

COMMEMORATIVE

BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

—OF—

DUTCHESS COUNTY,

NEW YORK,

CONTAINING

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF PROMINENT AND REPRESENTATIVE
CITIZENS, AND OF MANY OF THE EARLY SETTLED FAMILIES.

—ILLUSTRATED—

CHICAGO:

J. H. BEERS & CO.

1897.

New Jersey, and they had a daughter, Arabella. The next in direct line is Augustine Graham, and his son, James, married his cousin, Arabella Morris, by whom he had the following children: James, Augustine, Lewis, Charles, Morris, John, Arabella and Isabella. James was killed by a fall; John, the youngest brother, served as a scout under Gen. Washington in Westchester county. The others were all active in the service of their native land: Augustine was a lieutenant; Charles was a captain and a member of the Society of the Cincinnati; Lewis and Morris were both colonels and both members of the Provincial Convention—Lewis from Westchester county, Morris from Dutchess. [Year Book of the "Society of the Cincinnati;" "Dutchess County History;" "Bolton's Westchester History;" "Journal of the New York Provincial Convention."]

The second son, Augustine, was the father of James Graham, who married Elizabeth Thompson, a daughter of Judge Jesse Thompson, and their daughter, Julia, married George Coventry. Isabella, the daughter of James and Arabella (Morris) Graham, married Jonathan Landon, their marriage license being issued December 11, 1771, and to them were born five children: (1) Richard, born in 1772. (2) Arabella, born in 1773, married, about 1789, Amos⁴ Ketchum (Joseph,³ Nathaniel,² Joseph¹), by whom she had seven children; she died in 1803, in Saratoga county. (3) Mary, born July 3, 1775, married John Church, and died May 30, 1850. (4) Anna, born in 1771, was the wife of Edward Thomas, the grandfather of the subject of our sketch; she died in 1838, aged sixty-seven years. (5) Rebecca, born March 15, 1783, died November 19, 1844. ["Partial Record of the Landons of Southold," in N. Y. Gen. and Biog. Record, Jan., 1897.]

The grandfather of Mrs. Isabella Landon, Augustine Graham, was surveyor general, and held a major's commission under the Crown in 1700 in Westchester county, and a colonel's commission in Richmond county in 1715 [See "Bolton's Westchester Co. Hist.;" "Colonial MSS. of the State of New York".] He was a patentee in the Great Nine Partners Patent of 1697, and also a patentee in the Little Nine Partners of 1706. His death occurred October 18, 1719. Morris Graham built the first house in the village of Pine Plains, now owned by Isaiah Dibble, and Jonathan Landon built

the house on the hill in the rear of the home of our subject. The farm owned by Augustine Graham has always been transmitted by will, as it has never passed out of the family.

Hiram Thomas, the father of our subject, was united in marriage with Catherine Coventry, of Deerfield, Oneida Co., N. Y., a daughter of Dr. Alexander Coventry, and they became the parents of five children: Julia, wife of Dr. Lewis D. Hodgekins, of Ellsworth, Maine; Jane, wife of John Veile, of Ancram, N. Y.; Charles, of Pine Plains; Robert M., whose name introduces this sketch; and Alice L. The father followed farming, but was principally engaged in iron manufacturing, being part owner of the Ancram Iron Works, and was also interested in the milling business. He died in 1880, at the age of seventy-six years.

The entire life of Robert M. Thomas has been passed in rural pursuits in the town of Pine Plains, and from the neat and thrifty appearance of his place the passerby knows the owner and manager to be a man of enterprise and progressive ideas. In politics he is a strong advocate of the principles promulgated by the Prohibition party, but formerly was a Republican, and has served his fellow citizens as assessor. He is actively identified with all plans for the social and moral elevation of the community, and has the respect and confidence of all who know him.

EDWIN KNICKERBOCKER, one of the most prominent agriculturists of the town of Stanford, Dutchess county, and a leader in local politics, is a descendant of some of the early settlers of this region, the family having come originally from Holland.

