johathan Barnes     | 49 | John Cole                        |
| 13 | John Barnes         | 50 | Samuel Lucas                     |
| 14 | Jonathan Barnes     | 51 | Thomas Gray                      |
| 15 | Watson House        | 52 | Abiel Shurtleff                  |
| 16 | Joshua Morse        | 53 | Thomas Little                    |
| 17 | Isaac Lothrop       | 54 | Caleb Loring                     |
| 18 | Mercy Watson        | 55 | Francis Lebaron                  |
| 19 | Nathaniel Morton    | 56 | Nathaniel Howland                |
| 20 | John Foster         | 57 | Thomas Howland                   |
| 21 | Ephraim Kempton     | 58 | Nathaniel Clark                  |
| 22 | Timothy Morton      | 59 | Eleazer Jackson                  |
| 23 | Rickards' Warehouse | 60 | Town Pound now Court Square      |
| 24 | Wharf               | 61 | Nathaniel Holmes                 |
| 25 | Rickards' Wharf     | 62 | Samuel Clark                     |
| 26 | Fulling Mill        | 63 | Richard Holmes                   |
| 27 | Grist Mill          | 64 | John Atwood                      |
| 28 | Nathaniel Church    | 65 | John Atwood's Barn               |
| 29 | George Bonum        | 66 | John Cobb                        |
| 30 | Robert Barrow       | 67 | William Shurtleff                |
| 31 | Eleazer Rogers      |    |                                  |
| 32 | Nathaniel Jackson   |    |                                  |
| 33 | William Fallowell   |    |                                  |
| 34 | Robert Barrow       |    |                                  |
| 35 | Richard Cooper      |    |                                  |

LAST WILL OF WILLIAM (1) NELSON

INVENTORY OF HIS ESTATE

INVENTORY OF ESTATE MARTHA NELSON

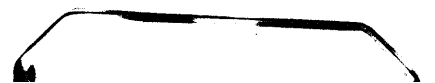








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	7	6	5
Item to Mr Edward Gray	01	10	0
Item to William Currah	00	07	0
Item to James Cole	00	19	02
Item to Joseph D. Miller	00	01	06
Item to George Bonum	00	02	00
Item to Joseph Barnlund of Newbury	00	03	00
Item to Mr John Harriman of Boston	00	11	00
Item to Leonard Dinkham	00	02	09
Item to Abraham Dinkham Junr	00	08	06
Item to William Lusk	00	03	04
Item to George Watson	00	01	00
Item to Edward Johnson	00	03	00
Item to John Nelson	01	10	00
Item to George Symson	00	09	01
Item to the Town of Plymouth	00	07	00
	1	06	07
	36	03	05

Item deducted the estate

The within Nelson the Register William Nelson take consent made oath to the book of this inventory this 5th of March 1679: 8.

The foregoing is a true copy from Plymouth Colony Records, Wills, Volume 4, Pages 54-56.

Attest:

Richard W. Holm  
Register

LAST WILL OF WILLIAM NELSON (1)

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INTERPRETATION

---

To all people to whom these Presents shall come William Nelson Senior of the Towne of New Plymouth in the Collonie of New Plymouth in New England in America tendeth greetings.

Know you that I the said William Nelson being weak of body through sickness and frayeltes, but of whole perfect and full strength of memory and understanding at the day of the date hereof, not knowing how soon it may please God to change my temporall life to death; have and do by these intents make this to be my last will and Testament; to continue and remaine for such persons and inviolable, in manner and form as followeth; Imprimis I will and bequeath my body to the Dust and my soul to God that gave it; Item I will and bequeath unto my son John Nelson and to his heirs for ever; the one half of all those my lands and all my medowes devided or undevided be it more or less which was graunted unto me by the Court; out of a certain tract of land lying and being in the Towne of Middleboro which were bought by Capt. Thomas Southworth pff and from the Indian Sachem called Josiah Wampatuk excepting twenty Acres of land that I shall dispose of hereby to my daughter-Martha Cob; alsoe I give unto my said son John Nelson all those my lands that I now have that I bought of William Mullins; be it more or less, lying and being in the said Towne of Middleboroe...excepting my share of the meddow which I shall dispose of to my son william Nelson, all which severall parcels of land as aforesaid with the appurtenances and Priviledges unto them belonging to belong to my said son John Nelson and to his heirs forever alwaies provided and it is my will that my said son John Nelson out of the proffitts of the said lands, give and pay yearly every year unto my wife Martha Nelson twenty two shillings every yeer during the whole tearme of her naturall life. Item That whereas I formerly sold unto Adam Wright one acree of land and received satisfaction for it, on which the said Adam erected a house lying and being on the easterly syde of my fifty acres of land that lyeth on the northerly syde of an old Indian Path in the township of Middleborroh, the said acree of land being to close----to the said path; I give therefore by this my will Rattify and confem the sale of the said acree of land to belong from mee and my heirs unto the said Adam Wright his heirs and assigns for ever. Item-I will and bequeath; to my son William Nelson and to his heires for ever all that my forty nine acres of upland that lyeth in the Towne of Middlebro on the northerly syde of an old Indian Path, and twelve acres of up land that lyeth on the southerly side of the said path against the said forty nine acres; alsoe all my meddow that I bought of William Mullins and one acree of my meddow that I bought of and off-----with the appurtenances and privileges unto both of the said plots belonging; to belonge to him my said son William Nelson and to his heires for ever alwaies; provided and it is my will that my said son William Nelson for in consideration of the said lands give and pay yeerly every year unto my wife Martha Nelson twelve shillings a year during the whole tme of her natural life; Item. I will and bequeath unto my daughter Martha Cob and to her

