

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF COLONEL JAMES SWAN

Col. Swan was the original purchaser of the twenty-five islands included in the Burnt Coat group. The largest of these islands, which contains this town, was named for him—Swan's Island.

He was born in Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1754, and came to this country about the year 1765. Although a small boy, this young Scotchman was unusually active and intelligent, and soon found employment in Boston. As a boy, he was studious, and devoted all his spare time to his books, and in this way secured an excellent education. While yet a young man, he had a varied experience. Before his twenty-second year, while yet a clerk in a counting house opposite the East End of Faneuil Hall, he had written and published a work on the African slave trade. This book was published in 1772, and was entitled, "A Discussion of Great Britain and Her Colonies from the Slave Trade." A copy of this work is said to be in the Boston public library.

He served several years as apprentice with Thaxter & Son, and while there formed intimate acquaintance with several other clerks who, in after years, became widely known. Among these were Benjamin Thompson, afterwards made Count Ruford by the King of Bavaria, and Henry Knox, a life-long

friend, who became a book binder on Cornhill, and later a noted general in the Continental army.

While Swan was thus employed, he boarded with other clerks on Hanover street. This was at the time of the birth of the Boston Tea Party. Swan had taken a great interest in the stirring events which were transpiring just previous to the Revolutionary war, and all his sympathies were awakened in behalf of the Americans, who were struggling against great odds to resist the tyrannical laws by which the British were trying to enslave the colonies. Under protest, Great Britain had repealed most of these obnoxious taxes, but as a matter of principle they retained the tax on tea. An immense meeting was held in Faneuil Hall to discuss the matter, and it was there decided that the tea in the ships at the wharf should not be brought ashore. Accordingly a party of the "Sons of Liberty," who has been trained as a local militia, disguised as Indians, went aboard of the ship, and emptied three hundred and forty-two chests of tea into the harbor. History relates that while these young men were on their way home from the Tea Party, they passed a house at which Admiral Montague, a British officer, was spending the evening. This officer raised the window and cried out, "Well boys, you had a fine night for your Indian caper, but mind, you have got to pay the fiddler yet." "O, never mind," replied one of the leaders, "never mind, Squire! Just come on out here, if you please, and we will settle the bill in two minutes." The admiral thought best to let the bill stand, and quickly shut down the window. When Swan and his companions returned to their boarding house, with tea in their shoes and smooched faces, they ran the gauntlet of other boarders at the next morning's breakfast.

Among others who were in the Tea Party was Samuel Gore, who lived to the advanced age of ninety-eight years; George Robert, who lived to the age of ninety-two, and Samuel Sprague, father of the poet.

Swan, although he had been trained for some months in the local militia, saw his first actual engagement at the Battle of Bunker Hill, where he was twice wounded. It was said he was voluntary aid to General Warren, but that is improbable, as all accounts of that battle showed that Warren declined command, and was killed while fighting in the ranks, so it is not probable that he would have had an aid-de-camp. Swan was soon promoted to captain in Craft's artillery, and as such was constantly drilling recruits in towns near Boston. He was present at the evacuation of Boston by the British, March 17, 1776. The next day, he was present and witnessed the entrance of Washington into Boston amid great rejoicing, as the inhabitants had been besieged for eleven months. Swan next became secretary of Massachusetts Board of War. During the time he held that office, he drew heavily on his private funds to aid the Continental army, which was then in dire need of funds to arm and equip the soldiers who were arriving in Boston from all parts of New England. He was elected to the General Court, where he took an active part in the stirring debates, in which Massachusetts and Virginia were the leading colonies, and in which plans were being made for future action.

Swan was promoted to adjutant general of the state. At the close of the war, he was a major of a cavalry corps. Throughout the war he occupied

positions of trust, often requiring great courage and cool judgment, and the fidelity with which these duties were performed was shown by the honors conferred upon him after his return to civil life. He was an intimate personal friend of Knox, Lafayette and Washington, and was in constant communication with those leaders. They depended upon his energetic efforts in raising funds, and recruiting men, but his advice was followed by his own and other states.

