

INTRODUCTION

It has long been the dream of the Kimball Family Association to produce a continuation of Morrison and Sharples' classic **HISTORY OF THE KIMBALL FAMILY IN AMERICA**, published in 1897. Three reprints of the original have been done through the sponsorship of the Association, but the task of updating that massive volume has always been more than a little daunting. Nevertheless, over the years of the Association's growth, money has been set aside for that purpose, and more importantly, material collected from members on their own family connections to Richard Kimball, the emigrant.

There is always the danger of waiting for "more information," which may or may not ever be forthcoming. It is obvious to all who use Morrison and Sharples that there are errors and many omissions. This is admitted in their introductory passages; too many people to whom they wrote simply never replied, or, were uncertain of their own inheritance. After the original edition was published, Stephen Paschall Sharples conducted a one-man campaign to correct and supplement what had gone into the book, through a family publication called "The Kimball Family News," edited and published in Topeka, Kansas by Gustavus F. Kimball. Interest in the family had been sparked by the genealogy, and he received much new and corrected information. This was carefully located for its proper place in the text, and printed in the News.

But, many people do not have access to the News, long out of publication (it ceased in 1903, after a disastrous flood had literally wiped out the printing presses, office - and information - accumulated by the editor), and that information was lost to them. Obviously, it needed to be included in any republication of the HISTORY. Copies were contributed to the Association, and sources found where runs of the News were available for research. Professor Sharples' work was invaluable.

Printed family histories of Kimballs were also studied, most acknowledged descent from Richard. These also indicated changes in the spelling of the name, particularly those who left Connecticut to settle in the Wyoming Valley area of Pennsylvania; they became Kimbles. They, too, filled in vacant spaces in the HISTORY, although Sharples evidently knew of many of them, as the News indicated.

From reading through material submitted by members it was easy to discover why many of the Kimballs from the New England states were "lost." The early to mid 19th century migration from the "hill farms" of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont to the fertile lands in the opening midwest was as evident among Kimballs as other families. Cryptic statements in the HISTORY relate this, as well; gone to Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, is common. And there, the lines ceased.

These strands have been gathered together, and while no family is ever "complete," many branches have been fleshed out and joined to the main trunk of the Kimball family tree. In the course of sorting through the material submitted, and in the reams of correspondence, it also became obvious that not all Kimballs/Kimbles/Kimbells came from Richard's six sons. We know there was an emigrant Kemble to New Jersey, in 1684, who was no relation to Richard Kimball of Ipswich; that there was an early Anthony Kimble in Pennsylvania who preceded the arrival there of Jacob Kimball/Kimble of Connecticut (and confounds the problems), that there was a Virginia Kimbell whose descendants may be Kimbells, Kimballs, Kimbles, or Kimbrells. Add to this, imaginative, early town records wherein the spelling may be Cymball, Cimbale, or any other variation, depending on the whims of the recorders, and some idea of the stag-

gering magnitude of sorting all the spellings into their correct niches may be realized. It is impossible to tell from the current spelling what the origin may have been. Consequently, the genealogy committee accepts all spelling variations, and works from there.

There are still some mysteries unsolved. Who was Caleb of Wells, Maine? Morrison and Sharples did not know, nor can we make a positive statement concerning him. He may have been the son of Richard' (Henry', Richard'), he may have been the son of Benjamin'. The early records of Wells show his marriage, and that is all. Who were the parents of the Charles Kimball of Vermont who married Edith Chase? Again, we do not know, although those descended through that line can trace back through the Chase family to Richard'. In some instances we have simply added more information to these mysteries, and they will appear in their original locations; unless, of course, we find that elusive "link." We have, unfortunately, found a few mysteries of our own to add. Following "clues" given in the original text has not always assisted in solving them; in many instances these tidbits left by Morrison and Sharples have only proven to be false trails.

