

AN OLD PHENIX HOUSE.

Circa 1727 "Mt. Eagle"
Filled With Quaint Relics of Bygone

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THE LE VALLEY HOMESTEAD.

It Now Belongs to Mrs. Harvey Spencer—
Its Priceless Legacies, Dating Back
Five Generations Described.

There is one of the most unique and charming of old houses here to be found, perhaps, in New England. The site on which it has stood for nearly, if not quite, 175 years is lovely. The house is the old Le Valley homestead on Phenix hill, where, in the childhood of New England, Peter Le Valley, a Huguenot of distinction, came, and, settling, was the ancestor of all of that name to-day in this section of the country. It may safely be said that there is not to-day a house so filled with relics of past times as is this quaint old structure. It is now the property of Mrs. Harvey Spencer, she being a lineal descendent of Peter Le Valley, and here Mr. and Mrs. Spencer live, surrounded with priceless legacies, counting back five generations.

Many by whom this story may be read, will recall to mind a most eccentric but excellent woman who inhabited the house, being the last of her direct branch of the family, and residing here alone, Amanda LeValley. What a legion of remembrances that name will recall! Miss LeValley was one of the prominent characters of village life for fifty years, and her home was the centre of cordial, if peculiar hospitality, during all that time. She was just such a one as Dickens would loved to have perpetrated in his writings.

It would be an easy task to describe all that is new in this old house, for there is little of it. A solid San Domingo table in the cheerful dining room is often set this way: white table cloths of linen, for which the flax was raised on the place, batchelled, carded, spun and woven into the lovely old "N's and O's" patterns of a past age.

Several such pieces of table linen are in perfect condition and ready for use; old silver teaspoons, with long, slender handles and hammered bowls, table spoons equally ancient, exquisite cut glass pieces, from tiny wine up to hammered punch glasses; two sets of frail but beautiful china, with numberless odd pieces, not to be duplicated, may be shown. Hanging as plaques on the wall are priceless examples of old delft, while fine brass pieces decorate the generous-sized, old fireplace. If one but steps into a sleeping room in this old home, there one sees a continuation of ancient handiwork, all in a perfect state of preservation. The sheets are those woven at the very beginning of weaving here. When the first cotton factory ever built here was ready to have started up its primitive machinery, Miss Elizabeth LeValley, then a young daughter of the family, because of her expertness in weaving, was sent for to start the hand looms at the mill. She went, and so the first cotton sheeting ever made in a factory here, was made by her. A cut of cloth was given her for this courteous act, and to-day the sheets made from it are in as perfect condition as any new articles of the kind.

Red spreads, immense in size, are here in beautiful variety, all home-woven. One of these is exquisite and unlike any ever seen before by the writer. It is of white hand woven cloth over which is worked in ornate design and rich tufting a charming conventional pattern. The tufted

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In quaint articles of every day use there are old lanterns of tin, with open work designs to let the rays of the candle enclosed within filter through; old runlets, once carried over the wilds of Warwick, as hunters went about for game or husbandmen toiled in the fields, slaking their thirst from the contents of these old vessels; toast racks, fitted to set before the hearth fire with revolving motion for the slices of bread; old pewter dishes and things innumerable.

An old flintlock musket, carried through the Revolutionary War by an ancestor of Mr. Spencer, may be seen. It is 6 feet 2 inches in length, with fierce bayonet and of enormous weight. A piece of furniture, belonging originally to the Lummis family on the maternal side of Mr. Spencer's family, is a most valuable thing. It is a combination of desk and chest of drawers, with the same standard as is seen in the first colonial buffets. This piece of furniture is made of lovely beech wood, stands seven feet high, has fine mouldings, many drawers, some of them secret ones, and is unlike any offered at sales of ancient curios.

A side saddle, just as well kept as if made yesterday, is in the stable loft. On the under side of the flap is still to be seen the business card of the maker, which reads:

"Saddles, and harness of all kinds, made and sold by Robert Durfee, on the west side of the bridge, a little eastward of Jeremiah Fenner's, in Providence."

Can any one give the history of this business first?

On the table cloths mentioned above, the date 1794 was marked carefully and plainly, while the china, silver, and furniture, date far back of that epoch.

Precious old documents, one even going backwards to the time when the first of these old Huguenots landed at Plymouth, and received his title to real estate, is held by Mrs. Spencer.

And what makes this quaint old home and its treasures more remarkable is the fact that not one relic is there, but those which came to Mr. and Mrs. Spencer as legacies from their own ancestors.

Verily, this household has not to go out collecting evidences of the right to ancient and honorable lineage, buying with money that which the circumstances of their forefathers denied them.

The News representative is indebted to the kind courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer for gathering matter for this article.