It seems peculiar, that of a man of Col. Swan's position as a soldier and financier, as well as the distinguished position socially of his family and the honored connections of his children in marriage, so little has been written concerning him in the Boston records. I was fortunate to get in touch with a relative, Samuel G. Clarke of Marietta, Georgia. He was a well-known writer, and was at that time in his eighty-eighth year. He was well acquainted with the Swan family history. His letter was as follows:

Marietta, Georgia, Nov. 10, 1894.

H. W. Small, M. D.

Dear Sir: — Mr. B. F. Stevens of Boston has forwarded me your letter asking for information respecting Col. Swan and his family. I can give more information about the colonel's family than himself, as he was living in France in my early days—that is from 1806 and before. I think he went abroad soon after the Revolution.

James Swan was born in Scotland, and came to this country probably from 1760 to 1770. As a young man, he was a clerk in a book store, as I have heard, perhaps in the same store in which Henry Knox was a clerk, as they were always intimate. My great grandfather, Barnaby Clarke, was a merchant and ship owner in Boston before the Revolution. He had two children, Samuel and Hepzebah. Col. Swan, in 1776, married Hepzebah. There was a wealthy Scot, and old bachelor, named William Dennie, living in Boston at the time, who was connected in business with Barnaby Clarke, and in whose employ Samuel Clarke, my grandfather, sailed as shipmaster. A strong friendship existed between Barnaby Clarke and William Dennie, and the latter having no relatives in America, often said he should divide his entire property between the two children of the former. When he died, however, he left his entire fortune to Mrs. Swan, being instigated thereto, it was believed, by the influence of Swan.

Both my grandfather and James Swan entered the army of the Revolution. The latter became colonel of artillery, and my grandfather, Samuel Clarke, was a major in one of the Boston regiments that took part in the Rhode Island campaign under General Sullivan, which failed on account of a great storm which prevented the cooperation of the French fleet. In this storm grandfather contracted a disease of which he died in Boston at the age of twenty-six years, leaving a widow, and an infant son, also Samuel Clarke. By his will he divided his property between his widow and son and made his brother-in-law, James Swan, one of the executors of the will, and the guardian of his child. His will gave directions as to the investments and care of the estate, none of

which was observed by Col. Swan, and when my father came of age, twenty years after, he was only able to obtain his property by a law suit with Col. Swan. Swan was a land speculator on a large scale, and brought the confiscated property of the Torries in Boston. Among others was an estate belonging to Governor Hutchinson, lying on Tremont street, between West and Boylston streets, which became very valuable property.

Col. Swan was in Paris at the time of the first Revolution. Whether he returned to Boston, I do not know, but if he did, he went back, and spent the remainder of his life in France. He became a heavy contractor for the supply of the French army. Mrs. Swan was with him for a time, but returned home, leaving her husband to follow. She built a fine house at Dorchester, on her estate, near Boston, furnished it with furniture and paintings from France. She also owned three handsome houses on Chestnut street, Boston, for her three daughters, who married Dr. John C. Howard, William Sullivan and John T. Sargent, all of Boston.

Col. Swan had a son named James, born in 1783, who married a daughter of Gen. Henry Knox, and resided at Thomaston, Maine, and died childless. He was educated at Harvard College. Mrs. Swan's daughters had large families; many of their descendents lived in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and were highly respectable people.

Col. Swan transposed his property from Paris to his wife in Boston, intending to return home, but was arrested by the French government on a charge of heavy debt to it. This he denied, declaring the government owed him, but was confined in St. Pelagie, where he lived in luxury on funds sent him by his wife. There he remained until the ascension of Louis Phillipe, when he was released, but died before he could return to America.

Although eighty-eight years of age, I never saw Col. Swan, he having, as I said, gone abroad before my time, but my father's aunt, Mrs. Swan, and her family, I was intimate with. What I have written, I received from my grandmother, Mrs. Freeman, wife of Rev. James Freeman, whom she married some years after her first husband's death; and from letters in my possession, from Col. Swan to my father, in which he acknowledged his debt, and promised payment.

Yours,
Samuel G. Clarke.

