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AN

# ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS,

JULY 4, 1854,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

INCORPORATION OF THAT TOWN.

---

BY EDMUND B. WILLSON.

*With an Appendix.*

BOSTON:

CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

111, WASHINGTON STREET.

1855.

100598

PETERSHAM, July 31, 1854.

REV. EDMUND B. WILLSON, WEST ROXBURY.

DEAR SIR,—The undersigned Committee of Arrangements for the Centennial Celebration on the 4th of July, respectfully request for publication a copy of the able and interesting Address delivered by you on that occasion. The profound attention with which that great audience listened must convince you, more than any thing that we can express, of the deep interest that was felt in the Address.

WILLIAM PARKHURST,  
CEPHAS WILLARD,  
SETH HAPGOOD,  
LEWIS WHITNEY,  
PHINEHAS W. BARR,  
JOSEPH G. PARMENTER,  
DANIEL STOWELL,  
WILLIAM H. BANCROFT,

HUBBARD PECKHAM,  
JOHN G. MUDGE,  
J. P. PILLSBURY,  
JOHN M. HOLMAN,  
JESSE ROGERS,  
WILLIAM COOK,  
COLLINS ANDREWS,

*Committee of Arrangements.*

WEST ROXBURY, Aug. 3, 1854.

MESSRS. WILLIAM PARKHURST, CEPHAS WILLARD, AND OTHERS, *Committee.*

GENTLEMEN,—The Address delivered at our late Celebration is at your service. I shall have to ask a little time, however, to append a few notes, and such other related matter as belongs to it.

I have a lively and grateful recollection of the patient attention with which the Address was heard, despite the extreme heat and long sitting of that midsummer's day.

With much regard, I am yours,

E. B. WILLSON.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,  
22, SCHOOL STREET.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE act of incorporation, by which the plantation of Nichewaug became a town, bears date April 20, 1754. The day chosen for the celebration of its centennial festival was not, it will be perceived, the precise anniversary of the incorporation. The true day falling in a month when the weather is quite unsuitable for out-of-door rejoicings, when the roads are usually bad, — sometimes hardly passable, — and when, consequently, access to the town from distant places would be attended with much discomfort and difficulty, another day was substituted for it.

The writer of the following Address would have been glad to make something else of it, which should have been of more permanent value. He would have preferred to recast and expand it into the form of a somewhat complete Town History. But he did not see how this could be done for some years at least; while he did see that the present publication might indirectly serve the same purpose, by provoking a new and wider interest in the town's annals, and stimulating curiosity to a keener search after the materials from which a more complete account of the town could be made at some future day by some other hand.

The antiquarian experiences no greater difficulty in his researches, than that of making the inheritors of old family mansions, and attics full of miscellaneous papers and time-yellowed

MSS., believe that there can be any thing of biographical or historical value among their neglected stores. They will not believe that an old almanac, an account-book, a letter, an occasional sermon, a newspaper article, a political handbill, or a ballad once sung up and down their streets, can be worthy of notice, and are too often reluctant to let the stranger look among their "rubbish," because their garrets are not furnished in the style of a parlor. Indeed, the owner of the garret is often as ignorant of what it contains as the strangest stranger can be.

The following pages contain the record of many facts. It is not presumed that they will be found free from errors. The writer can but claim to have spent much time, and exercised a reasonable care, in their compilation. And even his error, as well as his truth, shall help his purpose, if it cause some other to come after him, who will set his wrongs right, and add more or fewer to the facts that are facts.



## A D D R E S S .

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CITIZENS OF PETERSHAM, —

To you belong these lands that lie around us, but not wholly to you. There are many of us here, who can show no title in the county records to a foot of all this soil, who, nevertheless, feel that we have, in some sort, a property and an interest in it as well as you. The acres, we admit, are yours. The memories that attach to them are ours as well. We have learned, may be, to call other places home. But, up and down your roadsides, on the slopes of your hills, and by your streams, we see the homesteads of our fathers, our own birth-places perhaps, the play-places of our childhood. We identify, very likely, the spot where we were schooled in "manners" and multiplication-table; and that to which we went, with sobered step, on calm, summer sabbath-mornings at bell-ringing. We find here, in your keeping, those sacred enclosures which the ploughshare never enters, where our dead and yours sleep. All around us are objects which awaken reminiscences and associations of the

profoundest interest to us ; objects to be remembered as long as we remember any thing.

In all these, with their memories and histories, we have a joint inheritance with you. Wherever we have been scattered, eastward, westward, northward, southward, near and far, we have remembered these. We could not forget them. This ground was not to us as other ground. You will believe, then, that we heard with a willing ear, and not without a thrill of pleasure, your invitation to come and observe with you this day of commemoration. We have come. We were right glad to come. Our hearts go out to meet your welcome. They are as deeply in this occasion as yours. We shall not be a whit behind you in the zest and joyfulness with which we enter on the proceedings of this our common festival.

FRIENDS, who have come from beyond these borders ; natives of this place ; children and descendants of the native-born ; you who have married wives out of these houses, or whose fathers did ; you who have sometime dwelt here, tilling these fields and pasturing your herds on these hills ; — all you who have come hither to-day, because you cared for Petersham ; who cared for the place, because you cared for something that it contains or has contained, — I have taken upon me to speak in your behalf ; to say that you have come in full-hearted gladness. Your numbers, your faces, give me warrant that I spoke truth. Now, in behalf of those who dwell here, I take the liberty to repeat their welcome to you. Welcome, all ! for you are welcome. See it in the open doors.

the open faces, the open hands, that bespeak the open hearts with which you are received !

I foresee that this day will not be found long enough for all that we have to say and to hear, to see and to do. When we disperse, it will be to leave many intended greetings unspoken, purposed inquiries omitted ; and many a broken thread of " old acquaintance," which we had hoped to take up and tie, still hanging loose at end. I desire, therefore, to waste no moments of these precious hours — of which there will not be enough — in superfluous sentences of introduction. We are introduced already. The occasion has introduced us to each other and to our subject. Some of us may have been strangers to one another till now. But stranger is a word of which we know neither use nor meaning to-day. As little need is there that the theme of the hour should have formal announcement. But one theme can have suggested itself to any mind as the topic of this occasion. I am here, not to choose what I will say, but to say that which the time puts into my mouth ; that which I have come on purpose to say, and you as expressly to hear. We set apart this day to a special use, — to *one* special use ; to *commemorate the beginning and the history of this town.*

For this time, then, we will assume, if you please, the Creation of the world ; take the Flood for granted ; pass by the Discovery of America as a conceded fact ; and limit ourselves to a study of the *Chronicles of Petersham.*

This town had not its beginning in an act of incorporation. It had begun even before the first pioneer had set his cabin here, or turned a sod. The earliest settlers of these parts had their settlement in mind, before they had it as a fact visible to the eye. That is where we propose to begin, — in the minds of the founders. We cannot but be curious to know what put it into the minds of those men to come here; to know who they were; and what chance or providence turned their attention and their feet this way.

