

# EARLY SHREVE FAMILIES.

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## CALEB SHREVE OF NEW JERSEY, HIS CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

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Aside from the dates of births and marriages, and the names of parents and the parties contracting marriage recorded in the monthly meetings of the Society of Friends, it is nearly impossible to ascertain the history of any family, excepting it is of unusual prominence, in the early colonies of the United States. This is especially true of the class known as "early pioneers." The means of disseminating knowledge of current events were meagre, and the motive was nearly entirely wanting. Printing was expensive until after 1800, and mail facilities were hardly known. After the service was established in the more populous districts it was uncertain and slow, and the tax of twenty-five cents on each letter, when received, was often a drain on the family finances, as it exceeded the value of a bushel of wheat. So communication between families in Massachusetts and New Jersey was infrequent, and required more time than now from San Francisco to London. The attention of the sturdy pioneer was occupied in wresting sustenance for his family and his flocks from the fertile soil that abounded at every side, and in taking an active part in the local politics of the day. European emigrants brought little wealth, and when their kindred in the mother country left estates in which their descendants had an interest, before many years proofs of ancestry were difficult to secure, and other technical requirements eventually caused such estates to revert under the laws to the crown.

Markets for extra products were few and often distant. Some of the more persevering and intelligent pioneers had homes embellished with a little more than the domestic life compelled, but the vast majority were not nearly so fortunate. Wearing apparel from head-wear to foot-wear was "home-made." The furniture of the primitive homes was rude and in