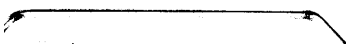
heires for ever all that my thirty acres of upland that I bought lying and being in the towne of Plymouth next and adjoining to John Cobbs land----- book; alsoe I give unto my said daughter Martha; all that my twenty acres of upland that I have lying and being in the towne of Middleboro upon Raven brook called a loose lott; which said acres of land with the appurtenances and privileges thereunto to belong unto my daughter Martha Cobb and to her heires for ever; alwaies provided and it is my will that my said daughter do give and pay yeerly and every yeer unto my wife Martha Nelson five shillings during the whole time of her naturall life; and if it should please God for to dispose that if any of my above said children should depart this life before their Mother then my will is that those persons that succeed them in their land shall pay to my wife as aforesaid: Item. I will and bequeath unto my daughter Jane Faunce ten shillings; Item, I will and bequeath unto my deare loveing wife Martha Nelson (my debts and Legasees being first payed) all the rest of my estate, I give it all to my loveing wife Martha Nelson and to here heires to be wholly att her despose and to doe with it what shee pleaseth; and I herep choose, appoint, nominate and ordaine my aforesaid loveing wife Martha Nelson to be my lawful and sole executrix of this my last will and testament; to administer on my said estate to pay all just debts as I owe and to collect all just debts as are due to mee; so too that my body be reverently buried and to defray the charges thereof. My closing here to Revoking all former Wills either written or verball: Thus hoping that this my last will and testament will be performed and kept forever. I the said William Nelson Senior: have in Witness thereof sett to my hand and seal. This thirty one day of October One thousand six hundred seaventy of nine.

William Nelson and a Seale.

Original Sealed and declared to  
be his last Will and Testament  
in presents of us  
E.T. The mark of  
Ephraim Tinkham  
- William Crowe

M<sup>s</sup>. William Crowe and  
Sargeant Ephraim Tinkham made  
oath to this will the fifth  
day of March 79:80







E.W. PIERCE LETTERS



## E.W. PIERCE LETTERS

---

Typewritten copies of two letters, one signed E.W. Pierce and the other E.W.P., were found by the writer among old records. Their origin has never been ascertained but the writer is of the opinion that they represent part of the research work so faithfully carried out by Abiel Ward Nelson (8). While they have been quoted in part in several places in this history it is felt worthwhile to reprint them in their entirety for the value of the data of the Nelson family as presented by one who appears to be an authority and for the interesting facts about the early days of the Calvinist Baptists when the Nelsons first openly avowed its principles and in which faith so many of the family became preachers, deacons and leading members.

The posterity and relationship of John Nelson regarding which E.W. Pierce admits to be unadvised has been established in this history so no further comment seems necessary. E.W. Pierce, as with other historians, erroneously refers to Thomas (3) Nelson's wife as Hope Higgins instead of Hope Huckins as established by the writer of this history. There may be, also, other differences between the story presented by Pierce and this history but the writer offers the suggestion that the latter, because of careful known research, may prove to be more accurate.

Boston, Mass.,  
March 17th, 1875.

Some earnest anxious inquiries recently addressed to me, inquiries bearing evidence that considerable labor, time, and pains had been unsuccessfully devoted to the task of seeking an answer, leads me to solicit the privilege of occupying in the columns of your paper, the space required to answer some of the questions asked, and also to put the seeker for knowledge on the track of further information on the subject.

A John Nelson, of Middleborough, was united in marriage November 28th, 1667, with Sarah, a daughter of Henry Wood, of that town. She died on the Fourth of March 1875, or two hundred years ago the present month. Her death occurred the same year that King Phillip's war commenced, that caused John Nelson to remove to Plymouth. John Nelson, after King Phillip's war was over, returned to Middleborough where he was elected a Selectman, for the years 1682 - 83 - 85 and 1686, and a Constable in 1684.

John Nelson's second wife was Lydia, widow of James Barnaby, of Plymouth, deceased. Lydia was born June 8th, 1647, and a daughter of Robert Bartlett, of Plymouth, an emigrant who came to America in the ship Ann, in 1623. Robert Bartlett's wife, - the mother of Lydia Barnaby Nelson, - was Mary Warren, born in 1628, and a daughter of Richard Warren, a passenger on board the May Flower, in 1620.