Let us fix a few early dates. In the month of January, 1731, Old Style (by the New Style, '32), John Bennet, Jeremiah Perley, and others, petition the General Court of Massachusetts for a grant of this tract of land, on which to plant a town. Their suit is urged on the score of services rendered, and hardships undergone, as volunteers, under Captains Lovell and White, in the Indian wars. The Court taking no action upon their petition, it is renewed in the following May, with a like result. In April, 1733, the memorialists present themselves a third time, respectfully reminding the Court of their former repeated applications, and again pressing the consideration of their case upon that honorable body. This time they are favorably heard; and, on the 25th of April, 1733, Mr. John Bennet is empowered by the Court to convene the proprietors of the plantation for the purposes of organization, and the adoption of needful rules.\*

\* The petitions of January and May, '32, are lost. That of April, '33, is preserved; and it is from it that we learn all we know of the preceding ones. (See

It is to be noticed, that these petitioners did not ask, in general form, for unappropriated lands, leaving it to the Court to select the place; but they asked definitely for this piece of territory, designating its extent and bounds with great exactness. The preference thus manifested for this spot indicates some previous knowledge of it; a knowledge which they must have come by either from report or from personal observation. That some, perhaps many, of them had had opportunities to see and traverse these lands is probable. Those expeditions into the Indian country, on which they founded their claim for land, had, it is likely, led them this way, and made them acquainted with the locality which they afterwards selected for their plantation. That the present limits of the town of Petersham were crossed, and that the tract of country which they include was, to some extent, ranged over, by English scouting parties, sent to look for Indians, is hardly less than certain.

What has been designated as Lovell's or the Three Years' War was brought to a close in the early part of 1726. The seats of the hostile Indians then lay to the north of the Massachusetts Colony, in what is now northern New England and Canada. Such was the dread entertained by the English of the sudden incursions of these savages, that the utmost vigilance

Appendix, A). The grant must have been made by the General Court between the 5th and 25th of April, 1733, as may be seen by comparing the time when the petition was presented, with the date and phraseology of the act authorizing the calling of the proprietors' meeting. Of the grant itself, we can find no record; and perhaps it is because the General Court of 1750 could find none, that they then formally re-granted the same territory.

was used to keep them at a distance from their remotest settlements. Accordingly, during the years 1724 and 1725, companies of forest rangers, consisting of from six or eight to ten times as many men, were sent out almost daily from the frontier towns, to scour the country back of those towns, and keep it as clear as possible of their wily enemies. The frontier towns in this direction were, at that time, Brookfield, Rutland, Lancaster, and Lunenburg (then called Turkey Hills). After leaving these towns, all was wild and unsettled, till the posts along the Connecticut River were reached, of which the principal ones were Hadley, Deerfield, Northfield (whose Indian name was Squakheag), and Fort Dummer, at or near the site of Brattleborough, Vermont.

Through these woods and wilds, scouting parties were kept constantly beating and searching for their foe. We can trace them up, in some instances, from Rutland and Brookfield to the Ware and Swift rivers, and across the country between Lancaster and Lunenburg on the east, and Northfield on the west.\* It was probably by means of these excursions that some of the original proprietors of this town became acquainted with these places, and were led, then or afterwards, to the determination to seek them for a plantation.

The petitioners for this grant, it will be remembered,

\* A considerable number of journals, kept by the commanders of these scouting parties during these marches, are filed in the office of the Secretary of State. Some of them possess an interest for the curious. One, detailing the march of a party from Turkey Hills, in January, 1725, records that they encamped one night on the top of Monadnock; rather a bleak bed-chamber, one would think, for a mid-winter's night.

asked it as a consideration for services rendered, under Captains John Lovell and John White, in the Indian wars. What proprietors of this town rendered services under Captain White, of Lancaster, or what the particular services rendered were, it is out of my power to tell; \* but we have the means of identifying above forty of the seventy-one proprietors of this town, as having been volunteers under the famous and redoubtable Captain Lovell, of Dunstable, on the last but one of his marches into the Indian country, — they constituting about three-fourths of his whole force. This was the expedition in which a camp of ten Indians was surprised, and the whole number exterminated. As so many of the first proprietors of this town were engaged in it, it may not be out of place briefly to relate the circumstances.

In answer to a petition of Lovell and others, for encouragement to hunt Indians, the General Court of Massachusetts had offered a bounty of £100 for every Indian scalp which should be brought in. Lovell, who was known as a gallant and successful warrior, had no difficulty in gathering round him a band of resolute men, ready to share with him the dangers and profits of Indian hunting. In December, 1734, his party had brought one scalp and one living captive, from beyond Lake Winnipiseogee, and received

\* Among the proprietors are named “the heirs of Samuel Mossman.” The following entry appears in a journal kept by Captain White, during an expedition into the Indian territory, in the spring of 1725: —

“24 day [April] . . . This day, Samll Moosman acidentally kild himself with his own gun.”

White himself had served under Captain Lovell, and went out to bury that brave man after his last fatal expedition against the Pequawkets.



their reward. It was in the following February, that, having increased his number to ninety men (though it was subsequently reduced to sixty), he set out on another excursion to the same region. On the eastern side of the lake, they came upon a trail; and, just before sunset of the 20th of February, descried a smoke, which indicated an encampment. Taking extraordinary precautions to prevent discovery,\* they waited in silence for the dead of night. Then, stealthily creeping near, they discovered the forms of ten sleeping Indians, lying round a camp fire. At the first shot, seven were slain. Two of the remaining three fell the same instant that they started from their sleep; and the last, badly wounded, was seized by a dog, as he attempted to escape, and immediately killed. Not one was spared.† The pond by the side of which this tragedy took place has since been known as Lovell's Pond. It is situated in the town of Wakefield, N.H., principally, and at the head of one of the branches of the Salmon River.

Thus, after a short absence, the hunters returned to Boston, with their ten scalps stretched over hoops, and received, besides their regular daily pay of two shillings and sixpence, £1000 in prize-money.‡

\* They made no fire to cook their supper, lest the smoke should betray them; and muzzled their dogs, to prevent their barking. During the day preceding the attack, they were near enough to the Indians to watch their motions, and to perceive that they were hunting beaver and other game.

† They were found to be provided with extra snow-shoes, moccasins, blankets, and other equipments, which they were supposed to have brought along with them for the use of captives. These preparations indicated an intended attack on some settlement, probably Cochecho [Dover].

‡ Appendix B.



It is not surprising that the result of this expedition should have been to set on foot another similar one very soon after. In April, Lovell was again on the march for the territory of the Pequawkets, at the head of forty-six men. The melancholy termination of this expedition has been celebrated in verse, described in graphic narrative, and recounted at a thousand winter firesides, where harking ears and horror-frozen hearts have attested the deep interest which the bloody tale excited. It was fatal to the daring adventurer with whose name the early history of this town has become associated.

It is not much that we know of the personal history of the men who planted this settlement. Whitney\* says they had among them enough who were wealthy and enterprising to give the plantation a good start, and an encouraging growth in the years of its infancy. The General Court made it a condition in their grant, that the grantees should either settle on their lands themselves, or send some of their descendants to occupy them. This condition, it is evident, was not very strictly complied with. But few of the original proprietors actually took up their residence here; and, in numerous instances, they sold, at an early day, the lots which they had drawn in the township. Many of them, however, who had already their homesteads in other and distant places, probably endowed marrying daughters, or sons arriving at manhood, with these uncultivated estates. This desire to

\* Rev. Peter Whitney: History of Worcester County.

give an outfit to man-grown sons, and daughters of marriageable age, it was, doubtless, which brought many petitioners for land-grants before the Legislature, in almost every one of those years. Fortunate they were who could urge past services to the State as a ground for their claims. The petitioners had no more land than they wanted for themselves, while the State had wild lands, unoccupied, in plenty. Money they had not — much; but they were rich in children, to whom, as was natural, they wished to give a portion of worldly goods, as the one sex should arrive at majority, and the other enter the state of wedlock. Here was a way by which the ambition which their children had inherited from them, to become large landholders, might be gratified without cost. It was well for the State. It was well for themselves. It was well for their children.

