

History, James WASON

In the tide of immigration that set into the colony of New Hampshire from Ireland about two centuries ago, came the ancestor of the Wasons. Like the great majority of settlers from that island, the immigrant

Wason came to the wilderness of a new country to bear the hardships and privations and enjoy the freedom and advantages of a land in a state of almost primitive nature. He proved his good qualities as a pioneer, was an enterprising and respected citizen, and became the ancestor of men who today are among the leading citizens of the state.

(I) James Wason, a native of the parish of Ballymena, county Antrim, Ireland, was born in 1711. When a young man he removed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and subsequently to Nottingham, now Hudson, where he lived until his death, August 22, 1799, aged eighty-eight. He married at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, November 30, 1736, Hannah Caldwell, also a native of Ballymena. She died April 6, 1786, at the age of eighty years.

(II) Lieutenant Thomas, son of James and Hannah (Caldwell) Wason, born in Hudson, December 26, 1748, died November 18, 1832. He married at Londonderry, December 1, 1772. Mary Boyd, born May 27, 1749, died October 20, 1832, daughter of Robert Boyd, of Londonderry. She was a granddaughter of Robert Boyd, Sr., who with his wife, whose maiden name was Morrison, emigrated from Ireland to New England about the year 1720 and settled in Londonderry.

(III) Robert, son of Lieutenant Thomas and Mary (Boyd) Wason, was born in Nottingham West, now. Hudson, June 14, 1781. He went to New Boston, April, 1803, to live with Robert Boyd, his uncle, who settled on lot No. 30, near Joe English hill, "being advanced in years." Robert Wason inherited his uncle's farm and resided upon it for the remainder of his life. He took an active part in public affairs and served in various offices. He united with the Presbyterian Church in 1815, and a few years afterwards was elected elder, which office he held until his death. Deacon Wason was a man of great energy, and entered with zeal upon every enterprise adopted to benefit the church or the community, so that he was a "doer of the word" as well as a bearer, and his death, August 7, 1844, aged sixty-three, was greatly lamented and the loss of his influence seriously felt. He was married, December 2, 1808, by Rev. Mr. Bruce, to Nancy, daughter of John Batchelder, of Mount Vernon. She was born October 13, 1789, died July 28, 1863, aged seventy-four, having survived her husband nineteen years. She was a faithful mother, and a woman of many christian virtues. Children of Robert and Nancy Wason were:

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1. Elbridge, see forward.
2. Louisa.
3. Hiram W., born December 18, 1814, graduated at Amherst, 1838, and later from Andover Theological Seminary. and then settled at Vevay, Indiana.
4. Nancy.
5. Mary.
6. Robert Boyd, see forward.
7. Adeline.
8. Caroline.
9. George Austin, see forward

(IV) Elbridge, eldest son of Deacon Robert and Nancy (Batchelder) Wason, was born in New Boston, September 26, 1809, reared in that village and educated in New Boston and at Pinkerton Academy, Derry, New Hampshire. He came to Boston, Massachusetts, March 5, 1832, and entered the employ of Pierce & Gardner, where he remained in the position of clerk until September 1, 1837, when he formed a partnership with Henry Pierce, which continued uninterruptedly until his death, August 19. 1887. a period of fifty years. He was one of the oldest and best known business men of Boston. upright and honorable in all his dealings, respected by all who knew him. He was a member of the Masons, in which organization he held office at different times. He married (first), April 24, 1851, Mary Stickney, born June 30, 1809, died August 15,

1863. Married (second), May 17, 1865, Mary Isabella Chase, born March 30, 1835, daughter of the Hon. Leonard Chase, of Milford, New Hampshire. Two children were born of this marriage: Mary Isabella, born January 11, 1867, married, June 4, 1890, Jesse S. Wiley, of Brookline, Massachusetts. Leonard Chase, born August 5, 1868, married, October 8, 1896, Harriet C. Willis, of Boston.

(IV) Robert Boyd, sixth child and third son of Robert and Nancy (Batchelder) Wason. was born in New Boston, New Hampshire, July 13, 1820. He was educated in the common schools and fitted for college in the New Ipswich and Pembroke academies, and taught school two winter terms, 1840 and 1841, in Amherst and Merrimack, New Hampshire. In June, 1841, he went to Boston and entered the employ of Wason, Pierce & Company, wholesale grocers and West India importers, a firm of which his brother, Elbridge Wason. one of the partners, had organized in September, 1837. After a term of service of about seven years as an employee, Robert B. Wason was admitted as a member of the firm, which on the death of Mr. Pierce became Wason & Company. The business has been prosperous, and now Mr. Wason, at the age of eighty-seven, after sixty-six years of mercantile life, fifty-nine of which he has been an active member of the firm, finds himself senior member of the concern, and in the enjoyment of good health. vigorous and vivacious for one of his age, and still able to look after business affairs with an alertness not possessed by many of his juniors by a quarter of a century. He is a Republican, and a member of the General Theological Library for many years.