Concerning the posterity of John Nelson, or whether he had children by either wife, I am not advised, or what relation he bore to Thomas Nelson, the ancestors of nearly, - if not quite, - all the Nelsons of Middleborough.

There are reasons for thinking that John Nelson resided in that part of Middleborough next to Halifax, as did also Thomas Nelson, before going to reside upon his purchase in Assawamset Neck.

Thomas Nelson's house, on Assawamset Neck, stood in a meadow now owned by Mr. Sidney T. Nelson, and nearly opposite the former residence of the late Mr. Hersey.

In my boyhood days a slight indentation in the ground, marked the spot where Thomas Nelson's house stood, and some traditions of what occurred then, caused me to regard the spot with considerable interest, so much indeed that when only nine years of age, I went to the place and sat down, and tried to fancy how it appeared when these things a "Long, long time ago," were enacted.

Thomas Nelson's purchase on Assawamset Neck, bore date of 1714, and the deed described his purchase bounded on one end by Assawamset Pond, and by Long Pond on the other, and by Indian Lands on both sides. Thomas Nelson was the first white settler on Assawamset Neck. He went to reside there in 1717, being at that time a married man with the following named children: Hannah, born April 10th, 1699: Hope, born December 23rd, 1700: John, born

August First, 1702: Lois, born August 19th, 1704: Ruth, born February 25th, 1706: Elizabeth, born June 3rd, 1708: Thomas, born April 12th, 1710: Sarah, born January 22nd, 1712: William, born May 30th, 1714: Foxell, born June 22nd, 1716 - or the goodly number of ten children. Two children were born on Assawamset Neck, viz: Amos, December 31st, 1718 and Ebenezer, December 22nd, 1721.

Hope Higgins was the name of Thomas Nelson's wife. She was born in or near Barnstable, in May, 1677. Soon after settling in the wilds of Assawamset Neck, Mrs. Hope Nelson one night heard a noise in the cellar that she believed proceeded from an Indian there, searching for something to steal, and, being a woman of resolution, she rushed into the dark place and laid hold of the clothing of a man, who vainly sought to extricate himself from her determined and unyielding grasp, till his raiment was parted, when he escaped. On bringing to the light what he had left in her hands, her suspicions were fully confirmed.

Backed by such a wife, it is no wonder that Thomas Nelson dared to settle where Indians were on both sides of him, and that he should become the Daniel Boone of Assawamset Neck. A good deal of credit has been given to Thomas Nelson for the leading position he assumed in the Baptist movement. He is said to have been the first Baptist in Middleborough, and as much a pioneer of that faith among the people of that town, as he was in the arts of civilization among the red heathen of Assawamset Neck. But I am lead to believe that this was one of those cases in which "The grey mare is the best horse," and that in truth Hope, the wife, could say "Before" Thomas "Was I am," and that they listened to the tenets of the Calvinistic Baptist doctrines from the lips of Thomas Nelson, received it "Second hand-" that Hope Higgins, instead of Thomas Nelson, was the first or original Baptist of Middleborough. Thomas might have been "beta," but Hope was "alpha."

Mrs. Hope Nelson was a member of the Calvinistic Baptist church in Middleborough, and with said church partook of the Sacrament when she was more than one hundred years old. Eight years before her death, her lineal descendants numbered two hundred and fifty-seven persons, and at the date of her death, were three hundred and thirty-seven. She died December 7th, 1782, aged one hundred and five years and seven months. Her remains were interred in the ancient cemetery near the Southerly shore of Assawamset Pond, in - what was then Middleborough now, - Lakeville, and her grave is marked by a slate stone bearing an inscription.

Thomas, son of Thomas Nelson and Hope, his wife, was born as before stated, April 12th, 1710, and was a very useful man in his day, and of service to those of his generation. He held the commission of Lieutenant, under King George 2nd, and this was - 1762, - renewed to him by King George 3rd., Lieu't Thomas Nelson was a Selectman of Middleborough twelve years, and for as many years Moderator of the annual town meeting, and fourteen years a member of the general court. His oldest son, John Nelson, born October 25th, 1737, was in active service as Major in the war of American Revolution, and from 1781 to 1787 was Colonel of the Fourth regiment of Plymouth County militia.

Lieu't Thomas Nelson was grandfather of Hon. Job Nelson of Castine, Judge of Probate for Hancock County, Maine - from 1804 until 1830, and of Rev. Stephen S. Nelson, a Calvinistic Baptist clergyman, of Attleborough and Bellingham, Mass. Another son of Thomas Nelson Sr., and wife, Hope Higgins, was William - born May 30th, 1714, and married October 2nd, 1740, Elizabeth Howland.

William and wife Elizabeth, were the parents of three Calvinistic Baptist ministers, viz: Rev. William, born July 18th, 1741, Rev. Samuel, born April 6th, 1748, and Rev. Ebenezer Nelson, born October 6th, 1753 - and grandparents of Rev. Ebenezer Nelson, Jr., not long since pastor of the Central Baptist church in Middleborough. A daughter of Thomas Nelson, Sr., and wife Hope Higgins, and who bore the Christian name of Hannah, was born April 10th, 1699, and married January 20th, 1719, Jabez Wood. Rev. Jabez Wood, Jr., pastor of the Calvinistic Baptist church in Swansea, was their son. Thus we see that Thomas Nelson and wife Hope, were the ancestors of six Calvinistic Baptist ministers, as well as the pioneers of the Calvinistic faith and doctrine in the town of Middleborough.