At the beginning of the Revolution, Swan was said to have owned two and one-half million acres of land in Mingo, Wyoming, and McDowal counties in Western Virginia, Pike county in Kentucky, and Tazwell county, Virginia. He sold what he could of this property, and devoted the proceeds to furthering the cause of American independence. In return for this service, the state of Virginia redeeded to him all the property on which he had a claim, and gave to him much more lying west of the Alleghenies. This property, like that at Swan's Island and elsewhere, was neglected after his departure for France. Towns and cities grew up on his lands, and not until after his death did his heirs make a claim for these now valuable lands in the courts of that state.

The last attempt was made in 1894, and the following account of that event is taken from the Abington, Virginia, paper, and is as follows: —

“A case involving the ownership of over 500,000 acres of valuable land in the counties of Mingo, McDowell and Logan, West Virginia, and Buchanan county, Virginia, is now on trial in the United States court at Abington. The site of the entire town of Williamson, W. V., is involved in the suit, and thousands of acres of land are occupied by descendents of the original settlers or innocent purchasers. A small part of the land is across the line, over the Kentucky border.

The case is the fifth which has been brought for the possession of this land, and the entire story of the litigation is a romantic one. The importance of the case may be estimated by the array of legal talent engaged in its prosecution. The list includes Judge Maynard Stiles of Boston, Col. Daniel King of Abington, Hon. H. A. Shepherd of West Virginia, W. K. Belnap of Philadelphia, and J. A. Henry of Lynchburg, Va., besides a number of lawyers of more local reputation.

This suit is of historical interest, through the romantic story connected with Col. Swan's ownership of the original tract of land, which was granted to him by the house of Burgesses of Virginia after the close of the Revolution, in consideration of his having placed his entire fortune at the service of the patriotic army. The original tract embraced a vast domain containing 2,500,000 acres, in that part of the territory which now forms part of Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky.

Col. Swan was a man who delighted in large projects. He had formed a close friendship with Gen. Washington in the Continental army, and he had conceived the idea to form a great French colony of the proscribed nobility and their supporters on his possessions here. He went to Paris with this new idea in view. There he met a number of former army officers, among them Lafayette, who at that time was the head of the Revolutionary French army. Here Swan entered into the fast life of the French court, and borrowed vast sums of money on his western possessions.

The crisis in France was at hand, and with the overthrow of the monarchy, came the end of his colonizing scheme. His debts were pressing, and his creditors finally had him confined in a debtor's prison, where he remained twenty-two years. He was finally released, but his friends had fled, or suffered death. He was a bankrupt, and soon after his release, he died.

The Virginia legislature appointed Pierre Dumas of Paris, trustee for the French heirs, for Col. Swan had married while abroad, and had several children. Years afterwards, the trusteeship was transferred to the United States, and was held successively by Josiah Randall, by John Reed, both of Philadelphia, by A. J. Lemoyney of Baltimore, and now by Mr. King of Boston. There are several hundred claimants in this country as well as in France, and the testimony is voluminous, and may consume four or five weeks.”

Col. Swan owned a great deal of valuable property in Boston. There was on the southern side of Dudley street, near Dorchester, an estate of one Col.

Estes Hatch, who died, leaving it to his son, Nathaniel, who was a Tory, and went with other Loyalists to Halifax in 1776. This property consisted of sixty acres of the most valuable part of Boston. It was purchased by Col. Swan, in 1780, for 18,000 pounds, and was afterwards offered to Governor Hancock for 40,000 pounds, but he would not pay the price Swan demanded.

After the war, Col. Swan lived on the corner of West and Tremont streets. This place was afterwards sold and converted into a garden theatre. The house he owned on Dudley street was one of the old pre-war mansions in the fashionable part of the city. In Dorchester, Mrs. Swan later built an elegant summer residence, a part of which is now standing in good condition.

During Swan's residence in Boston, he gave liberal entertainment. Among those who accepted his hospitality were the Marquis de Viomeuil, Gen. Lafayette, Gen. Knox, and others of the most distinguished people of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

Later, Col. Swan became deeply involved in debt, due to speculations that turned out badly. Previous to this he was considered one of the wealthiest men of Boston. To retrieve his fortune, he went to France in 1787, three years after the purchase of these islands, and entered into business in Paris, and through the influence of Lafayette, and other men in control of the affairs of the nation, he made a fortune through government contracts to supply their army. Here he lived through all the dark days and turmoil of the Revolution. He seemed to have retained a most influential position in the French capital during those years of upheaval, when one popular idol would gain ascendancy while it had the unstoppable support of the mob, when he would lose his head on the guillotine, to be succeeded by another more radical still.

