

A biographical sketch, of Philander
and Minerva Packard.

Feb. 10. 1896. Read before the Historical Society.

Samuel Packard with his wife
Elizabeth, emigrants from ~~Hingham~~^{Weymouth}
Norfolk Co., England, landed in Plymouth
Bay, Massachusetts, in 1638, and became
the ancestors, of a numerous race, bearing
their name. One of the direct-lines of
descent, from Samuel, was Zacheus,
John, Barnabas, and Bartimeus.

Philander Packard, was the second son
of Bartimeus and Abigail his wife, and
was born in the township of Palmyra, Co
of Ontario, and State of New York, on the
29th day of Apr. 1797. His parents mi-
grated from Cummington, Hampshire
Co, Mass, in the winter of 1792, and
established a home, in the then sparsely
settled country, New-Englanders by birth
and reared in consonance with the
tenets of that people, they possessed many
traits of Character, which have been
rightly ascribed to those sturdy colonists,
They were honest, industrious and
frugal, living in peace with their ^{neighbors}
and performing the varied duties of life with
apparent circumspection.

The son inherited from his parents many of their traits. The educational facilities of his boy hood, were far inferior, to those of the present day, but he had a thirst for books. Quick at learning, he early acquired knowledge sufficient, to teach others. - Records show that as early as 1816, he taught in the common schools; some of his scholars being his mates in years; thus he made teaching and studying his business in winters, while assisting his parents, on the farm, during the summer season. As spelling, writing, arithmetic and grammar, were the only branches then taught in the common schools; in all of which he excelled, he found time beside his other labors, to increase his ^{store} of knowledge. I have heard it said, by those who were cotemporary with him, that Phil was usually to be found, 'of an evening' studiously perusing some book, by the light from the blazing fire place.

For further improvement, he entered the Academy at Palmyra. (said academy was located on Church St. opposite the old cemetery, where the Catholic Church now stands)

While attending this school, he decided to enter the medical profession, and for this purpose, commenced reading under the instruction of Dr. Gaim Robinson, a then quite noted Physician of this region, with whom he temporarily resided, He had as a fellow student, one Alexander Mc Intyre who was afterwards, for many years, a Physician in Palmyra.

This reading brought his slight knowledge of Greek and Latin into use, enough to understand the long hard Terms, which doctors, use to mystify their patients, even to this day. He subsequently changed his mind, and decided to become a farmer, for the reason, as was said, that he learned more afflicted ones recovered without, than with medical aid. Of this I am not at all sure, for the reason I suspect was, there was a fair number of the kind, of greedy parents, who very much captivated him.

He was a little fearful, some other one, might become possessor of the coveted prize, if he delayed a claim, till he should establish a practice, sufficient to warrant matrimonial aspirations. A farm would give them a sure foundation for a home, and he

could depend on the yield of the land for the necessaries of life, so he abandoned medical life, for the hard labor of farming, and that girl, who afterward became his wife, helped to strengthen this new found decision, by bringing as her dower, eighty acres of the new land of this town, which required many days of hard toil, and patient waiting, to prepare for cultivation and production.

This attractive person was no other than Minerva, who was the Sixth generation of John and Mary (Mann) Lapham, who emigrated from England, in 1635, and landed at Providence, Rhode Island.

The line of descent was John I, John II, Joshua, Abraham and Ira,

She was the eldest daughter, of Ira and Polly (Beal) Lapham, and was born on Apr 17th, 1801, at the old homestead, of said, Abraham, and Esther (Aldrich) Lapham.

She passed her happy childhood, amid the stirring scenes of those early days, with parents, grand parents, and a host, of relatives, a little Quaker maiden,

she too was an apt scholar, and improved the opportunities of the time.

When grown to womanhood, she attended a select school at Aurora, Cayuga Co., and there received good instruction,

This of course was a Friends school, but with so good a reputation, that some of the gay young ladies, of Canandaigua, were attending, at this time, for the purpose, it was said, of controlling their wild ways.