The impression that I find has gone abroad, is that I have seen and perused the records of the First Baptist church in Middleborough, is not correct. I sought earnestly to find those records, sought as he that seeks hidden treasure, but my labors were only rewarded by the conclusion that those records were destroyed, or if still in existence, their whereabouts in unknown to anyone. But traditions concerning that church are calculated to mislead, as to the date of its formation, for I have it from reliable authority, that the First Baptist church in Middleborough, was not formed until Elder Ebenezer Hinds came to live in the town - or forty years after Thomas Nelson settled on Assawamset Neck. A Baptist church existed in Tiverton, - East Freetown, - at an earlier date than the First Baptist, in Middleborough. This Tiverton, - now East Freetown, - church built a meeting house near the present residence of Rev. George Tyler, and that meeting house was removed into Middleborough - now Lakeville, - and was the "Beech woods meeting house." That was destroyed by fire at the same time that the parsonage house of Rev. Ebenezer Hinds was burned. The second meeting house, - built upon or near the site of the first, - was demolished in or about 1842.

One of the last public gatherings in that house was a political meeting of the whig party in the year 1840, a party whose ideal temple was a "Log cabin," their God "Hard cider," their faith "Roast beef and two dollars a day," and sung "Without why or wherefore, Tippercanoe and Tyler, too." The old house fairly shook with their hilarity, and the music discoursed by the "Middleborough Brass Band." Rev. Ebenezer Hinds, as pastor of the First Calvinistic Baptist church of Middleborough, was succeeded by Rev. Simeon Coombs.

Reference to the town records of Middleborough, will convince any one that the Baptists were quite numerous in that town for at least twenty years before the coming of Elder Hinds and formation of the First Baptist church - but those early Baptist .

believers probably like Thomas Nelson, Sr., were members of the Swanzea church, and perhaps some belonged to the Tiverton church.

William Hoar, of Middleborough, - Now Lakeville, - was the first, or one of the first or earliest deacons of the First Baptist church in Middleborough, and he was not born until December 30th, 1721, or four years after Thomas Nelson settled on Assawamset Neck.

Pray excuse my prolixity; I would not have inflicted upon you this long letter but for the assurance that many people are searching for the facts that it contains.

Yours, etc.,

E. W. Pierce

The Nelson Farm in Lakeville.

Former Residence of the Oldest White Woman who ever lived or Died Within the Limits of that Town.

To the Editor of the Standard :

The interest exhibited by many readers of your paper in already published facts concerning the earliest white settlers upon Assawamset Neck, in Lakeville, leads me to furnish you with a few more particulars :-

Rev. Isaac Backus, in his excellent history of the Calvinist Baptist, informs us that "Mr. Thomas Nelson discovered such evils in Mr. Palmer, as gave a turn to his mind about principles." "He adopted the sentiments of the Baptists, and joined the First Baptist church in Swanzey, which is the first of that denomination in Massachusetts."

Rev. Thomas Palmer was the second pastor of the First Congregational church in Middleborough, and of whom the published history of that church informs us that there "was much opposition to his settlement, and at last, they of the opposition, seem to have been taken by surprise when, after several years preaching, he was ordained, May 2nd., 1702." "The opposition continued, and council after council was held until his deposition was advised." "He seems to have been a rash, headstrong man, and the charges of intemperance made against him, seem to have been well sustained." "In accordance, therefore, with the advise of a council of twelve churches, and also of the anniversary convention of ministers in Boston, he was, by the Congregational church in Middleborough, June 30th., 1708, deposed from the ministry, and excluded from their communion at the Sacrament table.

It was therefore probably some time between May 2nd, 1702 and June 30th, 1708, that Thomas Nelson discovered such evils in Mr. Palmer as gave a turn to his mind about religious principles. Mr. Thomas Nelson was about twenty seven years old when Mr. Palmer was ordained pastor of the First Congregational church in Middleborough, and about thirty three years of age when Mr. Palmer was deposed.

To have openly avowed the principles, and advocated the tenets or doctrines of the Calvinist Baptist at any time between 1702 and 1708, required a great deal more moral courage and self-denial, than to have done so immediately after the schism that occurred in the Congregational churches throughout all New England, as a result of the preaching of Rev. George Whitefield, - for many who then left the Congregational churches, and for a time called themselves Separates, or Separatists- eventually became Calvinist Baptists.