During this time of persecutions and debauchery, Col. Swan conceived the humane plan of colonizing the proscribed nobility with whom he had been intimately associated, to his lands in America. He had interested a number of immigrants in this project, and received on board his ships vast quantities of fabulously rich furniture, paintings, tapestries and personal belongings, but before the owners could follow their property, the relentless guillotine had caught them in its hungry jaws. The laden ships put to sea with this treasure, and arrived safely in Boston, where these furnishings adorned the handsome Dorchester mansion of Mrs. Swan, and some of it found its way to Gen. Henry Knox's mansion in Thomaston when Swan's son married the former's youngest daughter and took up his residence in Thomaston, Maine.

One of these ships was commanded by Capt. Stephen Clough of Wiscasset. He was an eye witness of the execution of the French queen, and this fiendish act was indelibly impressed upon his mind. He gave to his youngest daughter the name Marie Antoinette, in memory of her.

Of these ship loads of valuable cargos which found their way into the homes of Mrs. Swan and her daughters, some are still in the possession of their descendents, and others were disposed of in Boston and elsewhere. A massive soup tureen was bought of this family by a gentleman of Boston. If its mate could have been procured, it would readily have sold for a thousand dollars. Comparatively useless of itself, it was eventually sold in the East

Indies. At a period long subsequent, its companion was found in Boston. A pair of andirons of elegant and elaborate workmanship was brought from Paris, and for a long enjoyed a "golden" reputation. Later they became the property of the late George Blake, and after his death, they were discovered to be of brass gilt.

Among the furnishings going to the Knox mansion were three handsome sideboards to be disposed of, and still remain as relics in Knox county. One of these is still in Thomaston, as the property of the late Hezekiah Prince, Knox's agent, and was purchased by him in 1813, when he resided at Mill river, in a house built and furnished by Knox for his son Henry. This house, at that time, as well as much of the general's other property, had passed into the hands of his creditors, and was sold, and bought by Prince. It remained in the hands of the Prince family for twenty-five years, and was then sold to Charles S. Coombs. Another of the sideboards was purchased by Samuel Fuller of Thomaston, and sold to Boston parties.

Prince Tallyrand was conveyed to Boston in one of Swan's ships in 1794, from which place he visited many places in Maine. Among them was Mt. Desert, where tradition says he was born, the son of a French navel commander. Tradition has painted a romance interestingly described by Prof. O. W. Sawtelle in his published records of Mt. Desert.

Mrs. Swan accompanied her husband to France, where she shared his hospitality among the French aristocracy, but in those perilous days she preferred the safety and luxury of her Boston home. On his second trip, Col. Swan came to grief. It was claimed he had contracted a debt of 2,000,000 francs. This indebtedness he denied, and refused to pay. He was caused to be arrested by the French government, then in temporary power, and confined for twenty-two years in St. Pelagie, a debtor's prison, from the year 1808 to 1830. Swan proposed to remain a prisoner rather than secure his liberty on an unjust plea. He proposed by a life-long captivity, if necessary, to protest against his pretended creditor's injustice. He gave up his wife, children, friends, and the comforts of his Parisian and New England homes for a principle. He made preparations for a long stay in prison.

Swan's sincere friend, Lafayette, in vain tried to prevail upon him to forego his designs of living and dying in St. Pelegie; but, no, he was stubborn to the last. He lived in a little cell in the prison, and was treated with great respect by the other prisoners, they putting aside their little furnaces on which they cooked their food, that he might have more room for exercise. Not a day passed without some kind act on his part, and he was known to have been cause of the liberation of many poor debtors.