The proprietors of this place lived somewhat widely scattered; though they were chiefly inhabitants of the north and west part of Middlesex County, and the north and east part of the county of Worcester. Lancaster contained, by considerable, a larger number of them than any other town. Samuel Willard, John Bennett, John White; the Houghtons, — Jonas, Ephraim, James, Edward, Stephen, and Daniel; the Willsons, — Jonathan and Joseph; the Whitcombs, — Joseph and David; the Sawyers, — John, Ezra, and Samuel; John Goss, Fairbank Moor, John Wilder, Moses Chandler, and probably others, were of Lancaster. The Perleys, — Jeremiah and Jacob, — were of Boxford. The Farnsworths and (sometime)

the Athertons were of Harvard. Benoni Boyenton, Edward Hartwell, and Joshua Hutchins, belonged to Lunenburgh; Jonathan Parling and John Barker, to Concord. Tarbell, Spalding, and Shattuck were probably of Groton. John Varnum and Henry Colburn lived in Draeut; Moses Hazzen and Abiel Foster, in Haverhill. Farmer, Walker, and Stickney were probably of Billerica. Jonas Adams was of Hassanamisco [Grafton]. Aaron Rice and Samuel Brown were of Rutland. Others lived in Sudbury, Worcester, Amesbury, Exeter, N.H., Bedford, Chelmsford, and other places. Probably not a dozen of all the original proprietors ever came here to live.\* In a report made by the proprietors to the General Court, of the state of the plantation, at the end of the year 1750, the names of forty-seven of the sixty-one families then actually settled in town are given; and, of the whole forty-seven, the name of Joseph Willson alone appears on the list of the first proprietors.†

It will be remembered that the grant of this territory, for a settlement, was made in April, 1733. The first proprietors' meeting was held on the tenth of the following month; and measures were immediately

\* As, by the conditions of the grant, there were only sixty families required to be settled on the granted territory within three years, and there were some seventy-two proprietors, the privilege of postponing actual settlement beyond the term of three years was conferred on such twelve of them as would pay the largest consideration for the same into the proprietors' treasury.

† See Appendix C.

taken to commence the partition of the land among the proprietors.\*

It is impossible to say with certainty where the first dwelling was erected, or by whom, or at exactly what time. It is a reasonable conjecture, however, that several settlers came together, or nearly together, to make their homes here. I know no reason to think that any settlement had been made before the grant; and probably, as soon as the allotment of lands had taken place, not one alone, but several, came, without loss of time, to begin their clearing and building. The first division of land, for home or house-lots, was made in 1733; and, it is likely, made so early in the year, that improvements were begun before the winter following. A tradition exists, that Joseph Willson built the first house in town, near the present residence of Mr. David C. Page; and I believe the tradition sometimes adds that he was the first white man who spent a winter here. If Mr. Simeon Houghton, who settled on what is known as the Charles Wilder Place, was not here as early as Mr. Willson, he certainly was not much behind him. And, if Mr. Willson did really precede Mr. Houghton, there is traditional evidence that *Mrs.* Houghton was not preceded by *Mrs.* Willson, or by any other of her own sex in the new settlement.† The tradition runs,

\* This first meeting was held in Lancaster, at the inn of Thomas Carter. Samuel Willard was chosen moderator, and William Lawrence, clerk. A Committee was chosen to lay out to each proprietor fifty acres, for a first allotment, with authority "to make up in quantity each proprietor's lot in quality, so that each proprietor may draw for his lot." — *Proprietors' Records.*

† While this address was in the course of preparation, and after this paragraph was written, the writer received a communication from Jared Weed, Esq., who has

that Madame Houghton, albeit not the possessor of a well-favored countenance, was gifted with a genial disposition; and that she used to say, in the *post meridiem* of her life, shaking her head significantly at the fairest of the maidens around her, "Take no airs: I'd have you know, that the time was when I was acknowledged, without dispute, to be the handsomest woman in the town;" — that time having been when there was yet no woman in the town besides Mrs. Houghton herself.

This settlement, occasionally called, in old records and papers, Volunteerstown (or, in abbreviated form, Voluntown), because granted to volunteers, was almost universally known, from its settlement to its incorporation in 1754, by the name of Nichewaug, — a name as variously spelled as the fancy, caprice, or orthographical vagary of the writer happened to dictate.\* This was the Indian name of the place. There had

devoted much attention and given much research to the antiquities of this town, and has presented, by lectures and newspaper articles, much curious and valuable information to the public thereupon. Mr. Weed thinks that Mr. Willson came here and planted himself as early as the autumn of 1731. This opinion he bases upon the testimony of tradition. If this tradition were true, it would seem somewhat surprising that the earliest proprietors' records should not contain some incidental mention of a settlement, or settler's claim, already existing. It would seem not unlikely, that the Legislature, in voting the grant, would make some allusion to such an occupant or occupancy of the territory they were ceding. There is nothing in the proprietors' records, or in the action of the Legislature (unless it has escaped my notice), which indicates that the whole tract described was not clear of incumbrance at the time of the grant. Mr. Willson appears to have drawn his share or division of land by lot among the rest, in 1733; and nothing appears to show that he previously abandoned any claim he had before made.

\* Nichawogg, Nichewoag, Nichewagg, Nicherwagg, Nichawoge, Nitchewoage, and Nitchawog may all be recognized as variations of one name; but it is not so easy to see how Nepeschoge, or Nepeschoage, as the name was sometimes written, could have been so pronounced that its kinship to the family above described would be recognized.

been an Indian hamlet or settlement here before the English came, of which traces remained at the period of their coming. According to tradition, this Indian settlement was mostly about the hill on which now stands the dwelling-house of Mr. Thomas How, which hill also bore the name of Nichewaug Hill. To conciliate and satisfy such Indians as claimed that they had rights and interests in these lands, the settlers paid them for the relinquishment of their claims; a prudent measure, which afterwards saved them from serious annoyance, if not from positive danger.

