VOLUME 1

THE BENTON FAMILY

A HISTORY OF THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY, N.Y. BRANCH FROM HARTFORD AND TOLLAND, CONN. AND OF THE FOURNIER (FULLER) BRANCH FROM QUEBEC

WRITTEN BY BYRON S. BENTON
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
2007

Son of Lloyd and Grace Benton. Born Feb. 2, 1921, Lowville, N.Y. and lived in Plattsburg N.Y. Graduated Williams College 1942 and Harvard Graduate School of Business Education, 1947. Married Priscilla Francis June 7, 1943. U.S. Army Air Corps, 1943-1946. Employed Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and G. Fox Company. Resided Simsbury, Connecticut and Avery Heights, Hartford.

THIS HISTORY IS DEDICATED TO LLOYD BERNARD BENTON
1891-1975

FORWARD

THIS HISTORY WAS WRITTEN BETWEEN 1989 AND 2007 BEFORE THE INTERNET BECAME OMNIPRESENT. BENTON GENEALOGY IS NOW AVAILABLE AT SITES SUCH AS WWW.PAMSGENEALOGY.NET.

PORTIONS WERE WRITTEN AT DIFFERENT TIMES, NOT IN SUCCESSION, HENCE OVERLAPPING AND DISORDER.

THE BOOK EMPHASIZES THE WIVES AND IMAGINES HOW THEY MIGHT HAVE MET THEIR BENTON HUSBANDS.

THE BOOK SEEKS TO PICTURE THE BENTONS AT CRUCIAL POINTS IN HISTORY AND TO IMAGINE WHAT THEIR REACTIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

EVA FULLER, A DESCENDANT OF LOUIS HÈBERT, THE FOUNDER OF QUEBEC, MARRIED NOLTON BENTON, THUS MERGING OUR FRENCH AND ENGLISH GENES. OUR FRENCH ANCESTORS LINEAGE BEGINS AT PAGE 527, VOLUME 2.

BENTONS AND THEIR WIVES WERE FOUNDERS OF HARTFORD, MILFORD, TOLLAND AND STOCKHOLM, N.Y.

THE READER IS ADVISED TO REFER TO THE DIAGRAM "THE FIRST NINE GENERATIONS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY.." REGULARLY IN ORDER TO FOLLOW THE INDIVIDUALS. NOTE THE THREE SAMUELS - SENIOR - JUNIOR - SAMUEL III. THIS HISTORY IS MAINLY DEVOTED TO THE SAMUEL BENTON LINE WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN FOLLOWED BY ANYONE ELSE.

ARIEL BENTON'S SMALL AUTOBIOGRAPHY IS EXTRACTED IN VOLUME 2, PAGE 454 HE WAS A TOLLAND BOY WHO EXPERIENCED THE METHODIST'S ARRIVAL AND WHO WENT TO OHIO. HE WAS NOT IN THE SAMUEL LINE.

Page numbers are in handwriting at the top corners. Page numbers continue on through volume 2. (Ignore typewritten page numbers by and large. Page numbers in the Perpente genealogy are circled).

A note about THOMAS HART BENTON. Some Chapters are embellished with copies of his paintings, which seemed appropriate. He was born in 1889 and was not related to our line. He was from Missouri and his great uncle of the same name was a Senator from 1821 to 1851.

Zebulon Benton, a cousin of Senator Benton, married Caroline Bonaparte and they lived in Oxbow near Ogdensburg, N.Y. in 1840. She was the daughter of Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon. Hence, Lake Bonaparte.

Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2007

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VOLUME !

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*Fourniers changed their names to "Fuller" when moving to Vermont

THE FIRST NINE GENERATIONS OF THE ST.LAWRENCE COUNTY BENTON FAMILY

EPPING, ESSEX, ENGLAND

1595-John Benton-1662 & Mary Southernwood-1660
ANDREW-Thomas-Marie-Elizabeth

CONNECTICUT

1. 1620-Andrew Benton-1683 & Hannah Stocking-1670
John-Hannah-Andrew-Mary-John-SAMUEL-Joseph-Dorothy
*Aron

2.Andrew & Ann Cole
Ebenezer-Lydia-Hannah-John

1658-Samuel Benton-1746 & 1661-Sarah Chatterton-1679
SAMUEL JR-Sarah-Hannah-Abigail-Caleb-Daniel-Jacob-Moses-Lydia

1680-Samuel Benton Jr-1763 & 1684 Mary Pomeroy
Medad-Jonathon-Timothy-Eunice-Mary-SAMUEL III-Sarai-Josiah-Rachael

1717-Samuel Benton III-1800 & 1723-Jane Bradley
ELIHU-Jonathon-Ozias-Thankful-Thankful-Dorothy-Samuel-Zadock-Sarah-Jacob

1744-Elihu Benton-1782 & 1754-Martha Aborn
WARHAM-Martha Submit

VERMONT

1781-Warham Benton-1872 & 1789-Sarah Smith-1869
Daughter-Benjamin-ELIHU

NEW YORK

1. 1822-Elihu Benton-1868 & Fannie Perkins-1851
Fannie

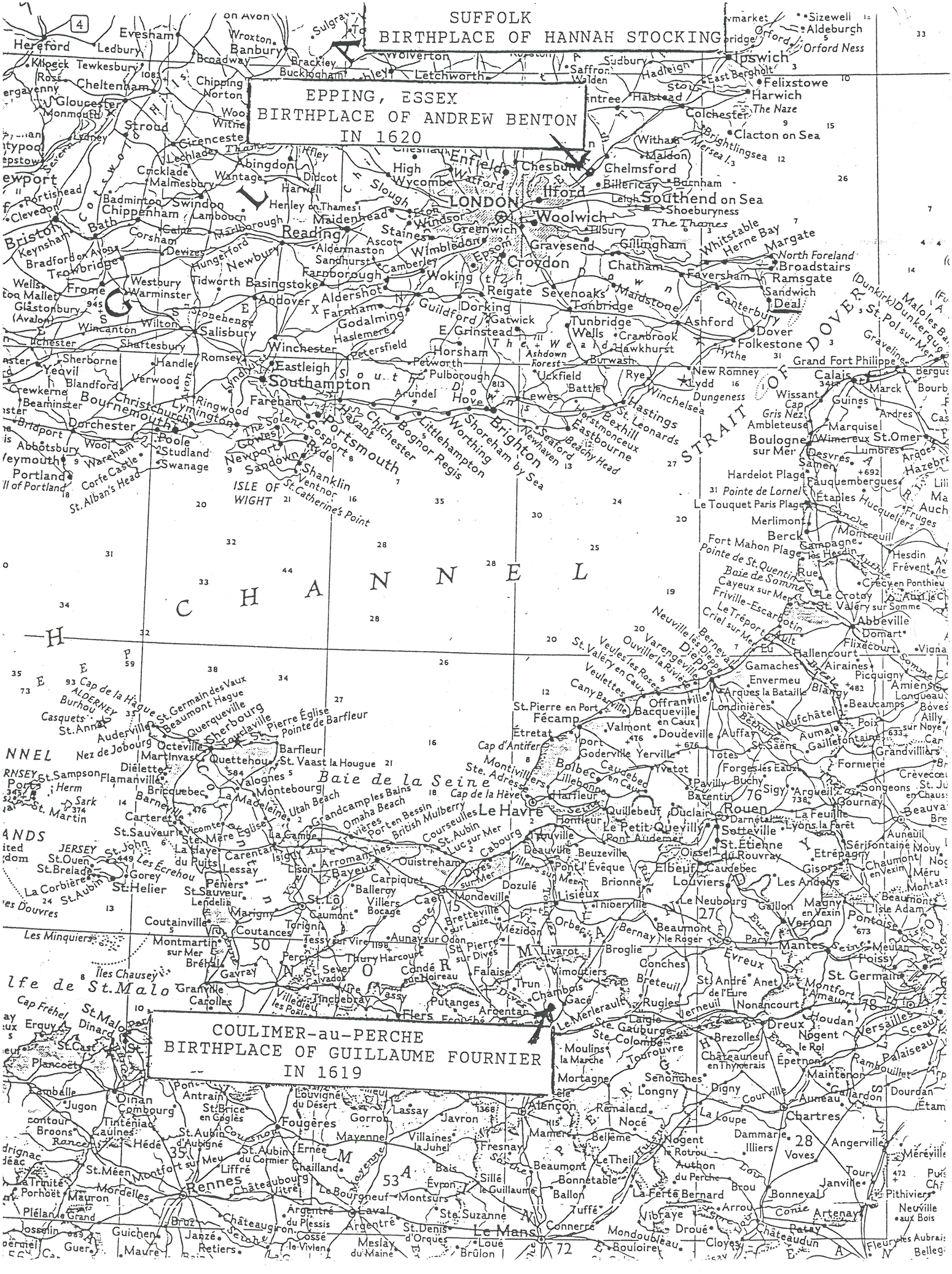
2 Elihu & 1833 Mary Arquit
NOLTON-Elon

1. 1858-Nolton Benton-1939 & Katherine Gary-1880
George-Carl

2 Nolton & Eva Fuller
Gerald-Lloyd-Beulah-Justine

*Aron-his existence came to light in 2006.

Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2006


SUFFOLK
BIRTHPLACE OF HANNAH STOCKING
EPPING, ESSEX
BIRTHPLACE OF ANDREW BENTON
IN 1620
COULIMER-au-PERCHE
BIRTHPLACE OF GUILLAUME FOURNIER
IN 1619
CHANNEL
Baie de la Seine
LONDON
Reading
Southampton
Portsmouth
Brighton
Le Havre
Rouen
Le Mans
Caen
Cherbourg
Dover
Ipswich
Colchester
Chelmsford
Southend on Sea
Canterbury
Folkestone
Calais
Boulogne
Dieppe
Abbeville
Amiens
Rennes
Chartres
Alençon
Evreux
Mantes
Vernon
Dreux
Nogent le Roi
Versailles
Fontainebleau
Orléans
Tours
Blois
Bourges
Nevers
Auxerre
Troyes
Reims
Soissons
Compiègne
Beauvais
Rouen
Dieppe
Fécamp
Étretat
Honfleur
Deauville
Trouville
Cabourg
Lisieux
Bayeux
Carentan
Cherbourg
Barfleur
Pointe de Barfleur
Cap de la Hague
Alderney
Casquets
St. Anne's
Isle of Wight
St. Catherine's Point
St. Alban's Head
Portland
Weymouth
Dorchester
Bournemouth
Christchurch
Lymington
Fareham
Gosport
Ryde
Newport
Sandown
Shanklin
Ventnor
Chichester
Bognor Regis
Littlehampton
Worthing
Shoreham by Sea
Newhaven
Seaford
Beachy Head
Eastbourne
Hastings
St. Leonards
Bexhill
Winchelsea
Rye
Dungeness
Romney Marsh
Ashford
Maidstone
Tonbridge
Sevenoaks
Dartford
Gravesend
Chatham
Margate
Ramsgate
Deal
Sandwich
Whitstable
Herne Bay
Broadstairs
North Foreland
Thanet
Isle of Sheppey
Sheerness
Faversham
Canterbury
Dover
Folkestone
Hythe
Romney
Lydd
Calais
Gris Nez
Cap Blanc Nez
Wissant
Guines
Marck
Grand Fort Philippe
Gravelines
Dunkirk
Ostend
Nieuport
Dunkerque
Furnes
Ypres
Poperinghe
Hazebrouck
Aire
Saint-Omer
Boulogne sur Mer
Ambleteuse
Wimereux
Marquise
Samer
Desvres
Lumbres
Fauquembergues
Hardelot Plage
Le Touquet Paris Plage
Étaples
Montreuil
Berck
Merlimont
Fort Mahon Plage
Pointe de St. Quentin
Baie de Somme
Cayeux sur Mer
Le Crotoy
St. Valery sur Somme
Friville-Escarbotin
Le Tréport
Criel sur Mer
Eu
Ault
Mers
Cayeux
Abbeville
Domart
Flixecourt
Hallencourt
Airaines
Picquigny
Gamaches
Envermeu
Arques la Bataille
Blangy
Londinières
Neufchâtel
Aumale
Gaillefontaine
Grandvilliers
Forges les Eaux
Formerie
Beauvais
Songeons
Crèvecœur
Poix
Ailly sur Noye
Longueau
Amiens
Beaucamps
Boves
Offranville
Bacqueville en Caux
Doudeville
Auffay
St. Saëns
Totes
Yerville
Goderville
Yvetot
Valmont
Fécamp
St. Pierre en Port
Cany Barville
Veulettes
Veules les Roses
St. Valery en Caux
Ouville la Rivière
Varengeville
Dieppe
Neuville les Dieppe
Bernay
Pont Audemer
Quillebeuf
Duclair
Darnétal
Rouen
Sotteville
St. Étienne
Oissel
Elbeuf
Caudebec
Louviers
Les Andelys
Gisors
Étrépagny
Gournay
Forges les Eaux
Buchy
Pavilly
Barentin
Sigy
Argueil
Lyons la Forêt
La Feuillie
Beauval
Bray
Auneuil
Sérifontaine
Mouy
Chaumont en Vexin
Méru
Montataire
Beaumont
L'Isle Adam
Pontoise
Magny en Vexin
Gaillon
Le Neubourg
Pont de l'Arche
Elbeuf
Caudebec
Louviers
Les Andelys
Gisors
Étrépagny
Gournay
Forges les Eaux
Buchy
Pavilly
Barentin
Sigy
Argueil
Lyons la Forêt
La Feuillie
Beauval
Bray
Auneuil
Sérifontaine
Mouy
Chaumont en Vexin
Méru
Montataire
Beaumont
L'Isle Adam
Pontoise
Magny en Vexin
Gaillon
Le Neubourg
Pont de l'Arche
Vernon
Bernay
Beaumont le Roger
Pacy
Evreux
Mantes
Meulan
Poissy
St. Germain
Montfort l'Amaury
Houdan
Dreux
Nogent le Roi
Versailles
Sceaux
Palaiseau
Rambouillet
Dourdan
Étampes
Chartres
Auneau
Gallardon
Maintenon
Epernon
Châteauneuf en Thymerais
Brezolles
Nonancourt
Verneuil
Rugles
Breteuil
St. André de l'Eure
Anet
Conches
Evreux
Le Merlerault
Laigle
Ste. Gauburge
Ste. Colombe
Moulins la Marche
Tourouvre
Mortagne
Senonches
Digny
Longny
Remalard
Nocé
Bellême
Mamers
Alençon
Fresnay
Villaines la Juhel
Mayenne
Ernée
Chailland
Fougères
Gorron
Lassay
Javron
Louvigné du Désert
St. Brice en Coglès
Antrain
Dol
Combourg
Dinan
Jugon
Tinténiac
Broons
Caulnes
Hédé
Rance
St. Aubin d'Aubigné
St. Aubin du Cormier
Liffré
Montfort sur Meu
St. Méen
La Trinité
Porhoët
Mauron
Mordelles
Rennes
Châteaubourg
Vitré
La Bourgneuf
Montsurs
Évron
Sillé le Guillaume
Bais
Ballon
Tuffé
Connerré
Le Mans
Loué
Brûlon
Meslay du Maine
Laval
Argentré
Argentré du Plessis
Château-Gontier
Craon
Segré
Candé
Ste. Suzanne
St. Denis d'Orques
Mondoubleau
Bouloire
Vibraye
Droué
Cloyes
Châteaudun
Patay
Artenay
Toury
Janville
Pithiviers
Neuville aux Bois
Fleury les Aubrais
Belleg
Le Theil
Nogent le Rotrou
Authon du Perche
La Ferté Bernard
Brou
Bonneval
Illiers
Voves
Dammarie
Angerville
Méréville
Étampes
Dourdan
Rambouillet
Versailles
Sceaux
Palaiseau
Meudon
Bellevue
Sèvres
Suresnes
Puteaux
Courbevoie
Neuilly
Paris
Vincennes
Charenton
Ivry
Bicêtre
Montrouge
Vanves
Issy
Clamart
Meudon

HISTORY CONTINUALLY COMES TO LIGHT

THESE REVELATIONS APPEARED SINCE THE BOOK WAS STARTED

Gov. John Winthrop's medical diaries were partially copied on the Internet in 2005, revealing the dates of **Aron Benton's** doctor's visits. He was previously unknown to us. Eight times Winthrop's drugs failed to save Aron's mother, Hannah. Pages 108 & 171.

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The track of the 1635 "Great Colonial Hurricane" that grazed Boston and the **Stocking** family was found by computers in Nov. 2006. Page 36.

Pictured are new French Royal Roussillon regimental uniforms created for the Ticonderoga Fife and Drum Corps, July 8, 2005. Page 309.

Diaries of our family were found and transcribed by **Leona Benton.** Pages 493, 502, 504 & 507.

Were there actually **Fourniers** in Coulmer, France, **Guillaume's** home town then? A partial answer was provided in the Fournier magazine in November, 2006. Page 578.

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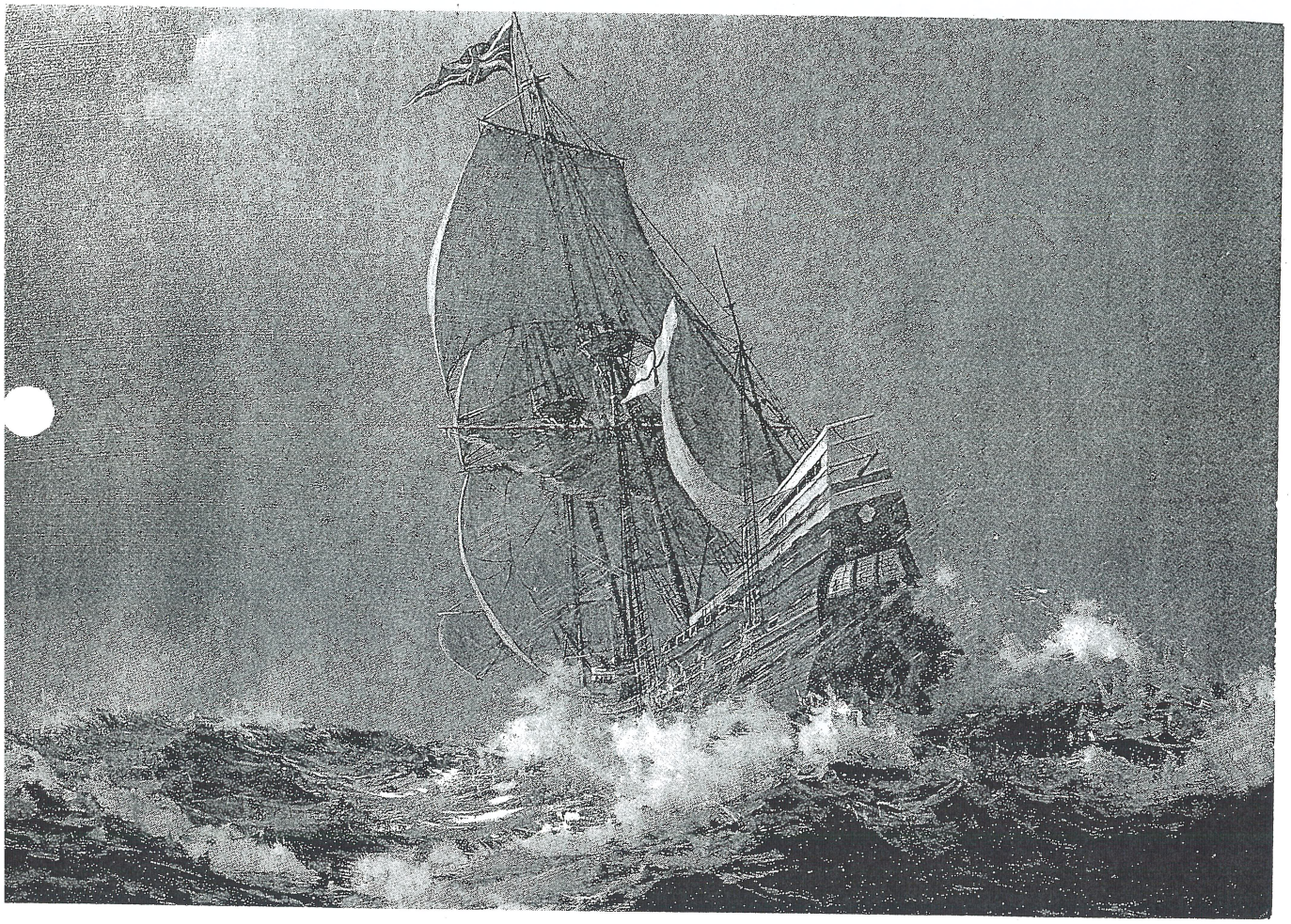
COMING TO AMERICA

THOMAS ROWLANDSON, PORTSMOUTH



WHEN PURITANS LEFT PORTSMOUTH HARBOR THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN PURPOSEFUL NOT BOISTEROUS LIKE THESE AIMLESS SOULS. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE PORT THE BENTONS AND THE STOCKINGS SAILED FROM.

A PAINTING OF THE "MAYFLOWER" SAILING IN FROTHY SEAS 15 OR 20 YEARS BEFORE OUR PURITANS VOYAGED



ANDEW BENTON AND HANNAH STOCKING - SAILING TO NEW ENGLAND

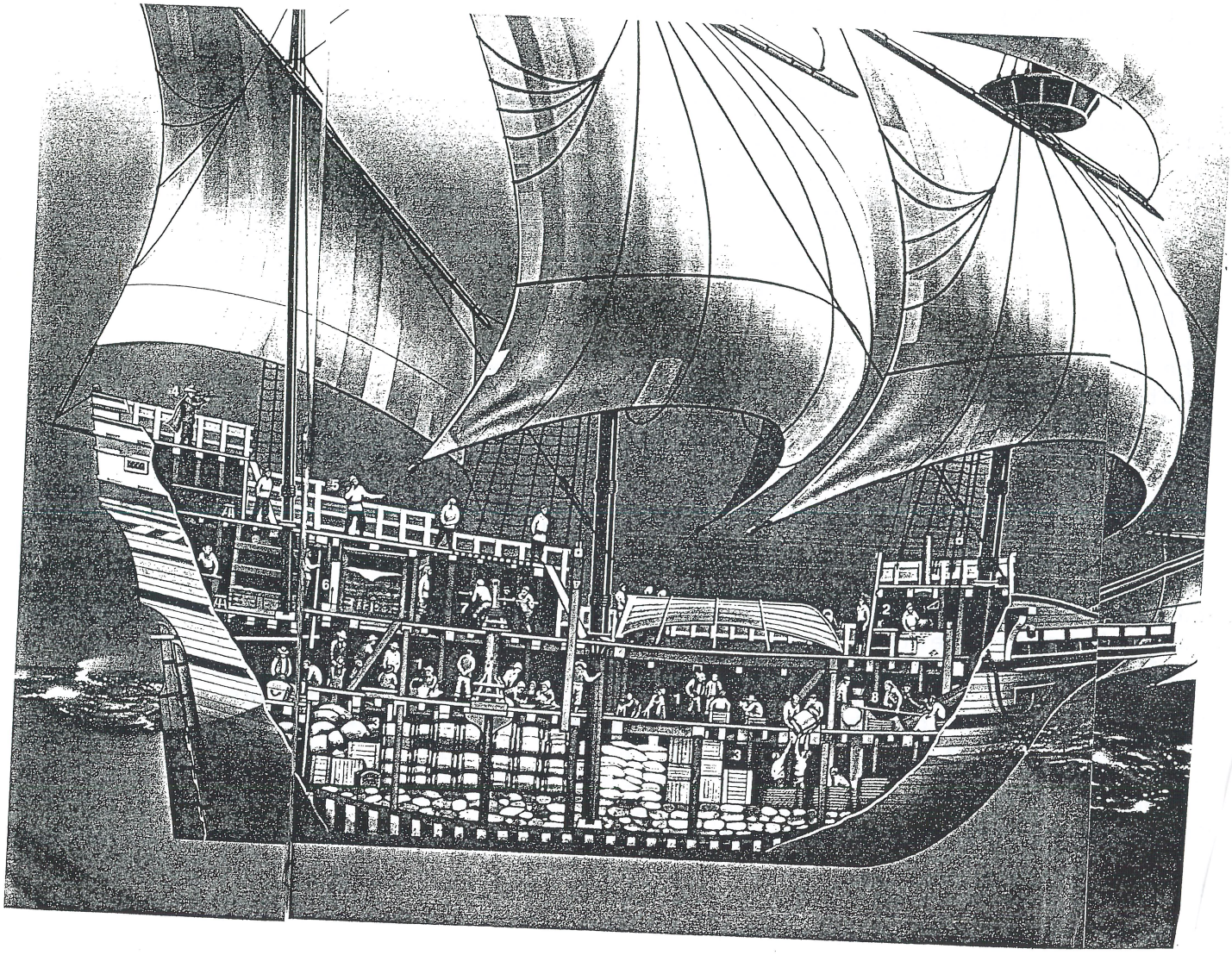
Hannah and Andrew each crossed the ocean in a small sailing ship that managed to couragesly traverse the ominous Atlantic with its frightening storms. By far the majority of these seemingly flimsy wooden craft made a successful landfall in New England. Of the 198 voyages in the 1630's only one resulted in shipwreck. Perhaps it was the skill of English shipbuilders and sailing masters. Or perhaps it was the prayers of the Puritan preachers on board, though many came without a preacher on board, such as did Andrew who came after most of the preacher led groups had arrived.

Hannah Stocking arrived four years before Andrew, landing in June of 1634, we believe. Andrew came in 1638, perhaps. She to Newtown, Massachusetts Bay Colony; he to Wethersfield, Connecticut. She found her way nearby Hartford in 1636. In someway they met as they were destined to.

How long were they in their ships? Many years before, Samuel De Chaplain, in 1610, once made the trip in only 19 days. Our French ancestor, Louis Hébert, sailed across the Atlantic eight times in eight years. One trip took 3 months. Sailing eastward was faster, one trip took only 25 days. Four trips were in Winter. Were the French better shipbuilders or sailors than the English? It is doubtful. The vagaries of wind, tide and weather were the main determinants of the length of the voyage plus the skills of the captain.

The Puritans took the Northern route which was shorter than sailing south by way of the Bay of Biscay, the Canaries and the West Indies. The later route seems to us to be the more comfortable and safer but on the average it took three months and maybe more depending on delays at the Islands. The Northern route took 8 to 10 weeks, perhaps. The Captains probably knew more about that route and we are sure the Puritans were in a hurry to discover their new lands. The Northern route meant heading towards Greenland to avoid the opposing flow of the Gulf stream, then turning West, tacking into the wind and moving with the Arctic current toward Newfoundland and finally steering South to the New England coast. Keep a sharp lookout along there for icebergs! The captain groped his way across with little more than a compass and a backstaff, a device that measured the altitude of the Sun to yield a rough estimate of the ship's latitude. He had no device for determining longitude or to determine speed. It must be remembered, however, that seamen had sailed to the waters off Labrador to fish for Cod for many years before the Puritans sailed. So there was a considerable body of navigation lore passed along among seafaring families.

A TYPICAL MERCHANT SHIP OF THE TIMES
PASSENGERS WOULD HUDDLE BETWEEN DECKS



Shipboard Life

Our trying to describe here in any detail the conditions they put up with would be much too gruesome. The English people were inured to filth anyway so the horrible conditions on board may have fazed them less. They were immune to many diseases so that immunity may have helped. Seasickness was not something they were used to, however, so it may have made the voyage a torment for some. As young people we must hope Andrew and Hannah were healthy and strong enough to put up with the discomfort. They had family responsibilities that occupied most of their time fortunately; Andrew with his uncle Edward's small children and Hannah making an example for her younger sisters.

The very small space in these small craft makes it hard for us to imagine how the Puritans were able to cluster their families together. Each passenger may have had less than 6 square feet and his headroom was from 4 to 5 feet. The ships also had to carry animals to provide food for the journey. The length of the journey, furthermore, was unknowable. Husbanding their food supplies was critical, but consuming the perishables early was vital; a quandary. Beer and wine would have been used at the beginning because water was considered unhealthy, yet rainwater squeezed out of the ship's sails would have been more than welcome if the voyage dragged on and on.

The Bentons May Have Paid 23 Pounds For Their Passage, The Stockings 24 Pounds

One source states that five pounds per person was required and that children between ages eight to twelve may have been charged two-thirds fare, one half fare charged between ages four to eight, one third for infants under four and sucking children "not reckoned". Edward's family of four might have been charged about 18 pounds assuming Rebecka, the oldest, was 10. Baby Edward, Jr, rode free in mother Alice's arms. As noted in a later Chapter, the Shingle Hall Bentons might have subsidized them. In addition to the fares, Edward needed to purchase food for the trip and farming equipment for tilling New England's soil. It has been estimated that an English husbandman such as Edward may have had a net income of only 20 pounds a year.

Based on the above fares, George Stocking's family may have been charged about 24 pounds for their passage. Thus, Hannah Stocking at age 10 came to America at two thirds fare while Andrew paid full fare. The families were about the same size with teenagers Andrew Benton and Samuel Stocking having been charged a full fare.





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Imagine Their Reactions

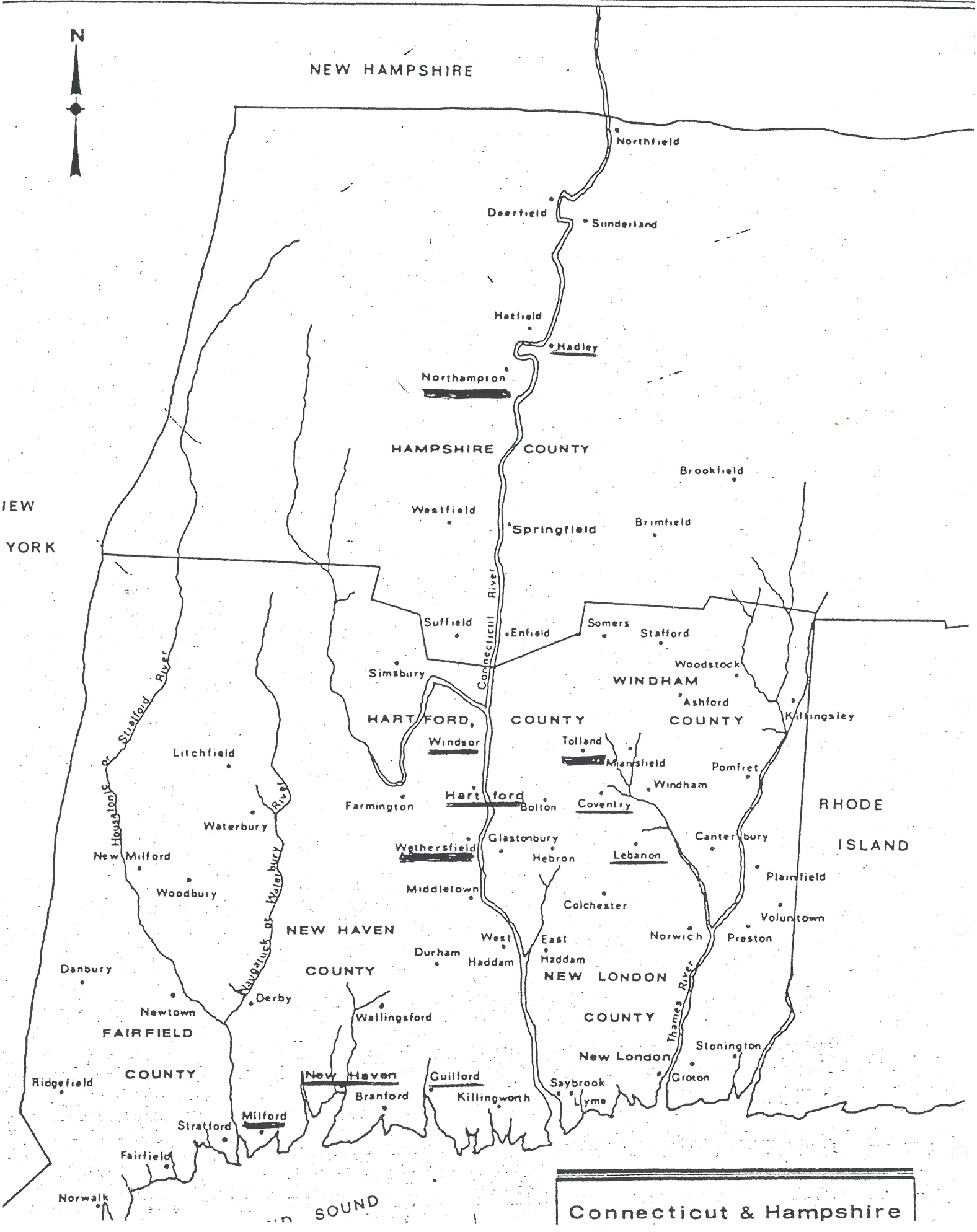
We can't imagine how two Puritan young people would react to such a prolonged ordeal. Their ministers would have steeled them about their deaths by reminding them that it was ordained. So, as far as drowning in the Atlantic was concerned that eventuality was taken care of; not to waste time in worry. Arriving in New England gave them little chance to brag as most everyone had already braved the voyage. Their hardships as compared to other's might have given them some chance to show off.

Their children, on the other hand, should have been in awe of their parents courageousness in coming across the Ocean to found their new land. We hope, Hannah and Andrew told them about it. Each came in a different ship so their contrasting stories should have been interesting. We would like to have heard them but we can only imagine what transpired then.

What transpired then in the lives of our ancestors can be realized only by our imaginations. Very little written record was made. In the following chapters we will set forth the circumstances as we found them in history's stories. **Imagine yourself in those times and places with our ancestors.**

Sources: The Atlantic Crossing, Melvin Maddocks, Time-Life Books
Family Roots in the Old Colony of New Haven, Earnest W. Elliott, F 104 N653, Ct State Library. 1997
Coming to America, Roger Daniels.
Le Fournier, vol 7#3, Nov 2005.

Byron S, Benton, Hartford, Ct. June, 2006.



Connecticut & Hampshire

WILL THE REAL ANDREW BENTON PLEASE STAND?

Andrew, our ancestor, came from Epping England to found our family in Connecticut. We would like to know why he came. For this we have to make guesses based on what was happening in Connecticut and England in those days as there are few facts of his life.

Andrew came with Puritans, but was he a Puritan? Many came who were not Puritans. They came to find a new home in America where there was land to be had and to find work. Many facts indicate that Andrew was a Puritan but other facts about his behavior are puzzling.

Why did he wait until he was 28 years old to join the Milford Church and not until after he had been in the town eight years? Was he preparing for his forthcoming marriage to Hannah the next year? She was Puritan in Thomas Hookers group. He certainly would want to be in church membership so that his children could be baptized! Or was Rev Prudden, his preacher, strict about membership? To achieve church membership the Puritan had to declare to the members of the church that he had experienced some transforming instance of knowing God.

It is assumed that Andrew came with his uncle Edward. His arrival supposedly in Massachusetts Bay Colony and travel to Wethersfield, Connecticut are not known. He was in Wethersfield when Rev. Peter Prudden came there and preached because Andrew went to Milford in the Prudden group. Edward Benton and family, on the other hand, went to Guilford to settle. Significantly the two parted. The fact is - Andrew did settle in Milford. A Chronology may help us understand his life better. (Dates in Colonial period are suspect because of the shift in the calendar).

(In modern times a "Byron Benton" and his son of the same name could be found in Guilford operating a meat market. Clearly, descendants of Edward Benton. There are many others also.)

CHRONOLOGY OF ANDREW AND HANNAH"S LIVES

1600 Edward Benton, his uncle, born in Epping.
1601 Peter Prudden born in Luton, Bedfordshire
1610 Jeremy Dyke became vicar of All Saints Church
1620 Andrew baptized at All Saints Church in Epping
1622 Edward Benton married Alice Purden
1628 Rebecca baptized, Edward's first child
1629 - 1637 Daniel and Andrew born to Edward and Alice
1634 June, Hannah Stocking arrived in Boston
1636 Hannah treks to Hartford with Hooker
1637 July, Rev Peter Prudden's group arrived in Mass. Bay
1638 January, Edward, Junior born in Epping
1638 March, Davenport-Prudden group sailed to New Haven
1638 April, Prudden preached for first time in New Haven
1638 summer, Prudden preached in Wethersfield
1639 Feb. land in Milford purchased by Prudden group
1639 Aug. Milford church organized (in New Haven)
1639 Lot 64 allocated to Andrew (age 19)
1640 March, settlement in Milford began
1640 Sept. Edward's first American child born in Guilford
1646 - 1648 Andrew received more land
1648 March 5 Andrew admitted to Milford Church
1649 Andrew and Hannah married (no record)
1650 April 9, John, first child born.
1650 October, Hannah admitted to Milford Church
1651 Hannah, a child, baptized in November
1653 Andrew Jr. baptized in August
1655 Mary baptized in April
1556 John born in Oct.
1556 Prudden died in July, no replacement
1658 Samuel born on August 15. (town record)
1660 July, Roger Newton, new preacher, in Milford
1660 Andrew and family moved to Hartford
1661 Joseph born
1661 Sarah Chatterton born, Samuel Sr. wife. New Haven
1662 Witchcraft Panic began
1663 Dorothy born
1667 Aron born (source Winthrop diaries)
1666 Andrew and Hannah dismissed from Mil. to Hartford Church
1669 Andrew and Hannah became original members, 2nd Church
1670 Hannah died
1674 Andrew married Ann Cole
1679 Samuel Sr. married Sarah Chatterton
1680 Sanuel Jr. born
1683 Andrew died
1685 Ann Cole Benton died

Did the Bentons come to the New World in 1638 or 1639? A change in the arrangement of the calendar causes difficulty in determining years. Common sense dictates they wait until 1639 so that the baby Edward is a year old. Yet Prudden preached in Wethersfield in 1638 and that was when Andrew heard him and was influenced to follow him to Milford.

Wethersfield was an apt place for the Bentons to come. The town was receiving many migrants and at the same time was the source of migration to begin other towns along the shoreline of Connecticut. Massachusetts probably was seemingly crowded by 1639 as the majority of the 25,000 migrants had already arrived and the towns were well established with less opportunity for newcomers to find land. Connecticut was the "frontier" then for newcomers and because there were so many, land prices were high. So the promise of free land in Milford would interest Andrew greatly. The promise of free land would have prompted Edward to move to Guiford also. It was initially settled in 1639 but there is no record of anyone from Wethersfield moving there at that time. Edward, however, was a transient so his name might not show up in a list. He is recorded as being in the town in 1643.

Wethersfield had been settled in 1634 by "adventurers" from Watertown, Mass. They were thought to have been part of a church originally organized in 1630 by Sir Richard Saltonstall and Rev. George Phillips in Watertown. They were not dismissed from the church there and came to Connecticut without any church organization. In 1636 additional settlers came from Watertown and the settlers established a church. This church became quarrelsome and was one reason why Rev. Peter Prudden came up from New Haven to mediate the dispute. Church records are lost so no one knows the real cause of the dissension.

The arrival year?

The mention of Sir Richard Saltonstall in connection with the Watertown church may be the reason why he is suggested in the Samuel Slade Benton book as the one who organized the Bentons and others to come to the New World. This book suggests that Andrew came to Massachusetts in 1630 and lived in Watertown until coming to Connecticut. After the book was published, Charles H. Benton, while in England on business, investigated the parish records of All Saints Church in Epping and found the birth dates of Edward's children and that Edward Jr. was born in 1638. This date establishes the earliest time the Bentons could have left England. So it is doubtful that Saltonstall had anything to do with the Benton's migration and that 1630 is not the year they came. That year saw the arrival of the Winthrop Fleet and if Bentons had been part of that first group, we would find frequent mention of them. We do not.

The recent 1996 study "The Great Migration Begins" by Robert Charles Anderson covering the period 1630 to 1633 has no record of a Benton. Furthermore, in a conversation with him, he fails to recolect that there were any migrants from Epping during the Great Migration. Raymond Cable of Milford recounts recently however, that Widow Martha Beard was from Epping. She had Lot #54 accross the brook from Andrew. Furthermore, there are no Bentons on ship passenger list of the period.

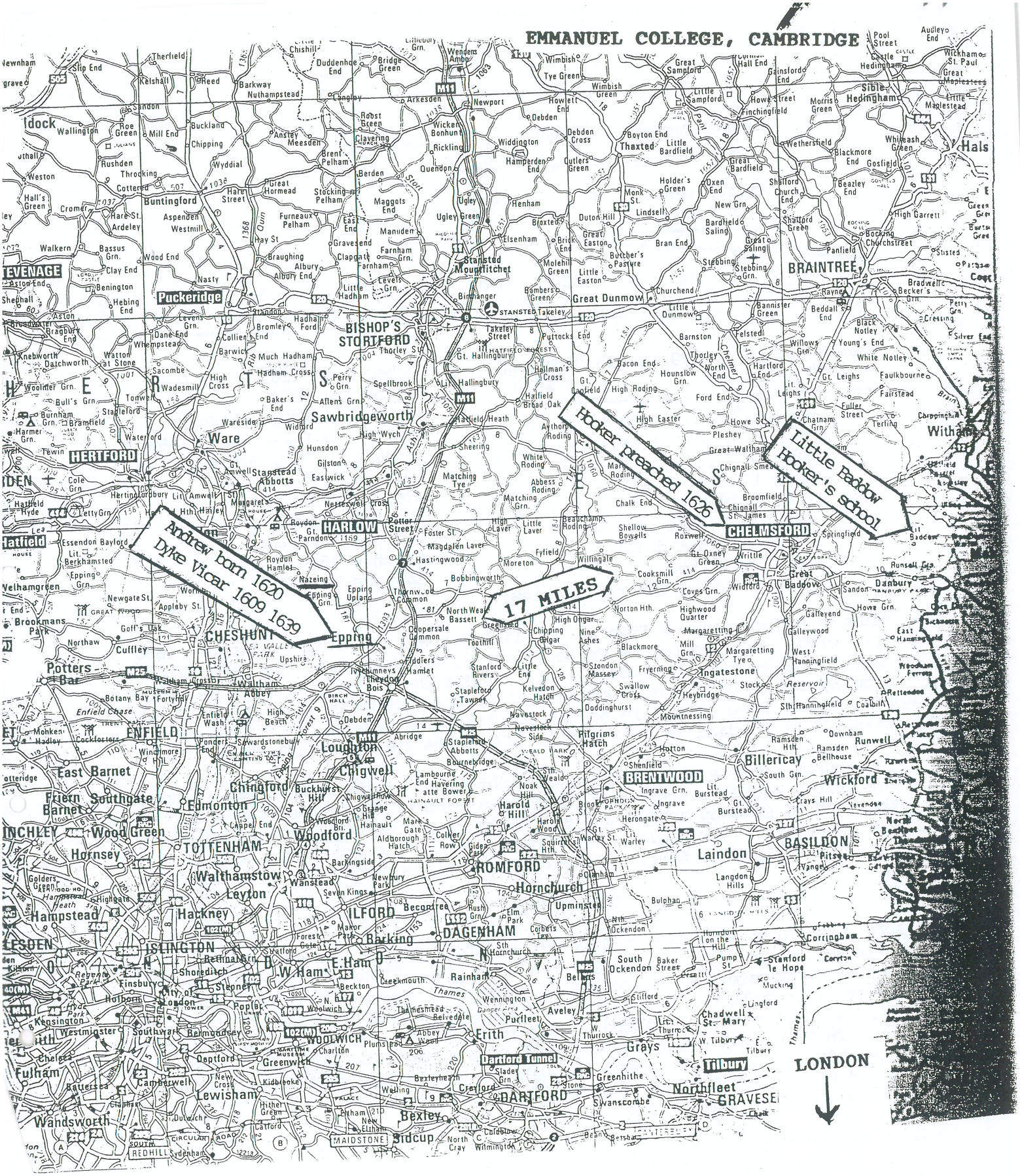
Andrew's Epping Preacher, Jeremy Dyke

In the later part of the migration decade the passion of Puritan preachers to lead their followers to New England seemed to be dying out as Archbishop Laud became more oppressive. Andrew's preacher, Jeremy Dyke of All Saints Church became a Puritan minister not conforming to the Church. He was from Emmanuel college the source of great Puritan unrest. Possibly he was there when THomas Hooker was a scholar there. Later, he signed a petition to Laud on behalf of Thomas Hooker along with 49 other Essex ministers. Dyke went against Laud and refused to move the communion table against the East wall as he demanded. Dyke kept it in the usual place in the chancel so that communicants could surround it and not have to kneel before it. Hooker held meetings for young preachers at Little Baddow after he was removed from Chelmsford and Dyke may have attended them. Hooker, Dyke and Andrew - a fascinating connection.

Did Dyke's preaching influence Andrew and Edward so greatly that they took on a burning desire to leave corrupt England and take up the Puritan cause in New England? Migrating to New England was a popular thing to do, however, and Andrew and Edward probably had mixed feelings; England was too worn out, they wanted land for themselves and they were regular attendants at a Puritan leaning Church. So they joined the 2,000 other migrants that year and came to Boston and Wethersfield.

Dyke was honored by Charles I, chosen to address the 3rd Parliament in 1628 but he preached a neutral sermon. He married for the second time in 1637 at age making it doubtful he had enough zeal to lead a group to the new world. In 1638 he wrote a treatise "shewing the due order of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Conformity or otherwise, we don't know? During this period the Bentons must have been deciding on their future as they considered the departure of Hooker and his followers along with Dyke's actions. He was allowed to be buried in consecrated ground in 1639. His role was ambiguous.

Nazing, the adjacent parish to Epping, sent many Puritans to the New World. "Memorials of the Pilgrim Fathers" by W. Winters, 1882, lists names of Essex men who were made freemen in the Mass. Bay Colony in this period. A "Benton" is listed under Nazing. We have copies of the baptism record of both Andrew and uncle Edward and they are from Epping All Saints church, not Nazing. (The book is quoting a collection of such names made by Col. J. L. Chester).


EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
Hooker preached 1626
Little Baddow Hooker's school
Andrew born 1620 Dyke Vicar 1609 1639
17 MILES
LONDON
BISHOP'S STORTFORD
HERTFORD
HARLOW
CHELMSFORD
BRAINTREE
Puckeridge
Sawbridgeworth
Ware
Epping
CHESHUNT
ENFIELD
Loughton
Chigwell
Chingford
Woodford
Wood Green
TOTTENHAM
Walthamstow
Leyton
Hackney
ISLINGTON
Hampstead
Edmonton
East Barnet
Potters Bar
Waltham Abbey
Waltham Cross
Stansted Mountfitchet
Great Dunmow
Thaxted
Great Bardfield
Great Easton
Dunmow
Takeley
STANSTED
Bishop's Stortford
Hatfield Heath
Hatfield Broad Oak
Matching
Matching Tye
Matching Green
Roydon
Nazeing
Broxbourne
Hoddesdon
Cheshunt
Waltham Cross
Abbey
Enfield Chase
Forty Hill
Debden
Abridge
Stapleford Abbotts
Bournebridge
Lambourne End
Havering atte Bower
Chigwell Row
Buckhurst Hill
Woodford Bridge
Aldborough Hatch
Collier Row
Harold Hill
Harold Wood
Romford
Gidea Park
Squirrels Hth
Warley
Brentwood
Ingrave
Herongate
Billericay
Laindon
Basildon
Wickford
Runwell
Ramsden Hth
Ramsden Bellhouse
Downham
Shenfield
Hutton
Ingrave Grn.
Lit Burstead
Gt Burstead
Crays Hill
Pitsea
Vange
Langdon Hills
Bulphan
Upminster
Hornchurch
Dagenham
Barking
Ilford
Becontree
Rush Grn
Elm Park
Corbets Tey
Nth Ockendon
Sth Ockendon
Baker Street
Pump St
Stanford le Hope
Corringham
Mucking
Lingford
Chadwell St Mary
Tilbury
Grays
Purfleet
Aveley
Rainham
Wennington
Belvedere
Erith
Thamesmead
Abbey Wood
Plumstead
Woolwich
Charlton
Greenwich
Deptford
Blackwall Tunnel
Dartford Tunnel
Dartford
Greenhithe
Northfleet
Gravesend
Swanscombe
Bexley
Sidcup
Crayford
Slade Grn
Welling
Bexleyheath
Eltham
Lewisham
New Cross
Kidbrooke
Blackheath
Camberwell
Peckham
Dulwich
Brixton
Clapham
Battersea
Chelsea
Fulham
Wandsworth
Putney
Kensington
Westminster
Southwark
Bermondsey
Rotherhithe
Shoreditch
Stepney
Finsbury
City of London
Holborn
Poplar
Limehouse
Wapping
Whitechapel
Aldgate
Bethnal Grn
Hackney Wick
Stratford
West Ham
East Ham
Forest Gate
Manor Park
Wanstead
Seven Kings
Ilford
Goodmayes
Chadwell Hth
Newbury Park
Barkingside
Fairlop
Hainault
Chigwell Hill
Grange Hill
Woodford Grn
Chapel End
Wood Green
Alexandra Palace
Muswell Hill
Highgate
Golders Green
Hendon
Finchley
Mill Hill
Edgware
Stanmore
Harrow
Wembley
Willesden
Kilburn
Paddington
Hyde Park
Kensington
Chelsea
Fulham
Battersea
Clapham
Brixton
Dulwich
Camberwell
Peckham
New Cross
Lewisham
Blackheath
Greenwich
Deptford
Woolwich
Charlton
Plumstead
Abbey Wood
Thamesmead
Belvedere
Erith
Crayford
Bexleyheath
Welling
Bexley
Sidcup
Eltham
Lee
Catford
Sydenham
Penge
Beckenham
Bromley
Orpington
Chislehurst
Sidcup
Dartford
Gravesend
Northfleet
Swanscombe
Greenhithe
Stone
Slade Grn
Tilbury
Grays
Chadwell St Mary
Lingford
Mucking
Stanford le Hope
Corringham
Fobbing
Horndon on the Hill
Basildon
Billericay
Wickford
Runwell
Ramsden Hth
Ramsden Bellhouse
Downham
Shenfield
Hutton
Ingrave Grn.
Lit Burstead
Gt Burstead
Crays Hill
Pitsea
Vange
Langdon Hills
Bulphan
Upminster
Hornchurch
Dagenham
Barking
Ilford
Becontree
Rush Grn
Elm Park
Corbets Tey
Nth Ockendon
Sth Ockendon
Baker Street
Pump St
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Chadwell St Mary
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Dartford
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Northfleet
Gravesend
Swanscombe
Bexley
Sidcup
Crayford
Slade Grn
Welling
Bexleyheath

ANDREW BENTON'S EPPING ROOTS

Edward Benton d 1605 m 1563 Joane Halloway b 1564 d 1599

↓

Andrew Benton b 1565 m Mary _____ d 1642

John Benton b 1595 m 1618 d 1662 Mary Southernwood d 1660

Edward Benton b 1600 d 1680 Guilford m 1626 Alice Purden

↓

Andrew Benton b 1620 d 1683 m 1649 Hannah Stocking d 1670

↓

John b 1650 d 1650
Hannah b 1651 d 1669
Andrew Jr. b 1653 d 1704
Mary b 1655 d 1752
John b 1656 dy
Samuell b 1658 d 1746
Joseph b 1661 d 1753
Dorothy b 1663
Aron b 1667 (Winthrop diaries)

Rebecka b 1628
Daniel d 1672
Andrew d 1714 Guilford
*Edward b 1/27/1638 d 1698
Hannah b 1640 Guilford
Mary b 1642 "
John b 1643 "
Tabitha b 1645 "
Elizabeth b 1647 "
Sarah b 1650 "
Zacheus b 1652 "

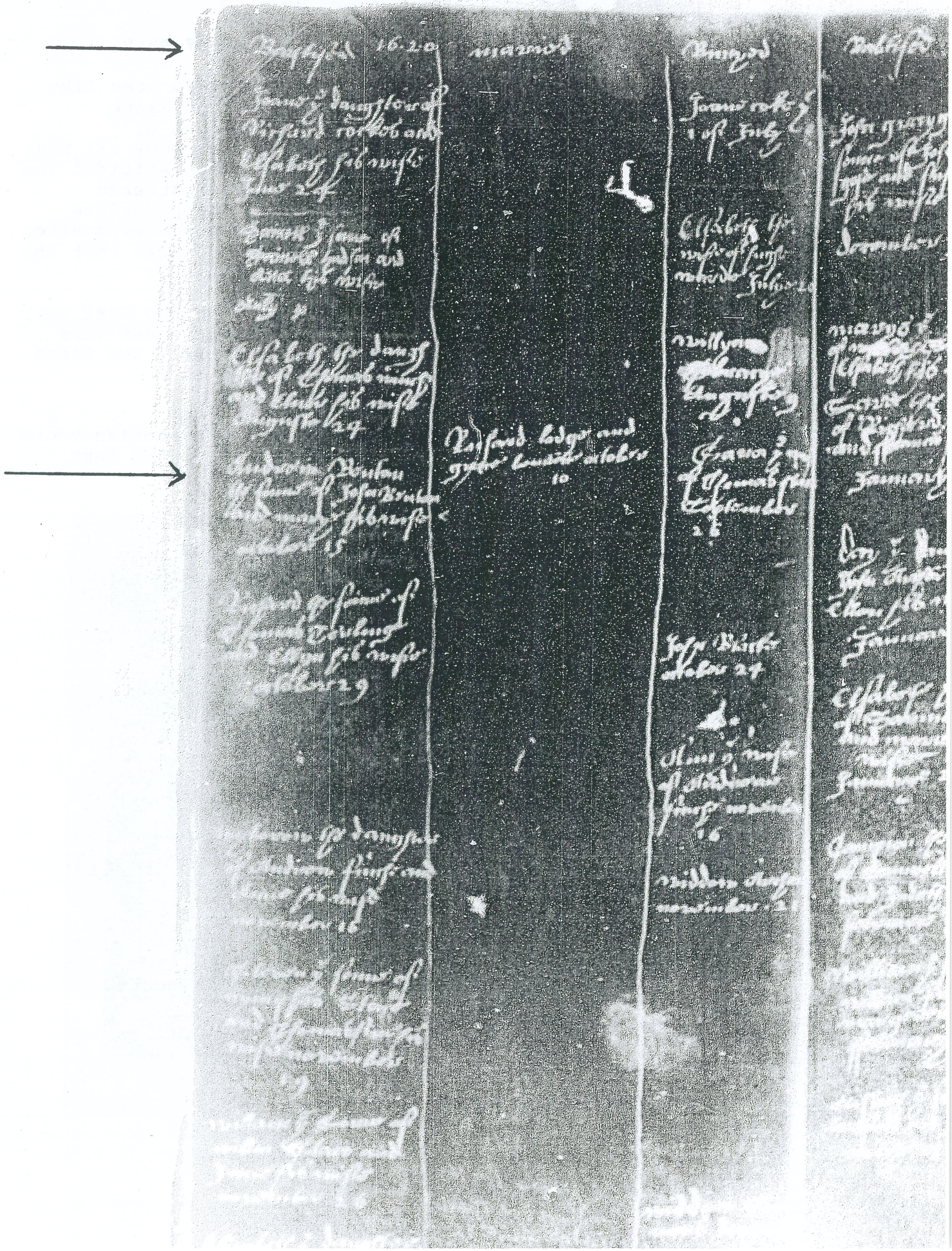
*Edward Benton, son of Edward and Alice Purden, was born in January 1638 in EPPING. Sailing to New England had to be after that. The next child, Hannah, was born in September 1640 in GUILFORD - a 32 month window to travel from Epping to Guilford. Edward's first four children are assumed to be baptized by Dyke. There is no date of death for Alice, but "Anne, wife of Edward Benton" died in Guilford in 1671. The fate of Alice is not known.

The church records above give no insight about the Benton's life in Epping. One writer suggests they were "crestless yeomen" tillers of the soil. If so, they had to somehow accumulate sufficient money to buy passage and supplies for a voyage to New England for Andrew and all the children. Perhaps one of Shingle Hall family of Bentons, below, helped?

SHINGLE HALL

Another insight into Epping life showns another John Benton acquired a large manor farm called "Shingle Hall" in 1562. This date suggests he would have been either a brother or uncle of Edward. "Shingle Hall" was derived from a lease granted by the King on "La Chinglodehall." It was the third largest manor in Epping - comprising 150 to 250 acres, much of it farm land. In 1570 John Benton willed half of the manor to his wife Agnes. The ownership of the manor passed through two generations of Andrew Bentons to end with Ralph Benton. The building was demolished in 1899 but a few cottages still remain there.

RECORD OF ANDREW'S BIRTH.
His name appears legible as does John, his father



WHERE EDWARD BENTON WAS MARRIED BY JEREMY DYKE

A small porch as shown at the South wall may well have been like one under which Jeremy Dyke married Edward Benton and Alice Purden in 1626. That was a custom in the past because of sentiments about women in the church. After the ceremony all went inside for mass to solemnize the marriage. The porch shielded the couple and minister from the elements. Townspeople gathered outside the church to celebrate noisily and make inappropriate calls. This 1808 engraving continued to show the porch even after many church renovations. The contemporary postcard shows that the porch is still authentic and preserved.

English churches were built so that the altar was on the East wall in the direction of the rising sun to signify hope and new life as Christ did. One entered the church at the West wall and faced the altar with reverence. The South door was used as a convenience; not sacred as the West door.

A restoration of the church occurred in 1722 and a historian wrote that the communion table was still at a distance from the East wall as Dyke had placed it!



SOUTH VIEW OF EPPING CHURCH.

KNOWN BY ANDREW'S PARENTS

The oldest and most striking memorial is the brass on the south wall of the chancel in memory of Thomas Palmer. He was Professor of Common Law at Cambridge, and died in 1621, having lived at Gills, the moated farmhouse 1500 yards south west of the church. The Latin inscription reads:

> You who behold (this tomb) are dust destined to die.
> I am dust that is dead.
> Your fate is much worse than mine. The tainted world has you in its grasp, I am held by the starry heavens.
> Your life is death for you; my death is life for me.
> Learn how to die while you (yet) live, that you may be able to find life when you die.
> Thus will life not be burdensome, nor death sorrowful.

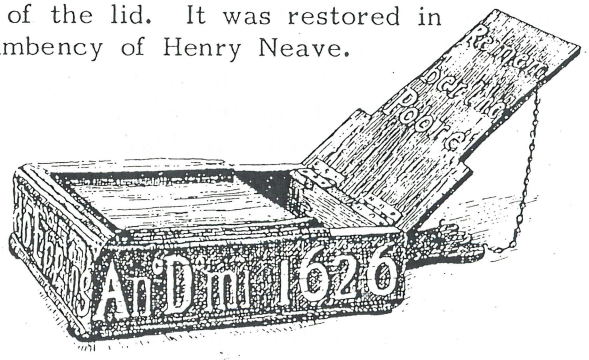
The left hand banner reads 'Life is the way into death; death is the gateway to life', and the right 'Do not deem him dead who is alive in heaven'.



HERE LIETH INTERRED Y^E BODY OF THOMAS PALMER ESQVIRE IN HIS YOVTH A STVDIENT AND SCHOLLER IN THAT FAMOVS NVRSERYE OF LEARNING S^CT IOHNS COLLEDGE IN CAMBRIDGE AND AFTERWARDS A PROFESSOR OF THAT ILLVSTRIOVS & FLOVRISHING SCYENCE OF Y^E COMMON LAWE. & AN VTTER BARRESTER OF THAT RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL SOCYETIE OF LINCOLNES INNE, (THE THIRD SONE OF HENRY PALMER OF DEWSHALL IN Y^E PISHE OF LAMBORNE IN THIS COUNTY ESQ^R DECEASED.) WHOVT ISSVE CHANGED THIS LIFE FOR IMMORTALLITIE AT HIS THEN DWELLINGE HOVSE CALLED GILLES IN THIS PARRISHE Y^E 28 DAY OF MAY 1621 LEAVING IOANE HIS BELOVED WIFE HIS SOLE EXECVTRIX Y^E DAVGHTER & HEYRE OF IOHN HOGBEN OF Y^E CITTYE OF CANTERBVRYE MARCHANT. WHO AT HER PROPER COSTE IN TOKEN OF Y^E TRVE LOVE & AFFECTION TO HER DEARE HVSBAND DEPARTED HATH CAVSED THIS MONVMENT TO BE ERECTED

FROM ANDREW'S TIME

An almsbox originates from the days of Jeremiah Dyke as Vicar (1609-1639), and is dated 1626. It is made of oak, and painted green with gilt lettering 'Remember the Poore' on the inside of the lid. It was restored in 1826 during the incumbency of Henry Neave.





EPPING, ENGLAND IN 1669

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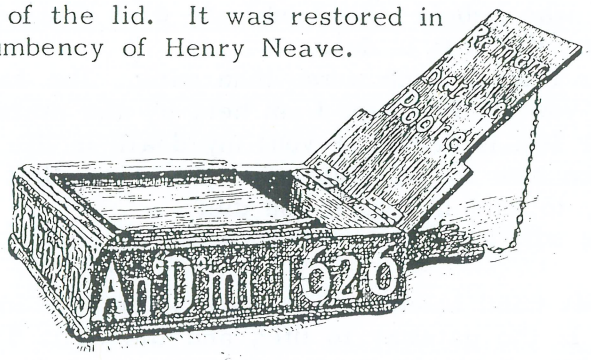



EPPING, ENGLAND IN 1669

KNOWN BY ANDREW'S PARENTS

The oldest and most striking memorial is the brass on the south wall of the chancel in memory of Thomas Palmer. He was Professor of Common Law at Cambridge, and died in 1621, having lived at Gills, the moated farmhouse 1500 yards south west of the church. The Latin inscription reads:

> You who behold (this tomb) are dust destined to die.
> I am dust that is dead.
> Your fate is much worse than mine. The tainted world has you in its grasp, I am held by the starry heavens.
> Your life is death for you; my death is life for me.
> Learn how to die while you (yet) live, that you may be able to find life when you die.
> Thus will life not be burdensome, nor death sorrowful.

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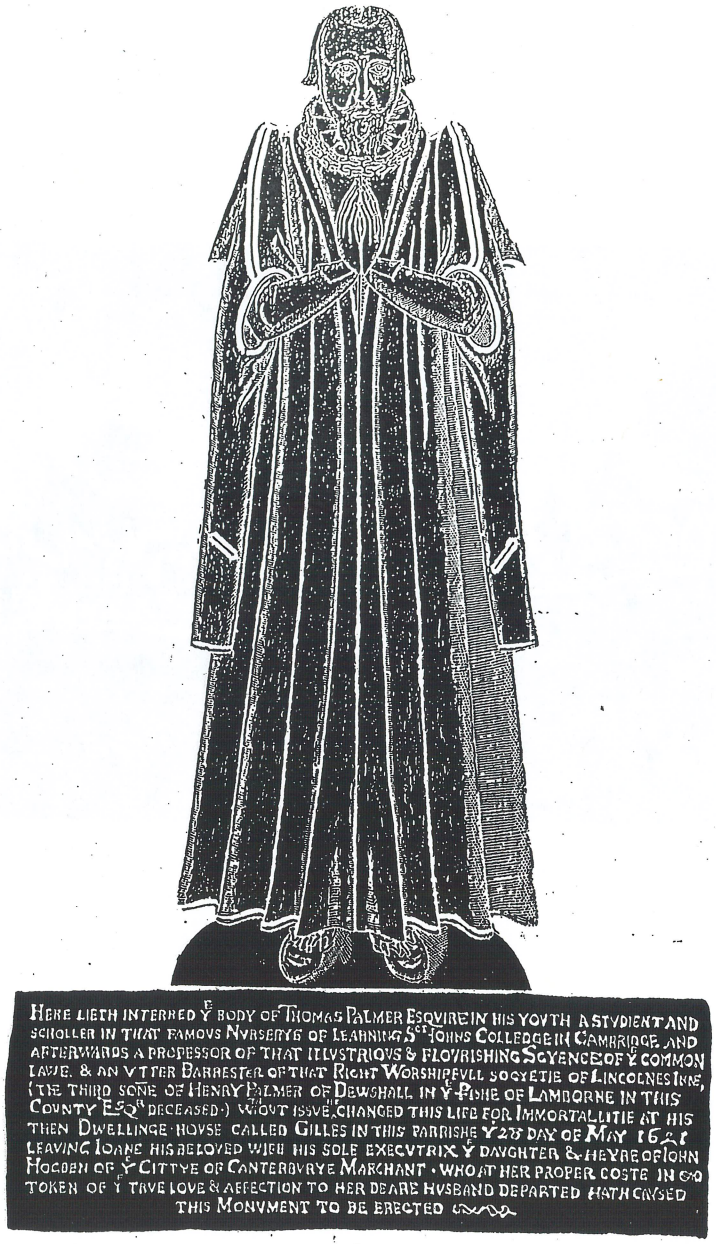




MODERN VIEWS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH







1637

1637	Baptisms	Marriages	Dates
Maye 4	Richard the sonne of Thomas Archer	September 21	June 2
June 13	Marye the daughter of Leonard Osborne	Richard Bremer & Ramsey widow	Septem
June 25	Daniell the sonne of John Gaylord	October 28	Sept
Julie 16	Sara the daughter of Tho Terlinge	Nymphas Osborne & Jeane Benton	Widow October
August 20	George the sonne of William Fuller		James Ch
September 3	Nicholas the sonne of James Page		Novem
September 10	John the sonne of Thomas England		Widow Novem
September 10	Margaritt the daughter of William White		Robert M
September 24	Dorcas the daughter of John Chandler		Febru
October 1	Henrye the sonne of Richard Graygoose		Thomas Febru
October 22	Elizabeth the daughter of Roger Gerrit		Arthur
November 7	Marye the daughter of Thomas Wright		
November 12	John the sonne of George Pegg		
November 27	John the sonne of William Wyland		
December 10	Anna the daughter of John Wyatt		
December 16	Marye the daughter of John Alvarye		
Januarye 17	Elizabeth the daughter of Edward Benton		
Januarye 28	John the sonne of John Mott		
Januarye 28	Edward the sonne of Edward Benton		
Februarye 27	Sara the daughter of Edward Richards		
March 12	Isaac the sonne of George Seale		
March 12	John the sonne of John Mitchell		

1638

BIRTH RECORD OF EDWARD BENTON JR. JAN. 28, 1638. 4TH CHILD. BORN JUST BEFORE THE FAMILY COULD HAVE LEFT FOR NEW ENGLAND

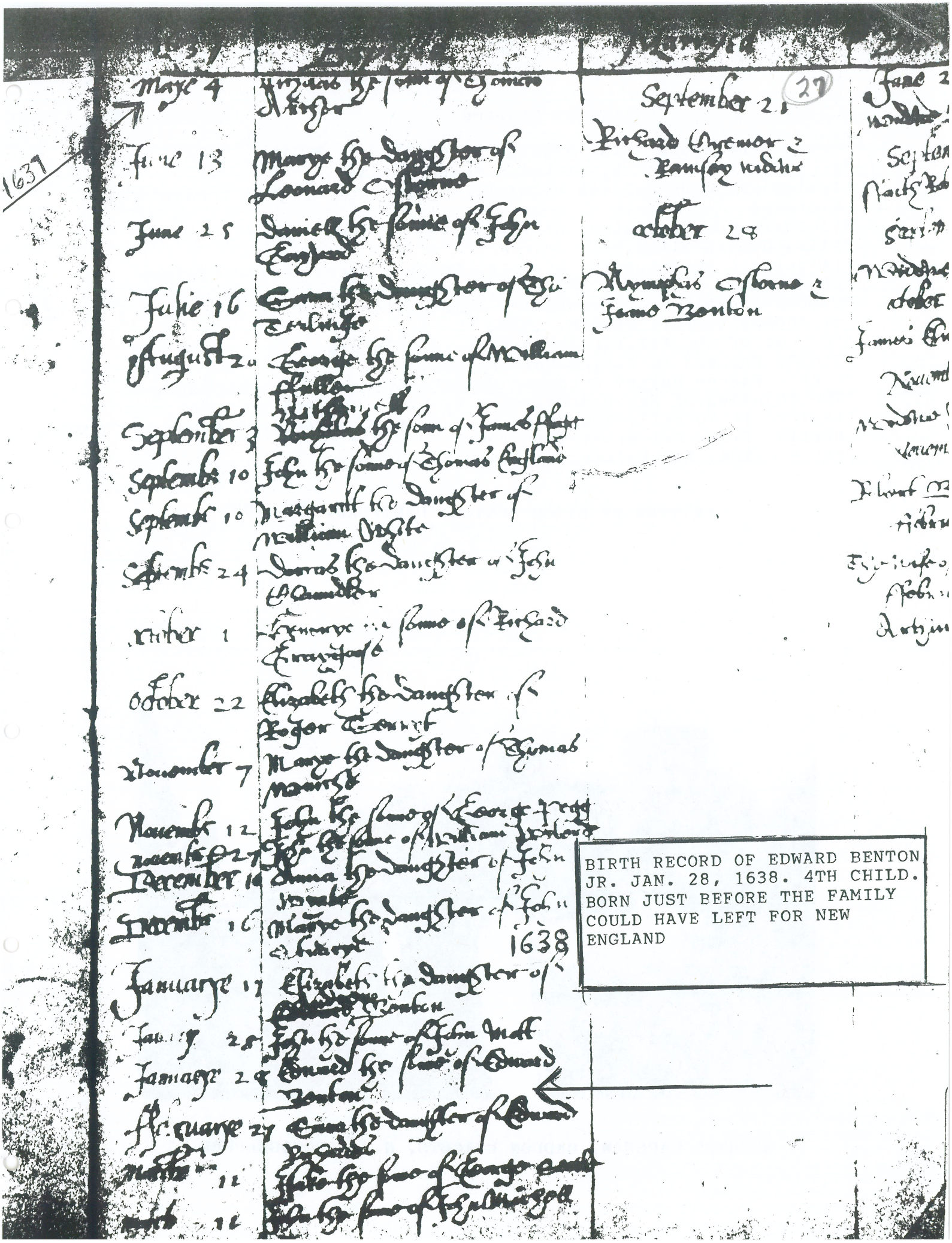
Epping Sources

"Caleb Benton and Sarah Bishop" by Charles E. Benton, 1906
"A Benton Heritage" by Nicholas Benton, 1964
"Epping Churches and its Vicars", by Charles Wright, London 1896
Victoria
"Victoria County History of Essex" Vol 5, 1966
"Elizabethian Wills."
"Pilgrims & Adventurers" by J. P. Smith. Essex Record Office, Chelmsford, England, 1992.
"Hooker Genealogical Material", Celebration of 400th Anniversary of birt
of Thomas Hooker, NEHGSS, 1986.
"Notices of the Pilgrim Fathers" by W. Winters.
"Thomas Hooker" by Deryck Collingwood.
"Little Baddow United Reformed Church" by Rev. P. Buick Knox.
"The Founding of Harvard College" by S. E. Morison
"England in Turmoil: The Roots of the Great Migration" paper by Timothy Harris, Brown University, 10/1995.
Church Guide, All Saints, Epping Upland, 1987

WRITTEN BY BYRON BENTON, HARTFORD, CT 2005



MICHAEL HARSHAW, HADDON HEIGHTS, N.J. PHOTOGRAPHER



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MICHAEL HARSHAW, HADDON HEIGHTS, N.J. PHOTOGRAPHER

COMING TO MILFORD

At some point in 1639 lots in the new town of Milford were assigned. We have no information as to how Andrew made the transition from a Wethersfield inhabitant to a member of the new town. In any event, Andrew's lot was in the last row farthest away from the meetinghouse to be. In order to reach the meetinghouse, furthermore, he had to follow a footpath and cross the "Little Dreadful Swamp" on a tiny bridge. In reviewing the lot assignments there seems to be no pattern. Neither age, marital status nor place of origin had any influence except that the town leaders were allocated larger, central lots. An indication that under Prudden harmony might be established early on.

Puritan policy was quite firm that single persons were not allowed to live in a town by themselves. In 1637 the Court in Wethersfield stated that no young man without a wife or servant, who was not the holder of public office, should keep house by himself; and no Master of a family should give board to any young man to dwell in his family without permission of the town, under a penalty of 20 shillings per week. If the young man could not find a family to live with, the magistrates would assign him to a family. Assuming the court in Milford abided by this same Puritan rule, Andrew should have lived with a family, presumably from the Wethersfield group, when he began life in Milford.

This rule was common sense as a single youth would not have time to establish his own household while settling in a wilderness. His energy would be better spent in helping those with families build their houses, erect fences and palisades while in turn they would supply his needs.

The Puritans also believed that the family was of prime importance and that the Master of the family was responsible for instructing and instilling Christian beliefs to all of the household. Thus a single person would have to be connected to a household to receive this essential guidance.

Andrew, friend of future Governor Treat?

No Wethersfield family seems to be a likely one with which Andrew might first stay. In reviewing some of them, look at Robert Treat the future Governor of Connecticut, a whole 2 years younger than Andrew, unmarried and a first settler. They might have been friends as two young men from the same town, chopping trees together working to build a palisade.

Treat seemed to be favored by family status, however. His father, Richard Treat was a large landholder in Wethersfield. Robert had no education, yet was looked to whenever any boundaries or surveys were needed. He married Jane Tapp daughter of Edmund Tapp, one of the Seven Pillars that formed the Milford Church. This has the earmarks of a Puritan arranged marriage of two members of prominent families.

He had no house lot assigned and perhaps even lived with Rev. Peter Prudden at first. Eventually he lived on his father-in-laws' land. He didn't join the church until 1647, after his marriage. He had two sisters older than Andrew and one Andrew's age. Robert became a prominent personage in Milford during the time Andrew lived there. If Andrew was friendly with him, he didn't gain any advantage from this. Robert Treat was made Governor in 1683, the year Andrew died. He made history later when he participated in the nefarious plot to whisk the Charter away from the tyrant Andros and hide it in the Charter Oak tree.

Other Wethersfield families as hosts

It is noteworthy that quite a few Wethersfield people who left to form the Milford town were childless couples who would start families in Milford:

Thomas Tibbals, Lot 53, near Andrew's lot was the soldier who first scouted the land selected for the town. He was 25 when the town settled. His first child was born in 1643.

John Fletcher, lot 12, married Mary Ward and their first child was born in Milford in 1641.

John Rogers, lot 47, admitted to the Church in 1642 (?). His first child was born in 1642.

Richard Miles (Mills) May have left Milford before 1642.

Families with children when they moved to Milford:

Rev. John Sherman came to Wethersfield from Watertown and preached until 1637 but was not a leader of a group. After he moved to Milford he was made Teacher. He came to Milford with a family and stayed only 5 years.

George Hubbard, lot 66 near Andrew's lot, probably had five children when moving to Milford. Went to Guilford in 1650.

Thomas Tapping, lot 39, left for Southampton and then Branford.

Andrew not a "Free Planter"

Of the original group meeting in November 1639 to begin the town, there were 44 "free planters" who had the right to vote and hold office. These were church members, although records indicate some were "admitted" to the church in later years.

It is important to know that ten other people were not considered "free planters" and that one of them was Andrew Benton. Their status was based on the fact that they were not "church members". Of these ten, Treat, Benton and Plum all appear to have been young single men not yet committed fully to their Lord or to a woman.

Eventually the Milford Colony, in 1643, allowed civil rights to six members not in church membership and probably Andrew was one of them. Prudden managed this liberalization of the requirement to bring more harmony to his Colony. When the New Haven Colony "absorbed" the then autonomous Milford Colony, special restrictions were placed in the treaty limiting these men's rights to voting and holding certain offices to matters not affecting the new Colony. Thus they could be "free planters" only on local votes and for local offices. Andrew appears to have held no offices in Milford in the 20 years he lived there.

A house in Milford

One of the first buildings was a "common house" not a meeting house. The meeting house was erected in 1641, after a year. No other colony seems to have built a common house first. If some reports are to be believed, an advance party went to Milford from New Haven in the fall of 1639 to take possession of the land they had purchased from the Indian chief Anasantawae a sachem of the Paugusett tribe. A common house might have served their purposes to stay the winter. One report says that they built rude huts for temporary shelter.

Not a Log House

Log houses were definitely not built. It was unknown to English people - after all who in England could find and afford so many logs. Probably the basic accommodation for the first few years was a light frame building with walls of wattle and daub and a thatched roof. Wattle and daub was clay plastered on intertwined branches. Both were relatively plentiful and easily put together by untrained women, children and men's hands.

32

In time, shingles or clapboard would be attached to the outside for added warmth and to prevent the rain from washing away the clay. Boards for siding would be made later on as they took considerable time to saw from logs in a saw pit - one man in the hole pulling a whipsaw from the sawyer on top of the log. The time at the saw pit would be put to better use at the beginning, to make the posts and rafters for the basic frames.

In June of 1640 De Vries, a Dutch ship captain who kept a diary, stopped in the bay to look toward the settlement and reported that 50 houses were in the process of erection and a portion finished. All told there were 54 heads of families and about 200 people in the first settlement. This report is interesting, if accurate. It would indicate the single men were building houses also rather than living with and helping families in accordance with Puritan practice.

The "Samuel Slade Benton" book theorizes that the buildings were framed in a low lean-to style and covered with split oak shingles. Also that, Andrew did not build on his lot until a year or two after he arrived.

Even if Andrew's living space in the first few years in Milford is unclear, by the time he brought Hannah to Milford he would have had an adequate house for her to live in. Probably not a full frame house. More likely a house such as above with a shingle roof, wooden floor and fireplace at one end. Only one room with a loft in the roof space.

Full frame two story houses with board or shingle siding and center fireplaces probably weren't erected until a few years later except by the most prosperous and important settlers. Such a house would have been quite common by 1660, 20 years later, when Andrew and Hannah moved to Hartford into the Greensmith house.

HANNAH AND HOOKER



REV. THOMAS HOOKER
1586 - 1647
FOUNDER OF HARTFORD



"HANNAH STOCKING"
1622 - 1670
SEVENTH GREAT GRANDMOTHER

CHRONOLOGY - STOCKING, HOOKER, HARTFORD

1582	George Stocking born, Suffolk
1586	Thomas Hooker born Marfield, Leicestershire
1586	Anna born, George Stocking's first wife
1588	John Winthrop, Sr. born Groton Manor, Suffolk
1611	Hooker received degree from Emmanuel College, Cambridge
1614	Adriaen Block in the "Restless" sails up Conn. river
1620-1626	Hooker curate of Esher, Surrey
1620	Andrew Benton baptized, Epping All Saints Church
1621	Hooker married Susanah Garbrand
1622	Hannah Stocking born, date probable.
1622	Joanna Hooker born, first child.
1626	Hooker lecturer St. Mary Church, Chelmsford, Essex
1629	Hooker silenced, ran private school in Little Baddow.
1630	Hooker escaped to Holland.
1632	Winslow of Plymouth built fort at Windsor, arrived by ship.
1633	Jacob van Curler bought small Hartford plot from Pequots.
1633	July, Hooker sailed from Deal, The Downs, on the "Griffin"
1633	Sept. Hooker arrived Mass. Bay Colony, went to Newtown
1634	June, George Stocking arrived Boston on "14 great ships"
1634	July 6 Newtown men sailed on "Blessing" to scout Hartford
1635	George Stocking allotted land in Newtown, owned house.
1635	Oct. Newtown advance party camped at "northside" Hartford.
1635	Dorcestor group settled in Windsor, came overland.
1635	Watertown group settled Wethersfield, came overland.
1636	Spring, more Dorcester settlers came overland to Windsor
1636	June, Hooker company trekked to Hartford. Negotiates for land with Sequassen, chief Saukiogs, settled "southside."
1637	Pequots attack Wethersfield, Mason expedition massacres.
1637	Hooker to Boston for Anne Hutchinson's trial.
1638	Hooker preached basis for Fundamental Orders to Court
1638	Rev. Pruden, in Wethersfield, recruited families for Milford, Andrew Benton presumably in Wethersfield then.
1639	The Fundamental Orders adopted in new 2nd meeting house.
1639	George Stocking, 20 acres, received right to undivided lands
1639	Andrew Benton given Milford lot.
1639	Hooker consulted about confederation in Boston
1643	Hooker attended Cambridge Synod.
1645	Hooker in Cambridge for Council and his book "A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline" was approved.
1647	Hooker died in an epidemic.
1647	George Stocking made selectman, age 55.
1649	Hannah and Andrew married, lived in Milford until 1660
1649	John Winthrop, Sr. died in Boston.
1653	Dutch "House of Hope" ousted.
1660	Andrew and family returned to Hartford.
1660	Approx. George Stocking married Agnes Shotwell
1667	Approx. Agnes Shotwell Stocking died.
1670	Approx. Hannah Stocking Benton died, Second Church founded
1683	May, George Stocking died age at 101.
1683	July, Andrew Benton died
1683	Dec. Samuel Stocking died, George's son.

Written by Byron s. Benton, Hartford, Dec. 2005

HOW DID GREAT GRANDMOTHER HANNAH STOCKING FIND HER WAY FROM ENGLAND TO HARTFORD?

Hannah was a young girl, maybe 12 years old, when her father George Stocking brought his family from Suffolk, England to board a ship to sail to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This journey was part of the Great Migration when many Puritans and other adventurers left England for a better life in the New World. George and family stayed only a brief two or three years in Newtown (Cambridge) and then joined Rev. Thomas Hooker's company to trek to Hartford to make their home there.

Only a few fragments of information are available to us as historians don't agree. George was born in 1582 in Suffolk; but where? John Winthrop, the leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was from Groton Manor, Suffolk and became a Puritan covert in his middle years. Maybe Stocking had a connection with him.

The next clue is his arrival in Newtown. Conventional wisdom among historians is that he sailed in 1633 on the "Griffin" along with Rev. Hooker, Rev. Stone and Rev. Cotton. This suggestion puts George in very auspicious company for a man from neighboring Suffolk. Hooker's company are all from Essex, the hotbed of Puritan non-conformity.

However, historian Rev. William D. Love of Hartford, in "A Colonial History of Hartford, 1914", page 2, believes Stocking came a year later. He states "The distribution of lands at Newtown, August 4, 1634 may indicate that the following newcomers were also passengers on one of the "Fourteen Great Ships" that arrived in June:..... .....George Stocking. These accessions quickened the desires of Newtown for more extensive fields."

The following is a possible sequence of the these events:

1633 Hooker and company arrive in Boston on the "Griffin".
1634 May - the company was allowed to seek other land.
1634 June - "fourteen great ships" arrive with Stocking.(Love)
1634 July - "six of Newtown sailed on the "Blessing" (being bound to the Dutch plantations,) to discover the Connecticut River intending to remove their town thither." (Winthrop records)
1634 August - Newtown land distributed to George Stocking.
1635 Stocking had a house on the corner of Holyoke and Winthrop streets.
1635 October - an "advance party" settled in Hartford north of the Little River. Some stayed the Winter.
1636 May 31, Hooker and Company leave for Hartford. George Stocking's family including daughter Hannah. was in that company.

The ship "Griffin" seems too crowded with Hooker's Essex group for there to have been room for George and his family. Hannah more likely came in 1634 on another ship as Love states. At the least, Hannah was in Hooker's company as they trekked together for a fortnight from Newtown to Hartford. She may have been friends with Hooker's daughter, Joanna, who was her same age.

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Hannah Stocking and her family braved this hurricane which came in the middle of August. It must have blown roofs off and wrecked ships in the harbor. Rev. Thomas Shepard arrived on October 5 "found many houses empty and many persons willing to sell and hence our company bought of their houses to dwell in" Love page 4. The Stocking family trekked to Hartford the next year.

In 1635, A Devastating Blow From South

By LARRY McSHANE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

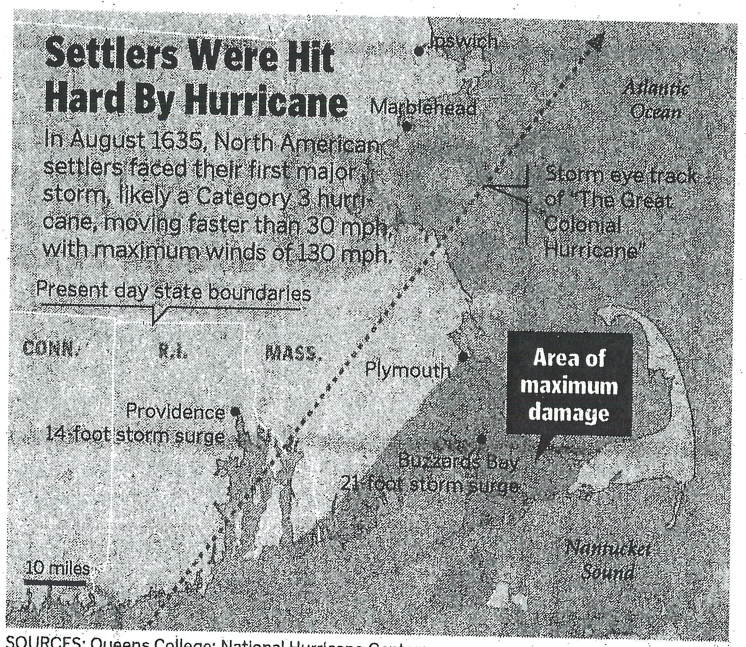
NEW YORK — The winds whipped up to 130 mph, snapping pine trees like pick-up sticks and blowing houses into oblivion. A surge of water, 21 feet high at its crest, engulfed victims as they desperately scurried for higher ground.

The merciless storm, pounding the coast for hours with torrential sheets of rain, was like nothing ever seen before. One observer predicted the damage would linger for decades.

This wasn't New Orleans in August 2005. This was New England in August 1635, battered by what was later dubbed "The Great Colonial Hurricane" — the first major storm suffered by colonial North American settlers, just 14 years after the initial Thanksgiving celebration in Plymouth Colony.

The Puritans, after landing at Plymouth Rock, endured disease, brutal winters and battles with the natives. But their biggest test roared up the coast from the South, an unprecedented and terrifying tempest that convinced rattled residents that the apocalypse was imminent.

And why not? The transplanted Europeans knew almost nothing of hurricanes, an entirely foreign phenomenon. Their fears of approaching death were reinforced when a lunar eclipse followed the natural disaster.



SOURCES: Queens College; National Hurricane Center ASSOCIATED PRESS

Once the weather had cleared and the sun rose again, the few thousand residents of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies were left to rebuild and recover from a hurricane as powerful as the Long Island Express, the killer storm of 1938. The 20th century hurricane killed 700 people, including 600 in New England, and left 63,000 homeless.

"The settlers easily could have packed up and gone home," said Nicholas K. Coch, a professor of geology at Queens College and one of the nation's foremost hurricane experts. "It was an extraordinary event, a major hurricane, and nearly knocked out British culture in America."

Last year, Coch used information that he collected from detailed Colonial journals to reconstruct the great hurricane. The 371-year-old data was brought to Brian Jarvinen at the National Hurricane Center, where it was interpreted using the SLOSH (Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) computer model.

The result: The hurricane likely tracked farther west than was thought, passing over uninhabited easternmost Long Island before moving into New England.

Coch said the pioneers from across the Atlantic likely endured a Category 3 hurricane, moving faster than 30 mph, with maximum winds of 130 mph and a very high storm surge — 21 feet at Buzzards Bay and 14 feet at Providence. Reports at the time said 17 American Indians were drowned.

The storm was moving abo three times as fast as the typi southern hurricane, and arrived in full bluster. Although it struck nearly four centuries ago, very specific details about the first recorded hurricane in North America were provided by the local leaders' writings.

John Winthrop, head of the Massachusetts Bay group, recalled in his Aug. 16, 1635, entry that the winds were kicking up a full week before the hurricane.

Once it did arrive, the hurricane "blew with such violence, with abundance of rain, that it blew down many hundreds of trees, overthrew some houses, and drove the ships from their anchors," Winthrop wrote.

William Bradford, the leader of the Plymouth group, offered a similarly florid recounting.

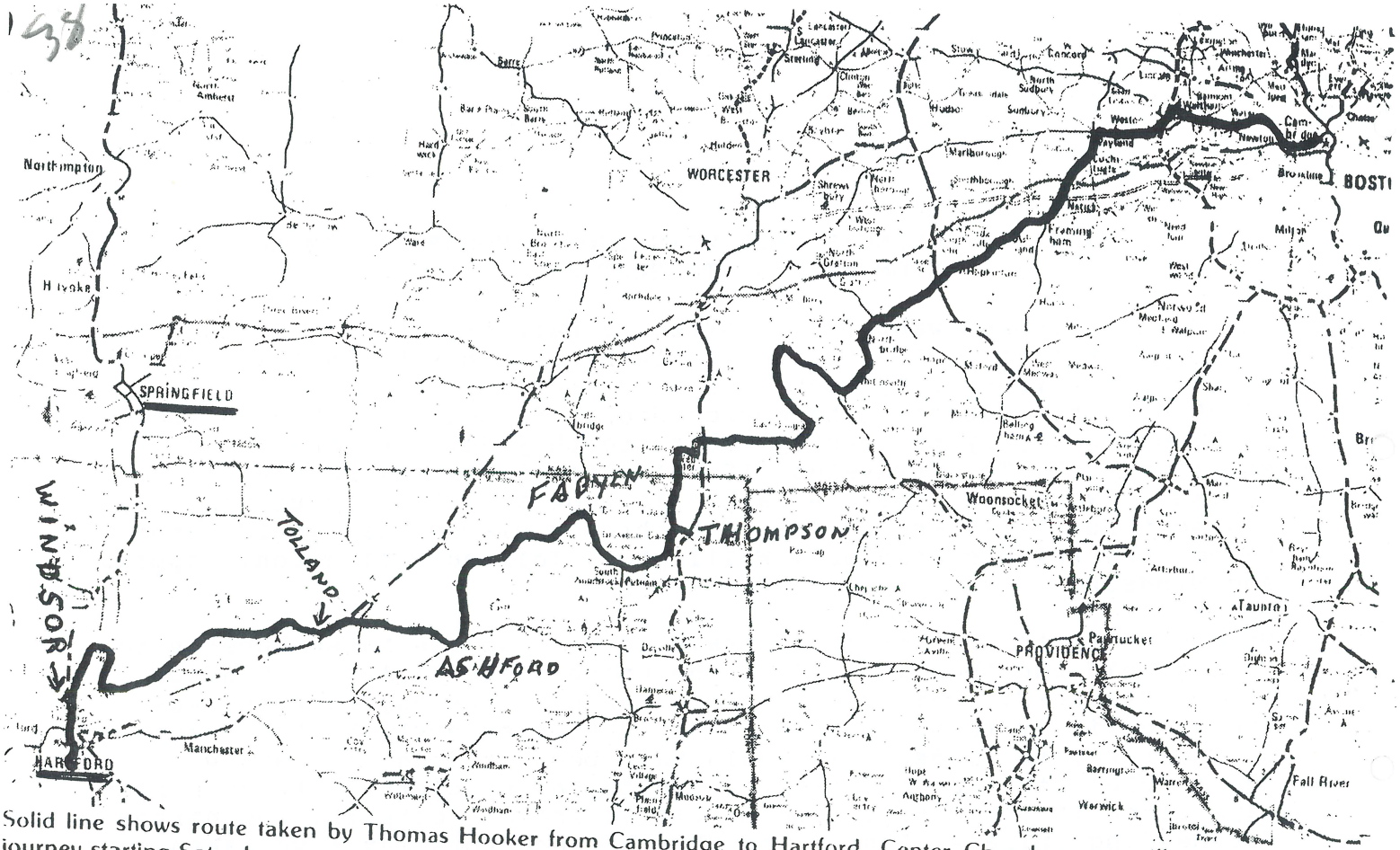
"Such a mighty storm of wind and rain as none living in these parts, either English or Indian, ever saw," he wrote.

HANNAH STOCKING'S TREK WITH THOMAS HOOKER'S COMPANY FROM NEWTOWN TO HARTFORD

The Hooker company wanted to migrate to Hartford for better land and to escape the rigid Puritanism of Winthrop's church and town. It is debated what route they took. In 1982, for instance, members of First Church, Hartford (the church Hooker founded) celebrated their 350 Anniversary by traversing the route they believed the first settlers took. They traveled 110 miles for 8 days along what later became known as the "Middle Path." It took an oblique southwesterly course through Eastern Connecticut through places that would later become the towns of Ashford, Willington, Tolland, Ellington, Wapping and Windsor.

Others claim the Hooker group traveled West across Massachusetts to Springfield and then South down the Connecticut Valley to Windsor and to Hartford. This route became known as the Bay Path and was the more likely route as it had been used previously by two groups on their way to Windsor. It would have been trodden down and wide. The Middle Path was not likely known to the settlers in those early days since it would have been merely an Indian footpath; too narrow for herding animals along. The Church reenactors may have taken a more romantic route but not an authentic one. The Middle Path did become useful later as Eastern Connecticut opened up for settlement and towns were established.

The Hartford Courant, however, took the church group at their word and published an article stating that Hooker came by the Middle Path. (August 21, 1982). Love's book, if they had looked at it, would have told them to check their sources carefully. In 1998, a group of researchers commissioned by the Connecticut Historical Commission studied the route and concluded it would not have been used as early as 1636.



Solid line shows route taken by Thomas Hooker from Cambridge to Hartford. Center Church group will recreate that journey starting Saturday.

Here's How They'll Go

AUG. 21

Cambridge, Mass.: 9 a.m. departure from Boylston Hall in the Harvard Yard. Plaque in wall honors Hooker. Proceed to Cambridge Common, through Longfellow Park, to Memorial Drive, out of Cambridge.

Proceed to **Watertown** along the Charles River on Greenough Boulevard. Approximate arrival, 11 a.m., Watertown Square. Continue for about one mile on California Street, to **Newton.**

Use River Street to get to **Waltham Center,** about 2-3 p.m. arrival. Follow Felton Street to South Street, North of Brandeis University, cross Route 128 (possible use of Route 20 on Bridge crossing 128).

Arrival, **Weston,** about 3-4 p.m., via U.S. Route 20 and Boston Post Road.

Aug. 22

Weston, 6 a.m. departure (probably from First Parish of Weston, Unitarian). Use Boston Post Road and Route 20. Proceed to **Wayland** on Old Connecticut Path East, which becomes Route 126.

About 9 a.m., arrive at Lake Cochituate, and enter **Framingham.** Route 126 becomes Concord Street. Follow Conard to Main to Waverly (Rte. 126 to State Rte. 135). Possible lunch stop in Framingham.

Arrive **Ashland** between 11 and 1, depending on lunch plans. Rte. 135 is West Union Street. Follow 135 to **Hopkinton.**

Arrive **Hopkinton** between 3 and 4 p.m. East Main St. and West Main Street are Rte. 135 here). Possible overnight stop at the First Congregational Church or Ashland State Park, or at the home of Fred Dickermanon Hayden Road.

Aug. 23

Leave **Hopkinton** 6 a.m. on State Route 135 (West Main St.) Go to **Upton** on Hopkinton Road and High Street. Go through **West Upton** and out of town via Pleasant Street.

Cross into **Northbridge** about 10 a.m. on the Upton Road. Go through the village of Riverdale. Walk on Quaker Street. Enter **Plummer Corner** on Church Street, and enter **Whitinsville,** crossing State Route 122 — probably detouring to Bruce Street and 122. Possible detour also to see Thomas Hooker Trail Marker. Go onto **Main Street.**

Enter **Sutton.** Cross State Route 146 and go through **South Sutton.** Proceed to **Manchaug** on Whitin Road/Manchaug Road, also using Park Road and Holt Road.

Enter **Douglas** on Oak Street, about 3-4 p.m. Overnight at Sanborn's Family Campground at Manchaug Pond.

Aug. 24

Leave **Douglas** at 6 a.m. at Causeway at Whitin Reservoir,. Use Oak, Wallace, Cedar Streets, and Webster Road (State Route 16). Proceed to **Webster** on Bazineti Highway (Route 16).

Enter **Webster** about 9-10 a.m. using Gore Road, East Main Street, Main Street, South Main Street (Route 12), and Scofield Ave./New Boston Road. Cross Massachusetts-Connecticut State Line.

Arrive at **Thompson** about 1 p.m. Use Linehouse Road, intersecting with Jerzeskia Road. Pick up State Route 131. Turn onto Parker Road. Go through village of **Fabyan** on Payne District Road. Turn right on Hibbard Road enroute to **East Woodstock.** Possible overnight stop at East Woodstock Congregational Church.

Aug. 25

Exit **Woodstock,** 6 a.m. past Muddy Brook Fire Department, turn right on 169 to **North Woodstock,** onto Route 197 (Turnpike Road) through **Woodstock;** leave Route 197 at Black Pond, staying on Turnpike Road.

Enter **Ashford,** passing through **North Ashford,** and picking up North Ashford Road, until reaching **Westford.** Arrival about 3 p.m. for overnight stop, possibly at Ashford Baptist Church.

Aug. 26

Leave **Ashford** about 6 a.m. Take Center Turnpike to Kidder Brook Road. Join Tinkerville Road, to cross into **Willington,** using Pilchers Road or Jared Sparks Road, through **Willington Hill** and **West Willington.** Must use Route 44, no sidewalks. Cross Wilbur Cross Highway (86), and go onto State Route 74.

Continue on State Route 74 to **Tolland** for overnight stay.

Aug. 27

Leave **Tolland,** approximately 6 a.m., on Old Post Road. Take Kingsbury Ave. Ext., and turn left to Route 30, and right onto Kingsbury Avenue. Cross into town of **Vernon** (City of **Rockville**), taking Route 74 through **Rockville** (Union Street, Windsor Ave., Wapping Wood Road). Pass through **Ellington** on Wapping Wood Road. continue to **South Windsor** on Ellington Road (74), into **Wapping.** Possible overnight stay at Wapping Community Church.

Aug. 28

Leave **Wapping** at about 6 a.m., using Route 30 — Ellington Road to Chanel Road — and over to Route 5. Group hopes to cross on Bissell Bridge into **Windsor.** Probably will follow Windsor Avenue and North Main Street into **Hartford.** Hopes to reach **Hartford** between 9 and 10 a.m., and arrive at the **Old State House** between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, to complete the Trek.

Hartford Courant
Aug, 1982

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Congregation Starts Trek Today

THE HARTFORD COURANT, Saturday, August 21, 1982

Walking in Steps of Thomas Hooker

By JOSEPH F. NUNES
Courant Staff Writer

Members of the First Church of Christ Congregational in downtown Hartford today will begin an eight-day trek from Cambridge, Mass., to Hartford, tracing the route taken by the Rev. Thomas Hooker when he founded Hartford in 1636.

The 110-mile walk will mark the 350th anniversary of the church, which Hooker established in 1632 in what is now Cambridge.

The idea for the pilgrimage was conceived by the church's 350th Anniversary Committee. "We wanted to do something that would embody the idea of celebration without going into fund raising or building something," said Robinson Buck, committee chairman.

Hooker moved his congregation from Cambridge to Hartford in a three-week journey through wilderness, leading about 100 parishioners who brought their household goods and 160 head of cattle, pigs and goats, said Mary Ann Connors, church spokeswoman.

"We've never re-created the trek before," she said.

About 20 people — including Mary Hooker Dougherty of Seattle, Wash., a 10th-generation descendant of Hooker's — will trace Hooker's pilgrimage beginning at 9 a.m. today, when they leave Harvard University's Boylston Hall, the original site of Hooker's home.

The participants, who will range from teenagers to church members in their 50s, will pitch tents overnight on church lawns and campgrounds along the way.

They will follow what is considered the Connecticut Trail, an Indian path that will take the marchers southwest through 15 Massachusetts communities before they arrive Tuesday in Thompson in northeastern Connecticut. From there, they will continue through Woodstock, Ashford, Willington, Tolland, Vernon, South Windsor and Windsor, before arriving in Hartford between 9 and 10 a.m. next Saturday.

The trek will end about noon with a reception at the Thomas Hooker statue in front of the Old State House in downtown Hartford.