It is but reasonable to suppose that Thomas Nelson had been an outspoken Calvinist Baptist for forty years at least, before Rev. George Whitefield came over from England and commenced his very remarkable preaching tour in America. Doubtless, becoming a Calvinist Baptist, had something to do with causing Mr. Nelson to

settle down with his wife and ten children in the wild-woods of Assawamsett Neck; the continued and very general opposition that he daily encountered among his old neighbors and former friends, on account of that change concerning religious principles, causing him to sigh "For a lodge in some vast wilderness or boundless contiguity of shade." We regret not to be able to give the precise date when Thomas Nelson was admitted to membership in the Baptist church at Swanzey.

Mrs. Hope, the wife of Mr. Nelson, also embraced the doctrines as then taught by the Calvinist Baptists, and she was, on the 5th day of August, 1723, admitted to membership in the Calvinist Baptist church in Swanzey. From that date until 1753, Mr. Nelson and wife were constant in their attendance at Swanzey upon the Sabbath, performing the long journey on horseback, and that they might better accommodate themselves, and not prove burdensome to their Swanzey brethren, tradition informs that Mr. Nelson caused a small dwelling house to be erected near the Baptist meeting-house in Swanzey, for the accommodation of himself and family - and thenceforth rode to Swanzey on Saturday, remaining in their house, when not in church, until Monday, and thus a part of three days and two nights were occupied every week in preparing for and performing the duties of the Sanctuary.

Thus we see the trouble and cost, besides the opposition encountered, and unpopularity endured, to be a Calvinist Baptist in those days - and the toil, labor and privation, Thomas Nelson and his wife Hope, were ready and willing to subject themselves to, that they might enjoy that precious boon and privilege, freedom to worship God.

Rev. Isaac Backus, in his history of the Calvinist Baptists, informs that in 1753, a Baptist meeting was set up in Mr. Nelson's house on Assawamsett Neck. Mr. Nelson died October 2nd, 1750 - or about three years after the establishment of a Baptist meeting in his house, one of the results of which was the formation of a Baptist church in that section of the country, November 16th, 1757. Of that church, Rev. Ebenezer Hinds, was ordained as pastor, January 26th, 1758.

Mrs. Hope Nelson became a member of that church and communed with it at the Lord's table when she was more than one hundred years old. She died December 7th, 1782, aged one hundred and five years, six months and twenty seven days. At the date of her death, her lineal descendants then living and dead, were three hundred and thirty seven persons.

Truly, a most remarkable "Mother in Israel," was she. Her grave is marked by a slab of dark colored slate, bearing a still legible inscription. Among her numerous descendants at the date of her decease, were four Calvinist Baptist clergymen, viz: Jabez Wood, Rev. William, Rev. Samuel and Rev. Ebenezer Nelson - and to these, a few years later, were added Rev. Stephen S. Nelson and Rev. Ebenezer Nelson, Jr.

These facts, it seems to me, are worth considering, and that it is advisable to place the record of the same in a condition to insure remembrance.

E. W. P.



NELSON HOMESTEAD

LAKEVILLE

NELSON HOMESTEAD

LAKEVILLE



FrontView-1952



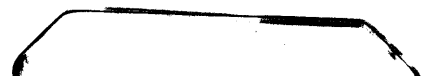
Side view showing "ell"  
between front or main part  
of house and barn in rear.

See Pages 38 & 39 for Comments.

"BOUGHT FROM INDIANS"

Such is the caption of an interesting article and tribute to the Nelson family which appeared in the Boston Sunday Globe, February 7, 1904, a photostatic copy being given on the following pages. It is well however to point out that there are several inaccuracies such as (1) crediting William Nelson (1) as coming from Scrooby, England which is thought to be true but never proven (see pages 6 & 7 for comments); (2) Thomas Nelson's wife is named as Hope Higgins instead of as Hope Huckins and (3) Col. John Nelson had an enviable military record in the Revolutionary War but the reference to being Capt. of Artillery and captured by the French is erroneous for that is the story of a Capt. John Nelson 1654-1734 of Boston (see page 8 for comments).

Sad to relate, since the publishing of this story not only has the Nelson Homestead passed into other than family hands but all save a few articles of furniture, china and other family heirlooms, have disappeared. But the story contains many interesting sidelights, not touched on in this history, worth the reader's attention.



DOUGHT FROM INDIANS

Middleboro in October, 1897; Clifton Nelson, who is associated with his brother in business at Jamaica Plain, and Maude Nelson, who married Dr Harry M. Lee of New London, Conn, a surgeon in the late Spanish war.

His second marriage was Nov 15, 1886, to Elizabeth Parkhurst, a sister of his first wife. She is still living.

Mr Nelson is a member of the South Bristol Farmers' club of New Bedford and Nemasket grange, P. of H., of Middleboro. He is one of the prominent farmers of the town and daily ships hundreds of quarts of milk to dealers in New Bedford.

Of Mr Nelson's brothers, one is Dr Abiel W. Nelson, born in Lakeville Aug 24, 1836. He served as a surgeon in the civil war in the 18th Mass regt, and was a physician at the Taunton insane asylum later.

He has been engaged in practice in New London, Conn, for many years.

At Brown college, he was an intimate friend of Ambassador Hay, who is distantly related. Thomas M. Nelson, his other brother, has lived in Chicago for about 25 years. He studied law, but never practiced. He has been engaged as a contractor while in Chicago. He was born July 28, 1840.