Let us now suppose the settlement fairly begun. Let us take our stand here in the spring of 1734. The sons, and the husbands of the daughters, and those hoping to be husbands to the daughters, of the proprietors, have come, as early as the opening of the spring would permit, to begin their labors, or to resume labors begun the autumn past. A portion have come from the more northern towns, along the northern side of the Wachusett, following a mere bridle-path through the woods, and doubtless bad enough at that. Another portion, from the more southern towns, have travelled up along another path, not much better, though a cart-path, leading through the woods, from Rutland. From Lancaster, the place at which the emigrants would chiefly rendezvous, as the last point of departure for the new settlement, there are two paths, — that first mentioned, as skirting the Wachusett on the north, and another winding around its southern base, — the two uniting about

five miles east of here, near what is known as Burnt Shirt River. Some have come by one, some by the other route; the length and practicability of the two ways being about the same. With the exception of a handful of settlers, just beginning a plantation at Lambstown (whose present name is Hardwick), these of Nichewaug have no nearer neighbors than the inhabitants of Rutland; and, after them, none within shorter distance than Brookfield at the south, and Lancaster and Lunenburgh on the east. On the west side, they scarcely calculate distances, as their communication is to be almost wholly with the towns lying to the east. Between them and the towns west of them, their intercourse will be for years quite infrequent.\*

Some idea of the state of the roads, or rather paths, which the pioneers in this settlement had to travel, as they came and went, at first, between their new clearings here in the wilderness, and the old homesteads

\* About this time, a road was laid out through this township, from Lancaster to Sunderland, on the Connecticut River, which was said to open a shorter way than any other between Boston and the Connecticut. Being very hilly, however, it does not appear to have become much of a thoroughfare till its location was changed in part. The plan of this road was reported to the Legislature in 1733. It was to run from Lancaster, across Nashua River, to Wachusett Pond, a little north of Wachusett Hill, eleven miles; thence through the northern part of Rutland (now Hubbardston), to the centre of the "Volunteers' Township," fourteen miles; thence to Sunderland, twenty-three miles, passing through no township; making the distance from Lancaster to Sunderland forty-eight miles. The town of Shutesbury, for a time called "Roadtown," was a grant to the makers of this road, as a consideration for their service. A lot of land laid out to Samuel Sawyer, lying in the south-westerly part of Nicherwagg, is represented as being on the road to Roadtown.

At a later period, there was much travel through this town, from south-east to north-west; it being situated on one principal line of communication between the forts on Lake Champlain, "No. 4" in New Hampshire (Charlestown), and other towns in that direction, on the one side, and south-eastern New England on the other.



which they had left in Lancaster, Groton, and other places, — may be given, by quoting an extract from a vote of the proprietors relating to the improvement of one of these ways.

It was on the 12th of September, 1734, that the proprietors voted to give to Captain Jonas Houghton, both valuable privileges as a proprietor, and a sum of money out of the treasury, “for making the road so feasible, — from Lancaster, along on the north side Wachusett, to the meeting of the other path, that goes from [the] aforesaid Lancaster, along on the south side Wachusett, — as to carry comfortably, with four oxen, four barrels of cider at once.” This vote not only gives us an idea of what was then considered a “feasible” road, but, in the standard adopted by which to determine its feasibility, indicates with what product of the older settlements the carts which travelled thence to the new went chiefly laden. The forests of Nichewaug could furnish shelter and fuel to the new-comer, and her generous fields could give him bread. But, with all, there was one deficiency, as our fathers deemed, without which the winter hearth must remain cheerless, and the arm of out-door labor lose its nerve and vigor. That deficiency they looked to the old orchards of Lancaster and Middlesex to supply.

Grist and saw-mills the settlers would need at once. No time was lost in constructing both. Mr. Jonathan Prescott, of Littleton, built the grist-mill, receiving one hundred acres of land, on the east side of Sherman Hill, as a compensation. Messrs. Joseph



Whitcomb, Jonathan Houghton, and Daniel Houghton, built, or caused to be built, the saw-mill, binding themselves to keep it in repair for ten years; and, for the same length of time, to sell good pitch-pine boards for forty shillings a thousand, or to saw "to the halves" for all persons who should bring logs to their mill. They received, as a consideration, eighty acres of land adjoining the mill-privilege, and lying between that and Prescott's. As both pieces of land were in Prescott's possession at the time they were surveyed, in 1738, it is likely that he was employed to build the saw-mill as well as the grist-mill. These *first* mills were probably at or near the place more recently known as that of the *Reed Mills*. There were other mills in town, however, at a very early period in the town's history.\*

No event of much importance occurred in the civil affairs of the new plantation between the time of its settlement and that of its incorporation, with the exception of those growing out of the war between France and England, known in this country as King George's War. Previously to the war, it had only those difficulties and discouragements to struggle with which are common to all new settlements; the most

\* Proprietors' Records. Mill-building would seem to have run in the Prescott family. Butter's History of Groton gives an account of John, the first of the name in America, who came to Massachusetts about the year 1640, and soon after settled at Nashua [Lancaster]. "He was a blacksmith by occupation, and was also a *builder of mills*." His sons were John, Jonathan, and Jonas. "Jonas, or his father for him, built the mill in the south part of Lancaster, now within the limits of Harvard." . . . "He also built mills at Forge village, now in Westford, but then in Groton." It is not in my power to connect our Jonathan Prescott, of Littleton, with the John and Jonas above; but he was undoubtedly of them.

dangerous enemies being found in rattlesnakes and wolves, of which the tails of the former, and the heads of the latter, became trophies, and sometimes the sources of profit, to the hunter. But, upon the breaking out of hostilities in 1744, all the horrors of Indian warfare arose again in prospect; and this, as one of the outposts, and therefore one of the most exposed stations held by the English, was obliged to protect itself by such defences as it could. Many of the houses were fortified.\* The inhabitants took down their guns again, and carried them with them wherever they went, — to their work-fields, to mill, and to church. Scouting parties were kept scouring the woods. Mothers put their babes to bed in fear; and men went their ways, not with the easy unconcern of conscious security, but with the careful step and the circumspect air of men who think that danger may be lurking by their path.

A MS. letter of Colonel Samuel Willard to Governor Phipps and his Council, written in the early part of the summer of 1748,† represents that Nichewog, New Rutland [Barre?], Narragansett No. 2 [Westminster], Leominster, Luninburgh, and Groton West Precinct [Pepperell], were in a state of much distress on account of the Indians. These towns, he says,

\* Whitney. There are traditions of some of these fortified houses. One was the tavern, kept first by Jonas Farnsworth, and afterwards by Kenelm Winslow and others, at the place beneath the great elm where Silas Foster's public-house stood, and was burnt. Another was in the east part of the town, at the Charles Wilder Place; another, at what is called the Willis Place, a little to the south or south-east of the dwelling of David Wheeler. And there were others.

† Preserved in the State archives.

“will not be able to do their harvest, and to get their hay, without some relief; there being but sixty-two soldiers allowed, and nineteen men for town-scouts, to the towns above mentioned, which is by no means sufficient to guard them.” The towns named by Colonel Willard were six in number; consequently, the average number of soldiers to each was only ten and a fraction. Ten men appear to have been assigned to Nichewaug in March of the preceding year, however, by the Governor and Council.

The response to Colonel Willard's letter was the appointment of fifty-eight men, to be apportioned among the six towns whose necessitous condition he had represented, Townshend being added; eight, that is, to each. These men, says the Governor, are “principally for guarding those inhabitants that may be exposed to the enemy in getting in their harvest of hay and English grain.” And he adds these instructions: “You must take especial care that the inhabitants that shall have the benefit of these men work and assist one another in getting in their harvest, — one day in one man's field, and another day in another, till their harvest be got in; the soldiers to be wholly employed in guarding, and not allowed to be taken off from guarding, by working with the inhabitants. And you must give the command of each party to some solid man; and they must be so quartered as that they may without danger, and without loss of time, get together for guarding the inhabitants upon their first going out to their work.” So the haying and harvesting were done in these fields, during that

summer, a hundred and six years ago, under a military guard of twenty men.