Hooker, who is considered one of the fathers of democracy in this country, is believed to have moved his church to solidify England's claims to land southwest of Massachusetts Colony. Dutch settlers in what is now New York posed a threat to England's claims, Connors said, although "there is no documentation per se."

After founding Hartford and settling the Congregational church here, Hooker is credited with helping formulate the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, recognized as the first written constitution in a democracy.

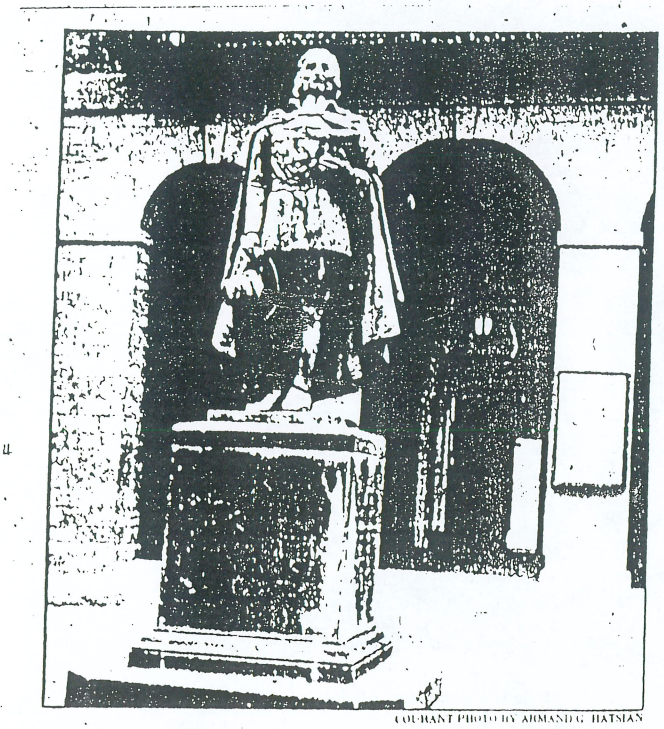
May 31, 1638, he addressed the General Court, the colony's ruling body, and laid down doctrines of government that were incorporated into the Fundamental Orders. In his so-called Freedom Speech, Hooker said, "The privilege of election belongs to t people, and the foundation of a thority is in the free consent of t people."

"It was a revolutionary id back then," Buck said.

The Congregational churc 350th anniversary celebrati will continue with a Founde Day Weekend Oct. 8-10. T church has about 550 membe from throughout the region.

Oct. 8, Dr. Glenn Weaver, pr fessor of history at Trinity C lege, will explain how Hooke church was "Hartford's First C ic Center." The talk will be in t church at 8 p.m.

Oct. 10, church members w conduct another symbolic walk 10 a.m., from the Old State Hou to the church at Main and Go streets, where a special servi will be conducted at 11 a.m. memorial ceremony will be co ducted at 12:15 p.m. in the A cient Burial Ground behind t church, where Hooker's remai once were buried. Their whe bouts now are a mystery.



COURANT PHOTO BY ARMAND G. HATSIAN

First Church of Christ Congregational members tracing the route taken by Thomas Hooker in 1636 will end their trek next Saturday at the statue of the founder of Hartford at the Old State House.

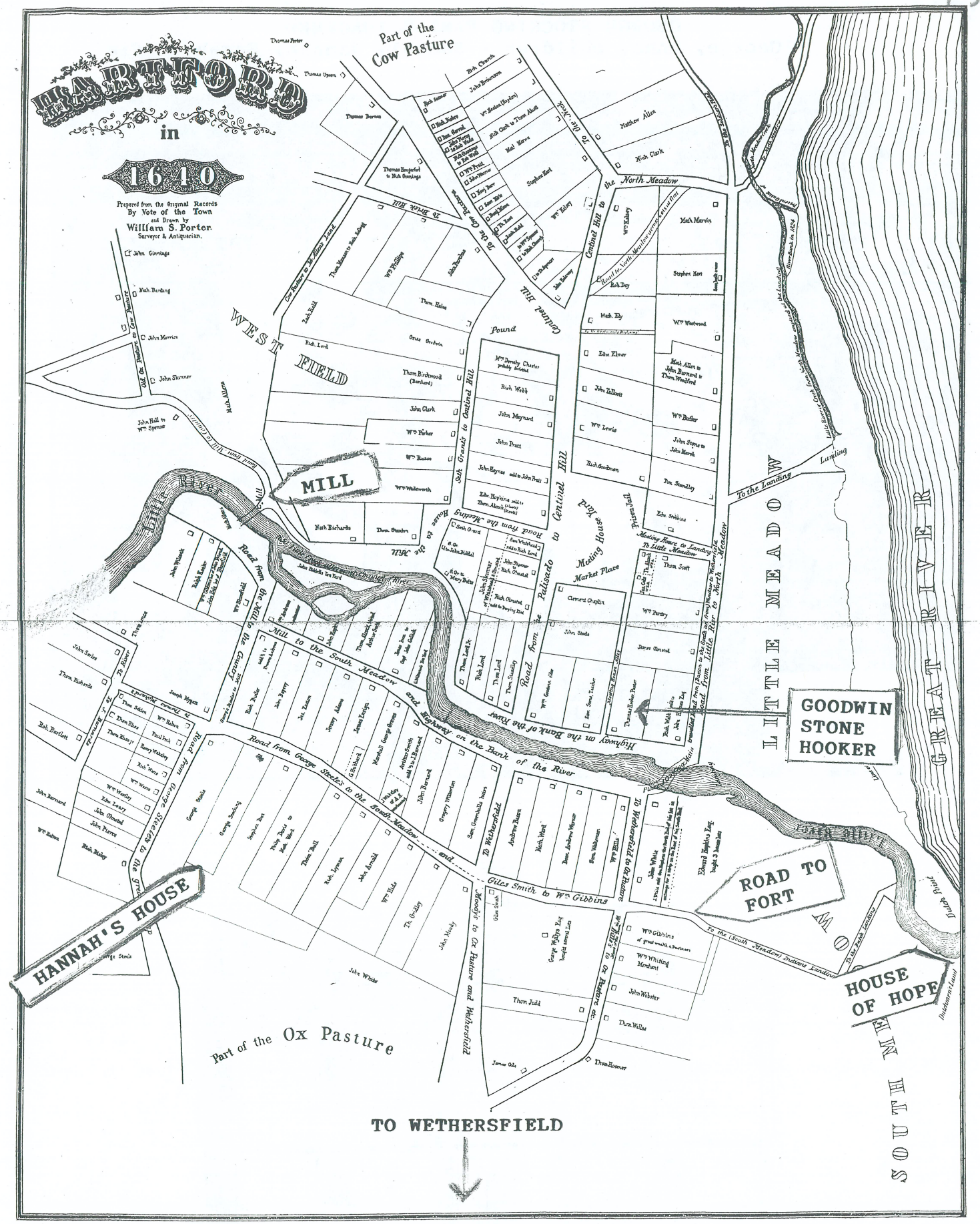


THE TREK

How large was Hooker's group? Love counts 35 heads of families. With all family members, the group may have consisted of over 100 persons with perhaps 160 head of cattle along with swine, goats, etc. Love writes "It was a long and straggling procession that took the road westward through Watertown. Some stalwart pioneer on horseback led the way, and guides with him made up the vanguard. Perhaps the cattle and flock came next, driven by their herders. (Hannah may have been a swineherd!) Then in families.... they followed one another, chivalrous husbands helping their mates, children in laughing parties. The ladies horse litter attended by her maids. (Mrs Hooker was in the litter). The pastor with staff and pack, the elders in his company, and, in the rear, the lingering young men who picked many a flower by the wayside, to gladden loving eyes.



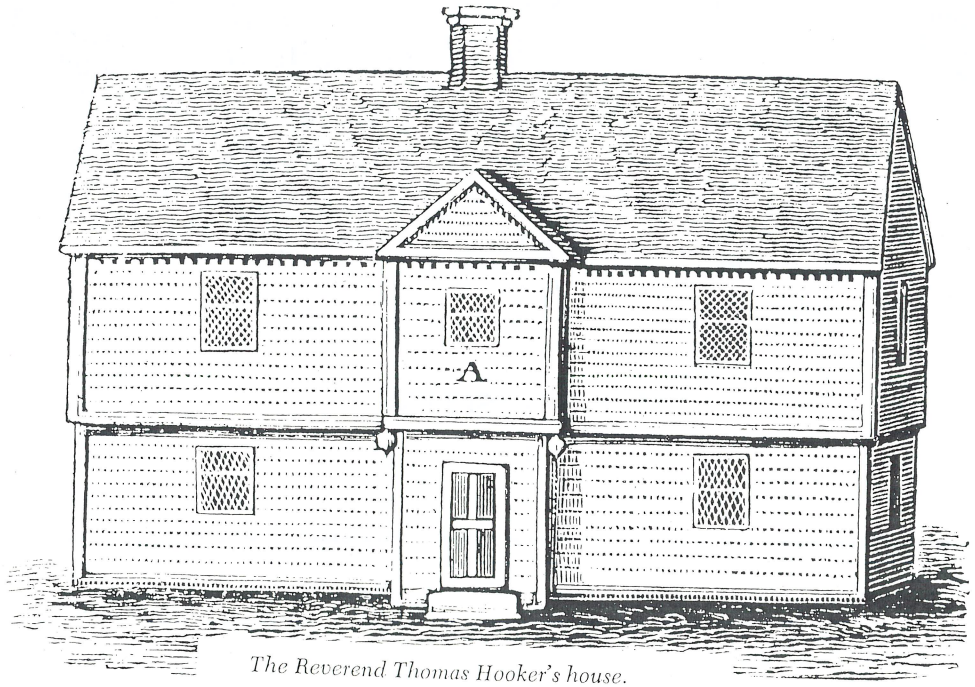
"HOOKER'S EMIGRATION TO CONNECTICUT" is depicted in a nineteenth-century engraving. The party of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, Hartford's first leader, came from Massachusetts Bay in the spring of 1735, along the Old Bay Path. Mrs. Hooker was carried in the litter.


HARTFORD
in
1640
Prepared from the Original Records
By Vote of the Town
and Drawn by
William S. Porter.
Surveyor & Antiquarian.
Part of the Cow Pasture
WEST FIELD
MILL
Little River
Road from the Palisado to Centinel Hill
Road from the Mill to the County
Mill to the South Meadow and Highway on the Bank of the River
Road from George Steele's to the South Meadow and Giles Smith to Wm Gibbins
Highway on the Bank of the River
Road from Little River to North Meadow
Centinel Hill to the North Meadow
Centinel Hill
Pound
Meeting House
Market Place
Prison Jail
To the Landing
LITTLE MEADOW
GREAT RIVER
GOODWIN STONE HOOKER
ROAD TO FORT
HOUSE OF HOPE
HANNAH'S HOUSE
Part of the Ox Pasture
SOUTH MEADOW
TO WETHERSFIELD

GEORGE STOCKING FAMILY IMAGINED
George, Anna, children - Samuel, Hannah, Sarah, Lydia



Henry Mosler, *Pilgrims' Grace*, 1897, oil on canvas. 98.4 x 131.5 cm (38 3/4 x 51 3/4 in.). Allentown Art Museum.



The Reverend Thomas Hooker's house.

THOMAS HOOKER WAS HANNAH'S PREACHER FOR 13 YEARS

From the time she was a 12 year old arriving in Boston until the time he died, when she was 25, he was her spiritual guide and dominate Colony leader. In the troubling events of the early years of Hartford and the young girl's inevitable doubts about her beliefs, she must have relied on him greatly.

His strong Puritan preaching had won him widespread fame in England among all who heard him. In Newtown and in Hartford as well, he was acclaimed. Hannah had heard about him as a girl in Suffolk and now was able to hear him preach herself. We believe Andrew Benton walked the three miles from Wethersfield to hear him preach and there Hannah may have taken notice of Andrew in a manner which turned out quite well for their future together! Why did Hannah and Andrew need to have very deep Puritan beliefs? It was their life.

Puritanism stemmed from John Calvin's belief that God was omnipotent and good and that men were evil and helpless, predestined before they were born either to salvation or to eternal torment. Those who accepted Calvin's doctrine always outdid themselves in order to follow God's Commandments as given in the Bible. The Puritan, knowing his efforts to be futile, nevertheless took a holy joy in them. They made him feel close to God's excellent purpose. They helped also to ease his agonizing pain over whether he was destined for heaven or hell. Even though good behavior could not alter a man's predestined fate, it was observable that religious conversion often befell those who tried to lead a godly life. Conversion was an experience by which God let a saved man know that he was saved. Moreover, Conversion manifested itself outwardly in renewed and intensified efforts to obey God's commands. A person's striving might thus be a sign that he was saved. Andrew proclaimed his religious conversion in Milford just prior to his marriage. When Hannah did so is unknown.

Puritans considered work as a gift of God. Work was considered good for the person by building character and strengthening the person. It also strengthened a persons position in the economy and lastly work was considered good because it promoted the welfare of the whole community.

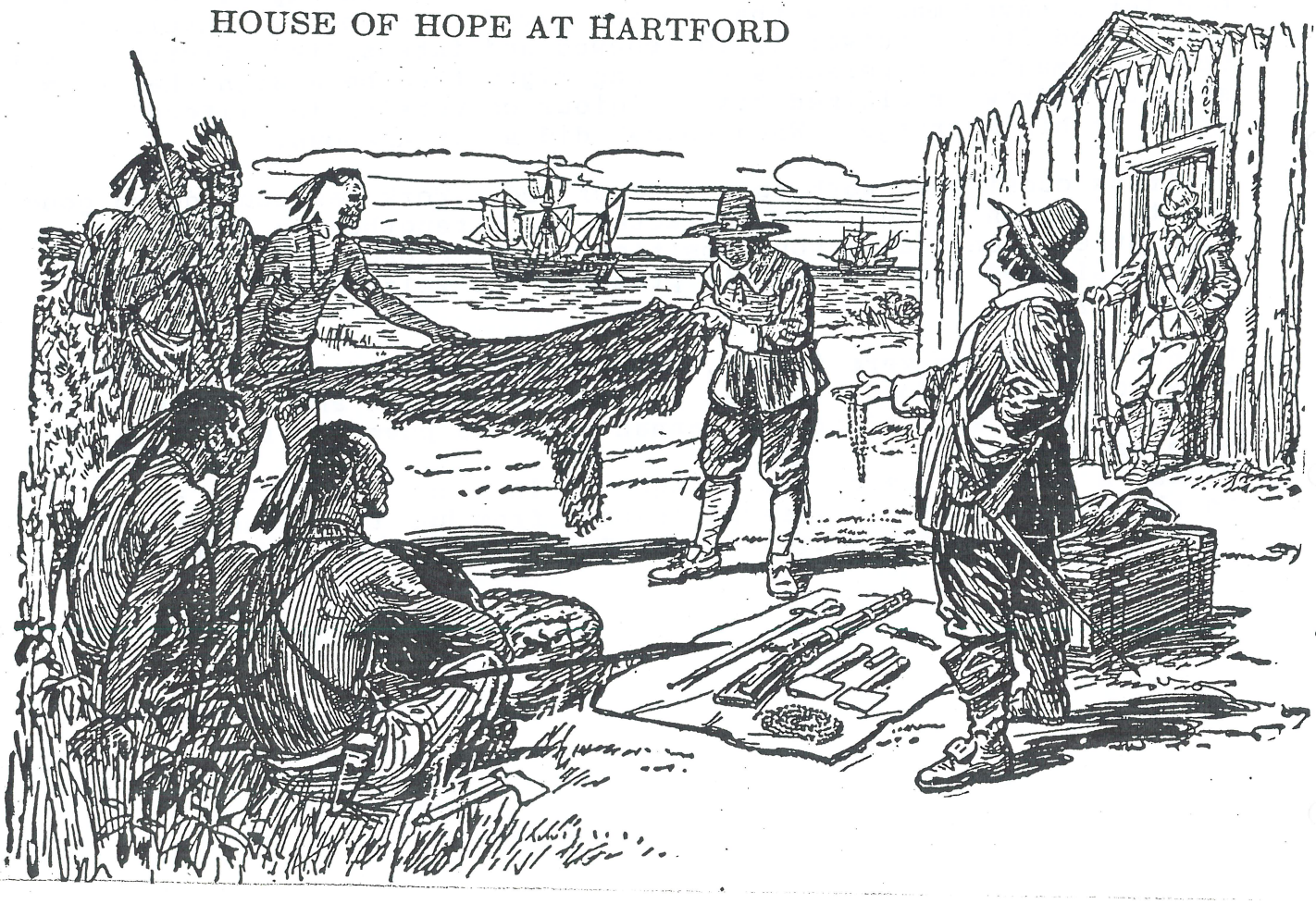
Hannah and Andrew were in Rev. Peter Pruden's spiritual care after they moved to Milford. He was judged the "finest and the best of Puritan preachers" affording Hannah a second powerful religious experience.
Hannah's children were thus brought up in a devout Puritan atmosphere as she taught them the lessons learned from her two preachers. We have to believe they became devout Puritans for the rest of their lives.

HOOKER PREEMINENT LEADER

The new Colony faced great problems of survival upon reaching Hartford. Shelter and food were paramount needs. Little is told us how their basic equipment came to Hartford as all they brought overland was what little they could carry on their backs. There is a hint from some historians that they had a shipload or two of equipment, tools, lumber, grains etc. sent from Boston. That would have been vital for building houses and farms. Their struggle to just survive would make a great story in itself. Historians, however, prefer to dwell on profound struggles.

The new colony, arrived with great expectations of plenty because of the lush meadows ripe for grazing livestock, found others there with prior claims - the Dutch and the Indians. In addition to making a town, the Puritans would have to live amongst different kinds of people. The Dutch had lain claim to a small plot at the mouth of the Little River and built a small fort there just before the Hooker company arrived. The Dutch originally planned to trade with various Indian tribes who would travel on the River to Hartford to exchange their furs for the goods of the new civilization. The Dutch, in turn would sail back and forth to New Amsterdam to leave the furs and bring back supplies and trade goods. The Dutch had no desire to make a settlement but did need to raise a few crops for their sustenance. What transpired was a series of episodes of harassment and petty fights as the English settlers tried to dislodge the Dutch and the Dutch resisted and protested.

HOUSE OF HOPE AT HARTFORD





THIS MURAL by Walter R. Korder at Hartford's Municipal Building, done in 1934, depicts the Dutch in their trading post in Hartford watching the long boat coming ashore from the English ship sailing up the Connecticut River. Its caption reads: "July 1634: Six Scouts of the Bay, sent to discover the Connecticut River, reach the House of Hope at Suckiaug, new Hartford." (HC)

The APPENDIX CONTAINS Courant summary of the Dutch in Hartford

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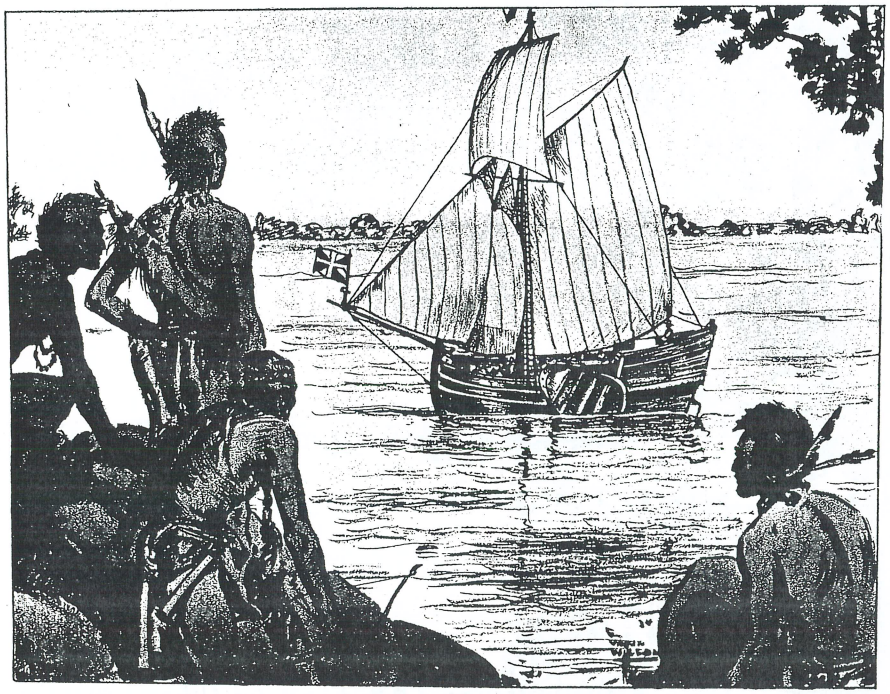
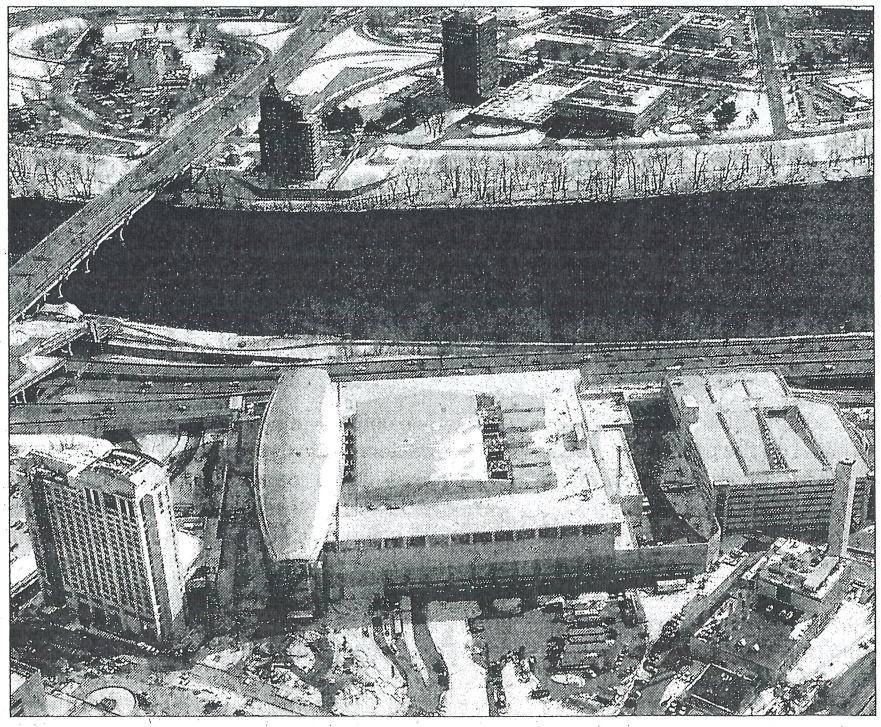
In 1614, Adriaen Block sailed past the Saukiog Indian camp later to become Hartford. This little "yacht" called "Restless" was built in Amsterdam and this voyage was the first European exploration of the River. He sailed up river as far as the falls at Enfield and as far up the coast as Massachsetts Bay. His voyage persuaded the Dutch to establish trading posts on the River right away.





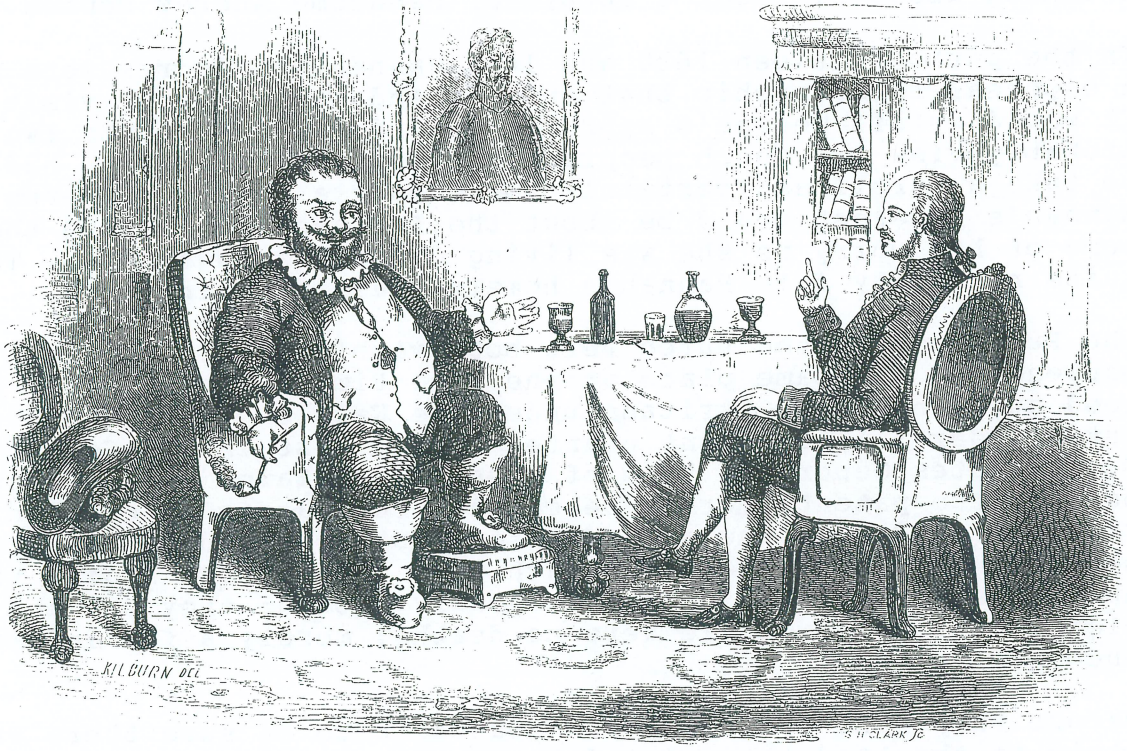
TOM BROWN / THE HARTFORD COURANT

ADRIAEN'S LANDING, anchored by the Connecticut Convention Center, is named for Dutch trader Adriaen Block, who established a post at the confluence of the Connecticut, Hockanam and P

HARTFORD COURANT NOV. 20, 2005

Hooker evidently felt it was wise that the civil leaders dealt with the Dutch, even though he had spent three years in Holland just before he came to the New World. And he might have been able to speak more than a few words of Dutch. In 1639, for instance de Vries, a Dutch official from New Amsterdam, was invited by Governor Haynes to dinner in order to discuss their differences. Hooker did not attend although he might have helped interpret and would have added to the Puritan's stature by showing a Dutch speaker was a leader in Hartford.

Probably Hannah cared little for the legal arguments about which group had the better claim to the lands at the House of Hope. We have no



Interview between Gov. Haynes and De Vries. **SCAEVA, 1853**

record of Hooker preaching about the disputes. The location of the Dutch enclave was far away from the everyday passages of her life. Stories about the settlers encounters with the Dutch enlivened conversation among the settlers, however, giving relief from tedious religious discussions.

When settlers arrived in Hartford they probably established their lots quite close to the Dutch, feeling that their claim was the only legitimate one. The Dutch had a "bouwerie" or garden plot behind the fort. Both groups must have zealously guarded each others lands.

The Dutch fort, the "House of Hope," (Huys de Hoop) was at the river end of the road that passed by Hannah's homelot - "The road from George Steele to the South Meadow." We have to try to imagine Hannah venturing towards the Dutch fort sometimes in the company of her girlfriends or maybe with Andrew Benton. What were her reactions? The reports of encounters may have worried her. It didn't seem likely the Dutch could do her any harm because they were so few in number. And at some time, there were Dutch families there who were possibly anxious for friendly exchanges. As for exchanges, wouldn't the Dutch have interesting European items that might be bartered for? But how could they talk together if they did meet? It may have seemed to Hannah and her friends that the disputes could be easily dispensed with if only the women and children were allowed to get together. These are some of the thoughts Hannah may have had whenever she wasn't thinking about her soul's future or handsome Andrew Benton.

In the period between 1638 and 1641 Hannah and Andrew were probably in a espousal relationship that enabled Andrew to openly visit with her. It would entail George's approval of Andrew's suit. The two would probably view the Dutch people with curiosity when they had a chance to take a stroll and certainly would have a lot to converse about. Hannah's interest would be about the Indians as well and they claimed some of her worry as she was living closely amongst them. The Indians quite naturally felt Hannah's homelot was in their lands.

The Puritans and the Dutch were both within their rights. They merely happened on the same place at the same time and each under equally good auspices. The Puritans under the Warwick land patent and the Dutch under a land patent granted to the West Indies Company by the Dutch States General. None of these land claims really mattered because the patents merely described broad areas no one had ever really mapped out. The second unfortunate coincidence was both groups had purchased the same land, each from a different Indian tribe and at about the same time. So each fervently thought they had the stronger claim. Fortunately there were no deaths; merely a few injuries and much hurt pride.

Before they left Newtown Hooker wanted a to be sure there was legal claim to the land they planed to settle on. It so happened that the Warwick patent had been activated in 1635 and under that patent Winthrop* had been appointed Governor of Connecticut. Hooker conferred with Winthrop through October 1635 until March 1636 to get around this development and they agreed on a maneuver whereby Hooker's company acknowledged the legal status of Winthrop and the Warwick grantees. In turn, Winthrop approved their settlement on the land along the River. The Massachusetts General Court was made a governmental agent but in name only. The Court, in turn, issued a commission to eight men in the advance party, some already in Connecticut, to carry out judicial duties, issue decrees and even to wage war. Now, this commission could call the inhabitants of the towns of the Connecticut valley together to act as a general court to carry out the authority granted. This was a very significant antecedent to the much heralded "democratic" Fundamental Orders. When the Hooker company reached Hartford they had the comfort of knowing they had legal status and furthermore, Hooker knew then the new colony might conceivably be organized under democratically chosen officials.

*winthrop junior

In 1640 the Dutch gave notice to then Governor Hopkins of their purpose to plow their land behind the fort. Both sides again disputed their particular claims and then the Dutch started to plough. The English Constable, Thomas Hosmer, arrived with a dozen men armed with sticks. With blows and their sticks they frightened the Dutch horses eo they ran away. An hour later, however, the Dutch resumed ploughing without hindrance. That night, the English sowed the field with corn. Both leaders protested and a truce resulted but two months later a mare belonging to the Dutch strayed onto an Englishman's land to feast on the greener grass. Governor Hopkin's servant impounded it. The Dutch commissioner, Opdyk. protested to New Amsterdam asking for assistance. Then the English quickly carried off a cow and a calf. The Hartford General Court ruled that the Dutch could have them back if they paid damages and charges within three days. All these goings on may have given Hannah, Andrew and their friends amusing chats and laughs.



Collisions between the Dutch and the English at Dutch Point. **SCAEVA, 1853**

Later in the summer Rev. Samuel Stone, the Teacher, and honored community leader, apparently loaded up his cart and carried away some hay the Dutch had cut and stacked. Stone, unfamiliar with the lots in that part of town, evidently went to a field he thought was the field of one of his parishioners and thought the later had donating the hay to him for his support. Opdyk served the Governor with a protest and apparently the Dutch were never paid for it since it continued to be one of the complaints against the English that was brought up at later negotiations.

The disagreements continued long after Hannah had moved to Milford. In 1653 the English and Dutch in Europe went on a short war and the Dutch lost. They had to give up the fort. The land was sold to English settlers and the ebb and flow of the River through the years obliterated all remnants of the fort. However, Casper Varlet and his family from the Dutch fort became residents of Hartford and later Judith Varlet, the daughter, played a significant part on the Witchcraft Panic of 1660. (Anne Cole, Andrew's eventual second wife, would accuse her of witchcraft)

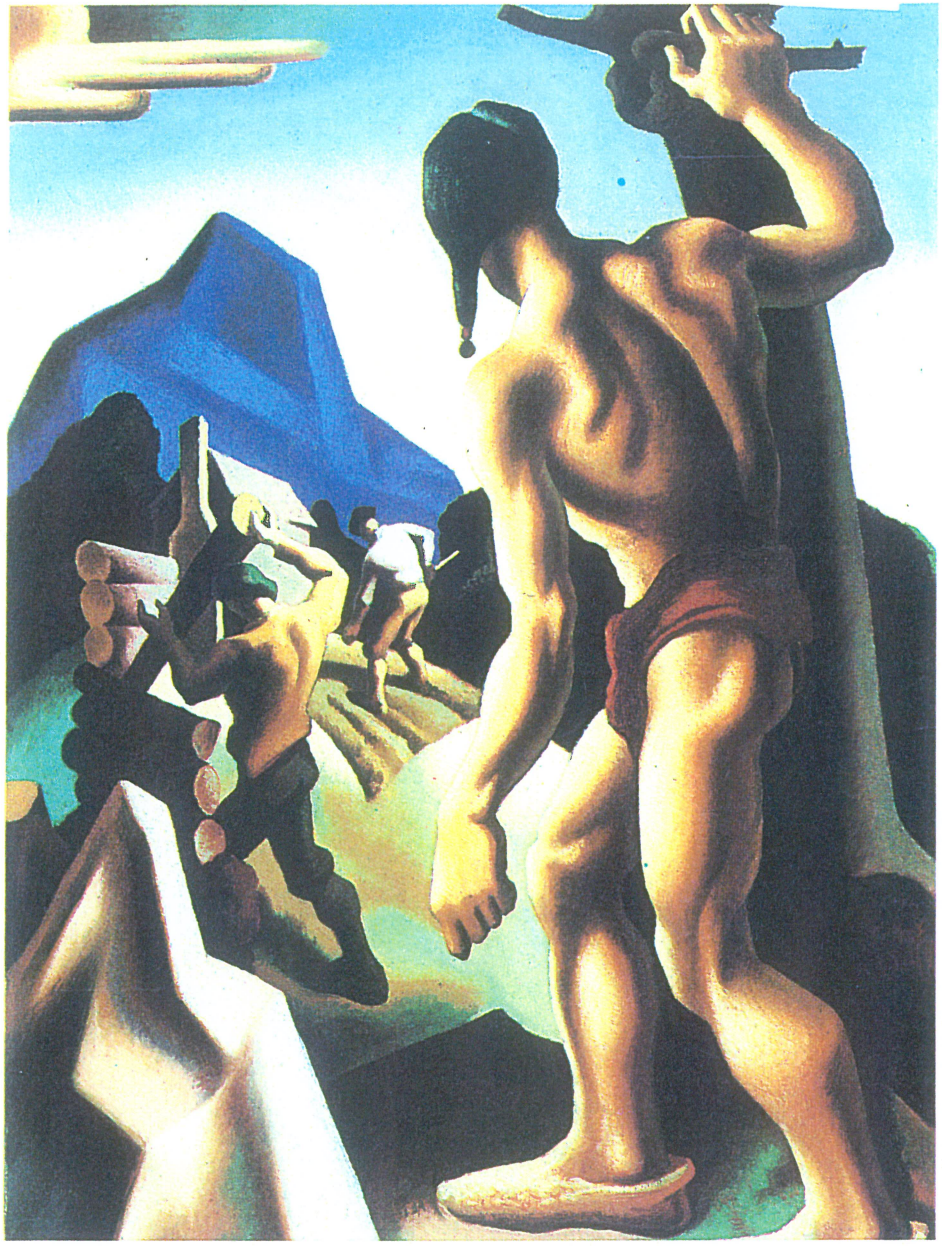
The Indians

Rev. Samuel Stone had made contact with the Saukiogs and their chief Sequassen in 1635 apparently in preparation for the arrival of the Hooker company the next year. He purchased the land for the settlement which included the Dutch lands. On the other hand, the Dutch had purchased land from the Pequots sometime earlier and assumed it included all the adjacent land to their fort. Since the Pequots had subdued the Saukiogs in battle years before, the Dutch maintained their claim was the stronger one.

The Pequot tribe from the area known as Mystic was the bane of everyone's existence because they were hostile, aggressive, and brutal. All tribes feared them and with the arrival of the English these tribes had a chance to seek protection. So making treaties with the settlers was the thing to do. When the Hooker contingent arrived they were implicitly welcomed by the Saukiogs and the Indians gathered their wigwams into tiny villages in and around the settlers lots. Remarkably, the settlers saw no need for a fort nor palisades. The Indians were their neighbors. Hannah may have traded with the squaws and learned valuable skills and useful tricks from their children. We are given little information about these relations but it could have not been any other way.

Trouble arose, however, because the Pequot Indians planned to obliterate all the English settlers in the region, putting Hannah in real danger if they succeeded. Attacks were made against settler groups along the shores of the Sound. Then, on April 23, 1637, they paddled up the River to Wethersfield, only three miles distant from Hartford, and attacked settlers working in the fields. Two girls were taken away. Hannah would then have reason for fear. Andrew probably had not arrived in Wethersfield yet.

HARTFORD - "LOST HUNTING GROUND"



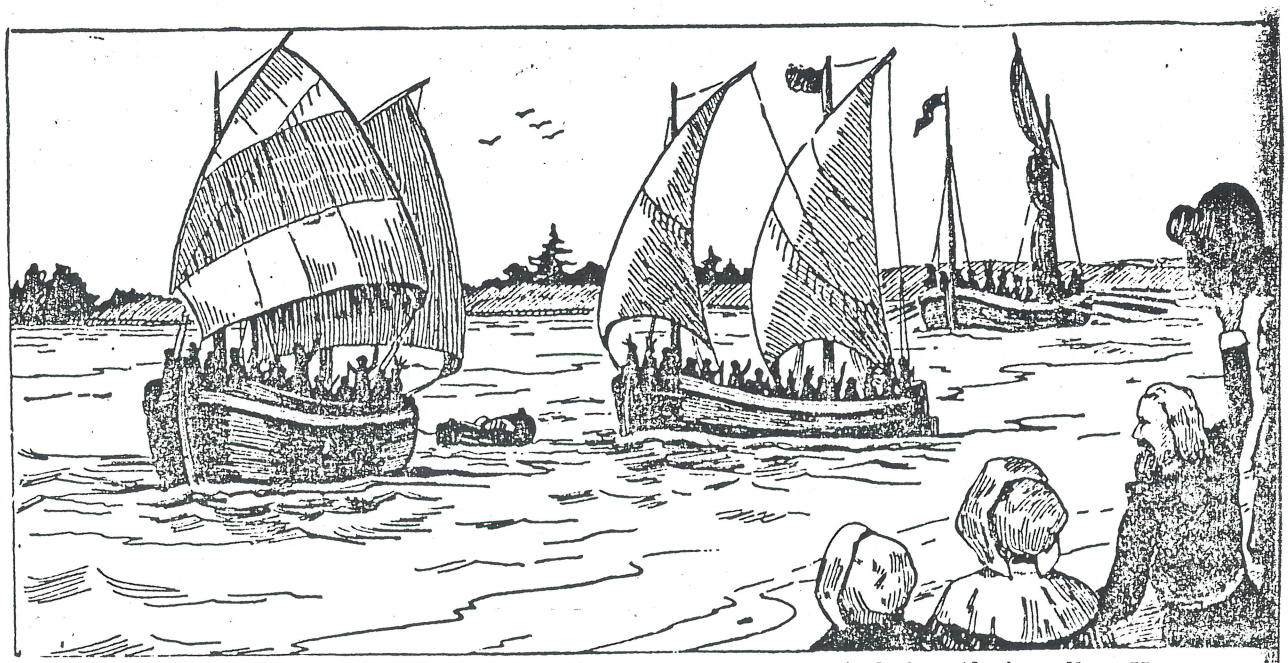
Thomas Hart Benton

The General Court of the Hartford Colony had to act so it authorized an expedition to sail down the River to destroy the Pequots. It seemed clear to all that they had to be eliminated for the safety of the Colony. Hooker further maintained that if the settlers didn't deal with the Pequots in an decisive manner, the Saukiogs would consider the settlers cowards and withdraw their allegiance. Hooker wrote to Winthrop "Though we feel neither the time nor strength fit for such service, yet the Indians here, our friends.. unless we attempted something, we had delivered ourselves into contempt and caused them to turn against us." The settlers had only been in Hartford a year and were they really ready to attack the largest and most fearsome Indian tribe? It was well known that the Pequots routinely tortured their prisoners mercilessly so Hannah must have thought the English soldiers who were going attack them were very brave. Her father was 55 years old; not a soldier. Hooker blessed them as their boats shoved off. Rev. Samuel Stone accompanied the soldiers as the Chaplain and was even so self assured that he guided Captain Mason at critical points by asking for and receiving "divine" intercession. Most of the braves were absent and the camp of the tribe was burned down with terrible loss of life. Afterwards the braves were hunted down and killed off.



By permission of The Travelers

THOMAS HOOKER PRAYING FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE PEQUOTS



On the 20th of May, nine days after the call to arms, the ninety men under Captain Mason were ready to go forth to the first Indian war in New England. The little army assembled on the bank of the Connecticut river, and with prayers and sad farewells, embarked in three boats, a pink, a pinnace and a shallop. They were accompanied by their ally, Uncas, and his seventy braves. They began to move down the river, but the water was shallow and the boats constantly ran aground. At their own request the Indians who did not relish this mode of transportation, were set ashore to proceed to Saybrook by land and the boats thus lightened made better



Slaughter of the Pequots

When the victorious soldiers returned to Hartford the Indians turned over to them part of their Little Meadow campground in gratitude and the area was divided into lots for the soldiers. It became known as the "Soldiers Field." Then the Indians made another village in the South Meadow south of the Dutch Fort. These Indian villages were along the River and were probably about an a ½ hour walk down from Hannah's homelot. Probably this distance was just as well since there was an Indian battle in the South Meadow in early 1643 when braves of Uncas attacked Sequassen's tribe, killed seven or eight of his men, wounded 15, burned the wigwams and carried off booty. So ended Hannah's living among the Saukiogs.

HANNAH HEARD ABOUT HOOKER'S FAMOUS SERMON ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOVERNMENT MAY 31, 1638

Hooker preached to the General Court that the choice of public magistrates belonged to the people by God's allowance. That the privilege of election, which belonged to the people, must not be exercised according to their "humors" but according to the blessed will and law of God. That they who had the power to appoint officers had the power also to set the bounds and limitations of that power. His text was Deuteronomy 1:13 "Take you wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make then rulers over you." Hannah's station in the Colony, of course, meant she could not attend sessions of the Court. She heard reports and as 16 year old might have talked to Andrew about the Hooker sermon.

Hooker's thought was that authority emanated from below and should not be imposed from above. In church polity he placed greater emphasis on the individual congregation and less upon the synod. In church affairs he favored the laymen rather than the clergy. He endeavored to give the people of Hartford a more democratic church and state that existed in the Massachusetts Colony. He saw that Colony as a theocracy and an aristocracy. He was a democrat and anticipated the doctrine of popular sovereignty.

The Fundamental Orders

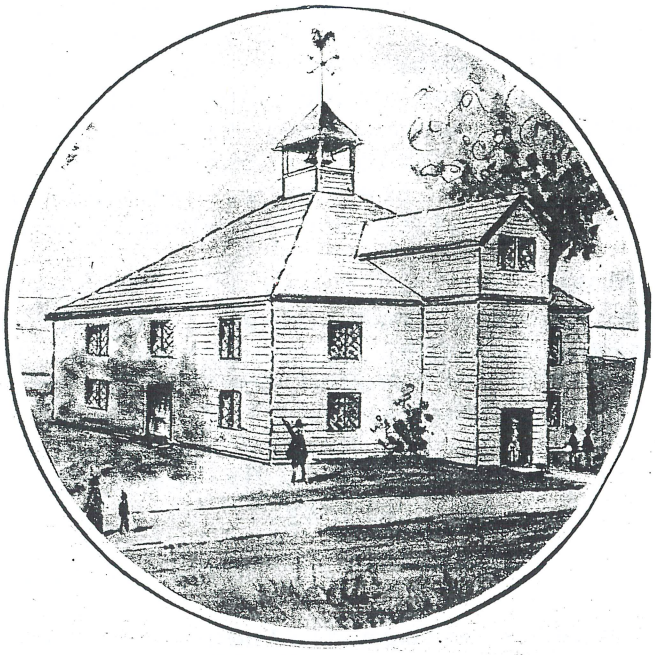
Hooker's sermon influenced the making of a new frame of government - "The Fundamental Orders" in January 1639. They were probably written by Roger Ludlow of Windsor as he was the only trained lawyer in the Colony. They knit together Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. They have been hailed as the precursor of our Constitution because they were based on the free consent the people. They consisted of a preamble and eleven "orders" setting up the workings for a General Court to govern the three towns.

Were The Fundamental Orders voted into being by the people in a mass meeting? Impossible because of the weather, the distance between the towns and the size of the new meeting house. The method of establishing them, according to Love, was a meeting of the General Court which was constituted by committees and magistrates representing the resident inhabitants the three towns. Committees were chosen by the inhabitants themselves, three in number from each town. They elected the magistrates. The people were the source of authority, but not acting directly as the source.

Hookers famous May 1638 sermon was probably delivered to the General Court in the small first meeting house. There were eight magistrates and fourteen committees and other important men in attendance. Thus the meeting house was of sufficient size to accommodate them as church meetings undoubtedly were attended by many more than that. The building is thought to have been about 24 feet by 16 feet 10 feet high with a pyramidal roof. At the end an elevated enclosure served for the pulpit. Rough benches furnished seating with men and women separated. A beaten earth floor sufficed. This is where Hannah first worshipped.



FIRST MEETING HOUSE
1636



SECOND MEETING HOUSE
1639

By the time of the gathering to adopt The Fundamental Orders in January 1639 a new meeting house was built although little mention of its erection is given. It was fifty feet square with adequate height to permit galleries to be added later. There were doors on three sides. Two narrow window-sashes, hung on hinges at the sides and opening in the middle, were glazed with lozenge-shaped panes of glass, set in lead. The front porch a was to be added later. If Andrew came to court Hannah they would have worshipped in this church after 1639.

When the victorious soldiers returned to Hartford the Indians turned over to them part of their Little Meadow campground in gratitude and the area was divided into lots for the soldiers. It became known as the "Soldiers Field." Then the Indians made another village in the South Meadow south of the Dutch Fort. These Indian villages were along the River and were probably about an a ½ hour walk down from Hannah's homelot. Probably this distance was just as well since there was an Indian battle in the South Meadow in early 1643 when braves of Uncas attacked Sequassen's tribe, killed seven or eight of his men, wounded 15, burned the wigwams and carried off booty. So ended Hannah's living among the Saukiogs.

HANNAH HEARD ABOUT HOOKER'S FAMOUS SERMON ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOVERNMENT MAY 31, 1638

Hooker preached to the General Court that the choice of public magistrates belonged to the people by God's allowance. That the privilege of election, which belonged to the people, must not be exercised according to their "humors" but according to the blessed will and law of God. That they who had the power to appoint officers had the power also to set the bounds and limitations of that power. His text was Deuteronomy 1:13 "Take you wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make then rulers over you." Hannah's station in the Colony, of course, meant she could not attend sessions of the Court. She heard reports and as 16 year old might have talked to Andrew about the Hooker sermon.

Hooker's thought was that authority emanated from below and should not be imposed from above. In church polity he placed greater emphasis on the individual congregation and less upon the synod. In church affairs he favored the laymen rather than the clergy. He endeavored to give the people of Hartford a more democratic church and state that existed in the Massachusetts Colony. He saw that Colony as a theocracy and an aristocracy. He was a democrat and anticipated the doctrine of popular sovereignty.

The Fundamental Orders

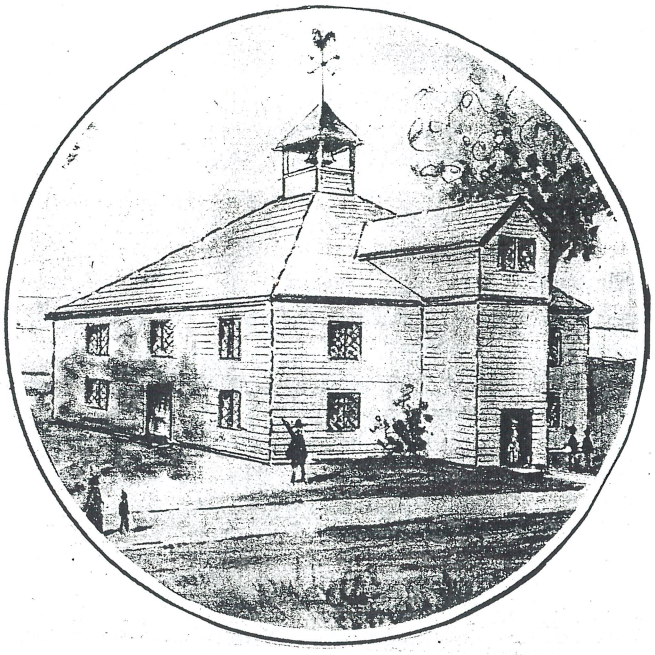
Hooker's sermon influenced the making of a new frame of government - "The Fundamental Orders" in January 1639. They were probably written by Roger Ludlow of Windsor as he was the only trained lawyer in the Colony. They knit together Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. They have been hailed as the precursor of our Constitution because they were based on the free consent the people. They consisted of a preamble and eleven "orders" setting up the workings for a General Court to govern the three towns.

Were The Fundamental Orders voted into being by the people in a mass meeting? Impossible because of the weather, the distance between the towns and the size of the new meeting house. The method of establishing them, according to Love, was a meeting of the General Court which was constituted by committees and magistrates representing the resident inhabitants the three towns. Committees were chosen by the inhabitants themselves, three in number from each town. They elected the magistrates. The people were the source of authority, but not acting directly as the source.

Hookers famous May 1638 sermon was probably delivered to the General Court in the small first meeting house. There were eight magistrates and fourteen committees and other important men in attendance. Thus the meeting house was of sufficient size to accommodate them as church meetings undoubtedly were attended by many more than that. The building is thought to have been about 24 feet by 16 feet 10 feet high with a pyramidal roof. At the end an elevated enclosure served for the pulpit. Rough benches furnished seating with men and women separated. A beaten earth floor sufficed. This is where Hannah first worshipped.



FIRST MEETING HOUSE
1636



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Hooker's Guidance Obviated Dissent.

One reason for leaving Newtown was Hooker's increased distaste for the extreme rigidity of Winthrop's church with respect to dissent. Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams were exiled for their different views and the Quakers were cruelly treated. In Hartford, on the other hand there is no record of dissent. In the eleven years of Hooker's ministry only one person was excommunicated and only one person was censured. Hooker sensitively managed potential dissent. If there appeared to be pending great agitation over some question Hooker would have the matter tabled and before the next gathering he would, ordinarily by private conferences, win over those that were unsatisfied. In the admission of new members Hooker insisted that the elders conduct the examination. Before matters were presented to the church he often went to the presiding elders and carefully explained them. With such high regard for the feelings of the parishioners, peace and love pervaded Hannah's church.

The return of Hannah and Andrew around 1660, however, found the church in the throes of controversy having cast aside all of Hooker's guidance.

ABOUT GEORGE STOCKING, CENTENARIAN

Birthplace Suffolk (Glemsford ?) in 1582. Died in Hartford 101 years later. Anna was his first wife and the mother of all his children. It is strange that his first child was not born until he was 38 and Anna was 34. He arrived in Boston at age 52, was allowed land there and owned a house. Was christened in 1633. (maybe he did come on the "Griffin"). Trekked with Hooker at age 54 and owned a lot of 20 acres in Hartford. He was selectman at age 65, highway surveyor at ages 72 and 80, chimney viewer at age 75 and was excused from guard duty at age 70 because he was too old. He and Agnes were a founders of Second Church.

Anna probably died when she was 74. Then he married Agnes Shotwell around 1660. He would have been 78 and really needed a second wife. Perhaps Hannah came up from Milford about then to assist.

His will adds to the confusion since in 1673, at age 91, he willed his property to Anna; but she was dead by then. Later the Court declared the will "in part contradicting" and made new cash disbursements. Forty one pounds to Sarah and Lydia, 100 pounds to son Samuel and 41 pounds to all Andrew Benton's children who would have received about 6 pounds each. (Samuel Benton was 15). Samuel Stocking was to receive the residue of the estate yet the will also allowed to the maintenance of ministry of the new meeting house all George's land. Further, the Court allowed grandson John, the remainder because John had taken care of George in his later years! In 1680 an inventory of his lands he had only 4 acres, having previously given Andrew Benton his last large lot, 8 acres.

Hannah probably died in 1670 at age at age 48 when George was 88. He led an amazing full life if the information we have is true.

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There is incorrect information in this speech. See comments at end.

Extract from "Sisters Who First Joined Second Church", a lecture given by Mrs. Charles H. Smith at South Church February 14, 1896. "As the fifteen men who have received their full share of attention it is around these eighteen women we must learn more".

"AGNES STOCKING

There is abundant proof that Sister Agnes Stocking and her worthy husband were among the patriarchs of this church, for ten years before the church was formed Brother George Stocking was "freed from watching" and when he died in 1683 the records say "at great age". She had suffered all the privations and struggles of a pioneer life and now with her four children, three daughters and one son, grown to womanhood and manhood with homes of their own, the good father and mother had more time to meditate on holy things, and with that fine influence which emanates from the pure lives of a good father and mother as we read down the column we think what a beautiful family group, father, mother, daughters and daughter's husband, to which was soon added the son's widow, Bethia Steele. It is not difficult to see how it all happened accustomed as they were to think of themselves. We can easily imagine them after the day's work was over seated around the great open fire agitated and perplexed, discussing at length the momentous questions of church discipline, covenant, halfway covenant and baptism. Although a mother in Israel, with her life work almost done, yet she too must worship according to the dictates of own conscience and she enters her name on the rolls of the new church. Her husband was one of the original proprietors, their home being on the south side of Buckingham Street near Washington, and it is pleasant to know that after 200 years, in this our time, for two generations the same land has been and is now occupied by South Church people, Mrs. Horton Bidwell and her son and daughter. When Agnes Stocking died is not known, but as wife and mother and good sister of this church her record stands out bright and clear, and no flower twining tombstone is necessary for the remembrance of one whose name will last as long as this church has being."

COMMENT

Mrs. Smith made a major blunder because Agnes was the second wife of George and was not the mother of his children. Unfortunately critical dates are not available. Anna, his first wife, probably died just before 1660 and then George married Agnes. She was a founder of Second Church and was listed as "Agnis" and her maiden name may have been "Shotswell" but few facts about her are known If she "suffered the privations of a pioneer life" it was not likely in Hartford. Anna suffered them.

The "family group" is an appealing scene but it could not have taken place because some had died before others could have gathered. George and his son died in 1683, Hannah Benton about 1770. Agnes was not mentioned the settlement of George's estate. Mrs. Smith should have referred to widow "Bethia Stocking" and not "Bethia Steele". Her second husband, James Steele, did not die until 1712.

The Dutch Put Hartford On The Map

By WILSON H. FAUDE

With a major development named for a Dutch explorer and new housing going in nearby at Dutch Point, it's a good time to ask just how important the Dutch were in the settlement of Hartford.

The short answer: We wouldn't be here without them.

The Dutch advance on the New World began in 1609, when the Dutch-owned United East India Company employed Englishman Henry Hudson to search the Americas for the Northwest Passage to Asia. It was believed that such a passage must exist, and when found it would provide a shorter and less costly trade route to the riches of Cathay. His explorations established the Dutch claims in the region.

Although he did not find the elusive Northwest Passage, he did discover an abundance of "many skins and peltries, martins, foxes, and many other commodities," according to historians Ross Hatch and Russell Shorto. After Hudson's death in 1611, Dutch merchants sent Hendrick Christianson and Adriaen Block to formally establish the fur trade.

They did, and the newly formed Dutch West India Company was given a monopoly over trade in Africa and America. In 1626, the company bought Manhattan Island for $24, in what may be history's most famous real estate deal, and established a settlement called New Amsterdam. The symbol of the settlement was the beaver. To understand how lucrative the fur trade was, one record lists more than 80,000 beaver pelts and more than 9,000 otter pelts shipped from New Amsterdam to Holland in a 10-year period.

Block charted Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River. In 1633, the Dutch built a small fort in Hartford, where three rivers meet (The Connecticut, the Hockanam and the Freshet, today known as the Park River). Its purpose was to receive the thousands of furs that Indians and others had to trade with them. The fort by all accounts was a modest one, thinly manned on 30 acres of land. Twice a year, when the river was full, Dutch ships would sail up from New Amsterdam to pick up the furs.

The arrival of the English from Cambridge in Hartford in 1636 changed everything. Although some may have come for religious reasons, it is no coincidence that the presence of the Dutch fort and the profitable fur trade dictated that the area around the Dutch fort was the place to establish a permanent inland English settlement.

Upset at the ouster, the Dutch referred to the settlers in Hartford as "Jankes," pronounced Yankees, which meant thief, robber or pirate.

Early accounts record growing tensions between the men in the fort and the English settlers. Stray Dutch cattle eating English crops further elevated tensions. As more and more Englishmen settled, Dutch lands were encroached upon.

It became apparent to the leaders of the English and the Dutch that something had to be worked out to avoid a war. After much negotiating, it was agreed that the governors of the Plymouth Colony, the Massachusetts Colony, the Connecticut Colony and the New Haven Colony should meet with the Dutch representatives.

The governors wanted to hold the meeting in Boston and the Dutch preferred Manhattan, so Hartford was selected because it was between the two. The Dutch were represented by none other than Peter Stuyvesant, "Governor General of the New Netherlands, Curacao, Aruba and etc" who was accompanied by his English secretary George Baxter and a large entourage.

Stuyvesant set out from Manhattan on Sept. 17, 1650, and visited Dutch settlements along the way, arriving in Hartford on Sept. 21. The English greeted him cordially and wined and dined him. The resulting Hartford Treaty of 1650 formally solidified the English position.

While the Dutch could retain their fort in Hartford, the remaining lands on both sides of the Connecticut River were declared English. A boundary line was drawn between the English and Dutch interests to prevent an incursions by the English on Dutch territory. It ran north-south through Long Island and the mainland, at the west side of Greenwich Bay. (This is why there are English- and Dutch-named counties on Long Island, Suffolk and Nassau.) No Dutch house could be built within 10 miles of the line. Any disputes would be mediated by the Dutch in Manhattan and the Colony of New Haven.

Stuyvesant knew he did not have the military strength to defeat an English invasion from the north, so a treaty that recognized Dutch interests around Manhattan was all he could hope for. The treaty was formally signed and on Oct. 12, 1650, Stuyvesant left Hartford.

Two years later, England and Holland went to war. After the news reached Hartford, on June 27, 1653, Captain John Underhill stormed the fort with a small group of men, threw out the Dutch and proclaimed "I, John Underhill, do seize upon this house and land hitherto belonging as Dutch goods, claimed by the West Indian Company in Amsterdam . . . for the state of England."

The Colonial Court ordered Underhill not to sell the fort and its land, but on July 18, 1655, he did just that, conveying the 30-acre property to Richard Lord and William Gibbons. The Dutch were powerless to retake the fort. Upset at the ouster, the Dutch referred to the settlers in Hartford as "Jankes," pronounced Yankees, which meant thief, robber or pirate.

It was the Dutch fort erected at the cross rivers of the fur trade in Hartford that dictated a new English settlement should be built here. When Hartford was chosen as the site for Colonial leaders to meet and resolve their issues, the city-to-be assumed the mantle of a respected place.

Had not been for the Dutch fort, Hartford would not have been the place selected for settlement by the English under the Rev. Thomas Hooker. So Adriaen's Landing and Dutch Point, hold your heads high, for you symbolize why we are in this place today.

Wilson H. Faude is director emeritus of The Old State House and a historical consultant.

HARTFORD COURANT NOV. 20, 2005

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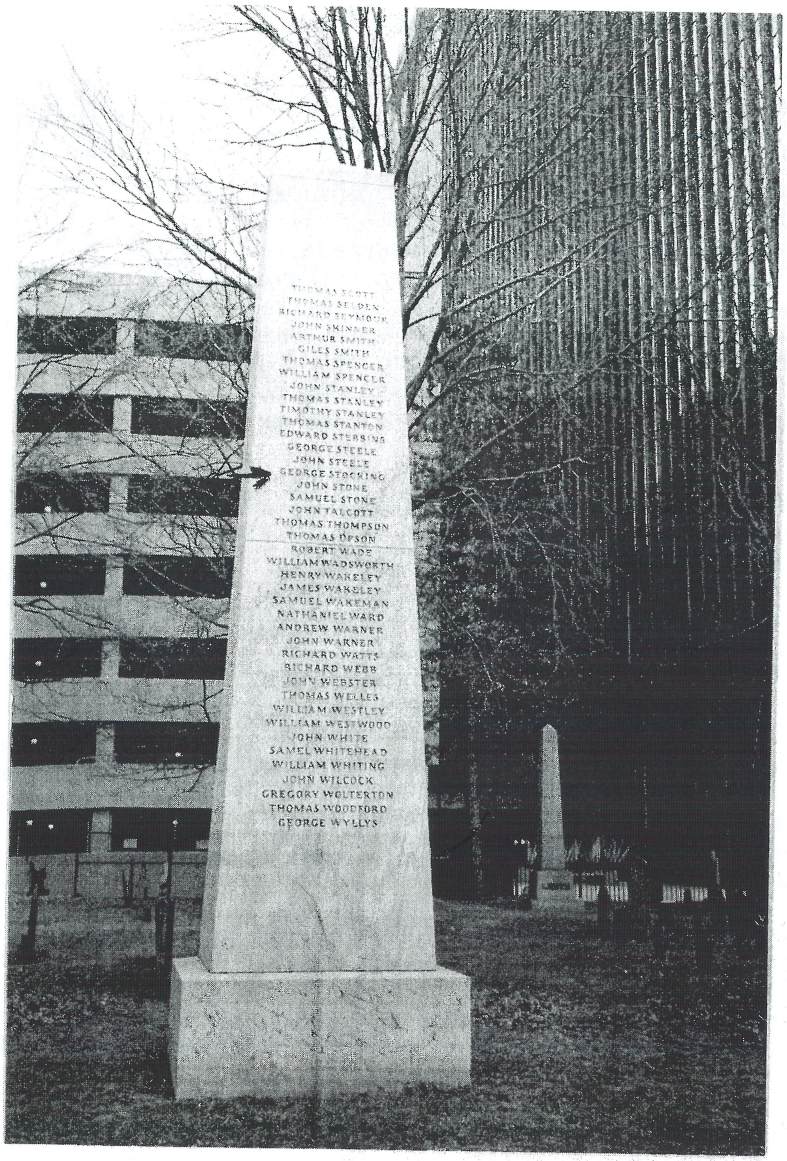
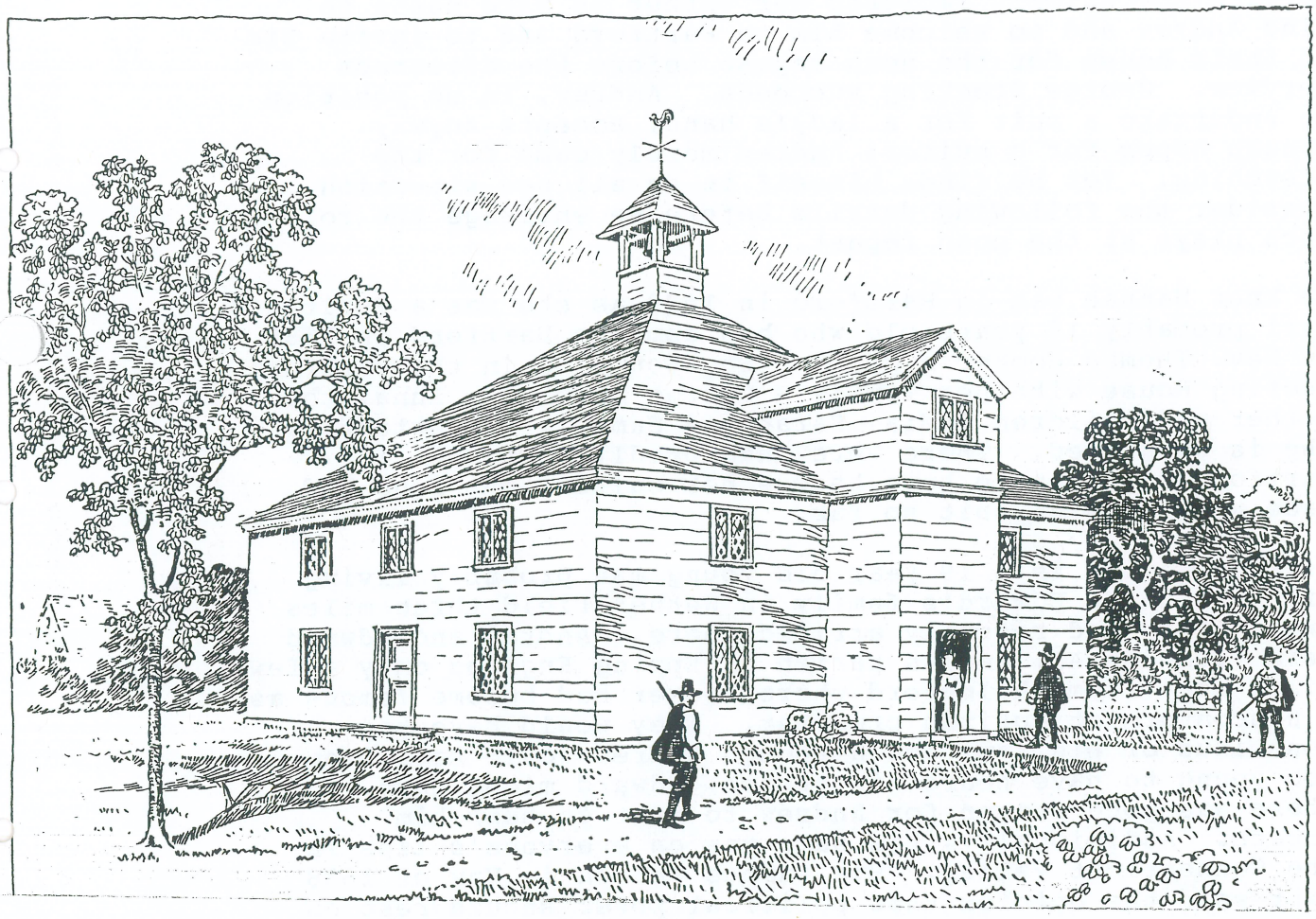
FOUNDERS' MONUMENT

Erected in 1986 in the Ancient Burying Ground to replace an brownstone obelisk erected in 1837. George Stocking's name is 16 from the top.



WHERE HANNAH CHOSE ANDREW!
IN THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE IN HARTFORD BUILT IN 1638



Source: Love"Colonial History of Hartford"

A FANTASY

HANNAH CHOOSES ANDREW!!

Our family had its beginnings when Hannah Stocking spotted Andrew Benton in the Hartford Meeting House in 1639.

Many circumstances of those days point to that event. After all, they were married 10 years later and they had to meet somewhere; what better place than in a meetinghouse. For Puritans it was the main place for them to gather as town-wide social festivities were not in their tradition.

Hannah, with no successful suitor so far, was alert to notice Andrew, probably reasonably presentable, squeezed in amongst the crowd standing along the sides of the small Meeting House while the famous Rev. Thomas Hooker preached. Andrew's was a new face in Hartford and at the end of the service she quickly implored her father to make haste to find Andrew and to welcome him to Hartford and to invite him to their house for the noon repast before the afternoon service. George Stocking succeeds. Andrew, in no position to undertake a suit for a lady's hand, accepts anyway. Hannah hopes for a suitor; Andrew merely came for the preaching. Yet he finds himself in an all new situation. Consider the following details before we envisage the role each plays at the noon repast.

We know Hannah was in Hartford in 1639 as she was a Puritan girl probably 17 years old who had come to Hartford in 1636 in Rev. Thomas Hooker's group. She would be in the Hartford Meeting House with her family - George Stocking, Anna, the mother and children Lydia, Sarah and Samuel. Importantly, she is unmarried. There were undoubtedly young men in Hartford eligible to have become her suitor, but none had made a successful suit so far.

We know Andrew is a 19 year old young man probably living with his uncle Edward's family in Wethersfield three miles away. They had recently arrived there. Andrew and Edward were from the All Saints parish in Epping England only a few miles away from Chelmsford where Hooker had become famous as a nonconformist Puritan preacher. They would have been conscious of his fame and although Andrew would have been too young to have heard him preach, Edward might have. So there was good reason for Andrew to want to hear him preach. Additionally, his name was on everyone's lips in the Connecticut Valley. His famous sermon in May of 1638 expressed the opinion that political power should rest on the consent of the governed. Just in January of 1639 the representatives of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield had met in the new second Meeting House to enact "The Fundamental Orders" embodying Hooker's democratic ideas.

As a single lad, Andrew would have little difficulty walking to Hartford on a Sabbath morning and fitting himself into the meetinghouse. Entire families from Wethersfield would not be able to go because of their size. Furthermore, there is no real church in Wethersfield at that time for Andrew to attend. What services there are take place in the homes. There is no meetinghouse nor established preacher. That is why the Rev Peter Prudden had come from New Haven and how Andrew learned of the opportunity to go to Milford.

Andrew probably would time his entrance into the Meeting House to be as unobtrusive as possible, squeezing in at the last moment. Its his first visit to a Puritan meeting house but he has learned about it in conversations in Wethersfield. It's a square wooden building with a pyramidal roof very unlike the stone All Saints Church he knew in Epping.

Hannah, sitting on the side benches with the women evidently has a view of him. She is incredulous at first that a new boy is in town who she did not know about! Then regaining her composure, she surveys the vision she has and quickly concludes he is a quite appealing. Andrew must not have been too handsome or else he would have long ago fallen to the advances of predatory non-Puritan women. He looks attractive to Hannah in any event and she nudges her mother, Anna, and Anna sees him and approves. Does Hannah catch Andrew's eye? Does Andrew really notice Hannah? After all, he came to hear the preaching and not to find a wife. As a young male, however, he probably does survey the young ladies present and may or not pay any particular attention to Hannah.

At the end of the service, George luckily finds Andrew outside the Meeting House before any other fathers find him. As he welcomes Andrew to Hartford and inquires to his health, Andrew uneasily sizes up the situation. He is being surveyed as a possible suitor for some young lady thereabouts. Which young lady and does he really want to go that way at this point in his life? He tries to concentrate on his conversation with George and at the same time, out of the corner of his eye, see which young lady is eagerly awaiting her father's approach. He can't find any.

Does he really want to go to the noon repast that will probably be offered him and then become entangled with a girl he may not like. But, he quickly reasons, I'm from out of town and can easily beg off from any situation not to my liking because of feigned obligations in Wethersfield. Just then George makes an offer of lunch and steps back and gestures towards his family. Andrew sees Hannah, the hopeful one. She appears attractive and demure.

At the onset, she gives Andrew a great big smile. Is Andrew immediately swept off his feet by her charms? Or is he merely pleasantly impressed? Anyway, at that fateful moment he accepts.

Its long walk to the Stocking home lot and the men, including Samuel, Hannah"s older brother naturally take the lead. Its the first chance either Hannah or Andrew has to hear the others voice as each group converses amongst themselves. When Hannah overhears Andrew's voice she is excited.

The Stocking house lot is in the second tier of lots after one crosses the Little River which is one block south of the Meeting House. It is near the last lot up the road and next to the "Ox Pasture."

Once in the house the women prepare a repast while the men converse. The meal is simple because no cooking would be permitted on the Sabbath - perhaps bread, cheese and cider. George is impressed with Andrew but he has learned on the way to the home that Andrew's future prospects require him to leave Wethersfield and settle in Milford as soon as the next season permits. Andrew has revealed this prospect to George in order to impress him. Thus the suit he hopes Andrew may want to make for Hannah's hand would have to be cut short. Or might Andrew be persuaded to stay in the area if Hannah is sufficiently intriguing? George is 57 years old and could readily welcome a young man on his lot. So as the meal progresses George is apprehensive about Hannah's reaction to this difficulty.

Fortuitously, Hannah and Andrew are placed opposite. She is animated - as animated as a Puritan girl is permitted to be. She asks him questions and hangs on his answers. They have news from England to share, their voyages, Hooker's preaching and Prudden's preaching. Andrew is flattered by the attention, forgetting for the moment, that at the end of the visit someone has to make move to either encourage a suit or not to. Everyone dreads this moment.

Andrew then impresses everyone with his declaration he is be part of a group soon to go to settle a new town. He senses immediately Hannah's change in mood from her downcast expression. She is greatly disappointed then looks longingly at Andrew. His heart melts and his desire for her surges.

66

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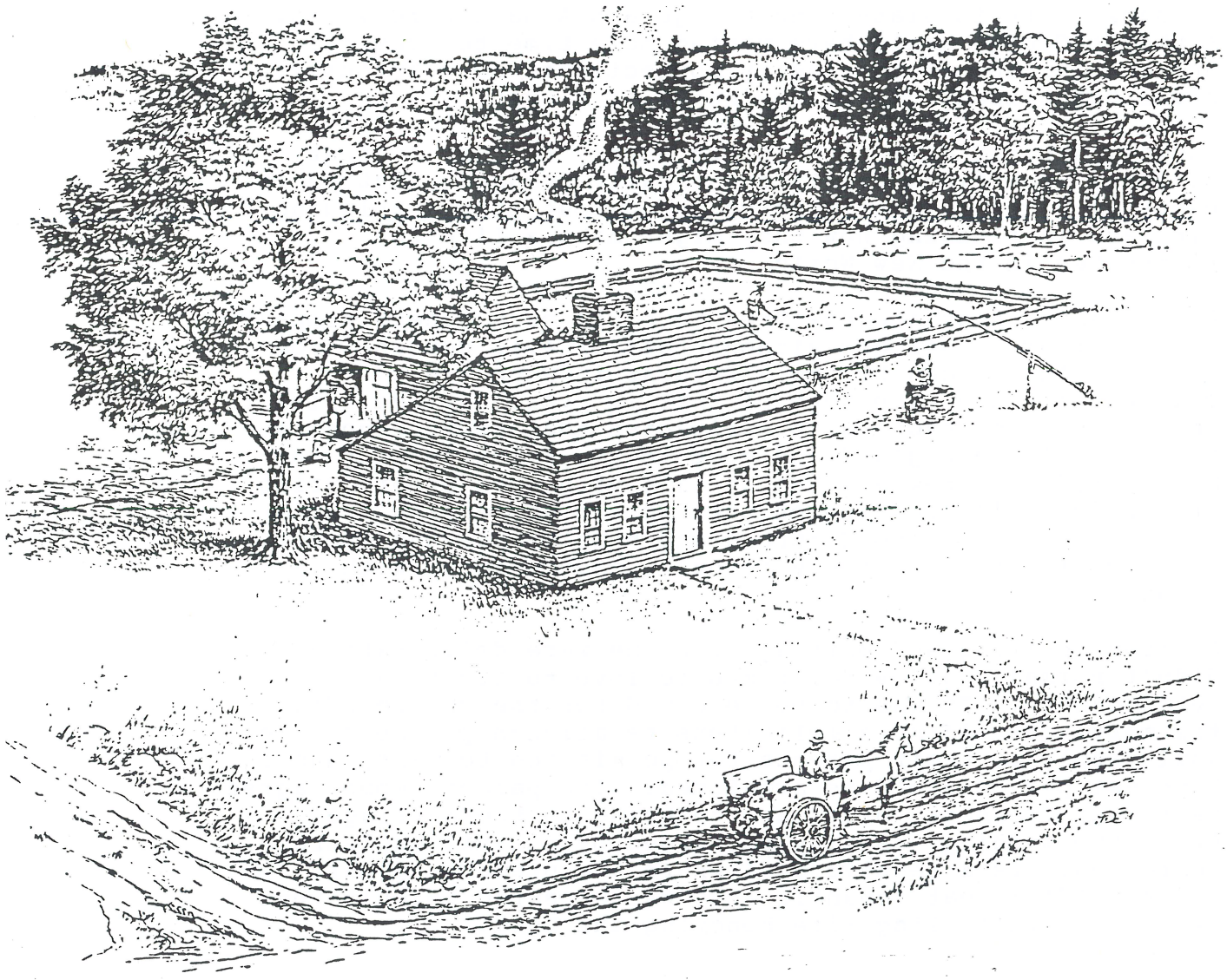
Impetuously, he declares there will be much time before he must go to Milford and he now wants George to allow him to spend the time in a closer acquaintance with Hannah. She is elated and George and Anna are relieved. Although George would have wanted more time to consider Andrew's prospects and family connections, he graciously gives his consent to the beginning of a suit.

Andrew, who had come to Hartford merely to hear a great preacher, now finds his life radically changed. But he is happy with the idea of finding more about this intriguing girl and in planning how they might make a life for themselves in the New World.

Andrew and Hannah are now free to be in each others company with a clear conscience without fear of evil comment from others. Andrew can become a regular in Hooker's congregation and take note of what is preached. He tries to understand the devotion to Puritanism that drove Hannah's family to leave England and come to the wilderness of the New World. Andrew and Hannah talk with each other during breaks in family routine on the Sabbath and Andrew volunteers to come to Hartford and help George and Samuel with their work. That way he has a chance to be with Hannah.

Puritan courting and marriage routine were deliberate and didn't normally allow for romantic love to create a relationship. It was to be reserved for the couple after the marriage. After a felicitous relationship, the couple would apply to their parents for permission to marry and a Espousal period would be arraigned. The parents would agree as to any financial offerings to bring to the marriage. After the wedding, usually performed by a civil magistrate, there would be a festive meal where the preacher might speak. After that romantic love was expected to knit the two into a fulfilling life honoring the Lord.

Whether Andrew and Hannah progressed as far in their relationship as to agree to an Espousal period before he left Wethersfield for Milford we will never know. Milford was commenced in the spring of 1640 and Andrew had a house lot. He had to travel from there to Hartford from time to time to continue his suit with Hannah. Since it is a long way without any certain means to make the journey, we have to be amazed at their fidelity and persistence. After all there were eligible partners available in each town over the long time it took before they were married - 10 years. But they were faithful to their initial vows to each other.



From "Puritan Migration to Connecticut"

HANNAH"S HARTFORD HOUSE

George Stocking may have built such a house for his family a few years after arriving in Hartford. It had a center chimney and therefore two or more fireplaces. It had room on the small second floor for sleeping quarters. George and Anna Stocking lived here with Samuel, Hannah, Lydia and Sarah. No large front yard would have been tolerated as land in town was all utilized. Their homelot was on the southside and was nine lots west of the Wyllys estate.

How would Andrew and Hannah keep in touch?

The direct overland route from Milford to Hartford would not have been feasible as there were ridges and valleys in between and few if any settlements. Milford was on the shore of Long Island Sound West of New Haven a slight distance. There were no rivers worth navigating North from the shore towns except the Connecticut but it emptied into the Sound at Saybrook about 30 miles East of New Haven. We are not told how much river traffic there was at that early time. There might be ships plying the River and then along the shore to the various towns there. The water route would be the best way to move goods and people as passable roads had yet to be built As early as 1638 the Puritan Army going to oppose the Pequots was able to move down River in a "pink, pinnace and shallop" transporting around 130 men and supplies. So there were some river craft being used.

Since Hartford and New Haven were the biggest colonies, people may have sailed part way on the River and then landed to make their way to New Haven over an established trail. There might have been camps or rudimentary taverns along there in the earliest days. It was about 50 miles from Milford to Hartford via New Haven. Horses weren't very plentiful, especially only for riding, so most travel would have been on foot. Maybe Indian canoes were available for the river portion of the trip giving Andrew the chance to hire an Indian to carry him.

Messages would be possible as Milford colonists were familiar with New Haven colonists and New Haven and Hartford colonists would be sending messages often. Could Andrew and Hannah read and write? If not, verbal messages might have to suffice.

No record of their marriage exists but their first child was baptized in Milford in 1650. Andrew joined the Church in 1648 and Hannah was admitted in October of 1650. Their marriage probably took place in Hartford in 1649.

The wedding celebration guests will be explored later. How did the bride and groom make their way to Milford with her household and personal belongings? Considering their bulk- a trunk, pots and food - the most efficient mode would be by the River to Saybrook and then by a second vessel along the shore from Saybrook to Milford. Otherwise, they could have walked and camped along the way, their goods loaded on a horse.

Their first child was born in April of 1650 but he died shortly therafter. Four other children were born in Milford, the last being Samuel there in August of 1658, our ancestor.

The Andrew Benton's return to Hartford around 1660 but Hannah died about 1670. Andrew, at age 53, married again to Anne Cole and their child, Ebenezer, is born in 1673.

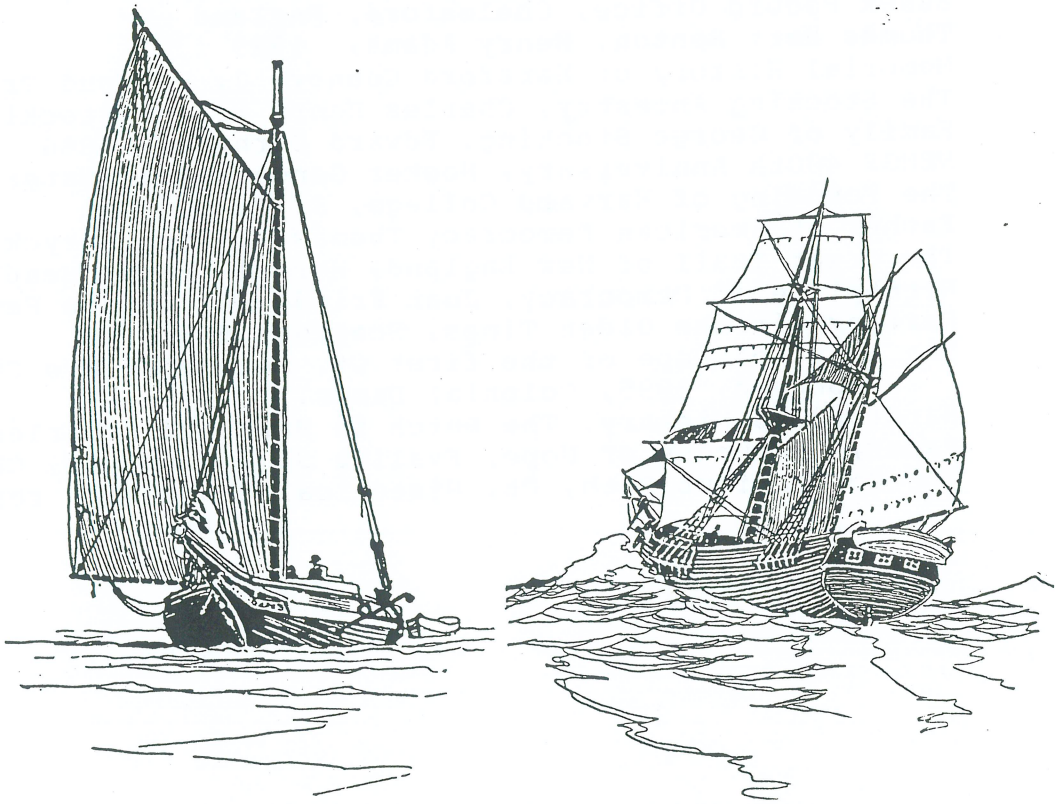
The Wedding

Weddings were celebrated in Puritan times by a feast at the announcement of the espousal period and at the wedding. Neighbors and family would come. The feast would be a joyful but sedate, quiet time at the bride's home. The minister would give an espousal sermon in which he instructed the couple in the proper way to prepare for marriage; at the wedding he gave a parallel sermon on the duties and obligations of husbands and wives. A secular magistrate performed the ceremony to signal the civil importance of marriage in a well ordered society. The Puritans at that time did not consider marriage a sacrement justified by the Bible. After 1694 it was optional as to who performed the cermony.

At the feast following Hannah and Andrews wedding, the Rev Samuel Stone would probably preach. Hannah's preacher, the Rev Thomas Hooker had passed away in July of 1647. Stone had succeeded to the leadership of the church. He was in of the original Hooker company as "Teacher" and would have been familiar to the Stockings. We don't know if Andrew knew him.

Hannah's brother and two sisters could have been part of the wedding feast. Samuel, her older brother had not yet left to settle in Middletown and sisters Sarah and Lydia were unmarried. All three married much later in life than Hannah. Andrew probably would have no family at the feast unless his uncle Edward, wife Alice and family, might have come up from Guilford. Also, Andrew might have brought friends from Milford.

Hannah chose Andrew at the Meeting House and presumably never regretted her wise decision. We certainly don't. She and Andrew make a successful life and have a large family. She does, however, predecease Andrew after all her faithful labors. We have no record of the time of her death but it has been estimated to be around 1670. Her birth date is also uncertain but she may have been 48 years old at the time of her death. Andrew would have been 50.



THE SHALLOP THE KETCH

Early Sailing Vessels
From "A History of Connecticut"

A "HONEYMOON" CRUISE DOWN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

Puritans believed in "romantic love" but only after the marriage After the wedding feast Andrew and Hannah might embark on a ship such as one of these and make love while voyaging to Milford. Her household goods and clothing needed to be transported somehow so carrying them aboard a river vessel would be practical.
We would hate to think Andrew arranged for the goods to be transported by ship while he and Hannah had to walk to Milford and camp overnight along the way.

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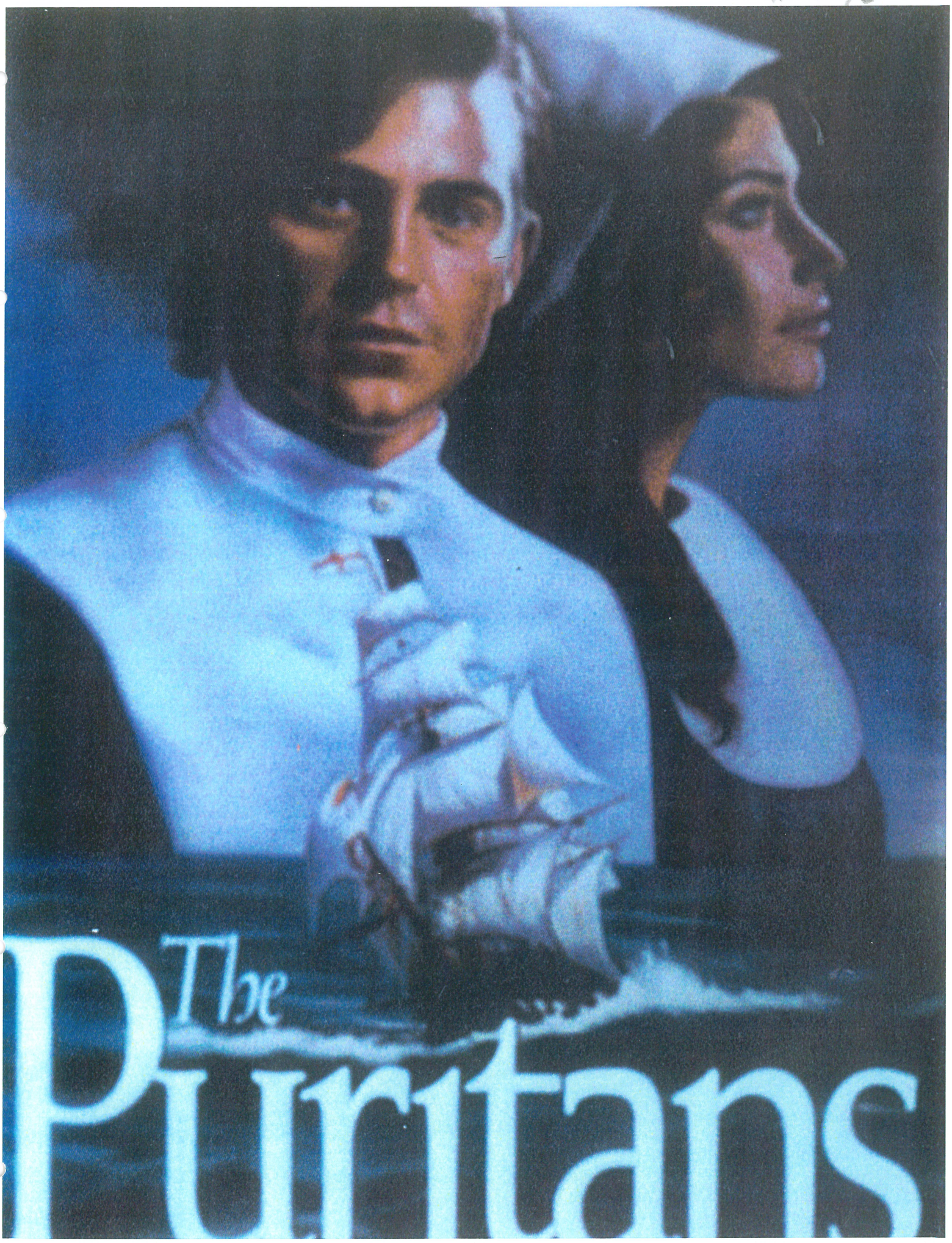
Written by

Byron S. Benton Dec. 2005


The
Puritans

BENTON ANCESTORS WERE PURITANS
WHAT'S A PURITAN LIKE?

(sources for this chapter are "The National Experience" and "Creating a Commonwealth" - certain pages have been copied for full study. The comments following have been summarized from them.)

The Great Migration of Puritans from England in the years between 1630 and 1641 brought around 20,000 people to new England. Most were Puritans, but not all. If one lived in Mass. or Conn. in those days and you were a Puritan, you would inevitably end up with a spouse who was a Puritan or a descendent of a Puritan. Such was the case with the Bentons at that time.

Up until the 5th generation, at least, Benton men married women who were from Puritan families or were descended from Puritans. Andrew came in 1639 and Elihu married Martha Aborn, from a Puritan family, in 1778. All wives in between were from Puritan families. Warham, Elihu's son, married Sarah Smith in Vermont in 1807 and her ancestors are unknown to us at this point. If Amos Smith was her father, it is probable that family also had Puritan roots.

So what was in their minds and hearts? We have no written words from them, all we have is a record of what they did as evidence of what was in their minds. We do have a autobiography of Ariel Benton from the period of the early 1800's. He reflects many Puritan ideas which we can look at a later point.

Simply put, they came with a minimum of equipment to a wilderness land and within two decades made it one of the most prosperous American Colonies, governed by a maximum participation of the people, with great freedoms and glorifying God all the while.

Puritans prudes??

Puritanism has come to mean prudishness. cruelty, fanaticism, superstition and hypocrisy. Actually, the New England Puritans had no greater share of these human qualities than did their contemporaries. What they did possess in stronger measure than other men was John Calvin's belief that God was omnipotent and good and that men are evil and helpless, predestined before they are born either to salvation or to eternal torment. Those who accepted Calvin's doctrine have outdone their neighbors in efforts to follow God's commandments as given in the Bible. The Puritan, knowing his efforts to be futile, nevertheless took a holy joy in them. They made him feel closer to God's transcendent purpose. They also helped him to ease his agonizing concern over whether he was headed for heaven or hell.

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Even though good behavior could not alter a man's predestined fate, it was observable that religious conversion (a personal experience by which God let a saved man know he was saved) often befell those who did try to live godly lives. Moreover, conversion manifested itself outwardly in renewed and intensified efforts to obey God's commands. A man's striving might thus be a sign that he was saved.

Not content with his own striving, the Puritan also felt responsible for his fellow men. Indeed, he was certain that any society that failed to honor God by punishing infractions of his commands would meet with sudden wrath not in the next world but here and now. Governments, he thought, existed for the purpose of enforcing obedience to God.

The Puritan's ideas of what God required were less rigorous that many people have supposed. God did not require that men wear drab clothes, live in drab houses or drink water when something stronger was available. He did require that they refrain from drunkenness, theft, murder, adultery, and breaches of the Sabbath. Puritans were vastly uneasy about the English governments indifference to these evils. They were even more concerned because the Church of England - supported by the government - retained corrupt practices inherited from Rome and not sanctioned by God in the Bible. Hence they left England to live according to their ideas as to what God required.

Puritans succeeded

The colonization of the New England area by the Puritans was a great success. New England shortly became an economic miracle -some of the strongest Colonies. It was a social success as well because of the amount of freedom and self government obtained. It was a spiritual success too because it was done for the glory of God. Why was this so and what did they do to make it happen?

They believed in God and themselves fervently. They felt they were on a mission to create a world God would approve of. When people believed in a cause this way they would succeed.

They were smart people. The leaders of the Puritans of England were leaders in thought and advanced thinking. They were openminded, risk takers and adventuresome. They chose people to join the Migration from those who knew how to work and were willing to work hard. Most were Puritans and those that weren't had to pass the test. Winthrop, one of the leaders, and John Smith conferred and agreed that the early Virginia Colony failed largely because people came expecting to be served not as workers.

Work worked well!

They succeeded because they believed in work. Work was considered a gift of God; work was considered good for the person by building character and strengthening the person; work was considered good because it furthered the person's position in the economy and lastly work was considered good because it promoted the welfare of the community. So work was an essential factor in the success of the Puritan Colonies.

Discipline played a key role in their success. The Puritans knew they didn't have a favorable climate or good land. Yet they gloried in the challenge it gave them. It gave them all the more reason to work and to glorify God as they prospered.

The Great Migration started in 1630 and lasted ten years; around 20,000 came. By 1640 they had began a profitable export trade to the Indies making use of their resources to supply a need in the Indies for meat and lumber. The colonies in the Indies were making so much money raising sugar for Europe, they didn't want to spare land or labor to raise food - so they imported it. The Puritans were disciplined to make the best use of their own products. They also built their own ships to carry their produce and ended with a commercial fleet rivaling those of Europe's.

Organization

How were they organized to succeed? First property was individually held, the family was the basic unit of society, the Church and the town were local community units and the General Court, or Colony government took a businesslike, no nonsense approach by passing laws without fear or favor.

The Court allocated land for purposes that would favor the prosperity of the Colony. When a ironworks was needed they allocated land for it and granted the specialized workers they imported generous benefits.

They passed sumptery laws that sometimes had been in effect in England. These laws forbad the wearing of adornment -but applied only to those with lessor means. Probably this is where the idea came from that the Puritans wanted people to wear drab clothes. Obviously not true because people with adequate means <u>could</u> wear adornments. The answer - if you are not well off, discipline yourself to employ your resources in the best way possible to become well off. Then you can wear what you want. This condition would uplift the person and benefit the community.

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Celebrating holidays, feast days, Saints days was not allowed. Firstly, because these rites were considered pagan Church of England practices. Secondly, they wasted time that should be used for production. Puritans worked six days and strictly observed the Sabbath with no work at all The work to rest ratio in Europe was 2 - 1, in Puritan New England it was 4 - 1. Puritans worked about 300 days a year but in England with its days of special observances people worked only 240 days a year. Discipline, Observed days were Election days, thanksgiving days and days of public humiliation.

A "General Letter" written and distributed in England in 1629 before the Migration commenced stated that all persons resident in the Colony must apply themselves to one calling or more and "no idle drone shall be permitted live among us".

Use of time

Time for the Puritan was critical and "God's precious time" should not be wasted. One Puritan observed "the time of your sleep be so much only as health requireth, for precious time is not to be wasted in unnecessary sluggishness". Therefore it was apparent that loitering, drunkenness and idleness were in and of themselves bad because they wasted a persons time that should be better spent working.

Assuring success

Other factors contributing to the success of New England include the following. Their society was a fresh start without the burden of pensioners, aristocrats, courtiers, functionaries and all those living off inherited wealth. Where there was an aristocracy of gentility and nobility there was an anti-work ethic.

They did not, as a rule, bring with them the merchant and craft guilds. Labor was in short supply and these guilds restricted free labor movement.

The colonies were left largely alone by the English government during the period between 1637 and 1660 because of the problems it had in England. Just as well because Massachusetts considered itself to be a self governing republic,

Demographics helped also. Although few immigrants came after 1641, the colony's labor force more than sustained itself. Infant mortality was low and family size was large. Male life expectancy was 70 years and female 65 years There were few famines, epidemics or tropical diseases but in 1670 barberry rusk killed wheat fields in eastern Massachusetts. Winter cold killed many germs. New England couples had between 6 to 8 children and usually all but one reached maturity. The diet was of maize, rye, peas, pork, beef and beer. Cheese played an important part later.

As material well-being increased some lessening of religious and devoutness took place. Piety produced industry which produced wealth which produced status conflicts and worldliness. After 1650 increasing material growth symbolized New England, diluting the ideals of its founders.

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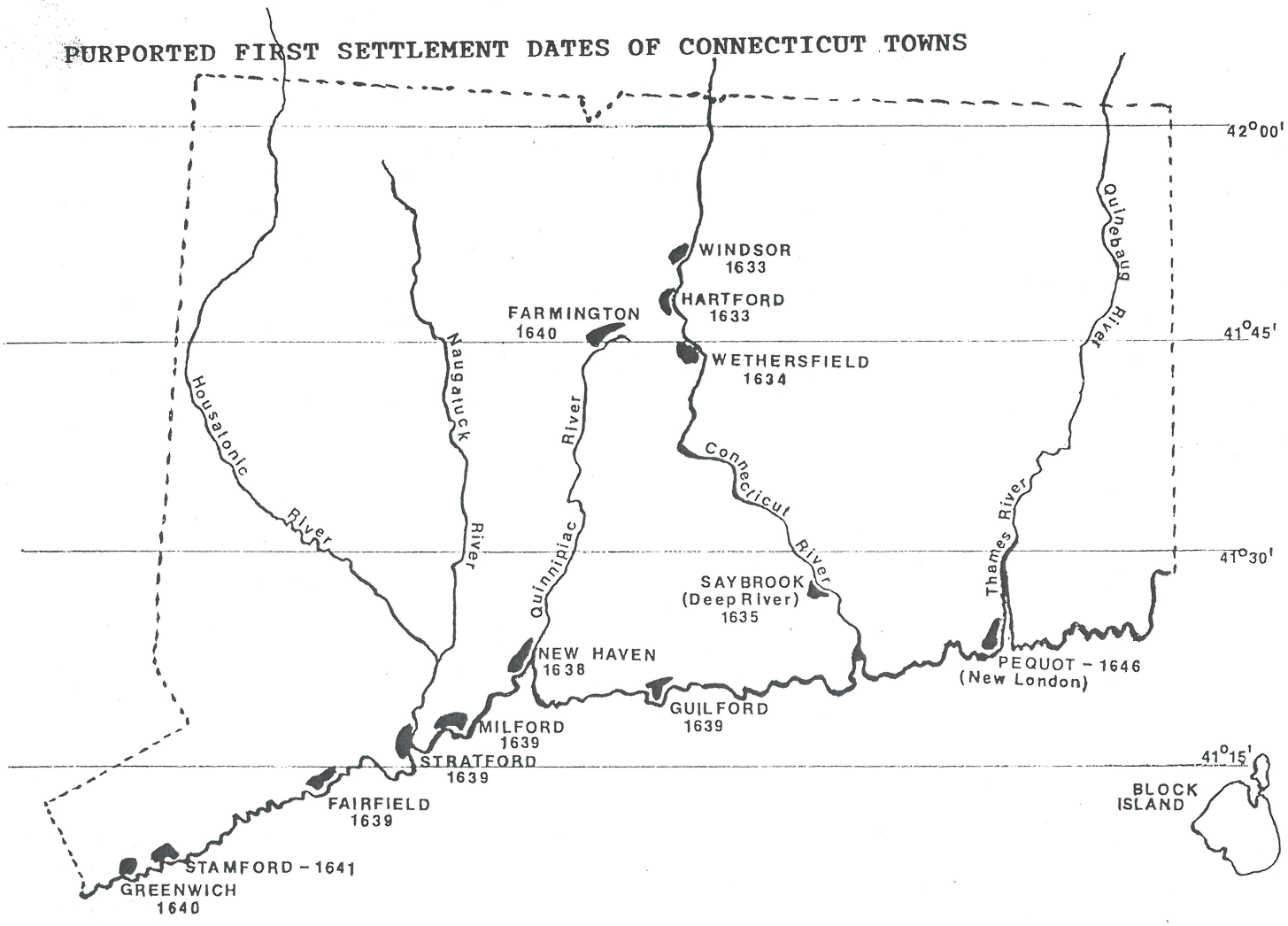
PURPORTED FIRST SETTLEMENT DATES OF CONNECTICUT TOWNS
42°00'
41°45'
41°30'
41°15'
WINDSOR
1633
HARTFORD
1633
FARMINGTON
1640
WETHERSFIELD
1634
Housatonic River
Naugatuck River
Quinnipiac River
Connecticut River
Thames River
Quinebaug River
SAYBROOK
(Deep River)
1635
NEW HAVEN
1638
PEQUOT - 1646
(New London)
GUILFORD
1639
MILFORD
1639
STRATFORD
1639
FAIRFIELD
1639
STAMFORD - 1641
GREENWICH
1640
BLOCK
ISLAND

"ANDREW BENTON ERECTING THE PALISADE IN MILFORD"
USING
THOMAS HART BENTON'S PAINTING



"PALISADES" by
THOMAS HART BENTON "THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL EPIC" 1919-1924.
NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART, KANSAS CITY, MO.