They were required to obey, all rules, pertaining to the school, for the privilege of remaining.

She always recurred to this year, as a very happy period of her life.

In the course of time, the lives of Philander and Minerva, ran on in the same current, toward the great ocean, over shallows, and through depths, that perhaps, at the time they knew not of.

On the 29th of Nov. 1821, they were married and in the spring of 1822, moved into a log house, on the farm now owned and occupied by their son Cyrus, and commenced in earnest the pursuit of farming. By diligence and economy, they were enabled in time to add adjoining lands to those first occupied, and eventually to gather a surplus. They believed that industry and perseverance, in an ^{honest} vocation, would finally be rewarded.

To the couple, were born in due time a family of five daughters, and two sons, all of whom grew to mature age, and all but one are now living; the eldest daughter dying in her 52nd year.

While the father was interested, and laboring for the maintenance of the family, now dependant on him, the mother was diligent in all household affairs; beside the daily duties, necessary in a large family there was the making of bedding and clothing the material of which was to be manufactured at home, both for summer and winter use, and a supply of which, she was industrious in providing, and spinning, weaving, dyeing and accompanying duties, were duly performed under her supervision, all of which required labor and forethought.

During the school years of their children the parents were actively interested, in whatever would advance the practical education, not only of their own family, but of those surrounding them, and believed that a thorough comprehension of the ^{practical} or fundamental principles of a subject, was far better than any superficial display.

The father was usually to be found at

the annual meetings of the school district, and a goodly portion of the time, was ^{entrusted} entrusted with, and performed, some of its official duties. He desired that Teachers, should be properly qualified to instruct, but knew by personal experience, that the advancement of the scholar, was mainly due to his, or her individual exertion and perseverance.

If there was any part of a school education which interested him more than another, I think it was Orthography; an apt speller himself, he wished others to be the same.

When it was fashionable, to hold evening sessions, in the various school houses, for the purpose of testing the orthographical ^{held} knowledge ^{district} of the scholars, if, in our own school ^{house}, he seldom failed to be present, and if in a neighboring school house, he often caused the big sleigh to be brought up, and loaded, with probably our own Teachers, and as many others, as could ride, and repair to the rendezvous. He seldom participated in the spelling contest, but watched it, with evident interest, and when at last the victor was brought down, would generally give the right spelling of the word.

Believing as he did, that a knowledge

acquired from books. Tended to enhance the well being of an individual, and if the power thus gained, was directed in the proper channels, a more extended acquaintance with them must be helpful, so when the more advanced sentiment of the neighborhood, saw the need of extended facilities, he readily joined with neighbors, and helped, to lay the foundation of Macedon Academy. He gave not only of his means, but of his time and influence, that the institution might become what in its palmy days, it truly was, the equal of any of its class.

In politics, he affiliated, with the Whig party, until its disruption, taking the Anti Slavery wing, which eventually became the Republican party. He was decidedly opposed to the extension of Slavery in the United States, and when the struggle which ensued, on the admission of Kansas, to the Union, he watched results with evident anxiety. Though Henry Clay was in his opinion, a very able man, he refused to give him his suffrage, for the office of President. When urged by members, of the Whig party, not to throw away his vote, by giving it to James G. Birney, he replied,

"I will never vote for a Slave-holder for the office of President of the United States"

He was never a politician, in the sense of seeking office, or in "so manipulating the wires" that certain men should be placed in nomination, regardless of their fitness for the place.

He accepted from his townsmen various offices during his life, such as Overseer of the Poor, Assessor, Commissioner and Inspector of Common Schools. When the American or Know Nothing party, - which was of mushroom growth and decay - was in power in the town, he accepted the nomination for Supervisor on the opposition ticket, and was defeated by four votes.