It was perhaps owing quite as much to the prudence that dictated the purchase of this tract from the Indians, as to the measures taken to protect it by garrisons and soldiers, that this plantation did not actually suffer from any attack or depredations during the war. Other places in the vicinity did not wholly escape. In Payquage [Athol], which was not without its defences, one man was killed, and another was taken and carried into captivity.\*

After the close of the war in 1748, the settlement went on prosperously till 1754, when it had grown to a size and attained a position entitling it to incorporation. The interval between the beginning of the settlement and the incorporation, we thus see, had been about twenty years.

I have made no reference yet to the ecclesiastical affairs of the town; not, however, for the reason that the founders of this town did not think of such matters, or that they neglected to make provision for

\* It is supposed that no record was made of the transfer of this land from the aboriginal possessors to the English. At least, none such has been found. There can be no doubt, however, that the Indians were in this manner satisfied, and that they voluntarily relinquished all claim to proprietorship in this tract of country. Tradition tells that a scouting party, of whom Captain Joseph Stevens was one, found themselves one day, after a long march, in the neighborhood of Payquage. They had seen no Indians, and were resting without a suspicion that any were in the neighborhood. During their halt, they amused themselves by shooting at a mark, the "mark" being an old hat of Mr. Stevens. It was afterwards ascertained that there were Indians lying near them at the time, who were spectators of the whole sport, though unseen themselves. The tradition adds, that the same party of Indians made an attack on Payquage. When asked why they did not molest the scouting party from Nichewaug, they said, because the settlers at Nichewaug had paid for their land.

worship and religious instruction. The children of the Pilgrims would as soon have thought of living in houses of pasteboard themselves, as of constructing a State, or gathering the smallest community, without founding it on the faith and worship of their fathers. They only waited for the report of their Surveying Committee, to learn what lands had been reserved for a meeting-house lot and common, before proceeding to erect a house of worship. It was at the second meeting of the proprietors, held at Groton in the fall of 1733, that the vote to build was passed.

In connection with this vote, the proprietors instructed the Building Committee "to take care that the meeting-house aforesaid be, as soon as [it] can with convenience, built; viz., so far as to finish the outside, and lay the lower floor, workmanlike." When so far finished, it would do, I suppose, for proprietors' meetings, and as a place of worship. It is impossible to say whether this house was ever considered finished.

In December, 1735, an appropriation was made by the proprietors to meet the charges the Committee had been at in raising and shingling the meeting-house; and, at the same time, a vote was passed "to proceed further in finishing the meeting-house; and that the former Committee about the meeting-house do build the pulpit and deacon(s) seat and the minister's pew in said meeting-house, as soon as can be conveniently." The next spring, the house was probably so far advanced that it could be used for Sunday worship, as we find that they began to have preaching

at that time. But, two years later than this, the vote to build pulpit, deacon's seat, and pew for the minister, had not been carried into effect; for, on the 21st of June, 1738, it was again voted to build these, and, besides, "to ceil said meeting-house as high as the lower windows, and to case the lower windows, and build the body of seats." At this time also, £3. 10s. were voted to Thomas Dick "for coloring the meeting-house." This coloring, if it extended to any part of the outside, was probably a mere striping of the corner-boards, and door and window-casings, with a line running just beneath the eaves, and another just above the sill, lengthwise the house. In September of the same year, the Committee who had been directed to ceil the meeting-house up to the window-casings, by an extension of power, were authorized to carry the ceiling "as high as the gurts." And, on the 2d of March, '39, the deacons were instructed to buy a "decent cushion for the pulpit."

In a warrant for a proprietors' meeting, to be held in October, 1740, was an article "to see if the proprietors will proceed to finish the meeting-house." The proprietors refused to act on the article. In March of the following year, they did, however, vote to proceed to finish the meeting-house; and, six months after, Reuben Stone was paid "in full, for building one pew and a body of seats, and for setting up two pillars in the meeting-house."

March 10, 1743, Mr. Bennet was released from service as one of the Committee "for finishing *part* of the meeting-house, by reason of his being at a dis-

tance; and Mr. James Clemence was made his substitute.”

December 13, '43, “voted to proceed in finishing the meeting-house, and to choose a Committee for the same.” This Committee was soon after directed “to lath and plaster said meeting-house overhead, and also to whitewash the same.”

On the 16th of March, '47 (about thirteen years after it was begun), a vote was passed to discharge the Committee chosen “for finishing the meeting-house;” and, at the end of that year, it was “voted to buy a plush cushion for the meeting-house,” and “that Samuel Willard, Esq., do provide the cushion aforesaid.” The purchase of this plush cushion may perhaps be taken as the last act of that somewhat prolonged and arduous enterprise, — the finishing of the meeting-house; though we find, within three months, that repairs had become necessary, and Lieutenant Stone was set to provide latches for the doors, as well as to repair the outside of the building.

This first meeting-house is still remembered by a few of your oldest citizens. It stood immediately opposite to the gateway of the burying-ground, leaving a passage of perhaps twenty feet in width between its eastern end and the front line of that yard. It was fifty feet long from east to west, forty feet wide, and “twenty-one feet stud.” Its front door was on the southern side; the pulpit, on the northern. It was without spire, and unpainted, with windows of small, diamond-shaped glass, set in lead. The stairs leading



to the gallery were within the house, ascending from the south-east and south-west corners.

When built, there appears to have been, at first, but one pew, set up at the expense of the proprietors, in the whole house; viz., that for the minister, which stood close to the front door, on the wall, at the right hand as you entered. About the year 1745, a tier of pews was erected quite around the wall of the house, consisting of eighteen in all. These were built and occupied by persons of largest estate and principal consideration in the place. The space within this circling range of pews on the outside was filled up with ranges of long and common seats, on which the inhabitants generally had permanent places assigned to them; the more eligible seats being accorded to the more wealthy and influential, with the sole exception that "some regard" was had to age. Men and women sat on opposite sides of the house. This assignment of seats was called "seating the meeting-house;" a delicate and important duty, to be repeated every few years, and which could seldom be done without creating some jealousies. The seats first appropriated exclusively to a choir were the two hind body seats, on the lower floor, on the men's side of the house, — that was the *west* side. But earlier than that, before there was choir or chorister, one of the deacons, from his seat in front of the pulpit, "deaconed" the hymn, and then led the congregation in singing it. An old gentleman, recently deceased, told me that he could well remember when Deacon Sanderson used thus to recite a line first, and then sing



it, and so on; conducting the congregation, line by line, through the hymn. This, however, could have happened only occasionally, I think, within his recollection, — as perhaps at ante-communion lectures, — since the habit of choosing choristers began as early as 1767.

After a while, the space occupied by the common long seats began to be divided up, piece by piece, into pew-ground, on which individuals were allowed the privilege of setting up pews for themselves, at their own expense.\*

The first preaching in this place was probably in the month of May, 1736. On the 16th of June of that year, Mr. Ephraim Keith was paid “fifty shillings a day for three days preaching past,” and a Committee was chosen to hire a minister for one year. Ministers continued to be employed, for short periods, till the summer of 1738, when the Committee was instructed to “treat with a minister in order for a settlement;” and, on the 6th of September of that year, it was voted, at a proprietors’ meeting, first, “to settle an Orthodox minister in this place; and, secondly, “to choose Mr. Aaron Whitney to settle as minister of the gospel in this place.” A proprietors’ lot (intended to be of equal value with the lots of other proprietors)† was offered to Mr. Whitney, together with £200 in money, as a settlement; and

\* See Appendix D.