On Mrs Nelson's side of the house there were some famous ancestors, whose deeds of daring and skill have spread abroad. One of the most notable of these was Dr Phineas Parkhurst, her great-grandfather, who was a surgeon in the army during the French and Indian war.

Henry W. Nelson of Marshfield Hills, a civil engineer and railroad builder, is still another of the Nelsons who have become prominent during his life. At Marshfield Hills he occupied a house which during the Indian war was used as a fortress.

The story of house building in the early days is most interesting, and in the accounts of the erection of structures in the early days there is much to wonder at when we consider the troubles of housebuilding today.

In the ancient days, when the Nelsons built their first houses, all that was required to encourage the work was plenty of refreshments, and the work took care of itself. In the old family records of the cost of building a house the price of lumber does not appear, the lumber being cut off the farm and prepared for use by the neighbors. The expense recorded was for entertainment, and this was carefully kept. The houses built were substantial. A portion of the S. T. Nelson residence built in 1774, and later additions built at different times, the last completed in 1793.

The S. T. Nelson place is one of the best along the line of cars in Lakeville, situated on a bluff, overlooking the swampsett on one side, and on the other side commanding a view of the surrounding country. It is a country place which is hard to duplicate. The present house, which has sheltered the family for nearly 170 years.

demonstrated by his appointment as  
cow keeper, then considered a position  
of trust. He married Martha Ford.

Following him was William Nelson  
the second whose bones have been  
known for years till it was recently  
discovered at the Green cemetery at  
Middleboro, close beside the First Con-  
gregational church.

The first record of Nelsons in Lake-  
ville is in 1774, when Thomas Nelson and  
his wife, Hope Higgins, came here to  
live.

They bartered with the Indians and  
secured a tract of about 150 acres of  
land from John Sassamon, a son of  
John Sassamon, an Indian missionary,  
who was murdered in 1675, and whose  
body was thrown into lake Assawamp-  
sett because of alleged complicity in  
warning the whites at Plymouth of a  
proposed war the Indians were to com-  
mence against them. It is claimed  
that this killing brought on King Philip's  
war.

On this tract of land, secured from  
Sassamon, the first of the Nelsons set-  
tled, building a log cabin close beside  
the site of the present Nelson house.

Here Thomas and his wife Hope,  
passed their days, she living to the age  
of 105, and meeting her end at that  
time by being burned to death accident-  
ally.

After the first log cabin, a portion of  
the present house was built, and from  
time to time additions have been made  
to this house till in 1793 it attained its  
present proportions.

For 10 years the first family of Nel-  
sons were in comparative comfort till,  
in 1724, death removed Amos Nelson, the  
first of their family to die. This was  
the first white person to die in the  
town, and the first to be buried.

The years rolled by, and Col John  
Nelson was born. He became a famous  
soldier, and fought brilliantly at Que-  
bec where he was taken prisoner by  
the French and kept for many years.  
He served as captain of the Ancient  
and Honorable artillery company of  
Boston for a time.

Job Pierce Nelson, the father of  
Sidney T. Nelson, the present occupant  
of the old homestead, was born in  
Lakeville, at the family house, Oct 17,  
1800.

As a boy he lived at Lakeville, and  
later married Fatima Baker of Upton  
in October, 1824. He spent most of his  
life on the farm at Lakeville. For a  
time he was associated with Eben  
Briggs in the manufacture of straw  
goods at Middleboro, and also con-  
ducted the stage line from Wareham to  
Lakeville, where it connected with the  
stage coach running from New Bedford  
to Boston.

His son Sydney, who now occupies  
the place, was born Aug 12, 1845, and  
he has brothers living. His  
life has been spent in this town. He  
was educated at the Pierce academy at  
Middleboro, and soon afterwards en-  
tered into public life.

He served 21 years as a member of  
the school committee, 8 years as select-  
man and assessor, and represented the  
town in the legislature in 1888. Mr Nel-  
son is also a member of the committee  
for the suppression of crime, and has  
been justice of the peace for 15 years.

He married Emma Parkhurst June  
12, 1872, and she died Aug 1, 1881, leav-  
ing three children, Thomas S. Nelson,  
who is engaged in business at Jamaica  
Plain and married Lillian Thomas of  
Middleboro in October, 1887; Clifton  
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brother in business at Jamaica Plain,  
and Maude Nelson, who married Dr  
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the surrounding country, it is a country  
seat which is hard to duplicate.

The ancient house, which has shel-  
tered the family for nearly two cen-

turies, is without doubt one of the most  
interesting, and its treasures constitute  
a complete museum of colonial relics.

On entering the house one is im-  
pressed with the striking style of archi-  
tecture peculiar to the earlier residents,  
the hall is spacious, though not large,  
from it leads a pair of winding stairs,  
the baluster being made of wood, carved  
by hand from trees grown on the farm.