For several generations the homestead of the family has been at Pine Plains, Dutchess county, and here our subject's grandfather, Hugh Knickerbocker, was born, and here he followed farming for many years, moving later to Northeast. He married a Miss Stickle, and reared a family of six children: Peter, Valentine, John, Nancy, Hugh and William, none of whom are now living. Hugh Knickerbocker (2), our subject's father, was born in 1801, and passed his early life at Pine Plains, attending the district schools of the neighborhood, later engaging in farming there and at Northeast, and in the town of Stanford, leading the quiet life of a farmer. For many years he was a

member of the New York State Militia. During his residence in Northeast he united with the Baptist Church, of which he remained a consistent member until his death in 1882. He married (first) Miss Mary Payne, of Northeast, and had four children: William, Theron, and Henry, all three residents of the town of Stanford, and Niles (deceased). The mother of these died about 1850, and for his second wife Mr. Knickerbocker married Miss Elizabeth Smith, born in 1817, a daughter of John Smith, a well-known citizen of New Jersey. Four children were born of this union: Edwin, Jennie, Fannie (who married Edward Loomis, of Pittsfield, Mass.), and McClellan.

Edwin Knickerbocker, the subject of our sketch, was born in Stanford, October 17, 1854, and received his early education in the public schools of New York. When a young man he taught successfully in the towns of Stanford, Clinton, Milan and Washington, and then engaged in farming upon land bought of his father. His educational opportunities were good, and he has improved upon them by private reading until he has acquired a wide range of information, and his sterling qualities of character and sound judgment give him great influence in the community. A leading worker in the Democratic party in his locality, he in 1881 was elected justice of the peace, and held the office eleven years, serving in the meantime for four years as justice of sessions in the county court. In the spring of 1893 he was elected supervisor of the town of Stanford, in 1894 was re-elected for two years, and again in 1896 for two years. On June 5, 1889, he was married to Miss Jennie Hooker, daughter of William and Sarah (Cutler) Hooker, well-known residents of the town of Dover, and has had four children: Jay, Asa, Effie, and Sarah. A progressive farmer, he is a member of the Grange, in which he holds the office of master, and he is also affiliated with the K. of P.

GILBERT COOPER, one of the leading and representative citizens of the town of Stanford, Dutchess county, was born in Fishkill (now Wappinger) town, Dutchess county, March 23, 1820. His paternal grandfather, Obediah Cooper, who was of English origin, engaged in farming in Wappinger town, where he also followed the trades of a wheelwright and wagonmaker. He married Miss Maria

Van Benschoter, and by her had five children: William M., Elias, Nancy, Sarah and Tunis.

Tunis Cooper, the father of our subject, was also a native of the town of Wappinger, his birth occurring there June 25, 1787, and he wedded Mary Budd, a daughter of Underhill Budd, of the same town. She was born April 22, 1793, and died April 10, 1825. They became the parents of the following children: Fletcher, born December 14, 1817, died May 12, 1884; Gilbert, whose name introduces this sketch, is the next in order of birth; Maria, born October 2, 1821, became the wife of John W. Sleight, of Lagrange town, Dutchess county, and was killed by a cannon ball at Nicaragua, Central America, April 15, 1857; John was born July 12, 1823; William, born April 2, 1825, enlisted in an Illinois regiment during the Civil war, served throughout that struggle as hospital steward, and died July 7, 1868. After the death of his first wife Tunis Cooper married Maria Myers, who was born December 17, 1804, and died February 9, 1874. Five children graced this union: Matthew, born November 5, 1828, died September 29, 1850; Amanda, born May 13, 1831, married Benjamin Pugsley, of Alamosa, Colo.; Susan, born March 3, 1836, became the wife of Louis Umlauf, and died August 15, 1873; Martin Luther, born February 23, 1833, died January 25, 1873; and Mary, born June 18, 1841, is the wife of William Pugsley, of Wappinger town.

After his marriage Tunis Cooper purchased the farm next his father's, and continued to live there until 1865, when he removed to the village of Wappingers Falls, where he remained for a couple of years. He next purchased a place between that city and Poughkeepsie, where he resided until his death, October 31, 1868. He had been drafted for the war of 1812, but hostilities ceased before he was called into action. On attaining his majority he supported the Democratic party, but after the nomination of President Lincoln, he became a staunch Republican, though he never cared for political preferment. He served as trustee and president of Amenia Seminary; was one of the leading members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the town of Wappinger, with which he was officially connected, and was always faithful in the performance of his duties in both public and private life.

During his boyhood and youth Gilbert Cooper attended the district schools of the town of Wappinger, and in 1842 left the place