When a jailer would introduce his pretended creditor, Col. Swan would salute him politely, and say to the former, "My friend, return me to my chamber." Here for long years he remained in prison, until on July 28, 1830, on the ascension of Louis Phillipe to the throne, he was discharged from prison with all other debtors, at the age of seventy-six years. This St. Pelagie was the prison where Madam Roland, of whom Thiers speaks so beautifully, and the infamous Du Barry, mistress of Louis XV, were taken to execution,

and where Josephine experienced her first vicissitude of fortune, as related in the story of her life by Imbert de St. Amand.

With funds sent him by his wife in America, Swan hired apartments in the Rue de la Clif, opposite St. Pelagie, which he caused to be outfitted up at great expense, with dining room, drawing room, stables, coaches and outhouses. Here he invited his friends and lodged his servants, putting at the disposal of the former his carriages, in which they drove to the promenade, the ball, the theatre, everywhere in his name. At this Parisian home, he gave great dinners to his guests, at which there was always a place left for the absent one at the table.

Swan seemed happy in braving his creditors. He allowed his beard to grow, dressed a la mode, and was cheerful to the last day of his confinement. When the Revolution of 1830 discharged these prisoners from St. Pelagie, this brave old man, who had passed through our own Revolution with honor, as well as through the horrors of the French Revolution, one of the bravest of our heroes went with them.

Three day later, July 31, he returned to St. Pelagie to reinstate himself a prisoner, for what could this old man do, who had passed nearly a third of his life in prison? He found his former friends missing, his wife was dead, and conditions had all changed. His long confinement had robbed him of any desire to enter again the world outside, which was strange to him. His health was broken and his fortune gone.

After his freedom, his one desire was to embrace his friend, Lafayette. This he did on the steps of the hotel de Ville. The next morning, Col. Swan was dead. He was seized with a hemorrhage, and died suddenly on the steps of the Rue d'Echiquier, near where Jordan Marsh Co. have their foreign office. No doubt he was buried in Paris, as he was not buried beside Mrs. Swan. He was said to have been a fine looking old gentleman, greatly resembling the great philosopher and statesman, Benjamin Franklin.

Col. Swan's career seems to have had many elements of greatness, which was especially shown by his sacrifices and heroism, and the placing of his fortune at the disposal of the Continental army during the dark days of uncertainty of our Revolution, as well as many deeds of charity and hospitality which characterized his whole life. It is to be regretted that his otherwise noble and generous character should at times have been blemished by his financial transactions. From humble surroundings, he rose to an empire builder, with dreams of luxury and power of feudal times. It is an interesting fact that many great men have vulnerable spots in their armor, and Col. Swan, with his ambitious projects and daring undertakings, his mistakes and shortcomings, must be reckoned from the good he did.

During Swan's stay in Paris, he and Gen. Knox co-operated in their business transactions. On Knox vast domain, he had saw mills, which cut into splendid boards and timber the primitive growth of pine, and this lumber was shipped to France to be disposed of by Col. Swan. Their ships returned laden with rich gleanings of French treasure. Capt. Clough commanded the ship which carried on this valuable commerce.

The following article written by the "Saunterer" and published in the Evening Express, which he gleaned on a trip to Wiscasset, tells in an interesting manner of a tradition of those times, of which Col. Swan was an active participant.

"While in Wiscasset lately, I called to mind a venture of a the long, long ago, which had its location in this sleepy little village, and which savors of romance as strongly as the ocean breezes tang with the salt of the sea. It is a story that the old residents like to tell, and which never grows old in their affection. It is woven into the sad and thrilling life story of Marie Antoinette, the beautiful, illfated queen of France, and is filled with the spirit of adventure.

"Against the town of Wiscasset lies Edgecomb island, which in days long gone was historic ground. For many years it was in possession of the French, and on the neighboring shores clustered a great community for the eighteenth century. Wiscasset was a shipping point of considerable importance. Its broad harbor sheltered many vessels, and other settlements around made it their port of entry. In those days, over on Edgecomb island, which the natives called Folly island, and sometimes Jeremy Squam, old Capt. Decker built a fine and spacious mansion, regarded in those times as a palace. It was really a plain two-story structure, clapboarded, and square, with one huge chimney rising from the center of the building. Until his death, Capt. Decker lived there. He left it to his partner in shipbuilding business, one Capt. Stephen Clough, who found things well laid out for his succession in 1792. Among other things to which he became heir, Capt. Clough received the tight little bark Sally of Wiscasset, whose speed has sent her down in history as a racer and formidable adversary.

