

Thomas Meacham was the noted hunter, probably the greatest that ever lived in the county. He died May 7, 1849, aged seventy-nine years. He kept an account of the animals killed by him, which is as follows: Wolves two hundred and fourteen, panthers seventy-seven, bears two hundred and ten, and deer two thousand five hundred and fifty. His traps were always out, and one day in examining them he found two wolves and a bear and shot another on the way. His bounty for these was \$185. An account of his life and record as a hunter was published by William H. Wallace, editor of the *St. Lawrence Mercury*, December 19, 1849, all copies of which were lost in the fire of 1861. He died in a poor log cabin, situate up the Northwest Bay road on south side of river above Nicholville, just over the line in Franklin County. With all his success in hunting he got along but poorly, living a hard, lonely life. Zebina Coolidge was at his cabin several times while Meacham was living there, and he tells me the following story of the man as it was current in his boyhood days. He says that at first Meacham lived only a short distance up the Northwest Bay road; that after parting with his wife he went down to Essex County and returned with the wife of Eben Call; that she got on the horse behind Mr. Meacham, and as they started off Mr. Call came up to the door with their child in his arms crying and entreating her not to leave him; that she called out to him, "Go back in the house and not stand there like a fool." When he reached Hopkinton the people were so indignant that he had to move up the road across East Brook in Franklin County, where he built a log house in the woods, in which they lived till the end, she dying a few years prior to his decease. After her death he lived there alone. While thus situated Mr. Coolidge made his last call at the cabin. He was in the neighborhood fishing, and as the premises looked deserted he went into the cabin. After he had entered he still thought they were, but presently Mr. Meacham came feebly and tottering out of what was called a bedroom to see who had entered. He was then gray and grizzled and just able to get about the house and yet all alone. From the diary it seems he thus died.

He had one or two children by the wife and two or three by the second union. Stephen Meacham, "Uncle Stephen" as he was called, was his son by his marriage. He married and had, as I remember, five daughters and two sons. He went west, using an ox team and cart, and finally settled at or near Nauvoo, Ill. His wife became converted to Mormonism and joined them. The Mormons took her and the children, discarding poor old Stephen, who found his way back to Hopkinton.