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EDITOR:

A. VAN DOREN HONEYMAN

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## ANECDOTES OF THE SOUTHARDS AT BASKING RIDGE

There is an old frame stable attached to the outbuildings of the farm familiarly known as the Breese property, about a quarter of a mile west of Basking Ridge, which was once the residence of Abraham Southard, who settled here in 1755, bringing with him his wife and his son, Henry, only eight years of age. Abraham Southard was one of the leading members of the church, so we must conclude that the old stable has often resounded with the psalms of the Presbyterian worship. Near the humble dwelling stood the dense forest which covered most of the level land east of Basking Ridge. The inmates of the house little thought that through that forest the boy, Henry, would hew the way to lasting honor for himself and imperishable fame for his illustrious son.

Henry Southard chopped in that woods for 2s. 6d. per day while living with his parents, and thus saved up a sufficient sum to buy the magnificent farm afterward known as the Southard property. It was then but a sorry place, but the strong, industrious arm that earned the land soon made it blossom like the rose. Mr. Southard by his industry in chopping made his mark in more ways than one. His neighbors took notice of his energy and talent and made him a Justice of the Peace, and in nine hundred cases upon which he decided only four appeals were made.

Mrs. Craig, now eighty years of age, living opposite the Southard mansion, relates many incidents of Judge Southard's life. One morning in his chopping days, as he entered the woods, he felt a deep conviction of sin, and the feeling grew so strong upon him that he could not work. He laid down his axe, knelt at the foot of a tree and made a vow that he would never rise till his load was removed. He prayed earnestly and long, and finally, with infinite joy, felt the blessing of God poured down upon him. Through his whole life he remained a consistent Christian. In the Revolution, he shouldered his musket and did gallant service for his country. He was one of the first members of our State legislature and represented Somerset in that body for nine years, when he was elected to Congress where he remained for twenty-one years by various reëlections, and retired voluntarily when past eighty years of age. During the last part of his Congressional life, he met his distinguished son, Samuel L., then in the Senate, on the Joint Committee of both Houses.

The Missouri question was before Congress, and "Sam" was to make his maiden speech to the Senate. Rev. Dr. B. C. Taylor, of Bergen, has given us an account of the scene as related to him by Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen. The latter was passing up the steps leading to the Senate Chamber when he met Mr. Southard, with a note which he requested

him to hand to his son. Young Southard was on his feet, surrounded by the great Senators of the day—Adams, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Benton, all earnest champions in the fight. Before the young Senator had opened his lips he received his father's note and read: "My dear Boy: I am sure you're right; do your duty—be not afraid."

It was something to stand up before this body of great men for the first time and discuss the most momentous question that had ever been before that body; but under the inspiration of his father's words this young son of a wood-chopper bared his arm for the fight and leaped in like a flaming giant. It was a proud day for young Southard. His brilliant speech placed him in the front rank of statesmen. It was a glorious day for old Somerset; it added another star of the first magnitude to her galaxy of illustrious sons.

Dr. Taylor says that while he was attending school at Basking Ridge in Dr. Finley's time, the boys frequently held exhibitions in the church. They had been brought up in wholesome fear of older men, and especially the elders of the church. One youth conceived the brilliant idea of reciting part of one of the elder Southard's speeches delivered a few days before in Congress, supposing the old gentleman was still in Washington. While the youngster was blazing away at a white heat, Mr. Southard walked into the room, and, if he ever had any vanity, it must have been gratified then. The boy did not know of the august presence till he sat down.

Henry Southard, though possessing but limited education, had a remarkable memory. He could recollect every question which had come before Congress while he was a member, and even the different speakers and their arguments. Mrs. Craig says she has often been present at the Southard mansion when several of the most distinguished men in the nation were assembled at table, and was not more struck with the ease and dignity with which the host presided than his ability to correct any mistake his guests might make in speaking of the questions that passed before them in Congress. This, to her, who had known the old man in his wood-chopping days of poverty, seemed almost incredible. Southard's wife was a daughter of Edward Lewis, a shoemaker and a dignitary of the church, who was also father of Hon. Wm. L. Dayton's mother.

Family worship was as indispensable in the Southard family as meals. One morning they had all assembled at prayers and Dr. Finley, who was then a boarder in the house, was found to be missing. He had a long journey to make that day, and, wishing to get an early start, did not come in. Mr. Southard saw him with one foot in the stirrup ready to mount, and peremptorily told him to hitch his horse and come in, as he might

need prayers before the day was out. The admonition was never lost upon the young minister.

Mr. Southard died May 22, 1842, aged ninety-five. He retained an unusual amount of vigor, and till within three years of his death he never wore glasses or used a cane. The room where he died is nearly the same as when he occupied it; indeed the mansion, which is a noble, old style, country house, has undergone few alterations, except that a wing has been added, and the whole is kept in excellent repair. The property is now owned by Albert Albro, Esq., of New York, whose wife is connected with the Southard family.

Samuel L. Southard, son of Henry Southard and Miss Lewis, was born at Basking Ridge, June 9, 1787. There is a remarkable coincidence between his career and that of Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, also a son of Somerset County. They entered Basking Ridge school together, and each remained for the same length of time. They entered Princeton College together in the same class, were roommates, and both graduated with high honors in the same class. Both studied law, young Southard, however, paying his expenses as he went by teaching school. Both rose rapidly in the profession and became known as brilliant men at the Bar. Both served in the Legislature, both were elected judges of the Supreme Court of the State, both were members of the United States Senate in the most brilliant period of its history, and were themselves among the most distinguished of that body. Each was Attorney-General of the State; Mr. Southard was acting-Vice-President of the United States, and at the next term Frelinghuysen was the nominee of his party for the same office. Mr. Southard was also Secretary of the Navy under the administrations of Presidents Monroe and Adams. Besides the unsurpassed distinction he won as a statesman, Samuel L. Southard was engaged in every generous and noble enterprise of the day. As a firstclass public speaker the Colonization and Bible Societies found in him an earnest and effective advocate. He died June 26th, 1842, at Fredericksburg, Va., among the relatives of his wife.

One of the striking features of his oratory was his impassioned eloquence. When fully roused it was like a sea in a storm. He had learned to control a passionate temper in early youth. When about eleven years of age his mother struck him in punishment. He left home in anger, intending never to return. But reflecting upon his conduct he sat down and wept bitterly. Those tears proved the sparkling jewelled drops that lit his way to fame and glory. He returned and asked his mother's forgiveness, and ever after, in the hottest political warfare or the greatest inflictions of private wrong and injury, maintained that self-control which made him greater than "he who conquereth cities."

[*To be Continued*]