"Now the Sally was engaged in carrying lumber under contract from Wiscasset to Paris, and in the dreadful period of the Revolution, Capt. Clough became well acquainted with the French spirit. Over his door on Edgecomb island, and on his saucy bark, the tri-colors waved, and there he dined many a French officer in his handsome home. So it was not strange that the sad and sorrowful arrest of the queen he had learned to honor, should have made a strong impression upon him.

"Capt. Clough was hand in hand with Bennete Claud de St. Pyr, a trusted officer of Lyons, and between them it was known, they hatched up the pretty plot to rescue the imprisoned queen. The Sally lay at anchor in Paris harbor waiting for a return cargo, and the master, filled with youthful enthusiasm and love of adventure, loitered about the city waiting for a chance. Trusties, disguised as longshoremen, conferred with him at discrete intervals and the bold plan was completed.

"Marie Antoinette was to be rescued from prison, and with few of her trusted friends, was to be bourne swiftly aboard the good bark Sally, and then if God were good, Capt. Clough was to take her and her companions safely to his home on the Squam. The captain was eager to begin the work, and not to be discouraged by any mishap. Day by day goods came aboard the Sally, and if those bundles had been unwrapped, they would have disclosed royal

furniture, clothing of the costliest design, all designated for the future use of the queen. When everything was aboard, there was little room for further cargo on the Sally.

“At last all was ready. The signal, the method, the hour, all were agreed upon. Only the arrival of the queen delayed the departure of the bark. For days Capt. Clough waited for the signal. It never came. One day he heard the queen had been removed to another and deeper dungeon. Then, on October 15, 1793, he jammed into the crowd and saw her led, in pure white robe which she herself had made, to the knife to be murdered for the pleasure of the Jacobins. Then Capt. Clough gave up his mission of saving the queen, but his work was not ended.

“During his waiting in the harbor of Paris, he had been in consultation with the queen’s best friend, Prince Tallyrand, to whom she was greatly attached. It was said, with much evidence of truth, that when the Sally came home to Wiscasset, in 1794, that Tallyrand was one, at least, of the passengers. No other ship, as far as known, was in the service of the French commerce at that time, and it is certain that Tallyrand arrived at Wiscasset on that date. From that town he traveled to Augusta, not far away, where he called upon Capt. North, a famous man of that period. Then the Prince went to Dresden, Hallowell and Thomaston. At the later place he was the guest, for some time, of Gen. Knox, and from there he went to the National capitol in Philadelphia.

“For many years the old sailors of Woolwich and of Sheepscot Bay had strange tales to tell of this attempted rescue of the French queen, and of the possession at Edgecomb island of royal furnishings and clothing brought there by Capt. Clough while they were in his employ as seamen.

“The owner of the lumber trade in which Capt. Clough and other captains of this district were employed was one Col. Swan of Boston town. He seemed to have had a hand in the proposed rescue of the ill-starred queen, for at any rate, after the arrival of the bark Sally in 1794, and a declaration of failure of the rescue plan, Mrs. Swan built a fine mansion in Dorchester, and in it the astonished neighbors found such fine furnishings and draperies as they had never dreamed of. Not only were there many pieces of comfortable rich furniture, but there was one bed which Col. Swan’s family always called the Marie Antoinette bed, and many beautiful court gowns, foreign to anything the natives of Boston had ever seen, were at times displayed for their admiration.

“One of the relics of that expedition is in this city (Portland) or has been in years not long past. The late Hon. James P. Baxter, father of the present governor of Maine, and several times mayor of Portland, owned a sideboard of ancient French marquetry, semi-circular in form, and supporting an elegant urn. This sideboard was known to have been brought over in the Sally. When Col. Swan’s son, James, married a daughter of Gen. Knox, this sideboard was contributed by Mrs. Swan to the furnishings of “Montpelier,” Knox’s mansion in Thomaston. It was on exhibition here in 1881, and was bought by Mayor

Baxter. The urn was traced to Chelsea, Mass., and there bought by Mrs. Baxter, and brought back to this city, once more to rest upon he sideboard.”