He was one of the original subscribers to the stock of the Rochester^{and} Syracuse Direct-Rail Road, which corporation after collecting 10% of the subscriptions, and making original surveys, for some cause was abandoned. But capitalists believing such a Railway, was needed for the best interests of the people, revived the scheme, and carried it to completion. He doubled his first subscription and shared with others the profits accruing from the success of the scheme.

In his ordinary dealings with his neighbors, his word was relied upon, I never heard of an instance, where he had made a verbal agreement; with a neighbor, whether the contract, proved to be wise or otherwise, but that he stood ready to fulfil his part, at the appointed time. During his active physical life he was a hard and rapid worker, and when a piece of work was commenced, he was assiduous in his endeavors to accomplish it, scarcely halting for sunshine or storm. Undoubtedly, his exposure to the elements, affected his physique, for he was afflicted with sciatic rheumatism, for about ten years, the disease centering in one of his hips, causing severe pain, and greatly crippling his movements. This ceased in about his 50th year, and he lived to gain an erect posture, and a fair use of his limbs. Though usually earnest, and without levity in his conversation, there was some times a vein of humor discernable. His answers to interrogations, though literally correct, were often quaint, and sometimes misleading to the questioner.

For instance, a dealer in hides, once asked him if he had any sheep skins? and if so, how many? His reply was - Yes - a hundred or more, Where are they? Can I see them? They are on the sheep's backs, and you can probably see them by finding the sheep. Again a migratory merchant called, with wares, of which the supposed customer, could make no use, and said, Good morning neighbor, can I sell you some of my wares? I don't know, you might

He early espoused the cause of temperance, and was a total abstainer, when friends & comrades indulged in the poisonous cup, He evidently ^{fore} saw the result, of an ungovernable appetite, for during an extended term of Over seer of the Prison, he came in contact with much poverty and degradation, arising from drunkenness, and when approached with arguments for moderate drinking, his invariable reply was, it is the first glass that makes the drunkard, During the agitation caused by the discussion of the "Maine Liquor Law" in the early 50's, he used his influence, to bring the liquor traffic under control of the State laws.

In religion he was orthodox, not quite an orthodox Quaker; however that was the house he and his family attended.

Brought up in the Baptist faith, and marrying a Quakeress, some what disturbed his old belief. I have heard him tell my mother, when he thought her too sectarian, he believed a good Methodist better than a bad Quaker, - which usually ended the controversy, as there was but one side to the question.

On the evening of April, 1st 1857, shortly before completing his 60th year, by accident he was struck by a moving engine, on the railway, in Fairport, N.Y. and was seriously injured. He lay through the ensuing night, in a semi-conscious condition, and just as light dawned on the material world, when at an age the intellectual powers of man, are judged by many, to be at their best, the freed spirit winged its way, to the effulgent brightness of a better world. The obsequies taking place in the old Friends meeting house, at Macedon Center, and his remains were buried in the yard adjoining,

The parents were ever friends of the poor and needy, and in many ways added to their support and comfort.

Our mother lived to an old age, and enjoyed the fruition of many hopes, of earlier years. She had greatly enjoyed reading, but when in later years, she had to lay aside the book and paper, she did so in complainingly, and when the eye failed of light, she sat in darkness, with ever an interest in the outer world, kindly greeting all, and always with a smile. She was a life long ^{member} of the society of Friends, satisfactorily filling the positions of Overseer & Elder, and in the faith of this society, she ^{entered} into rest, in the early morning of Oct. 30th 1881, and lies buried beside her companion at Macedon Centre.

We wish not to give undue praise, to the acts or lives of our parents, or attempt to show those lives to have been the embodiment of perfection. They were but human, and subject to the foibles and failings of humanity, often stumbling where others tread firmly and in error where others remained true.

We would prefer that - the record of those failings should be obscured by the dust of forgetfulness, and only the better and more noble traits be brought to view,

The above paper was written by Lydia P. Hane, and myself, for the M. C. H. Society, and read before it, by Lydia, at the home of Myron L. Hoag Feb. 10th 1896

W. C. Packard