LIFE IN MILFORD

Life in Milford would seem very routine in todays terms. Puritans wanted to work and to worship in order to glorify their Lord. They needed to confirm their being as Christians in this way and also to further their community. Each was important.

Farming, hunting and fishing occupied most of the men's waking hours during the six day week. Sunday was strictly for worship and prayer. Little has been written about fishing and gathering sea food, but living on the banks of a sea-water lake teeming with fish must have provided the colonists a full healthy diet. The beach abounded with clams, the river with blue crabs and the sea with oysters and lobsters. Andrew Benton might have been a good fisherman owning his own small boat. Like the other colonists, he had to find out how to fish as most were farmers. Did he fish with nets, lines or spears? He might have earned extra money by selling his catch to families who were busy with their crops.

Also Milford was the site of an annual Indian "salting" when they would come to the beaches from the interior to feast on oysters and to smoke enormous quantities of them to take back with them for barter and for winter sustenance. The large mounds of oyster shells they left showed the settlers how much of this tasty food the Milford wilderness had for them

Each settler was given a home lot - Andrew's was of average size - three acres. Then the outlying fields, meadows and marshes were apportioned out for each settler's individual use. Common field usage, as practiced in early Salem and in Hartford, was not felt practical. Andrew would have grown wheat, rye and sorghum and raised hogs. Owning a team of oxen, if he did, would have been the mark of a prosperous husbandman. They were valuable because they ate only a half as much as a horse and could pull heavy loads. The settlers must have shared their oxen's work time.

The woods surrounding the town would be full of wild game, so meat was plentiful. The basic problem facing the settlers was how to find ways to store enough food and produce to last through the winter. They had various techniques for this, apparently. Water to drink was scorned because English water was polluted and American water was felt to be the same. What a shame. Beer and cider were the regular drinks and coffee and tea were largely unknown at this period

EARLY MILFORD



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EARLY MILFORD



The women and children were the sustainers of the household as they had to cook over a fireplace, spin thread for cloth, make homespun cloth, tend the many children and help gather produce and sea food. Utensils were few, plates were wooden, only spoons were used for eating.

By hard work the town's economy succeeded so the settlers were eventually able to produce enough meat and barrel staves to export and this brought necessary tools and supplies back plus some small amenities. Andrew would have been accumulating pounds to finance his trips to Hartford and furnishing his house.

Jasper Gunn was the physician and he probably came from Wethersfield. Such was his care that the Colony existed 5 years before the first adult death occurred. These were tough people, as settlers to the New World were usually young and vigorous. They left their parents and seniors behind.

A mill to grind their grain was ordered by the General Court in its second session on March 9. 1640. William Fowler was asked to have the mill going by the last of September in time for the first harvest.

The Meetinghouse

Worship was conducted in the common house at first and then in November 1640 a meeting house 30 feet square was ordered built. It was covered with red oak clapboards and had a four-sided peaked roof. At the top of the roof was a small turret from which a drum could be sounded for worship and in case of alarm. Inside were plain wooden benches and a simple pulpit. Adornments of any kind were strictly against Puritan belief and probably none were available anyway. In the seating the men sat on one side and the women on the opposite side. Children were sometimes gathered in one corner to be watched over by a adult.

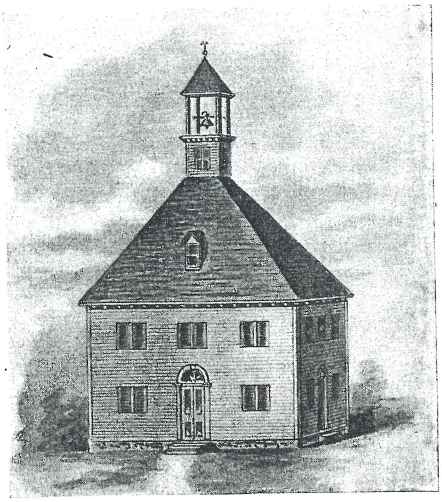
Would the first 44 families plus the nine non-church members fit inside this building? By the year 1646, 26 "afterplanters" had come to town. Andrew joined in 1648 and Hannah probably came to town in 1649 and was recorded as having joined the church in 1650. By 1654 there were 80 families and by 1656 there were 94 families out of a population of 500. At some point a gallery had been added to take care of this growth.

PLAN OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN PLOT OF MILFORD

(After Lambert)

The location of the house of each first planter, as they were recorded in 1646, is seen on the plan of the town, by finding the same number which is prefixed to the name of each individual in the following list. The exact quantity of land in the house lot of each person, is here placed against his name:

		a.	r.	p.			a.	r.	p.
1	John Astwood	7	2	0	34	Thomas Wheeler	3	0	0
2	Richard Baldwin	3	0	0	35	Mr. Edmond Tapp	7	2	0
3	Benjamin Fenn	2	11	3	36	Tho. Buckingham	2	3	0
4	Samuel Cooley	2	1	20	37	Robert Plum	5	3	0
5	John Peacocke	1	3	0	38	Richard Platt	4	1	0
6	Henry Stonhill	2	3	20	39	Thomas Tapping	1	1	20
7	Nathaniel Baldwin	3	2	0	40	Mr. Peter Prudden	7	2	0
8	James Prudden	2	0	0	41	Mr. Wm. Fowler	7	2	0
9	John Sherman	4	0	0	42	Thomas Lawrence	1	0	0
10	Thomas Baker	3	2	0	43	George Clark, Junr.	4	1	0
11	Stephen Freeman	2	0	0	44	John Burwell	2	0	20
12	John Fletcher	2	3	30	45	Henry Botsford	2	2	0
13	John Baldwin	2	1	10	46	John Smith	1	3	20
14	Frances Bolt	2	1	20	47	John Rogers	1	3	20
15	Micah Tompkins	2	1	20	48	Philip Hatley	3	3	20
16	John Birdseye	2	3	20	49	Roger Tyrrell	2	3	20
17	Edward Harvey	2	3	0	50	Nicholas Camp	6	1	20
18	John Lane	2	2	20	51	John Fowler	1	2	20
19	William East	2	3	0	52	Joseph Baldwin	2	1	20
20	Thomas Lawrence (sold to Wm. East.)	2	0	0	53	Thomas Tibbals	1	2	20
					54	Wid. Martha Beard	4	1	00
21	Thomas Sandford	2	3	0	55	Thomas Campfield	3	0	0
22	Timothy Baldwin	4	0	0	56	Thomas Ford	3	0	0
23	Alexander Bryan	4	0	25	57	William Roberts	3	0	0
24	Jasper Gunn	0	3	0	58	John Smith	4	0	0
25	Tomas Hine	3	0	0	59	Thomas Bailey	3	0	0
26	Henry Lyon	3	0	0	60	William Brookes	3	0	0
27	John Stream	3	0	0	61	John Brown	3	0	0
28	William Slough	3	0	0	62	Nathaniel Briscoe	3	0	0
29	James Prime	3	0	0	63	Edward Riggs	3	0	0
30	Thomas Reed	3	0	0	64	Andrew Benton	3	0	0
31	Robert Denison	3	0	0	65	George Clark, Senr.	4	2	0
32	Zachariah Whitman	7	2	0	66	George Hubbard (sold to John Stream.)	4	2	0
33	Thomas Welch	4	2	0					



THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.

Andrew and the Indians

(Better described as "Native Americans", The old term is used here for brevity)

All in all the earliest encounters between the English and Indians had gone well as they generally found it mutually advantages to work with one another. They were each distinct cultures, however, and the English were definitely taking over the land. So conflict was bound to arise. The Pagussetts were willing to sell some of their land to the Prudden group for a strategic reason. They hoped the settlers would scare off the Hurons from the West who were harassing them.

The Palisade

The shocking Pequot attack on the settlers in Wethersfield in 1637 was uppermost in the minds of the settlers since some of them had come from Wethersfield. So they built a palisade early on. It was 12 feet high built by emplacing logs side by side in the earth. It enclosed an area of one square mile within which the settlers had their house lots and town buildings. Andrew's lot butted up against the West wall. This palisade must have been a very big project and we imagine Andrew sweating to fell trees and help erect the logs.

They organized their own militia - called a train band - and each male above the age of 16 had to be provided with, and have in readiness, ammunition to repel a possible attack. The ammunition was a pound of powder, two pounds of bullets or shot and two fathoms of match for a matchlock gun. The ammunition was drawn from the town magazine. Penalty for not being so supplied was 5 shillings a month. Andrew was in the train band and we hope always supplied with his ammunition. Presumably, he brought a matchlock gun with him from England.

The local Paugusset tribe took some offense in 1646 and set fire to the woods around the town. The settlers stopped the fire at the swamp line and saved the wall. No casualties were reported. This would have been Andrew's first hostile Indian encounter. After this attack the town went on an alert and sentries were posted on the palisade. Each household was required to furnish one sentry every fifth day. In Andrew's household he would have been readily available since he was single. Perhaps he did extra sentry duty. The planters did not venture outside the palisade except in armed parties with one sentry watching while others worked. Fear of an attack probably made the settlers dubious at times of their decision to come to the New World.

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This fear was realized two years later when the Mohawks attacked the local tribe. A settler working in the fields saw them and alerted the Paugussets who repulsed them with many casualties. Apparently the settlers were not involved in this fight and no more is written about the Indians. Hannah came to Milford a year later and may not have had to worry so much about their safety.

The Milford Theocracy

God was their King and the Bible their law. In August 1939 Prudden's group while still in the New Haven Colony organized themselves as a church by electing "Seven Pillars". These men were chosen, after much praying, and Bible reading as the ones most fitted by character and piety to become the guiding spirits of the new new theocracy. No Wethersfield men were named. In November the first civil Court was held and five judges were named. They were to guide themselves by the written word of God. At this meeting the Church members are listed as "free planters" and the ten not in church membership are denied the right of vote. Andrew was in the later group.

Did Andrew go to New Haven to be present when the church was organized? Probably the Wethersfield group did not make the trip to participate in this ceremony. Maybe Prudden's original group didn't feel they were essential. Could he have gone and signed on as a church member? It is not clear how those there were accredited with church membership. Presumably they attested to their previous affiliations with other churches. Andrew might have done so as a member of All Saints Church in Epping. He was a young man without family ties or friends so his church membership status was probably seen as unimportant.

Was Andrew present in November when the first town meeting took place. It would seem so in order to get his lot assignment and evidence his commitment to be a town inhabitant. At this time the household in which he would live would have been established and agreed to but the written record of this meeting carries no such details for us.

The only earthly claim the settlers had to the land for the town was a deed signed by the Indians when they purchased land. They had no royal charter nor permission from any other Colony to settle there. As regimes came and went in England, their lack of a Charter placed them in constant danger of being swallowed up by another Colony - Massachusetts Bay, Hartford or New York. In 1648 it happened, as Milford became part of the New Haven Colony. This colony would suffer from a lack of a Charter also and eventually was absorbed by Hartford.

Deeding the land to the English was affected by the traditional Twig and Turf ceremony. After the paper deed was signed by both parties, the sachem Ansantawae, was handed a piece of turf and a twig. Taking the piece of turf in one hand and the twig in the other, he thrust the twig into the turf and handed it to the English. In this he was to have signified that the Indians relinquished the land in the deed and everything growing on it. For this purchase he was given six coats, ten blankets and some knives and mirrors. This type of transaction was typical of those that took place all over New England to obtain a title from the Indians for their land. It does not appear to be a fair bargain especially as the Indian chiefs had no knowledge of English property law and did not appreciate the difficulty their people would have afterwards to freely move over the land.

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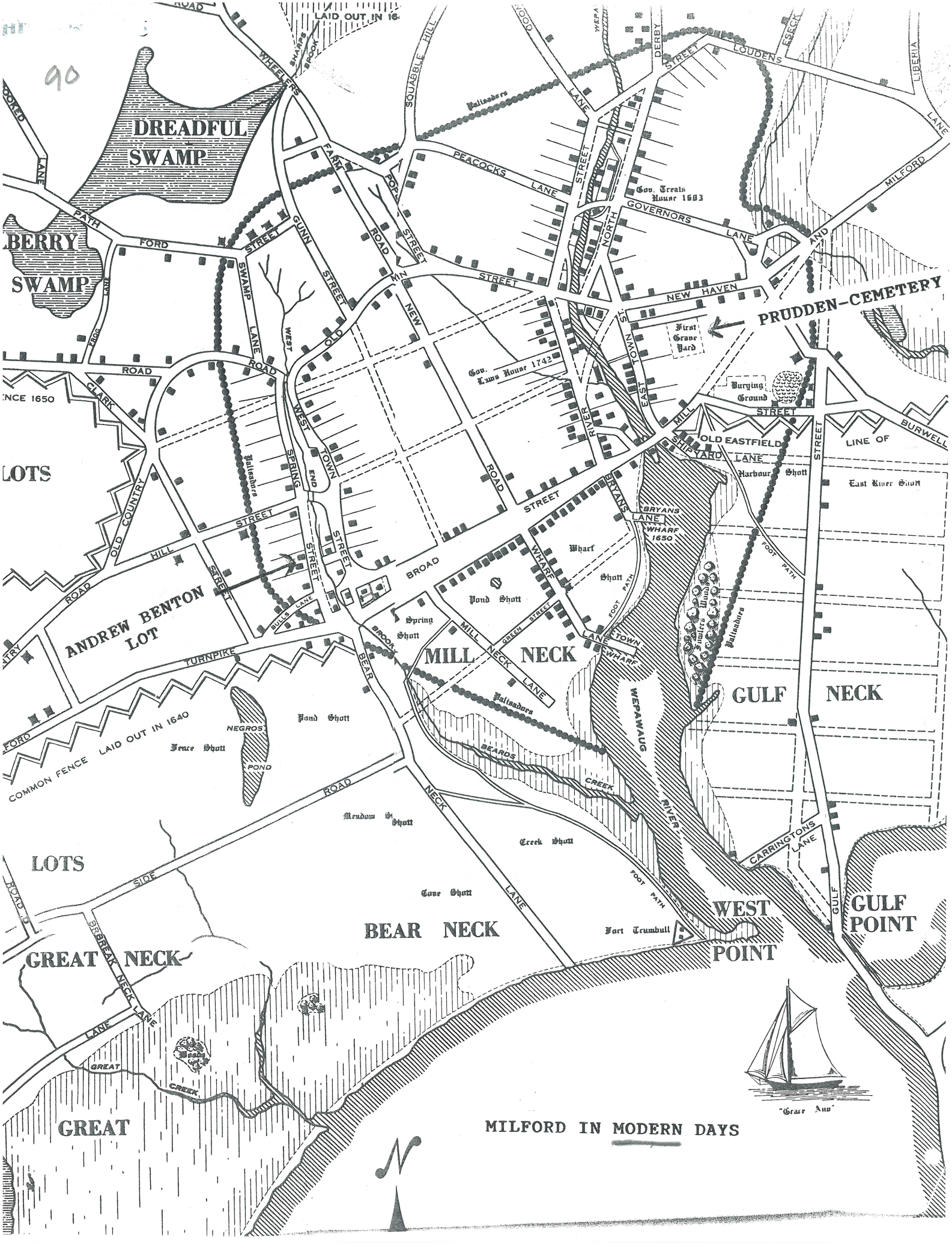
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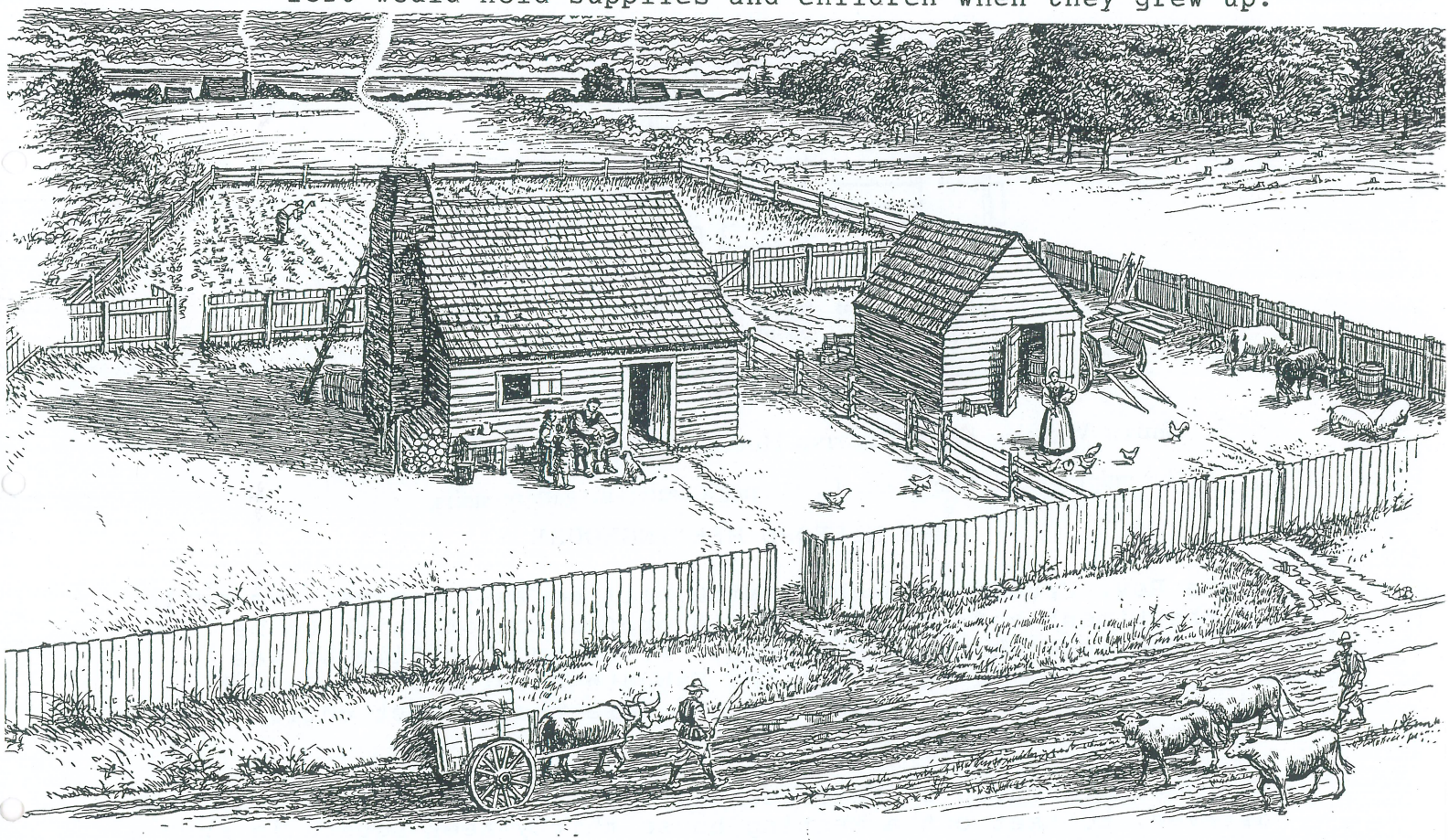
DREADFUL SWAMP
LBERRY SWAMP
LOTS
ANDREW BENTON LOT
MILL NECK
GULF NECK
WEST POINT
GULF POINT
BEAR NECK
GREAT NECK
GREAT
PRUDDEN-CEMETERY
Gov. Treats House 1683
Gov. Laws House 1742
First Grave Yard
Burying Ground
OLD EASTFIELD
Harbour Shott
East River Shott
Wharf Shott
Pond Shott
Spring Shott
Fence Shott
Meadow Shott
Creek Shott
Cove Shott
Fort Trumbull
Palisadoes
WEPAWAUG RIVER
COMMON FENCE LAID OUT IN 1640
NEGROS POND
LAID OUT IN 16
"Grace Ann"
MILFORD IN MODERN DAYS
N

THEIR HOUSE IN MILFORD?

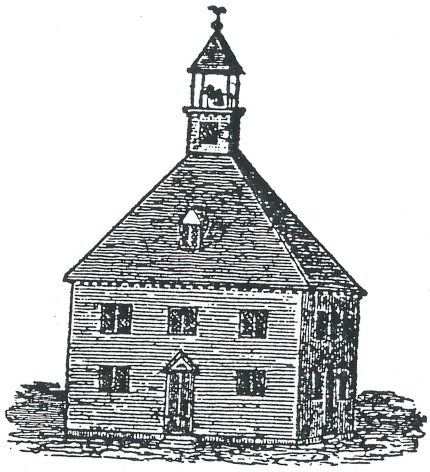
Andrew may have built such a house for Hannah after they were married in Hartford. Would she be pleased with such a house?

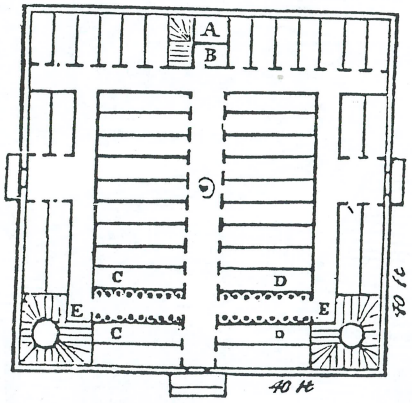
Probably her father's house in Hartford was better with a center chimney and rooms on the second floor. Here she would have but one room with the fireplace at one end. The floor would be wooden as well as the outside siding. A loft would hold supplies and children when they grew up.



From "Puritan Migration to Connecticut"

Andrew would not waste land with such a big front yard as shown here and further his homelot butted up against the palisade wall.





South View of First Meeting House and Ground Plan

A, the pulpit; B, deacon's seat; C, D, guard seats; E, gallery stairs.

THE MILFORD MEETINGHOUSE

Where Rev. Prudden preached "with boiling zeal against the evils of the times" and Andrew made his profession of faith to be accepted into Church membership. Prior to that time he was expected to be in church on the Sabbath nevertheless. Hannah became a member after she arrived. Here their first children were baptized by Rev. Prudden.

The settlers voted on November 24, 1640, a year after they arrived, to "set out a meeting house thirty feet square in such a manner and in such a place as should be judged most convenient for the public." It was required to hold two hundred souls plus children! Seating 5 persons in each pew would manage this. Two guardsmen sat back by the door with matchlock muskets. No ornamentation of any kind was placed inside except for a sounding board over the lofty pulpit. The study frame was covered by oak clapboards. From the turret a drummer would call people together or to give the alarm. Later a gallery was built, a bell replaced the drummer and another door was cut into the side.

REV. PETER PRUDDEN - SAVING ANDREW'S SOUL!

Andrew was somehow ensconced in a dwelling place in early Milford, and the palisade and train band of militia protected him from the Indians, but who was to save his soul? He was taught by the Vicar Jeremy Dyke in Epping as a lad, but his faith needed real nurture as he matured in the wilderness amongst strangers. Fortunately, he had the Rev. Peter Prudden to help him grow in faith.

For Prudden was the "finest and best" of Puritan preachers in New England. As the preacher in Milford for the first 16 years and as a leader of the Colony he must have influenced Andrew as Andrew took his place in the community. When Hannah Stocking became Andrew's wife and moved from Hartford to Milford he became her preacher also and he baptized their first three children. (Samuel, our direct ancestor, was born after Pruddden died). Andrew became a "church member" in 1648, nine years after the Church was formed.

Cotton Mather said of Prudden he "is an example of piety, gravity and boiling zeal against the evils of the times" Yet this "boiling zeal" never was allowed to disrupt the congregation into any controversy during his pastorate. Mather said he possessed "a singular faculty to sweeten, compose and qualify exasperated spirits and stop or heal all contentions - whence it was that this town of Milford enjoyed peace and truth all his days." He was not as stern as Rev. John Davenport of New Haven and not so commanding as Rev. Thomas Hooker of Hartford but we are fortunate that Andrew, and later Hannah, were touched by this paragon of all other Puritan preachers.

Mediator

His aid was repeatedly sought to help settle disputes and mediate quarrels. His very first mission was to Wethersfield to try to bring peace to that quarreling congregation. He made such an inspiring impression on the people of that town during his short stay there that many of his hearers sold their properties and went with him. Andrew belived him also. Such were his pious and fervent ministrations. He was asked to help mediate a dispute in far away Plymouth, in Ipswitch, in Hartford and locally between Derby, Pequonnock and Milford.

Citizen

Prudden was earnestly religious and sought to influence the colony more from the pulpit than by direct involvement in public affairs. He refused to serve as a magistrate longer than a single year so that he might give himself more perfectly to the ministry of the word and to prayer. He did intervene to see that the law was enforced but only as a private citizen. He may have been responsible for changing the rules so that the six men not considered "free planters" be allowed to vote anyway. He received no stated salary but was supported by gifts and grants of land. The people planted and gathered his crops. But this he did not claim as a right but as a free will offering. As a equal, he shared the burden of the community. His property was taxed and he was compelled to keep his firearms and ammunition in readiness though he was not called to stand guard.

Prudden kept careful records - the record of the first child baptized was "1640 - Baptized Epenetus Platt - at Milford - the first". The baptismal records of Andrew and Hannah's children are in his handwriting - John 1650, Andrew 1659, Hannah 1651, Mary 1655, John 1656. Another record is found of the first adult death coming after 5 years of the colony - that of Sahar Camp died in childbirth on the last day of the week "and was buried in my garden" He offered his garden as a burial site. His generosity and kindheartedness even extended to paying the fines of impecunious wrongdoers.

Prudden and Andrew

Andrew must have talked to Rev Prudden in 1648 saying he had experienced the Lord and would like to witness to his convictions before the church. In this way he would be accepted as a "church member" and be in full communion with the neighbors he had lived with since coming with them to Milford nine years earlier.

He was fervid and earnest as a preacher, but perhaps owing to his desire to keep the church free from unworthy members, only 100 were received into Church fellowship in his 16 year term. Andrew was one in 1648. At his death the church numbered about 94 members in a town population of about 500.

Prudden would have been pleased at once because he recalled Andrew from the summer he had preached in Wethersfield when Andrew had decided to join him in building a new town. Prudden had spoken then so movingly about the great possibilities of making their own independent, Puritan state, with the Gospel for its law and Jesus as its ruler with no restrictions from outsiders. He knew Andrew as a good worker, attending the meetings quite regularly and never having been in of trouble with the Court. He fought bravely against the Paugusset indians when they had attempted to set fire to the fields years previously.

Prudden also knew Andrew often absented himself from Milford to travel up the great river to Hartford to see a girl to whom he was believed to have been espoused. Andrew had been regular in his visits leading Prudden to guess they would be married eventually. Did this have anything to do with Andrew's new religious turn of mind? Of course, Andrew's children could not be baptized unless Andrew was a church member.

Andrew spoke fervently of his new found vision of the Lord as his personal saviour. He told how he felt the spirit moving him in services at the meeting house when Prudden was preaching and praying. Prudden asked about Andrew's future plans now that he had finally built a good house on his plot and has acquired a few animals. Andrew said he would be married to a fine Puritan girl from Hooker's congregation and they would make their home in Milford. He said that Hannah was a strong professor of the faith and had inspired Andrew as she gloried in the Lord's love. Prudden knew of the strength of Hookers preaching.

Prudden was a shrewd judge of character and knew Andrew well after eight years of life together in the small community. But was Andrew sincere in his protestation of religious conversion? Prudden decided - yes! Andrew had finally embraced Puritanism and his soul would be safe. He would be able to make his witness before the congregation and Prudden was certain they would accept him in full communion. With Hannah coming to Milford in the near future he could foresee they would make a good family each complementing the others Puritan faith. If there had been any doubt in Prudden's mind it may have been tipped in Andrew's favor by Prudden's openhearted trust that Hannah would be at his side. A more strict Puritan preacher, such as Rev. Davenport, in the adjoining New Haven colony, might have refused Andrew.

Thus it came about that on March 5, 1648, at age 28, Andrew Benton stood forth as a Puritan to ensure he would become the proper father of a Puritan household and to strenghten himself to play his role in founding a new church in Hartford later on in his life. Peter Prudden played a crucial part in his growth and from witnessing Prudden's life we can see it was in his character to do so.

PRUDDEN'S LIKENESS

HIS ONLY LIKENESS APPEARED AS PART OF A STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN MEMORIAL HALL ON ASYLUM STREET IN HARTFORD IN 1874. HE WAS PICTURED WITH HOOKER AND DAVENPORT - VERY DISTINGUISHED COMPANY! MEMORIAL HALL WAS USED AS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES BUT WAS TORN DOWN IN 1914. NO TRACE OF THE WINDOW OR A PICTURE OF IT EXISTS.

Sources: Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut, Vol. II, Page 123.
Proceedings of the 250 Anniversary of the First Church of Christ in Milford Ct. August 25th, 1889. when a tablet was dedicated to him containing the words of Cotton Mather, quoted on page 93.

COMING TO HARTFORD FROM MILFORD ABOUT 1660

Was life in Milford too difficult or did life in Hartford seem more desirable? Were there family situations making it better to come to Hartford? Making the move must have been very difficult with three children, the oldest seven years and the youngest, Samuel just two years. Further, Hannah may have been pregnant with Joseph, born about 1660. Andrew had lived in Milford since its beginning and must have had good friends there after twenty years. We find him holding no offices, however, but receiving regular grants of additional land. Hannah, on the other hand, had been in Milford only eleven years and maybe was homesick for her family, the Stockings, in Hartford.

Hannah's Family

Assessing the Stocking family situation in Hartford for her reasons to want to return; her brother, Samuel, had left to found Middletown in 1655 leaving Hannah's father, at age 78, to take care of his land alone. He was still active in town affairs as he was surveyor of roads and a chimney viewer, although he was "freed from watching" in 1660. The two daughters, Lydia and Sarah might not have had promising suitors at that moment so the prospect of sons-in law to help seemed remote. Lydia did marry John Richards in 1662, however. Sarah married Samuel Olcott eventually.

Complicating this situation was the death of Hannah's mother, Anna, sometime before 1660 and then the marriage of her father to Agnes Shotwell soon aftewards. George Stocking was 78 and one wonders about this marriage. Stocking genealogy is meager so we don't have dates or the age of Agnes. She apparently was dead at the time of his death "at a great age" - 101! Hannah might have been relieved at her fathers marriage or on the other hand, worried about the kind of person Agnes might be. She might have been the widow of John Webster, a governor of the Colony. Little is known about her ancestry.

Many Homelots Becoming Available

Speculative opportunities may have enticed Andrew to migrate because many families were leaving for Hadley, Mass. as a result of the Church Controversy. He may have hoped to satisfy Hannah's anxiety about her family and at the same time obtain a good house and land very reasonably. Since he did purchase the bewitched Greensmith's house and land eventually, renting may have been what he did in the interim.

Probably these events were important enough for Andrew and Hannah to give up their hard earned place in Milford and seek a new life in Hartford. The standing of George Stocking in the town may have assured them of acceptance in Hartford and finacial help. We don't know what Andrew might have received for his land and possessions in Milford when he left there. Their first shelter on arriving in Hartford would probably have been the Stocking household. Andrew would have taken over the farm work from George until Andrew found a place to rent.

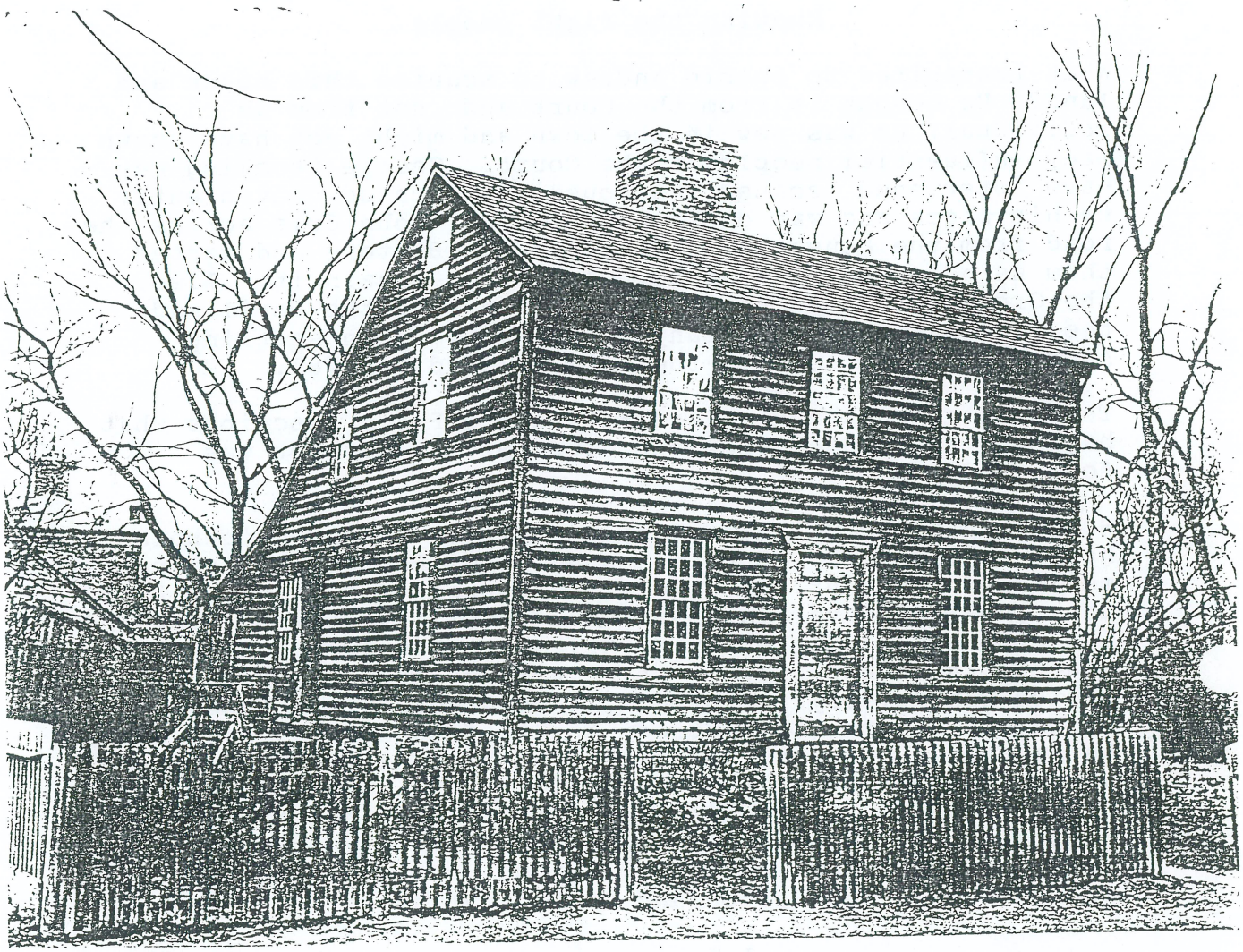
At this time Joseph was born and then after the witchcraft panic Dorothy was born. Joseph would become a leader in founding Tolland when he matured.

The Stocking household, Hannah's concern, might have resolved itself after the two daughters departed with their husbands. Agnes would have been keeping house with only herself and George. Their reduced needs could have been supplied by their extended family with Andrew's sons taking care of the land and stock.

The Benton family left the relative calm of life in Milford for turmoil in Hartford. The Rev Peter Prudden, a preacher of kindliness, avoided discord in Milford. Now, in Hartford, the Benton family faced ugly witchcraft and church controversy. They were closely involved in both.

A home in the house of the bewitchers!

Nathaniel and Rebecca Greensmith lost their lives in 1663 after being accused of bewitching Ann Cole. The Court took possession of their house and belongings for "charges expended on the Greensmiths" probably meaning the cost of their imprisonment and court charges. The house became available and Andrew bought it and Hannah and the children moved in. His deed was dated later, in 1668, however. The house stood on land estimated at "three roods be it more or less abbutting on a highway leading to Wethersfield on the East, and on a highway leading to Farmington on the North, and towards the West, and on Thomas Hosmer and his land South". This lot must have been south of the present "South Green" and in the triangle formed by Wethersfield Ave. and Retreat Ave. Greensmiths holdings also included approximately 20 acres of "upland land" probably the land now belonging to the "Institute for Living" which is on a slight rise from Wethersfield Ave.



The Hosmer house was similar to the Benton homestead in Hartford. The needs for a large center chimney for the fireplaces and for a stairway took up a great deal of space leaving the rooms small. Possibly there was room in the garret. A shed had been added for additional space. Room enough for Andrew and Hannah and six children?

100

Knowing the right people

What transpired to enable Andrew to acquire this house and land? He bought it from the Court and not from an individual. He was new in the town and might not have known many influential people in the Court. George Stocking may have intervened because the house was located conveniently to his place and was on the south side. John Cole across the road from the house may have liked the Bentons and wanted them as neighbors and so he helped them obtain it. Also, the Greensmith's supposed affiliation with the Devil made the property cursed in many people's eyes. In settling Andrew's estate in 1685 the homelot sold for §85.

The Chapter on the Hartford Witchcraft Panic describes what happened in 1663-63 when the Greensmith's homelot was forfeited.

Noting that the Cole and Benton families became neighbors helps explains why John Cole and Andrew Benton are frequently mentioned together. They were "to correct any disorder that they shall discover in the time of public worship." They and two others were called by Mr Whiting to be present at a meeting in November 1666 "at Mr Willys" house" during the Church Controversy.. Further, when Hannah dies, Andrew looked no further than across the road to a young lady, Ann, he had known for about 14 years for his second wife. There were three children in their family. Then, when Nathaniel Cole lost his wife, Lydia Davis Cole, he turned to Mary Benton for his second wife, a person he had known as a neighbor since the Benton's moved to the adjoining lot. Mary was then 30. The Benton and Cole families were close.

A frame house

The Bentons lived happily in the Greensmith's house in spite of its superstitious trepidations. It became the Benton homestead and passed on to son Joseph who sold it in 1693. Six children of Hannah's and three children of Ann were brought up in the house. It may not have been too commodious since the center chimney took up lots of interior space and two fireplaces would have been needed on each floor. The shed at the rear might have been added for extra sleeping room as well as working space. The garret must have been filled as many people occupied the house for long periods.

Townsman Benton

Andrew took up his civic duties soon after he arrived and as many of them are by town vote, he must have quickly become well known and trusted. As noted, he was made Tythingman along with John Cole. He was chosen a collector of the minister's rates (salary) in 1668 along with one other person. He was a fence viewer in 1663 and 1664, and he was chosen a juror in 1664, 1667 & 1671. The years for jury duty were not those when there were witchcraft trials. He was admitted and sworn as a Freeman May, 11, 1665. In taking the Freeman's Oath he swore to be faithful to the Government, not to plot or practice any evil towards it, maintain the honor of the magistrates and in voting be guided by his conscience without favor of persons.



ANCIENT BURYING GROUND, MAP LOCATION 897, SECTION XIV

OUR GREAT PURITAN PREACHERS

Our Connecticut ancestors were Puritans and Puritanism was a preachers movement.

Some of the outstanding preachers of the Connecticut Valley were the movers and shakers of the new colonies. Our great-grandmothers heard them and were probably deeply changed. These sermons took positions that frequently transformed Puritan thought. Without their profound teaching the New England experiment might well have failed.

Remarkably, our three earliest fathers married young women who were influenced by three of these preachers - Thomas Hooker of Hartford, John Davenport of New Haven and Samuel Stoddard of Northhampton, Mass.

Andrew's wife Hannah Stocking was a member of Thomas Hooker's group that trekked overland to found Hartford and was in his congregation in Hartford from 1636 until she left for Milford about 1649 upon marrying Andrew. Hannah listened to Hooker for 15 years.

Samuel's wife, Sarah Chatterton, was in John Davenport's congregation in New Haven. Davenport had brought a group from London to settle New Haven in 1638. He was a righteous adherent to the word of the Bible and believed in restricting church membership to true believers. Sarah's mother, Mary Clarke was born in New Haven in 1645 seven years after the founding of the colony. Davenport must have baptized her. Sarah, her daughter, was born in 1661 and he must have baptised her also. She was in his congregation for eight years as he left in 1669 to go to a Boston Church amid controversy over the Half Way Covenant.

Samuel, Junior's wife Mary Pomeroy was from Northhampton, Mass. Although Northhampton was considered to be on the frontier, the church there succeeded in attracting Samuel Stoddard to be its preacher in 1669 and Mary was born in 1684. He must have baptized her and she was in his congregation for 20 years.

Stoddard opened the Puritan Church to a wider acceptance of people in contrast to Davenport and he also became a brilliant counter to the conservative Mathers of Boston. His appeal throughout the Connecticut Valley was so enthusiastic that one wonders if Samuel might possibly have met Mary while he was in Northhampton hearing Stoddard preach. Mary's father, Medad, was instrumental in calling Stoddard to the church as the Pomeroys were prominent Northampton leaders Mary and Samuel were married in Hartford in 1704.

We must wonder how powerfully these preachers influenced these young women and how the women influenced their partnerships and their children. Davenport and Stoddard held opposite positions in the extreme. Did our family appreciate the degree of change these preachers were advocating? Religious matters were of great concern for the Puritans as these matters were the basic reasons for their being in the New World and furthermore there often wasn't much else to talk about.

How did the Puritan preachers affect the Benton men? Andrew was a boy brought up in Epping, England in a Puritan environment. His preacher, Jeremy Dyke, appears to have been an advocate of Puritanism and the fact that Andrew was persuaded to leave home for an unknown future is some indication that Puritanism may have made him willing to do so. His uncle Edward was also moved to go abroad. We are indebted to the Puritan preacher Jeremy Dyke for the beginnings our family. If he had not inspired Andrew and Edward about a covenant with God to build a new community in the New World, we never would have had a family here.

Practical matters, however, may have had their part to play. His uncle Edward may have needed help in making the journey and Andrew as an 18 year old was needed. Yet, when Andrew arrived in Wethersfield he soon attached himself to another preacher, Peter Prudden, and may have left Edward's family. Or was he more interested in acquiring the free land available in Milford for himself? He had just become acquainted with Hannah so what was her influence in his thinking? Andrew might have stayed in Wethersfield or come to Hartford to help Hannah's father. George Stocking could have helped Andrew secure land in Hartford. Instead Andrew chose to follow Peter Prudden into a adventuresome foray. Thus, another Puritan preacher came along to lead our Andrew.

Peter Prudden died about two years before Hannah and Andrew returned to Hartford, about 1660. When they arrived they found Hooker dead and the church in controversy. Rev. Samuel Stone was its minister. The question of baptism for children of members who had not been in full communion occupied many; then the witchcraft accusations sprang up.

Samuel and his sons missed hearing the greatest of these preachers. They would have to wait for the Great Awakening, 1740, for their chance to be profoundly moved by inspired preaching.

THE FAMILY BEGINS

Tracing Andrew and Hannah's family from its beginning in Milford and then to Hartford. Six children were born in Milford and three in Hartford.

JOHN BENTON, firstborn in 1650. A note, probably in Rev Pruddens's handwriting, says "John born April 14, - found dead beside his mother the day following and baptized April 17"

HANNAH BENTON. Born Nov 23, 1651. Married to John Camp, Jr of Milford on July, 15, 1673 and died in Hartford 1678. A daughter, Hannah, was born in 1672 and died in 1675.

ANDREW BENTON, JR. Born 1653. Married Martha Thankful Spencer in Hartford in 1676 and was given a lot near Washington and Webster streets as a wedding present by his father. He built a house there and he and Martha raised ten children there - Hannah, Ebenezer, Joseph, Martha, Andrew, Mercy, John, Dorothy, Mary and Elizabeth. Hannah was baptizsed in Second Church January 6, 1677 and on that day Andrew Jr "owned ye covenant." He and Martha were admitted to Second Church December 10, 1694. His last child was born in 1698 six years before he died at age 51 in 1704. He had an estate of §94 but was insolvent. He lived all his life in Hartford.

Martha Thankful Spencer was born in 1657 the daughter of Thomas and Sarah (Bearding) Spencer. Thomas Spencer was a soldier in the Pequot War and had arrived in Hartford the year after the main Hooker group arrived. He was from Bedfordshire, in England.

MARY BENTON. Married three times to widowers. Always a nannay and stepmother but never a mother. Died at age 97! She was born in Milford in 1655. She married the brother of her stepmother about 12 years after her father married Ann Cole. Mary was living with Andrew and Ann Cole when Nathaniel Cole's wife, Lydia, died. Lydia Davis Cole died in 1683 and then Mary married Nathaniel in 1685 at age 30. They had no children and Nathaniel died in 1708. She was stepmother to Nathaniel's son Nathaniel Jr. born 1682.

While Mary was in the Andrew-Ann Cole household, three children were born - Ebenezer, 1674; Lydia, 1675 and Hannah, 1678.

Andrew and his daughter, Mary, both married into the Cole family. Ann Cole and her brother, Nathaniel, were children of John and Mary (?) Cole. Their birthdates are unknown and they were of a family of 7 children. John Cole was the son of James Cole, a cooper, who came with Hookers Group. Ann was the central figure of a witchcraft trial in 1662, which will be discussed later.

Mary Benton's second marraige was to Johnathon Bigelow about 1709. For a third marriage she married the brother of Johnathon Bigelow's widow. Rebecca Shepard married Johnathon Bigelow in 1672 and after she died he married Mary Olcott who died in 1697. He then married Mary Benton but he died in 1711 at age 62. Mary then married Deacon John Shepard, Rebecca's brother, about 1712 or 1713. He was a Second Church official whose first wife was Hannah Peck. They had 7 children, the last was born 1698. He was about 60 years old and Mary was 58 when they were married. His will was dated in 1728 but Mary lived until 1752! Who was the last child?

JOHN BENTON was born Oct 7, 1656 in Milford but died in 1659 the year after his next older brother, Samuel was born.

SAMUEL BENTON was born October 7, 1656 in Milford about two years before the family moved to Hartford. Rev. Prudden had died so he did not baptize Samuel. Samuel is our ancestor and lived to be 88 years old. He would live to learn of the birth of Elihu, in 1744, two years before he died Elihu was his great, great grandson and our ancestor as well. Samuel married Sarah Chatterton of New Haven and they had nine children all born in Hartford. He was admitted to membership in the Second Church in 1716 at age 58

JOSEPH BENTON was born in 1661 in Hartford. At age 54 he was "largely entrusted with public affairs" as one of the principal organizers of Tolland. He served as the first town clerk (his handwriting was so bad that some records cannot be read easily) and as a selectman for two years. He petitioned the General Assembly for permission to establish a church and was the first deacon. He moved, in 1742 at age 82, to Salisbury, Conn. where he died in 1753.

His first wife was Martha Peck the daughter of Deacon Paul Peck and she died in 1680. Paul Peck was a soldier in the Pequot War and received land in Hartford as a reward. Joseph received §5 from his will in 1695. Their only child was Joseph, Jr. who also was a first settler in Tolland with his father but we don't know at what age.

Then in February of 1697 Joseph married Sarah Waters who was the daughter of Bevil Waters of Hartford "a man of good estate". He left Sarah §500 in 1729 after the couple had moved to Tolland. Joseph and Sarah had 7 children - Ruth, Sarah, Isaac, Aaron, Jemima, Jehiel, Kezia. All born in Hartford before they came to Tolland. The later was baptized in South Church, Hartford Sept. 19,1714.

Four Bentons were founders of Tolland - Joseph, Sr., his son, two nephews - Samuel Benton, Jr. and Daniel Benton both sons of Samuel Sr. Did Joseph act as an "Uncle" or did they manage on their own? Joseph Jr's age is unknown, Daniel was only 18 but Samuel Jr. was 34. Daniel's children were all born in Tolland but Samuel's were all born in Hartford before he moved to Tolland. Where their lots were is not clear

DOROTHY BENTON. No baptismal record. Gov. Winthrop visited her in 1667 and recorded 2 as her age in his diary; thus born 1655. She married Daniel Bidwell as his second wife. She shared in Andrew's estate so she must have lived until 1683. She received thirty three pounds worth of household goods and livestock.

ARON BENTON'S name has been discovered in Winthrop's Diaries indicating Aron was born in 1667 and was visited by Winthrop four times until he was 1½ years old. Then the diaries stopped. We believe Hannah was 45 then.

CHILDREN OF ANDREW AND ANN COLE: Andrew married Ann in 1673.

EBENEZER BENTON was born in 1674 and was described as "impotent", apparently meaning not mentally capable. He was well provided for in his father's will and by members of the Cole and Benton families. There is evidence he lived to age 87.

LYDIA BENTON was born in 1675 and joined Second Church in 1697. She married a person named Thomas.

HANNAH BENTON was born January 26, 1679. (Samuel Slade Benton book is incorrect, about her husbands, p.33)

JOHN BENTON was born in 1680 when Andrew was age 60 and died before 1683.

Byron Benton, Hartford, Aug. 2006

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ARON BENTON DISCOVERED!

ARON BENTON HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THIS CENTURY TO BE RECOGNIZED. NO RECORDS WERE MADE OF HIS LIFE. NOW THAT GOV. JOHN WINTHROP JR'S, MEDICAL DAIRIES HAVE COME TO LIGHT ON THE INTERNET THEY REVEAL HE VISITED ARON 4 TIMES.
ARON, WELCOME TO OUR CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER 340 YEARS OF OBSCURITY!

Winthrop was of a scientific mind and attended many Connecticut people to help with their medical problems. He kept a diary of his visits. It numbered over 1,000 pages recording about 10,000 visits but it has never been fully publicized. "Pamsgenealogy.net" on the Internet recently showed about 40 random pages containing about 400 entries. They show 22 Benton visits thru 1669 when his diary ends. Seven visits to Hannah failed to save her.

Wintrop's prescriptions were relatively few and simple. He used some old fashioned herbal recipes such as wormwood and anise and he tried other vegetable potions: rhubarb, jalap, horse-radish, amber and powder of coral. His favorite drugs were mineral, especially niter and antimony. The principal Winthrop medicine for curing almost anything was a reddish powder chiefly compounded of niter and antimony which he called "rubila". His pharmacology appears to have been sound and alive to advanced practice among contemporary European physicians. His extensive correspondence with English and Continental scientists shows a constant effort to get the latest books an keep up with current ideas. His patients had great faith in his curative powers. In 1668 he probably tried many drugs on his four visits to Hannah.

Dorothy Benton was the last child of Andrew and Hannah previously known but she had no recorded birth date. She was thought to have been born in 1662, 1663, or 1664. Now, Winthrop's diary shows he attended her in 1667 and called her 2 years old then, giving us a better assessment of her age. Aron was born in 1667 giving a likely succession of children. Apparently neither Dorothy nor Aron were baptized and therefore they have no such record.

An explanation of the failure of Andrew and Hannah to baptize their last two children might be found in the attitude of the people in the church towards its ministers who were arguing vociferously over church organization and the Half Way Covenant. This was resolved in 1670 when Rev. Whiting and the Bentons left to form Second Church. But Winthrop's diaries ended then just about the time Hannah became fatally sick. Dorothy was not baptized even after the family became members of Second Church. We would guess that Aron never survived very long in view of the four repeated attempts by Winthrop to save his life.

("The Death of Hannah", page 171, has more on Winthrop)

Sources: "The Winthrop Dynasty of New England 1630-1717" by Richard Dunn. in Puritans and Yankees. Great Migration Newsletter, Vol 9, Jan-March 2000. No. 1 by Robert Charles Anderson.

COMPARISON OF WINTHROP'S ESTIMATE OF ANDREW'S CHILDREN'S AGES WITH THEIR BAPTISMAL DATE

CHILD	YEAR VISIT MADE	WINTHROP'S GUESS OF AGE	BAPTISMAL DATE	ACCURACY
Hannah	1659	8 yrs	1651	OK
	1667	14 yrs		3yrs off
Andrew Jr.	1660 May	5 yrs	1653	2 yrs off
Mary**	1657	2 yrs	1655	OK
	1667	4 yrs		info bad
	1568			
	1669	6 yrs		info bad
Samuel	1659	1½	1658	OK
Dorothy	1667	2yrs	none*	
ARON Jan	1667		none*	
	1668	1 yr or more		
Dec	1668	1½		
May	1669	1½		

*Winthrop's diary now provides probable date of birth.

**Winthrop was correct as to Mary's age on the first visit but her identity must have wrong on his subsequent visits.

WINTHROP'S VISITS TO MOTHER HANNAH - BORN 1622

In Milford - no date
1666 pain stomach
***1667 July
1668 Jan
1668 April
1668 May vomiting & flux
1668
1669 July (last page of diary)
Hannah died after 1670

***Probably the year Aron was born. Hannah would have been 45 years old. We believe she was born in 1622 as 2nd child.

Winthrop visited Andrew Benton once - Feb. 28, 1659 in Hartford giving a possible date for his arrival in Hartford. Andrew Jr. was visited in May, 1660.

Byron S. Benton. Aug. 2006

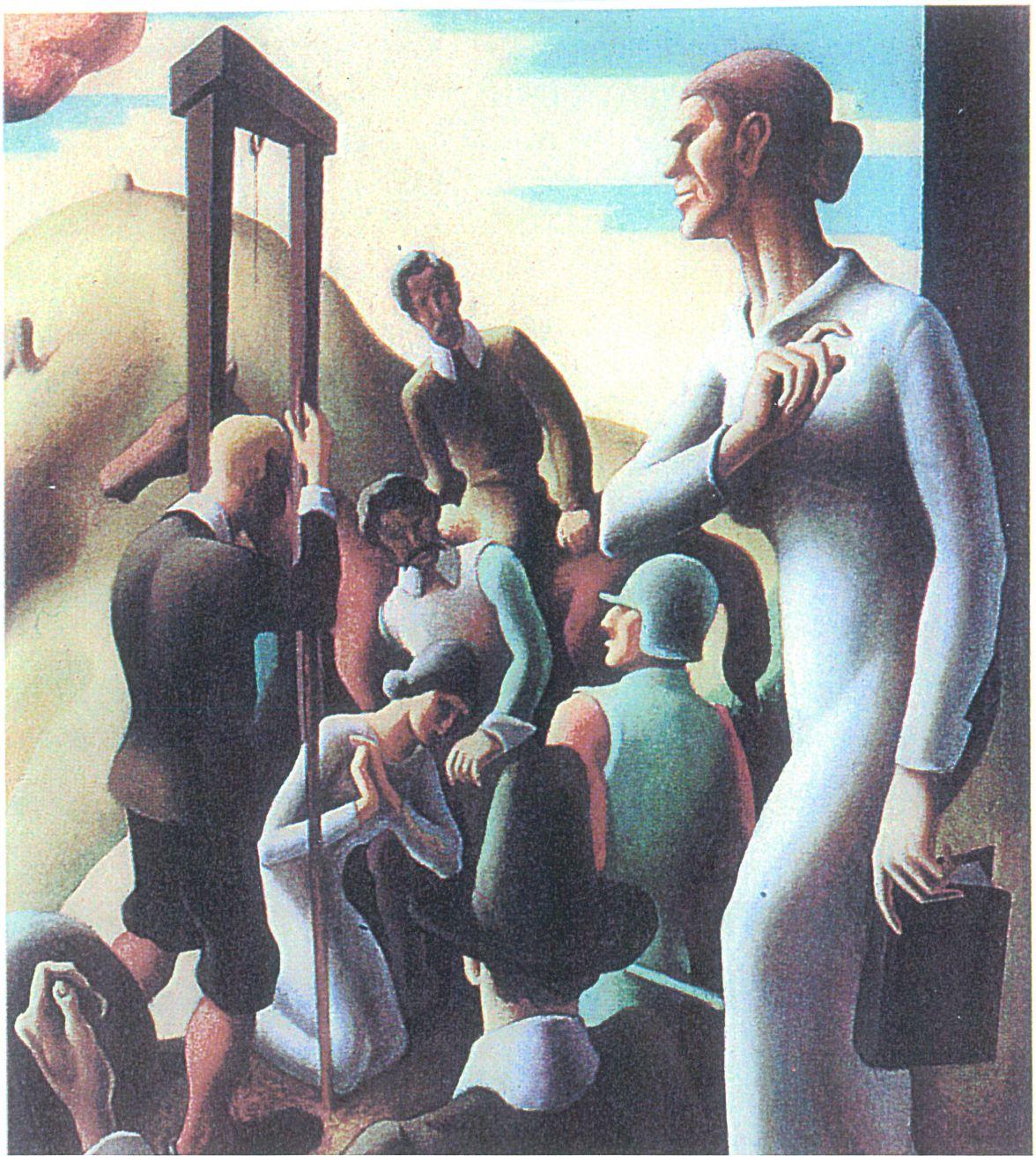


John Winthrop, Jr., of New London, 1606–1676; Governor 1657–1676,
with the Exception of 1658

From a Painting by George F. Wright of Hartford, in Memorial Hall Connecticut State Capitol

THE HARTFORD WITCHCRAFT PANIC 1662

FROM A MURAL BY THOMAS HART BENTON, PART OF THE "AMERICAN HISTORICAL EPIC" SERIES. THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART, KANSAS CITY, MO.



CHRONOLOGY OF THE HARTFORD WITCHCRAFT PANIC

DATE	ACTION	RESULT
1662		
March	Elizabeth Kelly died	Goodwife Ayres suspected.
May	John Kelly accused	Goodwife Ayres.
May	William Ayres accused Rebecca Greensmith of sorcery	Nathaniel Greensmith sued Ayres for slandering Rebecca. Suit dropped.
May	Magistrates inquest Water trial applied	Goodwife Ayres questioned. Ayres and husband fled.
June	Magistrates inquest for familiarity	Mary and Andrew Sanford. He fled, she may have been hung.
Summer	Magistrates inquest	Greensmiths imprisoned. He was released.
Summer	Ann Cole had fits in church and at Wyllys mansion on fast day. She named	Elizabeth Seager, Rebecca Greensmith & Judith Varlett.
Summer	Magistrates indicted	Seager & Varlett.
Oct.	Varlett imprisoned	Letter received from Stuyvesant and Varlett released
1663		
Dec. 30	Magistrates indicted	Rebecca and Nathaniel.
Jan. 6	Trials began	Elizabeth Saeger's trial.
Jan. 8	Trials continued	Rebecca Greensmith's trial. She accused: *Nathaniel Greensmith, Elizabeth Seager, Mary Sanford, Goodwife Ayres, Judith Varlett, James Wakely, Grants wife, Katherine Palmer.
Jan. 20	Verdict	Greensmiths guilty.
Jan. 25	Sentence carried out	Greensmiths hung.
Jan.	Trials continued	Mary, wife Thomas Barnes of Farmington, guilty and hung.
July 2	Magistrates indicted and tried	Seager for witchcraft and adultery. Found guilty of adultery only.
1665	Magistrates indicted and tried Seager	She found guilty of witchcraft. Gov. Winthrop kept from hanging.
1666	Court action	Saeger released went to R.I.

*The fate of those Rebecca accused: Nathaniel hung, Saeger freed, Varlett released, Sanford had probably been hung, Ayres had fled, Wakely and Palmer fled later, Grants wife unknown.

ANDREW AND HANNAH BENTON AND THE HARTFORD WITCHCRAFT PANIC

"You shalt not permit a sorceress to live"
Exodus 22:18

Andrew and Hannah were not surprised when Elizabeth Kelly accused Goody Ayres of bewitching her. Along with everyone else, they believed in a Devil, a gentleman clothed in black with horns on his head, cloven hoofs and a forked tail, whom you might meet by ill luck almost any dark night. His servants were the witches who had signed away their souls and furnished him with the power to do physical injury. The Devil was present everywhere, trying to enlist the weak into his service to do evil things to good people. It was hoped that if everyone worked to find and destroy the witch, they would curtail the Devil's power for evil.

Many of the people who had settled in Hartford had come from Essex, which had the dubious distinction of having the largest number of witchcraft trials in England. In the minds of most people, many acts of nature and misfortunes of men were easily attributed to the Devil and his witches. Andrew and Hannah would have believed no differently.

The Colony of Connecticut enacted a law in 1642 to punish witchcraft. It read:

"If any Man or Woman bee a Witch, that is, hath consulthewth with a Familiar Spirritt, they shall bee put to Death."

It also extended the scope of the accusation by including close friends, neighbors or relatives of the accused as subjects to be viewed with suspicion also.

What may have shocked them, as the witchcraft panic emerged, was finding themselves right in the presence of Ann Cole's wild outbursts. They had heard of weird incidents near where they were living in Milford, but they hadn't been close to any of it. Nearby, Goodwives Bassett, Knapp and Staples were all widely known to have been accused.

Goodwife Bassett had confessed and was hung in Stratford in 1651, shortly after Hannah had arrived in Milford. Information about her trial is unknown. Legend says she made "hornblende streaks" with her fingers in a quartz boulder as she struggled against her executioners near "Gallows Brook."

In 1653 in Fairfield, Goodwife Knapp was convicted because she had "witches teats" and a committee examined her to find this out. At the time Fairfield was in turmoil over an expected attack by the Dutch from New York. Others testified against her as she was new in town. She exclaimed at one point:

"Take heed the Devil have not you, for you cannot tell how soon he might be your companion. The truth is you would have me say that Goodwife Staples is a Witch, but I have sins enough to answer for already and I will not add this to my condemnation. I know nothing by Goodwife Staples and I hope she is an honest woman."

Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 1989.

The gallows scene was grotesque as various persons still cajoled her to name others. She did descend from the platform and whisper a few words in the ear of Roger Ludlow, the zealous town founder. After, Mary Staples insisted upon an examination of her dead body to find the teats and exclaimed "here are no more teats than I myself have, or any woman if you but search your body!" Later Thomas Staples and Roger Ludlow countersued each other for various slanders and eventually Ludlow left for England. Surely tales of these bizarre happenings reached serene Milford and to the ears of Andrew and Hannah.

Hannah may have remembered, however, that after Andrew had left for Milford, Alse Young had been executed for supposed witchcraft in Windsor. The year was 1647 and she was the first victim in New England! The next year the sad case of Mary Johnson of Wethersfield shocked everybody as she was a bewildered servant girl who made a lurid confession. Rebecca Greensmith, then living there, might have remembered and drawn on it for her later confession. Others charged and tried would not have been remembered so well as at the time Hannah and Andrew were very busy with their marriage, children, and movements to and from Milford.

Ann Cole's Story

But then in Hartford, Ann Cole, a young girl who also lived on the southside, brought the spectacle of the Devil's workings close to the Bentons for the first time. The story is not clear as to the timing of her outbursts. She had strange fits at home, a great disturbance occurred during public worship and also at the Wyllys mansion during a special day of prayer held especially for her. Andrew and Hannah probably saw and heard her in church and in the mansion. Although the Bentons and the Coles would later become close friends, they probably did not know each other well enough at this time for the Bentons to be able to sympathize with the Cole family.

Ann claimed not to remember the things she spoke of during her seizures and she was occasionally incoherent. The ministers came to listen and record her terrible and marvelous utterances. In her intelligible comments she said that a band of witches lived nearby and were tormenting her and several others.

> "A company of familiars of the evil one were contriving to carry on their mischievous designes against some, and especially against her, mentioning in sundry wayes they would take to that end." The sundry ways would "afflict her body, spoile her name, hinder her marriage etc."

She named Elizabeth Seager, Rebecca Greensmith and Judith Varlett as being the "company of familiars of the evil one."

ANN COLE'S HYSTERIA



The quotations are from a letter written many years later, after the Salem Witch trials, by Rev. Whiting to Rev. Richard Mather of Boston who was writing a book called "Remarkable Providences" about the witchcraft events. He told Mather he could not find the papers where he had written what Ann Cole actually said so what he gave was only a summary account. Whiting's letter described only the Ann Cole case and so she is the central figure. It is an valuable insight. He wrote:

> "Sundry times such kind of discourse was uttered by her, which was very awefull and amazing to the hearers. Extremely violent bodily motions she many times had, even to the hazard of her life in the apprehensions of those who saw them. And very often great disturbance was giuen in the publick worship of God by her and two other women who also had strange fits."

At the special day of prayer, the motion and the noise was so wild that some persons fainted. Andrew and Hannah may have shook their heads in dismay, Andrew little knowing some day he would make her his wife.

Ann, saying the Devil confused her speech to prevent her speaking against the witches, so sometimes "her discourse passed into a Dutch tone." Rev. Stone declared it impossible that one not familiarly acquainted with the Dutch should so exactly imitate the Dutch tone. This seemed to convince Stone and others the Devil was doing it. In the "Notes" that follow information is given to show how Ann and Judith Varlett might have been acquaintances so enabling Ann to know some Dutch.

Powerful John Winthrop, Jr., Governor from 1657

Had he not been in England then seeking a Charter for the Connecticut Colony, he might have seen through Ann's actions and brought them to an end. He was learned in the scientific thinking of his time. His influence kept witchcraft accusations from rising to the level of any court conviction in Hartford in the period from 1857 until he left for England in 1661.

With Winthrop Gone Trouble Starts in Early 1662

Elizabeth Kelly, only eight years old, started the panic when she was taken sick with stomach pains. She had gone to church with Goodwife Ayres on Sunday and by Wednesday she passed away. Evidently Goody Ayres was a church going person but the Kelly father and mother weren't. The Ayres were a couple in poor repute, thus they were vulnerable. He had often been convicted of stealing and the couple had to post bonds for good behavior. Goody Ayres may have related many colorful stories of the Devil to Elizabeth and others. Clearly this was not a prudent thing to do in a climate of controversy and among superstitious people.

Elizabeth cried out many times that Goody Ayres was tormenting her
"She chokes me, she kneels on by belly, She will break my bowels. Father why won't you go to the magistrates and get them to punish Goody Ayres"

To forestall further rantings by Elizabeth, Ayres offered her a bribe. She was overheard to whisper:
"Betty, why do you speak so much against me? Be quiet and hold your tongue. Lie still and say no more to your father about me and I will bring you a brave lace to set upon your dressing."

When Elizabeth asked for confirmation, Ayres answer showed her deep fear. "Yes", she said, "Indeed I will. If I live!"

Although there hadn't been any open talk of witchcraft in the Hartford area in many years, Goody Ayres would have known from past stories that an accusation of spells or torment against a dying person would be taken very seriously by the court. There must have been a tenseness throughout the town as the church controversy had separated friends and many had left for Hadley. Further, Governor Winthrop, much beloved by all, had left Hartford to seek a Charter from his connections in England. He was cool-headed.

A jury of inquest was ordered and it decided upon an autopsy, the first in Connecticut, to seek the true cause of death. It was done at the graveside many days after death and did not clear Ayres. The court of inquest convened in May and on hearing the depositions she exclaimed "This will take away my life." But she survived and fled the town with her husband, leaving everything behind, even their son who was the same age as Elizabeth. As described in the Notes following, they may have been subjected to the "water test" and may have failed it.

Now, with witchcraft hysteria in peoples consciousness, a grand jury was convened in June to bring indictments against Mary, the wife of Andrew Sanford, a pump maker, and mother of a large family. She was charged with "familiarity with the Satan and acting in a preternatural way to the great prejudice and the discomfort of several members of the Commonwealth." Who brought charges isn't known but she was found guilty and probably hung, although no record of such an event has been found. Perhaps William Edwards, the zealous prosecutor, brought the charges. Andrew Sanford fled to Milford and remarried as described in the Notes following.

Ann Cole's Victims

Judith Varlett's brother came from New Amsterdam with a indignant letter from his brother-in-law, Gov. Peter Stuyvesant stating that due to Judith's well known education, good character and religious faith she obviously could not be guilty of witchery. New England Puritans saw no need to challenge the Dutch Governor's understanding of witchcraft and so she was released and went to New Amsterdam where she married his nephew.

A BAND OF WITCHES



Courtesy The Connecticut Historical Society

■ Witches dancing with devils were depicted in this illustration by Nathaniel Crouch, published in 1728.

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Ann apparently included Judith in the band of witches, an unlikely participant. We can see Judith as "different", speaking bad English and easily subject to social scorn. Caspar Varlett, her father, had been "warned" against bringing another Dutchman and wife into town without permission in 1661. He had twelve months in which to remove them or pay 100 shillings fine. As with Rebecca Greensmith, Judith was a neighbor easily demonized.

Unconventional Elizabeth Seager

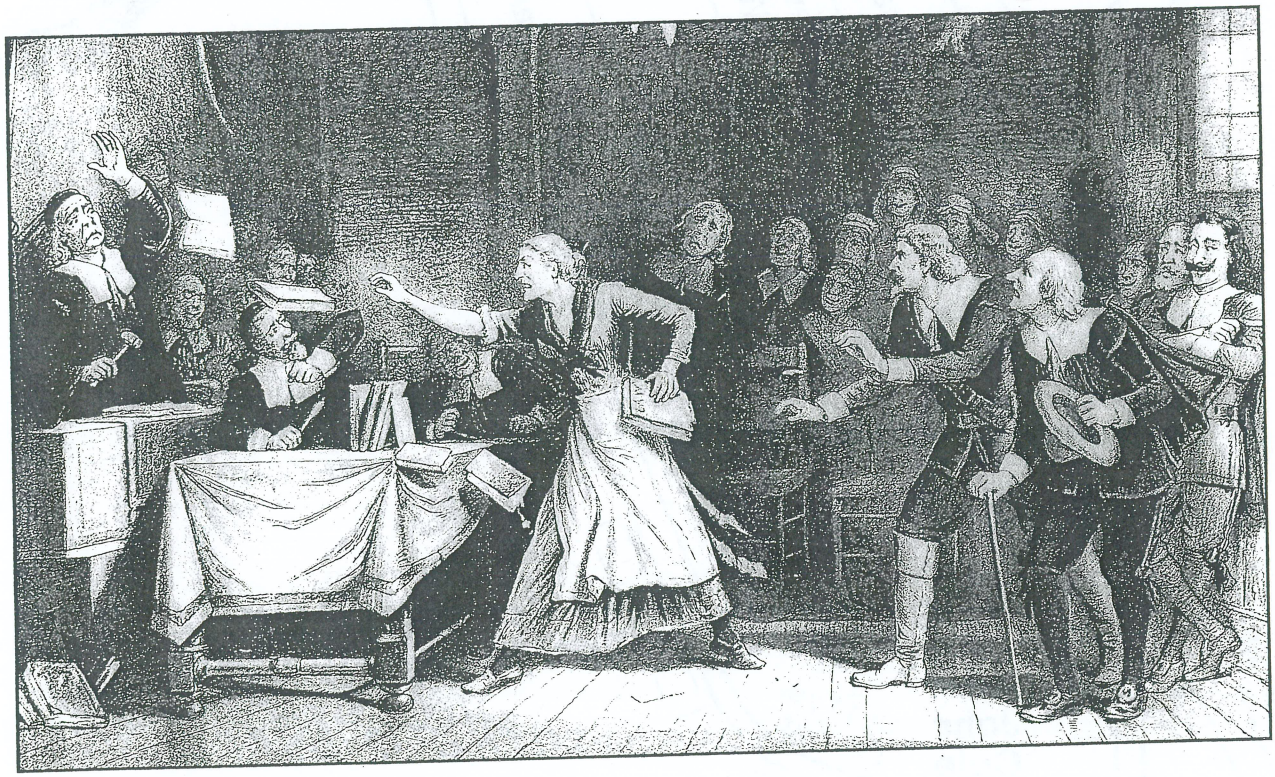
No Puritan guilty conscience crippled Elizabeth Seager. She fought back and refuted her accusers. Called Ann Cole's words as carried in Rev. Haynes notes - "hodg podg." She never confessed. At her trial she quoted Acts, Chapter 19 which warns against false exorcists, either referring to those proceedings or to the day of prayer to heal Ann Cole. It was reported that she had prayed the Devil would appear and witness to her innocence rather than God would help her. Her association with Goodwives Sanford and Ayres was against her and the fact she had "covertly" aided in the Ayres' escape.

A Mess of Parsnips

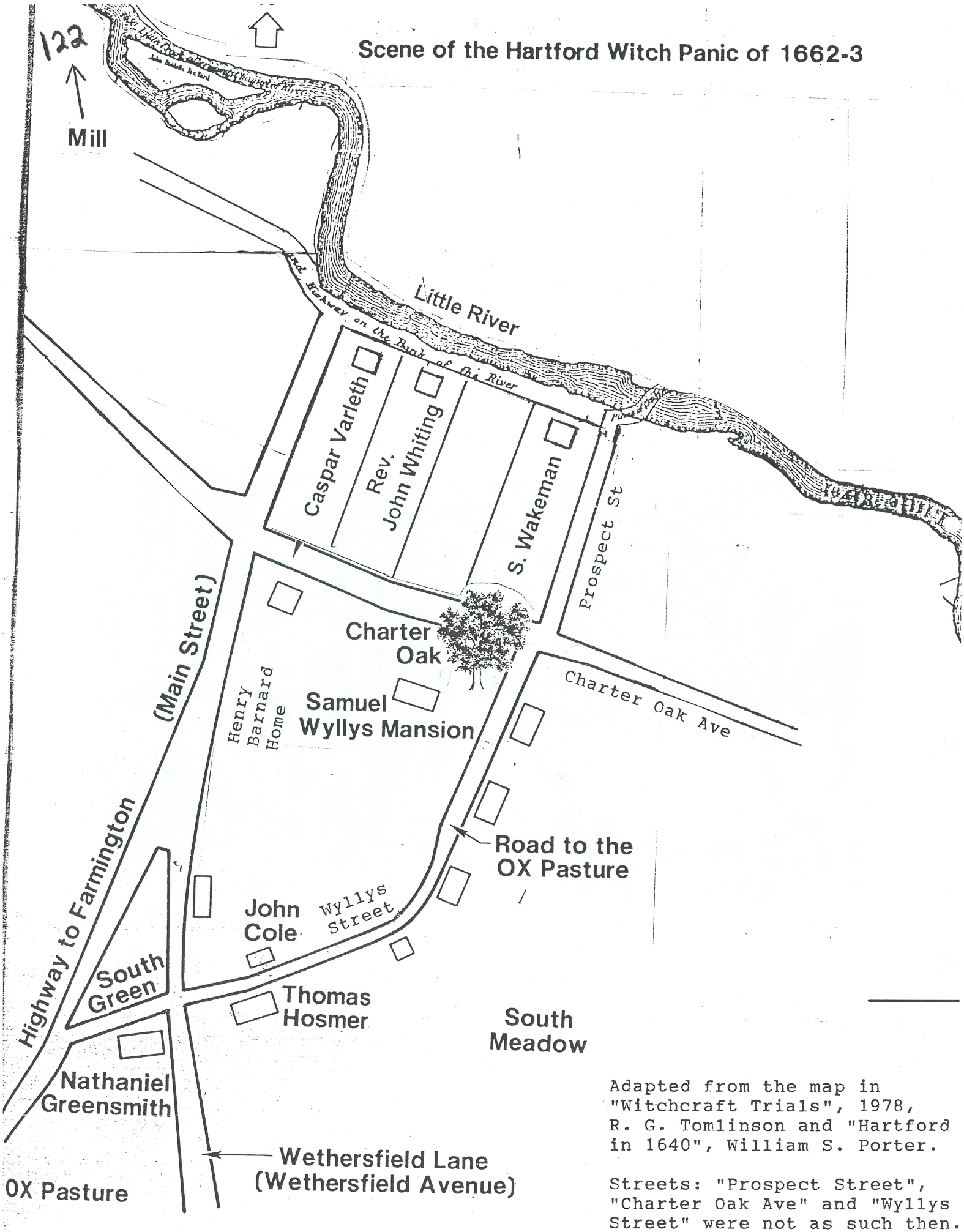
She attempted to curry favor with the Hosmers, who lived across the road from Ann Cole, by sending her daughter to present them with a "mess of Parsnips". Goodwife Hosmer was't home as she was next door at the prayer day in the Wyllys mansion. Thomas Hosmer was at home but refused the gift and explained accepting it might somehow be used as testimony against his own wife. Such was the climate of fear and apprehension that prevailed.

The jury did not really believe the wild stories related by her accusers: flying through the air, dancing in the woods around two black creatures with three other women, one of which was Goody Greensmith, and having unappreciated discourse too often with Mrs. Migat, whose husband was a prosecutor. She was acquitted as she gave the magistrates no confession to substantiate their case. Later, she was tried twice more and finally found guilty.
Gov. Winthrop Jr., in 1666, was reluctant to see the death penalty used any more and appealed to the Court to free her. In 1666, she removed to Rhode Island for safety from more accusations. She had been imprisoned often yet lived in the same community with Ann Cole for over five years.

IN THE HARTFORD MEETINGHOUSE 1662



ELIZABETH SEAGER CRIES "HODG PODG" AND CALLS THOSE AGAINST HER FALSE EXORCISTS QUOTING ACTS 19, VERSES 11-17



Adapted from the map in "Witchcraft Trials", 1978, R. G. Tomlinson and "Hartford in 1640", William S. Porter.

Streets: "Prospect Street", "Charter Oak Ave" and "Wyllys Street" were not as such then.

Drawn by Byron S. Benton, 5/2007. apt0@Juno.com

Rebecca Greensmith Beset

She maintained her innocence at first but when Rev. Haynes read Ann Cole's words in Court "she could have torn him in pieces." Yet, after he had read awhile she was "as if her flesh had been pulled from her bones and so she could not deny any longer" and confessed lurid details. Such was the apparent strength of Ann Cole's outburst, when intelligible. Further, Rebecca needlessly condemned her husband by telling tales of his alleged feats of strength and of satanic apparitions around him.

The recorded stories about her were largely unsympathetic. Since she talked so wildly all writers assumed she was really evil and had unnecessarily betrayed Nathaniel. She lacked the fortitude of Goody Seager. She may have believed confession would save her soul, many did, and by telling extravagant stories her salvation would be better assured or at least the day of doom forestalled. It was also caused by fear and repeated accusations and questionings and her personal guilt in not being able to live up to the Puritan ideals of the community.

She had left her southside neighborhood and went to the Ayres house in the northside to be a part of the group around Elizabeth Kelly when she was "possessed." Elizabeth's mother was Bethia Wakeman who Rebecca might have known as her home was near the Whiting's Probably in connection with that happening William Ayres spread rumors about her. Enough so that Nathaniel Greensmith sued Ayres for slander. But Ayres had fled so no action resulted. That mention started suspicion of Rebecca.

She had two prior marriages and two teenage daughters by the second marriage. She was called by Rev. Whiting a "lewd, ignorant and considerably aged woman." She admitted the Devil had frequent sexual intercourse with her. Whiting's "lewd" charge probably means that the "considerably aged" wife of a prosperous husband should have the presumption of decent conduct.

She was asked at her trial if whether she had made express covenant with the Devil and she answered she had not, only that she promised to go with him when he called. The Devil told her that at Christmas they would have a merry meeting and then the covenant would be drawn and subscribed. Then Rev. Stone laid forth the exceeding heinousness of that dreadful sin and took notice of the Devil's loving Christmas. Since it was a forbidden holiday for Puritans, it was further proof to the Court that the Devil had determined to undo their traditional beliefs.

How Rebecca came to marry Nathaniel Greensmith is difficult to imagine. We are told she feared him because of his reputation for thievery and that her appearance was unattractive. He was a relatively prosperous farmer but his previous family, if any, is unknown. They both had lived for a time in Wethersfield. Sometime between the years 1655 and 1660, he married her as the widow of Jarvis Mudge. She had originally been married to Abraham Elsen of Wethersfield who had died in 1648 leaving her with two daughters to rear, Sarah and Hanna Elsen. Rebecca was married the following year to Jarvis but he died in 1652 and she was alone again. Then John Nott was fined by the court for "miscarriage" with her and her estate, inherited from Mudge, was sequestered for the benefit of the girls. They were 18 and 16 years old at the time of the trial.

Rebecca's further confessions told how the Devil had first appeared to her in the form of a deer which came out of the woods and skipped around her, frightening her. Gradually she lost her fear and by degrees it contrived to talk to her as the Devil. She asserted a band of witches would meet for revels in the woods at night or under a tree on the green by her house where they would dance and drink sack. Some would come in the form of crows or cats or other creatures.

Nathaniel Greensmith Overwhelmed

Initially, both members of the couple were arrested and imprisoned. Nathaniel, probably because of his poor reputation, but he was soon released. He returned to the jail to plead with Rebecca to spare him from any accusations for a promise he would take care of her daughters. She said at the trial:

> "I speak all of this out of love to my husband's soul, and it is against my will that I am now necessitate to speak against my husband. I desire that the Lord would open his heart to own and speak the truth."

Nathaniel Greensmith lived south of John Cole, in the point of land between Wethersfield Lane and the highway to Farmington. He was a small, wiry and quarrelsome man who, from his first appearance in Hartford in 1650 had frequently been in trouble with the law. He had been convicted for stealing a bushel and half of wheat, for stealing a hoe and lying to the Court and also accused of battery. In later times had established himself as a relatively prosperous farmer. This in itself raised suspicions as to how all this might have been acquired.

In 1661 there had been a complaint he had set his barn on "ye common land without liberty." Nathaniel Willett and two others were to survey it and report to the town. Willett was on the jury that convicted Nathaniel. That property, which Andrew would subsequently acquire from the court in 1686, was valued at §182. This was to become the Benton family home.

Nathaniel made no confession but his wife implicated him, asserting he had "another's" help in accomplishing all his farm work, he had lifted heavy logs into his cart that should have taken two men to lift, and she had seen red devilish creatures following him in the woods while all along he claimed they were just foxes.

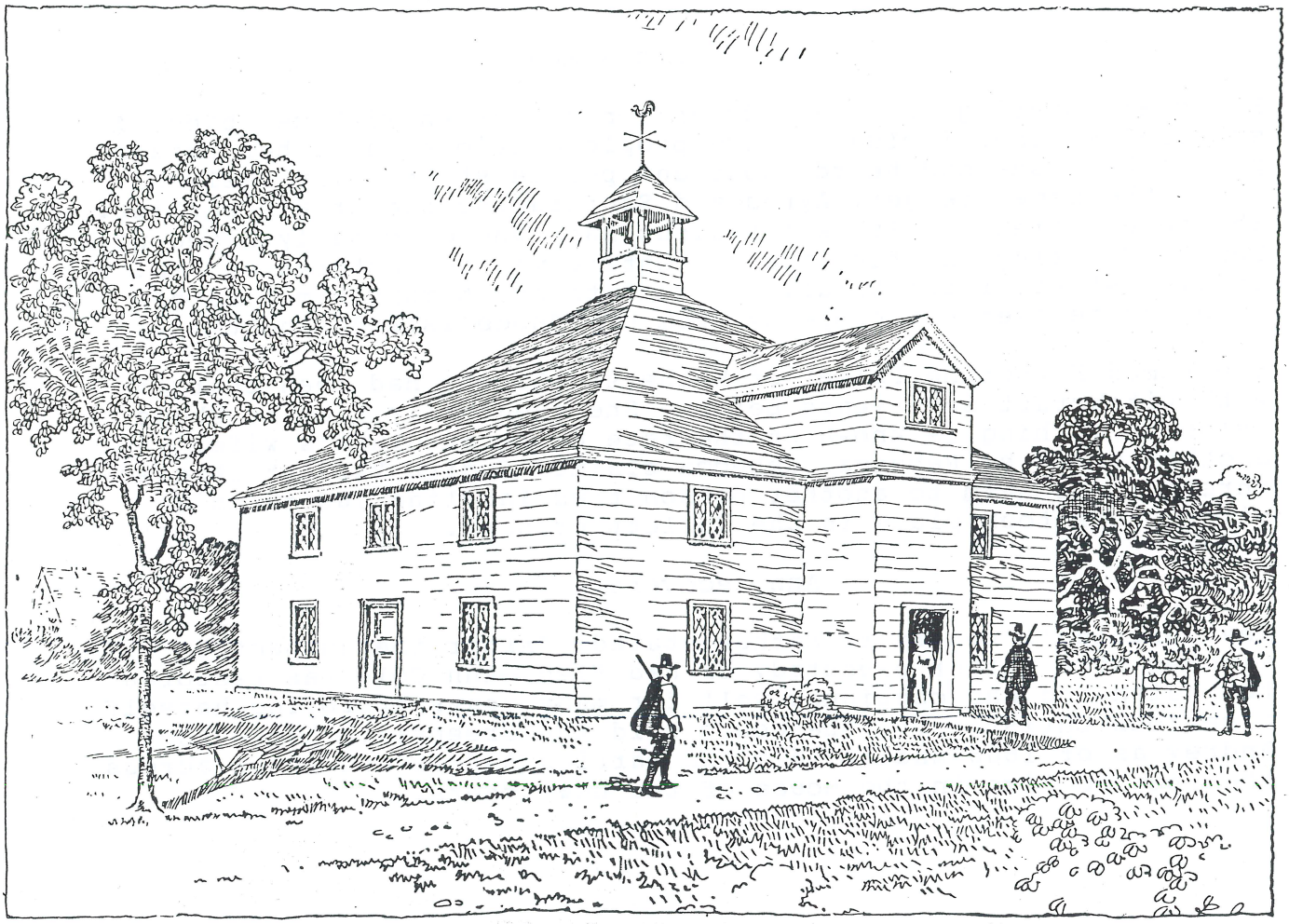
Many Others Named

Rebecca's meeting in the woods and on the green with her band of supposed witches included those people mentioned at other trials plus others she had heard about and people she had ill feelings for. She named Seager, Ayres and Sanford who had trials earlier. She named James Wakely, a litigious man, who originally lived near George Stocking. He fled and his estate was sequestered on Jan. 6, 1663, just after the trial. He went to court many times as he tried to recover his property from his Rhode Island sanctuary.

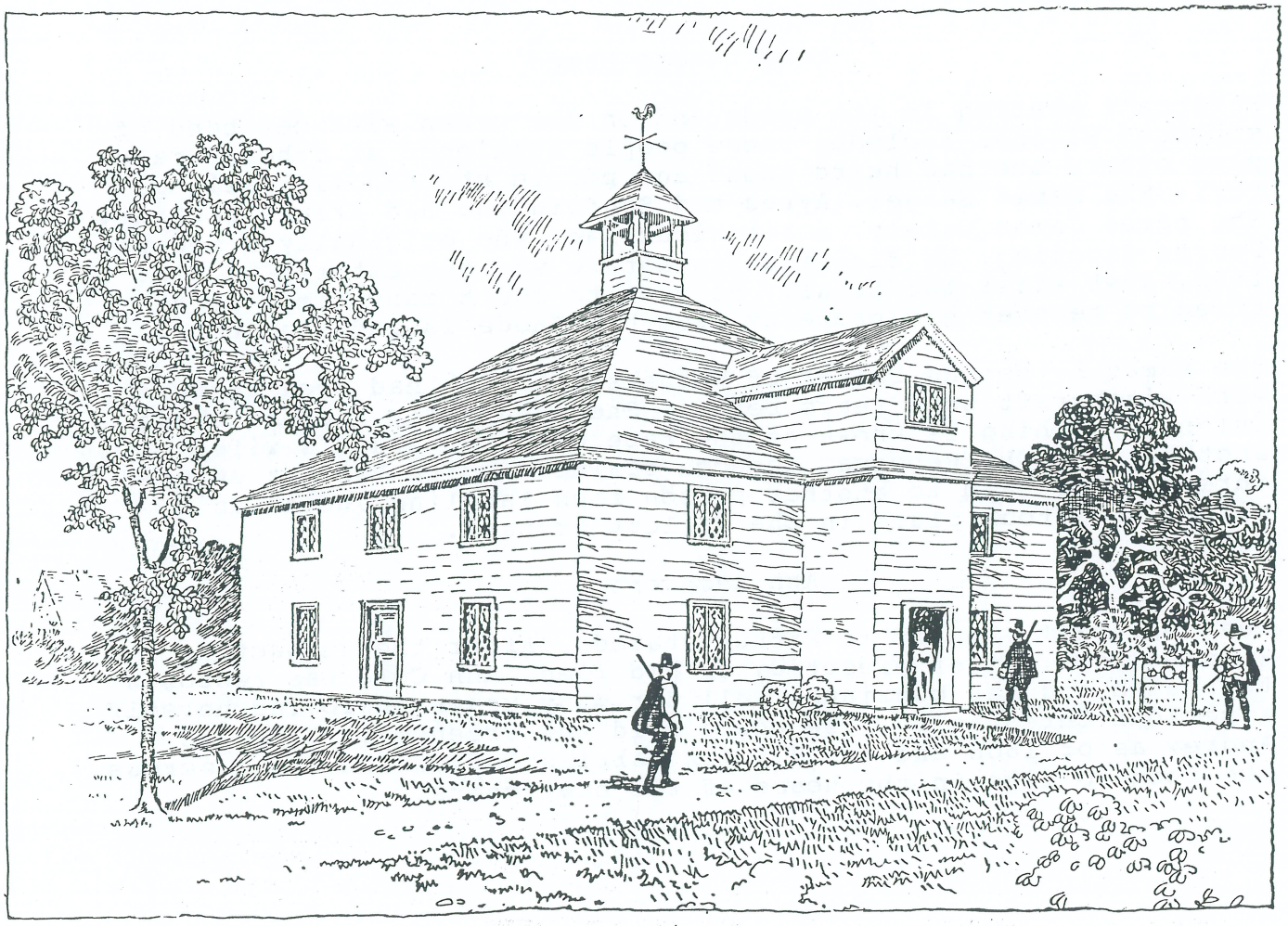
She named Katherine Palmer of Wethersfield who had been charged with witchcraft some years before. She eventually fled to Rhode Island. Nothing is known of the fate of Peter Grant's wife, another named by Rebecca. Rebecca claimed Judith Varlett uttered a threat to do harm to another person thus labeling Judith as a witch. This took place in the Varlett orchard.

Ann Recovers.

Rev. Whiting's report to Mather stated: "After the suspected witches were either executed, or had fled, Ann Cole was restored to health and has continued well for many years approving herself a serious Christian." The court sold the Greensmith house to Andrew as of 1668 and in 1674 Ann married Andrew and moved across the road to live in the house of the bewitchers.



THE MEETING HOUSE OF 1638



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Mary Barnes Purged

Rev. Samuel Hooker, the new preacher of the Farmington Church, and Magistrate Samuel Wyllys seized the time of hysteria to do away with Mary Barnes, wife of Thomas Barnes of Farmington, although this couple seemingly led a self respecting life there. Thomas Barnes was an early settler, militia Sergeant and Church member. Although records about her trial were removed, apparently she was accused of the usual familiarity with Satan and judged guilty. She was hung at the same time as the Greensmiths. The two men had known about her association with a Bayley couple in the Pequot Plantation (later called New London) in 1653. While the Bayleys escaped judgement as witches they were so unsavory that the Court tried many times to expel them from the Plantation. For Mary there was a suggestion of adultery. Wyllys and Hooker investigated witchcraft there many times and evidently knew about Mary's reputation.

Rev. Hooker, newly arrived in Farmington, may have wanted Mary out of his town. Mary may have joined the Church without her past being known so he wanted that remedied. Further his lot was now next to the Barnes lot. Aiding the two men in their effort to remove Mary may have been Nicholas Bayley who appeared in Hartford about that time. Nicholas may have been prevailed upon to bring charges of witchcraft against Mary out of his displeasure with their arguments at Pequot. Thomas Barnes evidently suffered this tragedy unscathed and married again two months later. There is no record of his suing Bayley for slander. (See Notes following)

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In 1668 Katherine Harrison in Wethersfield was found guilty but Winthrop challenged the verdict and a group of ministers came together and proposed new rules in such cases. They proposed that two persons had to see the witch's specter, that the devil could not be believed to take the form of an innocent person and thus provide false evidence. Harrison was released from the Colony.

Andrew and Hannah would have been relieved that their southside neighborhood was peaceful. Hannah, pregnant, awaited Dorothy's birth. Caspar Varlett died in 1663. Andrew wondered - could he obtain the Greensmith property? But they still faced the continual arguing during the Church Controversy.

Byron Benton, Hartford 2006

Notes

Will the Real Anne Cole Please Stand?

"A religious melancholic, tormented with doubts about her religious welfare" (Forest Morgan) or
"She hath been a person esteemed pious, behaving herself with a pleasant mixture of humility and faith under heavy sufferings who had for some time been afflicted and in some fears about her spiritual estate." (Rev. Whiting)

In Connecticut, Ann was the only person to have fits insprired by witches and was the first person to see witches appearing as a group.

After the hangings of the Greensmiths, Whiting writes ""Since the abatement of her sorrows she joined to the church and herein been a humble walker for many years. And since she married a good man, hath borne him severall children and in her constant way approved herselfe truely goodly to the charity of all observers."

It is impossible to fathom her soul from the time and distance separating her from our culture so it falls on us to extract from the information we have whatever explanation there might be found. Fortunately Rev. Whiting knew her well and we have his letter written in 1682, twenty years after the events and ten years after Ann became Andrew's second wife. He became minister of the Church in 1660 so he knew her life experience from then until she died in 1686. He died three years later.

It is important to know that all people, even the ministers, in those days believed in the Devil and that it inhabited people making them do evil. So when Ann said the Devil was making her say evil things, for instance, all believed that to be a fact.

Whiting writes she joined the church afterwards so the religious anxiety she was undergoing was perhaps because she feared she was inadequate to make a expression of religious experience which would have been required to join. She was "esteemed pious" according to Whiting and behaving herself; yet she may have doubted herself sufficiently to be in God's loving care. The experience of the witchcraft excitement, the trial and the hanging must have brought about such a transformation that she "experienced religion" and joined the Church.

We don't have her date of birth, she may have been about 20 at the time of the trials, in that case old enough to join the Church. The list of original founders of Second Church in 1770 shows 18 "sisters in full communion" and Ann is listed proving she was "in full communion" in the Church after the trials.

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Mary Barnes Purged

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Byron Benton, Hartford 2006

Her family situation is unclear and where she is in relation to her three brothers and two sisters isn't known. We do know one sister, Mary, died young and that she was born in 1654. Lydia was shown on the Second Church's lists with the young children "not in full communion" indicating she was younger than Ann. Nathaniel and Samuel are not listed as joining until 7 and 14 years after the 1770 founding indicating they may have been younger that Ann. Nathaniel was first married in 1676 possibly showing he had not left the household. Maybe John Jr. and Samuel had left it. One source, Tomlinson, states that two of Ann's brothers were lame, a possible source of anxiety for Anne to cope with. Anne was clearly the older sister with heavy responsibilities.

John Cole's "wife" joined Second Church as late as, 1778, but "loving wife Mary" was mentioned in John's will showing she was likely the mother of Anne at the time of Anne's hysteria.

Whiting states she was "under heavy sufferings". Ann's actions "Extremely violent bodily motions, even to the hazard to her life," were unique in the history of witchcraft at that time according to the available reports. No other person had suffered fits. The other instances involved people making accusations against one another and responding angrily, but no hysterical thrashing about as in Ann's case.

Were her actions authentically uncontrolled hysteria or copied? True, Essex England was a hot bed of witchcraft fever at these times and the stories of the way people behaved during them may well have reached Hartford. Between 1645 and 1647 there, 300 hundred people were accused and a majority had been put to death. Two other women were traumatized by Ann's actions and imitated her. Apparently this happened one time in church and it shows the strength of Ann's expressions to grip other's emotions.

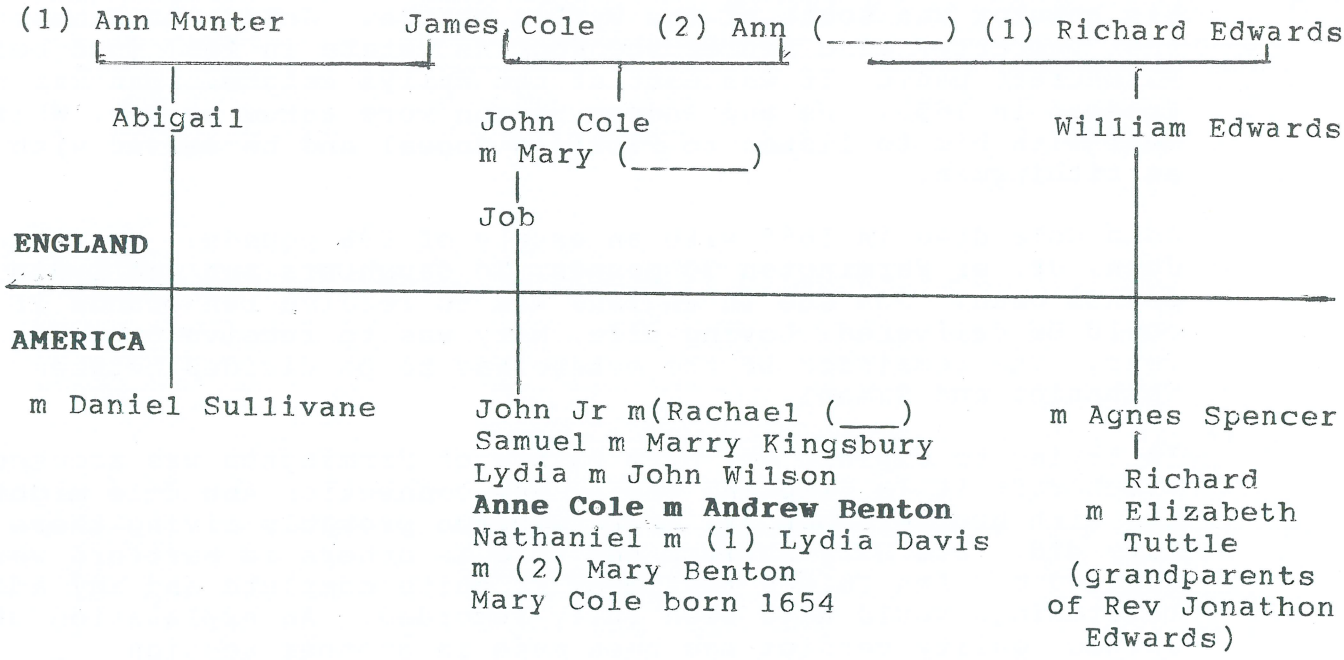
Ann must have been under extreme hysterical suggestion to make her loose control of her body and speech. Besides thrashing and jerking about her "discourse was awful and amazing, and after some time of unintelligible muttering passed into a Dutch tone." Ann seemed to be truly out of control. Probably, and how can we ever know, her situation seemed truly desperate to her and given the tenseness in the town and the example of others seeing witches, she went into hysterics? They seemed to satisfy her needs and so she continued whenever and wherever she had an audience. This was not a mental breakdown because she recovered after the Panic with no lasting effects. The extreme nature of her outbursts and motions make it difficult to believe she was faking.

For the cause of her fits she created a band of witches and named vulnerable people as its members - Seager, Greensmith and Varlett - and also maintained that this band of witches had attacked Whiting's sister. The dangerous consequences of identifying these people must have been submerged by her hysteria.

What was her state of mind when the trials took place? If she was worried she might cause others to die, her concerns were conveniently disposed of. When her words were read to the Court and caused Rebecca Greensmith to confess, Ann must have felt relief to see the imminent end of one of her witches. Greensmith's voluble confession certainly justified Ann's accusation. Seager, accused by Greensmith also, relieved Ann of responsibility for the fate another one of her witches. Varlett, likewise accused by Greensfith, ceased to be a worry for Ann as she escaped to New Amsterdam where she couldn't bewitch from such a great distance.

