

Captain Simeon Samson.

Captain Simeon Samson (Peleg 3, Isaac 2, Abraham 1) was son of Peleg and Mary (Ring) Samson, born in Kingston August 1736; married 1759 Deborah Cushing. She was born in Hingham 31 August 1740, daughter of Seth Cushing of that town. (Note:- In his will, Captain Samson writes his name as I have now written it. In the Massachusetts Archives his name occurs several times and always without the "p". All his descendants to the present time (1864) conformed to the same orthography which is unquestionably the true method of writing the name). In youth, he betook himself to a sea-faring life and performed many voyages in the employment of the merchants of Plymouth. In 1760 he was taken prisoner by the French, in a vessel belonging to Goodwin & Warren of that place. The French captain released the vessel upon the promise of a sum of money and Mr. Samson was left in his hands as a hostage. He escaped in the dress of a female and returned to his family in Plymouth. On the breaking out of the Revolutionary War a maritime force being deemed essential to the successful prosecution of the conflict, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts appointed him their first naval captain. (See Thacher's History of Plymouth). He immediately took command of the armed brigantine "Independence" belonging to the Province which had been built at Kingston under his direction. (Note:- The name of the vessel which was given to her, it would seem, some months before the Declaration of Independence, indicates that a separation from the mother-country was already determined upon, as early as the spring of 1776. The first payroll of the brig "Independence" commenced 17 April 1776. The last terminated 5 July 1777 on the return of Captain Samson from Halifax. His pay in the "Independence" and "Hazard" was 14 pounds 8 per month; in the "Mars" 162 pounds per month, the currency being depreciated. Most of this sketch of Captain Samson is derived from a manuscript furnished by one of his grandsons) In this vessel he was eminently successful. He captured and sent in five prizes, one of which was the "Roebuck", Captain White, in the autumn of 1776. Shortly after this (probably early in 1777), he was himself captured by a British cruiser, commanded by Captain Dawson, after a severe and bloody con-

flict. The intrepidity and skill exhibited by Captain Samson were applauded even by the enemy; and had he been properly sustained by his crew, he would probably have been the victor. The papers of that day state that he was driven to the necessity of running through the body two or three of his men, who abandoned their guns at the most trying moment. One of these was his third lieutenant. Soon after his ~~capture~~ ^{captivity} --- which was spent at Fort Cumberland near Halifax --- (Note:- He was sent from Halifax to Boston to be exchanged 28 June 1777) --- he was appointed 15 August 1777 to the command of the armed brig "Hazard", fitted out by the state of Massachusetts. In this vessel he took several prizes, among which was the ship "Live Oak". In 1779, he was selected to command the ship "Mercury" built at Plymouth for Congress by Mr. John Peck. She was employed to carry despatches to our ministers in France. In this ship, he returned from Nantz during the severe winter of 1780. He was promoted 11 May 1780 to the command of the armed ship "Mars", a larger vessel, belonging to the state. (Note:- The compiler's ^{maternal} grandfather, Thomas Giles, was sailmaker of the ship "Mars" in the ^{sc}ruise under Captain Samson). In this vessel he was also employed in carrying despatches; and carried ~~over~~ ^{one of} our ministers to Europe. These facts show the confidence that was reposed in him. While in the "Mars", ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ he captured the British flagship "Trial". He retired from command of the "Mars" 12 March 1781, and, so far as we know, this was the close of his naval career. Notwithstanding his important service to his country, he found himself in the possession of a very scanty estate, and with a numerous family dependent upon him for support. In 1788, he disposed of his mansion house on Middle Street, Plymouth, and purchased a farm in the neighboring town of Plympton. In that town, he died, of apoplexy, 22 June 1789 aged 53. He was buried upon his ^{own} farm; but afterwards the remains were removed to Burial Hill in Plymouth, where an appropriate monument marks his last resting-place. Few naval commanders stood higher in the public esteem. Few citizens were more respected for their domestic virtues. His will, dated 14 April 1787, proved 3 August 1789, recorded in Plymouth Probate 31 - 26, gives wife