The upper story is in keeping with the  
rest of the house, and the floors up-  
stairs are still in good preservation,  
though they have been laid for over 100  
years.

The more modern part of the house  
was built by Dr Thomas Nelson, a gradu-  
ate of Brown university, who practiced  
medicine.

Dr Nelson was prominently identified  
in the religious work among the early  
residents, and through his efforts the  
Baptist church, or as it is commonly  
known among the older residents, "the  
Pond meeting house," was built, start-  
ing with 25 worshippers. He was an  
ardent worker for the association, and  
it prospered. About 1850 services were  
discontinued there, and most of the  
members of the church became affiliated  
with the Central Baptist church at Mid-  
dleboro. The church building is not in  
existence now.

Millionaires were scarce when this  
church was started, and there were few  
bequests of large sums. Money had to  
be obtained, though, to keep it in ex-  
istence and to give titles to the pastor,  
hence an ingenious plan was put into  
operation to pay the expenses.

Lottery tickets were sold to the mem-  
bers, a copy of which is presented with  
this article. The tickets were counter-  
signed by a church officer, and the  
prizes were drawn off frequently.

There are five tickets known to be in  
existence, and Mr Nelson has them all.  
Four are of the series of March, 1783.  
They are numbered C2019, D860, E881 and  
F862. The other is dated 1783, and by the  
contest shows a license granted by the  
general assembly of the state of Rhode  
Island to conduct the lottery to raise  
money with which to build the church.

An early industry for the residents  
around the ponds was fishing iron ore,  
which was found in great quantities,  
from lake Assawampsett, and the other  
ponds in the vicinity. It was sold to  
the smelting plants to be made into  
useful articles, or when the occasion  
required it, during the early wars, into  
cannon balls.

The iron ore was found in large quan-  
tities then, and even today there is  
some in the pond, a specimen of which  
was presented the Globe reporter by  
Mrs Nelson.

The ore was fished up from the bot-  
tom of the lake with tongs, many boats  
being used as lighters to transport the  
ore to the shore after it had been  
brought to the surface.

Mrs Nelson has many interesting and  
valuable relics of her ancestors, as well  
as those of Mr Nelson, and she takes  
considerable pride in them. Included in  
the collection is property of every sort,  
some pieces of which are rarely seen  
today.

A large collection of English delft oc-  
cupies a position of honor in the house.  
Some of the specimens were among the  
first brought to this country. She also  
has two pewter salvers, which were  
the property of Col John Nelson, and

which bear the inscription "J. N., 1760."  
A massive grandfather clock ticks the  
hours away, from its position in the  
dining room, having warned the family  
of the passing hour for over a century.  
A mirror, close beside it, has been a  
family treasure for more than two cen-  
turies.

It is known that porridge was a favor-  
ite dish with the early residents, and a  
pewter set, with lead spoons, made  
from colonial bullets complete a col-  
lection of tableware used in serving it.  
She also has a pewter cider tankard,  
similar to the one now on exhibition at  
Pilgrim hall, Plymouth.

There is also a fine collection of ma-  
hogany furniture, including highboys,  
sofas and other articles of furniture. An-  
other piece of furniture, though not  
made of mahogany, is an old desk, a  
written history of which was found in a  
secret drawer.

Occupying an attractive place in the  
parlor is a shingle, which was placed  
on the latest addition to the house in  
1793. It was taken off in 1890, after hav-  
ing shed the rain and snow for 80 years  
and was still in good condition. The  
shingle was gotten out by hand, and is  
now attractively painted.

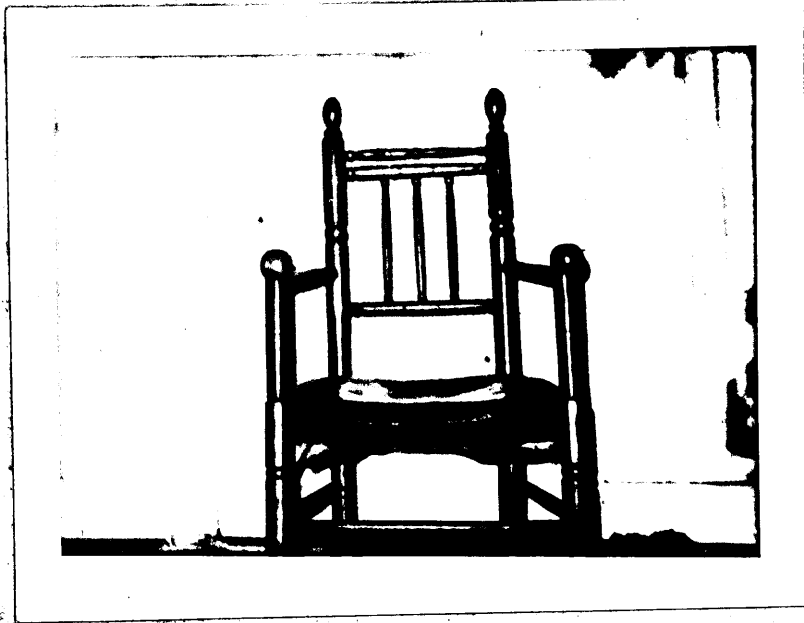
The remains of a family custom-  
of the Nelsons is seen in a silver marriage  
token, in possession of Mrs Nelson,  
which was used at marriages. It is a  
diagram of a large heart, made by the  
intersection of two smaller ones, and  
cut out in the center, showing a single  
heart, made from the two, and bearing  
the inscription "We Are One." Its  
significance is apparent, bespeaking the  
unity and dignity of the family, the  
first member of which arrived at Plym-  
outh nearly four centuries ago.