Whiting reports Ann "had abatement of her sorrows" afterwards. This "abatement" may have meant that she became reconciled to her family situation and remained hopeful of having a suitor and joined the Church. Apparently the hangings cleared her mind and cleansed her troubled soul and she felt no guilt. As across the road neighbors she and Hannah would have been friends and Hannah may have eased her mind. Later, Andrew would solve the problem of a suitor and she would have a her own family.

SUPPOSED ANCESTRY OF ANN COLE



Birthdates of John Cole's children are not known, except for Mary. She died young. No date of death is known for John Cole's wife.

Abigail moved to New Haven and died without children. Sullivane remarried. James Cole willed his Hartford property to her and it was was bought by John Cole or came to John as the settlement of her estate. John Cole was not mentioned in James's will but the foregoing transaction leads to the belief that John was James's son.

Abigail Cole was the daughter of James Cole and his first wife, Ann Munter. She was the daughter of Julian Munter, wife of Henry Munter of Buttails Algate, London.

Ann Edwards was James Cole's second wife. Her first husband was Rev. Richard Edwards of London and they had one son, William Edwards. He came to Hartford at age twelve and was a landowner in 1646. He was the prosecutor of witches in 1662-63. He was a tithingman along with John Cole and Andrew Benton in 1667.

It is assumed that James Cole of Essex, England came to Hartford with Abigail, stepson William Edwards and Ann Edwards Cole. John Cole followed later possibly. His son, Job, was born in England and remained there.

James Cole was in Hooker's 1636 contingent as a founder of Hartford. His homelot was south of the Wyllys estate. John, who succeeded to that property, also rented the Hopkins estate in 1661 just before the witchcraft panic. It was east of the Wyllys estate. John was made a freeman in 1655. He and Andrew Benton were asked by Rev. Whiting to meet with him to listen to Pitkin's appeal and he served with Andrew as tithingman.

John Cole died in 1685 with an estate of 396 pounds. He willed to John, Jr. of Farmington 30 pounds. To daughters Ann and Lydia 5 pounds each. Son Job in England was to receive ten pounds if it could be delivered. Loving wife, Mary was to receive 6 pounds a year. The remainder of the estate was to be divided between Nathaniel and Samuel.

In trying to explain why Mary Barnes of Farmington was accused of witchcraft it is tempting employ any connection Ann Cole might have had with brother John Jr. in Farmington probably living there when Mary did. Did Mary bewitch Ann Cole as others in Hartford were accused of? Ann Cole's testimony is quite complete and any additional bewitchings would have been fully recorded. An explanation of Mary Barnes' guilty verdict has been made in another section.

Nathaniel Cole married Mary Benton in 1685 as his second wife and they had no children. This was her first marriage and she was 30 years old at the time. Nathaniel had a son, Nathaniel, Jr. by his first wife, Lydia Davis, who he married in 1676. She died in 1683.

Increase Mather related much later that Ann Cole had an extrasensory experience in 1665 when a man named Cole was killed by lightening in Northampton, Mass. forty miles away. Rev. Whiting, however, remembers her as having been cleared of all delusions much before that time. The man named, either Matthew or John, was not a member of the Hartford John Cole family. The report shows the easy acceptence of witchcraft superstition in those times.

John Cowles is not be confused with John Cole as the former was from Glouchestshire. He came to Massachusetts about 1635 and to Hartford around 1639. He became a first settler in Farmington in 1640. He joined the group taking up land in Hadley, but did not move there immediately, alternating living in Hartford and Farmington before taking his family there in 1664. He is thought to be the "farmer" mentioned in the 1655 Hartford land records whereas John Cole was called the "carpenter." They both were simply named "coal", however, in that record. He was a juror in the trial of the Greensmiths and Mary Barnes. He was an appraiser of Greensmiths estate which Andrew Benton eventually bought.

John Cowles married Hannah Varian and their children were Samuel, John, Jr., Sarah, Esther, Mary, Elizabeth. All were born in Hartford or Farmington. John, Jr. moved to Hadley while Samuel inherited the home in Farmington.

Extract from "The Sisters Who First Joined the Second Church", a paper given by Mrs Charles H. Smith at South Church, February 14, 1896. "As the fifteen men have received their full share of attention it is around these eighteen women we must learn more."

ANN COLE

There must have been some religious instruction in John Cole's house that bore fruit after many years and what comfort it must have been to him when nearly sixty years old to realize that the daughter Ann whose shortcomings and weakness he had reproved and sighed over was led to unite with the new church at its very onset. It is doubtful if her father ever withdrew from the old church but the new church records give us abundant evidence that her brother John was made a brother in full communion at the same time and we like to think of a great manly nature full of sympathy and love for his repentant and confessing sister and of her impulsive and womanly nature appreciating his gospel support. That she was a victim of strong hallucinations of her day has been graphically told by our historian on page 59 that it is useless to repeat it here, but it is gratifying to know that she had "abatement from her sorrows" and was a "humble walker for many years" and that Brother **Andrew Benton**, after he had laid in the dust the wife of his youth and the mother of his children, Hannah Stocking, quieted his aching heart with the love of Ann Cole and it is possible that she may have been the mother of two of his children, John as the name savors of his father and brother and Mary so suggestive of a pleading and comforted soul. **Andrew Benton** died in 1683 and his wife followed him three years after, dying in 1686. It is encouraging to know that through all the vicissitudes of her earthly life, good eventually triumphed over evil and the closing name of the record shines brighter and brighter through all these years, and that Sister Ann Cole outlived the follies of her youth and was for many years a good woman and for us an enduring monument of God's free grace.

These good Christian women with their varying characteristics and circumstances in life, sick and poor, learned and ignorant, were the sisters in full communion who formed this church, which has come down to us enlarged and beautified beyond their greatest conceptions. Let us guard carefully our inheritance and pass it on untarnished.

COMMENT

Since this lecture has been preserved, it should be presented for historical interest. It provides little useful facts but shows how far apart the Victorians and the Puritans were. Even though Mrs. Smith had few genealogical facts to work with she effuses with persiflage anyway. She doesn't tell what Puritan women were really, like speaking from a very different culture.

Genealogy corrections: John Cole, Senior, probably did join the 2nd Church as he and Andrew served together often. Mary, John's wife didn't join until 1677. John, Junior is not recorded as joining 2nd Church, nor is daughter Mary Cole. Lydia Cole, Anne's sister joined in 1670 with the original youth. Samuel Cole joined in 1677, Nathaniel in 1684.
Ann Cole and Andrew had 4 children, not two. They were Ebenezer Benton, Lydia Benton, Hannah Benton and John Benton. The later lived only 3 years.
Byron S. Benton, July 2006

ACCUSED JUDITH VARLETH AND HER DUTCH FAMILY

The tragic story of the Varleth family gives an insight into life in Hartford at the time the Bentons came back in the late 1650's. When they left, after their marriage in 1649, the Dutch House of Hope was a busy Indian trading enterprise. But it had been closed in 1654 because the England won control of all of New Netherlands.

Caspar Varleth, the head of the family, brought his family to Hartford about 1656 as evidenced by the dates of his last court case in New Amsterdam and his first court case in Hartford. Caspar purchased a house and lot on what is now Charter Oak Ave. and Cole Street and, of course, it was near Ann Cole's home. It had orchards. South Green and the Wyllys mansion were nearby. The Bentons, living South of South Green with a house full of babies and little ones, would have come to know the Varleth family. Samuel Benton, third son, was born in 1658.

Caspar was born in Ouderkerk in 1601 and his wife Judith Tintenier was born in 1596. His family came to New Netherlands in December 1650 from Utrecht. Caspar's family was caught up in the life of New Netherlands as shown below:

In Dec. 1651 daughter Jannetje married Augustyn Hermann. He was a wealthy merchant and moved his family of two sons and three daughters to "Bohemia Manor" in Maryland about 1660.
In 1652 Anna Verleth, daughter and wife of George Hack, was in New Amsterdam courts about her cargo of tobacco from Hack in Virginia.
In 1652 Judith, wife and Anna were in a suit in same courts over a the loss of a number of negroes and property they had purchased.
1652, a court judgement against Caspar and his son for carrying freight on a ship "Fortune."
1653, Judith, his wife, was sued for wages from a servant girl who served the family on a ship while traveling to New Netherlands.
1654, Caspar was requested to show up at the City Hall on the morning of the next day with all his papers.
1654 Spring, Maria, third daughter, and Johannes Van Beeck slyly attempted marriage away from New Amsterdam officials and succeeded by finding a Magistrate in Greenwich, Connecticut thus causing Caspar much time with the authorities. Van Beeck was killed in an Indian massacre in September, unfortunately.
1654 Oct, Judith was in court for fighting with Webber.
1654 Oct, Nicholas Varleth married Anna Stuyvesant.

Caspar owned a warehouse on the Connecticut River to conduct his business. He contined the trading of furs with the Indians that had been carried on at the former House of Hope. He imported the kinds of luxury goods from the Continent that the Puritans could not obtain from Boston. He imported tobacco and silk from his family connections in Virginia. Furthermore, he operated a distillery. Where he obtained enough grain stock is a mystery. He was fined once for selling spirits directly to a person. He probably supplied the taverns with his local product as well as importing liquor from the Continent and the Caribbean.

Trade with the Indians would have been with wampum, with the Puritans, English pounds and in New Amsterdam with guilders. With his connections in New Amsterdam one can imagine the profits shrewdly made from currency dealings; the Dutch were well suited for this way of life, the Puritans were not. Caspar was in trade with his son Nicholas in New Amsterdam and when his son-in-law, Paulus Schrick, came to Hartford they worked together as well.

Maria (Varleth) Van Beeck, sister of Judith

She gave birth to a daughter in May of 1655 and was widowed in September around the time the families moved to Hartford. Her marriage ceremony caused legal problems so it is doubtful that she obtained much from Van Beeck's estate or would have found a welcoming household in New Amsterdam. Perhaps Caspar and his wife desired to move to Hartford to relieve her of this distress. But in Hartford she found Paulus Schrick and another fortuitous match was made. He was from Neurenberg, Germany and was styled as "de heer" (honorable). He was an important parsonage among the burghers of New Amsterdam and Albany and had many trading connections in Holland. In spite this elite network, he became a Hartford resident. (Nicholas Varleth, Maria's brother, purchased a New Amsterdam lot from Paulua In Febriary, 1658 for instance). Paulus and Maria were married in Nov. 1658, probably arranged. The advantages for both Caspar and Paulus would have been inviting.

The couple lived in Hartford for five years and raised a family of two children while caring for Judith Van Beeck, the child of her first marriage. Paulus continued to have business dealings in New Amsterdam and Albany. Here we can observe a pattern of very much traveling back and forth between major towns, probably by horse. Womenfolk and household goods must have come on the trading ships. When Judith was released from jail she must have traveled back to New Amsterdam on horseback with Nicholas.

MISFORTUNES

By 1662, however, the family suffered terrible misfortunes. The mother died just before. In that year Judith was arrested for witchcraft and had to leave town. Caspar died later in the year. Paulus died in 1663. Nicholas, the elder son, had to come to Hartford to close out the affairs. In October 1662 an inventory of Caspar's estate was presented. In December Maria Schrick, as co-administer, took an action against a debt of Thomas Bracy for 30 shillings. In March of 1663 she took two actions against Peter Grant for 1 and 2 pounds each. She took action against Dan Cone for 2 pounds. She was still in Hartford at these times and the notations suggest she was acting as attorney for her brother. Her children, Paulus and Susanna, born in Hartford but never baptized there, were finally baptized in New Amsterdam that year. Maria, however, pursued her marital course and married a merchant from Albany, Willem Teller in May of 1664. He was 44, she was 33. Beautiful Judith, her older sister, had yet to be engaged!

Marriages for Position and Profit

The Varleth family fortunes blossomed about the time of the move to Hartford. Son, Nicholas, managed a coup d'etat by a marriage to the Anna Stuyvesant, sister of Peter. Twenty two years her junior, his second marriage. She was a brilliant woman who taught her children three languages and thus helping Judith's husband his advancements. (See diagram). She successfully protested the arrest of a Quaker. She was the widow of Samuel Bayard. Nicholas, her husband, advanced steadily to become Commissary, Collector, Inspector, Commissioner and Ambassador to name but a few of the illustrious posts he held.

Caspar's daughters aligned themselves well also; Anna, born 1617 married George Hack of Virginia and Maryland and Jannetjie, born 1625 with Augustyn Hermans of the same places. Maria, as mentioned, with Schrick. Judith, as will be noted later, finally achieved a marriage with Nicholas Bayard, a renowned leader of the Colony, worthy of her beauty and talents. Was it a love match or well managed? Their careers merged heroically.

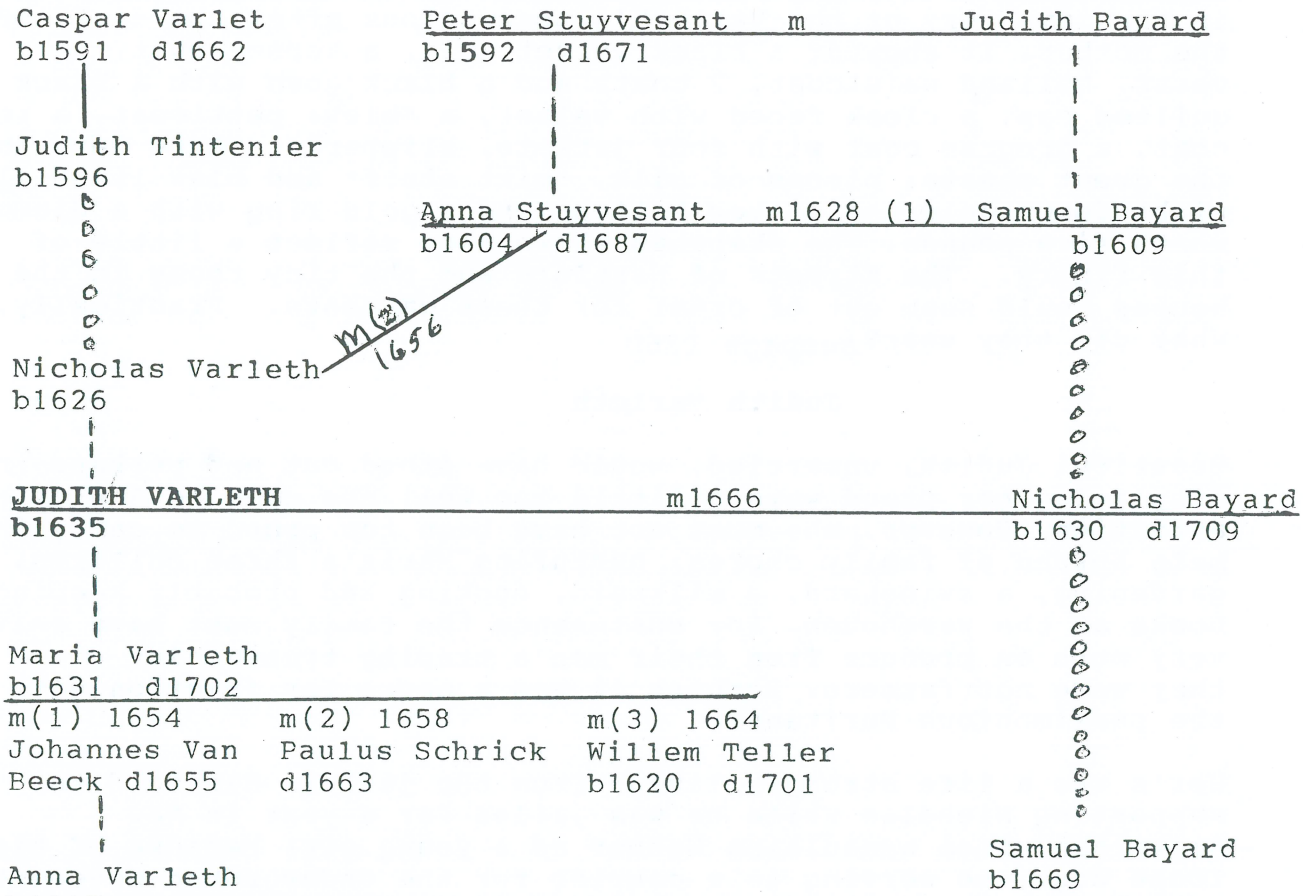
Life in Hartford

A description of the house that Caspar purchased is based on the inventory of the estate. The house appears to be similar to the Hosmer House shown on page 99. It had a large room on the ground floor with a entry hall, two upper chambers and a "garrot". In this space we must imagine the family crowded together; Caspar and wife Judith, daughter Judith, Maria and Paulus and three children. In the main room was a bed, table, chairs, screen (very necessary), a case of drawers, a number of painted boxes, three or four large chests used to hold linen and clothing. In the entry hall was a settle, four chairs and two trunks. In the main room was a good carpet of broadcloth with a "green quishion box." There was a green carpet in the hall.

In both the upper rooms were bedsteads and six feather beds, three bolsters, six pillows, ten blankets, some 30 "pillow boors," eleven pairs of Holland and seven other sheets, sixteen towels and napkins and seven table-cloths. Where was there any room for the people? In the garret were six pairs of combs for wool, five looking glasses and a horse saddle. That space seemed to be for storage. On the ground floor was a buttery and kitchen with every utensil needed. Also, in the barn were eight loads of hay, two cattle, two steers, two cows, a calf and a pig. The household goods were valued at two hundred and five pounds.

For six years this family managed a life in Hartford there. The male members were off on business but the women might have had difficulty. They were of a different religious tradition, spoke English differently and had odd dress and households. They had to market with the Puritan women with the possibility of arguments but also of some friendships.

ABBREVIATED DIAGRAM OF JUDITH VARLETH'S RELATIONS



KEY:
sibling:---------- offspring: oooooo marriage:————

Judith Varlet's mother-in-law was also her sister-in-law. Samuel Bayard was Judith's only child.

Anna Varleth is erroneously called Caspar's sister and Catharina is likewise called his daughter by some researchers. Hack research shows Anna correctly. Catharina was his sister. A "Sarah" is identified as Judith's sister in "Dutch New York" page 22. Howard Swain@ix.netcom.com gives her birth at May 1639.

Byron S. Benton

136B

Clothing

Ostentatious airs might have separated the two cultures as noted in the inventory of the Varleth's possessions after the death of the mother. It showed: a black velvet suit, a kersey suit, 4 vests, Holland waistcoat, 2 coats and a black gown with a black quilted cap, a cloak faced with velvet, a "blew: petticoat, a red coat, a grogram coat with four jackets, slippers. There were in the great chests, pieces of silk, "mixt stuff" and blew linen <u>also</u> eight dozen gold and silver buttons and a gold ring with a diamond worth five pounds. The sketches shown here reflect a little of this finery. The streets of Hartford and the tiny rooms in the houses would seem out of order for these garments. Practically, what did they wear? seepage 136D

Judith Varleth

Beautiful Judith, unmarried, would have stood out and perhaps in displaying her proud ways a little too well she came to Ann Cole's attention, However, she must not have been too proud to carry the main burden of family chores; nurturing Maria's three children, gardening, a swineherd, a milkmaid, cooking and probably keeping books at the warehouse. For sustenance the family must have relied very much on produce from their men's trading transaction since they were not farmers. Perhaps it was a cause for friction with the parsimonious Puritans?

Her's was a life strongly lived; from the jail in Hartford to supporting Nicholas while he was jailed for a year in New Amsterdam, from assaulting Webber as a young girl because of his loose dogs, to serving as a courier for the underground movement against Leisler, from a spinster's fate in Hartford to the wife of the Mayor of New Amsterdam, from declaring to Rebecca Greensmith in the Varleth orchard that she would do Marshall Gilbert mischief or hurt if she could do so, to receiving Leisler's heart after he was hanged and his body mutilated. (Caspar had been in the town courts 16 times)

Judith's Battles

Dutch women in New Netherlands were not reluctant to physically assault their neighbors, spouses and others on account of perceived insults, defamations and abuse of positions of authority.

In New Amsterdam in 1654 Judith and Wolfert Webber were in Court because Judith's pigs were destroying his crops and Webber drove them off the with his dogs. Judith, age 19 and her sister, Sarah, age 16 attacked Webber in his house by striking him then throwing stones at him. She claimed that he threatened to strike her with his whip, assaulted her, bruised and dragged her by the arm and kicked her sister so that she had a blue bruise on her hip. The Court ordered them to leave each other unmolested and fined Webber for fulminating lies. Had news of this squabble reached Hartford by the time Judith reached there?

During the "Leisler Rebellion" 1689-1691, which occurred later in her life, a power vacuum had allowed Jacob Leisler and some followers to assume authority on the name of William of Orange, Nicholas Bayard, Judith's husband, was on the Governor's Council but Leisler had him thrown in jail for a year. She carried on her husband's business. As a result they became Leisler's deadly enemies. In 1689 Judith was brought before a Council controlled by him. She was searched and found to be carrying in her purse letters for the opposition. After the English throne sent in a new governor, anti-Leislerian groups had him brought to trial and executed. Judith demanded his heart be carved out for her and she was obliged.

Leisler's action had threatened the Dutch elite's status and particularly the role of women. They resisted his power. Women in New Netherlands were active in business, independently or as partners with their husbands. (Judith and Nicholas must have been companions because in his will he called her "Judy.") The Dutch ruling groups kept power through powerful family associations fostered by the women. In some instances they even defied authority independently to secure justice for the aggrieved. The attitudes towards women in the Dutch and Puritan cultures differed markedly since Puritan women viewed home and Church above business and politics.

As the two cultures took different paths, it is doubtful that many Hartford people knew of or cared about Judith's remarkable life, but Ann Cole Benton and the rest of her family would have pondered her fate more than once.

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Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2007

Chronology of Judith Varleth's life

		AGE
1635	Born in Netherlands, Amsterdam	
1650	Travel to New Amsterdam with parents	15
1653	English authority instituted	18
1654-1555	Webber quarrel	19
1656-1662	Hartford inhabitant	20-26
1662	Witchcraft Panic - to New Amsterdam	26
1666	Married Nicholas Bayard	30
1666	Wife of a high official	30
1669	Samuel, son, born	33
1685	Wife of the Mayor of New York	50
1689	Leisler Rebellion	54
1689	Judith's purse searched by Council	54
1691	Leisler tried and executed - revenge	56
1707	Nicholas Bayard's will made to "Judy"	64
1709	Nicholas Bayard died, large estate	66

Judith's date of death not known

IMAGINED VARLETH FAMILY



NICHOLAS AND JUDITH



CASPAR, MARIA AND PAULUS

Sources:
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GOVERNOR PETER STUYVESANT OF NEW AMSTERDAM VOCIFEROUS AT JUDITH VARLETT'S ARREST



Notes for the Hartford Witch Panic of 1662-1663

Playing on Ann's Dutch flavored speech in order to prove Satan's power.

First, it should be noted that when Rev. Whiting returned to Hartford from his first appointment in Salem just two years prior to the panic, he took the Nathaniel Ward homelot. It was just south of the Little River and across the road from the Wyllys estate. It was in the vicinity of Ann Cole and Rebecca Greensmith's houses, as they lived at the other end of the Wyllys estate. Please refer to the map.

Next, the Whiting letter says that Ann named another person who was also afflicted by Ann's witches.She was identified by having lived next to the Varletts. The person's name was not given but she was known to have been unable to speak from birth. She was thought to have been Whiting's sister. Assuming that Whiting made a home for his sister because she was impaired, it can be seen that Judith Varlett lived on one side or the other of Rev. Whiting. Possibly on the lot Andrew Bacon originally owned as he had an orchard. Additional confirmation comes about when Rebecca, in her confessions, placed she and Judith in the Varlett orchard showing the two were probably acquainted and that Judith mingled with the English. This part of her confession had a rational basis.

Goffe, in his diary, also confirms that Ann Cole lived near Judith Varlett in the same southside neighborhood.

Ann Cole, living nearby, might have easily learned from Judith some manner of Dutch. The Rev. Whiting, as a next neighbor to the Varletts, would have known the extent of friendship among the young women in his part of the town. Others, as magistrates and jurors, would have been aware of the good possibility that the two girls knew each other and that picking up words from each other would have been natural. Yet the ministers and all others seemed to have ignored the obvious and clung to the theory that pleased them most - the devil confounded her speech with Dutch! Or more likely yet, one of the Devil's disciples, Judith Varlett, that Dutch girl, was affecting her speech!

No one asked Ann why she was using Dutch? At least Whiting never reported it, therefore it was conveniently assumed to be the Devil's work! Later, of course, when Andrew married Ann, he found out why she knew Dutch.

Rev. Whiting's sister bewitched also.

Ann Cole introduced another person, Whiting's sister, onto the scene to bolster the case that her witches were everywhere. One of them, Judith, had also afflicted Rev. Whiting's sister. Apparently Ann turned against Judith out of desperation to explain her own hysterical behavior expecting the community to make Judith an easy victim because she was from an alien culture.

The approach Ann Cole took to identify Whiting's sister was clever. Based on the reports we have, she apparently referred to her obliquely as a person living next to the Varlett's so as to create the impression she was thereby obviously in jeopardy. Living in the same neighborhood, she would have known the sisters name and could have used it had she wanted to. Her name isn't known.

Maybe to Ann's surprise, Whiting's sister played along and claimed someone had pinched her arm in the dark and so forth. She had heard all the talk of witchcraft, of course, and so confirmed Ann's claim that Judith, next door, was a witch. How would she convey this information since she was mute from birth? Rev. Whiting would have known how communicate with her and he could have supplied the magistrates with the accusation. So the community was arrayed against the Varlett's and Judith was imprisoned.

Rev. Stone"s responsibility questioned.

G.L. Walker in his "History of the First Church in Hartford" calls Rev. Stone responsible for the panic. He was credited with encouraging accusations of witchcraft against those who opposed him or the authority of the Church because he was old, embittered and because his authority had been threatened by the Church Controversy causing many to leave for Hadley. More likely, Walker was referring to this controversy, not the witchcraft panic when he states that the "melancholy controversy occupied a large chapter in Rev. Stone's ministry." No other writer about the panic gives Stone any responsible role. The nature of the accusations and fits seem spontaneous and having no tie in with the church feud. Those involved in the panic do not seem to be of the class likely to have been active church members.

William Edwards, prosecutor, protecting Ann Cole?

William Edwards was half brother to Ann Cole's father, John Cole. He was a "zealous prosecutor" of witches in the years just following Ann's involvement and maybe the prosecutor in 1662 when many were brought to trial. As a member of Ann Cole's family circle, he might have been trying to aid her in her time of distress.

He pursued Elizabeth Seager in 1665 on the basis of claims made earlier that she could fly through the air. He prosecuted others in 1663. Perhaps he is not mentioned in the early trials because the magistrates proceeded on the seeming clear evidence of the accusers. He might have prosecuted Mary Barnes and Mary Sanford whose trials were unrecorded.

He was the son of Ann_____ and Rev. Richard Edwards and was born in England. James Cole was his mother's second husband and they came to Hartford in 1636 along with Abigail Cole who was the daughter of James Cole's first marriage. William Edwards married Agnes Spencer in 1645 and was recorded as a landowner in 1646. He was an ancestor of the famous Rev. Johnathon Edwards known for the Great Awakening.

Test by Water Ordeal

Some writers suggest that the Ayres were subjected to the flotation test to find if they were witches. The accused witch was "cross bound" with right thumb tied to left big toe and the left thumb to the right big toe. The accused was then placed in water. Some believed a witch would float in this situation. One theory was that the witch having made a covenant with the devil, had renounced his baptism and was, hence rejected by the pure element, water. Another theory was that devils venom maligned their spirits and fermented, making them buoyant. If the accused sank it was proof he was no witch.

The mill pond on the Little River above the two islands would be a natural place for such a trial. This pond was only two rows of homelots from George Stocking's homelot where Andrew and Hannah may have been staying then. Hannah could have easily left her household chores long enough to take the young children and baby to go and view the spectacle. Hannah was 11, Andrew 9, Mary 7, Samuel 4 and Joseph 1. Andrew may have gone ahead with Andrew, Jr. The Ayres floated and it frightened them so much they left everything they owned, and their son, and fled.

The Trials

Andrew might well have found room in the new East gallery of the Meetinghouse to watch the trials. It was the same Meetinghouse in which he Hannah had meet when he first came from Wethersfield on a Sunday to hear Rev. Hooker preach. It was new then and just as he and Hannah returned to Hartford the church had added a gallery although by that time many were leaving the church for Hadley.

The meetinghouse was crowded with the accused and accusers, the ministers giving evidence, the twelve man jury, the magistrates and court attendants. What room left was filled with spectators. This meeting house was thought to be about fifty feet square and replaced the earliest one hastily put up when Hooker's group had just arrived.

The tiny windows did not admit much light on the short days of December and January. There was no heat except from the bodies of the people. The atmosphere was heated, however, filled with the shrieks and cries of the accused and accusers as well as outbursts from the spectators. Undoubtedly the jurors and magistrates were swayed by this emotional environment. Pre-trial assumptions of guilt were commonly deduced and usually little credence was given to the accused's explanations.

Andrew was not a juror probably because he had been in town too short a time. (He was made one in 1677, however.) Nathaniel Willett, who had been charged to investigate Caspar Varlett's infringement on town property with his barn, was on his jury. Also, John Cowles of Farmington was a juror and he was a neigbor of Mary Barnes. How could they be impartial?

The magistrate in some of the trials was Samuel Wyllys whose mansion and estate was squarely in between of the homelots of Cole, Greensmith, Varlett and Whiting, the contestants. The day of prayer and fasting on Ann Cole's behalf was held in his house. As a magistrate he must have been intimately familiar with the events alleged to have taken place in his area.

The Wyllys estate on Wyllys hill was one of the larger sections awarded to those of high rank. The mansion took two years to build and contained 14 rooms. The estate was over 7 acres and contained barns and out buildings as well as orchards, and apple trees imported from Normandy. In the front of the mansion was a majestic oak, later to become the "Charter Oak."

The time of the greatest trial excitement came at the end of 1662 and the beginning of 1663 when Nathaniel and Rebecca were indicted on Dec 30th and on January 6th when Mary Barnes and Elizabeth Seager were indicted. Also, that was the day James Wakely's estate was sequestered. Two days later the Greensmith trial started. It lasted until the 20th and the Greensmiths were hung on January 25th.

The prisoners were held in the "House of Correction" built in 1640 and measuring 24 feet long and about 18 feet wide with a cellar or dungeon. It was located north of the meeting house in the public yard and near where the stocks, pillory and whipping post were located. The accused person was assessed 3 shillings a week for their board and keep at the jail and this amount was deducted from the proceeds of their estate afterwards! Mary Barnes husband was charged twenty one shillings for her three week keep. After conviction, the Greensmiths and Barnes were held in the jailers house for their few remaining days. They had to bring their own beds and clothing as well and pay for their keep.

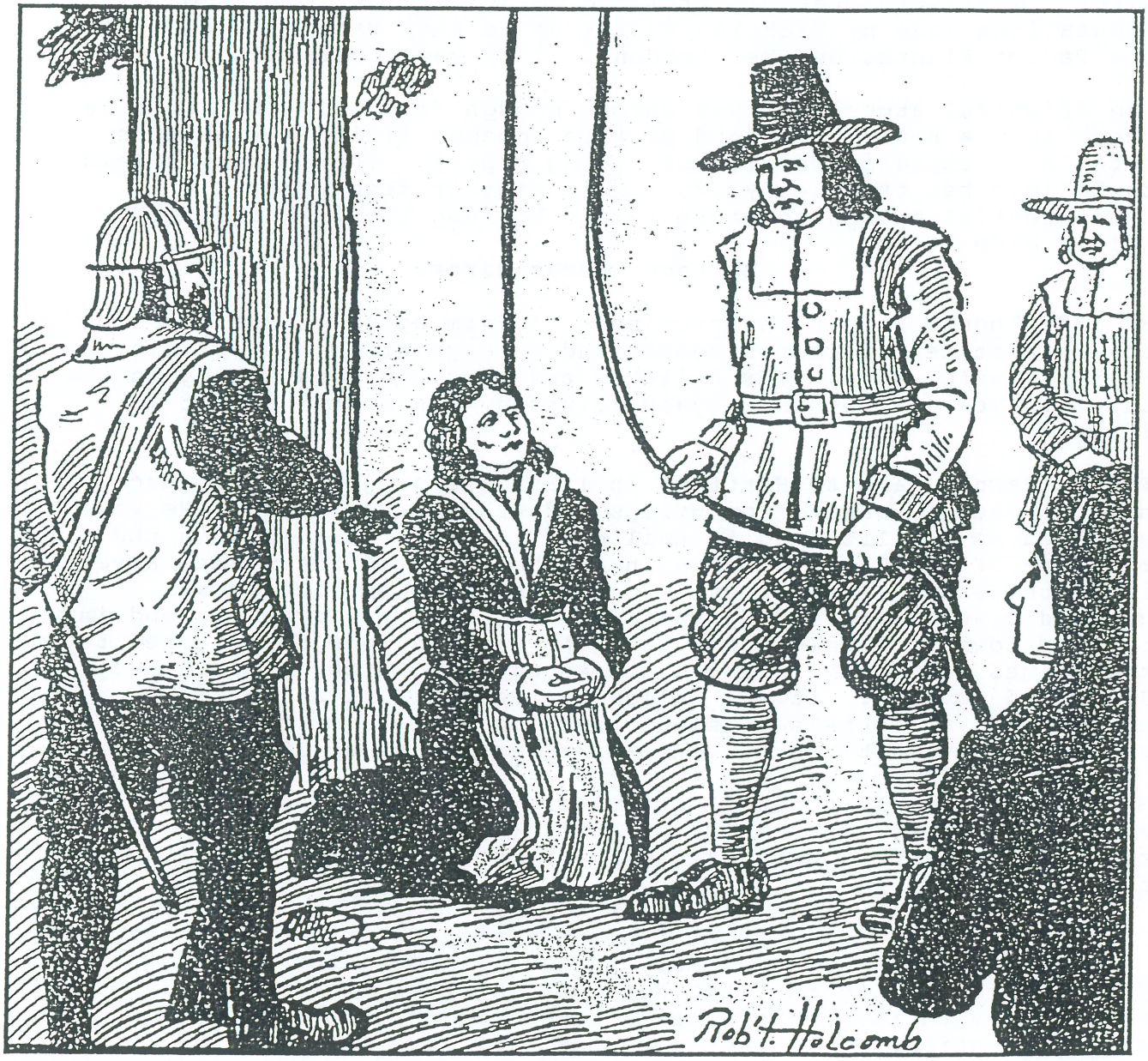
Prisoners from the adjacent towns were brought to the Hartford jail the await their trial because Hartford was then the center of the Colony. The Marshall, Jonathan Gilbert, certainly had trouble seizing his accused before they fled town or else the jail keeper, Daniel Garret, negligently allowed friends of the accused to spirit them out of the jail and out of town. Rhode Island, founded by refugees from Massachusetts Bay Colony's rigidity, accepted them without question.

Hannah probably waited expectantly for Andrew to return home from the Meetinghouse each day to tell her of the day's happenings. She would be shocked at what Rebecca had said about the band of witches and she would compare this story with the one Ann Cole told about another band of witches. Wasn't Rebecca elaborating on Ann's tale, she would wonder, and question Andrew for exact details? When Rebecca told about her husbands familiarity with Satan, Hannah would be shocked.

The Hanging

The whole family made their way to the hanging place though it was January weather. Although Joseph was still too small to walk, he would go since there would be no one left at home to care for him. The hanging was a public sensation no one should miss. Furthermore, the youngsters should see it to be aware of the devils ministrations. Criminals were hung at "Gallows Hill" on the rocky hill, now Trinity College. But witches were to be hung at a different place and from a great tree on the road to Simsbury, now Albany Ave.

A HANGING IN !663



Mary Barnes Story Now Revealed

Although the Court record of her indictment was printed no other record of proceedings against her has been found. Yet she was hung along with the Greensmiths so she must have been swept up in the Panic somehow. Recent research has given a clue. She was from nearby Farmington town and not in the Hartford excitement, yet two men in authority, Rev. Samuel Hooker of the Farmington Church and Samuel Wyllys magistrate in Hartford saw her as a witch. They were probably prompted to act against her from accusations made by Nicholas Bayley as he knew Mary previously in the Pequot Plantation (New London). They had squabbled.

The frightful atmosphere was strong enough to enable the Court to reach into a nearby town and pick on someone living a righteous life in a respected family but having a past. The Court was lead to believe her troubles years ago in another town were consequential enough to cause her to be hung then. Hooker and Wyllys made it so.

Husband Thomas Barnes

By 1662 Thomas Barnes was prominent in Farmington with a house on the main street, a Church member and a sergeant in the militia. He had a wife, Mary, four children and they had been living in the town six years after once again returning there from Pequot in 1657.

Thomas Barnes came to Hartford in 1639 as a single man who made himself useful working for Wyllys and other proprietors. He was selected as a militiaman to sail down the river and join in the massacre of the Pequot Indians near the mouth of the Thames River in southeastern Connecticut. For three weeks service he was granted 6 acres of land in Hartford. He also was granted land in the new town of Farmington. With the Pequots gone he returned to the Thames area to help build a town on land which John Winthrop Jr. would develop. It was called the Pequot Plantation. In the earliest days of the settlement there he met and married Mary whose family isn't known. This marriage was about 1643.

Mary was obliquely accused of adultery in 1649 in the tail end of a Hartford Court order which established the Plantation. It requested a warrant against one Phaext for adultery. Then it went on:

> "As also a like warrant shal bee directed to the Constable there for the aprehending and bringing vpp to the next perticular Courte, Mary Barnes of theire towne."

The order suggested that the Hartford Governor "acquaint Mr. Wenthrope with it." There is no record as to what happened to this accusation. It is possible that Mary came to trial in Hartford and was cleared without any record left. This would make her known in Hartford as a person with a clouded character.

The next year, 1650, the couple moved to Farmington to take up their land there and the first child, Sarah, was born. Thomas joined the Church (Mary may have joined also but the records are poor). He became a sergeant in the Train Band. Joseph and Benjamin were born. Suddenly, it appears, Thomas took a ¶25 mortgage on all his land and the family moved back to the Pequot Plantation in 1653. Thomas had land there from their first days.

Returned to Pequot Plantation

Their new neighbors were Nicholas Bayley and his wife and the later was a loudmouth troublemaker. She was suspected of witchcraft but never brought to trial as a witch. Instead the Court tried to get them to leave town many times. Both Thomas and Mary Barnes were included in Goodwife Bayleys's slanders and squabbles. Hooker and Wyllys interviewed the Bayleys to persuade them to comply with the Court's orders. In these interviews Mary Barnes probably came off in an unsavory light giving the two men cause for suspicion that Mary was suspect. After all mere association with one accused of witchcraft brought great suspicion on oneself. Thomas apparently had immunity.

In 1662, the indictment against Mary Barnes was the standard claptrap of not having the fear of God before her eye, had familiarity with the Devil and acted in a preternatural way beyond the ordinary course of Nature. Nothing specific. She pleaded not guilty and there was a jury trial. The Jury found her guilty of the indictment. The jury was composed of Gregory Wilerton, Nathanial Willett, Robert Webster of Hartford; Edward Griswold, Walter Fyler, Samuel Marshall of Windsor; Samuel Boreman, Samuel Hale of Wethersfield; John Gilbert, John Cowles and William Wadsworth of Farmington and John Olmstead of Norwalk. (Nathanial Willett was the grandfather of Elizabeth Kelly the young girl whose death initiated the Panic). The magistrates were Sammuel Wyllys, Capt. John Talcott, Lt. John Allyn, Treat, Woolcot and Daniel Clark, Sec. Mary was hung on Jan. 25 with the Greensmiths.

Thomas probably dared not speak up lest he be accused. Promptly in March he married Mary Andrews, the daughter of Constable John Andrews and since there was a twenty year difference in their ages a pre-nuptial agreement was drawn up. They had two children.

Conjecture

Possibly Nicholas Bayley accused Mary Barnes of witchcraft to even the score for their difficulties in Pequot. Wyllys and Hooker then welcomed the accusation being carried away themselves by the hysteria. Rev. Hooker had assumed the pulpit in the Farmington Church just recently in 1661 and may have been motivated to rid the town of an unsavory person, especially one who lived on a lot adjacent to his. Church rolls aren't clear but it is possible that Mary had been admitted as a member during Rev. Newton's ministry and Hooker took offense at that as well.

1448 B

Sanfords and Bentons
Mary Sanford hung and husband Andrew fled to Milford.

Milford? Andrew fled to Milford because his older brother Thomas lived there! The historians dismiss the Sanford tragedy quickly because there was no actual record that Mary was hung and there no details of their supposed transgression. His subsequent life as a Milford inhabitant is clear as he married again and had children and was made a town official. In order to marry again, Mary his first wife, had to have been recorded as dead, supposedly hung.

Andrew Benton and Hannah would have been acquainted with Thomas Sanford as he was a early settler in Milford on Lot #21 near the main part of the settlement. Likewise, Hannah would have been acquainted with Mary and Andrew Sanford because they were early settlers in Hartford as she was.

If brother Thomas, in Milford, heard about Andrew's indictment would he appeal to Andrew Benton to intervene? As a recent Milford neighbor, Andrew would easily come to his mind as the word of his brother's trouble reached him. What could Andrew Benton do anyway? He was a newcomer with no connections with powerful people at that time. Furthermore, in witchcraft's wild sensationalism, keeping quiet would be the safest course. Did Andrew even visit him in jail prior to the trial? Robert Sanford, Andrew Sanford's brother, his companion when they both came to Hartford, would have been in a position to have helped and maybe took care of the two teenage children, Andrew Jr. age 19 and Mary, age 16.

Andrew Sanford's Court troubles

Andrew Sanford was in the Particular Court three times in the years preceding the Panic. In the first, in 1654 eight years earlier, he was a plaintiff against William Ayres for slander. Ayres was accused when Elizabeth Kelley died and apparently was a nuisance even earlier. In 1658, Andrew was a plaintiff in an action for defamation "in a high degree" against William Edwards, the prosecutor. The next year he was a defendant when his apprentice claimed he didn't receive all the training a Covenant of Indenture required and wasn't taught two trades. Andrew was a "pump maker" and not a husbandman.

These Court actions lend suspicion that he was not a inhabitant in the best repute, on the other hand, he was made a Freeman in 1657 and a chimney viewer in 1662, the very year he was accused.

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Witchcraft accusations

The Particular Court records merely repeat the standard "not hauing the feare of God before thyne eyes thou hast enterteined familiarity with Satan, the great enemy of God...." Carleton Sanford's book states that they were indicted for witchcraft or for holding public meetings other than those prescribed by the Elders or for dealings with Satan. In Andrew's case the jury could not agree. Some thought guilty, some thought strongly suspect. He was released. Mary, on the other hand was found guilty on June 13, 1662.

Andrew Sanford's family

An Ezeckiel Sanford in Stanstead, Essex married a sister of Andrew Warner and was the father of Andrew and Robert Sanford. Andrew Sanford was named after him and he and his brother, Robert, followed Warner to Hartford. None of the wive's names are known, unfortunately.

Brothers Andrew and Robert came to Hartford after Andrew Warner had become a first settler. They may have arrived about 1638. Andrew Warner first came to Newtown, Mass. in 1632. He then came to Hartford with the Hooker group and was a church member. The brothers were not recorded so.

However, Thomas Sanford, the eldest son of Ezeckiel, came from England to Dorchester, Mass. Rev. Prudden came from Hertfordshire with 15 families to Dedham, Mass. Thomas Sanford, evidently knew some of the Hertfordshire people, since it was not far from Stanstead, or he knew of Rev. Prudden. So he and his family joined them and sailed to New Haven to eventually found Milford and meet Andrew Benton. He died in 1681.

Now the three Sanford brothers found themselves in different colonies after taking diverse routes; Thomas, with Prudden's congregation and the other two following uncle Andrew who was with Hooker's group. They were all from Stanstead originally, but their diverse routes stemmed from having settled in different towns in the Bay Colony.

(Thomas Sanford's descendent was Jonah sanford a first settler of Hopkinton, N.Y. and possibly known to Warham Benton. His story is in Warham's chapter.)

Andrew and Robert Sanford had lots side by side on Burr street on Northside. Andrew Warner's lot was on the Southside next to Nathaniel Ward's and across from the Wyllys estate. He and Ward left for Hadley in 1659 with the first withdrawers so was in no position to aid Andrew when he and Mary were accused.

One report has Andrew Sanford fleeing to Milford as late as 1667! We would have to believe he remained in Hartford long after being accused and lived among those who had wished him evil. This seems unlikely. Although he was not a church member in Hartford, he joined the Milford Church in 1671 with his second wife, Sarah Gibbard. They had ten children. Andrew died in 1684 at age 67.

Sources: "Sanford Family" Carleton E. Sanford, Potsdam, N. Y. 1911.
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"The New Haven Colony", Isabel MacBeath Calder, Yale U. Press, 1934.
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"One of the Warner Family" Andrew F. Warner, 1892



A community tests a woman by dunking her in a river. Women who floated were believed to be witches while those who sank proved their innocence. *Witches apprehended, examined and executed, for notable villanies by them committed both by land and water: With a strange and most true trial how to know whether a woman be a witch or not.* (London: Printed by William Stansby for Edward Marchant, 1613.)

A Descendant's Duty

147

THE HARTFORD COURANT 6★ SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 20

Mary Sanford Was Hanged As A Witch, And Her Granddaughter (8 Generations Removed) Wants Her Exonerated

For the last few weeks, Debra Avery's dining room home has become the unofficial center for exonerating the women of Connecticut executed as witches.

Her 13-year-old daughter, Addie, pores over documents and occasionally corrects her mother on certain dates and names. Nearby is a short pile of books with such titles as "Damned Women" and "Entertaining Satan." Their e-mail and fax machines have been buzzing with correspondence from other descendants of those accused of witchcraft in the 17th century. For the past year Debra and Addie have, with increasing intensity, taken on a project to clear the name of their ancestor, Mary Sanford — one of four Hartford women accused of witchcraft and executed by hanging in 1662.

But this was more than 350 years ago, people tell her, and most people already take it for granted that these women were subjected to injustice. Why go to all this effort for an official apology?

Avery always knew that Mary was in her family tree somewhere. She just didn't realize that she was a direct descendant — she's Avery's great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother ("That's eight 'greats' for me, and nine for Addie," Avery says). It was then that Avery felt an urge to right a wrong.

"Mary Sanford is our grandmother — it doesn't matter if she's eight generations back," she says.

"We're trying to fix a mistake," Addie chimes in.



Like investigators at the outset of a case, they've considered a number of motives for why someone would charge her ancestor with "familiarity of Satan." Among other suspicious behavior, Sanford's accusers noted that she had partaken in "a bottle of sack" (liquor) on the Hartford town green. Avery guesses that perhaps such behavior ruffled the stodgy community.

Chimney rage is another possibility. Mary's husband, Andrew Sanford, held the post of "chimney viewer" — one who makes sure everyone's chimneys are clean and in good condition. One could have made plenty of enemies with such a job.

After Rebecca Greensmith (who would also be hanged) confessed to witchcraft and implicated Mary Sanford, the indictment against the Averys' ancestor listed her crimes as "not haueing the feare of God before thyne eyes" and for "knowing of secrets in a preternaturall way beyond the ordinary course of nature."

Sanford's husband was also accused but eventually acquitted. That should be expected. Walter Woodward, the state historian, says women in Connecticut were four times more likely to be accused of witchcraft than men.

This only adds fuel to the Averys' ire. Addie, who is home-schooled, has made the issue of why women were singled out the subject of a research paper.

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On A Hunt To Clear A Witch's Name



A DIRECT DESCENDANT of accused witch Mary Sanford, Debra Avery of Washington, Conn., is collecting data that she hopes will convince the state of Connecticut to apologize for hanging Sanford 1662.

Originally they were going to wait to kick their exoneration efforts into high gear. But when the Wall Street Journal ran an article on their efforts last month, they started getting calls from other folks interested in clearing the names of the 11 Connecticut residents executed for witchcraft. Avery was interviewed on BBC radio recently. They figured the publicity boost can only help their case.

Woodward is glad the Averys have taken on such a project. He doesn't agree that Sanford and the other women were singled out simply for failing to conform. It's a popular view, he says, but he believes the accusations were born out of genuine fear.

"We want to make witchcraft cases very simple and absolutely crystal clear cases of injustice," he says. "It's just not that simple."

From contemporary perspectives, he says, it's an obvious injustice. But pardoning the accused women, he says, hits "a very gray area" that approaches what historians call "presentism" — interpreting past events through contemporary attitudes.

"Given their worldview — that magic was extremely dangerous and extremely powerful and that there were people who were in league with the devil to use magic against them — given that perspective, you can at least understand why witchcraft was a much more complicated affair."

BY WILLIAM WEIR | COURANT STAFF WRITER

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I am Ann Cole. Welcome to South Green.

-In years past I lived nearby when I fancied I beheld a BAND OF WITCHES dancing here on the grass. My neighbor, **Rebecca Greensmith,** who I accused of being a witch, later confessed she also saw another BAND OF WITCHES making merry at night under a tree here and drinking a bottle of sack. She was hung after she made a terrible confession. The witches in my band cried out to me to give my soul to **Satan** as they had done.
-In the Church and in other places I was so tormented I screamed and kicked the floor and beat it with my fists. I cried out to all that would listen that they would afflict my body. I had lost all hope I would ever be espoused. In my despair I feared I might be shunned and afterwards could I experience my Faith and be taken into the Church?
-The ministers wrote down all these things I cried out and brought them to the Magistrates They jailed **Rebecca, Judith Varlet and Elizabeth Seager.** Two had trials. Elizabeth railed at the magistrates that the charges against her were HODGE PODGE. She even quoted from the book of Acts in the Bible to say they should not try to exorcist her until they had first exorcist themselves She even tried to beg favor of the **Hosmers** who lived here on our Green when she sent them a MESS OF PARSNIPS. Thomas refused them out of fear.
-**Judith,** the DUTCH girl I knew lived near the LITTLE RIVER just beyond the GREEN. She was one of the BAND OF WITCHES I was sure and I called out many times in my thrashings she was after my soul too. But my words somehow sounded DUTCH as I had worked beside her many times in the orchard next to her house. But my words did help her to become a wife anyway She left and married Gov. Steyvesant's nephew in New Amsterdam. A letter from the Governor got her released from our jail.
-Good for her I say, but no man sought me out in those days as I was bewitched. Later, years after the Greensmiths were hung and Seager excused, I did marry **Andrew Benton** and go to live in that house the Greensmiths had here on the Green. He bought it from the town after they were done away with. I raised four children there and died at a ripe old age.

Written by Byron S Benton, Picture from "The Witch of Blackbird Pond"

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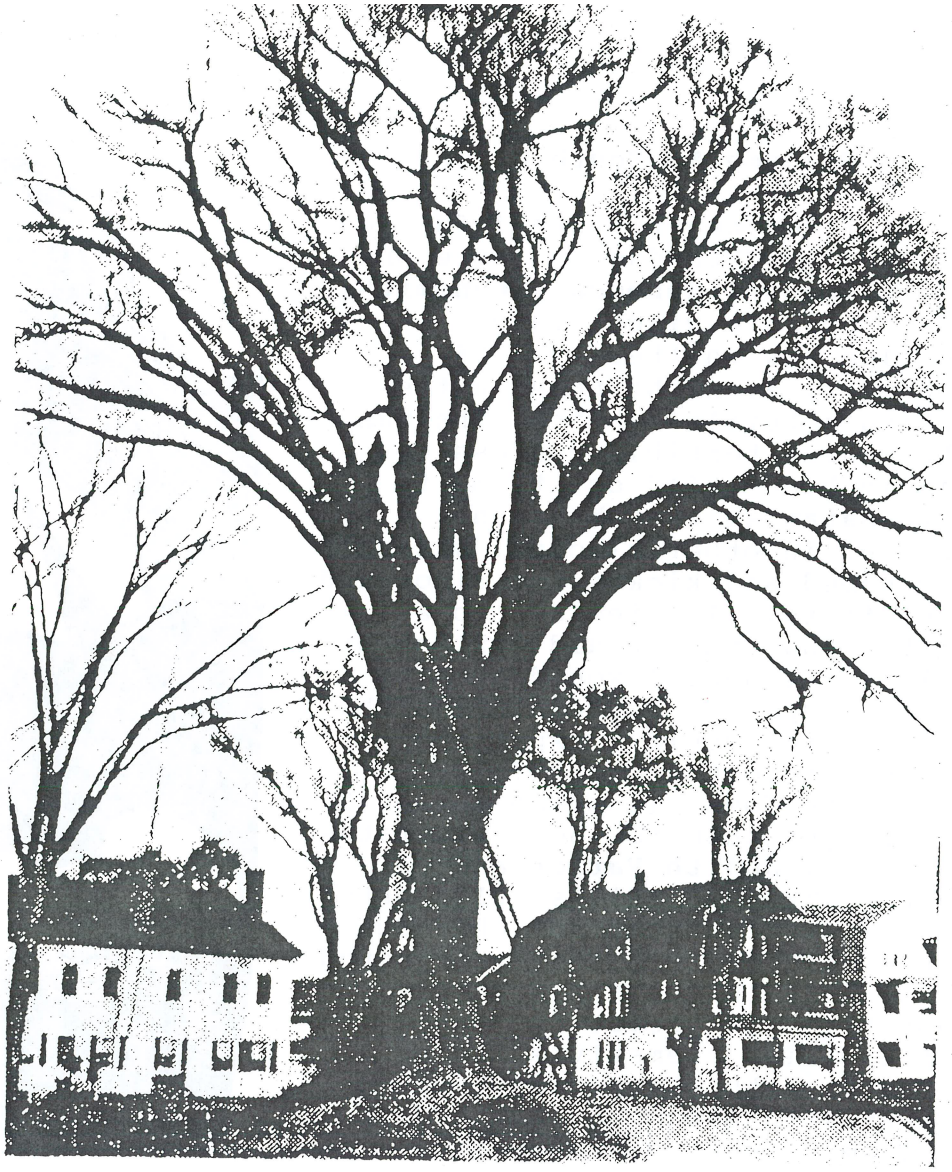

*Witch Elm, Hartford.

The Witch Elm stood on Albany Avenue between Garden and Irving Streets until 1930, when it was cut down. It is said to have marked the scene of the last hanging for witchcraft in Connecticut and is mentioned in a deed of March 11, 1711, when John Read sold a tract of seven acres to John Alcott.



THE SAMUEL WYLLYS MANSION

Here, during a day of prayer for her soul, Ann Cole had another hysterical attack accompanied by outbursts in a "Dutch tone."

It was the largest dwelling in Hartford with fourteen rooms and took two years to build. The estate was on a hill with a view of the River and covered seven acres. Underneath the enormous Oak the local Indians held their councils in years before the Puritans arrived and some Indians successfully persuaded Wyllys to spare the tree when the land was cleared. It became the Charter Oak.

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Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 1989

SAMUEL BENTON
(Senior)

Born in Milford, August 15, 1658, prior to the family's coming to Hartford. He must have made the trip to Hartford when he was about 5 years old. If they came overland he could not have walked very much, Maybe he rode in an ox cart. His brother and sisters probably walked. He may have lived in the Stocking household at first with Grandfather George Stocking and his daughters, Lydia and Sarah. Agnes Shotwell, his step-grandmother, married George and joined the household at some point. Samuel's siblings, Andrew, Mary, and Hannah lived there also along with two babies, Joseph and Dorothy. The Stocking house must have been very crowded.

After his father purchased the Greensmith house, across the road from the Cole house, Samuel grew up there along with his brothers and sisters. His mother died when he was about twelve years old. His father married Ann Cole a few years later when Samuel was about fourteen and then his step brother, Ebenezer, stepsisters, Lydia and Hannah were born and came into the family as youngsters. Andrew, his brother, left his home to marry when Samuel was 18. Andrew was given land by his father as a wedding present and he built his house on it.

Joining Sarah Chatterton With Samuel Benton

An eighteen year old girl stood to be baptized in the newly formed Second Church on September 7, 1679. One man was also baptized on the same day. Church records state "Sarah Chatterton baptized and received in full communion 7ber 28, 1679". Unremarkable, except she is from New Haven, miles away, with no family connection or other identification known in Hartford. Why she was there and how she met Samuel is an enigma.

Sarah might have been "boarded out" with friends or relatives in Hartford, hard although it is to imagine a young girl being sent so far away to be brought up in a strange family. Boarding out was a common practice for young girls. It gave them better training than their mother might provide because the atmosphere wasn't charged the young girl's natural rebelliousness. Who did the Chatterton's know in Hartford with whom they would trust their daughter? How else to explain her presence in Hartford and her presence is a key to the dilemma? A search for Second Church families with similar New Haven names or connections showed nothing. A wider search of families in both towns was too daunting. Another explanation is needed.

THE FAMILIES AS OF 1679

WILLIAM CHATTERTON AGE 44
MARY CLARK age 34

Sarah age 18
Mercy age 15
John age 11
Samuel age 8
Mary age 6
Joseph age 3
Sussannna age 1

ANDREW BENTON AGE 59
(HANNAH STOCKING d1670)

(Hannah m abt 1672. d abt1678)
Andrew, Jr. age 26 married
Mary age 23
Samuel age 21
Joseph age 19 married
Dorothy age 24 married

ANNE COLE mother d1686

Ebenezer age 6
Lydia age 4
Hannah age 1
(John born May 30 1680)

GEORGE STOCKING AGE 97
(ANNA _____ d 1660 ?)

Samuel age 59
(Hannah d 1670)
Lydia age 52
Sarah age 50

AGNES died?

THE UNRELATED CLARKS

James came with Davenport - lot on New Haven map. Sarah's grandfather George, Deacon, came with Davenport - lot next to Andrew's in Milford
George, Junior, lot 43 in Milford.
A John came with Davenport to New Haven.
A John came to Hartford in 1637, rights to 22 acres land in 1639

In the 1670's in question there were no Clark families in 2nd Church.

We might idealize the Bentons in Milford as friends with the Chattertons in New Haven; their towns were mother and sister. A George Clark had the adjoining lot to Andrew in Milford, for instance. But even had it been so, could they have been close enough friends after 20 years of separation to different towns to arrange for a marriage or a boarding out? With Hannah gone, in addition? Not reasonable.

Next, picturing Samuel present in New Haven often enough to become acquainted with Sarah is not reasonable either because New Haven is too far away and too different. Anyway, any chance meeting with a girl in Puritan times was strictly forbidden. The father must approve first.

The fact that Sarah was baptized in Second Church indicates that she was living in Hartford. Rev John Whiting, the first minister of the newly formed Second Church, felt the need to baptize her in order to accept her in full communion and it was essential she become a member if she were to marry Samuel. Undoubtedly she had been baptized in New Haven but the towns were totally separate.

At that time marriages were performed by civil magistrates and not performed in church so records were not kept or were lost. Researchers claim that the marriage took place in 1679 thinking that must be the year since the birth of their first child took place in 1680, the next year. As the Church baptism identifies her as a single girl and in September, the marriage must have occurred in either October, November or December of 1679.

Samuel Jr's. Date of Birth?

Two dates are presented by researchers, creating a embarrassing dilemma - either August 8, 1680 or January 28, 1680. The August date follows nicely after a September baptism and an immediate marriage. Many, however, cite January. This inopportune time of birth might come about in the following way.

In the William Chatterton family, Sarah was the oldest, the next youngest was Mercy, age 15 at this time. Then there was John, age 11, Samuel age 8, Mary age 6 and Sussanna age 1. How was the family able to spare the loss of Sarah's real help? Mercy would have too much work to do. Sarah in Hartford was a shock.

Sarah Asserts Herself

It could be that Sarah herself decided to leave her family and make a new life by boarding herself out in Hartford! Perhaps Sarah was unhappy with her lot as the oldest daughter and she wanted a new life in a fanciful place of possibilities as Hartford may have seemed to her. Milford was too close with too many snooping families. There had been no successful suitors. She may have feared father Chatterton had few resources for her dowry.

Hartford beckoned. She must have had a girl friend who knew the kinds of families in Hartford who would be likely to welcome her. Once settled, the gracious host would send word back to the Chattertons that Sarah was safe and well in a Puritan household. No need to bother the Magistrates. A bold step such as this was not at all characteristic of Puritan girls but it made an a intriguing possibility for our great grandmother.

In Hartford

Probably she would not have boarded out in the Andrew Benton household because they would have been too busy to bother with a strange girl. Wife Ann Cole Benton had just become pregnant and her children were Ebenezer age 8, Lydia age 4, Hannah age 1. How many of Andrew's children from his first wife were still in the household? Maybe Dorothy age 16, Mary age 24 or Samuel age 21?

Grandfather George Stocking's household, on the other hand, might have been a possibility because Agnes, his second wife, died earlier. The daughters had left and George was age 97. His grandson, John, was living there to take care of him as evidenced by the Special Court's Judgement which allowed John to have the remainder of George's estate. John appears to have been a bachelor. Samuel Benton may have lived there and helped with the farming. A woman's presence may have been needed so either Dorothy or Mary may have helped out. This household might possibly have been a sanctuary for a strange girl. It was already disjointed.

Samuel's Dubious Prospects

Was Samuel an attractive suitor? Apparently he had been unsuccessful up to age 21 since he was living with his family; owning only a little land. His grandfather, George, had taken pity on him earlier and granted him four acres "Lyeing near the wolf pound .." Andrew had waited until brother Andrew Jr. was married before he gave him any land. Brother Joseph had not received any land for a wedding present. So Samuel could not expect any land from his father when prospecting for a spouse. Samuel's prospects were glum until Sarah appeared. Their mutual attraction was predestined!

Sarah's relationship with Samuel must have been romantic; kept out of the way of adults until love blossomed. The couple then presented the host family with their problems.

Conclusions

Sarah's obliging host family must have been cruelly taken aback when they discovered that lack of attention of Sarah gave them the problem of arranging for Church membership, an early marriage and a impending birth. Sarah had taken her fate in her own hands but now she was virtually helpless as her life became controlled by strangers.

After the wedding where would the expecting couple live? Probably with the Andrew Bentons or with George Stocking.

Later, in December 1682, "through the courtesy of the town" the magistrates took pity on Samuel and granted him "a small piece of land to set a house upon, near Jonathon Webster's house." The couple would then have a house of their own and would not have to live any longer amongst others. Sarah, their second child, was not born until 1685.

Land given by the "courtesy of the town" was apparently granted new families who would have had little opportunity to make a home otherwise as it helped increase the cultivated area. A home lot was usually two acres.

Unforgiving Samuel

In Samuel's will, made 42 years after his 16 year old eldest daughter Sarah made a runaway match, he "cut her off with a shilling." Showing no tolerance for her in view of his own probable seduction of her mother, he willed her 20 shillings of worthless "old tenor money" to be sent her within three months! His wife must have agreed, finally regretting her own runaway years ago.

Samuel Baptized?

While Sarah had become a baptized member of the Church in full communion, what of Samuel himself? No baptismal record exists as his preacher Peter Prudden of Milford died before Samuel was born. Samuel might have been baptized by a local person who would not have made a record. While his children were baptized and raised in the Second Church, Samuel was not admitted until he was 58 years old. His brother Andrew was not admitted until he was 41 years old and probably only because a new preacher, the Rev Thomas Buckingham, came to the Church. His siblings - Joseph was admitted at age 8, Lydia at age 22.

Samuel Prospers

Samuel's father died in July, 1683. Samuel shortly received four acres from Andrew's original 20 acre purchase of the Greensmith's farm. (Andrew, Jr. had received four acres of it as a wedding present). The sixteen acres remaining was divided between Samuel, Andrew, Jr. Joseph and Ebenezer giving Andrew Jr. eight acres. The four acre plots were valued at 28 pounds each.

Samuel gradually acquired more land. He bought Joseph's four acres in 1701, Andrew Jr., died in 1704 and Samuel was the administrator of his estate and became the guardian of his two children, John and Mary. Samuel would have managed their land in the interim. This land was bought by Samuel Jr. in 1708. In 1709 he bought four acres next to the Joseph Benton lot from Nathaniel Cole. In 1720 he acquired the four acres given to Ebenezer by Andrew's will. Samuel had been appointed the guardian of Ebenezer in 1720. Samuel's home lot then consisted of 16 acres and it was willed to Moses, his youngest son, before Samuel died, in return for caring for Samuel and Sarah in their aging years.

Samuel would have had access to the "Ox Pasture," a common grazing and pasture ground for raising his cattle and swine. Crops he may have raised were Indian corn, barley, peas, summer wheat, oats, meslin (a mixture of wheat and rye). Andrew's farm in 1683 had 90 bushels of meslin and rye and 30 bushels of Indian corn worth 18 pounds. The inventory of Samuel's estate is missing.

Samuel's Will

His will was made in April of 1744 at age 86. He died two years later. Apparently Sarah was alive when the will was made as he left one third of his estate to her as was customary.

To Samuel Jr. he left eight acres in the West division. (Probably included George Stocking's gift).
To Caleb he left 40 acres of land in the new town of Harwinton. He had previously given him 120 pounds to purchase a lot in Hartford for himself. Caleb probably sold the Harwinton land and remained in Hartford.
To Daniel he mentioned that he had already given him land in Tolland.
To Jacob he gave the remainder of his land in Harwinton. Jacob settled on this land to become a founder of the town.
To Moses he gave all of his Hartford property and farm equipment (two oxen, two horses, a cart, a plow, a cow and a weavers loom. At age 86 Samuel could not have been an active farmer and these things were being used by Moses to operate the farm. Samuel's cattle probably had been sold previously).
To Sarah he gave 20 shillings "old tenor" within three months after his death.
To Lydia he gave a bed and coverings, a cow and six sheep. She was to have a room in his house as long as she was unmarried.
To Hannah and Abigail he gave the remainder of his household belongings.

Samuel Managed

Surviving, prospering and raising the family took hard work and management to continue our line of descendents who grew and also prospered. Tolland became our Benton's next hometown.

William Chatterton, Sarah's Father

He was born before 1640 in England. It is thought that his father was Michael Chatterton and that his mother was Martha Vinel. They were married in 1639 in England.

He was not an original New Haven settler nor is there any record of his arrival in the Colony. He made an oath of Fidelity in 1657 and his first child, Sarah, was born in July 19, 1661. The seating chart for the Church in 1661 shows a William Chatterton and a "Sister Clark" which might possibly be Mary Clark. His seating in the Church indicates he must have had sufficient status to have been accepted as a suitor and husband of a Clark family daughter. He was granted land in 1670. His will was made in 1699 and did not mention wife, Mary, only mentioned John, Sarah, Mary Sammuel, and Susanna. He died in 1709 leaving an estate of 153 pounds. Would he have had enough assets in 1679 for a dowry for daughter Sarah in the event there was an arranged marriage with Samuel Benton?

Daughter Mercy, 3 years younger than Sarah, managed to marry a Wethersfield man, John Francis, in January 1683. That seems too long after the time of Sarah's marriage to envisage some possible connection.

Revealing some family connections which took place much later in 1721. Samuel Benton and Sarah, Mercy Francis, widow and Joshua Hotchkis and Susanna granted three acres of land in New Haven to John Hotchkis in thanks for his taking care of Mary Chatterton for 4 years. Sarah's sister Susanna had married Joshua Hotchkis. Also. sister Mary had married John Hotchkis.

Michael Chatterton, thought to have been the father of William, was born about in 1614 in England. His father was Thomas Chatterton born in 1585 in Portsmouth, England. According to Donald Lines Jacobus, Michael came to Piscataqua near Portsmouth, New Hampshire having been sent over by the Laconia Company of London in an expedition of "merchant adventurers beyond the seas" headed by Sir Ferdinando Gorges. He was one of the signers of the "Grant of the Glebe" in 1640.
Michael appeared in New Haven in 1645 as a creditor and in 1647 as a witness. He owned property in 1652. No further records have been found for Michael and Martha.

SARAH CHATTERTON WIFE OF SAMUEL BENTON

Descended from 14th Century Normans and The Rev. John Davenport's London Parishioners

Sarah was the daughter of William Chatterton and Mary Clark. Little is recorded of her father but much is available about her mother's family. The chart shows her lineage back to the 1300's in Kent, England. Ten of her ancestors have been indentified as:

Baron Ferrers, born 1332
Baroness D'Ufford Ferrers, born abt 1330
Baron Clifford, born 1305
Isabel Berkley, born abt 1307
Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, born 1313
Countess Mortimer of Warwickk, born 1309/1310
Baldwin De Freville, born 1292
Elizabeth De Montfort, born abt 1314
John Botetourt, born abt 1322
Joan Gernon, born abt 1328.

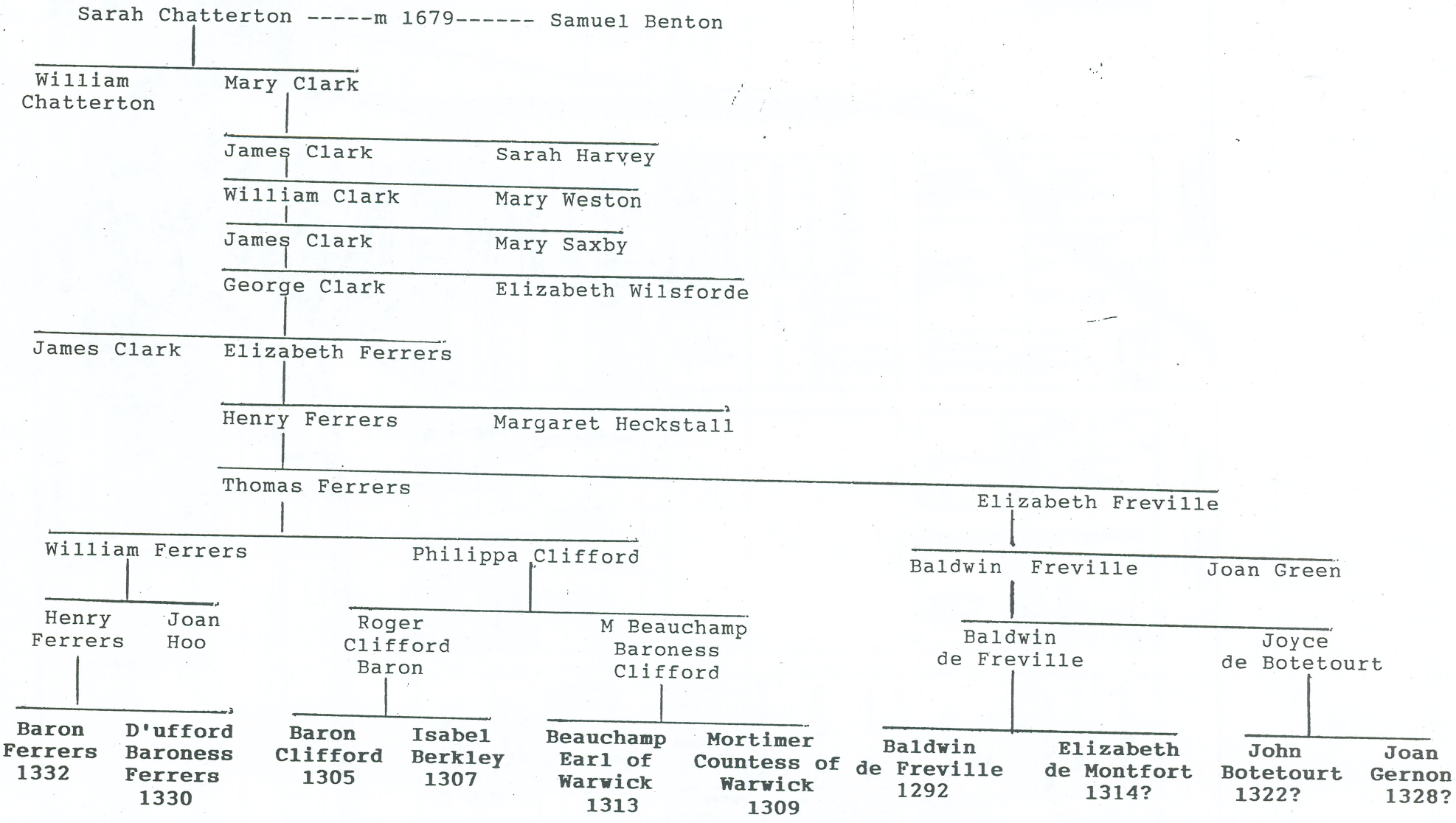
William Clark lived in London and James Clark, his son, was born there in 1602. James was a member of the parish of St. Stephens, Coleman Street, which was John Davenport's church. When a group was organized to come to America, James joined and was a proprietor of New Haven when it was formed in 1639. His home lot is shown on the map.

Mary Clark's mother is thought to be Sarah Harvey born in England in 1622 about which little is known. The date of her marriage to James Clark is unclear. Where they married in England before the trip to America which was in 1637? Their first child, James, Jr., was born in 1640 in New Haven after the colony was organized in 1638. The Davenport group did stay in the Massachusetts Bay Colony for a short period before coming to New Haven so we must wonder why their first child wasn't born until 1640 and after reaching New Haven. Mary was born in January of 1645. There were four other children. Sarah Harvey died in 1661 when Mary was 16.

Mary Clark married William Chatterton in 1660 and Sarah Chatterton was their first child, born on July 19, 1661. Sarah's next older sister, Hannah was born in 1663 but did not survive long. There were six other children of the marriage ranging in ages from 13 to one at the time of Sarah's marriage. She would be sorely missed.

The seating chart for the church in 1661 shows a William Chatterton and a "Sister Clark" which might possibly be Mary Clark.

NORMAN ANCESTRY OF SARAH CHATTERTON



Source: LDS Pedigree Charts 06 Mar 1996

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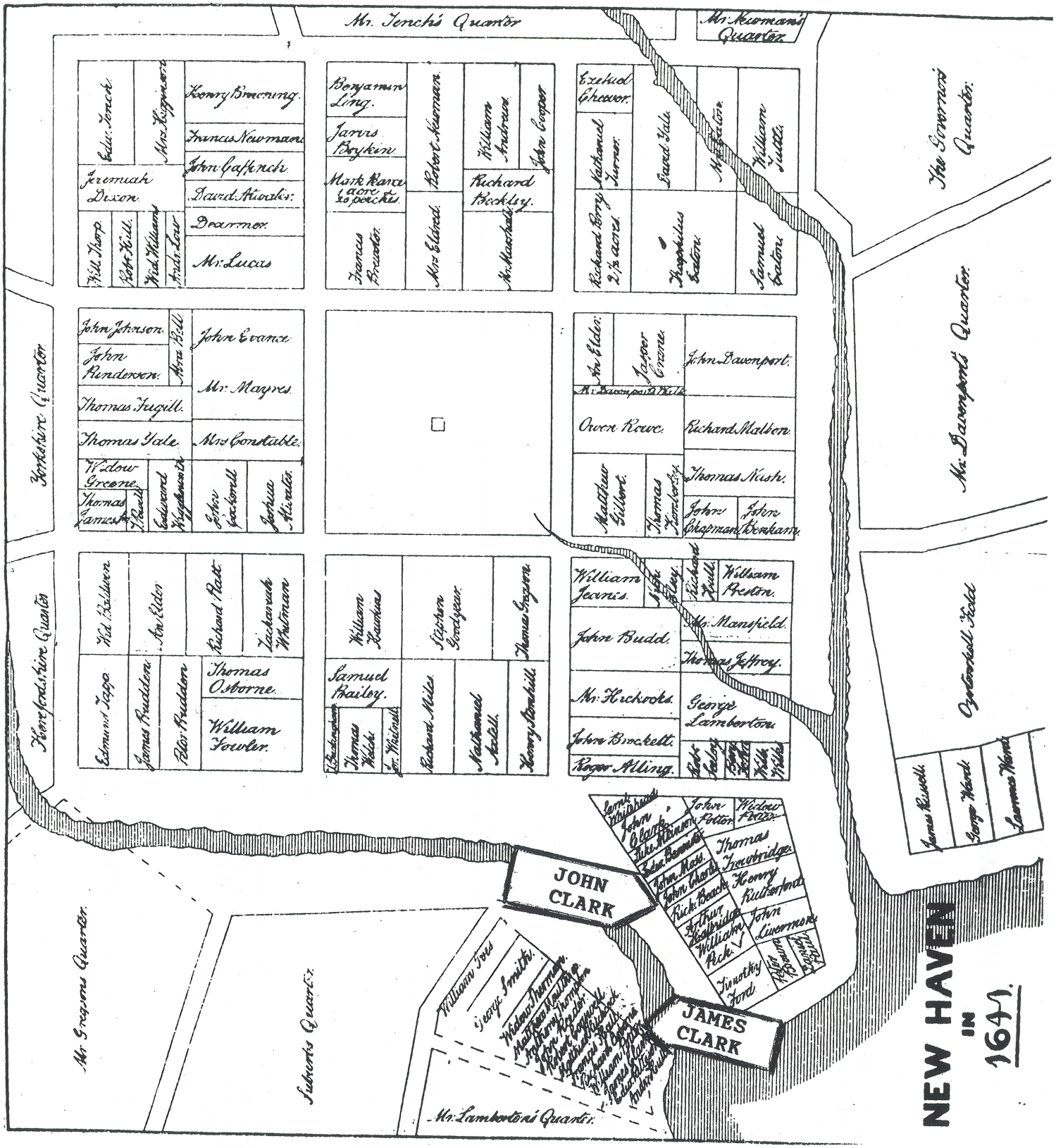
Mr. Tench's Quarter
Mr. Newman's Quarter
The Governors Quarter
Mr. Davenport's Quarter
Yorkshire Quarter
Hertfordshire Quarter
Mr. Gregsons Quarter
Suburbs Quarter
Mr. Lamberton's Quarter
Goldsmith Field
JOHN CLARK
JAMES CLARK
NEW HAVEN IN 1641.

"TO DISPOSE OURSELVES INTO A CAPACITY OF DISTINCT WALKING"

EVENTS FORESHADOWING THE CREATION OF SECOND CHURCH IN HARTFORD, 1670
Andrew and Hannah and her family, and the Coles, Steeles and other families withdraw from the Church to follow Rev. John Whiting

Hannah Stocking's preacher, Rev. Thomas Hooker, died two years before she married Andrew and Rev. Samuel Stone was left alone in the ministry of the Church. He had been the "Teacher" for the Church and Hannah knew him when he accompanied the group on the trek from Newtown. The Teacher instructed the congregation while the Preacher proclaimed the Word. The two have been described as "grave goodly and judicious Hooker" and "rhetorical Mr. Stone." The later's views of church discipline were never advanced during that time to anyone's knowledge. Later they would emerge.

The wedding of Hannah and Andrew would have been performed by a civil magistrate in Hartford but Rev. Stone would have attended the wedding feast and probably have spoken of their marital duties toward one another and to their God. This wedding was probably in 1649. While the Andrew Bentons were making a home for themselves in Milford, until about 1660, in Hartford many meetings were held, new problems erupted in the Church and two new preachers arrived.

In the approximately 11 years before they would come back to Hartford, the Church would become embroiled in a controversy which was based on the question of the authority of the clergy and the powers of the congregation and secondly over the question of baptism. It centered first on Stone's refusal to let a new preacher candidate's appointment be decided by a vote of the congregation. Also, animosity arose between the personalities of Rev. Stone and Elder Goodman.

Stone's stubbornness in the first quarrel came to Hannah and Andrew's attention because it shook all the colonies and directly required their preacher, Rev. Peter Prudden, to travel all the way to Hartford to lend his conciliatory genus to help settle the dispute. But it was beyond his great ability. Upon his return, Hannah would have dwelt on his words to try and grasp the situation in her home Church. Her mother and father and her friends were undoubtedly on one side or the other but how to fathom which at the remote distance. Prudden was quizzed a lot probably and being a compassionate preacher did his best to enlighten her and console her.

In Prudden's Church Hannah and Andrew enjoyed harmony.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PROPOSITIONS

1647 Rev. THomas Hooker died. Stone attended Cambridge Synod and was named minister of the Hartford Church.
1648 Andrew admitted to the Milford Church.
1648 Cambridge Synod ended. Created a basis for common church practices but failed to address problem of baptism.
1649 Andrew and Hannah married in Hartford about this time and moved to Milford.
1650 Hannah admitted to Milford Church.
1650 Stone suggested Boston Synod bring uniformity of baptism. He favored accepting all children.
1653 Disagreement in the Church commenced.
1655 John Whiting (future minister of 2nd church) graduated from Harvard and assisted in Salem Church for two years.
1656 Dissenting minority threated to leave Church.
1656 Conn. Court called Council. Prudden attended.
1656 Parties apparently reconciled.
1657 Stone delegated to Ministerial Assembly in Boston which endorsed the "Half Way Covenant" baptism practice.
1658 Joseph Haynes (future Church minister) graduated from Harvard
1658 Court ruled against forming a separate church.
1660 King Charles II claimed English Throne.
1660 Andrew and Hannah came to Hartford about this time.
1660 Whiting ordained as assistant to Stone.
1660 Goodwin and dissidents withdraw to Hadley, Mass.
1662 Gov. John Winthrop returned from England with Connecticut's first Royal Charter!
1662 Ann Cole accused the Greensmiths of bewitching her.
1662 Mass. Church Synod affirmed the Half Way Covenant.
1663 The Greensmiths hanged in January.
1663 The Rev. Stone died.
1664 Haynes ordained as associate to Whiting.
1664 Pitkin raised questions on church privileges.
1666 Andrew Benton met with Pitkin and Whiting.
1666 Whiting and Haynes argued in Church over baptism.
1667 Reconciliation effort by ministers failed.
1669 Court agreed to division of Church.
1669 Whiting applied to Assembly to form separate church.
1670 Second Church formed in February.
1670 Hannah died shortly thereafter

Sources:

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REV. SAMUEL STONE'S STATUE

Installed in Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground, May 2005 as a gift from his hometown Hertford, England. It is a copy of a statue that stands on that town's green. Hertford honors Stone as the co-founder of Hartford, USA. Stone's co-founder, Rev. Thomas Hooker, is memorialized also by a statue that stands one block North at the Hartford Old State House.

Stone negotiated with the Indians for the purchase of the land for Hooker's group and was responsible for naming the town after his own birthplace. He asserted that Ann Cole must have been bewitched when she uttered Dutch sounds.

The English sculpture, Henry Tebbutt, surely intended the upraised arm to be interpreted as elucidating from the Bible but some in Hartford were inclined to interpret it also as showing the Hadley group the way to get out of town as a result of Stone's divisiveness or perhaps showing the Puritan soldiers the way to go to the Pequot massacre. He was active in the leadership of the expedition to punish the Pequots and gave Captain John Mason explicit directions for the route the Puritan soldiers should take saying he had obtained a divine revelation.





First Controversy

It had its inception after Rev. Stone said:

> "It is a liberty of ye church to declare their apprehensions by vote about ye fitness of a person for office upon his tryall but I look upon it as a perceived truth yet an officer may in some cases lawfully hinder ye church from putting forth at this or get time on act of her liberty."

Stone was referring to his veto of Wigglesworths candidacy for associate minister without the congregation being allowed to vote. Stone viewed congregationalism as a "speaking aristocracy in the face of a silent democracy."

His protagonist was Ruling Elder William Goodwin - "a very reverend and godly man yet he was one who in the heat of argument could so far forget himself as to use some unreverend speech." He stood for the rights of "ye brotherhood."

The congregation of the Church coalesced around these two strong personalities as their argument continued and enveloped the members and other churches of the colonies. Attempts to reconcile their positions failed while councils and Courts met repeatedly.

Meanwhile Rev. Stone was tutoring the son of Governor John Haynes, Joseph Haynes, who was living on the Northside of Hartford and who was fully cognizant of the turmoil going on. As an protege of Stone he would likely have shared his views. He was at the Church frequently and was became an expert witness to Ann Cole's tantrums in the witchcraft trials.

Goodwin and the dissidents removed to Hadley

About 32 men are listed as signing a petition to remove although about 11 later returned or went elsewhere. Of the original 170 heads of households in Hartford as of 1640. few were left by 1662 as death had taken 35 and at least 80 had moved away. Others came, of course, for instance ,Nathaniel Greensmith but they were often not to become church members. When Andrew came from Milford he apparently would have had a large choice of vacant homelots if he had wanted to buy one. He didn't, however, and he either rented one or lived with the Stockings. He purchased the Greensmith's property eventually.

Andrew and Hannah returned to Hartford

Upon their return Rev. Stone was their minister and the Church was divided by the quarrel. They would be sympathetic with George Stocking's views in all probability and would not be in favor of Stone's strong authority over the congregation. Life would be more exciting for them than in Milford because of these other events. They had a new King, Charles II. The English government would try to control the colony and subvert Puritanism. Their Governor Winthrop spent time in England and obtained the first Charter of Connecticut. It was no longer an appendage of Massachusetts. New Haven and Milford were swallowed up into the new Colony. Witchcraft disturbed the town and 3 people were hanged. In Massachusetts another synod met and proclaimed the Half Way Covenant baptism practice, although it didn't apply to Connecticut Churches. Their family continued to grow when Joseph and Dorothy were born about 1660 and 1664.

Upon their arrival John Whiting was named assistant minister to Stone. He was 25 and the son of a prosperous Hartford merchant. He graduated from Harvard 5 years before and had been assistant to a minister in Salem afterwards. He was unknown to either Hannah or Andrew but shortly would be their leader. Whiting was a moderate Congregationalist by some accounts and perhaps was accepted by Stone to mollify the lingering dissenters in the congregation. His father's influence might have helped him. They were "southsiders" also which will be discussed shortly. Stone certainly did not hire Whiting on his own authority in view of the past quarrel so there must have been a congregational vote, but it isn't recorded. Church agruments were put aside momentarily because of all the other events that occupied peoples attention.

The Hartford Witch Panic of 1662-63

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"

Elizabeth Kelly, age 8, was the first one to accuse another of witchcraft when she cried out against Goody Ayres. In June, Andrew and Mary Sanford were accused. In December, Rebecca and Nathaniel Greensmith were indicted on Ann Cole's accusations of betwitching her. In January of 1663 indicments were brought against Elizabeth Seager and Mary Barnes of Farmington. Judith Varleth, a Dutch girl was imprisoned. Henry and Katherine Palmer were accused in June and also James Wakely.

In all there were fourteen indicments against eleven persons and still others were implicated though not brought to trial, Four of the accused were found guilty and executed, five fled the colony, Judith Varleth was freed by intercession of Gov Peter Stuyvessant, her brother in law, and one for which the jury could not decide.

Rebecca Greensmith was imprisoned and interviewed by Whiting, Haynes, Stone and Samuel Hooker of Farmington. Her confessions were the most vivid, dramatic and damaging of any. In her apparent zeal to clear her soul she named many others to their subsequent regret.

Ann Cole, in her outcrys, delivered some words or phrases in what some hearers said was Dutch. Since there was only one Dutch family living in Hartford then, the Varleths, it was concluded the Devil was obviously making her speak that way. It was agreed she had not known the Varleth family so could not have picked up words from them. The panic's story will continue later.

Joseph Haynes enters

The death of Rev. Stone in July, 1663 after the January trials necessitated the selection of another minister and might well have been by Whiting's option. Stone's group, however, would not have tolerated this move so the selection was left to the town to make and Joseph Haynes was named. He had been tutoring under Stone and was the son of Governor John Haynes so his selection was natural. He was a Northsider as well. He was a Harvard graduate in 1658 three years after Whiting received his Master's Degree. Soon the two young ministers took opposite sides and the eligibility of parents for baptism of their children became an issue over The Half Way Covenant. It is described next.

THE HALF WAY COVENANT EXPLAINED

It enabled parents whose church status arose solely from their own baptism to bring their children into the church to be baptised. For this privilege the parents made a pledge of faith and were accepted into partial membership - one without communion privileges.

IDEALLY - The first settlers were a deeply inspired people who had entered into a partnership with God through a conversion experience. They were the "visible saints." Their children were, of course, baptised and would become members by making their own covenant when they were old enough to make a declaration of their religious experience. Later, they would bring their own children to baptism and the process would repeat itself.

HOWEVER - Succeeding generations weren't as pious and many did not make a declaratioon of religious experience because they apparently did not have one. Yet they were still church goers and leading a godly life. What about their children? They could not be baptised under the then prevailing theology.

SOLUTION - The partial membership idea manifested itself and was called the Half Way Covenant. These children could be brought for baptism, but the parent had to make an express acknowledgment on his part of at least an intellectual faith and a desire to submit to all the covenant obligations implied in membership. Yet, though this membership was complete as far as it went, it was not sufficient to admit him to communion nor to vote in church affairs.

PROPONENTS - This membership would protect the purity of the Lord's Supper because parents would not seek communion by pretense to qualify for their children's baptism. Nor would churches be tempted to lower the requirements for admission to full membership in order that the new generation might be kept within the care and discipline of the church. Ministers, by and large, favored this membership because it assured that church membership could remain large.

OPPONENTS - Although this membership limited the Lord's Supper to the regenerated, it gave baptismal privilege to unworthy persons whose inherited covenant membership had been lost by their own failure to come to conversion. Further, extension of church privileges in this manner would, in time, lead to additional erosion of church standards.

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Southsiders vs Northsiders

The way Harford was originally settled and its geography played a part in politics and controversy. In 1635 forerunners of the main Hooker group built rude huts around the meeting house yard and dugouts in "Centinel Hill." The next year Hookers main group arrived and the more prominent took land there and the others took land south of the "Little River." Those living on the homelots in the vicinity of the meeting house naturally felt more important than those on the south of the river who had to cross over to get to church and meetings. Nevertheless, southside inhabitants were prominent and included William Whiting, John's father. Stocking, Cole, Steele and Andrew were southsiders. Stone and Haynes were northsiders.

The number of freemen living on the south side was 65 and on the north side, 50. (Only those men who had pledged an oath of loyalty were "freemen"). The new church when formed would be located on the south side of the River and was often called "South Church."

Second Controversy

In 1666 the two young ministers confronted each other in the Church over the baptism question. From the Walker book:

> "On the June, 1666 Lecture Day, young Mr. Haynes preaching and preparing to administer the rite of baptism to some child or children of parents not communicants. Forbidden to proceed by his senior colleague, Mr Whiting. - The stormy beakup of the meeting. The challenge to debate. The obvious popularity of the innovating measures and young Mr. Haynes who represented them."

John Warham, the elderly minister of the Windsor Church was there to support Whiting, but "he was rudely silenced by declarations that he was out of place."

The "parents not communicants" were said to be presenting adopted children or servants born in their house. Here Haynes was attempting to go beyond the limits of the Half Way Covenant. The Parker book states that Haynes sent three of his party to warn Whiting that on the next Lecture day he would be practicing this way of baptism and that Whiting refused to consent to it. Haynes felt he had a strong group behind him and Whitings group felt Haynes was imposing change without congregational agreement. This attempt to warp the Half Way Covenant was blatant mischief by Haynes. Haynes party might be defined as Presbyterians and Whitings party along with Andrew and his friends defined as Congregationalists.

Whiting and Haynes jointly ordained a minister for the Stratford church one or two years later and put their animosities aside for the occasion.

Andrew met with Whiting and the Anglicans

Whiting records that in November 1666 he asked Andrew, John Cole, James Steele and James Richards to meet with him when William Pitkin asked for admission to the Church on the basis of Pitkin's membership in the Church of England. The meeting took place in the Wyllys mansion on the south side. It is refreshing to see Andrew placed in such a position of importance since he had been in Hartford only 6 years. It tells us who Andrew's friends were.

Second controversy concluded

Whiting next adroitly forestalled the creation of another Connecticut synod in 1667 which might have mandated the Half Way Covenant. He did so by suggesting to the Court that the synod include representatives of the other colonies. Haynes protested this move to the Court but lost and when Whiting transmitted an invitation to the Massachusetts Court they weren't interested.

A Court appointed committee of ministers from other towns then concluded that a church be allowed to divide if its members were irreconcilable. So the Court reversed its earlier prohibition and agreed two churches be allowed. The General Assembly agreed to a petition from Whiting "for a distinct walking in congregational order" and admonished their parent church to "grant their loving consent to their brethren to walke distinct." No record exists that the parent church gave consent. In view of the protracted quarreling in is understandable that the Assembly vote was not unanimous as four Assistants and fourteen Deputies dissented.

Second Church began

In February of 1670 thirty one persons signed a Covenant amongst themselves and with their God for

> "walking together with all brotherly love and mutual watchfullness to the building up one one another in faith and love unto His praise."

Andrew and Hannah agreed to this covenant relationship along with
George and Agnis Stocking (Agnis his second wife),
John Cole and Ann Cole (Ann would be Andrew's second wife),
James and Bethiah Steele (Grandparents of Stephen Steele, future first minister of the Tolland church),
James Richards, (nephew of Lydia Stockings husband, John)
and the others.

The covenant gave the principles by which they would govern themselves and the most significant points emphasized their stance to be independent of any church assembly or synod and to lodge control with the members. These points were the underlying difference with the Haynes members of their parent church. The argument over the Half Way Covenant sprang up because Whitings friends saw it being imposed on them without congregational assent. They strongly insisted they were the sole authority for any change. This feeling of independence still remained strong long after Goodwin's followers had left for Hadley over the same argument.

George Stocking had agreed with Goodwin in the first quarrel but when it came to the point of deciding to leave the church he had helped found with Hooker, he and George Grave were reluctant withdrawers. Andrew and Hannah would have consoled him. His second wife, Agnis (Shotwell) might have been of little help as she was new.

Using the Half Way Covenant

Once as their separate church, the members made their own choice about the Half Way Covenant and adopted it! Immediately, the first child baptized with that practice was Lydia Smith in March. It was by following the congregation's own will!

The children of the church or members not in full communion were thirty six in number and included Hannah Benton, the oldest daughter. The other children are not listed as they were too young. Some of the members not in full communion soon brought their children for baptism. The Benton family used the Half Way Covenant provision as, for instance, Andrew Benton Jr. and his wife were not themselves received into the Church until after Whiting's pastorate yet their children were baptized by Whiting. No adult members of the family were received during Whiting's pastorate yet 11 children were baptized during that time.

How the Church was formed

Another Church in the same town was troublesome. The town provided no land for such a structure so a building was commenced on private land donated by Lieutenant Thomas Bull. Town taxes were to pay only for one minister, of course, so in the next year a law was passed allowing taxes to be levied for either minister. The church building was very much like that of the first meetinghouse but little is known about it. It was used until 1755.
For the moment, Andrew and Hannah would have been satisfied with their new Church as they were now within their rights as congregationalists and they were with their friends and Rev. Whiting. Sadness, however, prevailed at leaving their former church where they had worshipped so long and those they knew in that congregation. Their new congregation had to adapt to strained quarters in someone's house. Shortly the little congregation would bear more sadness as Hannah died!

THE DEATH OF HANNAH

The life of a Puritan woman was hard and it was a testament to their toughness that as many survived as did. Hannah's age is uncertain as well as her exact date of death. She bore Andrew nine children and moved her household to and from Milford and twice in Hartford, at least. Since Andrew was not a rich person she had to make do as well as she could. The stress of the church controversy may have affected her as she died shortly after the withdrawal.

"We know how scrupulously the child Hannah was trained" wrote Mrs. Charles E. Smith in a Hartford Courant article in 1896 describing the first women members of Second Church. "We have looked into the home of George Stocking and his wife Anna on Buckingham Street to see how she was trained both for this life and the life to come. The hardships of her childhood have taught her that fortitude and endurance which fitted her for her future."

"Perhaps she was the lodestar which drew Andrew Benton to Hartford - or may be he came as a traveler and was so pleased with Hannah that, after she promised to share his joys and sorrows, they settled on Wethersfield Lane - The life of Hannah Benton is the simple life of a farmers wife, full of toil and care, and oh, how she must have worked with her eight* children, and if it is permitted her to drop her golden harp, and cease her heavenly song, to glance 'adown the ages,' perhaps she sings the sweetest song when she sees that her influence has not yet ended and that her labors were not in vain. She went to her rest probably about 1678. She was not, for God took her."

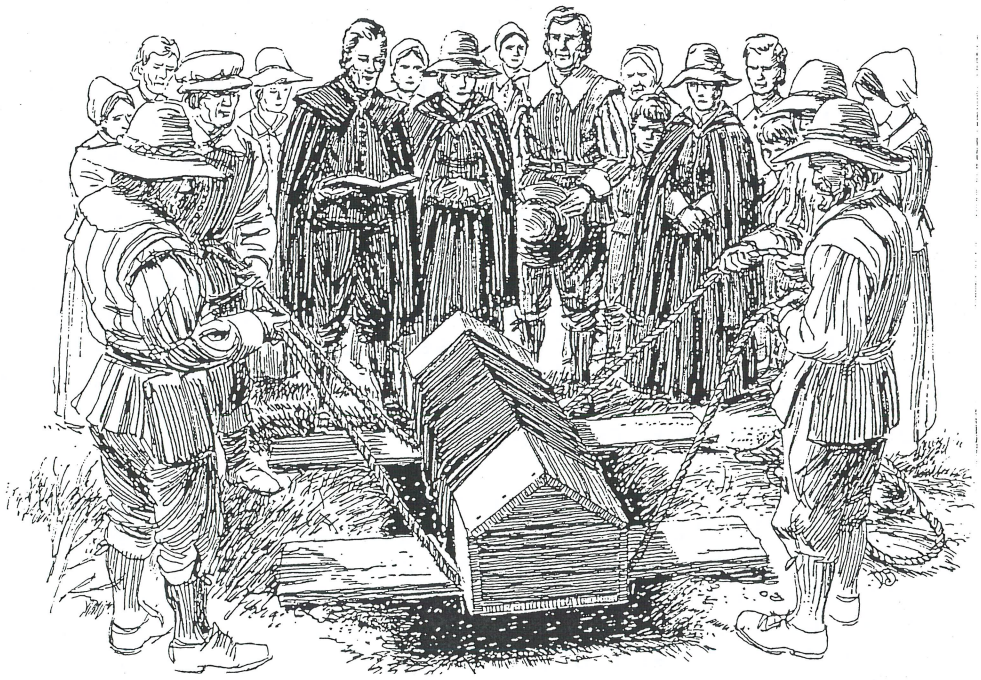
Gov. Winthrop, Hannah's Physician

She was doctored by Gov. John Winthrop since healing was one of his great interests. He used some old herbal recipes such as wormwood and anise, amber and powder of coral. His favorite drugs were mineral, especially niter and antimony, called rubila. He corresponded extensively with European scientists and tried to obtain the latest books. He treated Hannah eight times, his last entry being in July 1669 when his diary ended.

Hannah's Funeral

Puritan funerals during their first 20 years in New England were extremely elemental but gradually some socializing entered in but it wasn't until after 50 years that preachers played a role in the ceremony. Calvin doctrine of predestination meant that death could release to soul to eternal happiness or eternal damnation.

*Winthrop diaries now show Aron as the ninth.



IMAGINING HANNAH'S BURIAL FROM THIS SKETCH.
HER BURIAL MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT

-By the time of her death burial would have evolved towards an somewhat more elaborate occasion but still very functional.
- On account of the recent division of the Church we might have seen two groups standing separately. One group from the new Second Church and the other group from her old friends from First Church. Perhaps 30 members, including family, from Second Church and 20 from First Church.
-Dressing up would been been expected since by that time burials had become social occasions. The people in this sketch are pictured in everyday dress.
-The preacher, Rev. John Whiting, definitely would not have conducted a ceremony; he might have said a brief prayer as would have others.
-The coffin might have had bits of flowers attached as well as small notes from family and friends.
-The family in the foreground would include Andrew 50 (ages are approximate since the actual year of her death is not certain) George Stocking, 83, his new wife Agnis 50. Hannah's sisters and their husbands might attend as well as her brother and his wife. Children would include Hannah 19, Andrew Jr 17, Mary 15, Samuel 14, Joseph 9, Dorothy 9.
John Cole might be of close comfort to Andrew and Ann Cole 27, Andrew's next wife, would be seen supporting the youngsters.