† The first minister drew, or had assigned to him, one proprietor’s share, as if he had been one of the original grantees. The division assigned to the minister, in the first allotment, was the place at present owned and occupied by George White, Esq., together with considerable tracts bordering upon it, since sold off to other estates.

£150 as an annual salary. This invitation, Mr. Whitney accepted, and he was ordained in December of the same year.

The church appears to have been gathered in October, 1738, though no record is made of the precise date. It consisted, at its organization, of fifteen male members.\* Isaac Ward and Thomas Adams were chosen the first deacons of the church, in the December following.

The event which we particularly celebrate to-day, the incorporation of this town, took place on the 20th of April, 1754. As we are not keeping the precise anniversary of that event, it may be worth while to mention, that it is somewhat doubtful whether the act of incorporation, which bears date of April 20, was actually signed by the Governor on that day. On the 22d of April, the House of Representatives sent for the Secretary "to attend the House, in order to inquire of him whether the Governor had signed the two engrossed bills, erecting Nichewoag and Quabin [Greenwich] into townships; who accordingly attended, and informed the House that they were not signed." This was two days after the date which the act itself bears. Another record of the *Council* appears as if the Governor's signature might have been affixed on the 23d of April, which was the day of adjournment. It is not important to discuss the question

\* Aaron Whitney, Nathaniel Wilder, Joseph Willson, Isaac Ward, John Oaks, Reuben Farnsworth, Samuel Willson, Thomas Adams, Zedekiah Stone, George Robins, Silas Walker, Nathaniel Stevens, James Clemence, Jonas Farnsworth, Isaiah Glazier.

here. If any mind has been exercised by a scruple in regard to the propriety of celebrating on the 4th of July an event which took place on the 20th of April, it can have the benefit of a doubt, whether the Governor did actually put pen to paper on the day last named.\*

By some error, about twelve hundred acres of land, at the north-west of the town, and belonging to it, were not included in the act of incorporation. At the session of 1756, however, the mistake was rectified by the General Court; Abel Willard, Esq., of Lancaster, being employed by the town to bring the case before the Legislature.

I have not been able to find a satisfactory answer to the question, how this town came by its name. There are traditions enough about it; but, unfortunately, of those I have heard, none is entitled to any credit. The probability is, that the name was taken from the English Petersham, or from him to whom that place gave the title of Viscount of Petersham. But the question is, How came the English Petersham, or its Lord, to give a name to this Nichewaug of ours? Was it a mere fancy that selected the name? or does some fact of historic interest account for the association of that name with this place? †

John Murray, Esq., of Rutland, issued the warrant for the first town-meeting in Petersham, which was held on the 19th of August, 1754. The meeting was for the choice of officers, and for putting the town

\* Journals of the House of Representatives (printed) and of the Council, 1754.

† Appendix E.

upon the usual municipal footing. The following persons constituted the first board of selectmen, — Deacon Isaac Ward, Joshua Willard, John Wilder, James Clemence, and Joseph Willson. Joshua Willard was chosen town-clerk; and Jonas Farnsworth, treasurer.

The town now enters upon that uniform and uneventful course which furnishes but little of the material which usually constitutes the staple of the historian's narrative. Not that no events of importance really transpired here from year to year. There was no year, — no, not one, — of all the least eventful in the history of this town, in which those processes of thought and education were not silently going on, out of which peaceful progress or violent revolutions grow, and nations rise or sink. History has too often supposed its story told, and all told, when it has chronicled the march of armies, the intrigues of diplomatists, and the installation or dissolution of cabinets. But history, to include all that belongs to it, should describe more faithfully the life of *peoples* in their homes and hamlets, and devote less space, comparatively, to the doings and goings of governors and governments.

The movements of an age or of a nation are not recounted in full, much less is their significance understood, when it is related how one aspirant went up to a throne, or another went down from one; how one kingdom spread itself beyond its bounds, and another was, by just so much, curtailed and straitened

in its borders. The towns of the Massachusetts Colony went on many years, showing, to superficial observers, simply that they assessed and paid their taxes regularly; that they annually repaired their highways, and appointed the requisite number of constables and field-drivers; that they made yearly appropriations to cover the minister's salary and the expenses of their schools. When England and France went to war, of course the *New England* and the *New France*, this side the water, went to war too. And these wars are the main outstanding facts which arrest the eye of the reader of early American history. But more and more it comes to be seen, how, while the surface is calmest, the waters beneath are often fastest gathering volume and tide; how men are often thinking most when acting least; and how their ideas are hardening into convictions and inflexible purposes most rapidly, while there is smallest manifestation of present change. Take the period from the incorporation of this town, to the time when the Revolution and the independence of the country arose to view as palpable fact. It is only to the outward eye that this seems a period of inactivity. It was a preparation time, without which that struggle and its results could never have been.

While the people of this town were apparently doing little more than growing richer and more prosperous and more numerous, during the twenty years that elapsed between the beginning of their town-history and the visible beginning of the Revolution, they were, in common with the people of all the towns,

talking among themselves; reading their newspapers, and digesting their contents; and clearing and settling gradually, within their own minds, certain fundamental principles relating to constitutional government and popular rights, on which they were afterwards to organize their opposition to the home-government, and next to organize a new government of their own.

But I must leave the larger field which is opening before me, to pursue the humbler path of the local annalist.

The same tone of feeling which existed in Boston, as New England's centre and head previous to the Revolution, existed generally throughout the country towns. The controversies which went on between the Governors, their subofficials, and the defenders of kingly prerogative, on the one hand, and the leading spirits of the Revolution on the other, were all taken up with as passionate a zeal, re-argued as many times over, and as hotly disputed, in the interior, as they had been at the seat of government. To every trumpet-call of freedom from the borders of the sea, the hills sent back a quick and hearty response. Notwithstanding the comparative slowness and infrequency of intercommunication between town and country at that period, every pulse of feeling at the heart shot out an almost instant throb to the remotest extremities; and the fiery eloquence which famous old Faneuil Hall knew so well in those days had its modest echo in many a country meeting-house.

When the opposing forces came to draw off to their respective sides in this place, it was found that the party friendly to the government, or rather the party counselling acquiescence in the measures of government, although less numerous than the other, yet embraced nearly all the persons in the town of chief social consideration. The minister, whose profession had then far greater influence than now, supported that side. Not only by the weight of his character, but in his pulpit addresses and public prayers, he lent his support to the doctrine of the divine right of kings and of governments *de facto*. Others, as much respected for their virtues as for their intelligence, threw their weight upon the same side. Not all these, by any means, acquitted the home-government of blame, or altogether of oppression; but these all agreed that it was wildest folly to attempt to withstand the action of that government by any outright resistance. On the other side, there was as much honesty, and doubtless as much patriotism, and probably no more. It was a case where there was room for an honest difference of opinion. And it is to be remembered, that that difference was rather as to what was expedient for the colonies, than as to whether king and parliament had done right in the premises. Many would have said "Resist," had they hoped that resistance would do any good. But they saw no hope of success. Simply differing in opinion, then, at first, as to what would be the effect of resisting, they grew warm; positions taken with the coolness of conviction came to be defended with the heat of passion. Party spi-



rit arose, — rose higher and higher; more and more decisive became the separation; bitterness of feeling took the place of neighborly kindness, and hate ripened into violence and open war.