The members of the Kimball Family Association can be found all over the United States, in Canada, and in the Netherlands - the latter descended from an enterprising Kimball who left New England for the East Indies. Because of the geographic distances involved, we have accepted, in good faith, the material sent us by members. We simply cannot check it all out from primary sources, and in most instances this has already been done for us. Where vital records were easily available to us, we have checked births, deaths, and marriages. This meant mostly those records available in the Maine State Archives, the New Hampshire Division of Vital Records, the Vermont State Archives, microfilmed early town records in Maine and New Hampshire, probate records, census records in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, printed Vital Records of Massachusetts, gravestone records from many cemeteries in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, and any printed town and church records we could locate. We have used published town histories and county histories with care, as all could not be checked elsewhere for accuracy. Many of our members included photocopied records and newspaper clippings with the material sent to us. There have been copies taken from family Bibles, letters, and diaries. We have land records and military records. From all these we have tried to piece together the on-going history of the Kimball family.

When the decision was made that we had enough material to start, the next question was how to do it. The first thought was to simply provide an update - an addenda - to the material in the original HISTORY. This would have left us with many new branches, and how were we to insert them in their proper location? Obviously, we wanted to add the current descendants into whatever addition we produced. In the end, the simplest solution was the easiest to handle - begin at the beginning, and go on from there. By doing that all our "new" family members could be fitted into the framework already in existence [sic] - the HISTORY. This, however, would require renumbering of some sort. By using Morrison and Sharples, and continuing their numbering sequence and adding letters after already existing numbers would only create confusion. We started with Richard as "1," and when we reached our first new insertion, the numbering changed. As it happened, this was his daughter, Abigail; so, beginning with the second generation, the numbers are different than the original.

Once that decision was made, the next problem requiring a solution was the daughters. Morrison and Sharples were ambivalent; sometimes the daughters are only listed, sometimes they are listed with spouses and children, and sometimes they are continued for several generations. Unless we wanted to pro-

vide a genealogy that would rival the Encyclopaedia Britannica in size and scope we would have to limit daughters. We compromised. As many of the early generation daughters as we could find, with information on marriages and families, are included. This was important; many of those daughters' children and grandchildren married back into the Kimball family. For the remainder, daughters are given with all their children, if they married and we have those children, or, if those children lead to an Association member. Some of these lines are in the form of charts, all we had was a skeleton from which to work; others are complete. And, some are included simply because a descendant married back into the main trunk of the family. This is particularly true in the rich entanglements of the families in Bradford, Massachusetts. Here, the vital records can only produce headaches, more questions, and charts to follow the vagaries of the various Kimballs, Gages, Carletons, et al. In looking at these records it appeared almost *de rigueur* [sic] for a Kimball to marry a Gage, and if those families are further checked, a Kimball-Gage alliance among antecedents is almost certain to come to light.

The final decision made prior to "beginning at the beginning" was to give sources for the information **when these sources were known**. If the source given is [KFAI, it means we are including material provided by a member, and cannot always vouch for it. And, since our sources also include other printed materials, those, too, are listed. Although it is awkward to use symbols and abbreviations for all these sources, it also uses valuable space to list book titles (when that is the source) after each entry. All printed material is listed separately, at the end of each chapter, with the appropriate name given in the text. Vital records are indicated as [v.r.]. Each entry indicates at its conclusion, if additional material was added to the original Morrison and Sharples text, or, if changes resulted from this additional material. There is no indication of the many records checked that agreed with the original, this was simply part of the process used.

And, unless we have found the link joining the various Kimballs Morrison and Sharples listed separately at the conclusion of the HISTORY with Richard', we have kept them in their original position in the new edition. These families will appear in the final volume, with added information if we have received, or located it through other sources.

Finally, a word about the index. No work such as the HISTORY is of much value if it cannot be accessed. Morrison and Sharples produced an index that was easy to use, and if one is dealing with a given name such as "John," it is far easier to find the correct "John" through his spouse. Without the magic of the microchip, indexing would be time-consuming, and far less accurate. For that matter, without word processing, even attempting such a job as a new edition of the HISTORY would be impractical. So, through the blessings of the microcomputer, both text and index are possible. As each section is completed it will have its own index. There will be a complete index of the entire new edition, when, and, if, we come to an end of Kimballs.

Judith A. Kimball
George H. Kimball, Jr.
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