Hannah's Funeral

Puritan funerals during their first 20 years in New England were extremely elemental but gradually some socializing entered in. It wasn't until after 50 years that preachers played a role in the ceremony. Calvin doctrine of predestination meant that death could release to soul to eternal happiness or eternal damnation.

The Puritan would never know in advance so death was a terrifying thought. Since there was no acceptance of the idea of Purgatory nothing done on earth after death would affect the future of departed soul. So in the early times funerals were conducted in haste with a matter-of factness. Excessive mourning was frowned upon.

By the time of Hannah's funeral, however, there would have been a large gathering of people at the graveside and accompanying the bereaved back to their home. Burials had become a townwide social event. Wearing "funeral gloves" and fancy finery would be expected. At their home an elaborate meal would be provided using ceremonial eating utensils.

Her burial probably would have been one of the first major events in the life of the new church. Certainly her new preacher, Rev. John Whiting and his wife, would be witnessing the burial. He would not offer a long gaveside prayer about Hannah. The preacher of the church they had just left, Rev. Joseph Haynes, would find it unseemly to attend. That being the case to what extent would his congregation follow his lead? Or would many of them, out of long friendship with the Bentons and Stockings, feel a warm kinship with them and attend? The original settlers had endured many hardships and triumphs together in forging a society in the wilderness. Would a seeming personal or theological divisiveness between ministers prevent the congregations from sharing a moment in common to witness the burial of a longtime friend? The depth of personal feelings and animosity at the pewholder level during this controversy is difficult to assess. Perhaps some would come only for the meal, if specifically invited.

Children attending burials are never mentioned by historians so we do not know what they were expected to do. The teenagers probably attended - Hannah, 19, Andrew, Jr. 17, Mary, 15, Samuel, 12.

Hannah's children were not long without motherly care for Andrew married Ann Cole, a neighbor across the road, in 1673. Doubtless, Ann knew the children well and was of great help from the moment of Hannah's passing.

Daughter Hannah may not have been able to help since she had been recently married and had a child in late 1672. She died before 1678. Daughters Mary and Dorothy would help Ann.

("Aron Benton Discovered", Page 108, has more on Winthrop)

The information in the lecture is incorrect. See comments at end.

Extract from the "Sisters Who First Joined Second Church", a lecture given by Mrs. Charles H. Smith at South Church February 14, 1896, saying "As the fifteen men who have received their full share of attention it is about these eighteen women we must learn more." A copy of the lecture was printed in the Hartford Courant.

"Bethia Steele-Ann

By one of those strange discrepancies which we find in all our early records Bethia Steele has deprived her predecessor of her rightful place and her name as it stands in the church records is a misnomer, for when this church was formed Bethia Steele was the wife of Deacon George (Samuel ed.) Stocking, living in Middletown and with her heart and life wrapped up in her worthy deacon, who the Lord did not call to himself until 1683. How could she have been a sister in full communion in 1670 by the name of Steele? Although James Steele may have found a beloved successor to the wife of his youth, if he was the true and honest man we take him to have been he would deem it only justice to us to restore his.....wife her rightful place, and we take great satisfaction in writing the name of Ann Steele in the place where it belongs.

James Steele was a boy about 12 years old when he came with his father, George Steele. He was at just the right age to be impressed by what he saw and to be moulded by the excitement and the high tension of the pioneer life, it made him a bold and aggressive worker; it surely helped to form the man, for he was one of the most energetic and useful men of his day. He was undoubtedly considered quite a eligible match, so when he went to Guilford and brought back Ann Bishop, the daughter of John and his wife, his friends were not astonished that she fancied the gallant young soldier and Christian. We can only imagine her home life, rearing her six little ones, with the usual blending of grief and joy, pain and comfort, sorrow and gladness, distressed when her husband was away fighting the Pequot, prayerful and anxious for his uncertain return. - All of lifes phases were here in a few brief years. He was commissary in King Phillips War in 1676 and may be she died during his absence, for we are told she died in 1676. Good Christian woman, though credit has not been awarded her in her own church, we know sister Ann Steele's name is written in the Lord's book of life.

While Bethia Steele is undoubtedly a sister of a later date, there is such a chain of romance in her life that we are unwilling to drop her name, but take it as we find it, leading to the conscientious historian to clear the difficulties that surround us. Her life is but another tale of the light and shade of early colonial days....to.....with so many great and passing events that we wonder whether she was a woman of great energy and endurance, or was there a calm religious faith that saw God in her changing life.

She was the daughter of John Hopkins, one of the original proprietors whose home was on north side of Elm Street, about half way between what is now the Daniel's mill and Trinity Street. She was not English born but a native New Englander, one of the little children who have been carried in arms as she was only a year old when her parents came with Hooker and made this their earthly dwelling place. The little girl under the careful guidance of her mother, grew to womanhood and at 17, when she married her neighbor and friend across the field, young Samuel Stocking, Agnes (Anna ed) Stocking's son, she was ready to take her place in the world, waiting for her mission to come to her. Not long did she wait. The next year after her marriage in 1654, she moved to Middletown, where the best years of her life were passed. Her husband was an influential and prominent man, filling many public offices besides that of deacon in the church. And at 48 years of age she was left a widow with her eight children. It was natural that James Steele and Bethia Stocking should mingle their sighs and at last find themselves mutually comforted and it is a little curious that two of the youngest settlers, a boy of 12 and the babe of a year should finally end their lives' pilgrimages together. The domestic harmony of the united household must have been a special favor from heaven, for with Bethia Stocking's eight children and James Steele's six let us hope that we can say great was the.....of the children.

So in February after she came to this church from Middletown and from that time until she died in 1645, was sister in full communion. Her distinguished husband survived her 17 years, dying a good brother of this church, at a ripe old age. Good Christian sister not herself ....., honest and trustful to a high degree, Her name shall remain on our records until that time when the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain."

COMMENT

This part of her lecture is interesting mainly because of Mrs. Smith's marvelous, stilted Victorian phraseology. The Puritans would have been aghast had they heard themselves described in this way and with words which they would not have understood. No insight into the lives of Puritan women is offered and the identification of the wives is through the position of their husbands or, perhaps, the street where they lived.

<u>There never was an "ANN" Steele.</u> The first wife of James was the daughter of "<u>ANN</u> Bishop". So there the trouble began. A mistake in the "Memorial History of Hartford County" calls her "Ann Steele". The first wife was actually "Bethia Bishop". They were married in Guilford on October 18, 1685.

Unfortunately, James liked women named Bethia and married, for the second time, "Bethia Stocking", the widow of Samuel Stocking, a Deacon in the Middletown church. (Mrs. Smith said "George" Stocking by mistake). Samuel was the son of Anna Stocking, not "Agnes". Bethia Stocking was born "Bethia Hopkins" and was received into Second Church from Middletown February 21, 1685. James Steele lived until 1712.

The church records stand correct - "Bethiah Steele" - was a founding member. Her parents were John and Ann Bishop of Guilford.

Shortly after the lecture a letter to the Courant from James Shepard, New Britain, was copied in the Courant to clear up the confusion. Some words in the Smith article the Courant are illegible.
Comments by Byron Benton Hartford July, 2006

THE REV. THOMAS BUCKINGHAM - SECOND CHURCH MINISTER, 1694 - 1731, WITH MILFORD ROOTS

Andrew Benton came to Hartford from Milford as did the Rev. Buckingham. The later's grandfather was the first Thomas Buckingham who had homelot #36 amongst the homelots of the Colony's leaders. Andrew's lot, on the other hand, was on the other side of Dreadful Swamp up against the west palisade. Thomas and Hannah Buckingham were part of The Rev. Peter Prudden's congregation who founded Milford and Thomas was one of the "Seven Pillars" who were authorized by the inhabitants to constitute a "church". After Prudden died, in 1656, the congregation searched in vain for four years to find a replacement and Thomas died in Boston in the search. In this period Andrew and Hannah left Milford to settle in Hartford.

The eldest son of Thomas was Daniel, born in England, and an Elder of the Church. His eldest son was our Rev. Thomas who was born in Milford in 1671 after Andrew left. He was able to attend the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven. From there he attended Harvard and graduated in 1690. At age 23 he was called to the Second Church in 1694 and was married to Ann Foster in 1699. She was the daughter of the Rev. Isaac Foster, former minister of the First Church, who died at age 30 in 1682. Isaac Buckingham, of Stephen Steele's college class, was their first son followed by Joseph who became a lawyer. He witnessed the 1744 will of Samuel Benton, Sr. and later became Treasurer of the Colony.

During his ministry he bore the burden of depression, Indian Wars and a decay in godliness and morality. He served a Chaplain in the campaign of 1710 against Port Royal and of 1711 against Crown Point. He struggled to find a place for Yale College and even after Hartford was not selected he served as its trustee. He died in 1731.

The Benton family extended itself amply during his ministry and he performed their many baptisms, marriages and memberships into the Second church. Over 50 such ceremonies of the Bentons are listed in "The Samuel Slade Benton" book. He baptized Daniel Benton and all of Samuel Benton Junior's children, including Samuel Benton III, 1717. Stephen Steele also was baptized in 1698.

SAMUEL BENTON, JUNIOR

His story appears through-out the following chapters and wife Mary Pomeroy's story appears next.

He was born in Hartford in 1680, the first child of Samuel and Sarah Chatterton. He married Mary in 1704. He was an early settler in 1719 in Tolland along with Daniel, Joseph and Joseph Jr. He was elected Sergeant of the Train Band in 1722 and selectman in 1725 through 1729. His home lot was in the center of the town and served as a place of worship and town meetings for the first years. He acquired many tracts, buying and trading them through-out his life time. He was able to provide his sons with their homelots including Samuel III's lot in 1743.

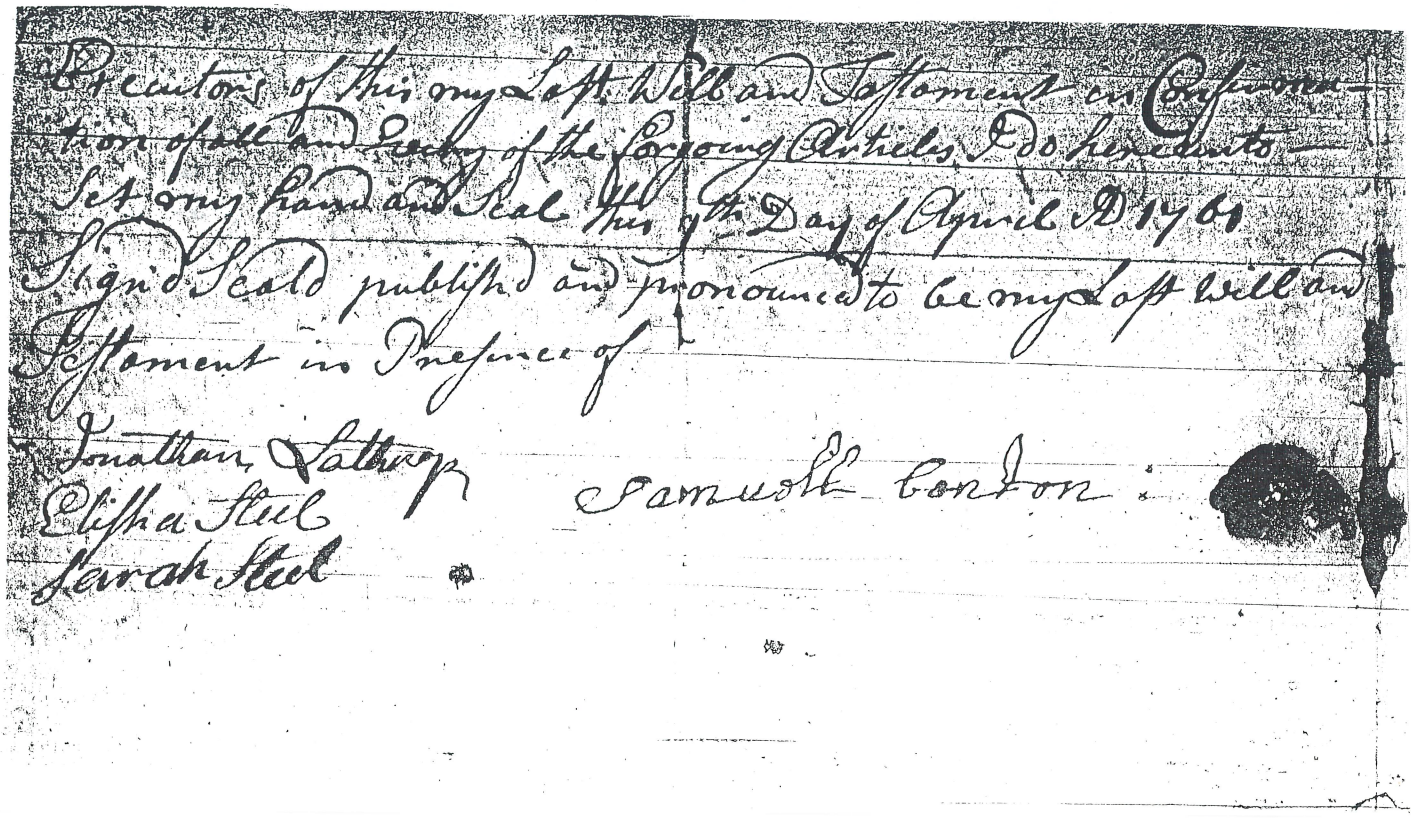
With wife Mary Pomeroy they raised ten children. Samuel III was their seventh child.

He was in Rev. Stephen Steel's congregation from the beginning of Steel's tenure and he experienced the excitement of The Great Awakening.

He was too old to engage in the French and Indian Wars but he saw son Sergeant Samuel III march off with Tolland men to the Battle of Ticonderoga where they suffered defeat but did their duty as ordered.

He died in 1763 at age 83. Mary must have predeceased him as she is not mentioned in his 1761 will.

The following is the bottom portion of his will showing his signature.



Executors of this my Last Will and Testament in Confirmation of all and Every of the forgoing Articles I do hereunto Set my hand and Seal this 9th Day of April AD 1761
Sign'd Seald published and pronounced to be my Last Will and Testament in Presence of

Jonathan Lathrop
Elisha Steel
Sarah Steel

Samuell Benton



PLAN OF ANCIENT WINDSOR

1640 - 1654

* * *

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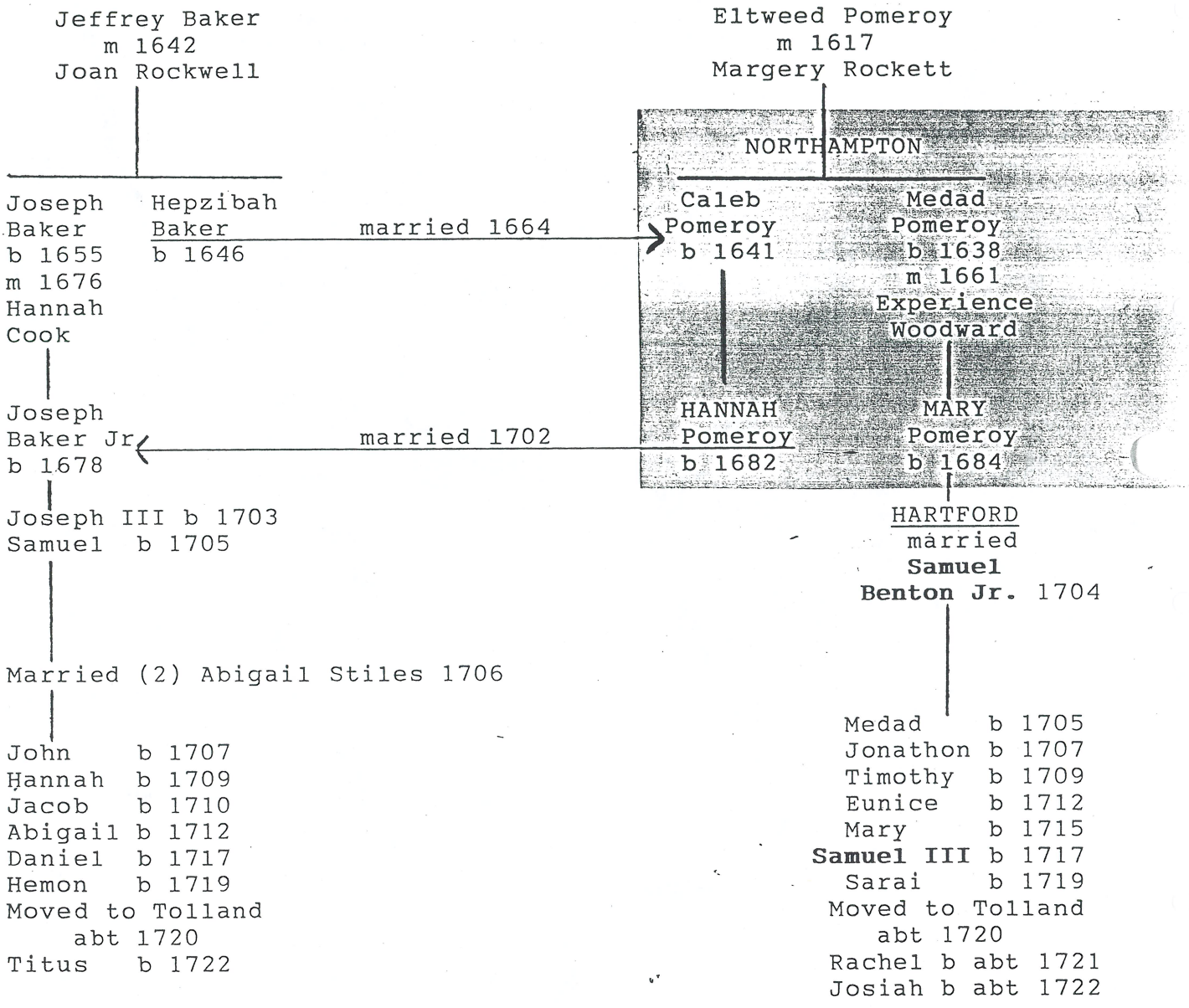
September 1993

FAMILY OF MARY POMEROY, WIFE OF SAMUEL BENTON JR.

CHART SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP OF HER COUSIN HANNAH AND THE BAKERS OF WINDSOR,.HER AUNT'S FAMILY.



Mary and Hannah Pomeroy may have come to Windsor to "board out." Hannah married Joseph Baker Jr. of Windsor and Mary married Samuel Benton Jr. of Hartford. He and Mary may have met while he was visiting friends in Windsor. Puritan courtship rules had relaxed by then.

MARY POMEROY STRAYED FROM REV. SOLOMON STODDARD'S NORTHAMPTON, FLOCK

Born in a faraway town on the frontier, she nevertheless found Samuel Benton Jr. of Hartford a suitable husband. Their first seven children were born in Hartford. Then they became first settlers of Tolland where Samuel III, their sixth child, and the others grew up. Two more were born in Tolland.

Mary's Roots From West Country

Not only was Mary from a far off town, she was also from a strain of English Puritans who lived faraway from East Anglia where the Bentons and their relatives originated. Her ancestors were from the West Country - Dorset, Devon, Somerset and Lancashire. When Samuel Benton Jr. and Mary Pomeroy married, they merged two distinct groups; Samuel's roots were in East Anglia and Mary's roots were in the West Country. The union produced a healthy genetic succession.

How Mary and Samuel May Have Met.

If Mary from Northampton was destined to marry Samuel from Hartford how might this have happened? Perhaps in Windsor through family connections. Her aunt Hepzibah Pomeroy lived in Northampton where Mary was born but she was of the Windsor Baker family. Mary's grandfather, Eltweed Pomeroy, was a Windsor first settler. Also, the daughter of Windsor's first preacher, Hester Warham, married Northampton's first preacher. So there were many personal ties to Windsor.

Mary and Hannah in Windsor

Mary and her cousin Hannah may have gone to live with the Bakers in Windsor. Boarding out was the custom then for young girls and with Indian attacks on the exposed towns of Western Massachusetts always a possibility, Windsor might be safer.

This suggestion looks promising because Hannah eventually married the Baker son, Joseph Jr.,actually her cousin. Then, while Mary was in Windsor she may have come to the attention of young Samuel Benton, Jr. from Hartford. He had acquaintances in Windsor because Joseph, his Uncle, had married Martha Peck and in so doing had made many friends in Windsor. It was through these friends that the Bentons may have learned of land being available in Tolland. Rigid Puritan rules governing boy-girl relationships had relaxed enough by then so that Mary and Samuel could have more easily met.

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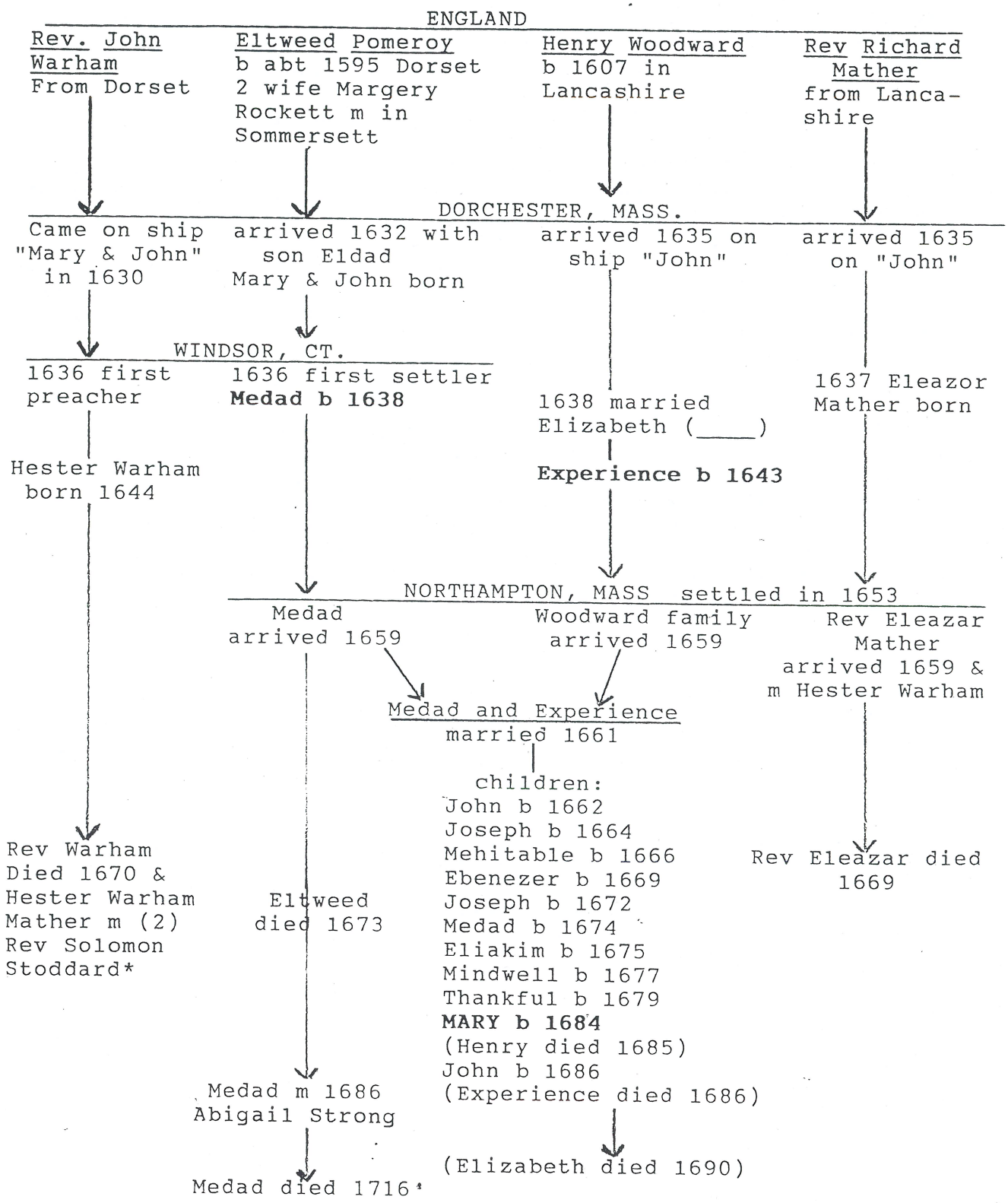
WEST COUNTRY ANCESTORS OF MARY POMEROY BENTON



*Rev Stoddard called to Northampton Church in 1669.

Was Hannah and Joseph's marriage an arraigned marriage or did it come about because they became close acquaintances? Would Hannah's parents, Hepzibah and Caleb Pomeroy, in Northampton negotiate with the Bakers in Windsor so that Hannah and Joseph might marry? As first cousins this appeared to be a bad idea. So in the alternative the two may have lived together in the same household with the inevitable romance developing. This circumstance would support the idea that Hannah boarded out in Windsor. Our Mary, on the other hand, wasn't a cousin Joseph might be wary of marrying so why wasn't he partial to her? Had the roles of the girls been reversed we would have had a different family history.

Mary's Roots

Her grandfathers were both from the West Country. Grandfather Eltweed Pomeroy was from Dorset and came to Dorchester in 1632 shortly after the Great Migration began. Grandfather Henry Woodward was from Lancashire and came to Dorchester in 1635 with Rev. Richard Mather on the ship "John." Eltweed was married when he arrived and brought his wife Margery and son Elded with him. Henry wasn't married. He found Elizabeth in Dorchester and married her three years later. We do not know who her family was. Their children were: Freedom, bpt. July 1642, Experience, bpt. Nov. 1643, Thankful and John born between 1647 and 1649.

Eltweed as Founder of Windsor

He was a blacksmith much in demand and in the few years he lived in Dorchester he became a selectman. Two children were born there. In Dorchester the Rev. John Warham was the leader of a strong contingent of Puritans who had come with him on the ship "Mary and John" in 1630. They thought the meadowlands of Windsor a more suitable place and migrated there in 1636. Eltweed and family came with them and were given a favorable homelot near the center of town. Medad was born two years later. Caleb, Mary, Joshua and Joseph would follow in succession.

Northampton, New Town on the Frontier

It had been founded in 1653 by Springfield and Hartford people but they seemed to struggle to survive. It needed invigoration by energetic Puritans and some arrived in 1659. First, from Windsor came Medad, a blacksmith like his father, and Jonathon Hunt, a cooper. They were so welcome they were each given sixteen acres of land immediately. Medad was given a set of tools too. More land was given later. Within two years he had also found a wife, Experience. He found himself as well and became one of Northampton's leaders.

The Woodward family

In the same year more support arrived as Henry Woodward his family crossed the wilderness from Dorchester along with two other families, Clark and Cunliffe. They were accompanying young Rev. Eleazar Mather who was to be Northampton's first minister. Experience was 16 years old when she made the trek.

Henry, as a friend of the minister, was readily accepted and was one of the seven pillars chosen to organize the church in June, 1661. As a friend of the Mathers he had followed Rev. Eleazar to support him at his first parish. Eleazar was the son of Rev. Richard Mather and the brother of Increase, all famous New England religious lights. Cotton Mather was of the next generation.

Henry Woodward was close to Rev. Richard Mather as they were both from Lancashire, although from different parishes, and came to Dorchester together in 1635. Henry was about 10 years younger than Richard who was born in 1596. Richard went to Oxford and was the minister in Toxteth, Lancashire for 15 years until he was ejected for "nonconformity." Possibly Henry was in that congregation and went to Bristol with Richard's family to board the 220 ton ship "John" June 4th 1635. Captain Taylor was the Master and it arrived in Boston Aug. 16th. While in Dorchester, Eleazar Mather was born in 1637 and Experience Woodward in 1643. Eleazar graduated from Harvard in 1656. He didn't marry Experience, a family friend however, but selected a girl from the elite clerical class. He and Experience both made the trek to Northampton in 1659.

Eleazar wasted no time in Northampton to begin a family and right away married Hester Warham, daughter of the Windsor preacher, John Warhan. But he did find time, however, to travel back to Boston in October of 1662 to attend the famous Synod adopting the Half Way Covenant. He died after only a few years, in 1669, at age 32, before Mary Pomeroy was born. His death occasioned the succession to the Northampton pulpit of Solomon Stoddard, who would subsequently baptize Mary.

Henry Woodward's career continued in Northamnpton as he was recognized to operate an ordinary in 1665 "to entertain the Court." He also operated a grist mill but was killed by the mill wheel the year after Mary was born. So she never knew the grandfather who came from England to make the better life in the New World she was to undertake with Samuel Benton.

Mary's Church

Mary's grandfather was one of the seven pillars founding the church and Medad, her father, was one of two church deacons who travelled to Boston to seek out a new minister. Their choice, Solomon Stoddard, proved to be a luminary in the religious life of the Colonies. He graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen and completed two years in Barbados as a Chaplain. When the two appeared he had his bags packed and on board a ship to sail for England the next day. An old and respected citizen had recommended Solomon, though he warned he was gay and fond of joking. Solomon, reluctant to settle far away in the wilderness, asked many questions, the last of which puzzled the deacons. Where there any pretty girls in Northampton? The deacons felt they had met with a odd sort of minister; nevertheless they extended an invitation and Solomon accepted. King Phillips War would await him there six years later.

Solomon married Hester, the widow of Rev. Eleazor Mather, very soon after he settled in town. We aren't told if she was pretty or not. He was accepted as a fine man and preacher but some of the people found him to be too gay in tempermant for his position. So they gathered in front of his home for a meeting to "pray the devil" out of him. He was so touched by this radical gesture that he reformed his ways; but his temperament made him immensely popular throughout his ministry.

Rev. Stoddard baptized Mary and as she grew up she would have been impressed by his liberal theology. He believed in baptizing all who were presented and in offering communion to any reverent person in town. "Stoddardeanism" maintained that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be regarded as a converting ordinance and that all baptized persons, not scandalous in life, might lawfully approach the table, though they knew themselves to be destitute of true religion. This new attitude broke from the Half-Way Covenant and was contrary to all Puritan orthodoxy. Increase Mather railed against it. These revolutionary changes gave Rev. Stoddard great appeal and he became known as the "Pope of the Connecticut Valley." His openness endeared him to the people and although he was at odds with the Mathers of Boston, he continued to make his annual pilgrimage there to give the commencement address at Harvard. His many revivals added names to the church roles and as a result a big part of the young people in the town became very concerned for their salvation. Mary might have been concerned at his 1696 revival when she was twelve and might have joined then.

Church membership roles do not list Mary but this omission is not indicative because none of her siblings are listed either. However, Hannah and some of her siblings are listed. In 1677 Stoddard discretely rebelled at the Half-Way-Covenant and stopped recording names of children baptized. This may explain the missing names.

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Attack on Schenectady by Frenchmen and Indians

Mary Brought up by her Stepmother

Tragedy struck the Pomeroy family a few years after Mary was born when Experience, died in June 1686 probably while giving birth to John. Mary and her siblings were not motherless for long because Medad married right away in September. Abigail Strong, the widow of Rev. Chauncey of Hatfield, became their stepmother. She brought five children of her own into the family. Then she and Medad proceeded to have a son, Samuel, born in September 1687. So from age three onward Mary lived in a crowded household and with a stepmother. It was likely she was enthusiastic when her cousin Hannah suggested they go downriver to Windsor to live. It is impossible to gauge how old she was when she left her Northampton family; she married Samuel Benton when she was 20.

Terror of the Indians

The imminence of Indian attacks, must have given her further impetus to move to a more protected town. Northampton and the towns of Hadley and Deerfield were lone outposts in the wilderness in those days. There were no nearby settlements to their East towards Boston and none to their West. Their closest help would come from Springfield and Hartford. The Indians ranged freely in the wilderness and could attack and ambush day or night. They scalped, killed and captured the settlers, burned their homes and barns, ran off their cattle and ruined their crops. The isolated farms were vulnerable of course but the Indians even laid waste whole towns. Their weapons now included firearms in addition to tomahawks, spears and arrows.

The Indian Wars

In earlier times the Pequot Indians had been severely beaten just before Andrew settled Milford. Next in 1675, the Wampanoags under their sachem, King Phillip, launched attacks in the Eastern portions of the Colonies, and these spread to Western Massachusetts when the Narraganetts were forced into an alliance with Phillip. Northampton was attacked in 1675 and Medad fought at the battle of Turners Falls the next year. King Phillip was killed to end this war.

Indians were next encouraged by the French in Quebec to attack settlers in connection with conflicts in Europe between Britain and France. King William's war was the first result and it started in 1689 five years after Mary was born. Northampton was not attacked but fear of an attack permeated the minds of the people. For instance, Schenectady was burned in 1690. After this war ended there was a short peace until 1703 when Queen Anne's War commenced. By this time Mary was relatively safe in Windsor and probably glad she had left the fearful times her friends and family suffered in Massachusetts.

The Death of Cousin Hannah Baker

Hannah married Joseph Baker in 1702 and her first child, Joseph, was born in April 1703. Mary was married shortly thereafter in January 1704. Both bore children in 1705 but probably Hannah died in birthing her child, Samuel, in June. Medad Benton, Mary's first child undoubtedly named after her father Medad Pomeroy, was born in October. Mary had left Windsor to live in Hartford with the Bentons by then and may not have been able to be near Hannah at the end. Mary would have been many months pregnant at the time.

Samuel Benton and Joseph Baker who had married these cousins were acquainted and would eventually pioneer the new settlement in Tolland together. Samuel was 24 when he married and was two years older than Joseph. Joseph soon married again, widow Abigail Stiles Bissell, and their children's birth dates closely matched Samuel and Mary's. Joseph's only public service was in 1728 when he served as Selectman with Samuel.

Mary in Second Church Hartford

Mary and Samuel were married by a magistrate and their marriage is carried on the Hartford Town records. At that time Preachers did not usually perform the ceremony but confined their preaching to the wedding feast. Since the wedding ceremony was in Hartford, the Benton family of Hartford would have provided an ample feast to welcome the newcomer from Northampton into the family. And they would have been quite proud to note Mary's distinguished lineage from the West Country and undoubted worthiness. She could relate tales of fearsome Indian terrorism in Massachusetts and could tell how she was oftentimes moved by Rev. Stoddards's enlightened preaching.

Mother-in-law Sarah, however, may have grumbled that her preacher, Rev. Davenport of New Haven, didn't allow such heresy as Stoddard was practicing. Two disparate viewpoints might collide in this household as Puritan rigidity had mellowed in Northampton but had remained staunch in New Haven further away.

Rev. Buckingham's message at the Hartford wedding feast would have mollified such differences to make Mary welcome. As it turned out he would baptize all of their children born while still members of Second Church. Sarai, the last child born in Hartford was baptized in 1719. Mary was not recorded by Rev. Buckingham as becoming a member of Second Church.

(Continued on Page 12)

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Source "Samuel Slade Benton"

SAMUEL AND MARY'S HARTFORD HOUSE

- The original version of this house was built by Andrew Benton Jr. about 1676 and was situated south of his father's house. Both were on what is now Washington street and the Institute For Living.
- When Andrew Jr. died in 1704 just as Samuel Jr. and Mary Pomeroy were married, Samuel bought the house for their home. Here they raised their family and Samuel III was born in 1717 just prior to their move to Tolland.
- Then in 1723, Jacob purchased the house and moved in with his bride, Abigail Carter, daughter of Mary Skinner. Jacob was the brother of Samuel Jr. and Daniel. He was 26 when he married. Jacob and Abigail raised one child in the house. When his wife died Jacob married Elizabeth Hinsdale and raised four more children before they moved to Harwinton as first settlers in 1737.
- Jacob sold the house to Deacon Joseph Holton for §480. The house was moved across the street in 1800 and was still standing in 1900.
- Abigail was a cousin of Daniel's wife who was a Skinner. Also Elizabeth was the brother of Barnabus Hinsdale who went to Tolland with the Bentons. The Bentons, Skinners and Hinsdales were close friends.

Andrew Benton Jr. may have been at the wedding feast, but he died on the 4th of the next month at 51 leaving his wife Martha and two children. He was an Uncle of Samuel Jr. His house and lot became Samuel Jr. and Mary's home but it wasn't until 1708 that Samuel actually became the owner. Samuel Sr. was administrator of the estate and guardian of Andrew's children. Where the newly married couple had planned to live and what arrangements were made at Andrew's death for his family to live are puzzling. The house and lot were on land East of present day Washington Street and North of Webster Street. (Where Byron and Priscilla rented when they first arrived in Hartford in 1946).

To Tolland

In Tolland a new life awaited them in a house of their own making and from hard work clearing land and raising livestock. Sons Medad, Jonathon and Timothy would do their share. Samuel III, a toddler would have to wait many years before he could take up his duties. Soon Mary was pregnant again with either Rachel or Josiah.

They would already know the other Benton families and Barnabus Hindsdale. Also Joseph Baker and other Windsor friends would become their neighbors. They had the friendship of Rev. Steele, their minister, as he was familiar to Samuel from growing up together in Hartford at Second Church. In this respect they had an advantage over the other settlers. They could introduce the Rev. Steele to them and ease his introduction to his flock. Mary and Ruth Steele were likely to be close because they both came from Western Massachusetts. Further, Ruth as a newlywed, would need all the help Mary could give.

Steele made no attempt to keep membership roles or else they were lost. The Tolland church has no lists for the early days so many Benton's names cannot be verified. No date of death for Mary is known. Samuel Jr. lived until 1763 and died at the age of 83.

In amply filling the rugged role of a Tolland first settler, Mary Pomeroy Benton proved the worthiness found in all the Benton spouses.

THE FIRST NINE GENERATIONS OF THE ST.LAWRENCE COUNTY BENTON FAMILY

EPPING, ESSEX, ENGLAND

1595-John Benton-1662 & Mary Southernwood-1660
ANDREW-Thomas-Marie-Elizabeth

CONNECTICUT

1. 1620-Andrew Benton-1683 & Hannah Stocking-1670
John-Hannah-Andrew-Mary-John-SAMUEL-Joseph-Dorothy*

2.Andrew & Ann Cole
Ebenezer-Lydia-Hannah-John

1658-Samuel Benton-1746 & 1661-Sarah Chatterton-1679
SAMUEL JR-Sarah-Hannah-Abigail-Caleb-Daniel-Jacob-Moses-Lydia

1680-Samuel Benton Jr-1763 & 1684 Mary Pomeroy
Medad-Jonathon-Timothy-Eunice-Mary-SAMUEL III-Sarai-Josiah-Rachael

1717-Samuel Benton III-1800 & 1723-Jane Bradley
ELIHU-Jonathon-Ozias-Thankful-Thankful-Dorothy-Samuel-Zadock-Sarah-Jacob

1744-Elihu Benton-1782 & 1754-Martha Aborn
WARHAM-Martha Submit

VERMONT

1781-Warham Benton-1872 & 1789-Sarah Smith-1869
Daughter-Benjamin-ELIHU

NEW YORK

1. 1822-Elihu Benton-1868 & Fannie Perkins-1851
Fannie

2 Elihu & 1833 Mary Arquit
NOLTON-Elon

1. 1858-Nolton Benton-1939 & Katherine Gary-1880
George-Carl

2 Nolton & Eva Fuller
Gerald-Lloyd-Beulah-Justine

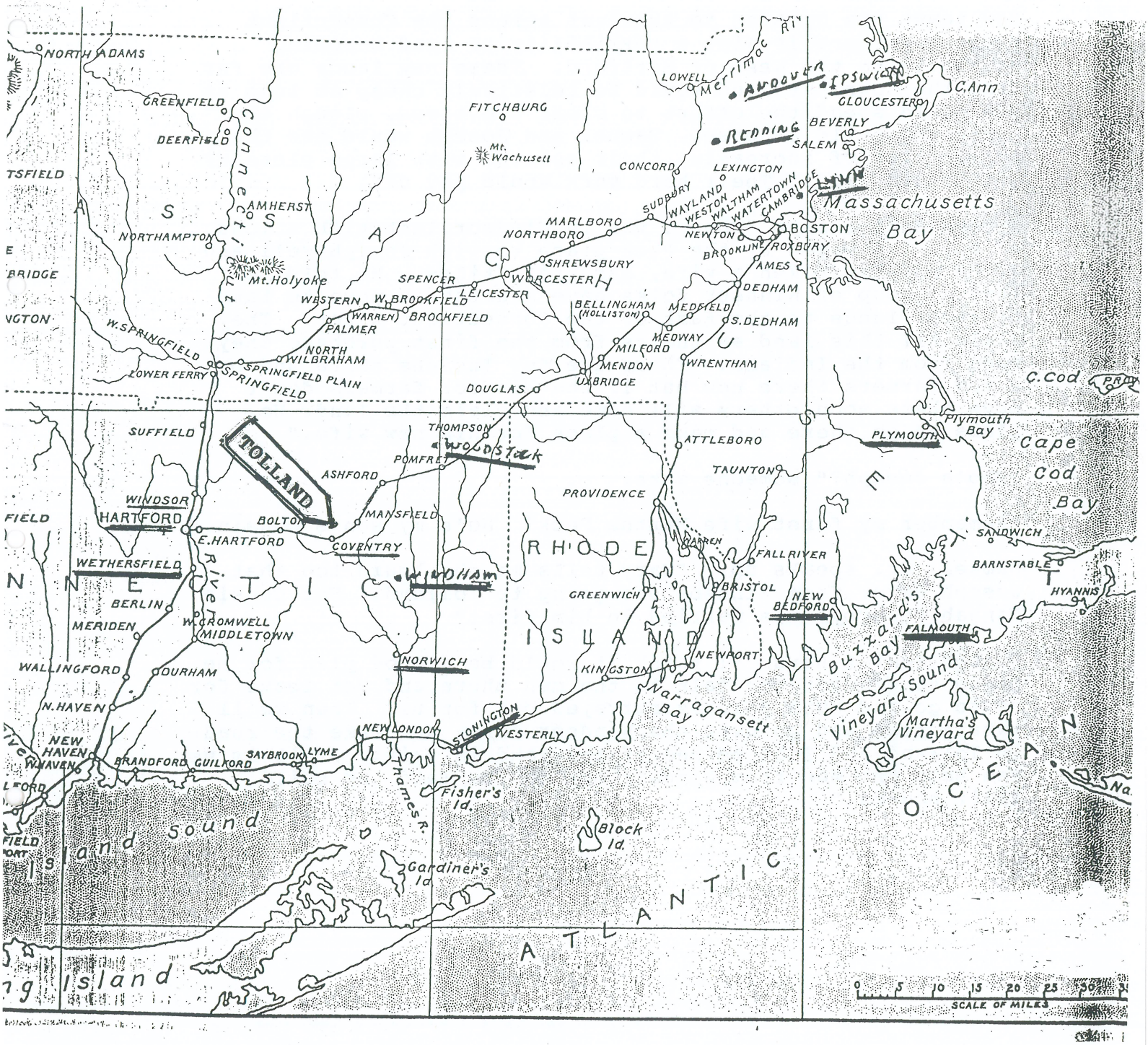
* Aron - discovered in 2006

Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2006

TOLLAND

AND

THE TOWNS THE FIRST SETTLERS CAME FROM
(underlined)



"THERE"S LAND FOR US IN TOLLAND"

Samuel, Senior, or Joseph, Senior might have spoken these words as they were discussing their situation in Hartford around 1714. They are in their mid-fifties, Samuel, Jr. is 34 and Joseph, Junior and Daniel are about 19. The young men have little hope of having a farm of their own in Hartford as there are too many people now and land is expensive.

New towns are opening to the East across the Connecticut River and there is also a possibility of land becoming available to the West of Hartford. These new lands are far from the town but land would be relatively cheap as long as one could spend the effort to clear the trees, plough the earth and build a house. Samuel and Joseph would see the possibility of increasing their estates with large plots of low priced land. Their hard work would pay off.

Joseph Senior says "When I was in Windsor last with a load of hay, I stopped by the Peck place to wish Joseph well and as he now has taken a wife, Margaret Stiles. He told me that a group of Windsor folks have started to move to take up their lands to the East of the Connecticut River. They claim all this land as theirs from the first purchase they made from the Indians. There are few Indians there and only a few farmers there now but if the Windsor farmers don't move there soon others will come and claim the land. He plans to go there and make a place for his new wife."

"Who's Joseph?" someone asks.

"Remember my first wife Martha Peck? He's my son's cousin."

Samuel, Jr. speaks up. "Mary tells me she heard too that Joseph Baker from Windsor was going to Tolland. Her Cousin, Hannah Pomeroy, was married to him first"

Joseph Senior says "I think it would be a good plan for me to go to Windsor and talk to the men there and get leave for us to go and have parcels surveyed out for us. Then we'll take a team and go over the Windsor ferry and take the road to Tolland and look to see if the land is fair. If it is we can help the men from Windsor settle the land and build their houses."

"Who do you know in town?" is the querry.

"Many of them" is the reply, "When I was courting Martha in Windsor, her brother, Joseph Peck wanted the townsmen to approve of my suit. I went to the meetinghouse and supped with quite a few, Joshua Loomis, Thomas Grant and a few others. I was at the burying of her brother too. It was only a few years after Martha died. Some of the Windsor families came to Hartford after she passed away."

Another question followed. "We're Hartford townsmen. Will Windsor men give us their leave?"

Joeseph relies. "We'll ask. We five Bentons can clear a lot of land, helping one another and helping them too. In that way the land will be ready for growing sooner, the town can be made and a church started. I judge they will be thankful for our help. Tolland will be a new start for us and will give Daniel and Joseph a place to begin families.

"You and Mary already have four and will need a larger place. With my Aaaron, Isaac and Jeheil and another due soon, I'll need a big place. My brother Samuel will you be wanting to leave Hartford with your family?"

Samuel Benton (Senior) "I want to see this land and work with you but I wouldn't try an get Sarah to come. She was from New Haven and likes Hartford town life. My daughters are finding young men in Hartford to become their suitors I doubt they would want the life of a new town where there would be many strange young men looking for wives. You're daughters are younger. To leave South Church would be hard on all of us."

And so the conversation continued as the Bentons faced a new life once again on new land in a new town. Four men chose to leave Hartford for Tolland, three stayed in Hartford and one, Jacob, would start a new line in the West in Harwinton in 1737. THE FAMILY SEPARATES AND DIVIDES.

THE BENTONS AND THEIR NEW TOWN

Its one thing to imagine the Bentons going along with the Windsors and others to stake out farm parcels in the open spaces of Tolland. Its quite another thing to imagine Joseph, a Hartford man, taking the leadership. He must have been quite well known to the Windsor men or else he displayed remarkable foresight and strength as the town was forming. We must take note of his roles:

He is made first town clerk 1717-1720.
He is made a selectman for 1720.
He was chosen by the inhabitants in 1719 "to go see if he can get a minister to be amongst us to preach the gospel amongst us".
He "put a prayer" into the General Assembly for a petition to organize a church.

More Benton leadership - Daniel Benton is made one of three selectmen for 1718 and then again in 1721.
Samuel Benton, probably Junior, was selectman in the years 1725, 1726, 1728 and 1729.

THE LAND PETITIONS

Surviving Tolland historical records depend greatly on the various petitions made to the General Assembly to form the town. These name the men who took part.

The 1713 petition by Windsor men requested permission to form a town used phrases such as: "being through the numerous increase in our families much straitened for want of land whereon to make improvement and get out a livelihood" and "speedily settle a fair town if the government discourage us not". This petition was not signed by any Benton men, of course. It was signed by 59 men including Joseph Baker, first husband of Mary Pomeroy's sister and also by Joseph Skinner cousin of the Hartford Skinners whose children married Daniel Benton and Jacob Benton later.

In 1715 the Assembly granted permission to form a town 6 miles square and agreed as to the costs. Most towns were 5 miles square as this was judged the appropriate distance one could travel to church from its farthest reaches. Tolland was big.

BRINGING THE FAMILIES TO TOLLAND

In the Samuel Jr. family all are baptized in Hartford including Sarai, on August 16, 1719. Although much work on the family house and land was accomplished in 1719, it would appear that Mary and the children would wait until spring of 1720 to move from Hartford.

Daniel, the younger brother was unmarried and is thought to have built the cellar living space of his house in 1720. He married, two years later, Mary Skinner of Hartford and may have erected the upper rooms of the house by then. The cellar had to have good cooking and heating capabilities so a large fireplace was built. It is still seen today in the Benton Homestead. In later years, after the Battle of Saratoga, it served as prison space for Hessian prisoners for about 18 months. The big fireplace supplied their needs.

In the Joseph Sr. family the last child was born in 1714 in Hartford so the family came to Tolland together. Since he was town clerk in 1717 they must have moved by the end of 1716. His name is on a May 1716 petition.

In Joseph Jr's case we know he married Sarah Pynchon at the end of 1718 and his first child, Andrew, was baptized in August of 1719 in South Church, but where he lived is in doubt.

Perhaps Joseph and family settled first, then a few years later Samuel and Daniel came. When the men were clearing the land and building houses they may have made a stone cellar and roofed it with logs to provide shelter. The wives and young children would remain in Hartford while the pioneering work went on. Tolland was over 20 miles from Hartford across the Connecticut River and many ridges so few trips back and forth would be made.

WHERE WAS TOLLAND - EXACTLY?

Tolland lands were defined easterly from Windsor, yet another group was defining their land northerly from Indian lands. The two were bound to overlap somewhere and defy accurate bounds. In 1675 enterprising and ambitious Colony leaders persuaded Joshua, a Mohegan sachem, to leave large portions of his supposed Southerly land to them in his will. A self-serving bogus deal, obviously, as he had no reason to even know them, much less honor them with grants of land. The Court reluctantly agreed to honor the will, probably under pressure from the beneficiaries, and saved face by admonishing them to act speedily to form towns on these lands.

In 1719, trustees appointed by the 1715 Assembly granted deeds to the 51 men who had apparently become the first to have land surveyed for them. This list included Samuel Sr. and Jr. and Joseph Sr. and Jr. but not Daniel. This list mentions men in the portion of the town north of the southern border which border was in dispute with Coventry town settlers. Daniel's land was in that area.

Also included in this list was Barnabus Hinsdale, a young Second Church member. He evidently came along to Tolland with the Bentons and had a parcel next to Daniel Benton's. He married Hannah Skinner from Windsor and others of his family married Bentons and Skinners. Joseph Baker and Joseph Skinner were also on this list.

In 1716 and 1718 appeals were made to the Assembly regarding the border dispute and Daniel, Joseph and Samuel Benton were on that list. The line was not agreed to until 1722 and Joseph finally found himself situated in Coventry, more or less. He and Francis West had to pay Coventry for their lands and they were allowed a house but only three acres. They were entitled to be Tolland inhabitants, however, and pay their public dues to Tolland. In 1729 Joseph's second wife, Sarah Waters was left the princely sum of 500 pounds by her father. Joseph left Tolland in 1736 for Newington and then in 1742 moved to Kent in the hills of western Connecticut.

Records show Samuel Benton, Senior gave Daniel 40 acres in Tolland on February 20, 1719 in consideration of love and goodwill. It was bounded East on Joshua Loomis, West on a highway, South on Barnabus Hinsdale and North on Ephriam Hickox. It is assumed this plot had been surveyed by the father himself. It is interesting to note that Tolland did have a highway that early. This gift was to be all that Daniel received in his father's will of 1744.

The early land deeds don't identify whether they are for Samuel or his son. Since the father was 60 years old we can assume he surveyed very small acreage, only that which was allowed to him as a signer of the petitions. We assume, therefore, that most of the deeds were for the son. The later and his Uncle Joseph first surveyed parcels of 45 acres each near Skungamund Pond but there are no deeds showing how they disposed of them. They took land at the center of town for their houselots, about 40 acres. The largest additional parcels Samuel Jr. obtained in the early days included one of 60 Acres and one of 90 acres.

THE DANIEL BENTON HOMESTEAD

Oldest house in Tolland, very well preserved



MORE ON PAGES 376 THROUGH 384

SETTLER'S ROCK

On Gehring Road.* The Bentons and others may have camped underneath nights when clearing and surveying their lands at the first days



* See map page 254

The Joshua tract

Towns south of Tolland began forming rapidly and Coventry, adjoining Tolland, naturally based its border definition on the Joshua tract which vaguely specified "all that tract of land lying from the mountain in sight of Hartford northward to a pond called Shenups, east to Willimatic river, south by said river, west by Hartford bounds except three hundred acres already sold to certain persons" No wonder the Tolland and Coventry settlers couldn't agree to their boundary and Joseph and Francis West got caught on the wrong side of the eventual border. Which by the way wasn't finally legalized until 1728.

Meeting House Hill

Another difficulty in locating "Tolland" came about when the first settlers were situating the town center. They laid out their lots on high ground, "Meeting House Hill", in 1713 and they thought they were near the center of the Tolland tract. But when the boundary with Coventry was announced in 1720, they found they were in the extreme south end of town. When the first meeting house was to be built in 1722, the other settlers insisted that it be built in the real center of Tolland, so it was built on what came to be known as Tolland Street. The plan for "Meeting House Hill" was then abandoned. That area then became known as "Grant Hill". George Bradley, Samuel III's father-in-law bought his first homelot there in 1716.

Land Frenzy

In studying the numerous land deeds it becomes apparent that the settlers initially acquired much land and then proceeded to exchange lots and buy and sell others very often. This great stress devoted to their land ownership detracted greatly from their devotion to the Puritan God. Granting their sons enough land caused some of the stress probably. The Great Awakening that was to come shocked them into a more righteous relationship to their God.

In the succeeding chapters some of the families land transactions will be outlined. Interpreting the deeds for these lands was very difficult as the location of most of them depended on the location of adjoining parcels which were in turn depended on their adjoining parcels. Samuel III's major parcel, however, was distinguished by a road, a mountain and the town line.

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Towns south of Tolland began forming rapidly and Coventry, adjoining Tolland, naturally based its border definition on the Joshua tract which vaguely specified "all that tract of land lying from the mountain in sight of Hartford northward to a pond called Shenups, east to Willimatic river, south by said river, west by Hartford bounds except three hundred acres already sold to certain persons" No wonder the Tolland and Coventry settlers couldn't agree to their boundary and Joseph and Francis West got caught on the wrong side of the eventual border. Which by the way wasn't finally legalized until 1728.

Meeting House Hill

Another difficulty in locating "Tolland" came about when the first settlers were situating the town center. They laid out their lots on high ground, "Meeting House Hill", in 1713 and they thought they were near the center of the Tolland tract. But when the boundary with Coventry was announced in 1720, they found they were in the extreme south end of town. When the first meeting house was to be built in 1722, the other settlers insisted that it be built in the real center of Tolland, so it was built on what came to be known as Tolland Street. The plan for "Meeting House Hill" was then abandoned. That area then became known as "Grant Hill". George Bradley, Samuel III's father-in-law bought his first homelot there in 1716.

Land Frenzy

In studying the numerous land deeds it becomes apparent that the settlers initially acquired much land and then proceeded to exchange lots and buy and sell others very often. This great stress devoted to their land ownership detracted greatly from their devotion to the Puritan God. Granting their sons enough land caused some of the stress probably. The Great Awakening that was to come shocked them into a more righteous relationship to their God.

In the succeeding chapters some of the families land transactions will be outlined. Interpreting the deeds for these lands was very difficult as the location of most of them depended on the location of adjoining parcels which were in turn depended on their adjoining parcels. Samuel III's major parcel, however, was distinguished by a road, a mountain and the town line.

THE DANIEL BENTON HOMESTEAD

Oldest house in Tolland, very well preserved



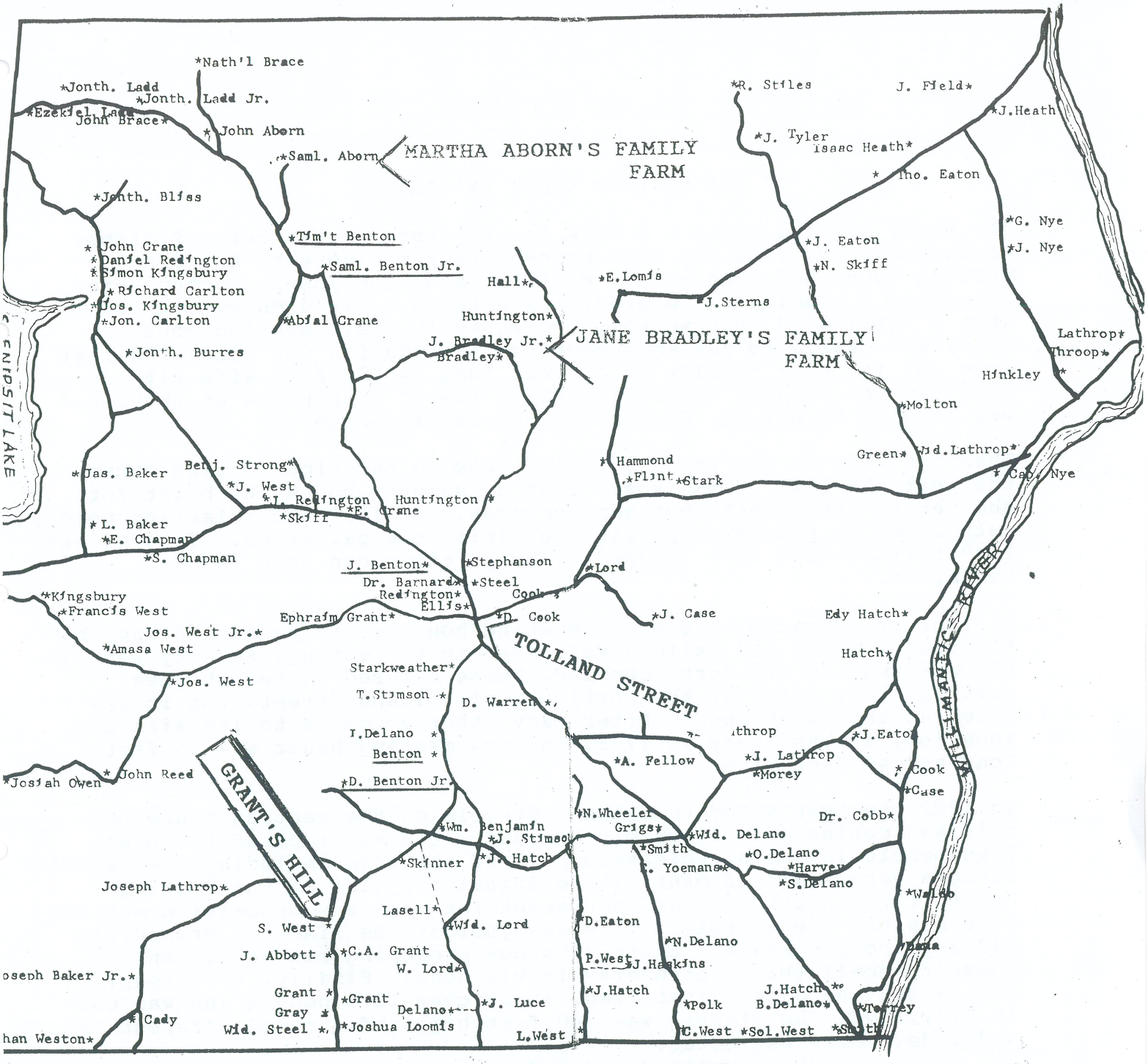
MORE ON PAGES 376 THROUGH 384

SETTLER'S ROCK

On Gehring Road.* The Bentons and others may have camped underneath nights when clearing and surveying their lands at the first days



* See map page 254



FOUR BENTON FARMS SHOW ON THIS 1754 MAP - TIMOTHY, SAMUEL JR. JOSIAH, DANIEL JR. DR. BARNARD SHOWS NEAR "J BENTON" IN THE TOWN CENTER. FORMERLY JOSEPH"S HOME LOT. ALSO JANE BRADLEY AND MARTHA ABORN HOME LOTS

TOWN OF TOLLAND.

1754.

This map was developed from an old chart in which the roads and the names were only roughly sketched in. The chart was submitted to the General Court in 1754 to decide a disagreement between the town and the citizens of the north-west quadrant over the location of the new church.

THE MEETING HOUSE IN TOLLAND

The first meeting house - a work in progress - never quite finished. On November 19, 1719 the town passed its first vote to build a meeting house and Noah Grant, William Eaton and Joseph Benton were appointed a committee "to order its affairs." It didn't, for it wasn't until 1723 that worship commenced in their meeting house. Delay was caused to get agreement to its location and size. The last vote set its size finally as 46 feet long and 35 feet wide with 20 feet between joints. Later, in 1725 a tax of four pence on the pound was imposed to pay for furnishing the meetinghouse.

Then, in 1726 it was voted to build pews on the floor raised above the rest. In 1728 it was voted that a "sabbath house" be built for shelter in the interim between services. In 1730 the selectmen were authorized to provide a pulpit and finish the galleries. In 1744 and 1749 parishioners were allowed to build their own pews in the galleries.

By 1751 it appeared that a new meeting house would be needed and in the town meeting 110 ballots were cast in the voting. Seventy were in the affirmative and forty opposed. Those opposed wanted the new meeting house sited at the North end of Tolland Street, but it was sited at the South end. After many other votes as to its size and location, it was ready in 1755. The new meeting house was 56 feet long and 40 feet wide.

In 1792 the town voted to raise a steeple on the meeting house but this was contested, ostensibly because a tax was imposed to do so. Townspeople in the northwestern part of the town including the Samuel Bentons were again adamant. The original spotting of the Meeting House at the South end was the reason for the many opposition motions made against the steeple. This was just at the time the Methodists had arrived and started their vigorous preaching but Ariel Benton doesn't recall this controversy in his book. Finally, the steeple was raised and a bell installed. It weighed 1010 pounds and was cast in Troy, N.Y. The steeple was 100 feet high and aroused interest far and wide. Some wag noted:

Poor Tolland! Grand People!
Old meeting house and new steeple!

This building lasted until 1838 when a new church was built and the old one taken down.

The site of the first meeting house is unknown.

HOW THE BENTONS SHARED PUBLIC OFFICE IN EARLY TOLLAND

In the struggle to forge homes and farms out of the wilderness, the settlers of the new town of Tolland took time to form their own government and Church. Three Benton men from Hartford held important positions. Little is recorded about forming the Church but town records do show who the men were who were chosen by the townsmen to govern them.

The town of Windsor claimed the territory which came to be called Tolland and men of Windsor took steps to petition the General Assembly in 1713 for its permission to establish a town. At that time Eastern Connecticut was being opened up to settlement as well as land in Western Connecticut because the early towns no longer had enough land for the second and third sons of the founding families. Coventry just to the south of Tolland had been settled in 1707.

As it turned out there weren't enough men in Windsor interested to work to build a home in the wilderness but there were men in Eastern Massachusetts and other Connecticut towns who wanted land. Some of them may have already taken up sites by that time. In later petitions to the General Assembly names of non-Windsor men, including the Bentons, appear more and more often. Possibly Windsor men, realizing they could not use all the land available, solicited men who were known to them to come and settle beside them. Thus the Bentons in Hartford may have been asked by their Windsor friends to join in the settlement of Tolland.

The Balance Between Windsor Men and Others

While there were more Windsor men, the Massachusetts men held more town offices in the beginning. Also, from the small Hartford contingent of six men, the three Bentons did more than their share. Stephen Steel, called to be the minister, was also from Hartford.

Counting those who bought and sold land and those who surveyed out land in the period up to 1729, the first 15 years of the town's life, there were roughly 74 adult male residents in Tolland. The public positions held show only 27% of the positions were held by Windsor men, while Massachusetts men held 36%. Yet Windsor men outnumbered the Massachusetts men. The three Bentons held 17%. Those from other Connecticut towns held 22%, close to their portion of the residents.

While these percentages appear precise they should be taken very cautiously because the underlying numbers depend on records easily misinterpreted. They do approximate the participation of the four groups, however. In particular, Joseph Hatch who held many positions is counted as coming from Coventry although his roots were in Massachusetts. John Huntington, a very prominent man, had Norwich roots but is counted as a Windsor resident. The origin of many other men is also not quite clear.

ORIGIN	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF MALE RESIDENTS	%	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OFFICES HELD	%
Windsor	29	39	73	27
Massachusetts	22	30	99	36
Hartford	7	9	48	17
Other Connecticut	16	22	55	22
Total	74		275	

The Benton's Status

The Bentons found themselves in the midst of strangers from many towns so it is remarkable that they were immediatley chosen to key positions - Joseph Benton as Town Clerk and Daniel Benton as Selectman. They had the acceptance of the men of Windsor because they were known to them from the time Joseph Benton was a suitor of Martha Peck of Windsor and their marriage. (Joseph Peck was named in a 1719 petition.) Nevertheless, Joseph and Daniel impressed all the other settlers. The Benton men do not seem to have carried any status from Samuel Benton of Hartford, Joseph's brother, because he wasn't prominent in Hartford. Merely coming from from the capital city may have added to their stature somewhat but Brace and Cadwell from Hartford had no offices. Joseph was a wise old man of 57 but Daniel was a young man of 22 leaving out age as a major factor. The conclusion must be that they had strong personalities the others liked and respected. They continued to hold the respect of the others as they took on more responsibilities, particularly Joseph's appointment to find a minister.

Samuel Benton Jr. took on his duties later, the first in 1719 to build the meetinghouse, but mainly in the years following his election as Sergeant in the Train Band. His popularity appears when the Church met in his house before the meeting house was built. It is easy to picture that house as a frequent meeting place for the settlers after work had been finished. Perhaps the women met there during the day also to share and gossip over hand work. Samuel and Mary apparently were known as sociable and well informed.

Daniel Benton, a mere unmarried youth of 22, was elected a Selectman in 1717, the town's first, along with a Windsor man and a Massachusetts man. His gift of 40 acres from grandfather Samuel of Hartford didn't come for another year and his allotment of land from the town proprietors didn't follow until later that year so his stake in the town was only a piece of land he had been able to survey out for himself early on. He wasn't made an "inhabitant" officially until October 20, 1720. He served as selectman twice, and as moderator, fence viewer and tax collector.

Joseph Benton was voted to be the first Town Clerk and he served three years. In 1719 the town meeting entrusted him to undertake the most sensitive task imaginable; that of finding a minister. Then, after Rev. Stephen Steel was agreeably settled in Tolland, Joseph was asked to write a plea to the Assembly to allow the Tolland men to form a Church. He was a Deacon. He served as a Selectman, a moderator six times and acted on six committees. When the proprietors met to divide up the Ceder Swamp land in 1728 they met at his house. Undoubtedly it was Joseph Hatch and his family who eventually persuaded Joseph Benton and some of his family to leave Tolland in 1750 for Kent as many of the Hatch family were settling there.

Samuel Benton Jr. was chosen a Selectman four times and served on committees seven times. He was made an "inhabitant" in September 1721. His last tour as Selectman was in 1728 the date this chapter concludes.

The Train Band

Samuel Benton Jr, was voted by the train band members to be a Sergeant when the group was first organized in 1722. These organizations were part military and part social. They were ostensibly for the protection of the town if ever danger threatened but in Tolland this was very unlikely. They met for drilling at regular intervals and provided a spectacle for the townspeople to watch. After drill a grand time was had by the members imbibing freely accompanied with boisterous hilarity. Officers were selected based on social position, one of the times when class status belied democracy.

The Sergeants and Corporals, however, were voted on by the members casting aside class and social position. Thus Samuel Jr. was a man of the people in keeping with the status of the Bentons as common husbandmen.

Officers of the first train band were Joseph Hatch, Joseph Pack and John Huntington. Hatch was a well-to-do land owner originally from Falmouth, Massachusetts and was a early settler in Coventry. There he became known as "Lieutenant Hatch." He owned lands near the ill defined border of the two towns and gradually moved into Tolland, selling his Coventry lands. He was also honored as the first town tavern keeper. Huntington, a large landowner, was of a prestigious Norwich family. Joseph Pack was in Tolland very early and may have been from Falmouth as was the Hatch family.

Other Men From Hartford

Three other Hartford men were original settlers. One was a young man, Barnabus Hindsdale, a fellow Second Church member of the Bentons who probably came along with them to Tolland. The first acreage he surveyed was adjacent to Daniel's. He married Hannah Skinner of Windsor in Tolland in 1725 after he became a settler showing how Hartford and Windsor townspeople were close. Another man is assumed to be one of the sons of Stephen Brace from First Church Hartford. He was an original petitioner and land owner. He willed land in Tolland to his sons but it's doubtful he resided there himself. At least one son raised children in Tolland. Mathew Cadwell was on the original Windsor petition and was a member of First Church, Hartford. The only Hartford men to hold offices were the Bentons who stood Hartford proud.

In Tolland, a small community just forming, it is noteworthy how well men from varying localities got along in administering their new town. The first selectmen, for instance were from Hartford, Windsor and Massachusetts. Apparently they did well and most of the other committees and offices found men from different origins handling their tasks together. The minutes of the town meetings show no disputes other than an occasional protest over the distribution of a piece of land. When the Committee to build the meeting house on which Samuel served evidently didn't perform another committee was readily available to finish it.

There were very few references in the minutes of the town meetings to problems of individual settlers. One curiosity was when Daniel Benton's horse was killed by the gore of a cow when he was at John Bissell's in the nearby town of Bolton "while in the service of the proprietors." Bissell was reluctant to pay for the loss of the horse probably waiting to see if the deep pockets of the Tolland's Treasury might save him the cost. Evidently Daniel argued strongly to be reimbursed and made the Town Meeting feel responsible. It's response was extended only if Bissell couldn't be persuaded to ante up. A committee was appointed to negotiate but the outcome is not recorded.

George Bradley, destined to become the father-in-law of Samuel Benton Jr.'s son, held no office in this period. He was old enough to have experience but he was never called on. He bought Tolland land in 1716 and married Hannah Braman the next year. Jane Bradley Benton was born in 1723.

Tolland Was A Microcosm of New England

Descendants of many strains of New England's first settlers converged in Tolland to find common ground. From Windsor came those of the Dorchester people from the West Counties who arrived on the ship Mary and John. From Hartford came those who followed preachers Hooker and Prudden. From the other Connecticut towns came descendants of the founders of New London. From Wethersfield a descendant of that town's founder. From Plymouth, Massachusetts, Pilgrim descendants. From Scituate came descendants of its founders. From north of Boston came descendants of the early Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. All were found in early Tolland. Each seemed to submerge his sectionalism and prejudices for the general well-being.

The Bentons and Windsor families now faced living in a cosmopolitan town. Previously their friends had been restricted to people of their own background. Now families from far away Ipswich, Falmouth and Stonington were bringing their own peculiar manners, customs and speech into a setting which was new for everyone. All would learn from the other. Some had experience already in organizing a new town. Some were distinguished and smart. In this new situation the Bentons were not dismayed taking part in the town's direction alongside many who were of better rank and had more learning and experience. They proved their worth.

Had the preachers of the ancestors of these settlers beheld this amalgam they would have been dismayed because all the rancorous religious differences of past decades had been submerged in the quest for land. Stephen Steel, from Hartford and a recent graduate of the Collegiate School (Yale) in New Haven, was readily accepted by all as their preacher, including the Boston area men. Little concern was expressed, apparently, to such previously hotly debated concepts as the Halfway Covenant, the Saybrook Platform or the Cambridge Platform. Tolland, a growing town, needed to work hard for material gain and leave religion to the new hired man, Rev. Steel. But after ten years of secular living, a spiritual bolt, seemingly loosed from heaven, would engulf them and all Eastern Connecticut people when Jonathon Edwards, George Whitefield and others preached the Great Awakening.

Sources

Place of origin for Windsor men was Windsor Vital Records, Windsor land deeds and Stile's history of Windsor. Massachusetts men were identified by family histories, Waldo's, Cole's or Savage's books. Connecticut origins were found in the above sources, Barbour card files and town vital records. Joseph Kingsbury and the Ladds were probably from Norwich. The Wests and Yeomans were from Stonington, the Thomas Eatons from Woodstock, Wallis from Windham, Goodrich from Wethersfield and Cady from Canterbury.

Note concerning JOHN HUNTINGTON. He was counted 16 times so his origin is critical to the town counts. His roots are clearly in Norwich and the family history book ("Huntington Family History in America" published by Huntington Family Association in 1915) states that he was born in Norwich in 1691 and "early in the settlement of Tolland removed to that town."

Hardly that simple. A 1714 deed in Windsor records made by Samuel and Abigail Baker make him a gift of 30 acres with dwelling. The deed states it is for their "loving son-in-law dwelling with us." This accounts for his name on the 1713 petition to form Tolland and his allotment of 12 acres in a 1729 division of Windsor lands. His mother was Abigail Lothrop who had married John Huntington Sr. first and then married Samuel Baker. He died 1715. John Huntington Jr. was a stepson, not son-in-law of Samuel Baker. He married Thankful Warner of Windham. He was 32 and she was 26. The deed is conclusive, however, that he lived in Windsor and had land there. His prestige derived from the the prominent position of the Norwich Huntingtons and his purchase of 300 acres in Tolland from John Ellsworth of Windsor in 1719. He received a large grant from his father's estate. Therefore he was named an Ensign in the Train Band at age 31 and is referred to as "Esq." by Waldo.

Jonathon Delano of Dartmouth, near New Bedford, Mass. was grandson of Phillipe De la Noye, a Huguenot, who came in 1621 on the Fortune, the second ship to come to the Plymouth Plantation. As he was in full communion with the French Church, he was admitted to the Pilgrim's Church.

Stephen Skiff of Falmouth, Massachusetts was a grandson of James Skiff who arrived at Plymouth Plantation in 1636. Stephen married Elizabeth Hatch in 1722 in Falmouth and came to Tolland thereafter.

The Lathrops, Ebenezer Nye and the Hatches were first settlers of Falmouth in 1660, having migrated from Scituate, settled in 1628.

From North of Boston: John Abbott, Andover; Nathaniel Flint and the Eatons, Reading; Thomas Whipple and Peter Emmons, Ipswich.
From Lynn: the Stearns, the Paulks, James Stimson, Anthony Slafter.

Books

"Huntington Family in America" Huntington Family Association printers, 1915.

"Huntington Family" by Simon and Margaret Huntington, 1863

"Descendants of Andrew Warner" 1919.

"Thomas Hatch of Barnstable and some of his Descendants" by Charles L. Pack.

"Fulton, Hayden, Warner Ancestry in America" by Clarence Leonard, 1923. (Cadwell family)

"Brace Lineage" by J. Sherman Brace, 1913.

"Early History of the Town of Falmouth" by Charles W. Jenkins, 1889

"Goodrich Family in America", 1889.

Note: Early minutes are illegible. Train band officers are counted as having been elected each year. The train band is assumed to have been reorganized in 1725 and more Captains named. The title Captain appears often and it is doubted that the train band needed that many but they were counted anyway. They had status apparently. Those given the title of Deacon were counted as having been elected in 1723 when Rev. Steel was ordained and each year thereafter. They were **Joseph Benton,** Francis West and JOSEPH ROCKWELL. Steel was not counted as an office holder.

TO JOSEPH BENTON - "GET A MINISTER TO BE AMONGST US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AMONGST US"

The words of the town vote in 1719 at a meeting of the inhabitants seemed to impose on Joseph a difficult task - to go search far and wide around New England for potential candidates. Actually, it was no problem at all for Joseph if we look at the circumstances of the moment. Stephen Steele, the candidate eventually elected, was a member of the Benton's Second Church in Hartford, was probably well known to them and probably was agreed on by the townspeople even before Joseph as voted to get a minister. Furthermore, Joseph carried the official title of Town Clerk and thus could act with authority.

The Steele family

George and Margery Steele, with son James, were in Thomas Hooker's congregation when it came to Hartford. James and Hannah Stocking should have been good friends as their homelots adjoined. Andrew Benton was about the same age as James and they may have been friendly also during the time in Hartford that Andrew and Hannah were espoused.

The Steele family was one of the "withdrawers" from First Church along with Andrew and Hannah Benton when fifteen families founded Second Church in 1669. James Steel, senior, and Bethia were parents of James Steel, Jr. who married Sarah Barnard. Stephen was their son and was born April 7, 1696 but not baptized until October 2, 1698. Daniel Benton was born about the same time so the two must have been friends.

Rev. Buckingham of Second Church

The Rev. Thomas Buckingham had taken up his ministry at Second Church in 1694 after a lapse of four years in the Church's leadership. Apparently a renewed interest in membership had come about since many joined about that time. Joseph Benton himself had united with the Church in March of 1696. Sarah Barnard and Elizabeth Steele joined in March of 1695.

Stephen at Yale

Stephen studied with tutors of the Collegiate School of Connecticut, which became known as Yale College just after he graduated in 1718. This was a new college as Rev. John Davenport, along with many others, wanted a college in Connecticut to reflect their views as contrasted with the views of the Massachusetts clergy expressed at Harvard.

ANCESTORS OF THE REV. STEPHEN STEELE

John Steele of Farmington --- brothers -- George Steele -- Margery Sorrell married Oct. 8, 1608 in Fairsted, Essex

Elizabeth	James**	Richard	Martha
m Thomas Watts	b 1622*	d1639	m Henderson
1645	d 1697		
d 1684	m(1) Bethia Bishop** 10-18-1651		
	m(2) Bethia (Hopkins) Stocking***		

Mary	Sarah	James	John	Hannah	Abigail	Elizabeth	Rachael
m Hall	b1656	b1654	m Melitiah	b 1669	b 1673	rec 2nd	
	mSamuel Borman	d1712	Bradford	rec 2nd	rec 2nd	church	
		m Sarah Barnard	d 1697	church	church	1695	

Mary	James	Johnathon	**STEPHEN**	Sarah	Elizabeth
b 1686	b 1688	b 1693	b Apr 7 1695	m John	m Cyprian
Joseph Ashley	d 1719	d 1753	bp Oct 2 1698	Watson	Watson
		m Dorothy Mygatt 1715	m Ruth Porter May 2, 1720 in Hadley		

Ruth	Stephen	Eleazar	Elisha	Sarah	Mehitable	James	John	Aaron

*in Fairsted, Essex.
**original members of Second Church.
***sister-in-law of Hannah Stocking Benton.

Source "Steele Family" by Daniel Steel Durrie, 1859,
"History of South Church" by Parker,
Conn. Hist. Society Genealogy files.

The Collegiate School was started in Saybrook in 1701. A Rev. Thomas Buckingham was one of the early trustees and he was the uncle of the minister of the same man who became Second Church's minister in 1694. From the beginning, political forces tugged to have the School located in either Hartford or New Haven. The school wasn't very successful and some of the graduating classes numbered less than five men.

In 1715 Rev. Thomas Buckingham of Second Church became a trustee, perhaps because his son Isaac was a student. Rev. Buckingham and Rev. Samuel Woolbridge of East Hartford managed to create dissent among the students at Saybrook saying that their tutors were unfit and that in Wethersfield Elisha Williams was more learned. Since living conditions at Saybrook were not the best and since many of the students had homes nearer to Wethersfield, many left in 1716 to form a school there. Elisha Williams was a Harvard 1711 graduate while the two tutors in Saybrook were young and seemingly less competent. Stephen came to Wethersfield and graduated in 1718.

Eli Yale

At about this time Elihu Yale who wanted to found a college in America similar to the English colleges donated a large number of books to the School and when they were sold they provided enough money to start a school building. The politics favored New Haven at the moment and the School was named after this benefactor.

Stephen's class consisted of 10 others, one of whom was Isaac Buckingham, the son of the minister. Robert Treat the son of Governor Treat was also in the class. Stephen is ranked near the bottom of the list of graduates because the author of the book on Yale graduates, Franklin B. Dexter, arranged them in order of "family rank" i.e. prestige as he saw it.* Stephen's tutors and instructors at Yale at that time were conservative members of the Congregational establishment.

Stephen at Hadley

Stephen taught at the Hopkins Grammar School in Hadley, Mass. for year after his graduation. A young man from Hartford would be welcome in Hadley. In the first place, dissidents from First Church had left Hartford to settle there in 1659 so there were family connections between the two towns. Stephen's mother was a Barnard and John Barnard was a first settler of Hadley. Secondly, Edward Hopkins from Hartford had left a bequest "to give some encouragement in these foreign plantations for the breeding of hopeful youths both at the grammar school and college for the public service of the colony in future times." Some of his estate, ¶308 was given to Hadley to start a school in 1667. Other parts of the bequest went to New Haven and Hartford to start schools there.

Tolland decides

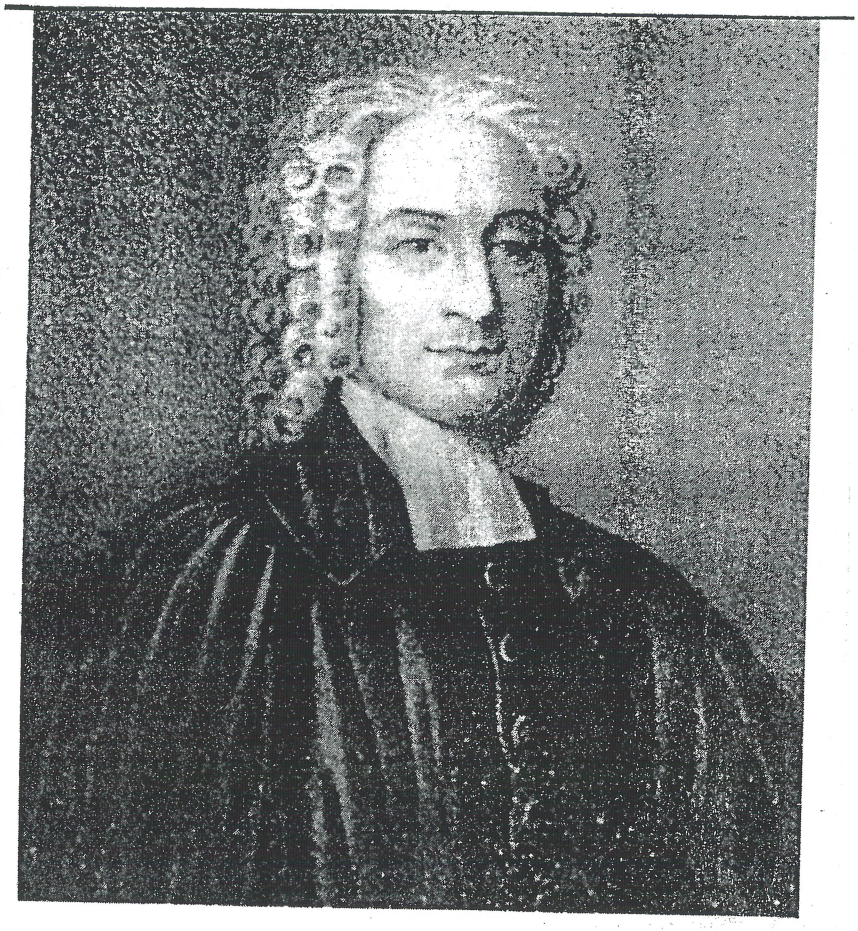
In Tolland, the selection of a minister "to be amongst us and to preach" was probably discussed before Joseph was tasked to go and find one. Undoubtedly the Windsor settlers had prospects in mind from their own connections and would have suggested them but there weren't any other recent Yale or Harvard graduates from the Hartford area to chose from. The need for Tolland was clearly someone they could afford and that would mean a young person. With many new towns being formed at that time how plentiful was the supply of prospects? Stephen's name came readily to mind to the Benton's and was proposed, although they would have had no way of knowing if he might be interested. What tipped the scale in his favor may have been the fact that he was a graduate of the nearby Collegiate School, who would lend Tolland prestige and would be well qualified to "preach the gospel amongst us." So it came about that Joseph the town clerk was voted to get a minister.

Joseph succeeded ably as Stephen began his pastoral duties before the year was out. His pay at Hopkins Grammar School was ¶40 a year and since he was probably in an espousal relationship with Ruth Porter already, he certainly would be susceptible to an offer of a position paying more money. Ruth was the daughter of Col. Samuel Porter of Hadley and their marriage took place on May 2, 1720 in Hadley. Probably Joseph was in no position to make a firm financial pledge so the subject of pay would trouble everyone later.

How was Joseph to make an approach? Joseph might have first talked with Isaac Buckingham, Stephen's Yale classmate, to get an appreciation of Stephen's attitude. Isaac and his father, Rev. Buckingham, may have wondered why Isaac was not being considered for the role. Maybe someone wrote Stephen a letter asking him to consider preaching in Tolland as Joseph had notoriously bad handwriting; a real drawback for a town clerk. Joseph may have traveled up along the Connecticut river to talk with Stephen in Hadley, which was just east of Northampton. Samuel, Jr. may have accompanied him as it would be a chance for him to visit his Pomeroy in-laws there.

After graduation, Isaac Buckingham went to New Haven for further studies and died in 1731 so he may not have been interested in a church position.

* "Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College" by Franklin B. Dexter. Cedric B. Cowing in his book "The Saving Remnant" ranks Steel as 9 in a class of 13, improperly assuming Dexter's listing was academic qualification and not realizing Dexter was basing it on family status.



The Rev. Elisha Williams tutored 14 Yale students in Wethersfield from 1716-1718.

JOSEPH BENTON - "A PRAYER SHOULD BE PUT INTO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY" FOR A CHURCH

Having settled a minister amongst them, the inhabitants needed to organize a church. Mary Daniels writing about this in the 1923 "History of the Congregational Church" tells us the story of these events.

When Joseph Benton convinced Stephen Steel to come to the town as its minister there was no meeting house nor church body organized. Tradition had it that a log house served to hold the Sabbath congregations for the first three or four years. Various town votes reveal a difference of opinion as to Mr. Steel's salary and as to whether he or the people should build his house. One vote in January 31, 1721 reads, "they would not agree with Mr. Steel no otherwise but as it was last voted, to wit; seventy-five pounds and he to build his house." At the same time it was agreed that his salary should begin when he began to preach with us, except the time when he was waiting."

It was perhaps difficult to gather the seventy-five pounds "to be paid in money or provisions," for after a few months a committee was appointed "to reckon with Mr. Steel to see what was paid him and what was behind of his due." Seventy-five pounds was a lot more than the 40 pounds he was receiving at Hopkins school. Each of the first 25 families would be required to pay 3 pounds for his salary each year. In 1719 it was voted to allot 80 acres for the ministers lot.

Stephen Steel was amongst the inhabitants in late 1719 but where would he live? Especially so when he would be bringing his new wife to Tolland in the Spring of the next year? The settlers were still busy laying out their lands and building their own houses. Yet early in 1721 the town was still undecided as to who would built his house and it was voted then that he would do so. The log house used to hold meetings in the first years may have been the Steel's abode.

THE PRAYER

By 1722 it was time to formally organize their church and so "a prayer should be put into the General Assembly" to petition for a church:
"To the Honorable, the Governor, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled in Hartford, May 10, 1722. The prayer of Joseph Benton, of Tolland, humbly showeth: that under the conduct of Divine Providence, and by favor of this honorable assembly, the aforementioned town of Tolland is settled with a competent number of inhabitants; and having obtained a suitable person to preach the gospel amongst us to the good satisfaction of the inhabitants, we are desirous to enjoy the benefits all gospel ordinances amongst us, to which end, we, as our law directs, apply ourselves to this honorable assembly for their approbation therein; and by a vote of said town, your petitioner is empowered to make his application to this honorable assembly; and your countenance herein will be further obligation to your petitioner ever to pray, as is duty bound.

Signed - Joseph Benton."

Steel Ordained

Joseph Benton was neither the Town Clerk nor a Selectman in 1722 so his petition may have been made as an acting church deacon.
Both the Upper and Lower Houses of the General Court granted this petition. The next year on June 19, 1723 the town voted "that the church hath liberty to ordain Mr. Stephen Steel pastor of a church in Tolland, that the charge of Mr. Steel's ordination is done at the expense of the town, that Noah Grant shall be one to see that provision be made for the ordination of Mr. Steel, that Daniel Cook shall be one to take care that provision be made for the ordination of Mr. Steel." The expense of the ordination would mainly be for purchasing food and drink for the townspeople to celebrate.

THE BENTONS OF TOLLAND AND "THE GREAT AWAKENING"

Shubael Stearns, zealot, and the "New Light" enthusiasts, beset Rev. Stephen Steel's established Church but it survived unchanged while religious fervor swirled around Tolland. Steel faced an uncertain future when the Awakening began but he was not converted to the new enthusiastic preaching. He had to recognize, however, that his congregation was affected by the mood of times.

During the "Great Awakening" New England was torn by Rev. Jonathan Edward's fervent preaching and by Rev. George Whitehead's electrifying appearances. The people clamored to renew their covenant, itinerant preachers invaded towns splitting them into factions and converted ministers staged revivals. Everyone, it seems, was affected one way or another. All certainly heard about it.

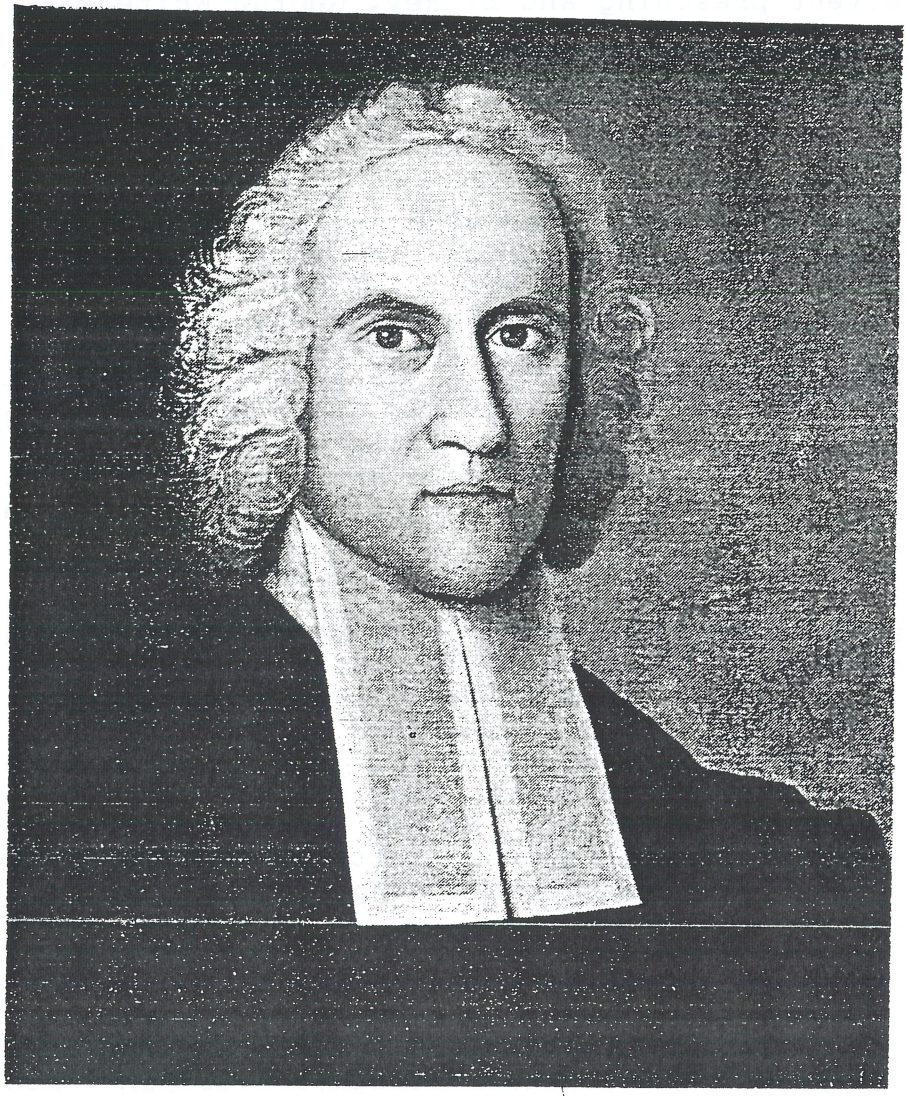
The Bentons can't be identified with any of the groups because Church records weren't left for us. We would like to discern which of the itinerants the Bentons heard and how they managed to do so. If they didn't, how and in what form did the word of the Awakening reach them? Lastly how did they perceive the Awakening and how did it change them? The answer to that question is unknowable, of course. One could speculate that the older Bentons being naturally conservative sided with the "Old Lights" and Rev. Steel, their friend, and that their children were attracted to the new style. But first, it is necessary to describe the individuals and events.

Examining the Town Historian's View

Loren P. Waldo, writing later in 1861, is the only source of information as to these events in Tolland. He credits Rev. Steele's sound judgement and Christian clarity with "controlling the excited feeling of the people at this time to continue their attachment to him and to the church." Yet he admits "the inhabitants of Tolland, in common with other towns in New England, were seriously affected by the preaching of Whitefield and his associates." Waldo also says that when the Separatist sect left Tolland, it "left him (Steel) in charge of a respectable congregation without any open dissension."

We should pay close attention to Waldo's words, undoubtedly written long after the events and with a probable bias against the innovators. "Controlling the excited feeling" means he was able exert authority. "Continue their attachment to him" means a personal loyalty. "Left him in charge" means no group successfully challenged him. "A respectable congregation" means orthodoxy without troublemakers. "without any open dissension" means there actually were disgruntled dissidents but were kept in the background.

Jonathan Edwards: The most talented theologian America ever produced.



Source: "The National Experience"
Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

Shubael Stearns

He was one dissident who didn't stay in the background. He may have heard Whitefield on the later's 1744-45 tour and spurned Steel's established church to form a radical Separatist sect; neither "Old Light" nor "New Light." He eventually turned Baptist and finally left with his family and some other followers for Virginia in 1754. He became an eminently successful preacher in the South.

Three Phases of the "Awakening"

"The Frontier Revival" phase started in 1733 in Rev. Jonathan Edward's Church in Northampton and set the expectant mood that Whitefield later capitalized on. It first arose among the young people as a result of Edwards preaching and counseling. Solomon Stoddard, the previous minister, had converted many young people in five "Harvests" in the years past so that renewal of the Spirit was in the town's tradition. Mary Pomeroy Benton had lived there during the time of the "Harvests." The young people's increased interest in religion spread among the general population. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation's being brought to them. A Spiritual aura overwhelmed the town for a short period.

Edwards described it in his 1738 book: "All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls and were wont often to meet together in private homes for religious purposes; and such meetings when appointed were wont greatly to be thronged. There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the Eternal World."

Word of the Northampton's divine blessing spread mostly by word of mouth and but also by Edwards visits. The aura spread through many Western Massachusetts towns and in Connecticut - Suffield, Windsor, East Windsor, Enfield, Coventry, Mansfield, Lebanon, Bolton, Hebron and Tolland. People experienced this wondrous release from the testimony of visitors from other towns. The Bentons might have received visits or excited messages from Ruth Steel's family in Hadley, Massachusetts and from Mary Pomeroy Benton's family in Northampton and so passed the word on to others in Tolland. Mary might well empathize with the Northampton relatives from remembering her experience during Stoddard's "Harvests" there when she was a young girl. Also, the Bentons were friendly with many in Windsor who had the same experiences. The stories of the new aroused feelings may have inspired many to flock to Rev. Steel's services eager to hear his words anew. Gradually this phase seemed to evaporate but it demonstrated that the people were susceptible of aroused feelings. As laymen began witnessing their religious testimony to one another, the idea that laymen might preach took hold. In the next phase it happened.

MARY POMEROY BENTON'S COVENTRY COUSINS

Henry Woodward married Elizabeth ( )1638



Freedom Woodward
born 1642
m 1662
Jedediah Strong

children:
Elizabeth b 1664
m Ebenezer Wright
Abigail b 1666
m Thomas King
Jedediah b 1667
Ford b 1668
Hannah b 1671 d 1762
m Benjamin Carpenter
1691
Thankful b 1672 d 1742
m Thomas Root 1691
Lydia b 1675 d 1718
m David Lee 1695

Preserved b 1680
m Tabitha Lee
John b 1681
Mary b 1683

Experience Woodward
born 1643
m 1661
Medad Pomeroy

children:
John b 1662
Joseph b 1664

Mehitable b 1666

Ebenezer b 1669

Joseph b 1672

Eliakim b 1675
Mindwell b 1677
Thankful b 1679

Mary b 1684
m Samuel Benton Jr. 1704

John b 1686

Thankful Woodward
born 1645
m 1662
John Taylor

John Woodward
born 1649
m 1671
Anna Dewey

Northampton, Massachusetts was the birthplace of those whose birthdates are given above.

First settlers of Coventry from Northamption in 1709:
Hannah Strong Carpenter and Benjamin Carpenter
Thankful Strong Root and Thomas Root
Lydia Strong Lee and David Lee

First Settlers of Tolland from Hartford in 1720:
Mary Pomeroy Benton and Samuel Benton Jr.

Rev. Joseph Meacham, of neighboring Coventry, had studied under Solomon Stoddard, Edward's grandfather. Meacham readily embraced Edward's "New Light" and effected a great revival there in 1735. Edwards came to preach later and stated "I had an opportunity to converse with some of the Coventry people, who gave me a remarkable Account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there."

The Benton's Coventry Cousins

Mary had two cousins on her mother's side who were living in Coventry and they were not the rude persons Edwards referred to. They were daughters of Jedediah Strong and Freedom Woodward who had married men from Northampton. They were first settlers of Coventry in 1709 and were about ten years older than Mary. They may have offered the Bentons a chance to hear Edwards preach.

The Bentons also had many connections to the Skinner family. Widow Hannah Skinner who had married into the influential Root family there in 1730 after her husband, Barnabus Hindsale, died in 1728. Barnabus came to Tolland with the Bentons and had also belonged to South Church. Daniel Benton married Mary Skinner in 1722 after he moved to Tolland. Jonathan Benton, Samuel's son, had married Martha Skinner in August 1730 in Tolland. Certainly Daniel and Mary or Jonathan and Martha might have been welcomed to Coventry by Hannah to see and hear Edwards.

Rev. Steel, encouraged by the new interest in religion and by observing Edwards methods, staged a revival in Tolland in 1735. Bentons who had neglected their church for the successes of their farms came back to hear Steel preach to them again, promising grace and forgiveness

The Second Phase - Religious Passions Unleashed

At ten o'clock in the morning, September 15, 1740 George Whitefield preached his first sermon in New England having reached Newport, Rhode Island from Charleston on Sunday the day before. Thus began the greatest single evangelistic event in New England history. His advent was presaged by reports of his phenomenal preaching skill and was amply covered by pamphlets and news reports in Boston papers. There were no newspapers or printing presses in Connecticut at the time. He attracted record crowds in Massachusetts for over a month and then on October 21st he moved down the Connecticut Valley through Suffield, Windsor, East Windsor, Hartford and Middletown with a weekend in New Haven.

WHITEFIELDS'S CONNECTICUT ITINERARY IN 1740

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21 from Springfield to Suffield to preach at 11:00 to several thousand. A noon repast at Suffield.

AFTERNOON traveled to Windsor to preach at Jonathan Marsh's church. Then traveled to East Windsor to preach at Timothy Edwards's church. He was the father of Jonathan Edwards who accompanied him this far on the trip. The group stayed in East Windsor overnight.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22 rode 3 miles to Hartford to preach to "many thousands" at First Church. It's minister said he preached to a "vast concourse."

AFTERNOON traveled to 2 miles to Wethersfield and preached to "about the same number." Rode the ten miles to Middletown and stayed the night.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 preached at Middletown at 10:00 according to the account of Nathan Cole reprinted here. Enjoyed a noon repast and traveled the 14 miles to Wallingford to preach. Afterwards rode 14 miles to New Haven.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 preached in New Haven to the Assembly with the Governor present, then to a group at his lodgings in the evening.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 preached twice to Yale students.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 preached twice in the church and in the early evening at his lodgings. Left a 8:00 PM for Milford and arrived about 10:00 after a 10 mile ride.