It was about the year 1767, that a young man, Ensign Man by name, a graduate of Harvard College, after having taught a school in Lancaster some three years, came to Petersham to pursue the same employment. He had warmly espoused the cause of liberty. The Committee who were to pass upon his qualifications as a teacher, of whom Rev. Mr. Whitney was one, did not like his political sentiments, and were willing to throw obstacles in the way of his appointment. Mr. Whitney refused to take any active part in his examination, and withheld from him his approbation, though he appears to have been present when the examination was made. But, in spite of all antipathies and objections, Mr. Man at length commenced his labors. The course taken by Mr. Whitney exasperated, to a higher pitch, those who were of the opposite party, and fanned the fire all ready to blaze. He was assailed, even in the public prints, with unsparing severity.\*

Early in '68, the Massachusetts House of Representatives, after having voted an address to the king on the subject of their grievances, in terms which were deemed offensive by the government, were required to rescind their action. The vote on rescinding stood seventeen in the affirmative, to ninety-two in the nega-

\* See Appendix F.



tive. Of course, the staunch *ninety-two*, who would not take back their own words at the royal mandate, were everywhere applauded warmly by the revolutionists, and the seventeen who were ready to comply were as vehemently denounced. The faithful and the faithless were alike remembered, and their deeds duly celebrated, by the Petersham Whigs.

The "Sons of Liberty," as they styled themselves in this town, met on the 20th of September of that year (1768), to dedicate a tree to the goddess of liberty. Having selected a thrifty young elm,\* they first cut off seventeen poorer branches, leaving, as they asserted, ninety-two remaining. The tree was then, with some ceremony, consecrated to liberty; and the seventeen amputated limbs were consigned to the flames, the famous Song of Liberty † being sung by the votaries of the goddess, while the dishonored branches were consuming to ashes. Having scattered the embers to the winds, and shouted long and loud huzzas around the new shrine of their divinity, they marched in procession to a place of entertainment, and there, in dishes of barley coffee, drank patriotic toasts, expressive of loyalty to the king, and enmity

\* This tree is said to have been one of the southernmost of that row of elms now standing along the east side of the street, above the Peter Chamberlain Place, and against the land of Seth Hapgood, Esq.

† A song, consisting of eight verses, much sung among the revolutionary patriots at that period. It was sung to the tune *Hearts of Oak*, and began —

"Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,  
And rouse your bold hearts at fair liberty's call;  
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,  
Or stain with dishonor America's name."

It was parodied by their opponents, and the parody then parodied again in turn.

to all kinds of tyrants.\* In the ceremonies of this occasion, young Mr. Man was a prominent actor. His part in them was, of course, not calculated to conciliate those who were already embittered against him. If they had liked him little at first, they liked him less now that they found him lending efficient aid to what they regarded as the most treasonable agitations. All other persons of education in the town being of the royal party, the training which Mr. Man had had in letters made him a valuable acquisition to the Whigs, who had frequent occasion, no doubt, to avail themselves of his services in drawing up their papers, and putting their resolutions in form. And, just to the extent to which he could and did render them aid, he provoked necessarily the ill-will of those who heartily wished them confusion and defeat.

At length, the conflicts and collisions, which, as yet, had been confined to words, took a more positive form. In August, 1770, Captain Thomas Beaman, a Tory (to use the common designation of those who were of the government party), who lived on the place now owned by Artemas Bryant, Esq., which place he had bought of Mr. Sylvanus How, claimed that a certain small schoolhouse, standing about seventy rods east of his dwelling, was upon his land, and was his property; and accordingly, with the design of keeping the obnoxious schoolmaster from entering the same, padlocked it, and made it fast

\* For further particulars relating to this occurrence, as well as comments thereupon, see "Boston Evening Post" of Sept. 28, 1768 (supplement), Aug. 22 and Oct. 3 of same year, and March 13, 1769.

against him. Mr. How, contending that the schoolhouse was not on Beaman's land, but in the highway, accompanied Mr. Man to the schoolhouse, and, without ceremony, broke it open. This led to a suit against How and Man, in which Beaman alleged that he had been damaged by the trespass to the amount of £9. 10s.\* The case was tried in the Court of Common Pleas, and the jury awarded to the plaintiff six shillings. The defendants, however, appealed to the Superior Court, where the damages were reduced; but the costs, amounting to a considerable sum, were thrown upon the defendants. Our Captain Beaman, by the way, the complainant in this case, has the unenviable distinction of having acted as a guide to the British troops in their march to Concord, on the day of the Lexington and Concord fight.† He afterwards fled to the eastern provinces, and his estate was confiscated.

Mr. Sylvanus How, in carrying his appeal from the Court of Common Pleas to the Superior Court, in the case just related, sought aid of one of the most eminent men of his day, and one of the foremost in

\* The complaint runs (in the style of legal instruments), that How and Man did, "on divers days and times, between the first day and the 15th day of August inst., with force and arms, break and enter a small house belonging to ye said Thomas, made for a Dwelling-house, of about 18 ft. square, standing on the said Thomas' land, in Petersham aforesaid, which he lately bought of ye said Sylvanus, which house is of the value of twenty pounds." . . . That they "there, and within said time, with force as aforesaid, took and carried away one of the plaintiff's padlocks, three of his iron staples, and one of his iron hasps, all of the value of Ten shillings;" and that "other injuries the said Sylvanus and Ensign did the said Thomas, . . . in his same small house and his close adjoining, . . . to the damage of the said Thomas, to the value of nine pounds." — *Court Records*.

† Shattuck's History of Concord.

influence and action among those who led the American Colonies to take and maintain their stand against the aggressions of the English crown. This was the distinguished Josiah Quincy, jun. He died at an age at which few men are ripe enough to begin to lead; but he had accomplished the work of a long lifetime. He did not live to see the struggle open even; and yet few, if any, contributed more than he to its triumphant termination. The sagacious and penetrating Franklin confided in him, and sought his counsel, as if he had been a man of widest and longest experience. The king and his ministers showed their estimate of his abilities, by courting him with flattering attentions, and still more significant advances; they discovered, at once, and unmistakably, however, the temper of his virtue; and attested, by the watchful eye which they kept upon his movements, how highly they rated his capacity to help or obstruct their counsels, and how much importance they attached to his espousal of the one or the other side of their quarrel with their American colonies.