TWO

THOMAS NELSON (3)

HEIRLOOMS.

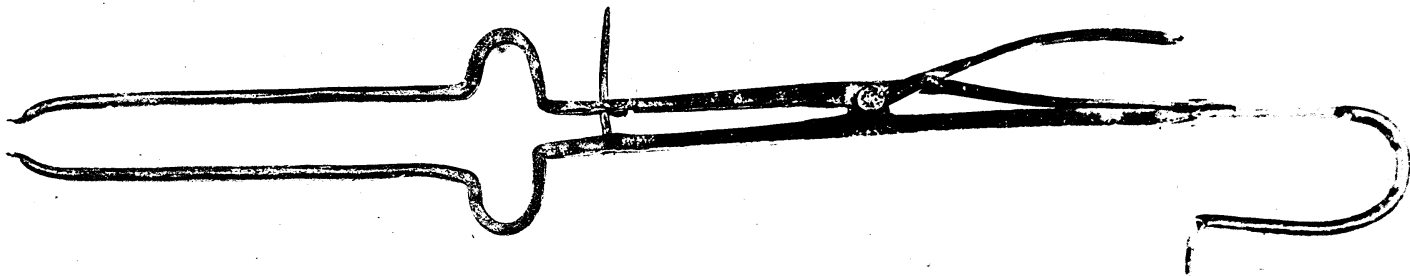
## THOMAS NELSON (3) CHAIR



This is said to be the chair that Hope Nelson(3), at the age of 105 years, was sitting in and fell out of into the fire place shortly before she died 1782. Owned by Clifton W. Nelson (1952). See page 38.



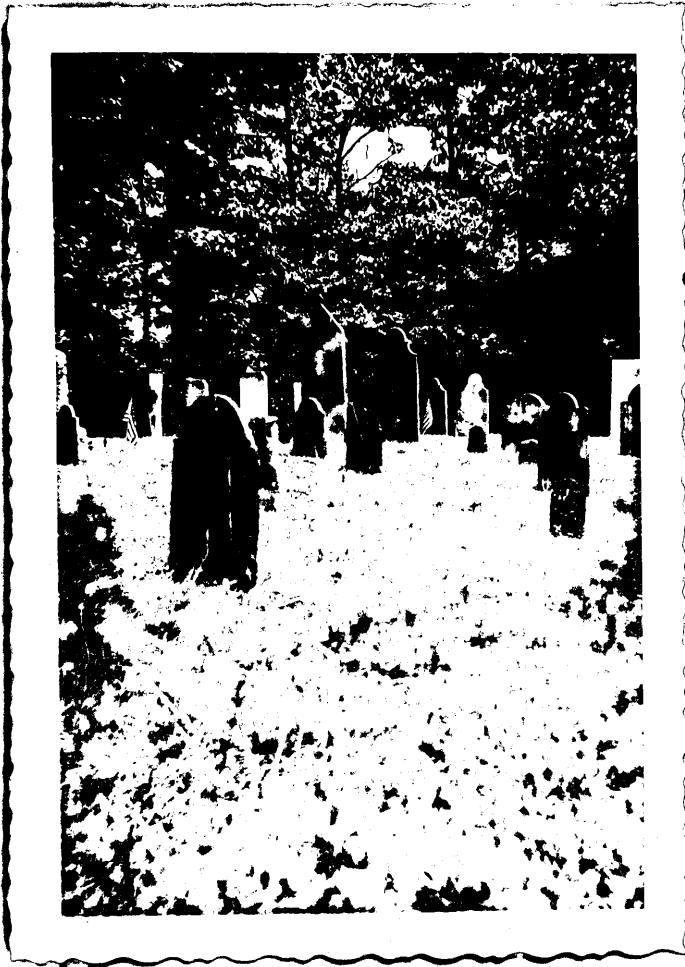
(3)  
THOMAS NELSON PIPE TONGS



1. Sharp prong in middle used to clean pipe bowl.
2. Round flat end of handle used to tamp down tobacco in bowl of pipe.
3. Tongs used to pick up live coal from fire to light pipe.
4. Crooked handle used to hang instrument near fireplace.
5. Instrument made of iron - picture about 1/3 actual size.
6. Owned by Clifton W. Nelson (1952).

NELSON GRAVEYARD

LAKEVILLE

NELSON GRAVEYARDLAKEVILLE

Partial View of  
Graveyard.



Gravestone of  
Thomas Nelson (3).

See pages 39 & 40 for comments.