On the following days stops were made at Stratford, Fairfield, Norwalk and Stanford. Snow and rain plagued him and he was barely able to revive himself to preach at Stanford. He rode 11 miles to Rye afterwards, however, to end his Connecticut tour on October 29.

Connecticut thus had ample warning of his imminent arrival and Tolland's Bentons could have readily planned a trip to one of the River towns to hear him. It would take a day to get to there and after hearing him an overnight stay would be needed. The Bentons had ample friends and relations in both Windsor and Hartford to provide hospitality.

The sketch given by Nathan Cole shows the intensity of feelings prevailing. This fever would be felt in Tolland as well and since there would be only one day given on which to hear Whitefield, we must imagine the Bentons strained every bit of their energy to be sure some of them, at least, got to Windsor or Hartford. There is no way of discovering how many from Tolland went.

Since Whitefield's message and the way it was delivered radically changed many, those who actually heard him must have relayed his message with overwhelming enthusiasm in order to convert so many others who never heard him. As Waldo says "the inhabitants were seriously affected" and they had "excited feelings." Much of this has to be attributed to word of mouth testimony. The message served to relieve them of accumulated guilt of worldliness by accepting God's saving grace promised to all by Whitefield.

Hearing Jonathan Edwards in Enfield

He visited many towns in this period and in July, 1941 at an announced evening lecture in Enfield he offered his most wildly threatening sermon when he pictured sinners held above the dreadful pit of glowing flames with only the power of God to hold them up. Bentons who had heard him on Coventry may have gone to Enfield for this meeting or those who missed him at Coventry may have wanted to be sure to go to hear him. Ministers from the area attended and Steel may have been one of them.

The Itinerant Uproar

After Whitefield left Connecticut he asked Gilbert Tennant, the New Jersey evangelist, to come to New England "to blow up the devine fire already kindled there." Tennant preached in Boston and southern Connecticut. Other evangelists, both ordained and laymen, sprang up in Connecticut to become itinerant preachers. They moved throughout the Colony, especially in the Eastern section where Tolland was located. They might have addressed Tolland people, including the Bentons, in outdoor meetings or in their homes without Steel's knowledge. Two Court records that were conserved show that John Pain, an itinerant preacher from Plainfield, preached in Tolland in 1745 and that Thomas Marsh, from Windham, preached in 1746. Both were arrested and tried for entering Tolland and preaching. Others may have also done so without being arrested or their Court records preserved. Shubael Stearns probably heard them and learned.

THE TOLLAND BENTON FAMILIES AT THE TIME OF THE GREAT AWAKENING, 1740

Children's ages

SAMUEL BENTON, JUNIOR age 60
MARY POMEROY BENTON age 56

Medad, 35

Jonathan, 33 — married Martha Skinner 1730, five children born between 1733 and 1741. He died in Windsor in 1746.

Timothy, 30 — married Abigail Scott in 1738, nine children born between 1740 and 1754.

Eunice, 28

Mary, 25

Samuel, 23 — married Jane Bradley 1743, ten children born between 1744 and 1768.

Sarai, 21

DANIEL BENTON age 44
MARY SKINNER age 36

Daniel, 16 — married Mary Wheeler 1747, 10 children born between 1748 and 1766.

William,, 15 — married Sarah Burroughs 1750, 5 children born between 1751 and 1759.

Mary, 13

Elijah, 12 — Married Mehetabel Chamberlain 1751, 12 children born between 1752 and 1770

Sarah, 10 ? — died young

Hannah, 9 ? — died young

John, 8 ? — died young

Siloam 7 ? — died young

Lydia 5

Abigail 4 — married Benjamin Davis 1757

JOSEPH BENTON
SARAH WATERS BENTON

His family moved to Kent, Conn. about 1742. Joseph Jr. had moved to Farmington.

Rev. Steel had brought the Bentons and others of the town back into the church again by staging his own revival and now he could try to capture all the newly aroused enthusiasm. Picturing them on Sunday in the meetinghouse we might note Samuel and Mary, the old generation at ages 60 and 56, very attentive to his carefully written sermon as they sat in their pews well attired with Mary's cap quite neat. Son Samuel III, age 23, may have been less attentive, his mind pondering the problem of acquiring a farm of his own in order to be able to select a wife. He knew who that might be as Jane Bradley repeatedly signaled him with querulous glances from her pew. She and others of that generation may have been slightly disheveled, their caps askew, as they had been outside before the service making wild gestures in imitation of the itinerant preachers they had seen or heard about. They may have hoped to hear Rev. Steel that day change his style and instead of reading his thoughtfully prepared words, launch into a free exhortation of sin and salvation. That would have excited them.

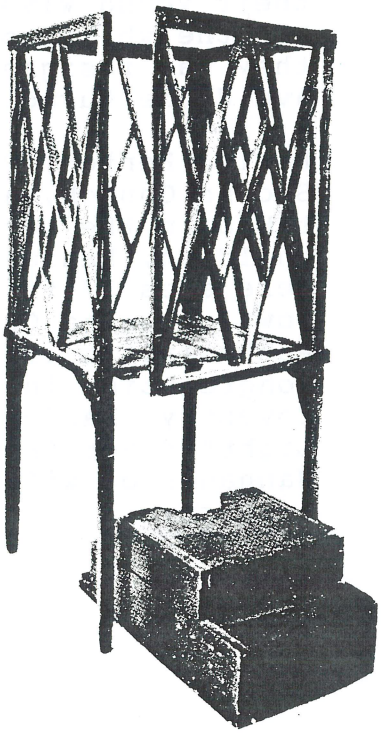
Samuel and Mary, however, were loyal to Rev. Steel, whatever his preaching. Samuel from knowing the Steel family at Second Church in Hartford and Mary from her acquaintance with Ruth Steel; both had made their way to Tolland from the Massachusetts frontier as young girls.

Sons Medad, Jonathan and Timothy, in their early thirties, and their young wives did their best to appear interested while hoping all the while to hear a loud sermon too. When disappointed as usual they had resigned themselves to continuing with Steel in order to avoid the turmoil some other churches were experiencing.

Daniel Benton, Rev. Steel's boyhood friend and peer from Hartford's Second Church, and wife, Mary Skinner Benton, may have loyally taken in the sermon in the same manner as Samuel and Mary. Their children, Daniel, Mary, William and Elijah were not yet married and were ages 17 thru 21. But Daniel's farm was in the south part of town close to Coventry where Rev. Meacham was pushing "New Light" enthusiastic preaching, appealing to the emotions of his congregation in the style Rev. Edwards started when he visited Coventry. Daniel's children, therefore, might have caught the "New Light" fever from Coventry relations. Their mother was a cousin of Hannah Root wife of Thomas Root, both prominent Coventry Church members.



George Whitefield: The Great Awakener.



Whitefield's Portable Pulpit, now in the possession of the American Tract Society, New York. The floor is about two feet from the ground. Easily folded-up.

The Coventry Church split in 1741 during the Awakening, and the residents living nearest to Tolland formed a new Church Society. Their reasons are obscure but it demonstrated to "New Light" sympathizers in Tolland the possibility of their separating from Rev. Steel's congregation. Daniel, out of close friendship with Rev. Steel, may have quelled the young people's enthusiasm for joining any group of dissidents. Mary, on the other hand, might have secretly admired the excitement her Coventry cousin Hannah was experiencing in her Church. No one, apparently, made any outward moves and, as Waldo says, Steel controlled the excited feelings of the Bentons and the remainder of the people.

The Aftermath

So much enthusiasm couldn't be sustained and the awakening subsided by 1742. Preachers argued interminably - "Was this the work of God?" More practically, - were Whitefield and the others correct in employing such heightened feelings to preach the Word? Selfishly - how to keep itinerant preachers out of established parishes? Those in the pews vigorously admonished those of opposite sides. The laymen criticized the clergy for being "unconverted." The clergy criticized the laymen of either being unresponsive or being carried away by loud itinerant preachers. Some left their pews altogether and became Separatists, such as those who left to join Shubael Stearns.

Steel's Attitude

Steel twice voted to oppose itinerant preachers conducting worship services in other towns. These votes in the Hartford North Ministerial Association took place after each of the first two Whiteheads sweeps through Connecticut. The Association, in late 1741, feared disruptions so much they passed another resolution forbidding any church member to announce, after the church meeting, that more preaching would follow in a private home. Also no member should travel to another church to hear someone other than his own preacher. Further, no member should leave his church on the excuse that his minister was "unconverted." These resolutions speak the fear the ministers felt of the unrest caused by the itinerants and domestic "New Light" preachers. Many "New Light" preachers opposed these bans feeling that enthusiastic preaching was good. Steel clearly didn't think so.

His brother-in-law, Solomon Williams of Lebanon, was a moderate "New Light." His wife was Mary Porter of Hadley, sister of Ruth Porter, Steel's wife. During family visits over the 18 mile distance separating the towns Solomon probably admonished Steel to acknowledge God's great moving force then working through the hearts of all the people. But he never was convincing enough to persuade him. Solomon's brother, Elisha Williams, had taught Steel in Wethersfield at the Collegiate School (later Yale). He played no significant part in the Awakening.

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THE TIMES AT ELIHU BENTON'S BIRTH
Five Turbulent Years

1740 In September, George Whitefield began his triumphant tour of New England.
1740 On December 7, the greatest flood in 50 years was recorded.
1741 New England's longest winter.
1741 On July 8, Jonathan Edwards preached in Enfield "Sinners In the Hand of an Angry God."
1741 A new church was formed in North Coventry adjacent to Tolland
1741 In July, Rev. James Davenport started his wild evangelistic tour in southern Connecticut and Buell of Coventry and other itinerants began preaching all around.
1742 **Samuel Benton III** probably obtained permission from George Bradley to court his daughter, **Jane.**
1742 Restrictive laws were passed to make preaching in another's town illegal.
1742 On June 1, Davenport brought to trial in Hartford amid riots.
1742 On June 21, the new North Coventry Church defiantly invited 20 preachers, including Steel of Tolland.
1743 On March 6, the "bonfire of vanities" disturbed New London.
1743 Rev. Edwards came into Connecticut and preached at Lebanon.
1743 On November 2, the "Eclipse Hurricane" struck.
1743 On December 22, **Samuel** and **Jane** were married.
1744 France declared war on England.
1744 In June the drought caused dry fields and springs and fires.
1744 Davenport published a retraction of his errors.
1744 In October, Whitefield began his second tour.
1744 On December 26, **Elihu Benton** was born.
1745 Whitefield preached in New Haven in June, in Norwich, Lyme Lebanon, and New London and in August. But where in July?
1745 Itinerant John Pain arrested for preaching on June 13th
1745 Stearns began preaching to his group in Skungamaug Village.
1745 On April 13 an expedition embarked from New London against Louisburg, Nova Scotia with 400 Connecticut volunteers. The Fort surrendered in June and New England rejoiced on a day of Thanksgiving.

Samuel Married Jane Bradley

At the time of this great controversy Samuel Benton III, ignoring these otherworldly distractions, took Jane Bradley for his wife. Almost to the day, a year later, **Elihu Benton** was born.

Shubael Stearns Role

In late 1744 Whitefield made another successful tour of New England although he was refused permission to preach in many Churches. His route in Connecticut is not clear from his Journal but it appears from other accounts that he spent his time in southern Connecticut - New Haven, Norwich, New London, Lebanon and further west. Yet his preaching so influenced Stearns and a Daniel Marshall of Windsor that they became lay preachers. Unless we imagine Whitefield did preach somewhere nearby, it must be concluded thay ventured to one of these towns just to hear him. Davenport had encouraged excited young men to become lay preachers while he was itinerating so these two men realized it was an option. Shubael began his lay ministry in 1745.

Daniel Marshall, a long time Windsor Church deacon, abandoned his worldly life and went to the Susquehanna area to preach to the Mohawk Indians. He stayed in the South but did manage, somehow, to come to Tolland and marry Martha Stearns, Shubael's sister, in 1747. The fact that Marshall, preaching in various places in the South, managed to court and marry Martha in 1747, shows that he and Shubael were in touch. The Stearns sect did not leave Tolland until 1754. Later, Shubael and Daniel successfully ministered together in the South.

What to Conclude?

The tide of The Great Awakening washed over the Bentons and everyone in Eastern Connecticut. They would not have escaped its emotions and its reactions for they permeated every town. The Bentons might have heard Whitefield or Edwards or itinerant preachers who came through Tolland. If not, at least their friends and relatives gave convincing testimonies to them. Some must have been converted to save their souls. They watched Shubael Stearns and his group find their redemption but chose not to join them. They heard that Samuel Buell of Coventry had left his town to prepare for preaching in the new fashion and that Daniel Marshall had left Windsor to preach to the Mohawks. The Bentons would have none of that. The Awakening had taught them, however, that new thinking about their faith was a possibility and for some of them a heartening prospect. This new appreciation would be needed as they weathered the next French War and the War for Independence that followed. Samuel III would become a Sergeant in the French War and Elihu, his son would become a soldier, briefly, in the War for Independence. What follows next are sketches of some of proponents and opponents in the Awakening, the greatest evangelical movement in New England's history.

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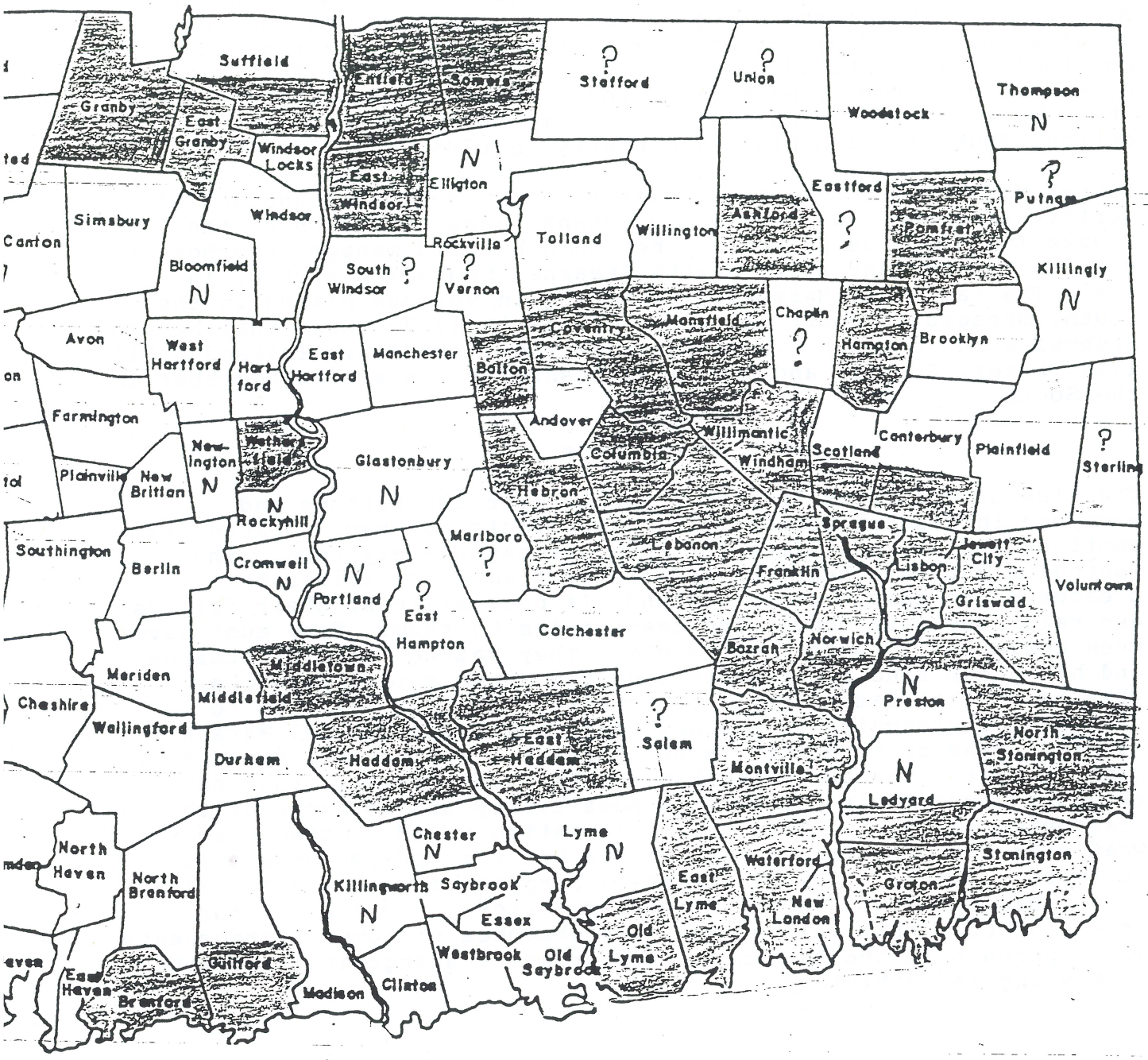
NEW LIGHT MINISTERS IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT IN 1743

Shaded areas indicate towns with New Light ministers

Open areas show Old Light ministers or, where indicated, N = neutral or ? = minister's attitude unclear



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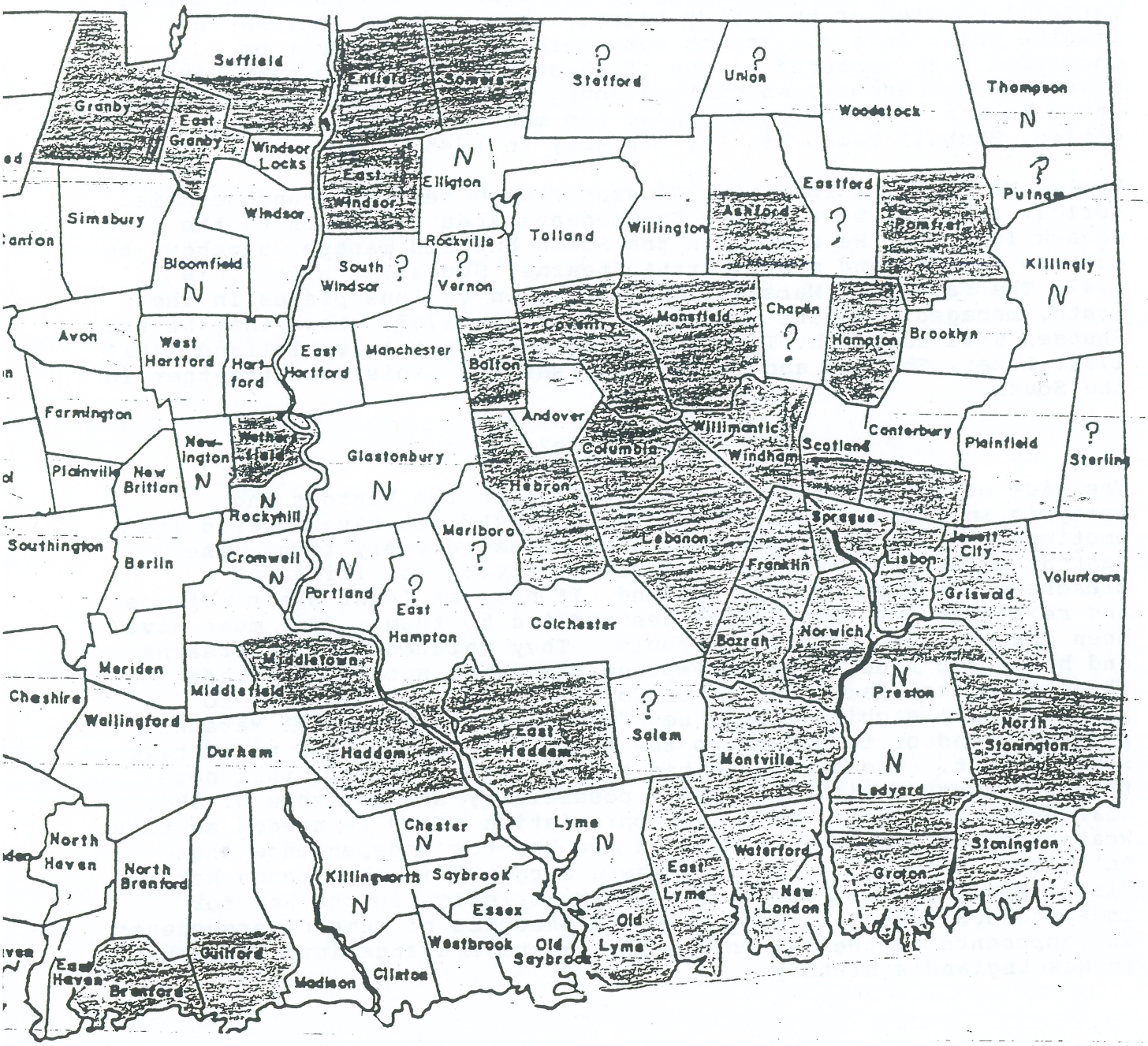

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NEW LIGHTS

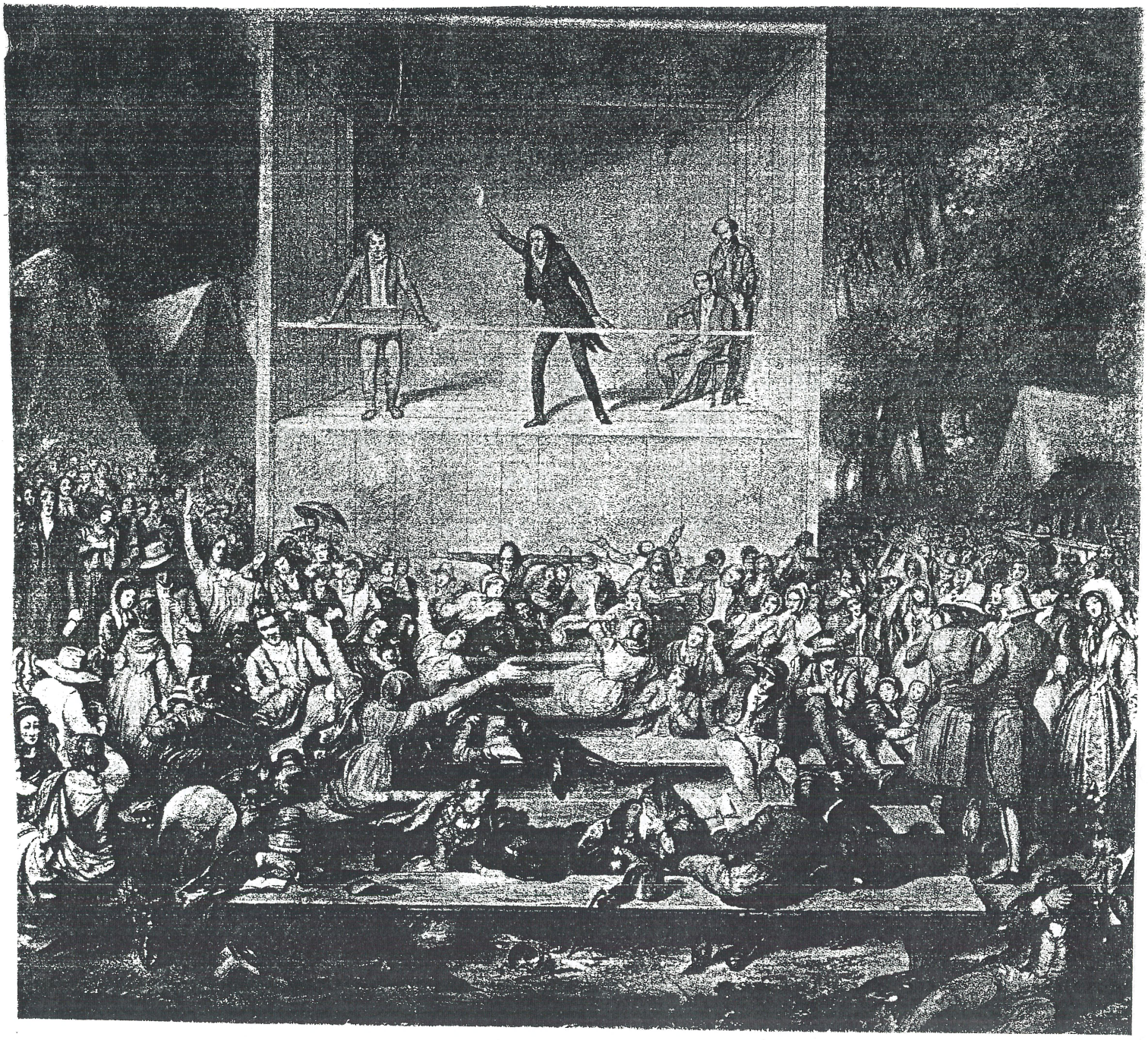
The "New Lights" ministers and their congregations were convinced that an appeal to the emotions and feelings was better than an appeal to reason. They believed Grace and not merely good works was the sure way to salvation of the soul.

The new Light preachers and the revivalist itinerant preachers told their listeners they were certain to be dammed and when sufficiently crushed by their sinfulness he told them that they could be saved by God's free grace. Guilt of worldliness had grown with the succeeding generations after Connecticut's founders, but few had the inner strength to follow their ministers promptings to covert during those years. Religion had languished while the ostensibly religious ones pursued worldly success. Now they were given an unexpected chance to throw themselves on God's grace and be converted. The chance was offered by the revivalists traumatic appeals. Hundreds found absolution.

Jonathan Edwards of Northampton

The theological activator of the Great Awakening, was first a revivalist, then its analyst, apologist and defender. His revivalist preaching is probably best known through the sermon he delivered in 1741 in the meetinghouse of the neighboring community of Enfield, to which he gave the title "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." It was a sermon, like many revivalist sermons, portraying the terrors of damnation awaiting the unrepentant sinner. "The God that holds you over the pit of hell," he declared, "is dreadfully provoked....You hang by a slender thread with the flames of a divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to burn it asunder...This is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again." Edwards was not adverse to painting the picture in lurid colors to gain the desired effect, and we are told that during the sermon there was a "great moaning and crying out," and "the shrieks and cries were piercing and amazing" before finally some received comfort.

Of the more than one thousand of his sermon manuscripts that have been preserved, less than a dozen are of this nature. His major contribution to revivalism was his compelling emphasis upon the new spiritual "sense" that is available for those who place their faith in God. He termed it a sense of the heart, a sense of the loveliness and beauty that God is holiness and grace.



Source: "Christianity in the New World"
Martin Marty

George Whitefield, the Grand Itinerant

It was said that Whitefield's voice was so compelling, his ability to clothe words with emotion so perfect, and his style of preaching so dramatic that by manipulating his tongue over the syllables "Mes-o-po-ta-mi-a" he could bring tears to his listeners eyes. But beyond this, his sermons focused undeviatingly upon the realities of sin and punishment and the promises of forgiveness and new birth. Confronting his listeners with the terrors of damnation and the joy's of God's mercy, he used his skills to penetrate to the deepest level of their anxieties and hopes. So his eloquent manner was the vehicle for a message of life or death and the result was success in religious conversion beyond any measure the country had heretofore known.

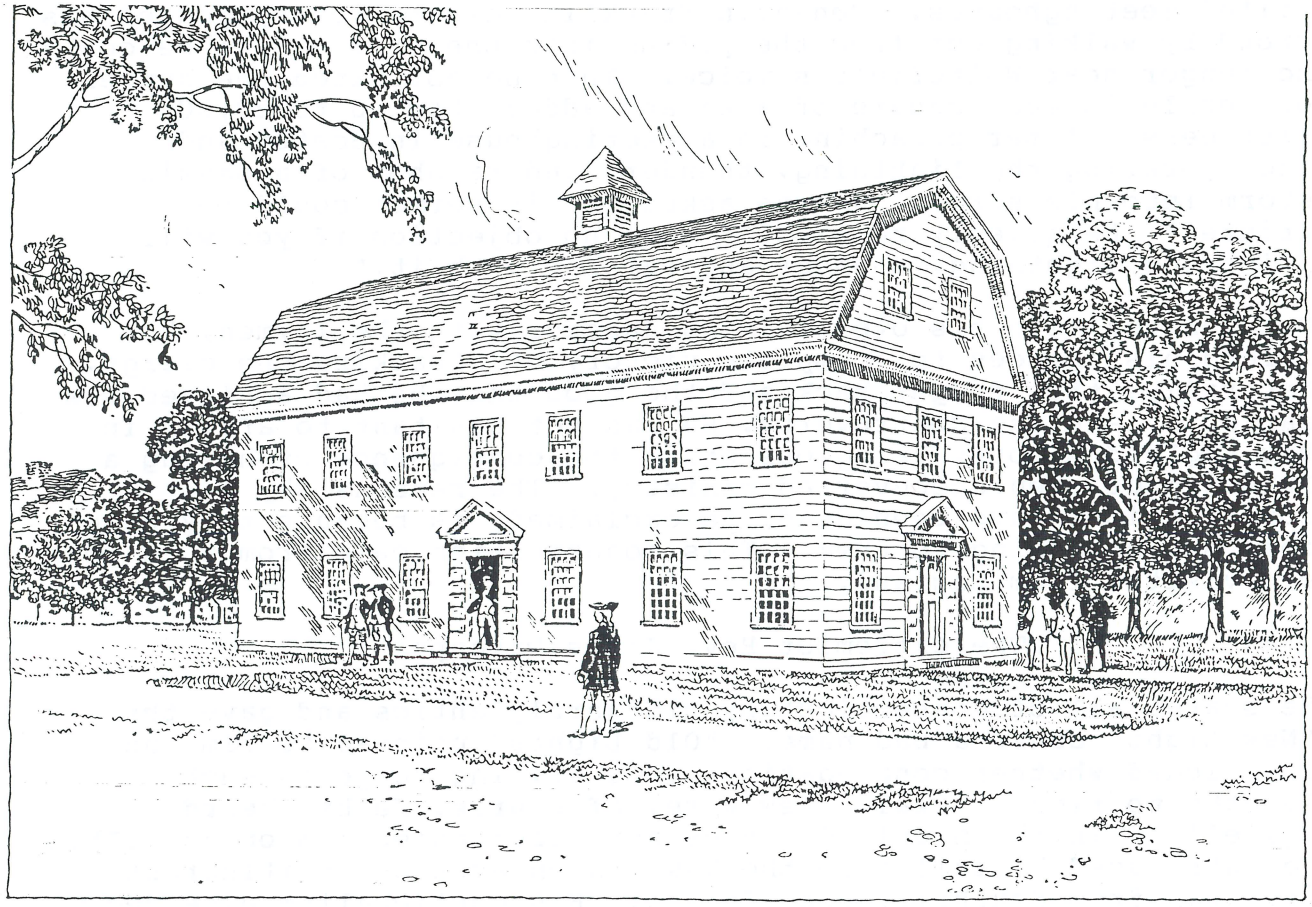
He preached to great outdoor crowds in Philadelphia and Boston and filled meetinghouses. Benjamin Franklin scientifically gauged his crowd by walking out from the podium into the crowd until he could no longer hear Whitefield's voice. Then he estimated the number of people in each square of area and added them up to 20,000 listeners. After preaching in a meetinghouse in Boston and incorporating the lightning, thunder, and rainbow of a passing storm into his sermon, he was asked if his sermon could be printed? He quietly replied "I have no objection if you will print the lightning, thunder and rainbow with it."

Not content with his overwhelming success with the laymen, he ruined his chances for complete victory by attacking the clergy. Naturally, they fought back and the good that he had achieved was marred by endless controversy. He was not hesitant to affirm in New England's sorry religious state the consequence of having a lukewarm or even unconverted ministry. The reasons why congregations have been dead, he exclaimed, is because they have dead men preaching to them. This condemnation came from a 24 year old visitor from England.

The extremist Rev. James Davenport

He scared all of Connecticut by his unruly antics and gave the "New Light" cause a bad name. "Old Lights" pointed to him and questioned whether congregations were willing to go to such lengths to find renewal. Few were, of course. He had heard Whitefield in the Middle Colonies and accompanied him on tour.Then he introduced himself into the New London area as an itinerant preacher from Southold, Long Island. His emotionalism exceeded that of his mentor. He developed the "holy whine", a singsong preaching which created nervous irritability and hysterical outbursts which he said were signs of God's approval. He invaded parishes without warning or permission. As he went through the streets praying and singing and gesticulating he was followed by excited women, children and young men imitating him.

THE TRAIN BAND HAD TO BE CALLED OUT HERE IN 1742 TO QUELL RIOTS WHEN DAVENPORT WAS TRIED FOR ITINERANT PREACHING



THE STATE HOUSE OF 1719

Source: \"Colonial History of Hartford, Love

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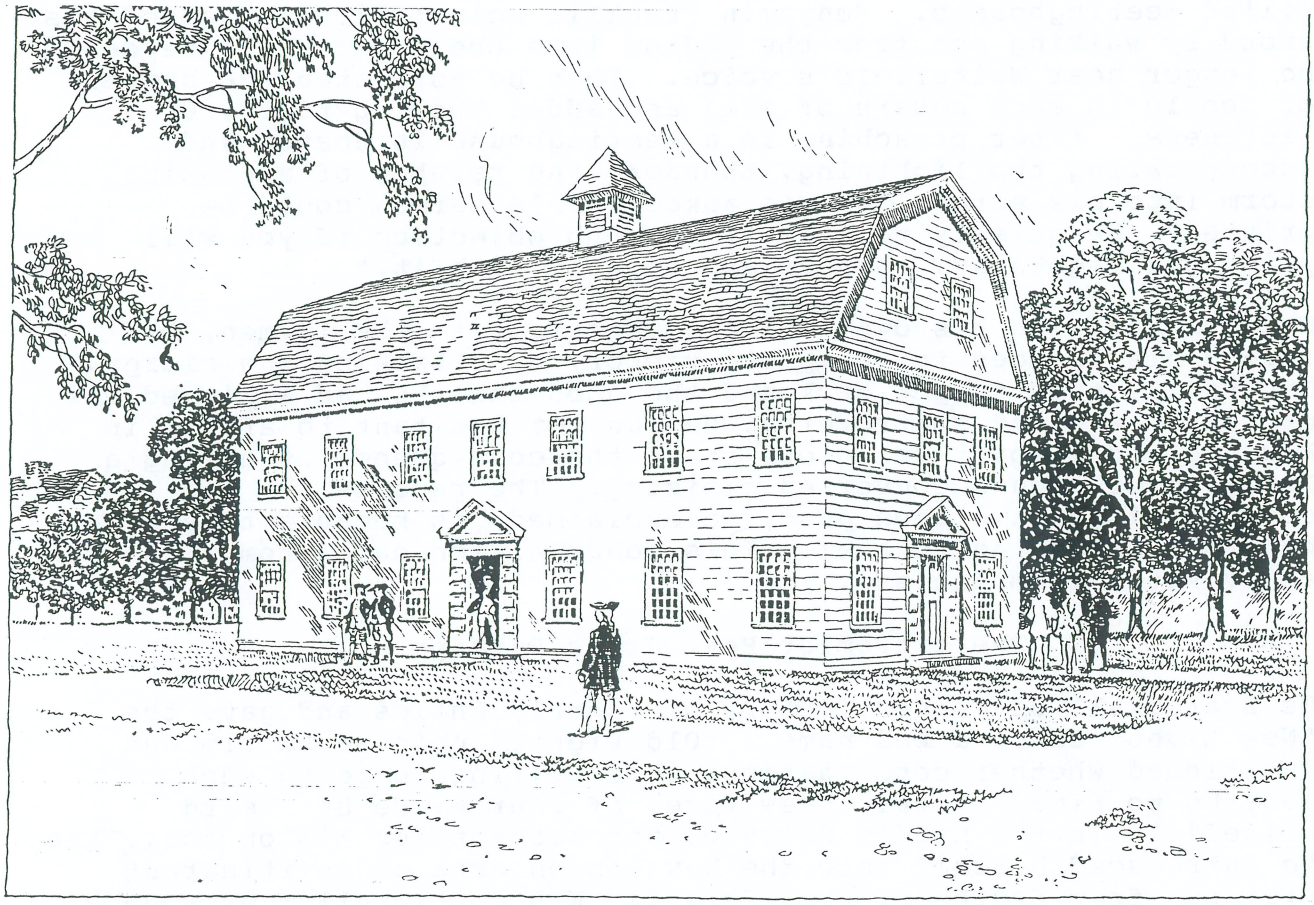

THE STATE HOUSE OF 1719

Source: "Colonial History of Hartford, Love

George Whitefield, the Grand Itinerant

It was said that Whitefield's voice was so compelling, his ability to clothe words with emotion so perfect, and his style of preaching so dramatic that by manipulating his tongue over the syllables "Mes-o-po-ta-mi-a" he could bring tears to his listeners eyes. But beyond this, his sermons focused undeviatingly upon the realities of sin and punishment and the promises of forgiveness and new birth. Confronting his listeners with the terrors of damnation and the joy's of God's mercy, he used his skills to penetrate to the deepest level of their anxieties and hopes. So his eloquent manner was the vehicle for a message of life or death and the result was success in religious conversion beyond any measure the country had heretofore known.

He preached to great outdoor crowds in Philadelphia and Boston and filled meetinghouses. Benjamin Franklin scientifically gauged his crowd by walking out from the podium into the crowd until he could no longer hear Whitefield's voice. Then he estimated the number of people in each square of area and added them up to 20,000 listeners. After preaching in a meetinghouse in Boston and incorporating the lightning, thunder, and rainbow of a passing storm into his sermon, he was asked if his sermon could be printed? He quietly replied "I have no objection if you will print the lightning, thunder and rainbow with it."

Not content with his overwhelming success with the laymen, he ruined his chances for complete victory by attacking the clergy. Naturally, they fought back and the good that he had achieved was marred by endless controversy. He was not hesitant to affirm in New England's sorry religious state the consequence of having a lukewarm or even unconverted ministry. The reasons why congregations have been dead, he exclaimed, is because they have dead men preaching to them. This condemnation came from a 24 year old visitor from England.

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The Hartford Bentons Help Keep Order

On June 1, 1742 he was put on trial in Hartford in new State House for violating the law forbidding itinerant preaching. The trial lasted two days and all the while Hartford people were in a great state of excitement. When he tried to preach outside the sheriff tried to carry him away but his partisans nearly tore him free. Near riot conditions existed during the night. The train band was called out to obtain order and probably Moses, Caleb, Caleb Jr. and Abraham Benton had to come over to the State House with their guns. Perhaps one or more of them watched the trial and took sides in the rioting. Presumably those favoring Davenport came from Eastern towns where he had gathered a following. Hartford inhabitants, including the Bentons, may have resented their presence and Davenport's flouting the established order. The Assembly judged Davenport to be deranged and at 4:00 in the afternoon he was marched "between two files of musketiers" down to the river and put aboard a boat for Long Island. The Bentons, having obeyed their orders, would have returned to their homelots with some satisfaction.

In 1743 in New Haven Davenport reached the final depth of his offensive behavior when he had his followers cast into a bonfire of vanities their fine clothes and jewelry representing "worldly things", followed by all "unsafe books" - in this case the writings of classic Puritan authors!

He encouraged excitable young men to begin preaching on their own and may have given Shubael Stearns and Daniel Marshall their cue. In 1744 he did calm down under the counseling of Solomon Williams and Eleazar Wheelock and published a retraction of his excesses. Williams was a moderate "New Light" and was the brother-in-law of Stephen Steel.

Samuel Buell, Ardent Convert

In neighboring Coventry, twenty one year old Samuel Buell was swept up in the tide of the religious fervor and probably by Rev. Edward's saving messages on his visit to Coventry in 1735. Buell decided to devote his life to that evangelical style of ministry so he renounced his double portion claim to his father's estate and used the money to educate himself at Yale. He was licensed by the Fairfield East Association in October 1741 at the height of the Awakening excitement and became an itinerant minister, having no church of his own. He preached in nearly every parish along the way from Fairfield to Northampton in October 1742. Edwards wrote "There were very extraordinary effects of Mr Buell's labors; the people were exceedingly moved, crying out in great numbers in the meeting house, and great part of the congregation commonly staying in the house of God for hours after the public service." He stayed in Northamption three weeks and Edwards was moved to tears because his own ministry seemed so unprofitable by comparison.

Buell also preached in Boston in April, 1742 and wrote to his mentor, Eleazor Wheelock of Lebanon "I have preached five times in Boston publicly....My labours have been attended with great success, through the blessing of God here and in adjacent towns...A door is opened daily for my preaching, but there are many adversaries. The world rages, hell trebles, heaven rejoices, while the Lord is with me owning my labors.."

He returned to Eastern Connecticut in 1743-44 and went with his former pastor and father-in law to be, Rev. Joseph Meacham, to New London on March 30, 1743 to consult with other "New Light" preachers about Davenport's bonfire of vanities. Jonathan Edwards was present as well as six others. Buell, having no church of his own, may have been flattered to have been invited by Meacham to accompany him and to be in the company of such a distinguished group. Further, Buell occasionally filled in at the Canterbury Church which lost their preacher in 1741 and may have known the Pain brothers. John Pain was an itinerant preacher arrested in Tolland.

He rushed to York Maine, in October 1744 to be the first Connecticut preacher to greet Whitehead for the latter's second tour of New England.

Jerusa Meacham, the preacher's daughter, must have been an attraction in Coventry as well as he married her in 1745. While in town did he have occasion to preach to his friends and relations from the pulpit of his home church? Rev. Stephen Steel, of course, wouldn't want him to come to Tolland to preach because he might stir up his congregation. Samuel Buell and Jerusha moved to Easthampton Long Island in September 1746 where he came the minister and he ventured forth no more on God's errands.

Itinerant John Pain Arrested In Tolland

Itinerant preachers were active in Tolland as evidenced by the complaint brought against him in June, 1745 "for Publickly Preaching and exhorting the people in Tolland on the 13th Day of June 1745 not being a Settled and Ordained Minister in said Tolland and the Major Part of the Church in said place there being only one Parish in said town to the Disturbance of the peace of his Majestys good subjects and against the Laws of this Colony." To this complaint the defendant pleaded not guilty. On July 16th he was judged guilty and bound over to the Hartford Court. He had to pay court costs of six pounds thirteen shillings. He spent eleven months in jail in Hartford.

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The three Pain brothers of Canterbury were ardent New Light preachers. John was the youngest, 38, at this time. Elisha was the oldest and Solomon the most famous. The Church divided over issues of platform and the selection of minister. The majority of the Church members withdrew and Solomon Pain conducted services in his home. The Association of churches censured him and he wrote a sharp retort for which he was arrested and committed to jail in September 1744. When crowds gathered at the jail to hear him preach excitement ran high. He was released a month later.

Next, Yale expelled two Cleveland brothers because, while home on vacation, they had accompanied their parents to hear Solomon Pain "exercise his gift." Yale maintained that its students should not be contaminated by New Lights since its principal function was to train men for the established ministry. The Clevelands were even forbidden to enter any college room lest other students be infected. Solomon Pain loudly protested this action.

Subsequently he became the minister of the New Light church after Elisha had refused an offer. Elisha was receiving too many calls to preach all over New England to be restricted to one Church.

John became the minister of a New Light Church in Reboboth in 1748 after his foray into Tolland. Did the Bentons hear him preach and was he Shubael Stearn's inspiration rather than Whitefield? The complaint against John's preaching was brought before the Grand Jurors, but on whose instigation - Rev. Steel, his Deacons or the town magistrates?

Thomas Marsh - Another Itinerant Trespasser

In July 1746 one of the grand jurors made a presentment against him for "Coming into the town of Tolland and without the Express Desire of the Settled Minister and Church in said place Publicly Preaching and Exhorting its People on the 21st day of July to the Disturbance of the Peace of his Majestys good Subjects and Contrary to Law he being no Settled and Ordained Minister" The complaint was made the very next day. The Tolland Court found him not guilty but he had to pay court costs of two pounds and ten shillings.

Marsh was a deacon in the Second Church in Windham . He was to have been ordained as a teaching elder on January 6 but was jailed for illegal preaching on the 5th showing the antagonistic attitudes existing in many towns. Released from prison in June, he nevertheless found his way to preach in Tolland in July.

The two actions that have been recorded demonstrate that itinerant lay preachers frequently expected Tolland people to respond to them. Tolland people remained unmoved and faithful to Rev. Steel except for Stearns flock. There was no movement to separate from his Church and preachers such as these from other towns were dealt with by the Law in Tolland.

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Att an Inferiour Court for Tryal of Small Causes Holden in Tolland in Hartford County on ye 22d day of June AD: 1745 — 299

Present Zebulon West one of his Majestys Justices of the peace for Hartford County —

Our Sovereign Lord the King is Pltf Vers, John Fain of Plainfield in Windham County Defendt —

The Defendt is Arrested (pr writ Dated June 20th 1745) and brought Before this Court to Answer to ye Complaint of the Grandjurors of our Sovereign Lord the King (of the Town of Tolland) for ye County of Hartford against the Defendt for Publickly Preaching and Exhorting the people in Tolland on ye 13th Day of June 1745 not being a Settled and Ordained Minister and without the Express Desire and Invitation of the Settled Minister in Said Tolland and the Major part of the Church in Said place (there being Only one Parish in Sd Town to the Disturbance of the peace of his Majestys good Subjects and Against the Laws of this Colony as pr Complaint on file Dated June 20th 1745 to this Complaint the Defendt pleaded not Guilty —

This Court is Adjourned until Tuesday the 16th day of July Next Ensuing at this place and the Case Between Our Sovereign Lord the King & John Fain Defendt is Continued to Said Adjournment —

Tuesday the 16 day of July AD: 1745 the Court is Opened According to the aforsd Adjournment and John Fain the aforsaid Defendt being before Said Court and further Examined on ye Complaint aforsaid Did Confess that he Did Publickly Expound the Word and Teach and Exhort the people at time and place Mentioned in Said Complaint (there being Some Evidences Taken also) In Consideration of the Case this Court is of Opinion that the Defendt is Guilty of Publickly Preaching and Exhorting the People According to Said Presentment to the Disturbance of the peace and Contrary to Law And Therefore gives Judgment that the Defendt Shall become bound in a bond of Recognizance in the penal Sum of One hundred pounds Lawfull mony to the Treasurer of the County of Hartford that he will be of Peaceable and good behaviour and no more Offend in the Like kind until ye County Court to be holden at Hartford on ye first Tuesday of November Next Ensuing and that he will Appear at Said County Court and Take up his bond Except Said County Court Shall See fit to Continue the Same and that he pay ye Cost of prosecution and Stand Committed until this Judgment be Complyed with

Cost allowed to be Six pounds thirteen Shillings & Elevenpence old ten

A True Copy of Record

[illegible] West Justice of peace

Transcription of John Pain's Court Proceedings on opposite page

At an Inferior Court for Tryal of Small Causes holden in Tolland in Hartford County on ye 22nd Day of June AD 1745-------

Present Zebulon West one of His Majestys Justices of the peace for Hartford County-----

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Cost allowed to be six pound thirteen Shillings & Eleven Pence old ten.

A True Copy of Record
Jebulon West, Justice of Peace.

SHUBAEL STEARN'S SEPARATIST SECT

The evangelical fervor everywhere drove Shubael Stearns and his followers completely away from the Congregational church to worship independently. He and his group were following the intensely religious path of the Separatists. By their emphasis on the transforming power of the Spirit in religious experience, they developed practices very much out of keeping with established Congregationalism. Worship might be engendered by astatic exhortation under the prompting of the Spirit. For this purpose it was felt that ministerial education was of little value and exhortation by inspired members of the laity was the only true way. Sermons should be delivered extempore because reliance upon advance preparation could of itself lead to stifling the advent of the Spirit into the worship scene. The role of the sacraments in worship was minimized as was all formal devotional practices traditionally looked on as aids to conversion. God's gift of new birth was understood to be more explosive and sudden in its coming than gradual nurture.

Separatists rejected any control by the ecclesiastical organization or civil authority and in return they were not tolerated. Since they refused tó pay taxes to support the established church, they were harassed, members fined, imprisoned or run out of town.

Waldo states that these "innovators were treated with more favor... than their associates received from clergy generally and the wisdom of the course pursued by Mr. Steel, growing out of his forbearance, catholity and kindness is evidenced by the fact that in a very few years this sect entirely disappeared from the town and left him in charge of a respectable congregation without any open dissension."

After they had settled in North Carolina, however, they published a pamphlet outlining their "troubles in Tolland." Another reference was to "ecclesiastical difficulties." We don't have these documents, unfortunately, and so cannot discern the real reason the sect left Tolland. If not clerical or civil difficulties, there might have been underlying hostility by the townspeople.

As was typical of many Separatist groups Stearns group eventually became Baptist. Rev. Wait Palmer, a Baptist itinerant preacher, probably passed through Tolland and Stearns's group was receptive to his message. Eventually he rebaptized Shubael and ordained him as a Baptist minister. Baptists from Rhode Island made their first entry into Connecticut in the New London area. Wait Palmer was born in 1711 and ordained in North Stonington in 1743. Stearn's group would have been inclined towards the Baptists anyway because the Separatists believed that infant baptism was not a "believers baptism." Furthermore, Baptists were relieved from paying taxes to support the Congregational Church by the Toleration Act so the Separatists in Tolland might have been particularly anxious to become Baptists in order to escape taxes.

Rev. James Davenport may have given one reason to Shubael to take on his role as a self-taught evangelist. Davenport pushed his religious enthusiasm to great lengths by everywhere urging on susceptible young men the duty to become a preacher like himself. Inspired by Whitefield's enthusiastic example and by Davenport's strong urging, Shubael's life changed. Further, the lay itinerant John Pain appeared in Tolland in 1745 to demonstrate his abilities to Shubael. Then Marsh appeared in 1746. If Whitefield's, Davenport's, Pain's or Marsh's messages were accessible in Tolland, some Benton or other resident could have just as easily fallen under their spells. Was Josiah Benton courting Ruth Stearns then? But he and the others were not at all susceptible.

Shubael Stearn's preaching eloquence seemed to gain him only a few adherents in Tolland and his peculiar style may have turned people away. In the rural back country of North Carolina, however, it caught on wonderfully. Shubael Stearns preached with such eloquence and vigor that someone styled him "Boanerges, Son of Thunder." Another, however, claimed he had a very musical voice. He was small of stature but had a very penetrating eye making him eminently successful in persuading men to accept and serve the Lord.

In 1754 the Shubael Stearns family, his father and mother, brothers and in-laws made an exodus, first to Virginia, then to North Carolina where his Sandy Creek church grew to 600 after a few years. In 17 years the Church had increased to 42 churches and 125 ministers. Shubael served there until he died in 1771.

The Separatists in Tolland who did not go with Stearns were left in the care of a Noah Alden of Stafford, a recently Baptized minister, so the sect had, in effect, left Tolland. Expediting the departure of the Stearns sect from Tolland was the role of Ebenezer Moulton who purchased their land. He was a very active Baptist minister from Brimfield, Massachusetts, north of Tolland, and may have been engaging in land sales as well. The Stearns farm changed ownership often after he initially obtained it. Moulton may have been an additional Baptist influence on Shubael.

The Stearns family had been original settlers in Tolland coming from Lynn, Mass. when Shubael was only eight. His father owned a saw mill on the Skungamaug River on the Eastern part of Tolland and was prominant in town affairs. He was Town Clerk and Selectman.

A description of the exodus is given after "Notes" alomg with a table showing the age of the migrants. Another abbreviated genealogy chart is shown in order to include the Paulk and Stimson in-laws. (Isaac is not shown in order to agree with the Paulk book.)

Josiah Benton was the youngest son of Samuel Benton Jr.

ABBREVIATED CHART OF THE TOLLAND STEARNS FAMILY

In 1630 Daniel, Shubael[1] and Isaac Stearns came to Watertown, Mass.

In Cambridge, Mass. Charles married Rebecca Gibson 1654

Shubael[2] b1655 — John b1657 — Isaac b1658 — Charles — Rebecca b1661 — Martha

m Mary Upton

Shubael[3] Jr
b 1683

m Rebecca Laveford
in 1704

Hannah
b1687

John
b1691

Rev Shubael[4] b1706

Peter
b1710

Isaac
b1713

Ebenezer
b1722

m1710
Dr. James
Stimson.
1716 to
Tolland

Martha
b1725

m 1723
Eliz.
Barnes

1714 to Tolland

m Sarah Johnson
in 1726

Hepzibah
b1729

m1736
Hannah
Stimson

m1734
Sarah
Johnson

b1725 Eleanor
b1728 Eliz.
b1730 Ruth

b1737 Charles
b1741 Ebenezer
b1742 Levi
b1744 Joel

b1737
Hepzibah

THE GREAT AWAKENING BEGINS

b1749 Rhoda

m1749
Anna
Field

m1747
Rev Daniel
Marshall

m1747
Josiah
Benton

b1748 Abraham
John
Zaccheus
Levi
Moses
Solomon
Joseph
Eunice

b1748 Hannah
b1751 Mary
b1753 Josiah
b1756 Ruth
b1758 Lorana
b1761 Iael
b1764 Aaron
b1767 Jerusha
b1769 Reuben

1754 to Virginia

1754 to Virginia

1754 to Virginia

1754 to Virginia

See Notes

Byron S. Benton Aug. 1998

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY STEARNS FAMILY CHART

Three brothers Daniel, Isaac and Shubael[1] Stearns came to America in 1630 and settled in Watertown, Mass. Daniel died unmarried. Shubael[1] and his wife died leaving two sons, Charles and Nathaniel, 8 and 10 years old, in care of their uncle Isaac.(He named Charles, a "kinsman", in his will).
Isaac was from Nayland with Wissington, Suffolk and a tailor. His wife was Mary Barker of Stoke Nayland. Their children were: Mary and Anna born in England, John, Isaac, Sarah, Samuel, Elizabeth and Abigail.

Charles, the father of Shubael[2], may have been about 30 when he married Rebecca, his second wife. (His first wife, Hannah_____ died in 1651 and their son was Samuel born 1650 in Watertown).

Before about 1717 the birthplaces were in Lynn; afterwards in Tolland. The following are exceptions: Shubael[2] - Cambridge; Peter, Isaac, Mary Upton - Reading; Rev. Shubael[4] - Boston; Sarah Johnson - Lexington.

REBECCA, SHUBAEL[3] JR. WIFE'S NAME is variously given. In Tolland Vital Records it is written "Laveford." Others are "Lariby," "Larriford" and "Sanford."

COMPLETE FAMILY OF SHUBAEL[3] JR. AND REBECCA LAVEFORD: Shubael[4] born Jan. 28, 1706 in Boston, Rebecca, born 1707, Peter born 1710, Isaac born 1713, Elizabeth born 1715, Hannah born 1718, Ebenezer born 1722, Mary born 1724, Martha born 1726 and Sarah born 1720.

CHILDREN OF DR. JAMES STIMSON AND HANNAH STEARNS: Ichabod, born 1713, Eneas born 1714 and Hannah, born 1716 all in Lynn, James Jr. born 1719, Naomi, born 1722 and Thomas, born 1725 in Tolland.

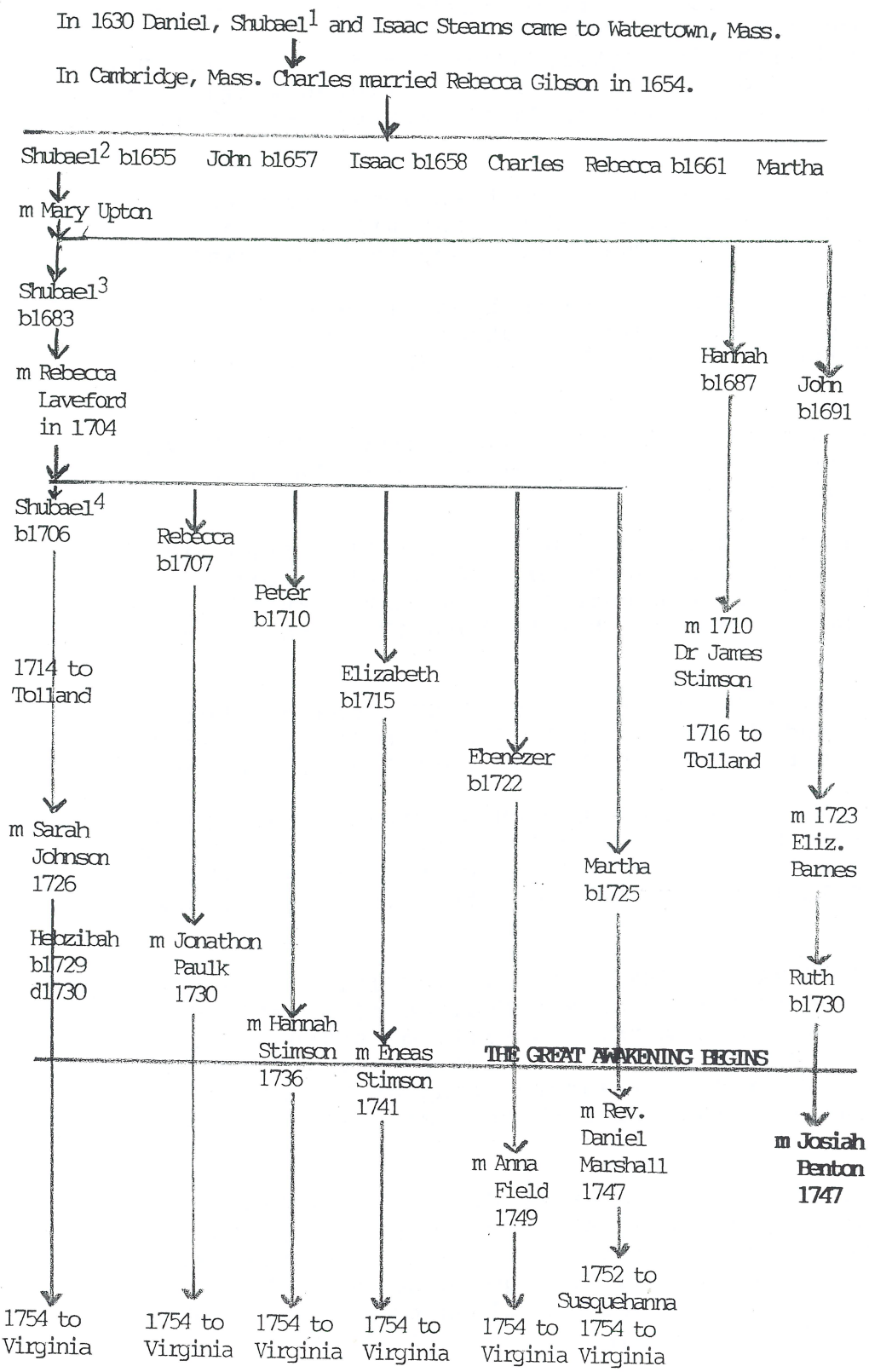
CHILDREN OF JOHN STEARNS AND ELIZABETH BARNES: Eleanor born 1725, Elizabth born 1728, Ruth born 1730 (married Josiah Benton), Lydia born 1732 and John born 1736. John was the Doctor Stearns who married Miss Wills of Tolland and was the father of Judge Elisha Stearns.

IDENTIFICATION OF OTHERS MAKING THE EXODUS TO VIRGINIA. Isaac and Ebenezer sell their land to Rev. Ebenezer Moulton of Brimfield, Mass in 1751. Isaac's daughter married a William Woburn of North Carolina. Joel, son of Peter, is called "of Atlanta." Ebenezer married, possibly a second wife, Elizabeth Young of Bucombe Co., North Carolina. Martha Stearns left with Rev. Marshall for the South.

Sources: Tolland Vital Records; "The Early History of Tolland," Waldo; "The Great Migration Begins," Anderson; "Genealogy and Memoirs of Charles and Nathanial Stearns and their Descendants," Avis Stearns Van Wagener; Skungamaug Village research by Mark Danforth, Tolland; research of Ebenezer Moulton by Barbara Cook, Tolland and research of Manuel Cunnup, Greensboro, N.C.

Byron S. Benton, August 1998

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE TOLLAND STEARNS FAMILY
Showing the migrants and Paulk, Stimson and Benton connections



See Notes

Byron S. Benton, June 1999

The Stearns Exodus from Tolland

(extract from "The Paulks in America" by Jessie H. and Delma (Wilson) Paulk, Rose Printing Company, Tallahasse, Fl. 1990)

One of the first impulses that surged through the Separates was the urgency of the missionary task. In 1754 Daniel and Martha (Stearns) Marshall and family of Windsor went among the Mohawk Indians but were forced to leave during the French and Indian War. They next went to a place called Opequon near present Winchester West Virginia. The Joseph and Priscilla (Avery) Breed family of Groton, Ct. were with the Marshall family in April 1754 and were baptized into the Mill Creek Church by Rev. Samuel Heaton. The Church licensed Breed and Marshall to preach. Preaching in the style of Whitefield, Marshall and Breed had great success.

Shubael Stearns received word of Marshall's success and already feeling the urge to become a missionary, decided the Southern Colonies were the place to go. He persuaded five families, all of them related to him by blood or marriage to go with him. They were:
Brother Peter and Hannah (Stimson) Stearns
Brother Ebenezer and Anna (Field) Stearns
Father Shubael and Rebecca (Larriby or Laveford) Stearns
First Cousin Eneas and Elizabeth (Stearns) Stimson
Sister Jonathon and Rebecca (Stearns) Paulk
The party left Tolland in August 1754 bringing their possessions in carts. They traveled down the Valleys of the mountain chain though Pennsylvania and Maryland, reaching Virginia before cold weather.

Racing the coming winter the Stearns party, joined by the Marshalls and the Breeds, chose a site on Capapon Creek, west of Winchester. They hastily build homes, then Stearns began to preach. He was disappointed as the area was thinly populated and attendance was poor.. During the winter he decided this was the wrong place. It was unsafe as the Indians had become hostile. On JUne 13, 1755, he received word from New England friends who had traveled to North Carolina and of the need there.

Stearns determined to move to North Carolina where his message seemed to be needed. He and his party journeyed over two hundred miles, down the Shenandoah Valley, crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains through the gap into Pittsylvania County. At Sandy Creek, in the forks of the Cape Fear River the journey ended. This may have been the place friends described to him or he may have felt that this was the place the Lord directed him to. Morgan Edwards in 1772 described North Carolina a "a poor and unhappy...wretched province", but for the Stearns it was a land of opportunity. Three pioneer trains converged there - the Settlers Road from Pennsylvania, Boone Trail from Wilmington and the Trading Path from southeastern Virginia. Over these roads within the next few years poured thousands of religiously destitute persons.

The Stearns party wasted no time. They acquired land and built houses. The sixteen charter members included the group Stearns brought from Connecticut, plus the Marshalls and the Breeds. They chose Shubael Stearns Jr. their pastor, Marshall and Breed the assistants. Services began at once and the neighborhood heard a new kind of preaching, a simple message in plain language, full of warmth and personal concern. These sinners increased to 606 in a short time. All of the people that wanted to hear could not get to Sandy Creek Church; therefore the preachers went to the people. For Stearns, Marshall and Breed, the year 1756 was filled with travel... All the Separate Baptists sprang hence; not only eastward towards the sea but westward towards the great river Mississippi, but northward to Virginia and southward to South Carolina and Georgia....Shubael remained at Sandy Creek and died in 1771."

Families of the August 1754 Exodus
showing their age at the time

Shubael Stearns[3] 71
Rebecca Laveford 70

Rev. Shubael Stearns[4] 48
Sarah Johnson
no children

Jonathon Paulk 51
Rebecca Stearns 47
Children:
Esther 23
Micajah 21
Ruth 19
Jabob 14
John 12
Joseph 10
Uriah 8
Thomas 6

Peter Stearns 44
Hannah Stimson 38
Children:
Charles 17
Ebenezer 13
Levi 12
Joel 10
Rhoda 5

Eneas Stimson 40
Elizabeth Stearns 39
Children:
Elizabeth 12
Enoch 10

Ebenezer Stearns 32
Anna Field
no children

(In "Paulks of America", Isaac Stearns, age 41 and wife Sarah Johnson, are not listed as making the Exodus yet he sold land to Ebenezer Moulton in 1751 as did other Stearns men. Possibly this sale was to raise money to give the others for their trip. But Isaac's daughter, Hepzibah, married a William Woburn of North Carolina. She would have been 17 in 1754.)

Daniel Marshalls family came from Opequon to join the Stearns family in 1754. He was from Windsor and was born in 1706. He married Hannah Drake in 1742 and next Martha Stearns in 1747. They had seven sons and one daughter. Their first son was born in 1748.

THE "OLD LIGHTS"

They believed emotions and enthusiasm were not authentic paths to salvation. Rev Charles Chauncy of Boston wrote "an enlightened mind, not raised affections ought always be the guide ..." and that true religious joy is defined as essentially sober and dutiful Christian living." They then excoriated the excesses of the itinerant and "New Light" preachers as evidence that they were not true to the faith.

The "Old Light" ministers were powerful politically and secured the passage of laws prohibiting minister from preaching in another's town without permission. These laws were quickly seen as an infringement on the rights of conscience and many ministers set out to defy the law. The nascent Coventry church nearest to Tolland, on learning of this restrictive law defiantly issued invitations to 20 different preachers to come to their new pulpit. All were itinerant preachers or "New Light" preachers, of course. Stephen Steel was included on the list probably out of neighborly courtesy, not because they recognized him a "New Light."

The Benton's Home Church Stays "Old Light"

Hartford's Second Church members heard the call of the Great Itinerant, George Whitefield when he stopped in Hartford but its minister, Rev. Horace Whitman, never became a "New Light." He originally welcomed Edward's enthusiastic opening the doors to new converts, but after hearing of outbursts of some of the converted preachers, he withdrew his welcome. Perhaps he never experienced conversion himself and, as with some other "Old Lights", feared to open himself to saving Grace.

Hartford Heard Whitefield on His First Triumphant Tour

He preached at the new meetinghouse of First Church on October 22, 1740 and its minister, Rev. Wadsworth stated "This day Mr. Whitefield preached in ye forenoon to a vast concourse of people here from Romans 14:17 verse. What to think of ye man and his Itinerant preaching I scarcely know." The verse reads "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Edwards had accompanied Whitefield from Northampton to East Windsor, where they had supper the day before with Rev. Timothy Edwards, Jonathan's father. He stayed there overnight before coming to Hartford.

The "vast concourse" descriptive of the crowd who heard Whitefield must mean that most of Hartford and the surrounding town gathered in the same crush as described by Nathan Cole. The new meetinghouse was positioned on the corner of the Burying Ground and he probably stood outside on its steps as no such crowd could possibly be contained inside. Possibly people stood on the gravestones to get a good view of his tall youthful form.

Samuel Benton, senior and Sarah might have been in the crowd as long as Moses Benton and bride Merriam could assist them to make the mile trip. Moses and Merriam would be caring for their parents in Samuel's house. Moses married Merriam Scott at about this time. Samuel was 82 years old and was having a full life until his death 6 years later. He was only a boy when the Controversy resulted in the forming of Second church and now at the end of his years another upheaval seemed to be approaching.

Moses Benton's estate was inventoried in 1755 and included in it was "Book of Mr. Whitefields, two bibles, Wats hyms, select hyms, a testament and Mr. Shepards sound believer."

Caleb Benton was an older brother of Moses and he and his wife Hannah Ensign also made their home in Hartford. They had been married in 1718. Joseph of Tolland was the oldest brother. He and other visiting Bentons might have stayed with either family if they journeyed from Tolland for the great day. Whitefield preached in Wethersfield that afternoon and was in Middletown the following day according to Nathan Cole's vivid account.

Division in Second Church

After Whitefield's appearance some members expressed great enthusiasm for the Awakening and Rev Whitman "labored to counteract the disturbing operations of the new enthusiasts" according to Church Historian Parker. Some did withdraw in 1743 on account of Whitman's moderate course. They were attracted to neighboring Wethersfield where Rev. James Lockwood was a "New Light." Apparently none of Caleb and Moses's families were so attracted.

When Stephen Steel might meet Horace Whitman at ministerial association meetings his concern would be with the situation the later faced in Second Church, Steel's home church. Steel might commiserate over the loss of members and express optimism that Tolland's members would remain loyal to him.

Moderates

Of a total of 420 Congregational ministers in New England in 1743, only 38 were steadfast "Old Lights," 130 were "New Lights" but of those only 30 were violently so. The remainder were moderates, sometimes called "Old Calvanists." Rev. Steel may have fitted into this category although he had voted to strictly control itinerant preaching and church members activities. He earned no reputation as an outspoken advocate of either way. His treatment of Shubael Stearns portrays him as a tolerant person as Waldo so describes him.

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NATHAN COLE

Born: Farmington; February 15-1710/11
Died: Farmington; 1783

Nathan Cole, separatist, was a farmer and carpenter in Kensington, then part of Farmington, and author of the remarkable "Spiritual Travels." This document, part of a manuscript of two-hundred pages, provides an opportunity to study the impact of the Great Awakening on the life and thought of an obscure New Englander. After hearing George Whitefield preach at Middletown on October 23, 1740, Cole embarked on spiritual travels that led him through a conversion experience, separation from the church at Kensington in 1747, helping to organize a Separatist church there in 1750, joining a Separatist church in Middletown in 1764, and finally becoming a Baptist in 1778. Nathan Cole's description of going to hear George Whitefield, written many years after the event, evokes the spirit and impact that the dynamic Anglican priest had on New England in 1740:

> *Now it pleased God to send Mr. Whitefield into this land...I longed to see and hear him, and wished he would come this way...then on a Sudden, in the morning about 8 or 9 of the Clock there came a messenger and said Mr. Whitefield...is to preach at Middletown this morning at ten of the Clock, I was in my field at Work, I...ran home to my wife telling her to make ready quickly...then run to my pasture for my horse with all my might.... When we came within about half a mile or a mile of the Road...I saw before me a Cloud or fogg rising; I first thought it came from the great River, abut as I came nearer the Road, I heard a noise something like a low rumbling thunder and presently found it was the noise of Horses feet coming down the Road and this Cloud was a Cloud of dust made by the Horses feet...and when I came within about 20 rods of the Road, I could see men and horses Sliping along in the Cloud like shadows and as I drew nearer it seemed like a steady Stream of horses and their riders, scarcely a horse more than his length behind another, all of a Lather and foam with sweat, their breath rolling out of their nostrils every Jump; every horse seemed to go with all his might to carry his rider to hear news from heaven for the saving of Souls, it made me tremble to see the Sight...and when we got to Middletown old meeting house there was a great Multitude it was said to be 3 or 4000 of people Assembled together.... When I saw Mr. Whitefield come upon the Scaffold he lookt almost Angelical; a young, Slim, slender youth before some thousands of people with a bold undaunted Countenance, and my hearing how God was with him...put me into a trembling fear before he began to preach; for he looked as if he was Cloathed with Authority from the Great God... And my hearing him preach, gave me a heart wound; By Gods blessing: my old Foundation was broken up, and I saw that my rightousness would not save me.*

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The Bentons of Tolland and "The Great Awakening"

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JANE BRADLEY BENTON

A Fatal Fire

As a girl Jane Bradley watched her mother, Hannah Braman, as she managed all the various pots, trivets, and utensils on the hearth in front of the fireplace. The big pots and skewers were hung right over the fire, but much cooking and warming took place on the hearth in front where coals were raked out and arranged under trivets which held the smaller pots. She noted also the way her mother shovelled hot coals from the fire up into the baking oven next to the fireplace. There they would stay until the bricks or stones were thoroughly heat soaked, then they would be shoveled out and the bread dough placed inside the hot space to bake. Manipulating hot coals was a constant, dangerous chore. Later when she was older she would assist in these operations. To keep the long skirts and blouses from catching fire from the hot coals was an acquired skill. Sometimes a dress would start to smolder or blaze up but a nearby bucket of water would extinguish it with luck. After all this was the duty women were to fulfill.

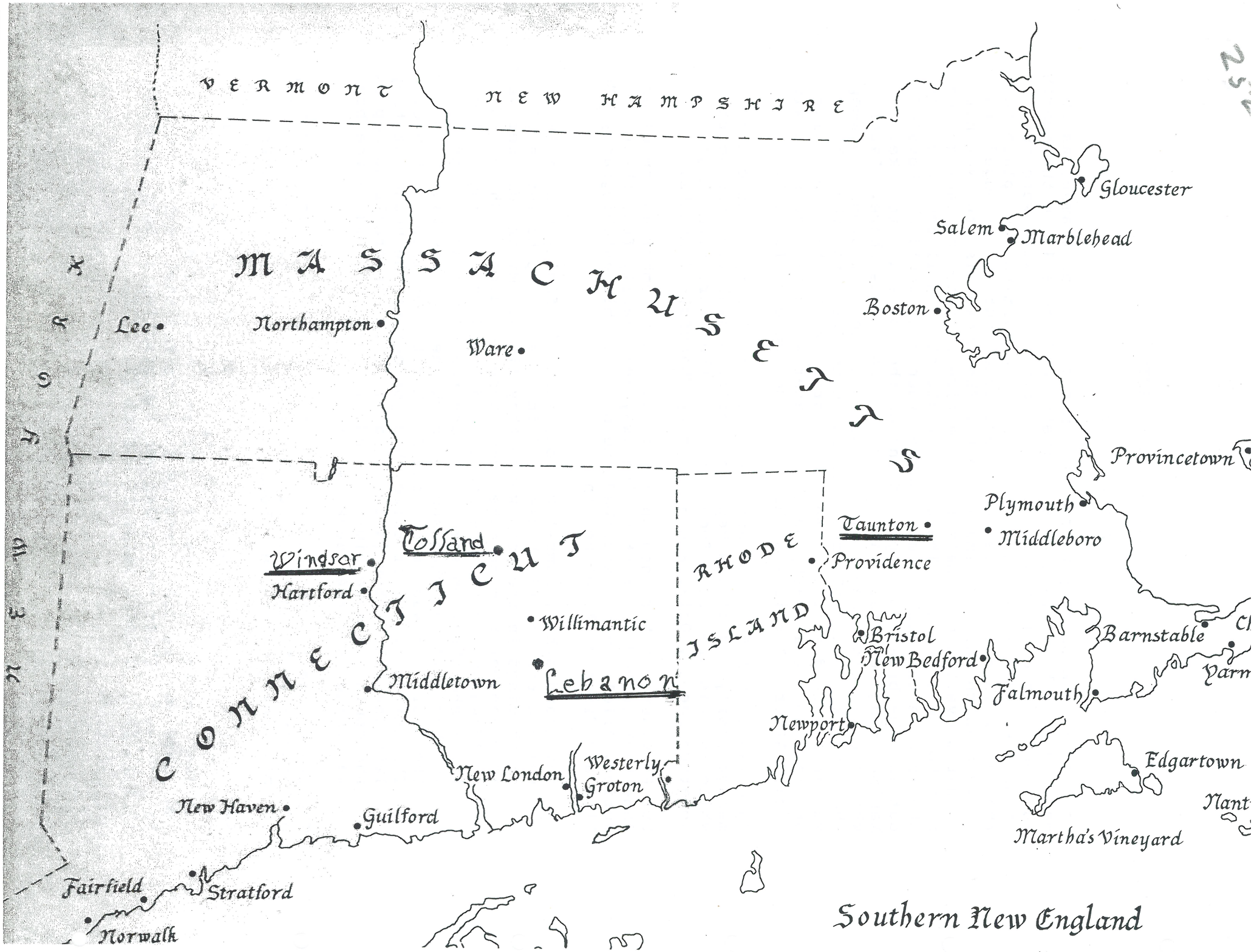
Jane was a skillful cook and never had difficulty. She could manage easily and always kept the children away from the hearth while she was preparing food. In 1751 they were Elihu, age 7 Jonathon age 5 , Ozias age 3 and baby Thankful, 7 months.

But Providence intervened on a cold day in November as Samuel and Jane both turned their attention away momentarily from their duties. Ariel Benton described the scene in his autobiography "The Life and Times of Ariel Benton":

> "My grandfather, Samuel Benton, when his family was small he built a part of his house, and in cleaning up he left a pile of shavings in the room where they lived. My grandmother went into another room to make some sauce for diner. She heard the children scream and she ran in and found the shavings all on fire; she threw on some water and ran to the spring for another pail and when she got back the fire was blazing out at the door. It was impossible for her to get into the house. The children, two or three, had got out of the house but they left the little boy (actually a girl) in the cradle asleep and she could not save him. He and all that they had in the house was burned up; they saved nothing."

The gravestone inscription in the North Cemetery reads "In Memory of Thankful ye Daughter of Mr. Saml1 Benton & Mrs. Jane his wife who Died being burned in a house Novr ye 3d 1751. Ae 7 months."

Samuel apparently was too far away to help soon enough so Ariel gives Jane the role of fighting the fire. The loss of Thankful, helpless one that she was, is a tragedy that could have been explained only as God's Providential act for their unfaithfulness in some way. Their recompense was the granting of baby Thankful II born just 10 month later on August 22, 1752.



Southern New England

Jane and Samuel III

Jane was 28 then and had married Samuel 8 years previously. He was 26. The excitement of the Great Awakening in 1743 apparently did not deter them. George Bradley, Jane's father, died in 1741 before they were married and Jane's portion of his estate was 40 pounds. His will stipulated it had to be distributed within three years of his death. Maybe money was the final incentive for them to join together? Samuel had received his grant of land in January and they were married in December. Their house was near the brook south of Timothy's tract.

Hannah Braman Bradley, Mother of Jane

Hannah, transported 60 miles away from her family and friends in Norton, Mass. to Lebanon Connecticut, found happiness nevertheless with a man of means from Tolland who sought her out. He was George Bradley and he married her in 1717 in Lebanon and then brought her to his new house on Grant's Hill Road. Jane became their fourth child in 1723.

Hannah's father was Thomas Braman and her mother was Hannah Fisher. They were married in 1685 in Taunton (Norton was not established until 1710). Hannah was their first daughter, born in 1690. Daniel was their first son, born in 1688. They had four other brothers and three sisters.

Hannah's father died in 1709 when Hannah was 19 and Daniel was 21. Possibly Daniel and the next two youngest boys carried on the work and Hannah helped in the house. Maybe her mother was sickly so Hannah was needed. She apparently had no suitors and continued to help until her mother died 5 years later. Daniel soon married and brought his bride into the home. Hannah no longer comfortable there, moved to Lebanon, Connecticut many miles away. Maybe she was "working out". At age 26 she had sufficient experience to be valuable. What connections there were between the two towns, we don't know. As we shall soon see, she might have even lived with the Gillett family.

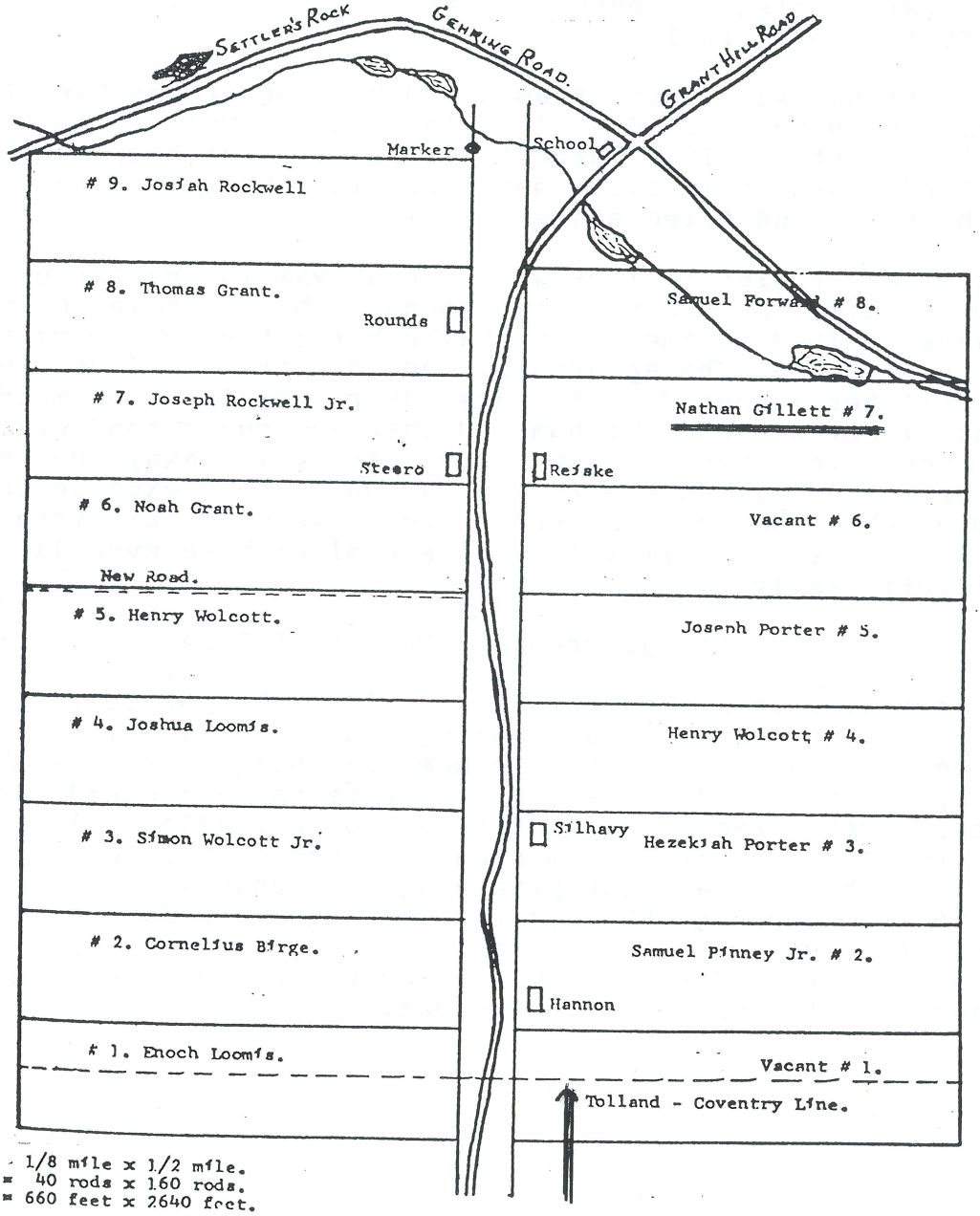
George Bradley, Father of Jane

He did not come from a New England family. He possibly came to Windsor as a 50 year old man seeking land and a wife. There are some records that a man with his name was born in Scamblesby, Lincoln, England on July 29, 1666 to parents George and Ann. Further, another record shows that a George Bradley sailed from London for Barbados in 1684 making our suspect George a 17 or 18 year old. This was an appropriate age for such a event as he was bound to a master for three years. These records do not disclose what his life was like in the Caribbean or elsewhere in the ensuing 28 years. Bradley families in Boston and New Haven do not have any direct connection to the man.

Weigold's map of the First Settlement in Tolland April 18, 1713 on Meeting House Hill later called Grant's Hill.

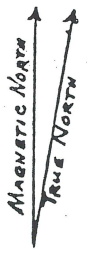
The lot lines follow the original deeds. Later, when it was discovered that this area was not anywhere near the center of the town of Tolland the 330 foot wide promenade was abandoned and it became just Grant's Hill Road. The lot owners were allowed to move their property lines out to the road. The Tolland-Coventry town line as evenutally agreed on through Lot #1 shows how far from the center these lots were. The brook is Spice Brook or Metcalf Brook.

George Bradley bought Lot # 7 from Nathan Gillett of Windsor in March 1716. The Grants bought some of the other lots making it unlikey that Bradley would be able to accumulate enough additional land to make a good farm even though the land on the East side was unclaimed. He sold it to Samuel Paulk in March of 1718.



Dimensions of lots - 1/8 mile x 1/2 mile.
= 40 rods x 160 rods.
= 660 feet x 2640 feet.

Width of proposed highway = 20 rods or 330 feet.



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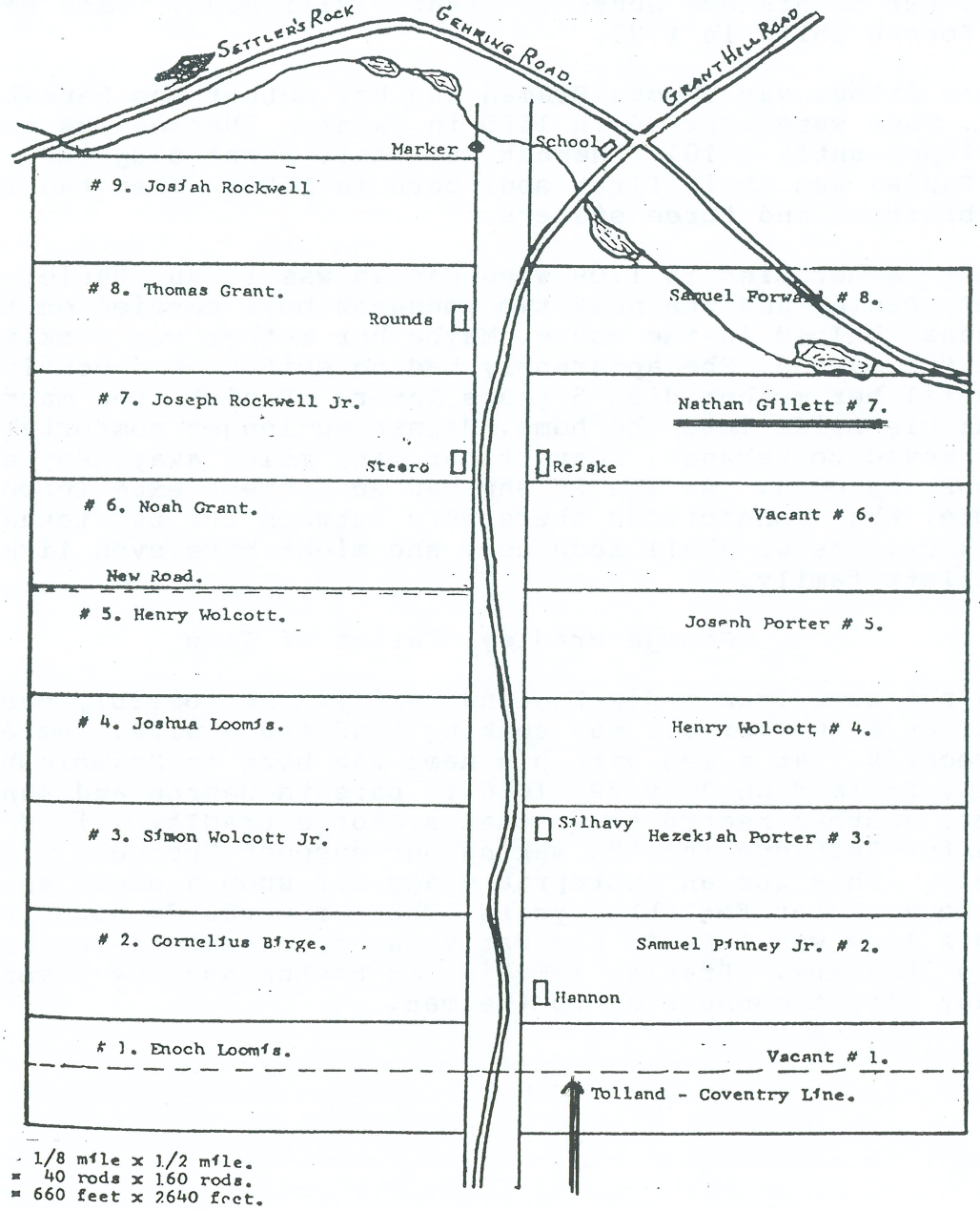

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Width of proposed highway = 80

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There is no explanation for his first recorded appearance in America in Windsor in March of 1716 when he bought lot #7 of 40 acres in the Southern part of Tolland from Nathan Gillett of Windsor for 30 shillings. He presumably was living in Windsor since Tolland was not yet settled. In May, in the role of a Windsor proprietor, he signed a petition to the General Assembly about Tolland's borders. He somehow was a friend of Gillett. His estate of 2800 pounds was a large one when he died in 1741 leading to the belief that he was well off when he came to America.

The Lebanon Marriage Connection

Nathan Gillett who sold lot #7 to George was a member of a large Windsor family and two of his family had signed the 1713 petition to the General Assembly from Windsor townsmen to organize Tolland.

It is noteworthy that two other Windsor Gilletts were first settlers of Lebanon, John and Nathaniel Gillett. Because there were Gillett relatives in both of these towns it takes little imagination to picture Nathan or one of his family introducing George Bradley to Hannah Braman, an eligible young woman of appropriate age then living in Lebanon.

George Bradley's gravestone in the South Cemetery shows his death in 1746 at age 74. Since his estate was inventoried in 1741, the stone is incorrect and should read 1741. In any event, he was 74 years old, placing his date of birth around 1667, thus making him 50 years old at marriage. It is barely conceivable that he was 66 when his last child was born, Jonah in 1733. As an older newcomer looking for a wife his options were limited if he wanted a woman not previously married. Widows were probably plentiful but George hadn't come to America to take on anothers' children as his family. Hannah who was 27 but in far off Lebanon was one of the few women known to the Gilletts suitable for such a match. For Hannah, of course, a man of some means, even though older would have been welcome even if it meant moving away to Tolland. She was already far from her family in Norton. The Braman Family notes preceding the Bibliography give further details.

Nathan Gillett, Middleman

He was granted East side lot #7 as one of the original fourteen Windsor men who layed out lots along Meeting House street in 1713, later to be called Grant's Hill Road. They were not all intent on settling Tolland themselves but wanted to be influential in the new town and make money by the sale of their lands. They mistakenly thought their street was the center of their tract but later events showed it to be more near the southern edge.

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Nathan Gillett deeded the lot to George Bradley in Windsor in March of 1717; 40 acres for 30 shillings (Book 1, page 180). (The price of "40 shillings" must have been a mistake by the Windsor town clerk and meant 40 pounds!). At that time Nathan was 60 and an established Windsor landowner. He identified himself in the deed as Nathan "second" as his father was an original Windsor settler, who arrived on the "Mary and John" in Dorchester and migrated to found Windsor.

George Bradley Landowner

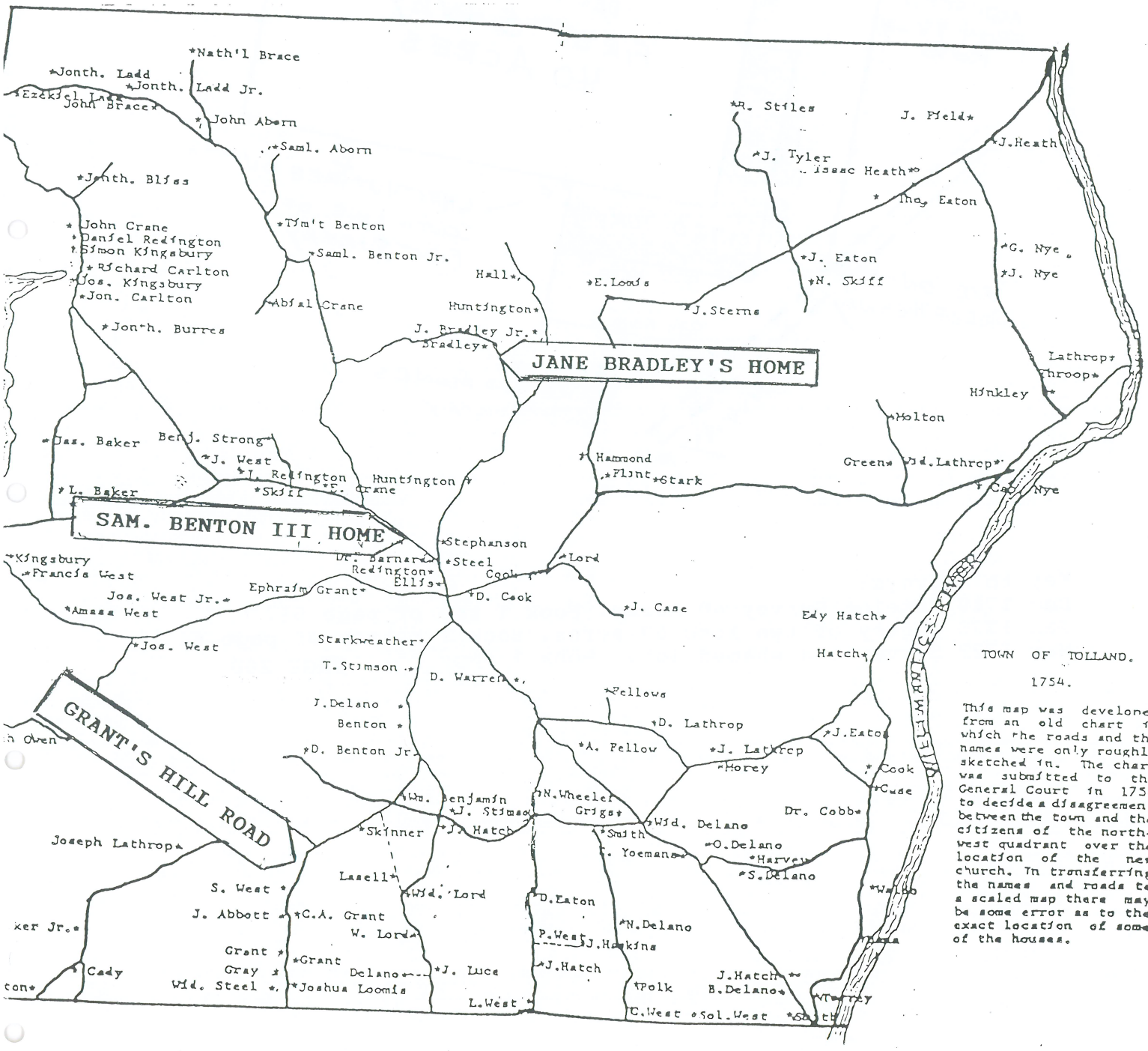
George married Hannah in Lebanon only a few months later in May of 1717. Did George Bradley have time enough to build a house and clear land before he was married? It is possible Gillett had some of the work done before he sold the lot. On the deed to Paulk, the next owner, he states "being the lot on which my new dwelling house stands." So he must have built a house in that time. Samuel Paulk bought the lot from Bradley in March of 1718 for 54 pounds (Book 1, page 75) yet Bradley did not survey a second homelot until December 1719. Paulk was from Concord, Massachusetts; part of the migration from there to Tolland. He may have bought the lot preparing for a later move to Tolland and did not want to occupy it immediately. So Hannah and George remained there until they could build a new house. George, Jr. was born in July 1718. The second child, Hannah, was born in December 1719 as her father was surveying his second homelot.

Why move to another tract? Lot #7 on Grant's Hill Road had no room for expansion as the Grants owned land all around that lot. The land at the new homelot appears to be flatter also.

George Bradley's status as a Tolland landowner is interesting as he was not an original Windsor proprietor. In 1719, fifty-one persons were listed on a deed that allowed them to become proprietors of land in the northern part of Tolland and survey land for themselves. Four Bentons were listed. Bradley's name was on a special provision that allowed him to survey a 40 acre lot if he paid six pounds within a short time frame. (Book 1, page 16). The fact that he was singled out in a special provision signals that he held a unique, but undefined, position in the Windsor community. He held no prominent positions in Tolland town life, however. Bradley availed himself of this opportunity to obtain his second homelot.

In 1724, Nathan Gillett, ever obliging, made out another deed for the same #7 lot for five pounds but this time added a worthwhile provision at the end, viz: All right which he had to any future division of land arising from the ownership of the lot would belong to George Bradley. For instance, when the proprietors met at Deacon Joseph Benton's house near the town center in 1728 to divide up the Cedar Swamp land, George Bradley was able to participate. (Daniel and Samuel Benton Jr. received a share each). The Cedar Swamp land was particularly valuable because the cedar trees there provided roof shingles and it was held in common from the beginning of the town

TOLLAND MAP OF 1754

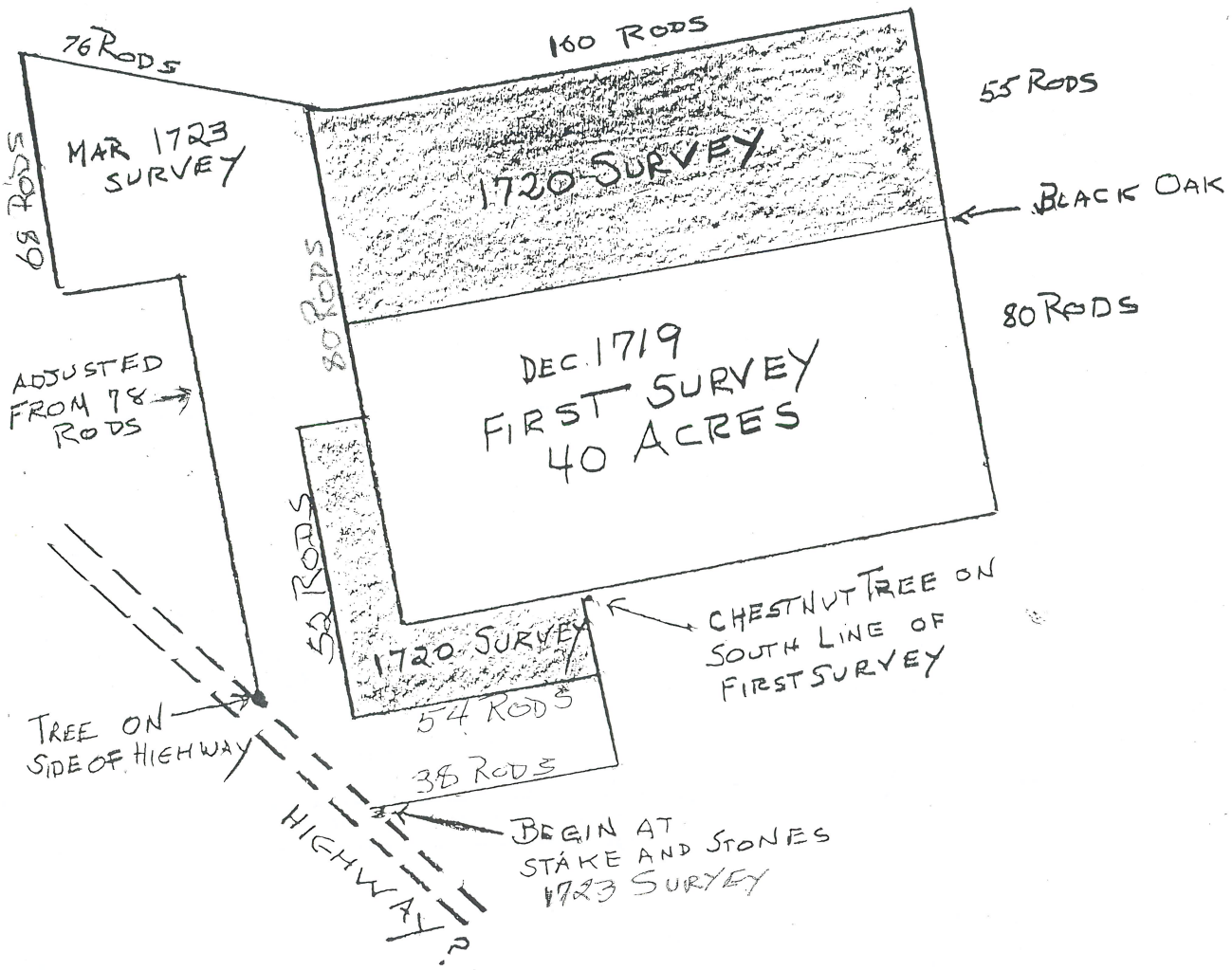


TOWN OF TOLLAND.

1754.

This map was developed from an old chart in which the roads and the names were only roughly sketched in. The chart was submitted to the General Court in 1754 to decide a disagreement between the town and the citizens of the north-west quadrant over the location of the new church. In transferring the names and roads to a scaled map there may be some error as to the exact location of some of the houses.

SKETCH OF GEORGE BRADLEY'S SECOND HOMELOT



Key to Surveys:
Dec 1719 Homelot Survey 40 Acres. Book 1 top of page 61.
Jan 1720 Survey of two lots 67 acres. Book 1 bottom of page 61.
Mar 1723 Survey odd shaped lot. Book 1 page 85.