Col. Swan's wife, Hepzibah Clarke Swan, together with Hon. Jonathan Mason, who died in 1831, owned the Mount Vernon place which Mrs. Swan occupied during her husband's stay abroad. She was a woman of great wealth, and aristocratic breeding, of great personal beauty, of strong impulses—a most marked and decided character. Col. Swan remitted large sums of money to his wife, which were invested for her use, and were subject to her power of appointment. Besides this, she received two-tenths of all the income from her Dorchester estates, and numerous other properties in Boston. She loaned considerable money to Gen. Knox in furthering the extravagant expenditures on his estate in Thomaston. Repeated attempts were made by creditors of Col. Swan to attach her property in Boston, which they claimed was purchased by the creditor's funds in the hands of Swan, but their claims were not successful.

Mrs. Swan lived for a number of years in an elegant mansion later purchased by Benjamin Wells, on Chestnut street, but as stated, her summer home was at Dorchester, where she entertained many of the distinguished and fashionable people in public life in this country, and many from foreign lands. In these beautiful grounds, Mrs. Swan, who died in 1826, was buried, as also was Col. Henry Jackson, the lifelong friend of the family and their attorney. The march of civilization, and the horse railroads in Dorchester ran through this tomb, so the bodies of Mrs. Swan and Gen. Jackson were removed to Mount Auburn cemetery.

Col. and Hepzibah (Clarke) Swan were the parents of four children, viz:

Hepzibah Clark Swan.

Christine Keadie Swan.

Sarah Webb Swan.

James Keadie Swan.

All these children were connected in marriage with the most distinguished families of those times in Boston and elsewhere.

Hepzibah C. Swan married John Clark Howard of Boston, who died, leaving several children, two of whom married in Boston—one to Rev. Francis Wayland, D. D., late president of Brown University, and the other to Rev. C. A. Bartol, the noted divine of West church, Boston.

Christine Keadie Swan married first John Turner Sargent, esq. He died in 1814. They were the parents of Rev. John Turner Sargent, jr., who died in Boston, May 26, 1877. She married, second, Rev. Dr. Richardson. After the death of the latter, she, by the permission of the General Court, resumed the family name of her first husband. For several years she occupied the family mansion of her mother in Dorchester. In early life she was eminently distinguished for her beauty. Her real name was Christine Keadie, but she was always called “Kittie” Swan. She was the mother of three distinguished sons, one of whom, Rev. John T. Sargent, before mentioned, was one of the leading preachers in Boston for many years. Another was a musician of

considerable talent, and also a poet of some reputation. He published a volume of his poems.

Sarah Webb Swan married William Sullivan, a noted lawyer in Boston. She was a most refined, amiable and ladylike person, and her husband was equally distinguished. His elegant manners, kind disposition, and considerate notice of the young, made his acquaintance most agreeable in the refined circles in which they moved, and in their home, where the charming hospitality of this beautiful and accomplished family, made their acquaintance a delight to their many friends and visitors. One of Sullivan's daughters married the talented artist, Stewart Newton, and after his death she became the wife of a Mr. O'Key of New York. Sullivan was a man of education and refinement. He published an interesting volume entitled "Familiar Letters on Public Characters." At the bar he was a pleasing speaker and took high rank in his profession.

James Keadie Swan was born in 1783, and was graduated from Harvard college in 1802. He was described as "A spoiled child of wealth and dissipation, with no business, no capacity, little taste, and no means of earning a livelihood, but for a yearly allowance from his mother." He married, as was said at that time through the influence of "two scheming mothers" Caroline F., the youngest daughter of General Henry Knox of Thomaston, in 1808. She was sixteen years of age, and a most charming and amiable person. After their marriage, Swan took up residence in Thomaston, where he lived "in and on" the old Knox estate, and where his wife endured him for twenty-eight years. For many years before his death, debauchery and drunkenness had left him an idiot. He died March 22, 1836, over fifty years of age.

