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Reminiscences of Rhode Island and Ye Providence Plantations (Classic Reprint)

Isaac Pitman Noyes

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Excerpt from Reminiscences of Rhode Island and Ye Providence Plantations

Amos Troop Jenckes was born in Providence in 1809. He was a man with a good memory. Whatever he heard from the older folks he never forgot. He had no inclination to put these tales into writing; but he was a good talker, and of an evening he would relate what he had heard, and what, in the course of his years, was personal experience. Mr. Jenckes had the faculty of seeing the humorous side of things, so in his tales there was much humor. It is doubtful if there was ever a man who, in the course of seventy years, had experience in so many occupations. He had been a clerk in different kinds of stores; he had worked in a printing office; had some experience on a farm; went to sea as captain, supercargo and passenger; was familiar with many things on sea and land. He superintended the building of some of the Brown & Ives vessels. Later he devoted considerable attention to medicine, whereby he became known as Doctor Jenckes. He put up for sale a yellow fever mixture. His mother was a Carter, the aunt of John Carter Brown, whereby he was cousin to John Carter. The Browns, Carters, Crawfords, Updykes, Pitmans, Jenckes and Goddards, all old families and all intermarried. The old Crawford house, now torn down, stood on North Main street near Mill. Captain Crawford, or Uncle Crawford, as he was called, bought the lot at the southeast corner of North Main and Meeting streets. He had his cut timber and materials gathered for building the new house on this lot. While he was off on his voyage the timber would season. But he never returned; he was lost at sea, and nothing was ever heard of his vessel, himself or crew. So his nephew, Captain Updyke, built the house, long known as the Updyke house. Here the family lived for two generations. When this Updyke house was built it was the finest house in town. Next above it was the Carter house - a very large three-story house, with a long back building, which was built for a printing office - one of the first printing offices in Rhode Island and one of the first in New England. The Crawford or Updyke estate, extended from the line of North Main street to the Seekonk River. Benefit street was then known as Back street. When the estate was divided it was divided into three parts, which at that time were supposed to have equal money value.

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