George and Hannah (Braman) Bradley's Family

George born July 8, 1718	Jabez born Feb. 18, 1727*
Hannah born Dec. 18, 1719	Henry born May 3, 1729*
Mary born April 11, 1722	Josiah born May 12, 1730*
Jane born Feb. 6, 1723	Jonah born Mar 3, 1733

*Jabez served in three campaigns in the French and Indian War, twice with Sergeant Samuel Benton and William Benton, and died in 1760. Henry died in the Cuba expedition in 1762. Josiah answered the Lexinton Alarm in 1775. The date of death of Hannah Braman Bradley is unknown.

When Hannah and George arrived in 1717 the only Bentons in Tolland were Joseph Benton, his wife Sarah (Waters) and their seven children. They had settled the year before on a lot on the southern edge of town. Samuel, Jr.'s family arrived from Hartford about 1720 to settle near the town center. In that family, Samuel III was the seventh child and would become the husband of Jane Bradley. He was born the year Hannah and George Bradley were married.

Bradley's Second Homelot

The sketch represents George Bradley's second homelot and it was surveyed on a skewed axis. The surveys after the initial survey are assumed to have followed that axis more or less. Most dimensions on all four surveys correspond well but not precisely so adjustments in the sketch were made. The axis of the highway, therefore, is a guess. The highway may have been about 80 rods from the house. The reference points in the 1720 survey identify Bradley's tract as his "homelot."

After Bradley surveyed the first tract in December of 1719 he immediately surveyed two additional pieces in January of the next year. The L shaped piece looks insignificant but it may have been situated close to what appeared then to be a new road forming. Bradley surveyed the odd shaped tract in 1723 and so connected his homelot with the new highway. The present day Kozley Road may be that highway.

The 1754 map shows a Bradley on the south side of the road and a J. Bradley Jr. on Sugar Hill Road. In 1723 as if an afterthought, another deed for the odd shaped lot was made out identical to the first deed except it allowed for a highway two rods wide through his land and also stated "this Land is part of his hundred Acres" (Book 1, page 195). Bradley had thus received more land and apparently had more land on the south side of the highway. George Bradley, Senior, died in 1741; George Jr. was born in 1718 and probably was the owner by 1754. The map designation plus the fact that the 1723 survey borders on a highway lead to the conclusion that this place was where George Bradley's second homelot was situated. Jane was born there in February 1723 just before her father acquired the odd shaped tract.

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The Second Deed for the Odd Shaped Lot
Allows for a two rod highway through
Bradleys land Book 1, Page 195
March 15, 1723

SKETCH PAGE 258

March ye 15 = 1723 Then Laied out to gorg Bradly by akers
of Land Beginning at a stak and stones then Run East 38 Rods
to a stake & stones Then north twenty Eight Rods to a stake
and then Run West fifty four Rod to a stake & stone then
North fifty two Rods to a stake & stones Then East twenty
four Rods then north Eigty Rods to a stake Which is the norwgt
Corner of his farm then west twenty five Dgr to the north
seventy six Rod to a stak & stones which is the northwest
Corner Then Run south sixty Eight Rod to a stake & stone
then Run East thirty six Rods to a stake & stones then Run
south seventy Eight rod to a whiteoak tree Which stands by ye
High way side marked on four sides from thence to the first
Corner bounded East partonmenestors Land and part on P bradly
north on mathew alling west on high way & Comon Land
sought on Common Land servayed By Daniell Eaton
servayer This Land is part of his hundred akers With a louance
for a high way two Rods wide thrue his Land by his barn to
John Cadeyes 100 akers by southeast Corner

The above written was Returnd Recorded on the Instrument
Brought to Record to John hunting to on march 23: 1723
these two Lines Enterd pr m Jonathan Delano Clerk

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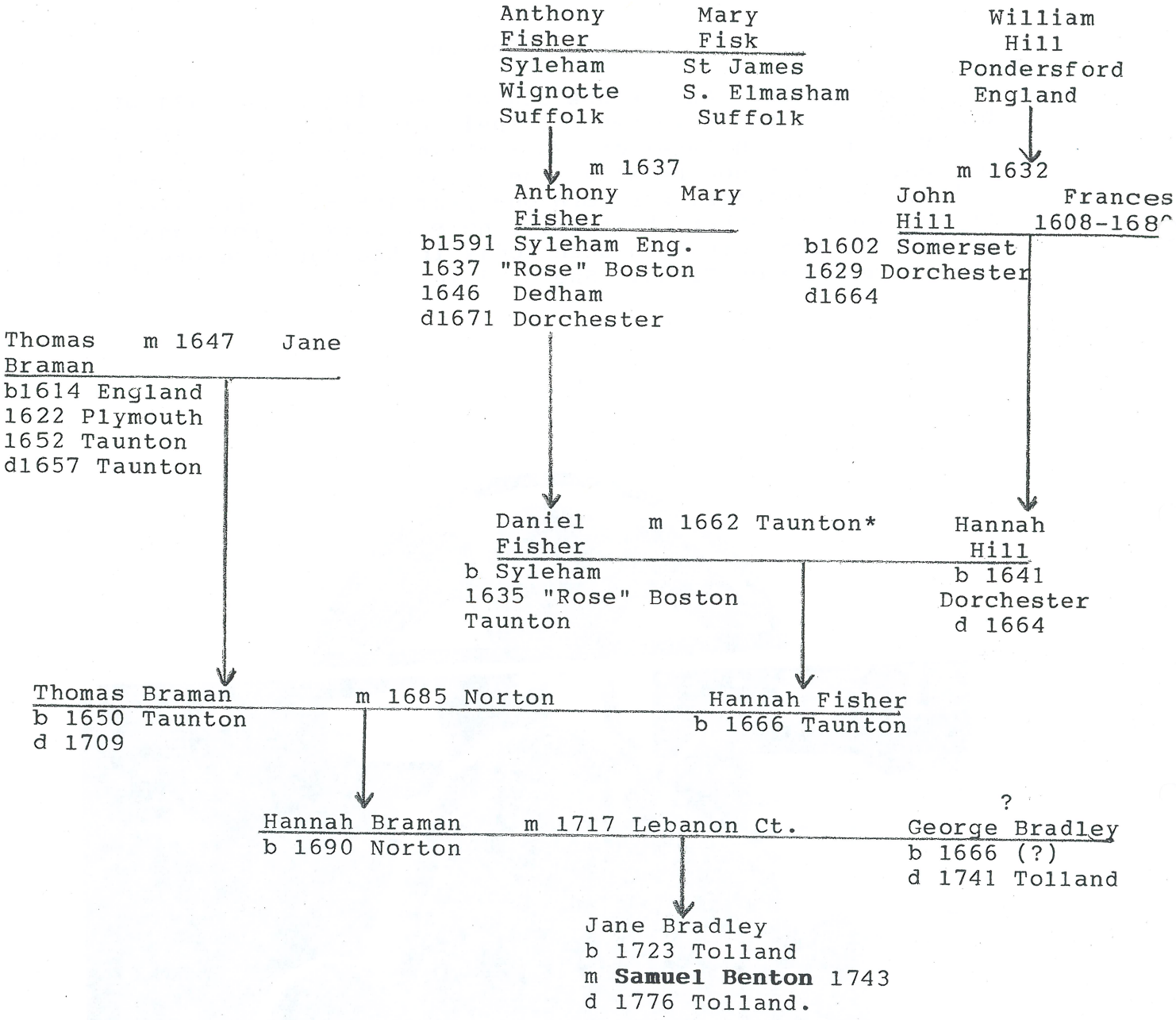
Jane Benton

She grew up there and became acquainted with Samuel III whose home was near the town center. Their affections grew leading to their marriage in December 1743; three years after her father died but only eleven months after the groom received his grant of land. Elihu, our ancestor, was born one year later. Their life together is outlined in other Chapters. Jane's barely legible sandstone grave footstone can been seen today in the North Cemetery next to the gravestone of Elihu. She died in 1776.



JANE BRADLEY'S ANCESTORS



*Alternatively Daniel Fisher was married to Abigail Marriott or Marret at Dedham in 1641 making identification of Hannah Fisher's parents unclear. NEHGR Vol 151, pages 171-191.

Notes on Hannah Braman's Norton family precede Bibliography page.

Abstract of Bristol County Mass. Probate Record, Genealogical Publishing Co, Baltimore, 1987

1707. Agreement between widow and children of Daniel Fisher, Sr. of Taunton, dated 29 July 1707. Widow Hannah Fisher called "our aged mother". Children Daniel, eldest son, Samuel, Eleazor, Ismael, Nathaniel, Hannah Brayman wife of Thomas Brayman, Mary Edy wife of Ebenezer Edy and Marcy Fisher

1707. Will of Thomas Braman mentions my sons and daughters. Names son Daniel to get double portion and John who is "already bound out".

1709 July. Estate of Thomas Braman inventoried by Hannah and Daniel.

1713. Daniel Braman appointed executor of estate of Thomas Braman.

1714. Robert Woodward paid money from Daniel Brayman to settle estate.

1725. Josiah, son of Thomas Braman (over 14) became ward of Samuel Leonard.

1724. Inventory of the estate of James Brayman of Norton presented by Nathaniel Brayman.

1726. Appointment of Nathaniel Brayman to settle estate of James, died intestate.

1726. July, Order for appraisal of Real Estate of Thomas Brayman as requested by his sons John and Josiah. Mentions sons Daniel and James, deceased, and their sisters.

1726. Division of estate of Thomas Brayman between Daniel, oldest son, John, James, deceased, Nathaniel, Josiah, youngest. Mentions that sons will pay money to the four daughters.

Lebanon, Ct. Vital Records:

Bradley, George m Hannah Bryman May 29, 1717.

"History of Norton" by George Faber Clark, 1859

Page 76 mentions Thomas Braman and note refers to Plymouth Colony Records Vol. III, page 37 for his origins.

Notes on Hannah Braman's Family, Norton Mass.

NEHGR Vol 17, page 233.
Thomas Braman married Hannah Fisher 20 Jan. 1685
Thomas, Son of Thomas born 2 Dec. 1686
Daniel Son of Thomas born 13 Oct. 1688.

Norton Mass. Vital Records, 1906 - Births:

Daniel	ch	Thomas	and Hannah,	Oct 11, 1688
Hannah	ch	"	"	Sept. 2, 1690
John	ch	"	"	Oct. 10, 1692
Nathaniel	ch	"	"	Jan. 10, 1694/5
Marcy	ch	"	"	Sept. 27, 1697
James	ch	"	"	Jan. 20, 1699
Mary	ch	"	"	Mar. 29, 1702
Sarai	ch	"	"	Mar. 31, 1704
Josiah	ch	"	"	May 19, 1705

Births of their children:
Thomas ch Daniel and Rachael, Oct. 31, 1716
Rachael ch " " " Sept. 12, 1717
Daniel ch " " " Feb. 13, 1718
Mary ch John and Mary Jan. 12, 1719
Marcy ch John and Mary, 1721
Sarah ch John and Mary, Nov. 13, 1724
Susanna ch Josiah and Marcy June 18, 1732
Mary ch Josiah and March, Apr 13, 1734

Deaths:	Hannah's Age
Thomas Sr died June 7, 1709	19
Hannah w Thomas died Sept 18, 1714	24

Marriages:
Daniel m Rachael Cambell, Nov 25, 1714
Josiah m Marcy Jilson Oct 3, 1729 in Attleboro
John m Mary Gray, May 28, 1718

"History of Norton" by George Faber Clark, 1859.
"Thomas Braman Sr. might have been the son of Thomas who with his wife were in Taunton June 1653 but of his ancestry we are uncertain. He is supposed to have lived in..... but at what time he settled there is unknown. He married Hannah Fisher June 20, 1685 and had nine perhaps ten children. He died June 7, 1709

Thomas Braman Jr. is supposed to have been the son of Thomas Sr. just mentioned and to have been born about 1686: but his name is not recorded with the other children of Thomas Sr. He was dead previous to May 1, 1725." (Probably Clark is looking at the probate records where Thomas Jr. does not appear. Thomas Jr. probably died young, unrecorded.)

The Lebanon Connection

"Genealogy and Social History of the Early Settlement of Lebanon" by Robert Charles Anderson, 1983 dissertation.
Town of origin for settlers from Mass. 1692 - 1705 were Duisbury, Bridgewater, Scituate, Mansfield, Plymounth. (No one from Norton or Taunton)
Most settlers were from Norwich Ct. and Northampton, Mass.; some from Windsor:

"JOHN GILLETT - born in Windsor in 1671, not long before the removal of his family to Deerfield, MA. John was taken captive by the Indians in 1696. He was granted land in the Ten Allotments in December 1697 and probably came to Lebanon in 1698 or 1699, for on 3 Jan. 1699/1700 he married Experience, daughter of Josiah Dewey, Sr. LVR, NEHGR 101: 43-66, 237-41

NATHANIEL GILLETT - Born in Windsor in 1673 he probably accompanied his elder brother to Lebanon in 1698 or 1699. Although there is no record of his marriage, his first child is recorded in Lebanon in November 1702. LVR 1:122, LCHR 4:22, NEHGR 101: 241."

No record in Lebanon of Bramans (except Hannah's marriage) or Bradleys.

Woodwards were present as Orlo D. Hine records:
"John Woodward Jr. m Experience Baldwin June 2, 1703 and gives 3 children.
Henry Woodward bought John Avery's house, 1702 m Hannah Burrows 1703. 4 children. Israel, son of Henry and Hannah m Mary Simms 1733".

Robert Woodward of Norton and Thomas Braman were in money transactions
as shown by Probate record 1714. Many Woodwards were in Dorchester, Taunton and Norton. Lebanon was settled by Northampton Woodward families. Henry Woodward from Dorchester was early settler in Northampton. Northampton Woodwards married Strongs and Jediah Strong was a Lebanon settler. Woodwards might have been a link for Hannah between Lebanon and Norton.

During this period the Lebanon minister was a Yale graduate and the Norton minister was a Harvard graduate so there was little communication.

Written By Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2000

Jane Bradley Benton

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"Norton Mass. Vital Records"
NEHGR Vol 17, page 233, Vol 101 page 237, Vol 151 pages 171-191.
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"The Bradleys of New Haven and Guilford (Conn.)" by Ralph D. Smith, NEHGR. LDS Index, Mar, 1996.
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"History of the Bradlee Family of Dorchester, Mass." by Samuel B. Doggett, 1878.
"Brief Sketches of a Few American Bradleys" John C. Bradley, 1889.
Four books of passenger lists for George Bradley.
RRBRADLEY@broad-lea.com

written by Byron Benton, Hartford, Ct. 2000



The Liberty Monument at Moses Circle

"FOR HASTENING TO SET A CROWN OF FREEDOM ON THIS NEW LAND WE LIE POSSESSED OF PRAISE THAT GROWS NOT OLD.....
AND HERE WERE MEN CO-EQUAL WITH THEIR FAITH WHO DID GREAT THINGS UNCONSCIOUS THEY WERE GREAT"

Inscription on Monument - underlining added.

SERGEANT SAM BENTON LEAD TOLLAND'S MEN AT THE BATTLE OF TICONDEROGA IN 1758

Embodying the exchange of four precious letters by Daniel Benton's family

Daniel in Tolland writing to son William a soldier at Lake George: (edited)

"I would let you know we are not unthoughtful about you but you lay heavy on our minds day and night.

I would have you behave yourself so as to gain love and favor of both God and man.

I would have you keep thoughts of death in your mind and fear of God before your eyes and do your duty without murmuring on account of all things are with God.

Now my son we wish the blessings of heaven to rest on you but we must love you and leave you in the hands of God that has made you and has the right to dispose of you as he sees fit,
This from your loving father Dan'll Benton"



Courtesy Glens Falls Insurance Company

Abercromby's Expedition Against Fort Ticonderoga Embarking at Head of Lake George

WRITTEN BY BYRON S. BENTON, HARTFORD, CT. 1999

SERGEANT SAM LEAD TOLLAND'S MEN AT TICONDEROGA*

Sergeant Sam looked dismally around the inside of his bateaux, leaking and overloaded with militia from his Tolland Company. It was being rowed laboriously up the length of Lake George in company of hundreds of other vessels to land a force to capture Fort Ticonderoga then held by the French. The Regular soldiers of the British Army had embarked at the Lake George camp first and had taken the best bateaux. They were arrayed up ahead and were kept in precise formation as expected of military units. The provincial troops from the colonies were to be on their flanks just ahead of the rafts for the artillery and supplies.

His men were struggling with their oars as expected of farmers with no seagoing experience. They had to pull in unison and neither side could pull harder than the other or the bateaux man, steering with a long oar in the stern, wouldn't be able to keep the vessel straight and in line with the others. He shouted to the rowers to row together and tried to show them how to keep the oars between the pins.

When Sam had first seem the condition of his bateaux he had quickly dashed back to the abandoned camp for a cooking pot. Then he had bailed water with it from the bottom of the craft, taking turns with another. The bateaux man kept pointing out to Samuel the cracks where water was seeping in. The boats had been hastily constructed along the Hudson of green timbers and the wood had not swelled uniformly so that gaps appeared. Also the boat had been wracked as it was dragged overland and now under full load more cracks appeared. Samuel, no marine craftsman, was puzzled how to fill them. But the July heat had forced the rowers to abandon their regimental coats and Samuel asserted his authority and snatched the nearest coat to slice it into strips and force them into the cracks with his cutlass. He told one of the Corporals to take over the job and finish it. The bateaux, now more or less safe from sinking, Samuel made arrangements for replacement of the rowers as they tired or became too inept at unison rowing.

William Benton, his nephew, the son of Daniel, was in another one of the three bateaux comprising Captain Samuel Chapman's 12th Company of Col. Lyman's First Regiment. All the men were from Tolland or close by and had been enlisted by Captain Chapman to form his Company based on his familiarity with them and time in the town train band. One of the Lieutenants was in Samuel's vessel and he nodded approval of Samuel's actions while he attempted to keep track of the other Tolland boats and shout encouragement or useless instructions to them.

*The personal experiences of Samuel and William are imagined. The four precious letters letters exchanged by William's family are real and they appear at the end of the chapter. This chapter contains extracts from sources in the bibliography.



Abercromby's army moved down Lake George on 5 July 1758 in a flotilla of almost 900 whaleboats and bateaux organized into four columns. From an unidentified early 19th-century textbook. Collections of Fort Ticonderoga.

Up to the end of Lake George

In Historian Francis Parkman's words "On the evening of the fourth of July, baggage, stores and ammunition were all on board the boats and the whole army embarked on the morning of the fifth. The arrangements were perfect. Each corps marched without confusion to its appointed station on the beach, and the sun was already above the ridge of French Mountain when all were afloat. A spectator watching from the shore says that when the fleet was three miles on its way, the surface of the lake at that distance was completely hidden from sight.. There were nine hundred bateaux, a hundred and thirty five whaleboats from Cape Cod and Nantucket and a large number of heavy flat boats carrying the artillery. The whole advanced in three divisions, the regulars in the center and the provincials on the flanks. Each corps had its flags and its music. The day was fair and men and officers were in the highest spirits.

Before ten o'clock they began to enter the Narrows; and the boats of the three divisions began to extend themselves into long files and the mountains closed on either hand upon the contracted lake. From front to rear the line was six miles long. The spectacle was superb: the brightness of the summer day; the romantic beauty of the scenery; the sheen and sparkle of those crystal waters; the countless islets, tufted with pine birch and fir; the bordering mountains with their green summits and sunny crags; the flash of oars and the glitter of weapons; the banners and varied uniforms and the notes of bugle, trumpet, bagpipe and drum answered and prolonged by a hundred woodland echoes. I never beheld so delightful a prospect, wrote a wounded officer at Albany a fortnight later.

The central column of regulars was commanded by Lord Howe. With this column came what was described as two floating castles, which were no doubt batteries to cover the landing of the troops. On the right hand and the left were the provincials, uniformed in blue and red, regiment after regiment, from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Behind them all came the bateaux, loaded with stores and baggage, and the heavy flat boats that carried the artillery, while a rear guard of provincials and regulars closed the long procession.

At five in the afternoon they reached Sabbath-Day point, twenty five miles down the lake, where they stopped till late evening, waiting for the baggage and Artillery, which had lagged behind. Here Lord Howe questioned John Stark as to the position of Ticonderoga and its best points of approach. At about eleven o'clock in the evening they set out again, and at daybreak entered the second Narrows where the lake approaches its outlet into Lake Champlain.

272

LANGY'S SCOUTING PARTY FIRST TO SPOT THE
ENORMOUS FLOTILLA OF BATEAUX AND WHALEBOATS
MOVING UP LAKE GEORGE
(Source: "Ticonderoga 1758" by René Chartrand,
illustrated by Patrice Courcelle. Osprey
Publishing, Ltd. 2000.)



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Up to the end of Lake George

In Historian Francis Parkman's words "On the evening of the fourth of July, baggage, stores and ammunition were all on board the boats and the whole army embarked on the morning of the fifth. The arrangements were perfect. Each corps marched without confusion to its appointed station on the beach, and the sun was already above the ridge of French Mountain when all were afloat. A spectator watching from the shore says that when the fleet was three miles on its way, the surface of the lake at that distance was completely hidden from sight.. There were nine hundred bateaux, a hundred and thirty five whaleboats from Cape Cod and Nantucket and a large number of heavy flat boats carrying the artillery. The whole advanced in three divisions, the regulars in the center and the provincials on the flanks. Each corps had its flags and its music. The day was fair and men and officers were in the highest spirits.

Before ten o'clock they began to enter the Narrows; and the boats of the three divisions began to extend themselves into long files and the mountains closed on either hand upon the contracted lake. From front to rear the line was six miles long. The spectacle was superb: the brightness of the summer day; the romantic beauty of the scenery; the sheen and sparkle of those crystal waters; the countless islets, tufted with pine birch and fir; the bordering mountains with their green summits and sunny crags; the flash of oars and the glitter of weapons; the banners and varied uniforms and the notes of bugle, trumpet, bagpipe and drum answered and prolonged by a hundred woodland echoes. I never beheld so delightful a prospect, wrote a wounded officer at Albany a fortnight later.

The central column of regulars was commanded by Lord Howe. With this column came what was described as two floating castles, which were no doubt batteries to cover the landing of the troops. On the right hand and the left were the provincials, uniformed in blue and red, regiment after regiment, from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Behind them all came the bateaux, loaded with stores and baggage, and the heavy flat boats that carried the artillery, while a rear guard of provincials and regulars closed the long procession.

At five in the afternoon they reached Sabbath-Day point, twenty five miles down the lake, where they stopped till late evening, waiting for the baggage and Artillery, which had lagged behind. Here Lord Howe questioned John Stark as to the position of Ticonderoga and its best points of approach. At about eleven o'clock in the evening they set out again, and at daybreak entered the second Narrows where the lake approaches its outlet into Lake Champlain.

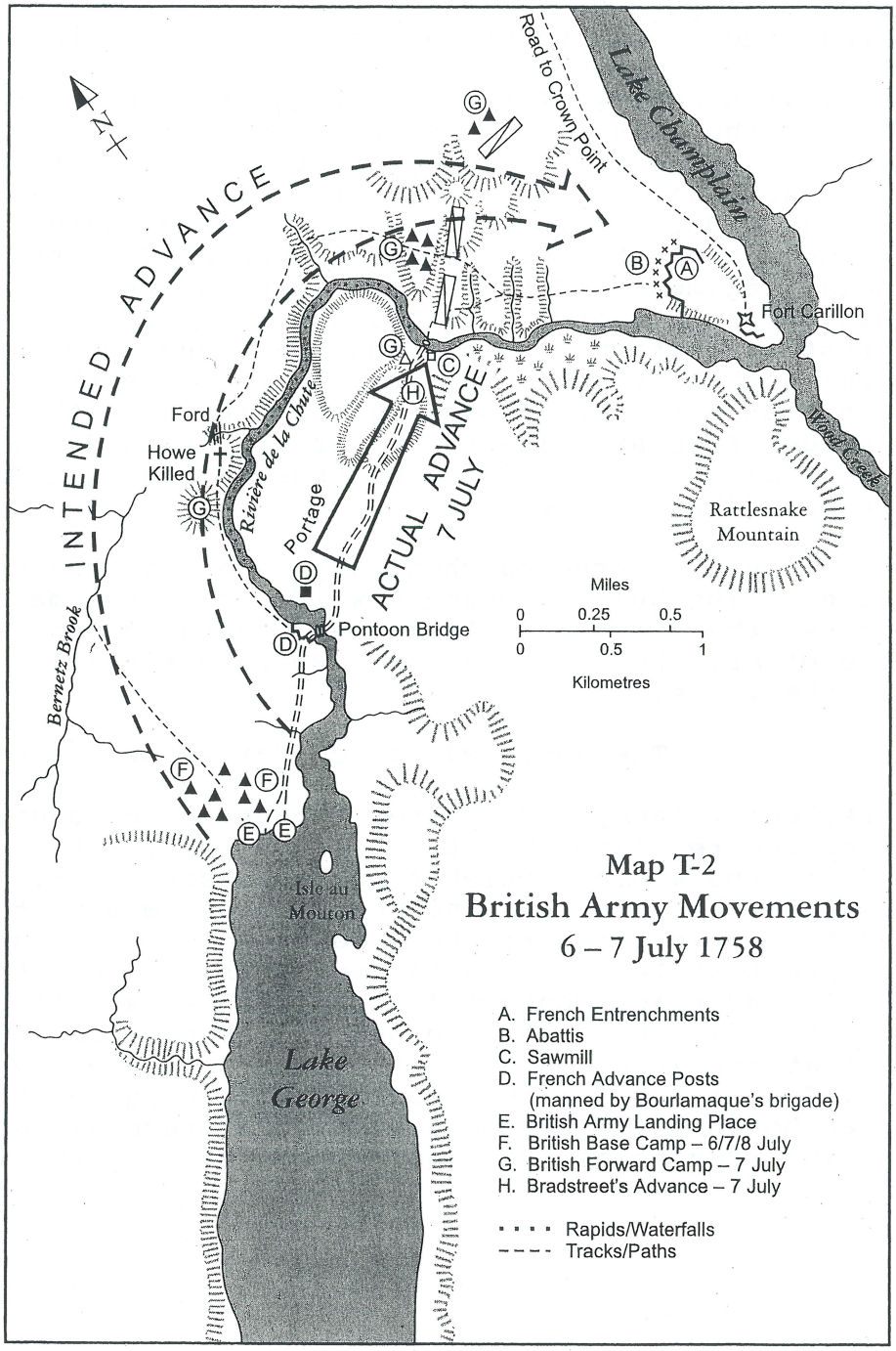
Close on their left, ruddy in the warm sunshine, rose the vast bare face of Rogers Rock, where a French advanced party under Langy and Treezec sat watching the movements of the Army.

Lord Howe with Rogers of the Rangers went in whaleboats to reconnoiter the landing. They saw a detachment of French troops too weak to oppose them so they landed and drove them off. By noon the whole army was on shore. Rogers, with some of his Rangers was ordered forward to reconnoiter a route to the West around the outlet stream. He was accompanied by the Connecticut provincial regiments of Lyman and Fitch and they moved ahead of the main body of troops. The Tolland men were in that regiment. The forest was extremely dense and heavy and so obstructed with undergrowth that it was impossible to see more than a few yards in any direction while the ground was encumbered with fallen trees in every stage of decay. The ranks were broken and the men struggled on as well as they could in gloom under a canopy of boughs that the sun could hardly pierce.

Their difficulty increased when they came near the upper rapids of the outlet. The guides became bewildered in the maze of trunks and boughs; the marching columns were confused and fell in one upon the other. They were in the desperate situation of an army lost in the woods.

The Advanced French Party Lost Also

The party under Langy and Treezec, about three hundred and fifty Canadians and regulars, had tried to retreat; but before they could do so the whole British Army had passed them, landed, and placed itself between them and their countrymen at the Fort. They climbed the steep gorge at the side of Rogers Rock and followed an Indian path that lead to the valley of Trout Brook thinking to descend it and reach Montcalm's camp at the saw-mill. Towards the close of the day they had come out from the valley of Trout brook and were at the junction of that stream with the river and were in a state of anxiety, for they could see nothing but brown trunks and green boughs. It seemed lonely as a grave since sounds of the British and provincials were quickly muffled by the woods.



Source: "FIGHTING FOR CANADA"

A Short Musket Skirmish

Lord Howe, with Major Israel Putnam and two hundred of his rangers, was at the head of the main column in advance of the others. Suddenly the challenge of "Qui vive!" rang sharply from a thicket in front. "Francais!" was the reply. Langly's men were not deceived by that accent. They fired out of the bushes. The shots were returned. A hot skirmish followed and Lord Howe dropped, shot through the breast with a musket ball. All was confusion. The dull, vicious reports of musketry in thick woods, at first a few scattering, then fierce and rapid volleys reached the troops behind. They could hear and see nothing. For all they knew, Montcalm's whole army was upon them. Nothing prevented a panic but the steadfastness of the rangers who maintained the fight alone till the rest came back to their senses.

Lyman's Connecticut Regiment Next Engaged

Rogers with his reconnoitering party and the regiments of Lyman and Fitch were at a distance in front. They all turned back on hearing the musketry so the French were caught between two fires. They fought with desperation. About fifty of them escaped at length; a hundred and forty eight were captured and the rest were killed or drowned in trying to cross the stream's rapids. The loss in numbers of English was small. The loss of Lord Howe was inestimable."

The army halted and stayed the night in the woods. The next day, the 7th of July, it retired back to the landing place, bridged the stream and moved across the cleared land to camp near the saw-mill.

William and Samuel There.

We are very fortunate to have a copy of William's letter of July 15, 1758 wherein he says "we tuck 188 prisners and how many we kild we no not.." In the course of the entire action there was no other opportunity for the British forces to close with the French and capture any of them. So the only French prisoners taken were at this skirmish and when William says "we tuck" he means his own regiment and the rangers did it. This letter gives us valuable proof that Samuel and William participated in this fight. Why William wrote so little about it may be his caution not to worry Sarah and his parents.



Fig. 12. Rogers' Rangers had several different uniforms. The man on the left is clothed in a hunting or workman's shirt, a form of early uniform. The man on the right is wearing Rogers' famous 1758 green regimental. The man in the center is clothed in a gray duffel goat. Speakman's and Hobbs' companies of Rogers' Rangers may have received these.

Joe Lee sketches from "Redcoats, Yankees and Allies"

Getting to the Heights of Carillon

William and Samuel found themselves in that battle because William Pitt in London had taken control of the war in December 1757 and decided a large European style army would be best to invade Canada up the Champlain-Lake George Valley. So he placed Major General James Abercromby in command and ordered him to recruit an army of 20,000 men from the Colonies, a huge number.
Such a large force would mean many untrained farmers would be pressed into service in order to fill the quotas. Connecticut voted to provide 5000 and the Tolland Company numbered 95. In the previous year Tolland had sent only 28.

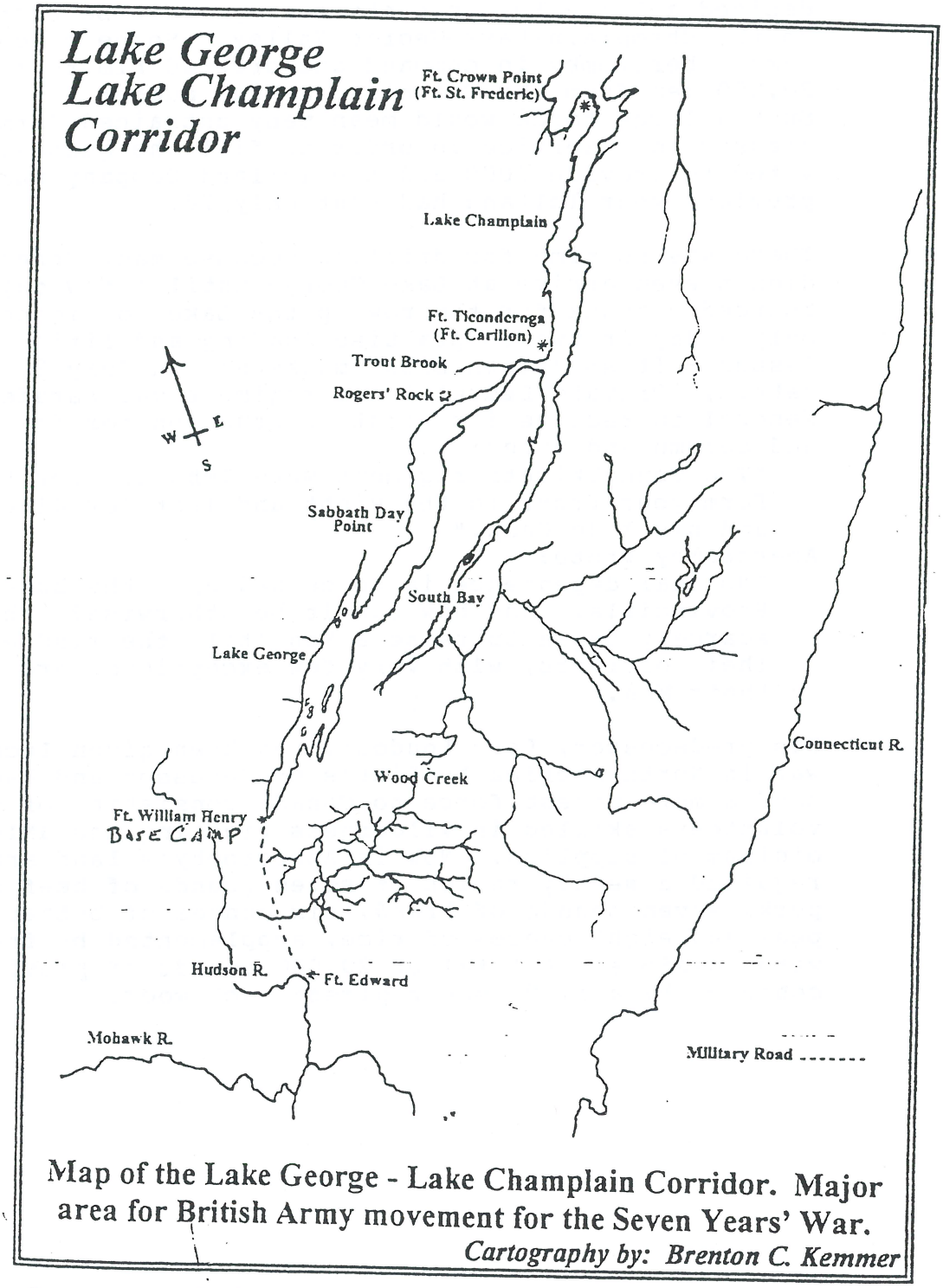
There was no time for drilling because many Connecticut troops didn't even arrive at Lake George until a few days before they boarded bateaux for the row up the Lake to Ticonderoga. Some had only a day or two to practise loading and firing their newly issued British "Brown Bess" muskets" On July 3, 5 days before the battle, Private Lemuel Lyons regiment was paraded before the General to receive its first instruction for deploying into line and column and noted:

> "The Connetticuts rigiment were Imbodied for to learn how to form your front to the Right and left for Jineral Abbacromba and his A de Camp."

Abercromby wrote:

> "No real dependence is to be had upon the bulk of the Provincials. And how can it be otherwise? The Provinces scarcely began to raise a Man 'till the middle of April. Their officers, with very few exceptions, are worse than their Men."

His predecessor, Lord Loudoun, had been given local control of the war in North America by Pitt's predecessor and had made ready to send a more modest force to Canada consisting of frontier volunteers skilled in wilderness fighting and able to move with a minimum of supplies. Now in Abercromby's land army each soldier required a weekly ration of seven pounds of beef or four pounds of pork, seven pounds of bread, six ounces of butter, three pints of peas and eight ounces of rice, supplemented by fresh vegetables were possible. A total of 20,000 pounds of provisions were consumed by a 1,000 man regiment each week.



Map of the Lake George - Lake Champlain Corridor. Major area for British Army movement for the Seven Years' War.

Cartography by: Brenton C. Kemmer

Source: "Redcoats, Yankees and Allies."

Consequently the plan to use 20,000 provincial troops meant that the provision contractors had to double the amount of rations over those needed for Loudoun's force. To provision the expected large number of provincial troops for a month from the supply base at Albany to Lake George it was estimated that 5,760 barrels of provisions weighing 576 tons would have to be transported the distance of 63 miles. It could have been moved in three weeks by a combination of 1,000 bateaux, 1,000 oxcarts and 800 wagons. All that could actually be raised, however, were 300 oxteams and wagons. These estimates were in addition to the supplies needed for the 6000 British regulars, the 40 gun artillery train and ammunition for the whole force.

Lord Howe, Abercromby's second in command, supervised the movement of the supplies. Rapids in the upper Hudson made two portages necessary. From Albany bateaux transported the supplies 12 miles to Half Moon, the first major portage, where they were transferred to wagons and hauled by a wood land road 12 miles to Stillwater. Between Stillwater and Saratoga the Hudson was used by means of large scows. Next the loads were returned to wagons or oxcarts to travel to Fort Edward and then over the final 13 miles to Lake George where an entrenched camp was established in June. Each piece had to be handled five times in the six days required.

The Tolland Company had been assigned to do some of this labor. In his July 13th letter William wrote that his compatriots were not well because "it was most hard for them going up to the nares (narrows?) were they was forst to worck knight and day and nothen to eat of aney valeu."

By June 17 all provisions were stockpiled at Fort Edward. Thereafter convoys were dispatched daily to the Lake George base camp using 173 oxteams hauling provisions or munitions, 90 wagons capable of carrying one bateaux at a time and whaleboats drawn on low wheeled carriages.

Pitt had promised to send only 10,000 muskets and 4,000 tents from England. Abercromby had to find the remainder in the Colonies. Delay after delay ensued while the Colonial assemblies argued about collecting the guns and how they would be reimbursed by the Crown. Fortunately, Pitt had issued issued a virtual blank check for this campaign so that money was not the problem. But how to convice the Colonies of the reliability of these promises? Connecticut's Governor Fitch and Abercromby exchanged letters thru March and April. Finally, on May 4th Fitch issued orders to Connecticut towns to begin collecting arms but refused to dispatch the troops until they had received their tents. Abercromby replied on May 14th that the Colony "lose no time in endless negotiation which the forwardness of the season does not admit of."



Fig. 33. Like wagoners, the bateaux men were not uniformed, as shown by these three bateaux men. Notice the bateau man on the right standing guard with his issued firelock (notice the cover for the lock), bayonet, cartridge box, and hair-on knapsack.

His shipment of muskets and tents didn't arrive in New York until June 13th. They arrived in Albany June 19th. By that date only 1900 Connecticut militia had arrived at Albany, the staging area for the campaign.

Samuel and William Tramped to Albany

Probably they first traveled from Tolland to Hartford and then followed along with others in stages to Harwinton, Goshen, Cornwall, Caanan, Sheffield, Mass, North Sheffield, Spencertown, N.Y., Kinderhook, Greenbush and Albany where they joined the rest of their regiment. If they were fortunate enough they could find food and shelter at inns. Connecticut paid them "billeting money." Crossing the Hudson River gave them a chance to compare its breadth with that of the Connecticut River and when they saw Albany they found it strange. Its unfamiliar Dutch decorated stone and brick houses were situated with their gable ends towards the streets and notched like steps. There they would have been out-fitted with equipment to supplement what they brought with them from Tolland. They may not have been too anxious to leave the excitement and ample food at Albany but the crowds of oddly attired provincials, British and Indians may have overawed them.

Up at Lake George base camp by June 29th only 500 Connecticut men had arrived, the remainder were scattered along the route from Albany. Some, as was the case of the Tolland Company, were probably manhandling the scores of barrels of supplies. By July 5th, however, Abercromby could delay no longer in the face of the possibility of French reinforcements to Ticonderoga. By then he had nearly 9,000 Provincial troops and 6,300 regular British soldiers. Under these hasty arrangements, the militia could not have been very effective, except in consuming the rations purchased by the British and hauled forward at such an effort.

CONNECTICUT PROVINCIALS

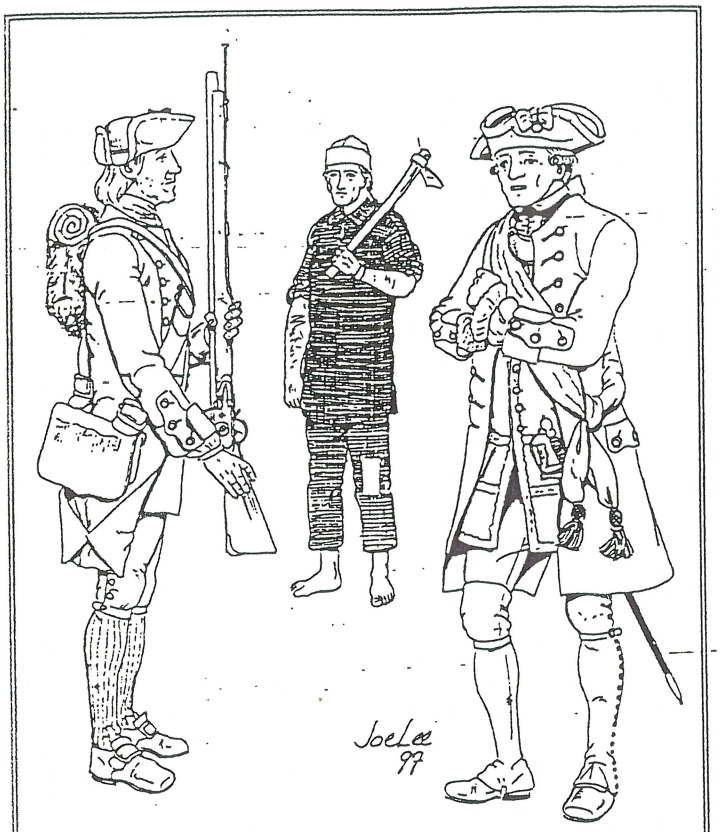
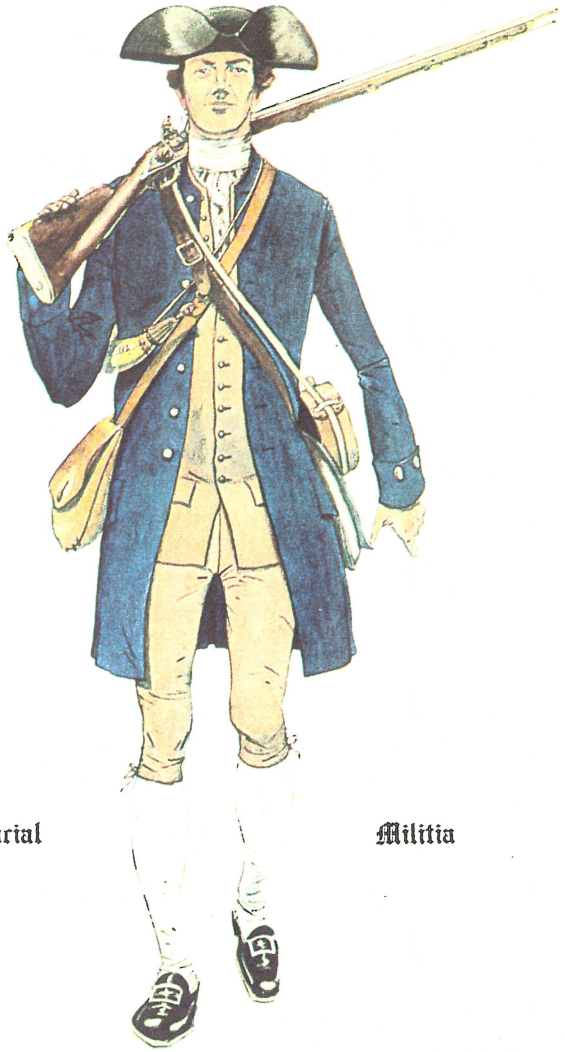


Fig. 5. The soldier on the right is an officer of the Connecticut Regiment. The man on the left is a private soldier in full marching kit. Notice the hair-on knapsack. The man in the center is wearing the fatigue dress for this colony, checked trousers and shirt.



Provincial Militia





PHOTOS ABOVE FROM REENACTMENT CAMP AT TOLLAND"S BENTON HOMESTEAD

Equipping William and Samuel

They would have worn a regimental coat, vest, breeches, white shirt and neck covering, stockings, shoes and buckles, gaiters or leggings. For working duty they might have worn a check shirt and trousers.

The red regimental coat with yellow facing was of wool with lapels and cuffs and was wool lined. On the left shoulder was stitched a wool tab that buttoned over the cartridge box strap. The length of the coat was mid thigh and was made to hook back at the skirts for parade. Lord Howe had wisely ordered the men to cut off their long coat tails so they would not become entangled with branches. Pockets were large and deep to carry extra food and gear.

The red vest or waistcoat was also made of wool and was mid thigh and straight cut. It was closed by a series of buttons from the neck to the waist.

Breechers or britches were red woolen knee length pants with a tall waistband and were fastened by bands at the knee. Buttons and buckles were both used for knee fasteners. Breeches fastened with a gusset and laced in the back of the waistband. The were baggy in the seat and used two different fly closures. The most common military fly was a single row of buttons called a French fly. Some men purchased or were issued drop-front breeches.

Shirts were large linen garments made from rectangles and gussets and were very full in the sleeve. They were made long half, way down the thigh.

Gaiters were heavy linen brown canvas tubes cut to fit the leg trimly and reached half way up the thigh. They reached to within an inch from the sole of the shoe. The outside of the gaiter was closed by 25 to 30 black horn buttons and the gaiter had a strap at the bottom that reached under the shoe at the arch.

The tricorn was a black, fur-felted round brimmed hat that was turned up on three sides forming a three sided headpiece. It was laced up on the sides by white worsted cord and was trimmed with white worsted tape, called ferreting. On the left side of the hat, a black cockade of silk ribbon was placed under the white cording and held in place by a regimental button.

RE-ENACTORS:
TOP, TOLLAND AT THE
BENTON HOMESTEAD.
LOWER AT TICONDEROGA







Sergeant Samuel Benton wore a worsted wool sash around his waist as a mark of command. It was scarlet with yellow facing down the middle.

Later, when William Benton was in the Western campaign under General Amherst in 1760, the colors had changed so that his regimental coat was dark navy faced with red. Vests and breeches were red. By that time he was made a sergeant and could wear the sash of command.

Gear included a musket (often a British "Brown Bess") with sling-hammer, cap-stopper-brush-wire-worm-turnkey-oil bottle-rag, bayonet, sword or cutlass or axe, belt and frog, scabbards for all edged weapons, cartridge box with belt and buckly or bullet bag, powder horn, haversack, canteen or wooden bottle, knapsack, blanket, trumpline.

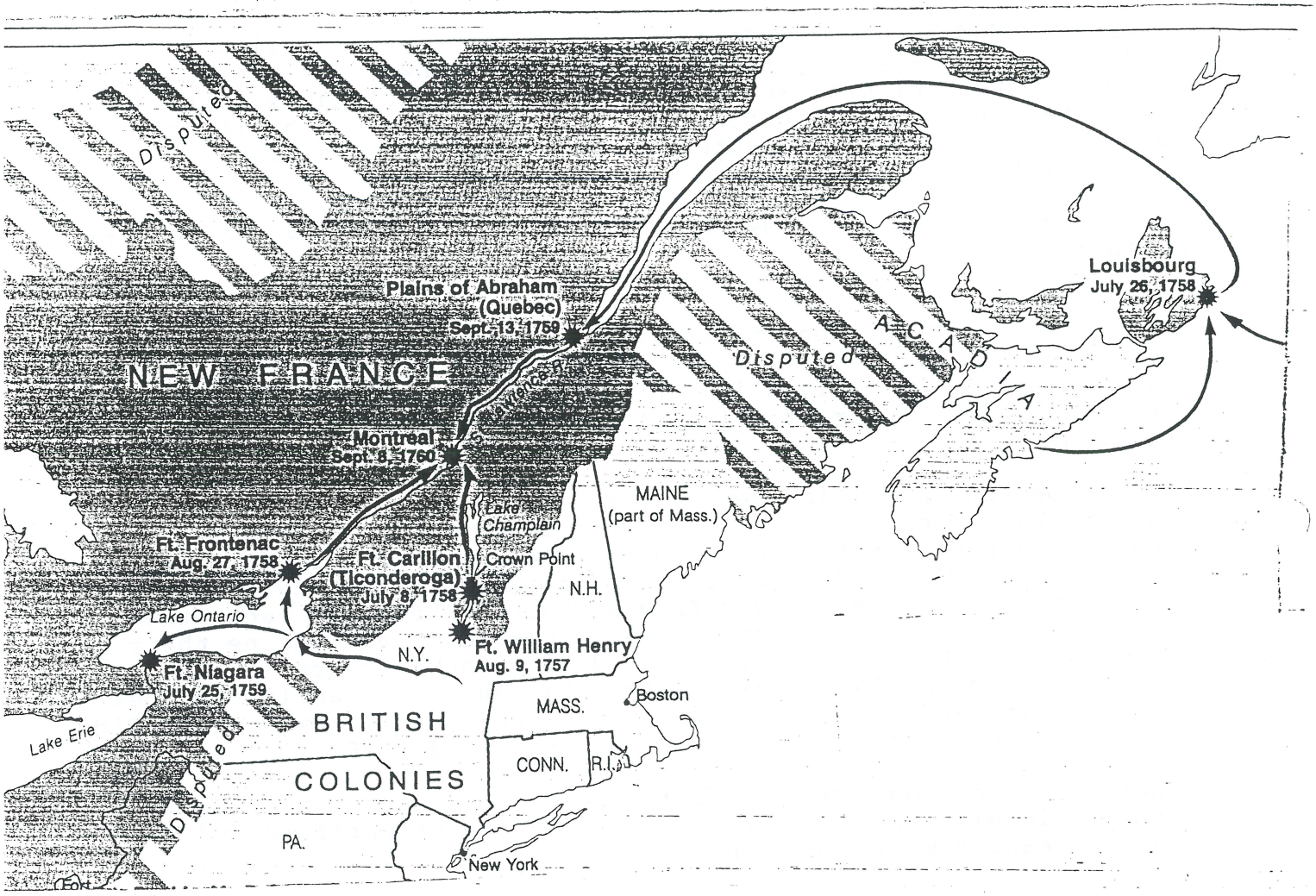
Each six soldiers were issued a tent, kettle, camp axe and cooking utensils.

Other Bentons in Lyman's First Regiment

William and Samuel served in Captain Samuel Chapman's 12th Company in Lymans First Regiment. Distant cousins also served in that same regiment:

Edward Benton and Silias Benton were in the 5th Company under Captain Ward from Guilford. They were descendants of Edward Benton, Andrew Benton's uncle. The later two had parted company in Wethersfield in 1637, Andrew went to Milford and Edward to Guilford. Had these Bentons from different stems met each other and tried to compare ancestors, it is difficult to imagine their conclusions. Had each family handed down the folklore of the families founding in the New World? Did Andrew's family remember uncle Edward and their Epping, England home? And likewise what did Edward's family still remember about young Andrew Benton?

Thomas Benton from Windsor was in the First Company under Col. Lyman, himself. His father was Caleb Benton of Hartford and he was Sergeant Samuel's cousin.



Source: America Past and Present, Scot Foresman, 1984

Bentons in other Regiments in the 1758 campaign.

Joseph Benton, 2nd Company, 3rd Regiment, under Lt. Col. Hinman from Woodbury. Probably he was a great grandson of Joseph, one of the founders of Tolland who had migrated to Kent. The third regiment acted in concord with the First in the initial skirmish.

Medad Benton, 2nd Regiment. 2nd Company under Lt Col. Coit of Preston. Probably the son of Jonathon Benton and Sergeant Samuel was his uncle. The 2nd Regiment was stationed at the landing area throughout the main battle.

Samuel Benton, 4th Regiment. 12th Company under Captain Everts from Cornwall. This Samuel was probably from Joseph Benton's family. The 4th was stationed north of Ticonderoga to forstall reinforcements from Canada reaching the battle.

Their pay

Wages for a 8 month summer campaign were 14:8:0 - Fourteen pounds eight shillings and no pence. In addition a bounty for signing was 4:00:00. By 1760, when William enlisted again the pay had increased to 16:0:0 because it was more difficult to find men to enlist. Attrition and hardships of campaigning discouraged many men. By that time he had been made a sergeant and his <u>monthly</u> pay would have been 2:4:0. Sergeant Sam's monthly pay as a sergeant in 1758 would have been 2:0:0. Therefore in a 8 month campaign he would have been paid 16 pounds compared to the fourteen pounds of a private. An additional bounty was provided for a soldier who came with his own gun since he was risking losing this valuable possession in the rigors of the campaign.

The course of the War

This last French and Indian War, 1775 - 1762, started with England on the defensive against constant French pressure to extend its empire in the West and Mississippi Valley. Then as alignments in Europe changed and Pitt became Prime Minister, the English determined to drive the French out of North America altogether. So in 1757 the British planned to conquer Canada. In 1758, the year we describe, they partially succeeded. By capturing Louisburg, the fortress guarding the entrance to the St. Lawrence and Fort Frontenac where Kingston now stands, they effectively cut the French off from supplies from France and from access to their trade with the West. The major disappointment that year was at Ticonderoga where an advance up the Champlain Valley to capture Quebec was forestalled by a defeat on July 8th.

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Next, in 1759, General James Wolfe defeated Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec giving England the key to possession of Canada. William Benton enlisted again the next year and was made a sergeant by Colonel Phynehas Lyman. His regiment was sent to the Lake Ontario-St Lawrence prong of a three point pinchers attack on Montreal. All three arms fortuitously meet on time and with the fall of Montreal the French possession of Canada was to be ended. The Fourniers would become British subjects the same as the Bentons were.

Connecticut's Role

Its leaders trod a careful path to retain its independence from British interference and yet to comply with the demands of the Crown for men and supplies for the War. Connecticut hoped to escape notice of the Lords of London as much as possible. It tried to comply with demands but stubbornly held onto as much control of its resources as it could without incurring too much wrath from the British. It would not allow its men to be under the command of British Officers. When pressed for supplies it often pleaded poverty or delayed complying. A standing army was out of the question so its men signed on only for summer campaigns and were dismissed in the Fall. The next year new companies were formed. Requests for soldiers were often met with inquiries as to their use and destination. Such questions infuriated the British who viewed war as a national effort. However, when it became evident the War was successful, Connecticut obsequiously offered its soldiers to serve under British command and at any place they where needed with no questions asked because the expectation British reimbursement overcame their native stubbornness.

Raising the Troops

While the leaders of Connecticut were very aware of the necessity of driving the French out of North America, the Tolland people weren't as concerned. By then Indian attacks were of little worry and the New York border was distant. What motivated them to go on the campaign? Rev. Steele, by now very weary, probably could not have raised the regular cry of a War of Protestantism against French Popery. He may have instilled such a fear in Tolland's people in years past for other campaigns, but such tirade wasn't in him this year. Secondly, this years campaign was so well supported by the British that everyone had reason the believe they would drive all the way into Canada. In which case French booty galore might be had by every soldier. This was a very good reason to sign up. Serving with one's comrades was a strong impulse to join with friends and neighbors who had much in common and perhaps cajoled Sam and William to join them.

Jabez Bradley, Samuel's brother-in-law, and Jonathon Burroughs, William's brother-in-law, both enlisted. They would be with seven Tolland men who had gone with them on the previous year's campaign. Finally, they had faith in their leaders, Captain Samuel Chapman of Tolland and Colonial Phynehas Lyman of nearby Suffield. Both were thought of as reliable men and privilege to follow. Daniel, Jr. writing to William at Lake George says "Remember my love to Captain Chapman....Samuel Benton.." indicating a townsman's affection for Chapman.

Samuel and William Benton Enlisted

Captains formed their own Companies by recruiting men who were so motivated and who also wanted to earn money. The bounty was the immediate incentive to enlist. William was second in line to inherit so he had needs, having been married eight years and was raising three children. William was in three campaigns so may have liked soldiering or needed the money so badly he was forced to leave his family. Sarah had the care of three youngsters while neighbors and family had to manage his farm.

Samuel evidently was popular with the townsmen so Chapman recognized his leadership and made him a Sergeant. He had served the year before as a private when 28 Tolland men were urgently enlisted to rush to the aid of the British besieged at Fort William Henry. They were too late and only reached Kinderhook, some on horseback, receiving just 14 days pay. Now as a Sergeant he would receive more pay. Against this incentive, Samuel had to weigh leaving Jane with six youngsters; Elihu, the oldest at 14, unable to help much. The Bradley's had many sons who might have been able to help with his farm work. Replacing the house and possessions that burned down seven years before probably put a financial strain on Samuel so he needed the money from military duty.

To Pay a Substitute for William?

When insufficient men could not be enlisted by a Captain, the Assembly allowed him to draft men to fill his quota of 105 men. A substitute to take the place of a drafted man could be paid and often was.

Daniel Benton, at home in Tolland suffering with fever, wrote to son William in July that he desperately wanted him to come home quickly. He wrote "I would have you come home if you can hier any body to take your place for I want to see you vary much." Then he adds "I wont not have you run a way by no means for it will only bring sorrow on me and trouble on your self but if money will clear you I would have you get clear." It seems unlikely that William could have paid anyone at the camp to take his place but apparently his father hoped he could. Daniel was then 62 and did live till he was 80.

A letter written on the same day by William's brother says of the father "he is very much deprived of his reason and talks anything and he thinks when he is in his rit mind he shall not live very long."

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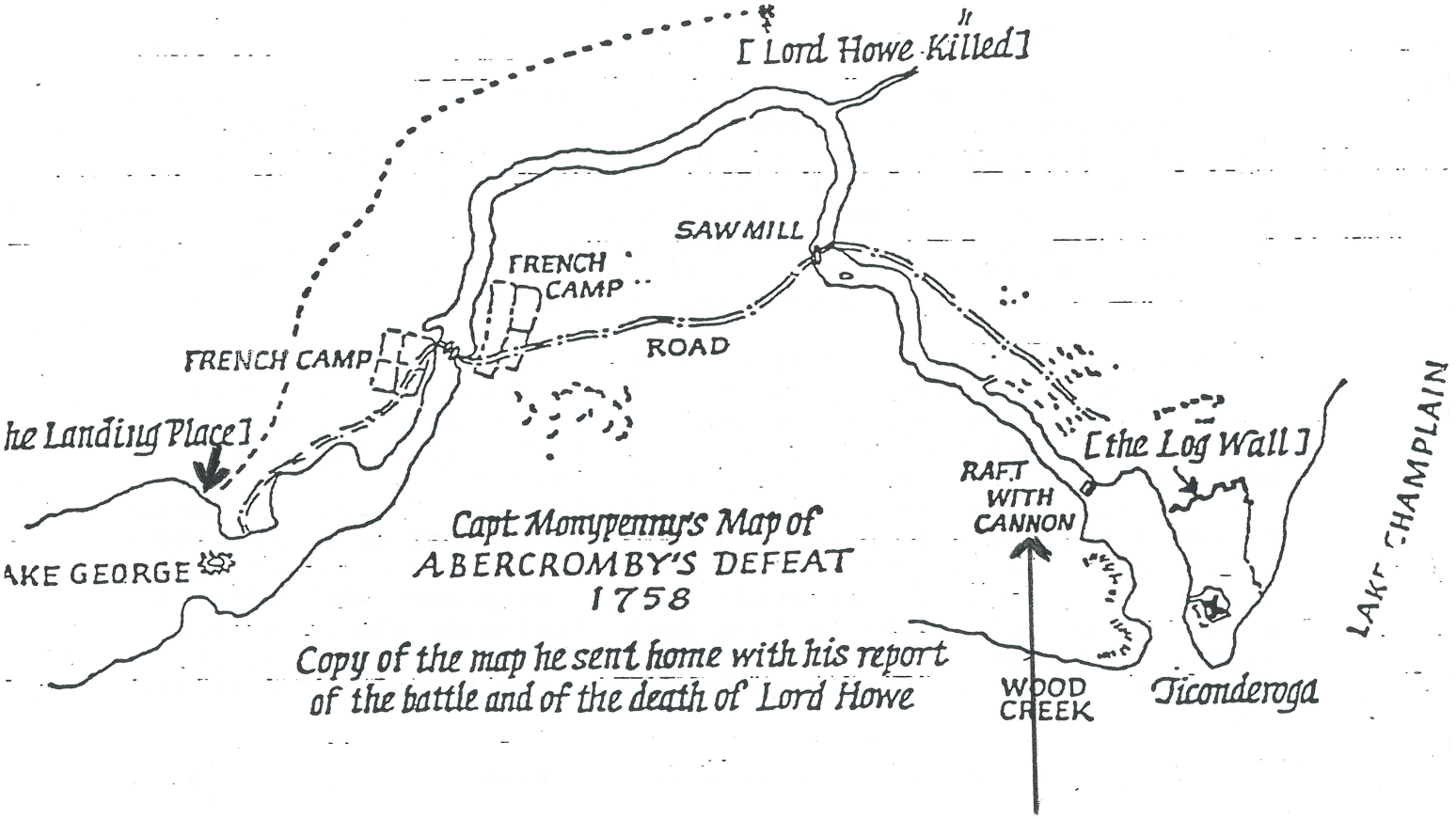


Capt. Monypenny's Map of
ABERCROMBY'S DEFEAT
1758

Copy of the map he sent home with his report
of the battle and of the death of Lord Howe

Captain Samuel Chapman's Command

1st lt. Titus Olcott, **2nd Lt.** George Cooley, **Ensign** Solomon Wills. **Sergeants** Samuel Benton, Jonathan Birge, Abner Webb, James Steel. **Corporals** Samuel Hall, Jonathan Bill, Asa Wood, Nath'n Boardman. **Drummers** Henry Bowen, Charles King. **Fifer** Joseph Conant. **Privates** William Benton and 79 others including Jabez Bradley, and Jonathan Burroughs.

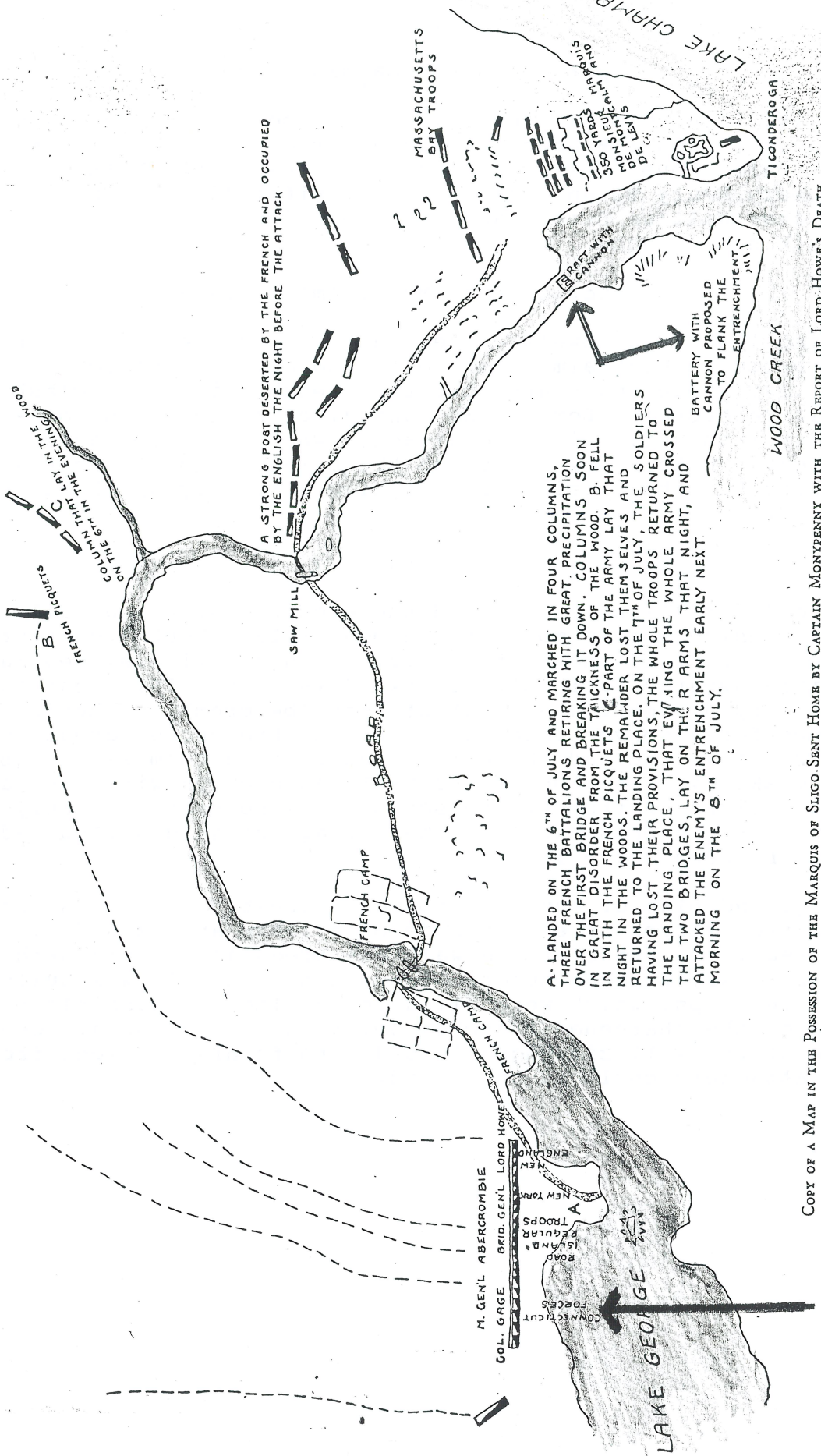
Abercromby and Montcalm's Stratagems

Having lost Lord Howe's better tactical advice, Abercromby succumbed to Montcalm's lure of a too obvious obstacle. Rather than lay siege and starve out the French, risking a clash with a small reinforcing force from Canada, or rather than bombard the French into submission, he attacked what Montcalm wanted him to attack. Further, by occupying the heights himself Montcalm forestalled the British from placing artillery up there to bombard the Fort.

A Log Wall

Montcalm brilliantly directed the erection of a log wall on the hill running across most of the peninsula, about a quarter of a mile in front of the Fort itself. French Officers, Regulars and militia sweated furiously for two days in the July heat to hack down virgin timber when Montcalm saw Abercromby gathering his troops for a conventional assault. The French set great logs horizontally two and three deep and pierced them with loopholes for musketry. The top of the wall was crowned with sandbags to a total height of from six to seven feet, so high that only the top of the Frenchmen's hats and their flags of golden fleurs-de-lis could be seen above it.

The ground plan of the wall formed a great U its sides crowning the steep slopes on either side of a ridge and extending well to the rear. In front of the wall all trees and undergrowth were cleared away for one hundred yards and an abatis was built using the tree tops, which were piled in an almost impassible hedge, the ends of the sharpened branches pointing toward the attackers. The line of the wall zigzagged in order to furnish salient from which the attackers could be enfiladed.



COPY OF A MAP IN THE POSSESSION OF THE MARQUIS OF SLIGO. SENT HOME BY CAPTAIN MONYPENNY WITH THE REPORT OF LORD HOWE'S DEATH

Source: Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum" July 1930

Considering that some detachments were designated to stay inside the Fort and others were stationed at the flanks, the French arrayed along the wall might have numbered 2500. While two thirds of them might be loading their muskets at one time, 800 would then be free to fire at the advancing British. More than sufficient time to maintain constant fire on the attackers. By the end of the day most had fired 70 to 80 shots and needed to replace their muskets.

On the eighth Abercromby began moving his force from the saw-mill area up to confront the log wall and by noon an attack began. He did not command from the battle ground but stayed at the saw-mill. He had ordered a green engineering officer to survey the wall and when that officer reported the wall could be taken by infantry assault, Abercromby merely issued orders for one assault after another. Lyman's regiment with William and Samuel were in the saw-mill area also in order to guard equipment and to build a breastwork so they were able to watch the General's headquarters. They could hear the battle din and follow its course from reports from British Officers returning to report and from wounded regulars retiring from the battle scene. They learned there was no success. Repeated forays by company after company, uncoordinated and in lines abreast, were turned back with horrible losses. Montcalm had advised the French soldiers to forswear the European technique of firing their muskets only in the general direction of the enemy but this time to take careful aim.

Joining the attack

Lyman's regiment was called to join the attacks near the end of the day. Their role was to position themselves among the trees in the abbatis and maintain musket fire while the regulars made their assaults through intervals in their positions. Across the rough ground littered with dead and wounded and with a maze of fallen trees, William and Samuel could see the top of the log wall, but not the French behind it. They fired at the loopholes whenever they could but musket fire was not accurate. They reasoned that artillery fire might have easily knocked the logs apart and cleared the sandbags off the top. Then they would have been able to easily force the French out. The assailants sacrificed time and time again for some of them to be able to get close up to the log wall, but there they were always stopped by the bristling mass of sharpened branches which they could not surmount under the French cross fire which swept them from side to side.

The scene for William and Samuel was frightful: masses of infuriated regulars who could not go forward and would not go back; straining for an enemy they could not reach and firing at an enemy they could not see; caught in the entanglement of fallen trees, stumbling, shouting, cursing and pelted all the while with bullets that killed them by scores, stretched them on the ground or hung them on jagged branches in death.



Fig. 21. The 42nd Regiment of Foot, or Royal Highland Regiment is shown here by a private soldier on the left, a grenadier in the center, and an officer on the right. Notice the distinctive bear fur mitre cap of this regiment. The officer is shown in the late war issued coat with lapels.



Fig. 21. The 42nd Regiment of Foot, or Royal Highland Regiment is shown here by a private soldier on the left, a grenadier in the center, and an officer on the right. Notice the distinctive bear fur mitre cap of this regiment. The officer is shown in the late war issued coat with lapels.

Considering that some detachments were designated to stay inside the Fort and others were stationed at the flanks, the French arrayed along the wall might have numbered 2500. While two thirds of them might be loading their muskets at one time, 800 would then be free to fire at the advancing British. More than sufficient time to maintain constant fire on the attackers. By the end of the day most had fired 70 to 80 shots and needed to replace their muskets.

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Sergeant Samuel was attentive to Captain Chapman's attitude, and all the while planned how to best group his men if the command ever came to move forward, but he hoped it never would come. He saw some provincials struggle to the wall without hope and knew the Tolland Company would do their best if needed.

While Samuel was worrying over this grave prospect, William's sharper ears picked up a strange noise that penetrated over the din and he raised his hand to motion others to listen also. Then more began to hear it. The howling shriek foretold one thing only and how the tide might turn in their favor and save the day. Now Scotsmen would show how their mettle was superior to British.

It Was the Pipes!

The weird, penetrating wailing of the pipers of the Black Watch, 42nd Regiment, heralded their entry onto the field. This was music of a kind William and Samuel had never heard. This piping called the Highlanders to recall its glorious heritage in the gleanns and hills of Scotland. Now the pipes screamed and howled wild battle songs of long ago. The pipers were enraptured at their moment of glory. The men screamed vile curses and yelled loud threats, their broadswords raised, as the pipes thrilled them. Surely this cacophony of sound would strike fear in the hearts of the enemy especially when coupled with the renown bloodthirsty ferocity of the Scot's steel. Their piping would shake the souls of Frenchmen whose Faith had never prepared them for this. The blue standard of St. Andrew with its white cross whipped in the wind and William and Samuel glimpsed the flash of sunlight on the blades of the raised broadswords that only the 42nd Regiment was allowed to carry. Victory seemed assured. The withdrawing British soldiers halted in their tracks, hope once again showed in their faces. Now the provincial troops would be fortunate to witness the fulfillment of a glorious battle legacy. Three quarters of the French regiment of Berry were young recruits in their first battle and some fled from behind the wall in confusion at the dreadful sound and fury of the Highlanders. They were replaced by reserve companies of grenadiers in time to prevent a British breakthrough. Whenever the amazed French soldiers slackened the firing their Officers and sergeants ordered "Rearmez" and "En feu"!



THE BLACK WATCH AT TICONDEROGA
From a painting in the possession of Glens Falls Insurance Company

Disaster

The pipes played on but the French guns continued firing. Then the pipers slowed their wailing as the musket fire continued. Soon the pipes were heard no longer as the musket fire slackened. The Highlanders attack had failed but not before Captain John Campbell and one other officer struggled to the top of the wall and leaped onto the French in a fruitless final gesture of bravery. The Black Watch had lost 490 of its 1,000 Scotsmen including twenty five of its officers.

Next Montcalm ordered his French Canadian militia out from the flanks to finish off the disorganized Black Watch. But they hesitated perhaps believing in the superstitious spell of the pipes. In that force of Quebec militia there may have been a number with the name Fournier and possibly an actual ancestor of John Fuller, Eva Fuller Benton's father. Possibly Fate may have arrayed two of our ancestors on the same field of battle.

The British regulars then began a general withdrawal leaving the provincials to cover them and to move the wounded back while firing at the defenders to keep them away. The French were so exhausted they made no effort to follow after the British. Montcalm refreshed them with beer, wine and food and they bivouacked right behind their breastworks for the night. The next morning they reinforced their battlements in anticipation of further struggle but not before a 30 foot high crimson cross had been lifted up to commemorate their victory. Montcalm ordered it to thank God. They had lost 377 men, a merciful few.

Colonel Lyman, for his part hesitated to withdraw so precipitately and his regiment and the third Connecticut regiment began to reinforce breastworks in order to stay the night. With so many Regulars remaining and with the artillery yet to be used, they were planning to continue the battle. Abercromby, however, issued no orders to halt the retreat so Lyman's regiment with William and Samuel followed the rest of the force on the next day down the Lake in very poor spirits. William wrote "But thear is a tumults stur amoung our peopel."

WHAT WENT WRONG?

This chapter was written in 1999. A year later a book was published which contained an excellent description of the battle and a fine analysis.* The following is a condensation of the important points.

1. LORD HOWE WAS KILLED.
He was lost in the first skirmish on July 6th. Since he was the executive officer of the Army and the most skilled in organization and tactics, the British command could not recover even if time had permitted. Vital decisions that all Officers depended on him to make were not made or were incorrectly made.

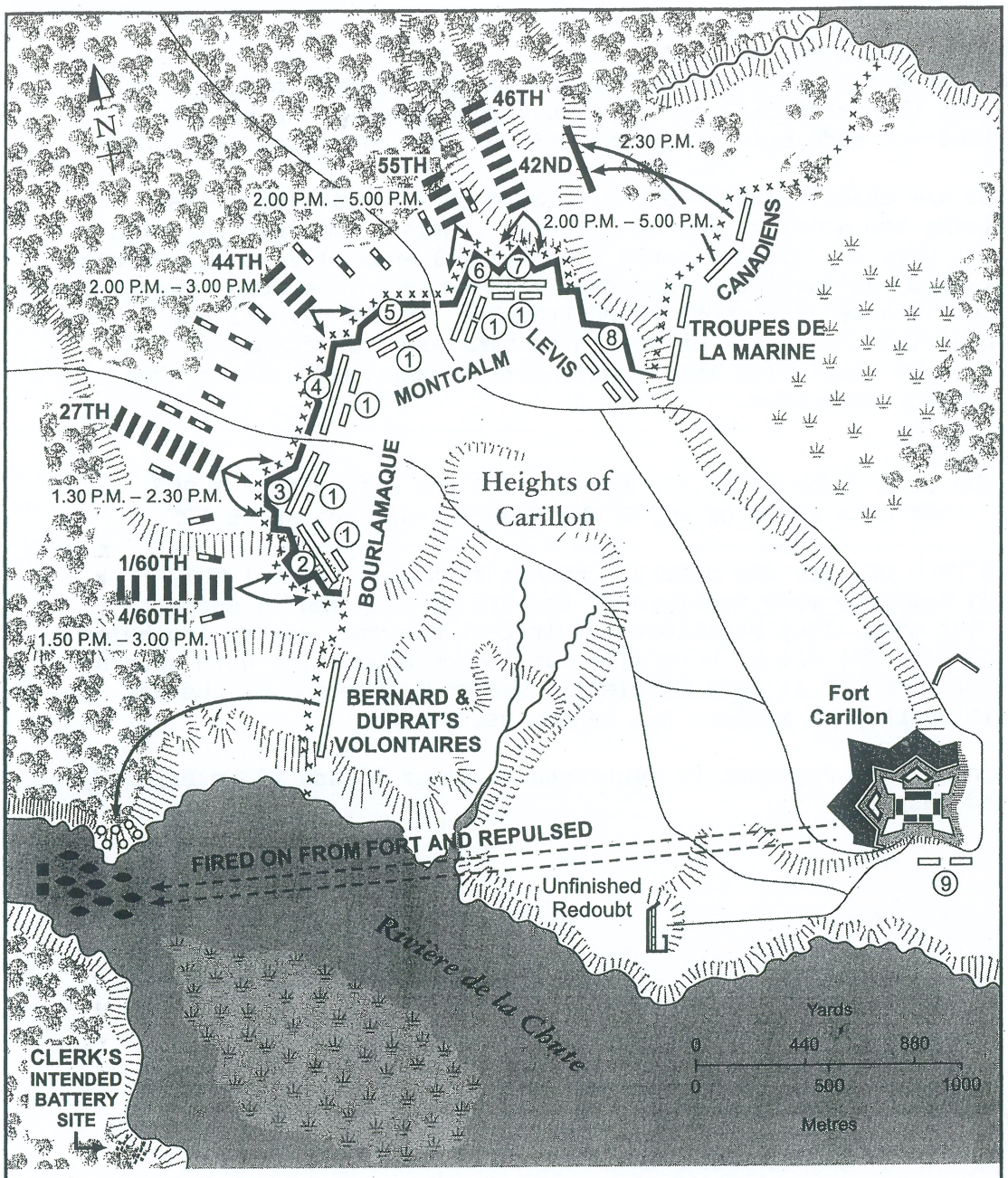
2. NO ARTILLERY CANNON WERE PUT IN PLACE.
Clerk, the young, inexperienced British engineer, suggested on the second day that cannon be placed on the south bank of the La Chute River to enfilade the flank of the French defenders from the side. This cannon fire would have raked their lines. It would have smashed the log wall as well. In that way the frontal assault by the British infantry would have been successful. His suggestion was approved but never accomplished. Before the assault **all** the command at the Council of War had assumed it would be done. Historic maps show this gun site proving it was part of the plan of attack.

Conventional wisdom has accused Abercromby of losing the battle by not opening up with his artillery before a frontal attack started as was the usual tactic in those days. But this detailed study of the battle reveals that he and his command had expected his artillery to be used, but at a different point.

Clerk had reconnoitered the south shore of the river on the morning of the assault and found a cleared level space appropriate for aiming the artillery. (See Map T-5) He neglected to observe, however, that the shore line was obscured by tall reeds. He neglected further, to fully instruct those entrusted with moving the guns. The four gun artillery battery was started down the river at noon on rafts towed by whaleboats and pushed by provincial troops wading in the water. They were lost in the reeds and went so far down the river that guns from the fort hit them and overturned two whaleboats. They retreated and never placed their guns in position. Howe would never have allowed this vital maneuver to fail.

3. DUBIOUS INTELLIGENCE.
The British command never saw the log wall before their assault. It was erected only the day before and was covered and hidden by tree branches. In front of it was a field piled high with brush. In front of this field was a breastworks of small logs and brush erected by the French as a picket line to protect themselves while they built the log wall.
On the morning of the assault, Bradstreet and a Huguenot engineer scouted the front of the field and reported back that the Fort was not fortified and there were only a few logs laid on one another. They had seen only the breastworks of the picket line. The council accepted this report in its hurry to attack before the French would have time to build better fortifications. Lord Howe would have conducted a better reconnaissance. The noise made by the French tree chopping and felling would have indicated to Howe that major fortifications were underway.

over



French Army

1. Grenadier and Light Companies
2. La Sarre
3. Languedoc
4. 2/Berry
5. Royal-Roussillon
6. Guyenne
7. Béarn
8. La Reine
9. 3/Berry

British Army

Light Infantry
Rangers
Battoemen
Whaleboats
Gunrafts

Roads
xxx Abattis

Map T-5
Attacks by British Regiments
1.00 P.M. – 5.00 P.M., 8 July 1758

Source "FIGHTING FOR CANADA"

4. POOR PLANNING FOR THE ASSAULT.

The Council of War never stressed the role each unit was to play. It is doubtful that the provincial officers were even present. Howe would have presided and made sure that each Officer knew his role, timing and signals.

All battles are chaotic and this was no more so. Provincial units started firing too soon, before the British regulars got into position to make what they had planned would be a frontal assault in line abreast in typical European fashion. Obviously this could not be done when they saw the field stacked with convoluted branches. In the Council one officer suggested they might attack in columns and the discussion was cut short by the conclusion they should attack "any way". Which they did with disastrous losses.

Additional notes:

Losses. Out of a force of 17,550 the British and allies lost 1,967, about 11%. Out of a force of 4,236 the French lost 554, about 13%.

The French rate of fire was nearly 6 musket shots per minute! This devastating rate was made possible by the use of many men in support reloading the guns. They positioned their best marksmen at the loopholes in the log wall. The French naturally ran low on ammunition with such a high rate of fire but it made little difference by the end of the day since their overheated muskets had become useless.

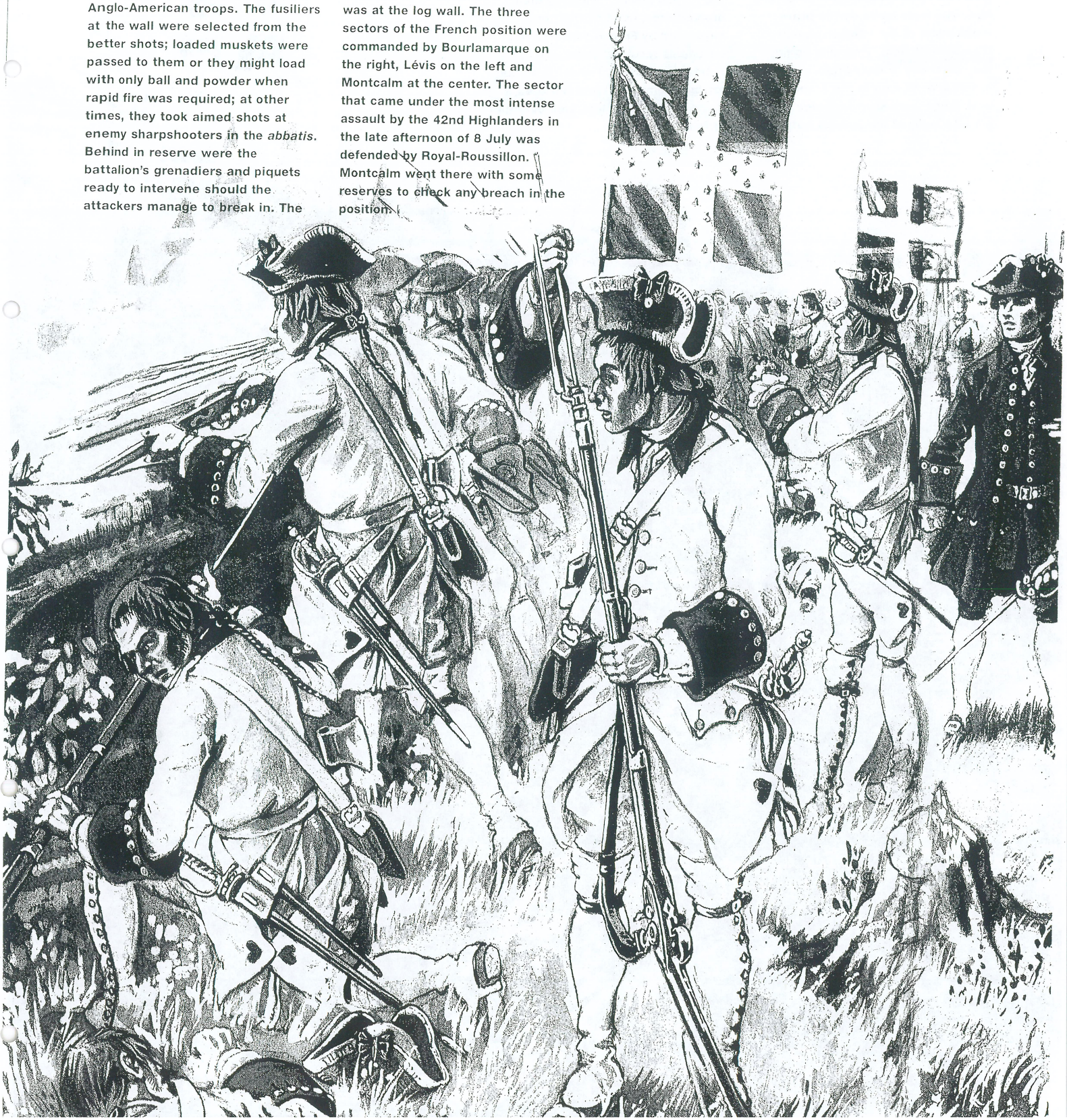
The 2nd Connecticut Regiment is mentioned on pages 53 and 57 as bringing up guns and supplies.

*"Fighting For Canada" Robin Brass Studio, Toronto, 2000. Chapter 1 written by Ian M. Mcculloch.

FRENCH FUSILLIERS OF THE ROYAL-ROUSSILLON AT THE WALL

(Source: "Ticonderoga 1758")

Inside the French entrenchments the log walls protected the French soldiers firing on the attacking Anglo-American troops. The fusiliers at the wall were selected from the better shots; loaded muskets were passed to them or they might load with only ball and powder when rapid fire was required; at other times, they took aimed shots at enemy sharpshooters in the *abbatis*. Behind in reserve were the battalion's grenadiers and piquets ready to intervene should the attackers manage to break in. The battalion's HQ was to be marked by the two battalion colors but, at Ticonderoga, at least one of these was at the log wall. The three sectors of the French position were commanded by Bourlamarque on the right, Lévis on the left and Montcalm at the center. The sector that came under the most intense assault by the 42nd Highlanders in the late afternoon of 8 July was defended by Royal-Roussillon. Montcalm went there with some reserves to check any breach in the position.



Of the many courageous charges made by British and New England troops against the French entrenchments, in the afternoon of 8 July 1758, the most determined and ferocious were made by the brave Highlanders of the 42nd Regiment (The Black Watch). Time and again, they persisted in their attacks, hoping to find a weak spot in the French log wall. Some were seen in a rage hacking away at the *abbatis* before them; the wounded encouraged their comrades to attack rather than help them; some few even managed to climb up the log wall and jump into the French position wielding their broadswords, meeting their end bayoneted by French soldiers. The casualties resulting from such outstanding conduct under fire were terrible: some 647 were reported killed, wounded or lost, well over half of the regiment.



Home to Tolland Relatives and Friends

For the rest of the season, British and French forces skirmished spasmodically and each gave only the outward appearance of again attacking the other in force. By November, the provincial troops period of enlistment was over and William and Samuel came home to their families in Tolland. The stories of their life in the big campaign must have been received with awe. They probably wrote many letters but their families wanted first hand descriptions. The two letters from William that have been preserved are written two days apart, the 13th and 15th of July. Daniel, Jr. writing to him on the 29th says "I have read your letters and many more that have been sent home."

Jabez Bradley Fails to Return

Samuel's brother-in-law was a sad loss to Jane and the family. He was not killed in the battle because William wrote "we all are come back to Lake George." Of all provincial troops in the battle 377 were lost. In the camp after the battle, however, sickness afflicted many and he may have been taken fatally ill. William wrote on July 13th "iam afrad it twell be a vary sickly time in a leatel while for most all our men are not well...I am sumthingen better then I have been. Joseph Eaton is poorley.." How many Tolland men failed to return is not known.

Coping with Defeat

In Daniel Jr's letter to William he wrote "We lament your defeat and your hard fortune." The disappointment at their defeat at Ticonderoga was mitigated by the striking victories at Louisburg and Frontenac. Providence, they believed, dealt them defeat because of their vainglory, boasting, sinful confidence in the size of their forces without sincere trust in the Lord. After the chastening defeat God had shown his continuing love after they had patiently borne the burden of shame and granted them these two victories. God had remembered mercy to his erring people because he had managed to quench their vanity.

Tolland people had no settled preacher to interpret Providence to them because Rev. Stephen Steel was weak and ready to relinquish his pastorate. Daniel Jr. had advised William in a letter of July, 29th, "I will jest let you know we have a minister that preaches here now we like exceeding well. I have not heard any body find falt with him. He is very earnest and lively preacher. He preached a fast day as well as ever I heard a man our fast that we had the 6th day of July. His name is nobles of Westfield." Gideon Noble, as it turned out was not called to be the next preacher.

The fast day was called to pray and to repent. The Tolland townspeople felt the battle imminent based on news filtering back of their soldiers and chose Thursday the 6th to gather together. They were convinced that success in the battle to come rested with Providence if they were sufficiently humble.

MONTCALM CONGRATULATING HIS VICTORIOUS TROOPS
JULY 8, 1758
(Early 20th Century painting by Henry Ogden)



The Catholic French, on the other hand, had no Calvinist Providence to grapple with at all and Montcalm wrote to his wife:

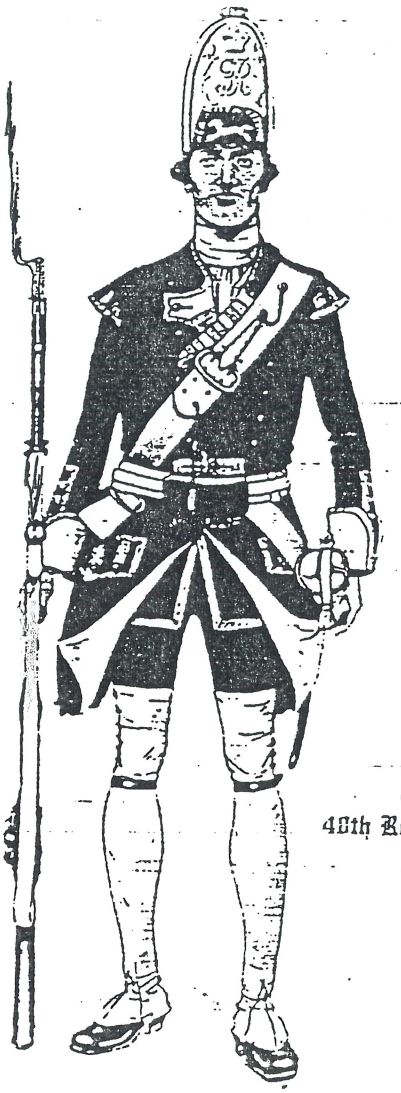
"Soldier and Chief and rampart's strength are nought;
Behold the Conquering Cross! 'Tis God the triumph wrought"

Wars End - The Future Awaits Tolland's Next Generation

The French and Indian Wars brought English and Colonial people closely together in large numbers for the first time. English soldiers and provincial troops served side by side and British Officers dealt with Provincial Officers. From these contacts dangerous misapprehensions resulted that bore ugly fruit before the Revolution began. British officials badly misjudged the fighting qualities of Provincial soldiers, feeling they were undisciplined and poorly trained. Colonial leaders hated the haughty way the British treated them and saw how incompetent their officers sometimes were. They felt the British were autocratic, wholly unsympathetic to Colonial popular government. Later, serious misunderstandings in 1775 gave Tolland and the Bentons dreadful distress.



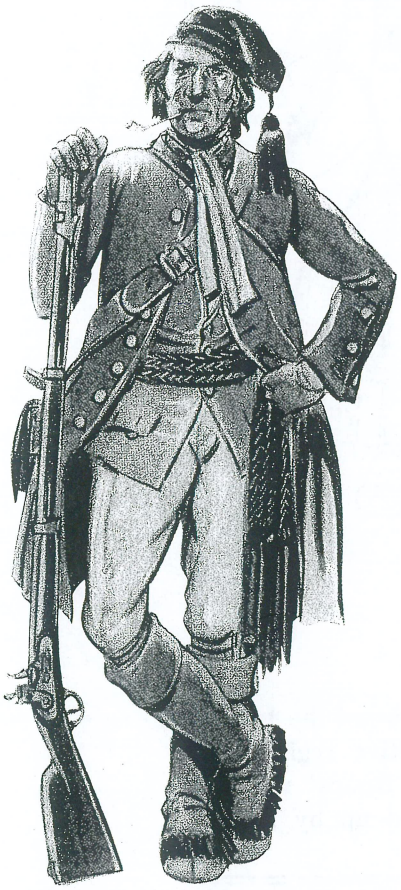
Fig. 18. These two soldiers are of the 17th Regiment of Foot. The grenadier on the right is a sergeant, distinguished by his waist sash. The private soldier on the left is dressed for inspection.



Grenadier
48th Regiment of Foot
1757

CANADIAN MILITIA

They were recruited from the Monteal and Quebec areas and Fourniers may have been at Ticonderoga. Joseph Fournier, our ancestor, was 52 years old and probably too old to soldier.





CANADIAN MILITIA

A Private of the Montreal detachment—Full Field Equipment. The Canadians were posted to defend the abatis to the east of the right return of the entrenched lines—Fort Carillon—1758.

Source: Bulletin of Fort Ticonderoga museum ~~1955~~



Fig. 1. Hundreds of women and children camp followers traversed the Lake George - Lake Champlain Corridor following their respective regiments washing, mending, cooking, nursing, and seeing to all the troops' needs. Notice the mixture of women's and soldiers' clothing picked up by these followers.

Provincial regiments did not allow women to follow them but British Regular commands made provision for them. Possibly some of the women were wives of soldiers that came over from England. Others would have been from North America. New Englanders thought them "loose women" but most performed valuable services cooking, laundering and sick care. They were regulated by general orders, subject to military justice and were provisioned by the command. Some were undoubtedly prostitutes. Thirty or forty were allowed to accompany each regiment. In the push to supply the Lake George camp for the battle, they were left behind at Fort Edward to spare the additional effort needed for their sustenance. No mention was made of French women having been inside Fort Ticonderoga.

AUTHENTIC 1757 UNIFORMS

THE CAIRN IN THE BACKGROUND WAS RECENTLY ERECTED TO HONOR
HE FALLEN F THE BLACK WATCH



Ticonderoga's celebrated fife and drums corps performed at the annual
8 commemoration of the Battle of Carillon in new French Royal-
:illon regimental uniforms, made possible through an anonymous gift.

2005

FRENCH REGULAR SOLDIER



2nd Battalion
Royal Roussillion
Regiment
1757

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CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY

Letter written by William Benton, soldier, to his wife Sarah Benton at Tolland, Conn. Dated Lake George, July 13,1758. [Benton died at Oswego in 1760.]

(Photostat copy)

Lackgorge July ye 13 Day 1758

Dear and Jouing wife after my loue to you and all my frends hopingen these fue lines will find you all in good helth at this present time as throw the goodnese of god we are all a liue tho we haue been in Danger of our liues Whear our enemeney haue De Stroyed foure thousen of our men and wounded ~~[illegible]~~ many more which was a Dredfull Drestren time we are all com back to Lackgorge and how long we shall stay there we no not our duty is hard and leuingen lickwise we cant get nothen for our Comfort but what cost uery dear Rum is four Shilings a quart wine fiue Shilings quart Shuger is two Shilings a pound and euery thing that is sold a mnn mit spend a good a farm in a letel time our alounses is a pint of flower and a letel pes of meat a day we haue now a spunfull of bter in once in fouer Days iam a frad it twell be a uary sickly time in a leatel while for most all all our mean are not well it was most to hard for them goingen up to the nares were thay was forst to worck knight and day and nothen to eat of ancy ualeu I haue not time to in form you all his been down and seen I am sumthingen beter then I haue been Joseph Eaton is poorley tho I hop he will get beter for thay dond set him to do ancy duty now he remembers his loue to his wife and all his frinds hopingen thay all in good helth at this present time

Your louingen husband William Benton

Transcript of William Benton's letter
of July 13 to wife Sarah in Tolland*

Lack george, July ye 13 Day, 1758
Dear and loving wife after my love to you and all my frends. Hopingen these fue lines will find you all in good helth at this present time as throw the goodness of god we are all a live tho we have been in danger of our lives. Whear our enemeney have De Stroyed four thousand of our men and wounded many more which was a dredfull dorestren (distressen'?) time we are all come back to Lackgorge and how long we shall stay there we no not. Our duty is hard and levingen (wearying?). Lickwise we we cant get nothen for our comfort but what cost very dear. Rum is four shillings a quart, wine is five shillings quart, shuger is two shillings a pound and every thing that is sole a man mut spend a good farm (?) In a letel time our a lounses is pint of flour and a letel pes of meat a day. We have now a spunfull of bter once in four days. Iam a frad it twell be a vary sickly time in a leatel while for most all out mean are not well. It was most to hard for them goingen up to the nares (narrows?) were they was forst to work knight and day and nothen to eat of aney valeu.
I have not time to in form you all has been doun and seen. I am somthingen beter then I have been. Joseph Eaton is poorley tho I hope he will get beter for thay dond set him to do any duty. Now he remembers his love to his wife and all his frends hopingen thay all in good helth at this present time.
Your lovingen husband, William Benton

*Some punctuation and capitalization has been added.

Family of William Benton

He was born Nov. 12, 1725 in Tolland and his father was Daniel Benton, first settler of Tolland. Daniel was the son of Samuel, Senior and Mary Skinner. William was the third of eleven children. He married Sarah Burroughs December 14, 1750 when he was 25. Their children: Sarah born March 17, 1751, "A son" born and died May 5, 1753, John born March 2, 1756, Ruth born Dec. 3, 1756, Abigail born October 22, 1759.

William was 25 at the Ticonderoga battle and he served the year before in the attepmt to save Fort William Henry. In 1760 he served in the 6th Company of Capt. Aaron Hitchcock of Suffield in the First Regiment. He died at Fort Ontario on August 25th at age 35.