Mrs. Swan married, second Hon. John Holmes of Alfred, Maine. He moved to Thomaston, where he repaired and occupied the Knox mansion. The second marriage of Mrs. Swan was as happy as the first had been unhappy and humiliating. Mr. Holmes' mansion at Alfred is still standing. It was built in 1802, soon after his first marriage, and was one of the most beautiful of the Colonial period. He was the son of Melatiah Holmes, of Kingston, Mass. At the age of seventeen he felt the need of an education, but his parents were of limited means. He taught school to pay his expenses. After years of labor, he was graduated from Brown University in 1796. He entered the law office of B. Whitman, and opened a law office in the old Webber Tavern. About the year 1800, Mr. Holmes' talent as a lawyer began to be recognized, and from that time until his death, he continuously served in public office. He was elected to the General Court as a representative, and later as senator, and while in the Massachusetts senate, his speeches attracted the attention, not only of the State, but also the nation, especially during the War of 1812, in which he vigorously opposed the position that Massachusetts took in opposing the action of the President and congress, while the country was at war with a foreign country. In 1818 he was active in his efforts to have Maine set off as a separate State, and his support contributed in no small degree, when this was accomplished in 1820. At the first session of the Maine legislature, he was chosen one of the two United States Senators from this

State, and held that office for eleven years. At the close of the war, President Monroe appointed him as commissioner to settle the boundary dispute between Maine and Canada. He also served his state in the legislature and as District Attorney. Mr. Holmes died suddenly, July 7, 1843, in Portland, while attending court at that place. Mrs. Holmes died in Thomaston, Oct. 17, 1851, aged sixty-one years. She was buried in the family lot at Thomaston. She had no children.

After Swan purchased the Burnt Coat group of islands in 1786, he proceeded at once to get this property settled with tenants, and proceeded to erect a mansion, which he intended to use for a summer home, where his family could entertain at their "Island Empire," as they called it, their aristocratic guests, as the Knox family did at Thomaston. But by the time the mansion was completed, he had left this country for France, never to return. His property here was left in the hands of his agent, Joseph Prince, whose wife's name was Joanna, of Beverly, Mass. He came here soon after Swan's purchase, and managed his business, for which he received \$500 a year, and his family supported. He managed the store and mills until his departure, about 1800. After Prince's departure, Swan's business was managed by various agents, and later by different attorneys. There is no record that Mrs. Swan, or any of her children was interested in the property here, and one of Swan's grandchildren, who resided in Chicago, wrote me she never heard of Swan's Island or knew of his connection therewith until she came into possession of a history of Swan's Island.

In Hancock County Registry of Deeds, volume 14, page 485, is recorded the will of Colonel Swan. I make the following abstract from that document: "James Swan, of Dorchester, U. S. A., now in Paris, made in prison, Sept. 9, 1824, proved May 7, 1831. He willed property to his wife, Hepzibah Clark Swan; his sister, Margaret, widow of David Swan of Leith, Scotland; brother Cowper Swan, for services in France; brother-in-law John Nixson, who is employed in the N. E. Glass Works in Boston, for loss he met in removing from Nova Scotia to Boston; oldest daughter, Hepzibah Clark, Widow of John Howard Clark, of Boston; Christina Keadie, widow of John Turner Sargent of Boston; Sally or Sarah Webb, wife of William Sullivan, and son James Keadie, "who has a bad description." Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Sullivan were named executors."

In his will he donated large sums of money to his children, and to the city of Boston to found an institution called the Swan Orphan Academy. Charles P. Ross was appointed administrator, but the estate was declared insolvent. Joseph May and William Minot were appointed commissioners, and they reported the claims against the estate to be:

Joseph Prince, Judgment	\$19,749.60
William Sullivan, trustee	28,866.01
William Sullivan	10,106.95
Jean Claude Piquet	5,841.90
Antonio Furey Piquet, administrator of the estate of Jean Claude Piquet, judgment in the Present circuit Court	126,997.76

William Sullivan's judgment in Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts	547.34
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	197,055.56
Sullivan's claim disallowed	38,972.95
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Amount Swan owed	\$158,082.61
His estate was hopelessly insolvent, for but little property in Swan's name was found.	