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(IV) George Austin Wason, youngest of the nine children of Deacon Robert and Nancy (Batchelder) Wason, was born in New Boston, September 17, 1831. His education was obtained in the common schools. He inherited the ancestral estate which now contains four hundred and seventy five acres, and devoted his life to the pursuit of agriculture. He was engaged in general farming, but made a specialty of raising thoroughbred Devon cattle, in which he attained gratifying success. He lived on the farm until 1885, when he removed to Nashua and resided there until his death, June 21, 1906. aged seventy-one. He kept the farm and managed it until 1903. He was a member of that class of New England farmers who have elevated agriculture to the dignity of a science. His interest in this industry was a more than ordinary depth, and his efforts for the improvement of stock resulted in much gain not only for himself but to farmers all over New England. He was a member of all the leading agricultural societies of his vicinity and of the state. He became interested in the grange during the early years of the organization in this state, and was a charter member of Joe English Grange of New Boston. and served for years as its master. For four years he was master of the state grange, and at the time of his death was the oldest living past master of that institution. To his work the present standing of the order in this state is due to a considerable extent. He filled the office of president of the Hillsborough Agricultural Society, and president of the Piscataqua Valley Fair Association. For over twenty years he was trustee of the New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts at Hanover and Durham, and served as president of the board for over seven years, being forced to resign owing to ill health in 1904. He was the first Republican moderator in the town of New Boston, in which town he maintained his legal residence and voted up to the time of his death.

Few men were better known than he throughout the county and state. He was county commissioner of Hillsborough-county six years, was representative from New Boston in 1883-95, and state senator in 1891-93. He was instrumental in securing the charter of the New Boston railroad, and was its first president, serving until his death. He was a man of upright character, honest in all his dealings, prompt to keep his word, kind and sympathetic by nature, a member of the best class of manhood this or any other state may produce. His interest in public affairs was such that he was many times placed by his fellow citizens in positions of trust and honor, and always sustained with credit the duties they entailed, however great their magnitude. George A. Wason married, September 17, 1863, Clara Louisa Hills, born in New Boston, October 15, 1843, daughter of Sidney and Louisa (Trull) Hills. Three children were born to them: Edward Hills, see forward; George B. and Robert S., of Boston.

(V) Edward Hills, eldest son of George A. and Clara Louisa (Hills) Wason, was born in New Boston, September 2, 1865. He acquired his education in the public schools, at Francestown Academy, and at the New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, from which he was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in the class of 1886. He subsequently read law in the office of George B. French, of Nashua, and while reading his course taught as principal several terms in the Main street evening school. He attended

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lectures at the Boston University School of Law, from which he graduated in the class of 1890, with the degree of Bachelor of Laws. In March of the same year he was admitted to the New Hampshire bar, and at once Opened an office in Nashua and began a successful practice. Later he became associated professionally with George F. Jackman under the firm name of Wason & Jackman.

Mr. Wason has shown a decided aptitude for politics ever since he attained his majority, and has, already filled various offices in the city of Nashua and in the state. In 1887 he was elected sergeant at arms of the New Hampshire senate, and in 1889 was re-elected to the same position. In 1891 he was chosen assistant clerk of the senate and returned to the same position in 1893. Two years later he was elected clerk of the same body, a high testimonial of his fidelity and ability as a public officer. In 1891 he was elected a member of the Nashua board of education, and in January, 1895. in recognition of his services. his associates elected him president of that body. In 1894 he was elected city solicitor, and re-elected the following year; in 1897 he was elected to the common council, and served as president of that body two years; in 1898 was member of the legislature: in 1902 member of constitutional convention: in September, 1902. was elected county solicitor, and in 1904 was re-nominated and re-elected. In 1906 he was elected president of the Citizens' Institution for Savings. and trustee of the New Hampshire College of. Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. He is an admirer of horses, and for some years has been treasurer of the Nashua Driving Park Association. Mr. Wason is a leading citizen and business man of Nashua, and has made an enviable record in the discharge of the duties of the various positions he has filled. He is a member of Rising Sun Lodge. Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. of which he is a past master: Meridian Sun Royal Chapter; Israel Hunt Council; Saint George Commandery;

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Knights Templar; Edward A. Raymond Consistory; Aleppo Temple of Boston; Nashua Lodge ;. Knights of Pythias; Nashua Lodge, Benevolent and. Protective Order of Elks, of which he was elected. exalted ruler in 1903.

(V) George Butler, son of George A. and Clara L. Wason, was born in New Boston, April 20, 1869. After graduating from the Nashua high school, he went to Boston, 1889, and entered the employ of the firm of Wason & Company, of which his uncle, Robert B. Wason, is a senior member. After serving five years as a clerk, he became a member of. the company 'in 1894. He is vice president of the ' Boston Wholesale Grocers' Association, a director of the new England Wholesale Grocers' Association, from 1903 to 1906 was a director of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, is president of the Liberty Trust Company, of Boston, and member of Mount Olivet Lodge of Free Masons. In politics he affiliates with the Republicans. He married, April 20, 1895, Lillian Maude Fletcher, born in 1869, daughter of Joseph and Bertha Fletcher, of South Orange, New Jersey. Their children are: George Fletcher and Richard Austin.

(V) Robert S., son of George A. and Clara L. Wason, was born in New Boston, December 10, 1871. He attended the Nashua high school. Berkley School of

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Boston, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating from the latter institution June 9, 1906. He began his business career as clerk in the firm of Wason & Company, and continued in that capacity until admitted to membership in 1898, the firm then consisting of Robert Boyd Wason, his uncle, George Butler Wason, his brother, and himself. Mr. Wason is a Republican in politics, member of various college fraternities, and was president of National convention of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity held at Washington, D. C., 1895. He married, January 28, 1903, Estelle Sperling, daughter of Ellis Joseph, of New York City.