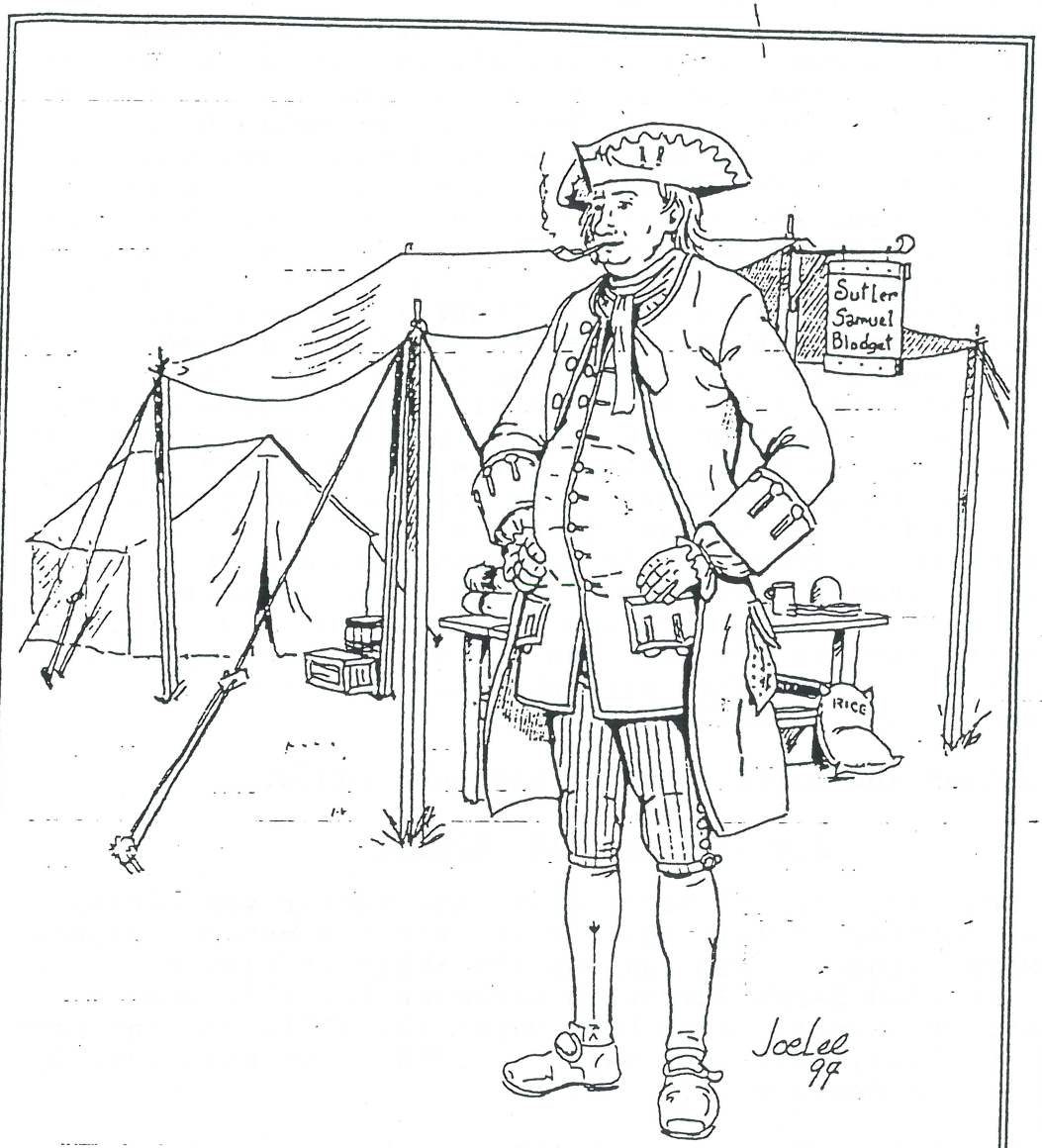

Fig. 31. Pictured here is Samuel Blodget, one of the regiments' sutlers, or storekeepers who followed the army. Each regiment of the British Army had sutlers to supplement their King's or colony's stores. Both the regiments and individual soldiers purchased items from these merchants. Notice his wall tent, fly, and his stores for sale.

William Benton, writing to his wife Sarah on July 13, 1758, "...lickwise we cant get nothen for our comfort but what cost very dear. Rum is four shillings a quart wine is five shillings quart shuger is two shillings a pound and every thing that is sole a man mut spend a good a farm (?)"

315

Lacke gorge July ye: 15 Day -1758

louingen Wife after my loue to you and my Chrildren hopingen thes fue lines will find you all in good helth at this present time as throu the goodness of god I am. I desier that yould send to me as ofen as you can for I haue sent suen letors to you and I Resued 2 letors the 14 Jey of July one from brother Daniel and the thuer from brother Dauie with grat joy. I would iest in form you the lost we met with in our armey when we went to the nares by what we can find out we lost about 4 thousen ~~and~~ ~~[illegible]~~ of our mean and we tuck 188 prisners and how money we kild we no not but thear is a tumults stur amouny our peapel sum are sent to numb fore and sum to the Jarmen flats and and sum to fort Edward and whear we shall go i no not no more at present I would be glad that you will tack as good care of my bisness at hom as you can tel brother John to sel the old Cow as sun as you can do with out hur for when we shall com hom I no not Remember my Duty to all my parents and loue to all my brothers and sisters I desier that thay wold not forgit me in prayer I would be glad to hear from you all as ofen as you can send so no more at this time I Remain your louingen husband

William Benton

be Shuer to larn your boock my letel [illegible] pray god to be with you all

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY
rrant appointing William Benton sergt.of 6th co., 1st regt.,
signed by P[hineas] Lyman, Maj-Gen., and Col.of the regt.,
April 7,1760. (Photostat copy)

PHYNEHAS LYMAN Esq;

Major-General, and Colonel of the firſt Regiment raiſed in the Colony of CONNECTICUT, in NEW-ENGLAND, in AMERICA.

To *William Benton* Greeting.

BY Virtue of the Power and Authority to me given, in, and by the Colony of CONNECTICUT I do by theſe Preſents, (repoſing ſpecial Truſt and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and good Conduct) conſtitute and appoint you the ſaid *William Benton* to be the *4th* *Serjeant* in the *Sixth* Company in the Regiment whereof I am Colonel For invading MONTREAL, and carrying War into the Heart of the Enemy's Poſſeſſions; and to proceed under the ſupreme Command of His Majeſty's Commanders in Chief, in NORTH-AMERICA: You are therefore faithfully and diligently to diſcharge the Duty of a *Serjeant* in ſaid Company; for which, this ſhall be your ſufficient Warrant.

Given under My Hand and Seal at Lyme: 7th April, 1760. *Lyman*

Transcript of William Benton's letter of July 15th
to wife Sarah in Tolland

Lacke gorge July ye 15 Day 1758

Lovingen Wife. after my love to you and my Chrildren hopingen thes fue lines will find you all in good helth at this present time as throw the goodness of god I am. I desier that youd send to me as ofen as you can for I have sent sven letors to you and I Resved 2 letors the 14 Day of July one from brother Daniel and the thver from brother Daviee with grat joy. I would iest in form you the last we met with in our armey when we went to the nares (narrows?) by what we can find out we lost about 4 thousen of our mean and we tuck 188 prisners and how many we kild we no not but thear is a tumults stur a moung our peapel. sum are sent to namb fone (?) and sum to the Jarmen (German) flats and and sum to fort Edward and whear we shall go i no not no more at present. I would be glad you will tack as good care of my bisness at hom as you can. Tel brother John to sel the old cow as sun as you can do with out hur for when we shall com hom I no not. Remember my Duty to all my parents and love to all my brothers and sisters. I Desier that they wold not forgit me in prayer. I would be glad to hear from from you all as ofen as you can send. So no more at this time. I Remain your lovingen husband. William Benton
be shuer to larn your
boock my letel coing.
pray god to be with you all

*Some punctuation and Capitalization has been added.

Note:
The sender of the second letter he received may have been "Daviee" but the name is illegible. This brother may have been in Sarah's family. The brother Daniel from whom he received a letter was one year older than William.

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Tolland July 29th Day A 1758

Loving Brother after my Regard to you [illegible] few Lines will find you well as they [illegible] through the Goodness of god at this time Father [illegible] Exceeding poorly he his had the fever and agaue [illegible] weeks and now it is got to the Burning agaue and his [illegible] wee think he hes got with it when he his a fet it [illegible] hours Every other Day and he is very much Deprived of his Reson and and talks any thing and he thinks when he is in his [illegible] he Shall not Live very Long he talks much about you when he his fits and wonders we Do not go and Call you and when we tell him you are gon a grate way of he for gets it very quick [illegible] week he Can but Test go a Lone he Remembers his Love to you and so Dos mother and So Dos all your Brothers and Sisters and So Doth all your friends Tuesday Last your wife and Children wear all well for [illegible] to your house and my Brothers with me and we Keep ed all your grain and we Do intend to Do as well as we Can for you But fathers Being sick we have all his work to Do and So Can not Do as we would But your Brother John tyler says he will take as good Cear as he Can for you I would not have trouble your self abought your Concerns here at home &c

I have Read your Leters and many more that have Been sent home and we Do Lement your Defeat and your hard fortuin and the numbers which have Been Killed and the Sickness which we hear is incresing a mong you but I hope the Destemper that hes Been in years past will not prevail among you as it used to Do = Do not be to much Cast Down but keep up you Corrage and put your trust in god who is able to keep all that put there trust in him: your Liveing is hard and you live poorly we hear: but if you go not forward a gain I hope you will Come home quickly — So no more of this head

I will Test Let you know we have a minister that preches here now we Like Exceding well I have not heard any Body find falt with him he is very Ernest and lively precher he preched a fast Day as well as Ever I heard aman our fast that we had the 6 day of July his name is nobles of West field

Remember my Love to Capt Chapman to Enigr Solomon Wells to Sam Benton to Joseph Davis to John Lathrop and to all Pelland more that ask after me &c Writen In hast

This from your Brother

Danl Benton junr

Isaac

Transcript of Brother Daniel,Jr's letter
of July 29th to William at Lake George*

Tolland July 29th Day of 1758
Loving Brother after my regard to you hoping these few lines will find you well as they Leave me and mine through the goodness of God at this time. Father Benton is exceding poorly he his had the fever and aguer a bought three weeks and now it is got to the Burning aguer and his Diffeculty wee think he hes got with it. When he is a fett it holds 12 or 13 hours every other Day and he is very much deprived of his Rison and talks anything and he thinks when he is in his rit mind he shall not live very long. He talks much about you when he his fits and wonders we Do not go and call you and when we tell him you are gon a grate way of he for gets it very quick he is so week he can but Jest go a lone. He remembers his Love to you and so dos mother and so dos all my Brothers and Sisters and so Doth all your friends.
Tuesday Last your wife and children wear all weell for I was on to your house and my Brothers with me and we reeped all your grain and we do intend to do as well as we can for you. But father, Being sick, we have all his work to do as well and so can not do as we would. But your brother John tyler(?) says he will take as good care as he can for you. I would not have trouble your self abought your concerns he at home.
I have read your letters and many more that have been sent home and we Lement your Defeat and your hard fortain and the number which have been killed and the sickness which we hear is incresing a mong you. but I hope the Destemper that has Been in years past will not prevail among you as it used to do - Do not be to much cast down but keep up your courage and put your trust in god who is able to keep all that put there trust in him. Your Living is hard and you live poorly we hear, but if you go not forward a gain I hope you will come home quickly -- so no more of this head.
I will jest Let you know we have a minister that preches here now we Like Exceding well. I have not heard any Body find falt with him. He is very ernest and lively precher. He preched a fast Day as well as ever I heard aman our fast that we had the 6 Day of July. His name is nobles of Westfield ---
Remember my Love to Cap'tan Chapman, to Enign Solomon Wells, to Sam Benton, to Joseph Davis, to John Lothrop and to all Tolland men that ask after me. Writen in haste --
This from your Brother --

Dan'll Benton jun.

*Some punctuation and capitalization has been added.

55305
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Tallant July ye 29th 1758

Loueing Son after my Kind Loue to you
I take this opertunaty to Right to you to let
you Know yt I am Vary poorly at present I
have had the fever and ago a lended with maney
other defacalties this three weak so yt I hant
ben able to do no sort of bisness and if their is no
way yt you Can Come home Quick I do [illegible]
you will Ever see me a gain in yr life but I desire
to Leue my self with god and he will do by me as
he thinks best I would have you Come home if
you Can hier any body to take your place for I
wont to se you Vary much I would not have you
Run a way by no means for yt will onely bring
Sorrow on me and troble on your self but if money
will Clear you I would have you get Clear
your Kind and Loueing mother with tears in
hur Eyes and with an acking hart Sends
hur Tender Loue and regard to you and amidst all
hur Troble & a fliction She desires to Bless god yt
She injoy such a mashur of helth & strength that
She is able to Keepe a Bought yr Rest of your frinds
are all well
I would Let you know yt we are not unthoughtfull
a bout you but you ly heavy on our minds day & night
I would have you Behave your self so as to gain yr
Loue and favour of Both god & man I would have you
Keep yr thoughts of deth in your mind and yr fear of god
Before your Eyes and do your duty without mormuring for
yr a vent of all thing are with god and now my son we
wish you yr Blessings of heaven to Rest on but we must
Loue you & Leve you in yr hands of that god how maid
you & hath a just Right to disspose of you as he seas
fill Loueing son fair well
this from your Loueing father Danl Benton
I would not have you fail sending home by Every
opertunaty for we want to hear as often as we Can

Transcript of Father Daniel's letter
of July 29th to William at Lake George*

Tolland July 29th, 1758

Loviny Son after my Kind Love to you. I take this oportunaty to Right to you to let you know that(?) I am Vary poorly at foryomt(?). I have had the fever and aso a tended with many other defacaltes this thoce waek so that(?) I cant ben able to do no sort of bisnes. And if there is no way that(?) you can come home quick I doubt thattho will Ever see me a gane in your life. But I desire to leve myself with god and he will do by me as he thinks ~~best~~. I would have you come home if you can hire any body to take your place for I wont to se you Vary much. I would not have you run a way by nomiuns for that(?) wall onely bring sorrow on me and troble on your self but if mony will clear you I woul have you get clear --

Your Kind and Loving mother with tears in her eyes and with an acking hart sends her Tender love and regard to you and amidfty all her Troble & a flection she defrs to Blefs god yet(?) she injoy such a mashur of helth & strength that she is able to keepe a Bought. Ye Rest of your frinds are all well.

I would let you know yt we are not unthoughtfull a bout you but you ly heavy on our minds day & night. I woud have you Behave your self so as to gain ye Love and favour of Both god & man. I would have you keep ye thoughts of deth in your mind and of fear of god before your eyes and do your duty without mormuring for that(?) a cont of all thing are with god. And now my son we wish you ye Blesings of heaven to Rest on but we must Love you & Leve you in ye hands of that god has maid you so hath a apuft(?) Right to dispose of you as he seas fitt. Loving son fair well.

this from your Loving father Dan'll Benton

I woule not have you fail sending home by eavery opurtunaty for we want to hear as ofan as we can.

*Some punctuation and capitalization has been added.

Note: The father reminds his son in true Calvanist tradition that God controls his destiny saying "God has a right to dispose of you as he sees fit", "leave you in the hands of God" and "account of all things are with God." Daniel's illness is left in God's hands when he says "but I defer to leave myself with God and he will do by me as he thinks best." But the word "best" was crossed out as if he didn't dare to ask for special consideration in a predestined plan. A remarkably moving letter from one who was suffering the effects of the fever and ague.

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WRITTEN BY BYRON S. BENTON, HARTFORD, CT. 1999



"THE AXES" Thomas Hart Benton

The Benton's Tolland Lands and Deeds
Martha Aborn and Elihu Benton
Warham Benton

Frontispiece - "THE AXES" by Thomas Hart Benton, "American Historical Epic". Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO.
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WRITTEN BY BYRON S. BENTON, HARTFORD, CT 1999 & 2005

TOLLAND FAMILY ROSTERS
(Bold type indicates main participants in land deeds)

JOSEPH BENTON
1st wife Martha Peck:
Joseph, Jr.
2nd wife Sarah Waters
Children:
Ruth
Sarah
Isaac
Araron
Jemima
Jehiel
Kezia

SAMUEL BENTON, JR.
wife Mary Pomeroy
Children:
Medad
Jonathon
Timothy
Eunice
Mary
Samuel III
Sarai
Josiah
Rachel

ZADOCK BENTON
Wife Lydia Day
Children:
Orrin Benton
Zadock, Jr.
Ariel
Sally
Lydia
Otis
Elihu
Nancy
Lyman

SAMUEL BENTON III
Wife Jane Bradley
Children:
Elihu
Jonathon
Ozias
Thankful
Dorothy
Samuel IV
Zadock
Sarah
Jacob

SAMUEL ABORN
Wife Mary Ingham
Children:
Martha
Samuel
Mary
John
Dorcas
Elizabeth
Ruth
Rueben

ELIHU BENTON
Wife **Martha Aborn**
Children:
Warham
Martha Submit

m 2nd **Alex. Baxter**
Children:
Elihu Benton
Mary
Alexander, Jr.

Incidental Intelligence:
The record of Samuel Jr's last two children do not appear in Tolland Vital Records but only in his will. Birth dates are unknown. Josiah married Ruth Stearns and Rachel married Jacob Burton.
Jemima Benton, daughter of Joseph, married Benjamin Strong owner of property North of Joseph in 1731.
Kezia Benton, daughter of Joseph, married John Paulk who did not migrate with Shubael Stearn's sect.
Daniel Benton, the younger brother of Samuel Jr., and his family are not narrated in this Chapter. In 1719, Samuel Senior of Hartford granted Daniel land south of the town center (Book 1, page 24).

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LOCATING THE LANDS OF THE BENTONS

Samuel Benton, Jr's house was the building in which the first church services were held in 1719 indicating that he owned a house in the center of Tolland sometime before then. Joseph Benton's town meeting minutes recorded: "Voted, the place for meeting for the public worship of God shall be at the house of Samuel Benton till the meeting house is fit to meet in."

When did Joseph and Samuel construct appropriate shelters for their Hartford families? Presumably they worked in Tolland by themselves for weeks on end living in a minimal cabin before returning to Hartford to see their families. They wanted to build frame houses near the town center sheaved with clapboards and with cedar shingles on the roof similar to the houses Daniel Benton and Timothy Benton would build later. Since the families were adequately housed in Hartford there was little need to hasten their removal to Tolland. The baptism of daughter Sarai in Second Church, Hartford that year demonstrates that the family was still tied to Hartford. There was no minister in Tolland in those days furthermore.

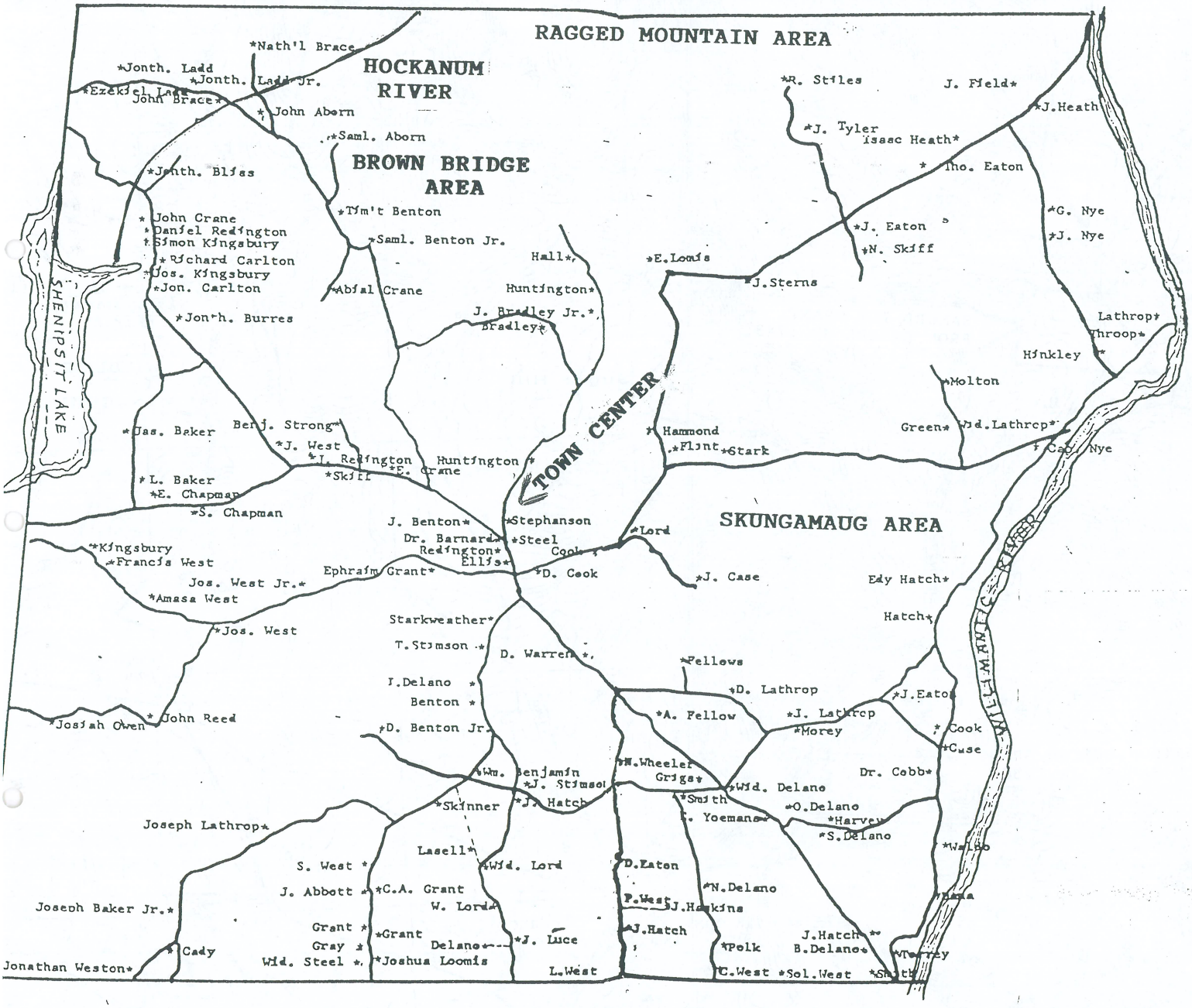
The deed for his property isn't recorded. We can locate it, however, by studying the deeds of the parts of it that he granted to his sons later on. (see page 14). Joseph Benton, his brother, lived on an adjoining plot. The earliest settlement of the town was probably in 1713 and consisted mainly of men living in rude shelters until land could be surveyed and houses built. "Shelter Rock", traditionalists maintain was the place under which some men huddled. By 1719 there may have been twenty five families living in the town.

An Overall Look

Samuel Jr. lived all his life on his lot. He provided land for sons Timothy and Samuel III when he purchased a tract from Goodrich near Browns Bridge (Map of 1754). Samuel III found his land there was too small to give land to <u>his</u> sons, so he traded with Waldon for land at Ragged Mountain and he moved there also. When he lost his wife he moved West to another tract not far from Shenipsit Lake. Samuel III's grandson, Ariel, lived near there. Samuel III's son, Elihu, lived on his own tract near Ragged Mountain until he died.

TOLLAND MAP OF 1754

THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FROM AN OLD CHART IN WHICH THE ROADS AND NAMES WERE ONLY ROUGHLY SKETCHED IN. THE CHART WAS SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL COURT IN 1754 TO DECIDE A DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE CITIZENS OF THE NORTHWEST QUADRANT OVER THE LOCATION OF THE NEW CHURCH. Designation of the Hockanum River, Ragged Mountain and Skungamaug areas has been added. (Daniel Benton's house which is not mentioned in this chapter can be found directly South of the town center, midway to the bottom)




MAP #1
TOWN LINE
RAGGED MOUNTAIN
OZEAS TRACT 1770
PEECHEED MOUNTAIN
JONATHON TRACT 1770
Kendall Hill
RATTLESNAKE MOUNTAIN
ELIHU TRACT 1770
SAMUEL BENTON III HOMELOT SOLD TO BUTLER 1777
Camp Spielman (Boy Scout Camp)
TIMOTHY BENTON HOUSE TODAY
North Cem
SAMUEL III GRANT FROM SAMUEL JR 1743
Sugar Hill
Skungamaug Marsh
WILDLIFE MANAGEME AREA
SAMUEL BENTON JR FIRST DIVISION OF LAND 1719
Skungamaug pond
JONATHON BENTON GRANT FROM SAMUEL JR 1730
LAND GRANTED TO JOSIAH BENTON BY SAMUEL JR. 1749
Tolland
Parker Mem Sch
Hicks Sch
FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA
High Sch
Cider Millpond
INTERCHANGE 99
Quarry

Early Deeds at Skungamaug Pond

We do have deeds for pieces of land that Samuel and Joseph had surveyed for them at Skungamaug Pond very early and they make an interesting study.

Skungamaug was the Indian name given to the stream and marshes on the eastern side of the town. Here Joseph Benton and Samuel Jr. claimed tracts in May 1719. This land was level and the marshes there promised easy grazing land without having to clear first. Samuel's land bordered Joseph's on the North. (Book 1 of Tolland Deeds, page 31). They started by simply measuring "northwest from Skungamaug Pond by North eighty rods." according to Joseph's deed. (Book 1, page 32). A copy of Samuel's deed in Joseph Benton's handwriting is included next.

The awkward diagonal lay of Joseph's first lots was probably to accommodate them to the lay of the land there. A modern day contour map of Tolland shows this land although the stream and pond have been altered over the years. (Map #1). Surveying entailed dragging a chain of known length through the forest in as straight a line as possible with directions taken from a compass reading. Since there were few, if any, adjoining known tracts, the records of the deeds shown no reference to much of anything except various kinds of trees, stakes and heaps of stones.

In November of 1720 Joseph and Samuel claimed more tracts adjoining their first ones. Together they formed a weird pattern but measuring and directions weren't the best at that time. Many other new settlers were simultaneously tramping through the woods laying out their own tracts in disorganized fashions. Transcripts of these deeds follow.

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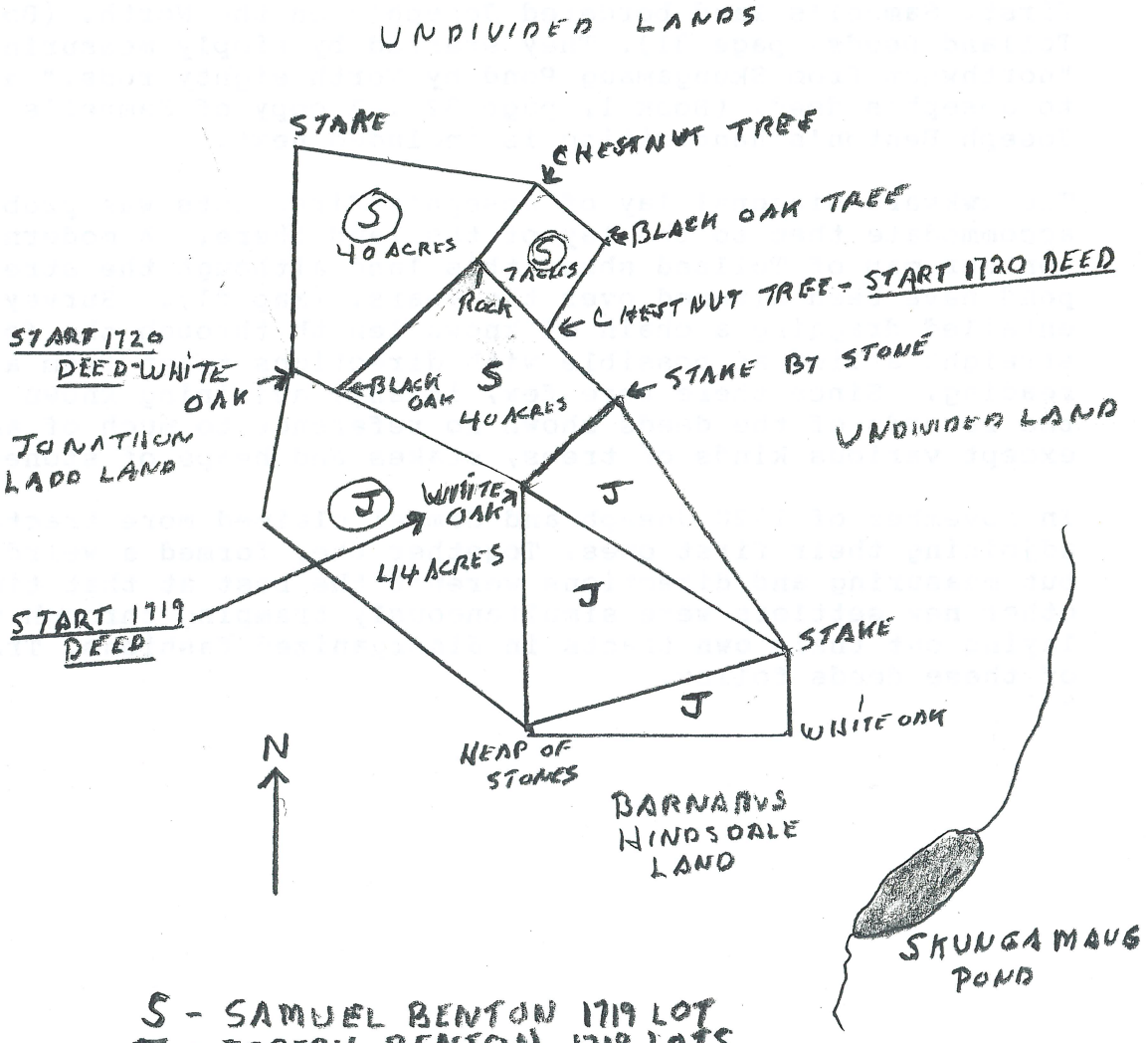
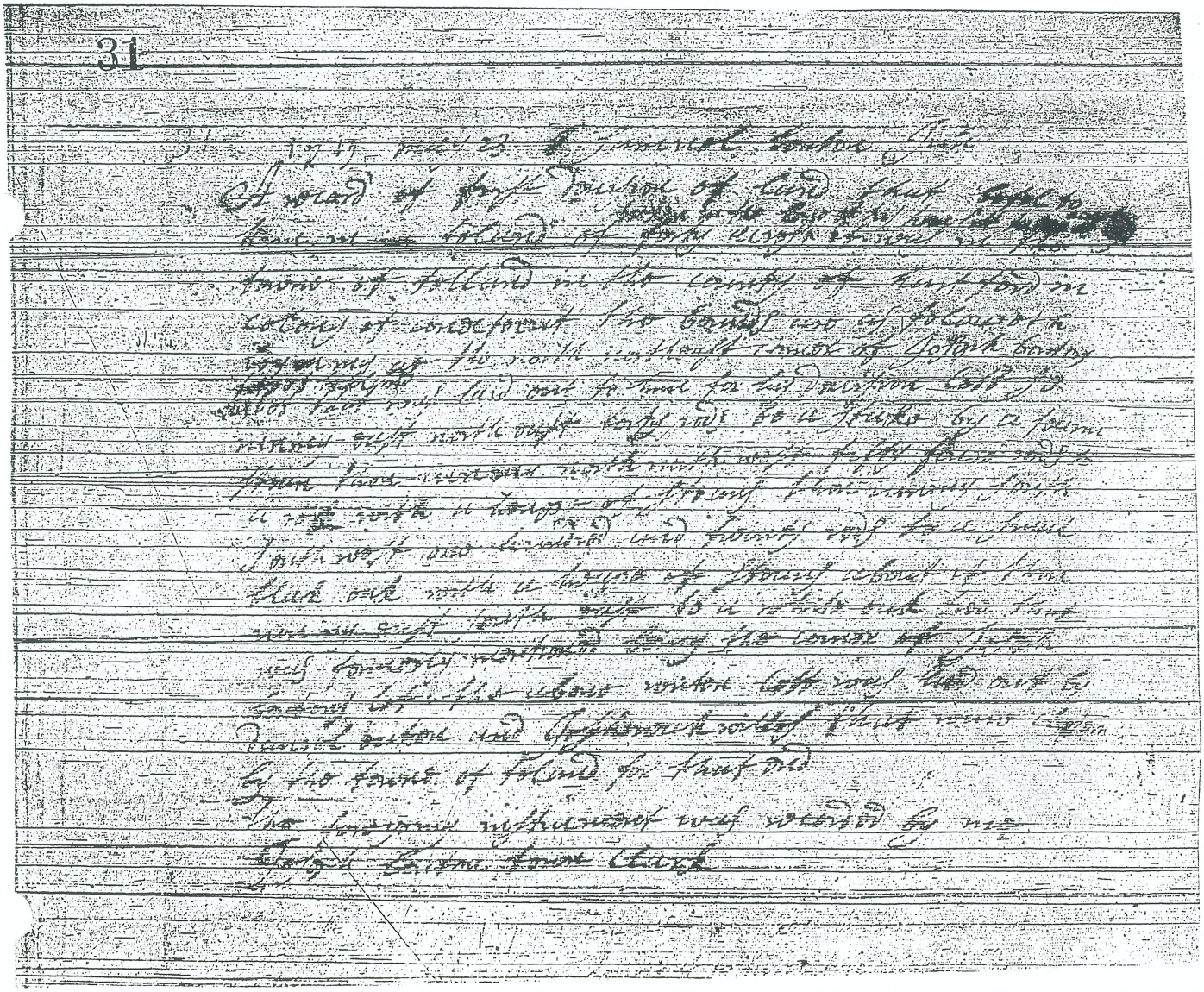
SKETCH OF THE LAND NEAR SKUNGAMAUG POND DESCRIBED
BY THE EARLIEST DEEDS OF SAMUEL AND JOSEPH BENTON
MAY 23, 1719 AND NOV. 1720



Free transcription of Samuel's deed to his
Division of land May 23, 1719, Book 1, page 31.

1719, May 23 Samuel Benton, Jr.
A record of first division of land that befel to him in Tolland in the County of Hartford in Colony of Connecticut the bounds are of foloworth beginning at the north northeast corner of Joseph Bentons lot that was laid out to him by Division lot running east northeast forty rods to a stake by a stone then running north northwest fifty four rods to rock with a heap of stones then running south south west one hundred twenty rods to a black oak with a heap of stones about it then running east south east to a white oak tree that was formerly mentioned being the corner of Joseph Bentons lot. the above division lot was laid out by Daniel Eaton and Jonathon Willets that now adetet by the town of Tolland for Hartford. The foregoing instrument was recorded by me, Joseph Benton, towns clerk.



Free transcription of Samuel's deed to his first 1720 Division of land. Book 1 page 124 (7 acres)

"1720. A division of land of 7 acres, being his second Division beginning at the south east corner at a chestnut tree then running westerly thirty two rods to a stake with a heap of stones, then running northerly thirty five rods to a chestnut tree marked which is the north west corner, then running eastly thirty two rods to a black oak tree which is the north east corner, then running southerly thirty two rods to the forementioned chestnut tree. bounded south on his other Division; east, west, north on undivided lands. This surveyed by us Daniel Eaton Jonathan Willis."

(See sketch at **S** circled. Begin at Chestnut tree lower right corner)

Free transcription of Samuel's deed to his second 1720 Division of land. Book 1 page 124 (40 acres)

Samuel Benton a record of forty acres of land being in Tolland in the county of Hartford on the west end of his former Division of 1720 from land laid out to Samuel Benton, a division of forty acres beginning at a white oak tree being the north west corner of Joseph Bentons division, then it runs north eighty eight rods to a stake with stones about it being the north west corner, then it runs easterly seventy rods to a chestnut tree that being the north west corner of his former division, butting east on his own land, south on Joseph Bentons lot, west and north on undivided lands. this surveyed by us Daniel Eaton and Jonathan Willis.

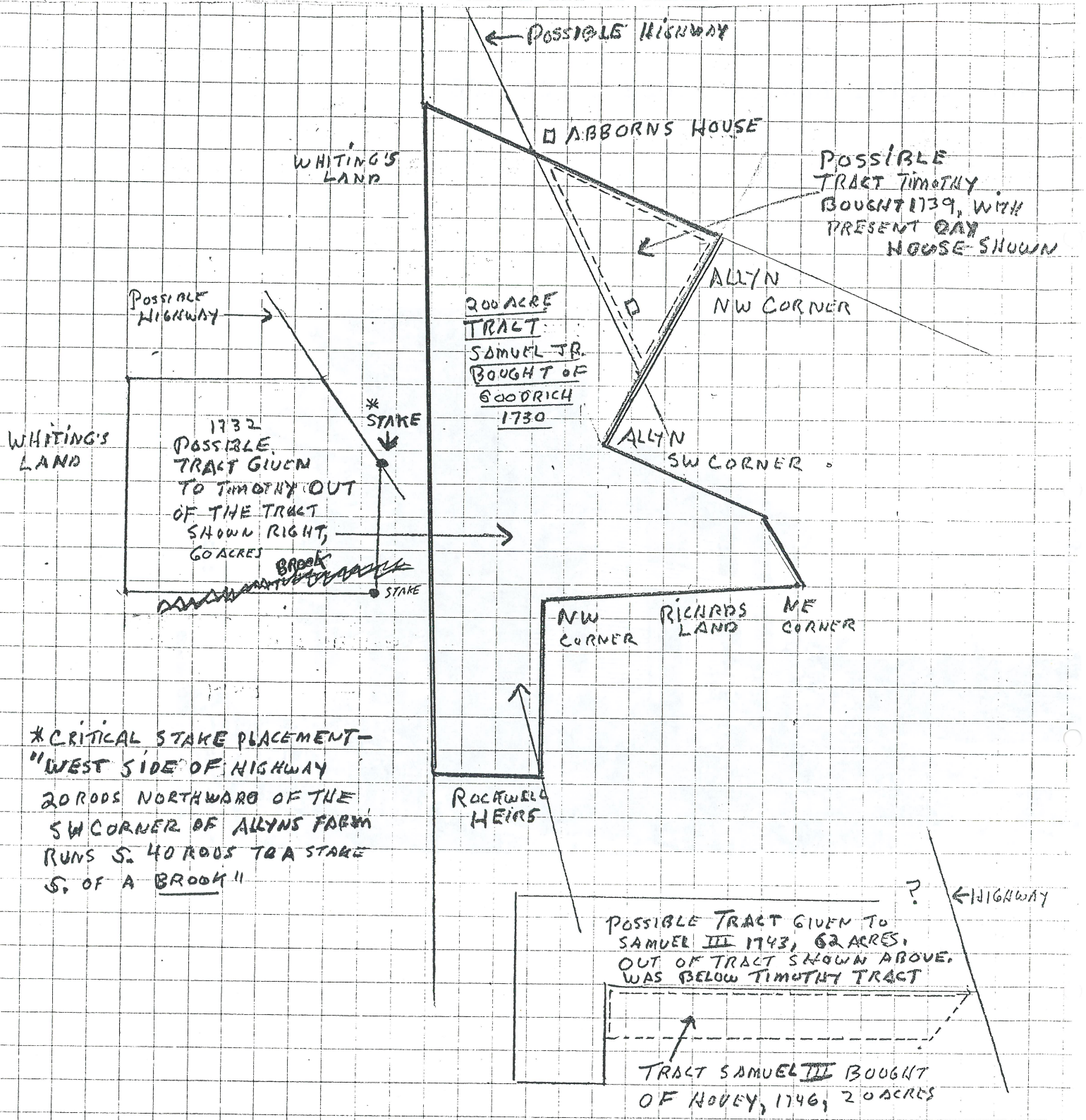
(See sketch at **S** circled. Begin at white oak bottom right corner)

(One of the deeds for Joseph Benton's lot reads, in part, "coming to nothing at the South end" which describes Joseph's odd shaped lots well.)

THE TIMOTHY BENTON HOUSE CIRCA 1800



PRESUMED GOODRICH TRACT AND GRANTS FROM IT MADE TO TIMOTHY AND SAMUEL III BY THEIR FATHER



*CRITICAL STAKE PLACEMENT—
"WEST SIDE OF HIGHWAY 20 RODS NORTHWARD OF THE SW CORNER OF ALLYNS FARM RUNS S. 40 RODS TO A STAKE S. OF A BROOK"

Land for Samuel Jr.'s Sons

Samuel Jr. and Josiah Goodrich of Wethersfield exchanged tracts which enabled Samuel to have enough land to grant to his sons Timothy and Samuel III. Samuel Jr. first purchased a tract of 200 acres from Goodrich in December of 1730 for 80 pounds (Book 5 page 265). This acreage was 2¼ miles north of his homelot at the town center and was in the area of Browns Bridge Road and Hunter Road.

Then, using the same 80 pounds, Goodrich purchased two tracts that Samuel had earlier surveyed; one consisting of 60 acres surveyed in 1720 and lying on the West side of Tolland near Shenipsit Pond (Book 1, middle page 124) and the other of ten acres nearby surveyed in 1721 (Book 1 bottom page 31). Goodrich purchased these two lots in March 1731 (Book 2 page 252). Possibly Samuel wanted the 200 acre area so that there would be plenty for both sons. Jonathon, the oldest son, had already been granted 60 acres in December 1730 north of the home lot at the town center so he was taken care of that way. (page 12)

Land at Browns Bridge Road

The 200 acre Goodrich lot may be located on Browns Bridge road where the Timothy Benton house now stands. Timothy later granted land for the North Burying Ground at the crossroads. Identifying Timothy's portion from his deed is confirmed by its relationship to Cemetery brook south of present day route 30 (Book 2, page 314).

Timothy received his grant of 60 acres in June on 1732 but did not marry Abigail Scott until 6 years later. The next year he purchased a 20 acre triangular tract from his father for fourteen pounds. This was across the highway and East of his tract as the deed reads "leaving the highway four rods wide between said granted lands and Timothy Benton's stonewall." (Book 3, page 150). His house stands today on the East side of the highway and may not be quite as old as sometimes described.

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DEED OF 62 ACRES FROM SAMUEL JR. TO SON SAMUEL III

To all People to whom these presents shall Come Greeting 381
Knowed that I Samuel Benton of Tolland in the County of Hartford
and Colony of Connecticut in Newengland for and in Consideration
of Love good will and Affection that I have and Do Bear Unto
my Son Samuel Benton Junr of Tolland in y County and Colo
ny aforesaid have Given Granted Conveyed and Confirmed unto
him y Said Samuel Benton Junr and to his heirs and Assigns
forever One Certain Tract of Land Situate Lying in y Town of
Tolland Aforesaid Containing by Estimation Sixty two Acres best
More or Less Abutted and bounded as followeth (viz) Begin
ing at Thomas Hoveys Land and Abuting on a highway forty
rods then Abutting on a highway Eighty rods then Abutting North
on Land belonging to Timothy Benton then Abuting West on
Land belonging to Mr Whiting Eighty four rods then Abut
ing South on Land belonging Samll Benton Senr forty rods
Then Abutting East on Land Belonging to Thomas Hovey forty
four rods then South upon Sd Hoveys Land One hundred and Six
ty rods to y first Mentioned bounds To Have and To Hold
the Said Granted and Demised premises Unto him y Sd Samll
Benton Junr and to y Only proper Use Benefit and behoof him
the Said Samuel Benton Junr & to his heirs and Assigns for
ever as a good perfect and Absolute Estate of Inheritance In
fee Simple without any Condition Reservation or Limita
tion of me y Said Samuel Benton Senr whatsoever &
Furthermore I the Said Samll Benton Senr Do by these
presents bind my Self and my heirs forever to Warrant
and Defend y above Granted and Demised premises
to him y Sd Samll Benton Junr and his heirs and Assigns
Against all Claims and Demands whatsoever In
Witness whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and
Seal this Seventeenth Day of January in y Sixteenth
Year of y Reign of our Sovereign Lord George y
Second of Great Brittain &c King Anno Dom 174
Signd Seald and Delivered

Samuel Benton

In presence
John Crane
Nathl Kingsberry

Tolland January 17th 1742 Then
Personally Appeared Samuel Benton
Signer & Sealer to y Above written
Instrument and Acknowledged y Same
to be his free and Voluntary Act &
Deed
Before me Samll Chapman Jus: peace

This Deed Recorded
Jany 29 1742/3

Samuel III's Tract

Samuel III received 62 acres from his father south of Timothy's in January 1743 (Book 3, page 381). (See left on Map #1) It cannot be fitted into the Goodrich purchase readily because in the intervening 13 years plots were exchanged by abutting landowners, roads were realigned at the crossroads and a watermill was built on the brook. Goodrich's tract had abutted Richard's land on the south and Richards may have sold to Hovey in the interim. The 1754 map, however, confirms Samuel III's house at the corner of Hunter Road. (He was a "Junior" to Tolland people). He received the land in January and married Jane Bradley in December. Perhaps he built their house in the interim. When it burned later, baby Thankful was lost.

He bought 20 acres from Hovey for 100 pounds in 1746 to expand his tract to the South (Book 4, page 113). In May of 1758, shortly before leaving for the Ticonderoga expedition, he purchased 51 acres for 85 pounds from Abia Crane South of his tract (Book 5, page 265). In 1768 he traded the tract he had assembled there for Jonathon Walden's land at Ragged Mountain.

Jonathon's Grant from Samuel Jr.

Jonathon, the first son, was taken care of at the same time Samuel was buying the Goodrich plot. In December of 1730 Samuel granted 60 acres to Jonathon northwest of the town center and it was bounded on the North by Benjamin Strong whose land appears there on the 1754 map (Book 2, page 306). It is not clear which survey Samuel made to obtain this land but it was adjacent to his homelot. The land was bounded East and South on highways and was rectangular with 160 rods on the North and South and 60 rods on the East and West. It possibly lay on the corner of Tolland Stage Road and Burbank road.(Lower left of Map #1). Jonathon married Martha Skinner of Windsor on April 26, 1730. He sold tracts to Holliday of Suffield in May of 1733 and to Stephen Steele in February of 1734 (Book 2, page 350). He died in 1746. The marriage of Benjamin Strong to Joseph Benton's daughter, Jemima, in 1731 shows the closeness of the families.

See also Map # 2

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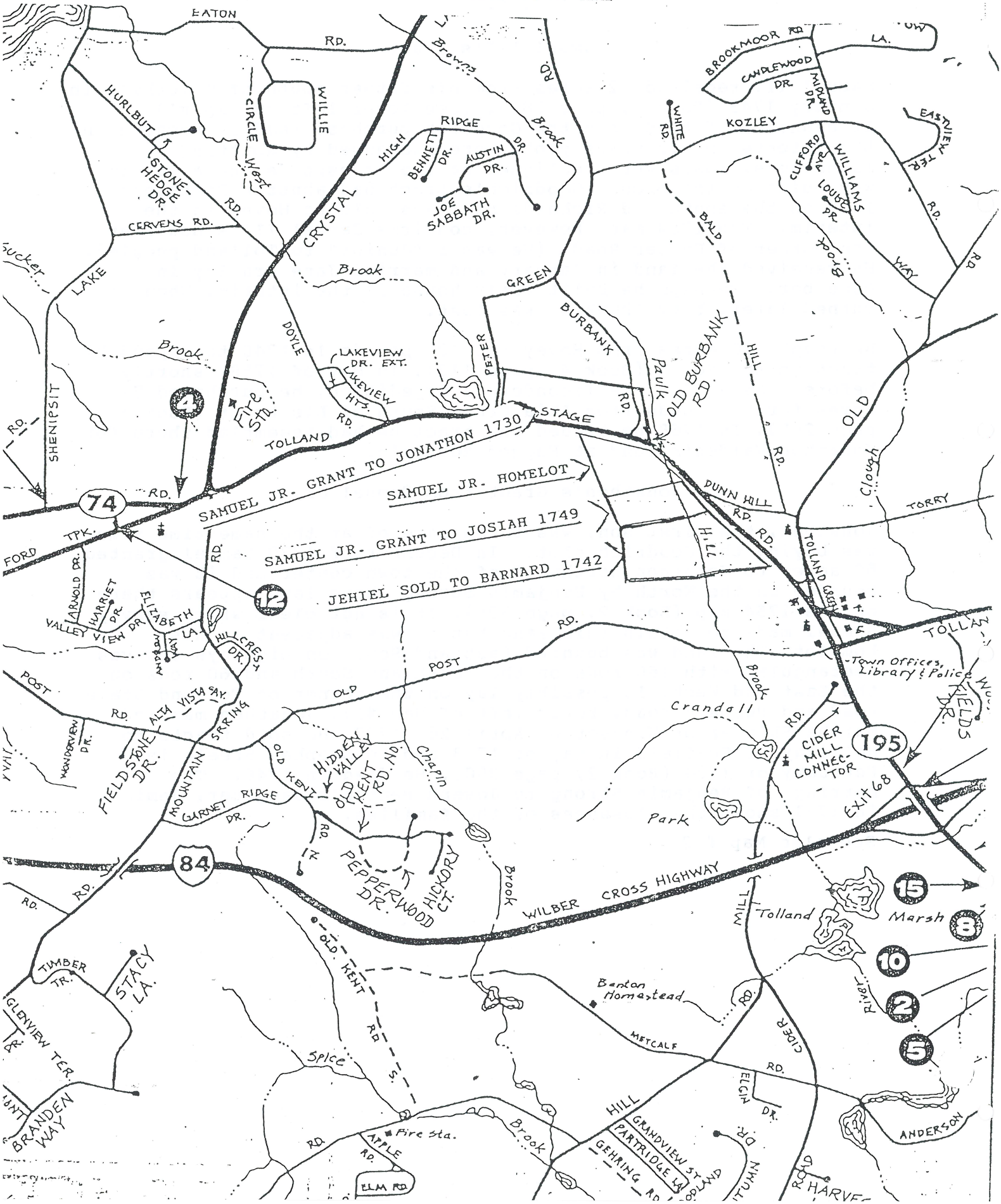
MAP # 2

PRESUMED LAND OF SAMUEL JR.
ON TODAYS TOLLAND TOWN MAP



Locating Samuel Jr's Homelot.

He and Joseph built their first dwelling places near the center of town. Looking at the deeds there Samuel's lot was always identified as being north of Joseph's homelot which aids in locating Samuel's homelot.

In 1735 Joseph granted his homelot to Jehiel (Book 3, page 191) who then sold it to Dr. Barnard in 1742 for the extravagant sum of 850 pounds (Book 3, page 344). It was described as a little way westward of the meeting house; it bordered a brook; it bordered the highway on the East and the property line ran by the town pound. Using a modern day town map Paulk Hill Brook may have been the brook; the land westward of Tolland Green where the meeting house stood would locate it further; the highway on the East would have been Tolland Stage Road. The town pound may have been a community animal pen. (See Map #2). Evidently a prime location.

In 1749, seven years after Dr. Barnard had acquired Jehiel's lot, Samuel granted a thirty-three acre portion of his homelot to Josiah, his youngest son. The deed reads "thirty three acres of land lying and being in the Township of Tolland and is on the South side of my farm that I now live on or my homelot" (Book 4, page 248). This farm was probably the home of Samuel Jr. and his family until his death in 1763. The 1754 map of Tolland locates this tract just north of the town center where it shows "J. Benton" and "Dr. Barnard." It bordered Dr. Barnard's on the South and fits the names given on the 1754 map if "J. Benton" on the map meant Josiah. It bordered on the highway on the East and on Samuel's remaining land on the North. In the deed Samuel reserved "during his natural life the privilege of one half of the orchard and three acres of plowland in suitable form adjoining to Dr. Barnard's land." (Book 4, page 248). Josiah had married Ruth Stearns earlier on November 9, 1747. Hannah, their first child, was born on October 5, 1748.

Samuel Jr. willed the rest of his homelot to Josiah in 1761. He stated in his will:

> "Nextly I give to my son Josiah the Remaining Part of my home farm which I now live on which has not heretofore Conveyed to him the said Josiah by Deed together with the house and Barn and Buildings thereon Standing and Privileges thereto belonging unto him."

SUMMARY

Samuel Jr. lived near the center of town according to these deeds and his will. The land he granted to son Jonathon in 1730 appears to be just North of his homelot confirming the notion that he gave part of his own land to Jonathon and then purchased land from Goodrich for the next two sons. The minutes of town meetings frequently give his house as the place where they took place indicating it was a central location. Joseph and Jehiel Benton left Tolland for Kent about 1742 after selling their properties.

RAGGED MOUNTAIN APPROACHED FROM THE SOUTH



THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN



Ragged Mountain Beckoned Samuel III

What attraction did the small 150 foot high hill hold for the Bentons? Samuel Jr. had obtained land there earlier and in his 1761 will he stated:

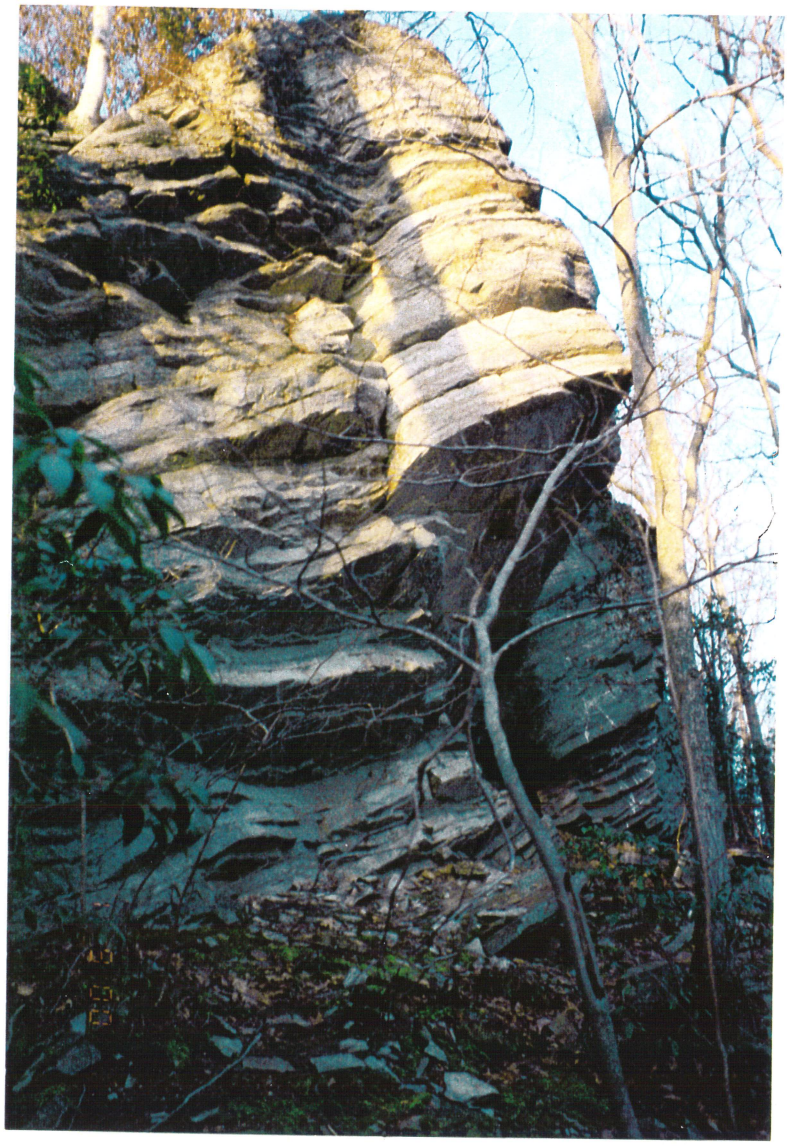
> "Nexly I give to my grandson Timothy Benton junr and to my grandson Samuel Benton the third a piece of land lying in Tolland aforesaid containing about nine acres near one corner of the Mountains called Ragged Mountains to them and their heirs forever to be equally divided between them both as to quantity and quality."

So Ragged Mountain was already place of interest to the family by the time the son, Samuel III, decided to swap land with Jonathon Walden for land up there. In May of 1768 he traded his land near Timothy's farm by the brook for land near Ragged Mountain up on the Town boundary. They traded even - each one gave 300 pounds for 130 acres. (Book 6, page 138 and page 150). The previous month Samuel had purchased 51 acres nearby from Walden for 44 pounds. At the same time he purchased 100 acres east of there for 50 pounds from Jonathon Gurley (Book 6, page 146). So Samuel consolidated his holdings up by the Mountain at 281 acres of land in 1768 to have enough to give his sons their due.

The Sons Received Their Legacy

In January 1770 Samuel III granted land to his oldest sons; Elihu 75 acres East of the Highway and on the Town boundary (Book 6, page 202), Jonathon 65 acres east of Elihu marked by Rattlesnake Mountain (Book 6, page 203) and Ozeas 40 acres south of Samuel's marked by Peeched Mountain (Book 6, page 204). In all, Samuel granted 180 acres, 50 more than he had available on his tract next to Timothy's by the brook. Ozeas waited two years to take a wife, Sarah Day of Ellington, the town North of Tolland. Jonathon also waited two years to mary Margaret Gilmore but Elihu waited eight years to take a wife, Martha Aborn.

Why move to that mountainous, rocky place? The land was uneven and much of it didn't seem suitable for plowing. The three small mountains defined the area with an eerie omnipresence, comforting but sometimes threatening. The Ragged Mounatin's length provided a shield from the North winds but the bluff on its southern end could expose the little valley to a whirlwind. The answer might be that it turned out to be an very unsatisfactory purchase so Samuel sold out his homelot to Nathaniel Butler in 1777. Or perhaps it was a shrewd deal by Samuel to make some capital during the War. He sold Butler 50 acres for 200 pounds including the Ragged Mountain (Book 7 page 7). Originally his purchases for all the land in that area amounted to 394 pounds. After providing farms for his three sons he ended 194 pounds ahead.



OVERHANG AT THE SMALL CAVE



PEECHED MOUNTAIN TO THE SOUTH

Living in the shadow of the Mountain undoubtedly stimulated the imagination and fears of various family members. The scarred rock face may have frightened young ones and the abrupt end of the ridge may have caused adults to question what cataclysm sheared it off. It would cast many spells as the sun and clouds passed shadows over it; as the winds swept around it; as frosts levered sections to crash down. All knew it had been there forever and its permanence was reassuring. But some may have feared it portended evil or danger with its ever changing aspects and overwhelming presence. Had God preordained a shield for them but then severed it abruptly to remind them of their doom if their faith ever slackened?

Samuel may have wanted to leave that eerie glen because his Jane died there the year before and her final years had been painful. Also, from the height of Ragged Mountain he and his family could look wistfully westward to see verdant, gently rolling hills and wish they had taken land there instead.

Settling Western Acreage

Samuel III needed another farm and needed another wife. In August 1778 he married Mercy Jones of Somers. Her family is unknown. His children, Sarah and Jacob, were still at home and Zadock and Samuel IV were soldiers. Samuel and Ozeas bought and sold countless tracts in this period to establish a new home for Mercy and the family.

On May 9, 1777 Samuel and Ozeas transacted four deeds:

- Samuel III sold his homelot to Nathaniel Butler, 50 acres for 200 pounds (Book 7, page 7).
- Samuel bought 40 acres from Eleazor Hammond for 180 pounds (Book 7, page 312).
- Samuel sold Ozeas 18 acres for 40 pounds (Book 7, page 5).
- Ozeas sold Samuel 20 acres for the same 40 pounds (Book 7, page 6).

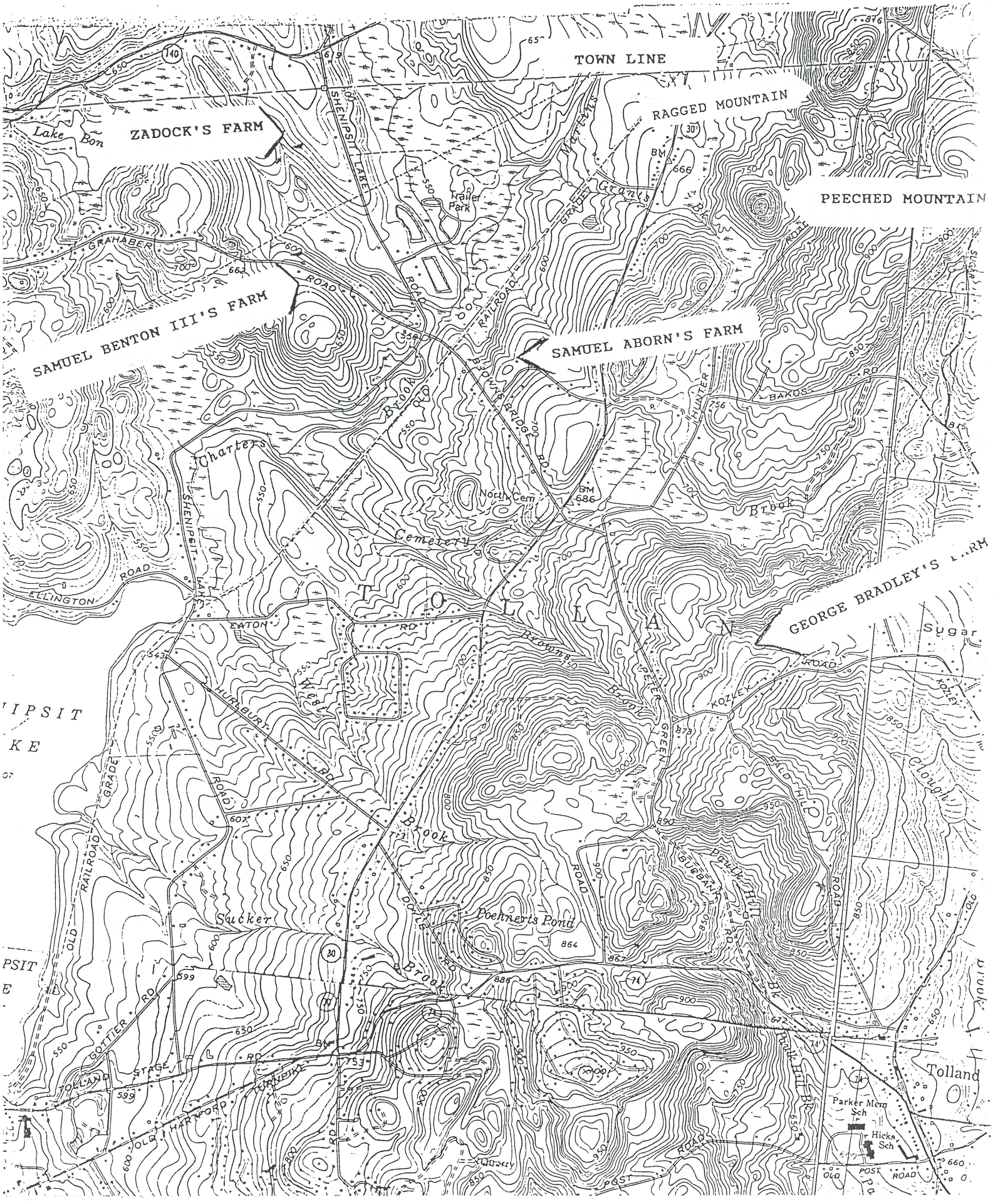
In April of the next year, more transactions:

- Ozeas sold Butler 54 acres (Book 7, page 339).
- Ozeas bought 62 acres from Gideon Willis for 510 pounds (Book 7, page 11).
- Samuel sold Butler 6 acres for 16 pounds (Book 7, page 10).

The tracts Samuel obtained were to be in the Northwest corner but are difficult to locate. Looking ahead to the Probate of Samuel's estate in 1800, the land allocated to his widow, Mercy Jones, was astride an East-West road. Roads running in this direction were not numerous so it might be assumed Samuel's final homelot was on the present day Grahaber Road. See Map #3

MAP #3

PRESUMED LOCATION OF SAMUEL III'S LAST HOMELOT, ZADOCK'S HOMELOT, SAMUEL ABORN'S FARM AND GEORGE BRADLEY'S FARM.



Ozeas too seems to have left the valley of Ragged Mountain since he sold a 54 acre tract to Butler and then bought 62 acres from Willis further West. Jonathon, Elihu's brother, had been granted 65 acres next East of Elihu's in Samuel's 1770 grants. But only two years after he married Margaret Gillmore 1772 he sold out to Stephen Day for only 20 pounds. Thus Elihu became the only son left to live by the Mountain.

No Land for the Younger Sons

Samuel III did not grant land to sons Samuel IV, Zadock nor Jacob. The first two were in the Service of the Colonies when they might have become eligible. Jacob was only age 9. Samuel IV married Eunice Clark of Windsor in 1783 but had no land. Eunice died five years after they were married. Ariel in his book "The Life and Times of Ariel Benton" says of Samuel IV:

> "But I had made up my mind and I meant to stick to it and not do as many others had done, get married young before they had a home of their own; taking farms and moving every year as long as they lived. Uncle Samuel Benton was one of them. He moved nearly every year as long as he lived; worked hard and took farms but never got anything ahead."

Jacob was killed in 1791 when a load of hay collapsed on him when he was 24.

Zadock's Travails

Ariel's autobiography helps us understand life of the Bentons in Tolland in those days. From his narrative we can follow Zadock's transactions to see how the family lived. Ariel writes about Zadock:

> "My father was in the war of 1776 under Washington. When he came out of the war he went to work to learn the millwright trade. He followed that business for a number of years. He got married about the year 1786. He then owned a piece of land near grandfather Benton's and he began to keep house in grandfather's house. Orrin, Zadock (Jr.) and myself were born in grandfather's house."

Zadock went into service in 1777 at age 16. Leaving the Army about 1780 he must have worked enough by 1785 to buy 48 acres of land from David Frost of Springfield for 43 pounds. This lot was on the town line and as Ariel says it was near Samuel's house (Book 8, page 45). Ariel's memory wasn't perfect since he fails to record that Samuel, at age 70, sold Zadock three lots totaling 50 acres in 1787 for 100 pounds, including half of Samuel's house and barn (Book 8, page 275). Zadock's family were thus living with grandfather Samuel Benton but in their own part of the house. Ariel was born in 1792, the third child mentioned. He then goes on:



A small level pasture alongside the base of Ragged Mt. Samuel Benton III may have cleared it. Bessie enjoys it now on Carol and Mark Cadman's mini-farm



Looking West from the top of ragged Mt. towards Samuel's final homelot and Samuel Aborn's farm

> "He then bought a farm nearly a half mile from grandfather's and gave nearly $1000 for it; run mostly in debt for it. There was a good house and barn on it for those times. Sally and Lydia were born on the farm. He then leased out his farm for one year and went back to live with grandfather Benton. Otis was born that year, 1798."

The year after Ariel was born Zadock purchased three lots, one of which was probably the farm Ariel mentioned. The largest was 96 acres purchased from Simon Loomis for 200 pounds (Book 9, page 396). He also purchased 25 acres from John Thomas for 28 pounds. (Book 9, page 395). In 1796 he disposed of the Frost lot to Moses Pelton, 49 acres for 60 pounds. Pelton had married Zadock's younger sister, Dorothy. Ariel continued, saying as Otis was born in 1798:

> "Father still continued to work at his mill business and at the end of the year he moved back on to his farm and it was more than he could do to support his family and pay the interest on what he owed towards his farm. Elihu, Nancy and Lyman were born after he moved back on his farm. Father worked the best he could. He lost his health and his debts bothered and plagued him."

Zadock sold land in 1800 to three purchasers, possibly to raise money. He sold 25 acres to Ozeas for $133.84 (Book 8, page 268). This was the lot Zadock originally purchased from John Thomas in 1793 for 200 pounds. There were two other minor sales. The last child, Lyman, was born in 1805. (The Elihu mentioned by Ariel is not Samuel's oldest son Elihu, described later, but perhaps was named for him.)

In 1808 Zadock sold 20 acres to Orrin for $300 (Book 11, page 377). In 1811 he sold Zadock Jr. 10 acres for $100 (Book 12, page 153). The next year, as Ariel writes:

> "There was a man by the name of Ison Chapman, who kept a store. He bought up a considerable amount of obligations against father and then told father that if he did not trade quite largely at the store he would drive him up for his pay. He went on until he got a mortgage on father's farm for eight or nine hundred dollars and no doubt expected to take the farm and deprive us all of a home."

In 1809 Zadock gave a mortgage deed to Isham Chapman of $701 for the farm he originally purchased from Samuel in 1798, 75 and 30 acres. At the end of the deed, however, was a proviso that the deed would become null and void if Zadock paid Chapman $701 before twelve months had passed (Book 11, page 492).

748

Fourteen acres in that farm were Samuel's last house lot. The Probate Court allowed Mercy one half of the house and barn "with liberty to pass and repas to and from same" and 5 acres lying on the North and South sides of the highway."

Zadock paid off the mortgage deed to Chapman in 1812 (Book 11, page 414).

Ariel describes how he and his older two brothers "worked out" to support the family and as Zadock had not done any work for some time the boys had to work his farm as well. Ariel started to "work out" at age 17. He continued until he was 21 when in 1813 Zadock may have decided his sons deserved a legacy of sorts. He gave them a deed to the Loomis farm for $1500 but they were bound to pay all the debts on it and support the family. Orrin, Zadock, Jr. and Ariel thus received 60 acres between them (Book 12, page 254). However, Zadock obligated them to provide a legacy of $100 to each of their young brothers when the brothers reached age 21. Ariel wrote:

> "I was to give Orrin my note for $200 with interest and when we divided we were to divide even; he was to have $200 and the interest on $200 until we did divide out of my share. I was quite loath to do it but Orrin and Zadock would do nothing about it unless I would take hold with them in order to have a home and for the good of the family. I concluded to do it."

Later in 1818, after they had settled in log cabins in Ohio and divided up their land there, Orrin still held Ariel to his note that had then grown to $260. Ariel stated: "I never thought this was hardly right."

True to his plan, he stopped "working out" when he was 22 and sought land for himself in Pennsylvania. This trip was the beginning of many surprising adventures for the young man from Tolland who had never before ventured further than across the Connecticut River. He found land in Pennsylvania but before he could settle on it his family called him home to ask him to travel to Ohio to seek land for them there. He succeeded and returned to Tolland and promptly took a wife, Lucinda Dimock, in April of 1816. They soon left for Chardon, Ohio along with Zadock Jr., his wife and their younger brother Otis, age 18. Ariel wrote:

> "We met at Mr. Gager's, his friends, our friends and my wife's friends on the thirteenth day of June 1816 in the forenoon, we met to bid each other farewell; thinking most likely we should never see each other again and we cut off locks of hair to remember each other by. We started off soon after dinner shaking hands, the most of them were so full of grief they could not speak. It was a solemn time."

The next year Zadock, senior and the remainder of the family followed so they did see each other again. Before they left, Zadock and Polly, his wife, executed a deed in Tolland for the last of their land. Lloyd Kendall, Polly's father, bought 92 acres for $80 (Book 12, page 470). Zadock died in Chardon in 1845 at age 84 having received a $80 annual pension for his Revoluntionary War service. Ariel, the autobiographer, was 90 years old in 1882 when his book was published as his birthday gift.

Elihu Benton

Samuel III's oldest son was born in 1744 on the land his grandfather, Samuel Jr., granted his father in 1743. The lot was south of Timothy Benton's lot by the brook. Their house burned down when he was young but his father rebuilt it. Sister Thankful was killed in that fire. He lived there with his family until he was age 24 when the Samuel III bought land from Walden and in 1768 moved to Ragged Mountain. Elihu received his 75 acre grant two years later but continued to live with his father.

Seven years later Samuel sold the farm he had purchased from Walden so Elihu was faced with moving with the family to a new home and with the prospect of living with a stepmother. His brothers, Samuel IV, Jonathon and Zadock, all had gone into service at that time. So he delayed no longer and made Martha Aborn his choice for a wife in January 1778. He was 34 and she was 24. Their lives are described in the Chapter entitled "Martha's Choice". Samuel took his second wife in August. Elihu was finally on his own land with a fine wife, but left with no family nearby.

Ariel calls Martha Aborn "a neighbors girl" but the Aborns did not live near Ragged Mountain. Ariel meant she was a neighbor of either Samuel's or Zadock's families and confirms the location of their farms to the West of Ragged Mountain.

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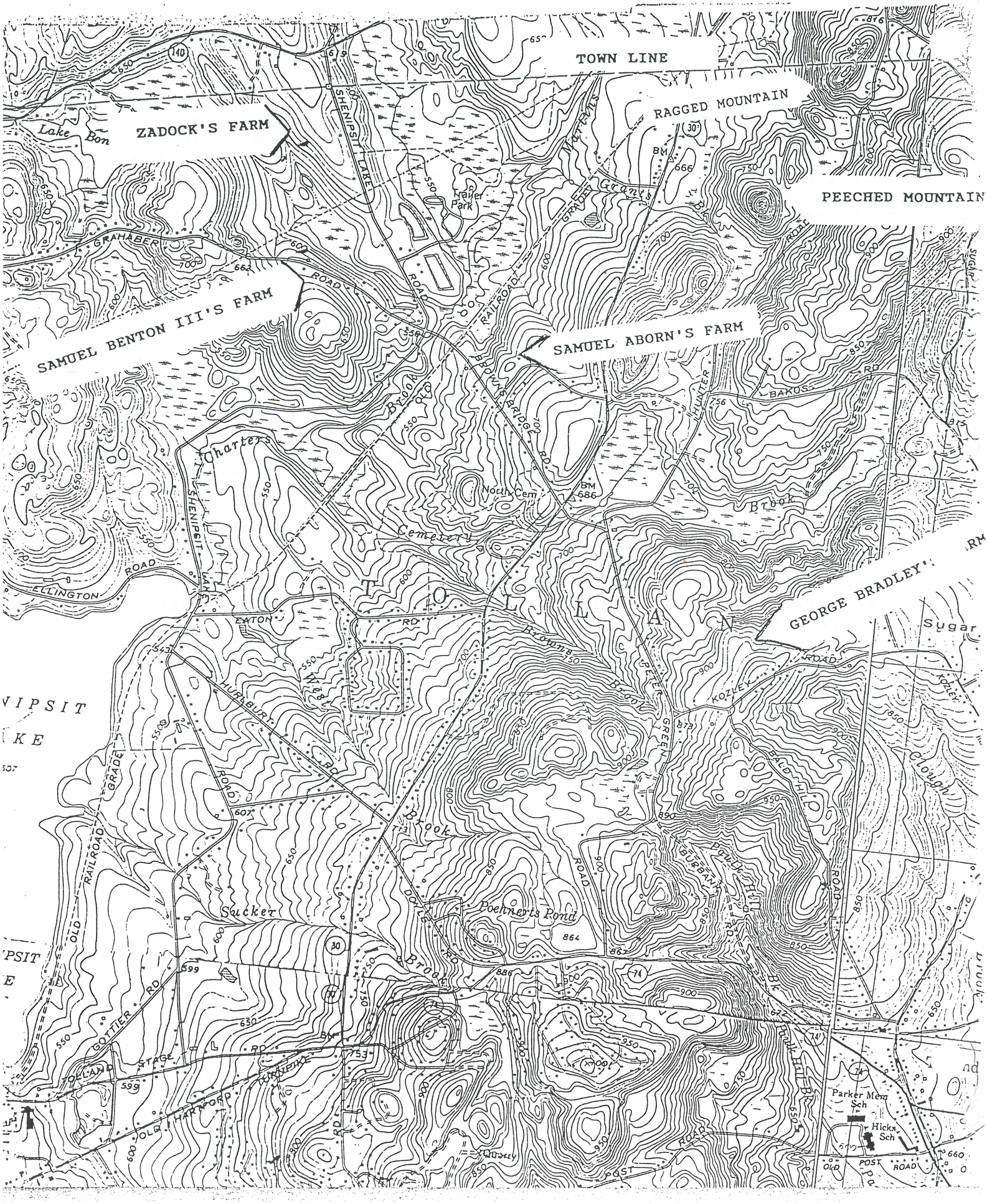
MAP #3

PRESUMED LOCATION OF SAMUEL III'S LAST HOMELOT, ZADOCK'S HOMELOT, SAMUEL ABORN'S FARM AND GEORGE BRADLEY'S FARM.



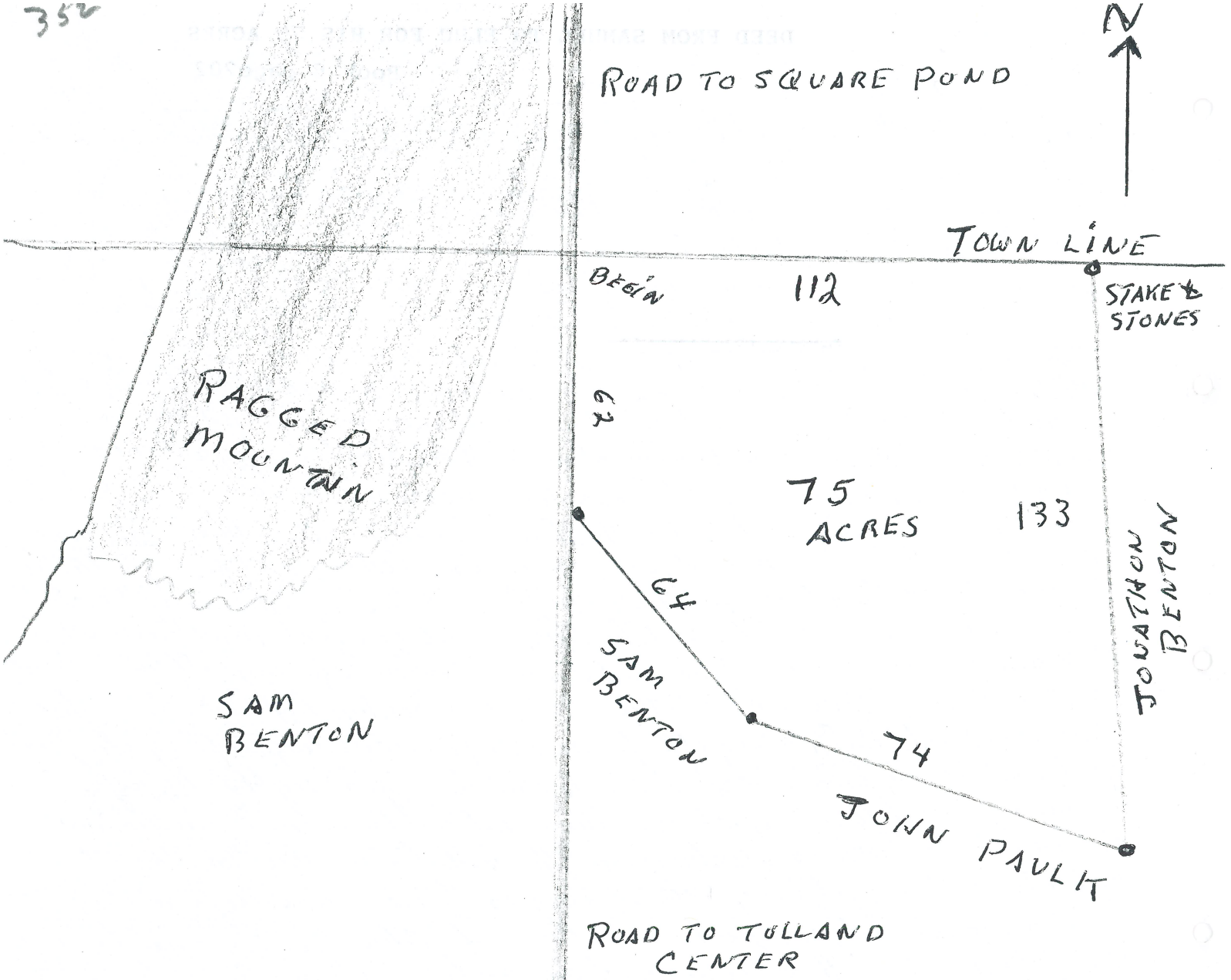
January 9th
AD 1770 } Know all men by these presents that I Samuel Benton of Tolland in
the County of Hartford and Colony of Connecticut in New England for the Love and reg
I have unto my Son Elihu Benton of said Tolland I the said Samuel Benton d
for my Self my heirs Executors and Administrators Give Grant Convey and Confirm
unto the said Elihu Benton his heirs and Assigns forever one certain peice of parc
of Land lying in the Township of Tolland Aforsaid in the county Aforsaid cont
ing by Estimation Seventy five Acres be it more or less butted and bounded as follows
Viz^t begining at a highway that runs from Tolland to Square Pond and runs East o
the Town line one hundred and Twelve rods to a Stake and Stones Thence South
One hundred & Thirty three rods to a Stake and Stones thence west Seventy four ro
to a Stake and Stones thence bearing about west & by North Sixty four rods to a ro
and Stones thence runing upon the road Sixty Two rods to the Town line or first
mentioned bounds bounded north on the Town line East on Jonathan Benton So
partly on Mr John Poalk and partly on my Self West on the Highway To Hav
And To Hold the above Granted premisses with the Appurtenances thereto bel
ing unto him the said Elihu and his heirs and Assigns for his and their own pro
use and behoof. and also I the said Samuel Benton do for my Self my heirs Exe
tors and Admin^rs Covenant with the said Elihu Benton his heirs and Assigns
that at and until the Ensealing of these presents I am well Seized of the premisses a
good Indefeasables Estate In Fee Simple and have good right to Dispose there
in manner and form as is Above written and that the same is free from all In
brances whatsoever And Furthermore I the said Samuel Benton do by these
presents bind my self & my heirs forever to Warrant and defend the Abov
Granted & Conveyed premisses to him the said Elihu Benton and to his he
And Assigns Against all Claims and demands whatsoever In Witness whe
I have hereunto Set my hand and Seal the ninth day of January Anno
Dom: 1770

Signed Sealed & Delivered
In presence of
Nathaniel West
Desier West

Samuel Benton A Seal

Hartford County ss Tolland January 9th 1770
personally Appeared Mr Samuel Benton
Signer and Sealer to this Instrument and
Acknowledged the Same to be his free Act
and Deed
before me Tebulon West Justice of Pe

See sketch page 352



Sketch of parcel granted to Elihu by Samuel Benton III, January 9, 1770. (Book 6, page 202)
Jonathon received 65 acres East toward Rattlesnake Mountain
Ozeas received 40 acres South of Samuel's parcel.

MARTHA'S CHOICE

Martha Aborn could look forward to life as a spinster when she became twenty four or she could accept Elihu Benton's offer of marriage. By 1777 there were fewer and fewer eligible suitors as the War dragged on. Elihu was the town's perennial bachelor at thirty four, still living with his family. She knew he was cultivating his land over at Ragged Mountain but he didn't seem very healthy. He had waited a long time to start his farm and family and hadn't gone to fight. His father had granted him seventy five acres of land seven years before. Should she leave her family to raise a family with Elihu, helping him farm that rocky plot to the East?

Martha was the oldest daughter of Samuel and Mary Ingham Aborn and readily pitched in to help with her family's farm work. Every family needed to produce as much as it could to provision the Continental Army and feed itself. Samuel, the next younger, served three years in the Army. John, the next younger son was 17 and carried his share of the work while the four daughters helped their mother. Rueben, the age 6 baby, needed minimal attention. Her mother was then 46. It would appear to Martha, after she had helped with the 1777 harvest, that her family could carry on if she left home to marry Elihu. He was a neighbor friend who she had long known and liked. So she agreed to Elihu's offer after their parents concurred.

Elihu may have finally been prompted to make an offer of marriage because father Samuel was selling his farm across the road from him and was buying property West of Ragged Mountain. Further, it appeared Samuel would soon take another wife and make life in her household awkward for an older son still underfoot. Perhaps Elihu had a partially finished house on his land to be quickly made ready for Martha. They were married in January of 1778. Then Samuel married Mercy Jones of Somers in August. Just four years later Elihu died leaving Martha with two young children, Warham and Martha Submit.

Martha's Parents

The Aborns were from the Salem, Massachusetts area and the Inghams were from Saybrook, Connecticut; widely divergent locations. Martha's grandfather, Samuel Aborn[2] probably bought Tolland land from Nathaniel Flint in 1724 as an investment. His son came to occupy that land later on, perhaps around 1750. The Aborn farm was near present day Webber Road, north of the Timothy Benton farm. Martha was born there in 1754 the year after her parents were married and she might have been named after her grandmother, Martha Bancroft. Martha's grandparents probably retired to Tolland later in their lives and were buried there.
See Map #3

ABBREVIATED CHART OF ABORN GENEALOGY

Samuel Aborn (1611-1700) married Catherine Smith
Salem, Mass. Marblehead, Mass.

Moses m(1st) 1671 Sarah Haines m(2nd) 1776 Abigail Gilbert
Lynn b 1646 d 1676 d 1736 Ipswitch

Sarah m1718 George Flint
b 1676

Samuel[2] m(1st) 1720 Martha m(2nd) 1731 Sarah Needham
b1692 Lynn Bancroft
d1743 Tolland b1695 Lynn
d1762 Tolland

John m Dorcas Woodward
b 1722 Lynnfield
d 1768 Tolland

Samuel[3] m1753 Mary Ingham of Hebron
b1727 Salem
d1798 Tolland

Martha b1754 m **Elihu Benton**
Samuel[4] b1756 m Dorothy Post of Hebron
Mary b1759
John b1761 m Sarah Russell of Square Pond
Dorcas b1763
Elizabeth b1765
Ruth b1767 m William Baxter
Rueben b1772

European roots of the Aborns are unknown. A Thomas Eaborne. tanner, lived in early Salem up to 1642. Samuel Aborn might have been his brother or son. He came to Salem about 1636 at the age of 25. He received a grant of marshland in 1637 for a household of two. Moses was baptized in 1648. Samuel did move to Lynn but he was still in Salem as of 1668. He maried Catherine Smith, daughter of James Smith of Marblehead.

Moses, their third child, lived in Marblehead in 1666-67 and in Salem until 1678 when he moved to Lynn. Two children were born to Sarah Haines in his first marriage, but Sarah and Samuel[2] were born to Abigail Gilbert.

Samuel[2] married Martha Bancroft and Tolland Cemetery records show "Martha relict of Samuel died January 1, 1762, age 67." Her age thus matches Samuel's. There is no record of Sarah Needham the second wife he married in 1731. As Samuel's last child, William, was baptized in Salem in 1739, when did Samuel move his family to Tolland? He probably didn't.

Although Samuel [2] bought land in Tolland as early as 1724 he may not have come live in Tolland until he joined his son later in life. Nathaniel Flint sold him a large piece of land for his future use. His son, Samuel [3], came to Tolland to clear and settle it. He married Mary Ingham in 1753 as the farm was established. Martha was their first child.

Note: Dorcas Woodward, wife of John Aborn, was from Stafford. They had no children. John's will left his estate to his wife, his brother Samuel and his sisters, Elizabeth Woodward and Abigail Newhart. Other connections: Sarah, Moses daughter, married a George Flint. Samuel [4] married a girl from his mother's home town of Hebron.

Written by Byron S. Benton, Hartford, Ct. 1999

The Aborns were part of the migration of families from the Salem area that included the Shubael Stearns', the Simpsons', the Flints', the Eatons' and the Slafters'. The families were interconnected by marriages; Nathaniel Flint married Mary Stearns, Dr. James Stimson married Hannah Stearns, Sarah Aborn married a George Flint.

The Eaton brothers were on the 1719 petition granting land in the North part of the town and Nathaniel Flint bought large acreage from Daniel Eaton. Flint moved to Tolland in 1722 and two years later was granted permission to erect a corn mill on the Skungamaug River. His family from Massachusetts had already been pioneers in the town of Windham, South of Tolland, in the late 1600's. He sold land to both Samuel Aborn[2] and Shubael Stearns in January 1724. Samuel bought ninety-six acres next to the Hockanum River for 46 pounds (Book 1, page 419).

At some time Samuel Aborn[3], the father of Martha, came from Lynn to settle on the land his father bought from Flint and then sought a suitable wife to begin a family. Having land was a prerequisite for taking a wife. His search took him to Hebron, a town South of Tolland. It had been settled by Windsor families and through those connections he was introduced to Mary Ingham. Possibly the Bissells helped him as that Windsor family had members in both Hebron and Tolland.

Mary Ingham was 22 when she married Samuel Aborn. Her grandfather, Samuel Ingham from Saybrook, had received allotments of land in the town of Hebron between 1702 and 1713 as his share in the bequest of Joshua the Indian Sachem. He ended up with a one-thousand-acre right. His son, Samuel Ingham, married Ruth Chalker in Saybrook in 1718 and they lived in Hebron where their daughter Mary was born.

Martha and Elihu

Theirs was a short four year marriage made happy with the birth of Warham. Their first two and one half years in a home together, however, was broken when Elihu had to leave for service. His enlistment may have been short or interrupted because only three months after his enlistment they were able to conceive a child who would be Warham. Sixteen months after Warham was born they conceived another child but in four months Elihu died. That child was Martha Submit who would never know her father. The family erected a fine monument which still stands today in the North Cemetery. On it is inscribed "Blessed are ye _____ which lie in the lord." Beside it is a Revolutionary War marker.

ELIHU BENTON'S LAND

"It was a hard, stony, sterile soil, which never produced a crop sufficient for the support of his family." according to Elihu Benton Baxter who was born and raised on that farm later. Taking a walk on a warm December afternoon over the portion nearest the road one sees a sloping very uneven terrain strewn with boulders, rocks and marred by large granite outcroppings. A little brook winds along down from East to West.





Martha and Her children

She was left to survive on 75 acres while caring for young Warham and baby Martha Submit. Probably she left the farm and went to live with her parents. There were three daughters in that family making the care of Martha's two children easy. The youngest Aborn child, Rueben, would have been nine years old while Warham was two years old. Ozeas Benton, her brother in law, and his sons who lived just down the road from Elihu's farm may have worked the land for her.

Alexander Baxter From Enfield

Martha with a farm and two children was in need of a husband and Alexander Baxter fitted the bill. He had served from 1777 to 1780 in Col. Sherburnes Regiment, Blackman's Company but was captured and made a prisoner for a long time in the old sugar house in New York City. His first son, Elihu Benton Baxter, later wrote that he returned from the war with a broken constitution caused by this confinement. He married Martha, however, in December 1785 and farmed Elihu's land. Martha was the Administrator appointed by the Probate Court to dispose of Elihu's estate. In compliance with a Court order to raise money to support her children Martha sold 16 acres on the East side to Joseph Tupper and 19 acres on the North side to Ozeas.

On April 4, 1785 the Court allowed her to take household items for her own use:

> "At a Court of Probate while in Tolland in the district of Stafford, Isaac Pinney, Esq judge holding Court on account of sundry things put out and allowed to Mrs Martha Benton widow and relict of Mr Elihu Benton late of said Tolland for support of herself and family to the amount of fourteen pounds, nine shillings and eight pense money in lawful moveables such as she shall chose out of the inventory at inventory price. Phelps, Clerk."

On her marriage day she also signed a deed to give Alexander eleven and ¼ acres for ten pounds (Book 8, page 271). Alexander thus had 40 acres to farm, viz. Martha's share, the children's share and his 11 acres. Elihu Benton Baxter wrote: "He purchased a part and worked the one-third of mother's and the part set off to the heirs (Warham and Mitty). It was a hard stony, sterile soil which never produced a crop sufficient for the support of his family." Elihu was born and brought up on this land so he spoke from personal knowledge.

Martha and Alexander raised two other children on that farm, Mary born in 1790 and Alexander Jr. born in 1793. So the farm had to support five children, viz. Warham Benton, Martha Submit Benton (often referred to as Kitty), Elihu Benton Baxter, Mary Baxter and Alexander Baxter, Jr.

ELIHU BENTON'S LAND

On this portion no attempt had ever been made to pry out protruding basketball sized rocks to even out the ground. No stone walls exist although one line of rocks suggest a wall might have been there once.



Very little growing could have been done here so any attempt at cultivation may have been further East where the ground was a little smoother. At the time of Elihu Benton's ownership most trees would have been cut and there would have been grass for livestock to forage on. Presently, the trees and saplings look poorly which would lead one to believe Baxter's observation about the soil being hard and sterile. There are groups of small white pines and large patches of mountain laurel. These and the oak trees are evidence of an acid soil.

This entire region is marked by numerous large stones and boulders with large outcroppings. The blunt stone face of Ragged Mountain, just a few rods West, is itself a large glacial remnant about 150 feet high. This region is elevated as the road from Tolland center gradually rises up through a little valley. Little Peeched Mountain right below Ragged Mountain forms its Western slope. The area is picturesque but hardly for farming.

Warham's Youth

Warham was 4 years old when Alexander Baxter started to farm the land and grew up there as the oldest child in the family. His stepfather taught him the husbandry skills he would need while Warham became more and more useful around the farm. He would hear that his uncle Jacob was killed at age 24 when a load of hay tipped over. Warham was then eleven, too young to manage a load of hay but was subject to all the hazards of farm work. He probably worked eleven years with his stepfather. He became the ward of Daniel Avery, his aunt's husband, when he became 15 and may have left then. Although Alexander may have wanted to favor his own son, the latter was six years younger than Warham and would never be as essential as Warham was.

Martha Submit was only two years old when her mother set up housekeeping again in her house. When Mary Alexander was born Martha was only seven years old and might have helped a little. But as she grew older she would have become a hardworking helper to her mother. When the Court had ordered the property surveyed, the men dividing the estate described her third as "the corner West room in the house with the bedroom in the Northwest corner with half Chamber over the great room on the South end of the Chamber with half the garret on the South end with one third of the celler under the house on the West side of the celler." It appeared to have a garret and another room on the second level and a cellar.

The Lure of Vermont

Vermont held the promise of better land and a better life. After the War, hundreds of Connecticut families took to the roads to Vermont, New York and Ohio to seek land that was reported to be fertile and level. Revolutionary soldiers returning to New England had seen it. Also warrants for the reward for military service gave veterans a chance to own their own land. Land promoters advertised its availability. The Baxters succumbed to the reports and moved to Cornwall sometime between 1800 and 1808.

Alexander mortgaged his eleven acres to Eliakim Williams in March 1803 for $60.00 (Book 10, page 128). This was the plot he bought from Elihu's estate for 60 pounds in 1789. The condition of the deed depended on Alexander repaying Williams the $60.00, two notes and a subsistence allowance before March 1806. One of the notes was made in October 1800 for $19.42 and the other was made in March 1801 for $2.68. Evidence of Alexander's distress is shown by the proviso:

> "Eliakim has agreed to make advances to said Baxter in his sickness and to furnish him such things as are necessary. Now if the said Baxter, his heirs or his administration, shall pay or cause to be paid to said Williams the aforesaid notes and the value of the articles he shall advance for said Baxter on or before the first day of March 1806 then this deed shall be void."

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On February 20, 1808 Alexander sold the same plot to Williams for $67.50 so the debts on the 1803 deed had been paid in time and the land had reverted to Alexander (Book 11, page 458). He died two years later, in 1810, after he reached Cornwall. Elihu Baxter married a Cornwall girl in 1808. Warham married a Starksboro girl in 1807.

On the 1800 census Warham was not listed in the Baxter family. He may have been listed in the Avery family or he may have gone to Bristol. The number of male children shown in the Avery family aren't clear enough to determine if Warham was there. In 1803 he managed to sell the land he inherited from Elihu's estate for $100. It was thirteen acres and sixteen rods (Book 11, page 509). Warham sold his land in March and Alexander mortgaged his land in April. Warham apparently did not help his stepfather pay the later's debts. He probably needed the money to live on in Bristol. Martha Submit Benton sold her portion of exactly the same size for $43.60 a year later (Book 11, page 517). James Isham bought both properties.

Cornwall, Vermont

Alexander and Martha moved their children, goods,and livestock to Cornwall, Vermont on what must have been a trek of many days across Massachusetts and three-quarters of the way up Vermont. After Alexander died the care of Martha would fall on Martha Submit, Elihu, Mary and Alexander, Jr. The later was 17 and Elihu Baxter was 23 years old. Elihu married Clarissa Field of Cornwall and Martha probably found a home with them. Their first child was born in 1808 and they had fourteen children including two sets of twins. Also noteworthy, Ruth Aborn, Martha's sixteen year younger sister, married William Baxter, a younger brother of Alexander, and they also went to Cornwall. Their move many have coincided with Alexander's move and they could have helped care for Martha. The circumstances of Marth's death are not available.

Elihu Benton Baxter became a Baptist preacher the year his father died and in 1812 joined the Methodist Church. He may have been influenced by hearing the Methodist circuit riders preach in Tolland and at the Square Pond Church. Maybe he was at Pulpit Rock on Cook Road when they orated. He volunteered for service in the War of 1812 and was at the Battle of Plattsburg. His date of death is unknown.

Cornwall was settled about 1761 by people from Litchfield, Connecticut including Isaac, Stephen and Nathan Benton who were Charter Members. They were possibly descendants of Joseph Benton's family of Kent. Warham Benton went to Bristol Vermont, not Cornwall, and married Sarah Smith in March 1807. She was from nearby Starksboro. They had two children, Benjamin and an unknown daughter. Local land agents convinced them to migrate to Stockholm, St Lawrence County, New York and they reached there sometime during the War of 1812. Ariel Benton, Warham's younger cousin, was probably searching for new land in Pennslyvania about that time.

Warham's Sisters Came to St Lawrence County

Martha Submit Benton disappeared from our story except for one tantalizing note in her half-brother's narrative: "My mother had two children by first marriage: Warham and Martha Submit. They are heads of families residing in St. Lawrence County, N.Y."

Mary Baxter, Warham's half sister, is recorded in the Baxter Genealogy as married to a Capt. Delos Dustin and residing in Southville, N.Y. in 1878.

These fragments open up the imagination to the possibility that Warham was an influence to their movements or possibly one or the other actually came to the Stockholm area at the time he did. Since they are women not owning land, records in Stockholm weren't kept. How could Martha Submit Benton be the head of a family as Elihu Baxter states and not create a record somewhere? Further, where is the record of Warham's daughter who was born in Bristol according to census records? We don't know and family lore never thought it important.

Martha's Choices

Martha Aborn's choices for husbands were unfortunate since both were in poor health but she managed well and the family she raised survived and became our ancestors. She was the oldest daughter in her family and loyally stayed by while her brother went to War. At age 24 she took what opportunity there was and started a family while helping Elihu. When he went to War she managed alone. When he died she administered his estate. Alexander Baxter, a veteran in poor health, found her a willing mate and she started a family with him on the poor land of her first marriage. Their children and her children from her first marriage had to be brought up as best they could. She succeeded and found herself in their care at the end of her days.

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Byron S, Benton, Hartford, Ct. Feb. 26, 2005

PURITANS AND YANKEES
SOCIALIZING - MEETINGS - CELEBRATIONS
IN MILFORD - HARTFORD - TOLLAND

After the Puritan generation passed on, the succeeding generations became less observant of strict practices and behavior and thereby modified many Puritan ways. They gradually became Yankees - people in a new land forging a uniquely new identity while retaining strong elements of their old beliefs.

We see Andrew and Hannah in Milford and Hartford; Samuel and Sarah in Hartford; Samuel, Jr. and Mary in Tolland with their children and their children. How did practices change over these generations? Andrew and Hannah, for instance, could be together before marriage only within strict proscribed rules. On the other hand, Samuel, III and Jane Bradley in Tolland in the middle 1700's could meet freely and frequently in causal circumstances without any fear of social approbation. For social and public events customs changed as well.

Holidays

Puritans condemned all English religious holidays - Christmas, Easter, All Saints Day and St Valentines Day. Scripture commanded the Sabbath to them but nothing else on a regular basis. The Church in Europe and England held as many as 165 holy days. Puritans felt they were Roman Catholic observances and celebrating any one of them might open the door to idleness, a vice to be suppressed. Also designating any one day as holy implied the other days were less so. Puritans argued "they for whom all days are holy can have no holiday".

Since the Church of England promoted the Feast of Nativity as a major religious holiday, the Puritans were, of course, opposed. They felt it occurred on the wrong date anyway. Even as late as the mid-nineteenth century schools in New England were not normally closed for Christmas. We should not try and picture any of the Benton families gathered around a Christmas tree or even in their meetinghouse or church on the 25th of December.

At her trial for witchcraft, Rebecca Greensmith said the devil promised to sign a pact with her on the next Christmas day. The ministers at the trial avowed this mention of Christmas was a certain indication of the devil's evil methods. Rebecca, of course, knew the mention of Christmas would bring such a condemnation.

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New France

Our French ancestors two hundred miles north in Quebec, would look forward to Christmas celebration with high expectations. It would be centered around a full Mass and there would be rounds of singing, feasting and visiting in the community. French settlers in the New World and their sponsors in France hoped to make that colony as much like France as was humanly possible. They called it "New France", meaning old France in a new location. New Englanders, however, hoped for a life they judged to be better than their life in England had been. They continued English ways only if they conformed to their beliefs as they read their Bible, the Geneva Bible. "New England" to them meant old England renewed.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving was observed as a feast day and a day of prayer if the harvest warranted it. But it was not a regular annual affair in the Colonial period.

Fast days were held to mark lamentable occasions, natural disasters, fires, bad weather, loss of battles and poor harvests. On these days people put aside normal work and gathered at the meetinghouse for a special sermon for the observance of the day.

After 1720 very few Fast Days and Thanksgiving Days were called, perhaps one or two per decade. There were only 7 Fast Days and 3 Thanksgiving Days between 1720 and 1770, but then during the days of the Revolutionary War there were 7 Fast Days and 5 Thanksgivings in the late 1770's.

Days of humiliation were called to chastise the populace for laxity and widespread rule-breaking. This day was the setting for a Puritan sermon called a jeremaid. It catalogued time and again the failure of the new generations to live up to the standards of the past and threatening the divine judgement this would bring to the towns and the Colony. It was reminiscent of the Old Testament's Lamentations of Jeremiah. The preaching emphasized religious decline as a national phenomenon and interpreted it to be a breaking of the national covenant that God had made with New England.