Mr. How, being brought into association with Mr. Quincy in the relation of client, and being about the same time appointed by the town chairman of a Committee to draft a Reply to the Circular Letter from the Boston Committee of Correspondence, was willing to receive aid from so competent a hand, in the discharge of his duty as a member of that Committee. The fact of this aid explains the wide attention which the Petersham Letter and Resolutions attracted to themselves on their publication; though it is but due

to the Committee to say, that those parts of their report which came directly from their own hearts and hands are not without many sentences fiery with patriotic passion, and expressive of a resolute energy, which is determined to stand by their cause and country to the last. What they did contribute to the report shows it was not from want of capacity that they did not furnish the whole. Such were the spirit and force with which some portions of it were drawn, that the question is said to have been repeatedly asked of Captain Ivory Holland, by his brother-officers of the army, what eminent man the town of Petersham possessed, who had attached himself to the Whig cause.\* To these questions, he could only answer, that the Whigs of that town had not one liberally educated person among them; for, by this time, Mr. Man had been wounded and taken captive by a subtler warrior, and a hero of more conquests, than ever went clad in armor of metal. The minister could not convert him from his idol-worship at the shrine of liberty, nor all the armies of the royal George subdue or bind his spirit; but the minister had a gentle daughter, the glance of whose eye smote his shield through and through, cleft his helmet in twain, and left him defenceless. At the feet of Miss Alice Whitney, he had, by this time, surrendered at discretion, renouncing utterly the politics of his earlier manhood. — This by way of parenthesis.

The Whigs of Petersham had received an important

\* Appendix G.

accession to their strength, in 1772, in Colonel Ephraim Doolittle. He came here from Worcester, where he had held various offices of trust, and been prominent and active as a Whig from the beginning of the troubles preceding the Revolution. He was a member of the Committee but just now referred to, as having presented the Reply to the Boston Circular, in December, 1772; and some portion of it he may have written. William Lincoln, Esq., in his "History of Worcester," speaks as if he were the author of the whole. We have shown that he was not the writer of all: he may have been of a part.\* The Committee consisted, besides Messrs. Doolittle and How, of Jonathan Grout, Samuel Dennis, Daniel Miles, Captain Elisha Ward, John Stowell, Theophilus Chandler, and Deacon William Willard, — men of strong sense and excellent understanding. Mr. Doolittle was also the moderator of the town-meeting at which the letter and resolutions were adopted, without a dissenting voice. In 1773, he represented the town in the General Court; the following year, he was a delegate to the Provincial Congress which met at Concord, and was chosen the Captain of the "West Side" Militia Company; and, soon after, Colonel of the regiment of minute-men in the county. He marched with his troops on the 19th of April, 1775, and was stationed at Cambridge. Being disabled, in consequence of a previous injury, he was not in the engagement at Bunker Hill, on the 17th of June; though

\* See Appendix G.

his regiment was engaged, and bore itself gallantly in the battle of that day. Colonel Doolittle "participated in almost every act of a public character in Worcester and Petersham during his residence in either town." \*

During the years 1773 and 1774, the public mind continued in a ferment throughout the colonies. In this town, there was no abatement — not a momentary lull — of the storm. The excitement went on increasing. The Whigs, gaining numbers and confidence, grew more bold, united, and determined; while their opponents, if unchanged in feeling, followed, to some extent, the dictates of prudence, and were less defiant. Some of the leading persons of the place, indeed, though in sympathy with the royal cause, took no active part in the contentions which were going on. Nevertheless, the opposition to the revolutionary measures continued to be strong in influence, if not in numbers, in this quarter. Lampooned in verse,† and denounced in prose, in the newspapers, they repaid their antagonists with contempt, and with such more substantial resistance as they were able to make. Considerable numbers of them entered into a compact essentially the same with that known as

\* Lincoln. For further particulars of Doolittle, see "History of Worcester," pp. 176, 281-2. A singular weapon, which he devised, and caused to be manufactured, for the want of a better, is still preserved among the curiosities of the American Antiquarian Society's cabinet in Worcester. The more polite called it a "Tory-hook." It had a name less polished for ruder ears. Though a formidable instrument to look at, it was not found serviceable. A description of it may be seen in the "History of Worcester." Colonel Doolittle was a hatter, and lived, while in this town, in a "hip-roofed" house, situated a little north of the present residence of Mr. William Clark.

† See Appendix II.



Brigadier Ruggles's covenant; an agreement binding them not to acknowledge the pretended authority of any Congresses, Committees of Correspondence, or other unconstitutional assemblages of men; and pledging them, at the risk of life, to oppose the forcible exercise of all such authority; to stand by each other, and repel force with force, in case of any invasion of their rights of property or of person.

For this act, the town voted a public censure upon them; and ordered three hundred handbills to be printed, posted at the taverns, and circulated abroad, naming them as enemies of freedom and of their country, and forbidding all persons carrying on any commerce with them. The number included in this censure and proclamation was fourteen, embracing some of the most respected and influential persons in the town. The esteem in which they had been previously held by their opponents is evinced even in the very act which denounced and almost outlawed them. After calling them "incorrigible enemies of America," and charging them with being willing "to enslave their brethren and posterity for ever," their judges say, "We are with great reluctance constrained to pronounce those, some of which have heretofore been our agreeable neighbors, traitorous parricides to the cause of freedom in general, and the united provinces of North America in particular."

Against Rev. Mr. Whitney, who had continued, both in his sermons and his prayers, to inculcate submission to the sovereign, the tide of popular indignation rose at length to the highest pitch. The church

was rent by dissensions, and public worship was neglected; till at length, about the close of 1774, the town voted that they “will not bargain with, hire, nor employ the Rev. Mr. Whitney to preach for them any longer.” Mr. Whitney attempted to open negotiations for a reconciliation with the people; but they refused to compromise with him, discontinued his salary, and, finding that that would not cause him to desist from preaching, they chose a Committee of ten, on the 24th of the next May, “to see that the publick worship on Lord’s Day next, and all future worship, be not disturbed by any person or persons going into the desk, but such persons as shall be put in by the Town’s Committee.” In pursuance of this vote, an armed guard\* was stationed at the meeting-house door, on Sunday morning, who, when the minister arrived, and would have entered as usual, refused to allow him to pass. After this, Mr. Whitney preached regularly at his own house on the sabbath, the services being attended by those who were politically in sympathy with him.

While Mr. Whitney was an out-spoken adherent of the royal cause, Rev. Mr. Dennis, pastor of a Baptist church at the south-west part of the town (the Factory Village, as it has been called of late years), was as ardent a Whig,† and drew many of the disaffected from the ministrations of the Congregational church to his own.

\* Peter Gore, a half-breed Indian, was appointed to this duty. He lived in a small house, just above the present residence of Joseph Brown, Esq.

† Appendix G.

During the year 1774, town-meetings were continued along, by short adjournments, pretty much through the year. The military companies were efficiently organized and officered; a company of minutemen, numbering fifty, was enrolled, with Captain Wing Spooner for captain; liberal appropriations were made for increasing the town's stock of ammunition; while earnest endeavors were made to engage every male inhabitant of the town, above twenty-one years of age, to sign the non-consumption covenant, — an agreement not to use any of the articles on which Parliament was seeking to raise a revenue from the colonies. Observing men saw now that force would have to be met by force, and that soon. They were generally ready for the issue. Their minds were made up. Such was the posture of affairs, that it was next to impossible for any to remain neutral. However reluctant, nearly all were compelled to take sides; and nearly all did so.

Things were in this state at the opening of the year 1775.

One of the first instances, in the country, of open collision between the friends of the king and the party of freedom, took place in this town in January, or early in February, of this year.

Two British officers, Captain Brown and Ensign D'Berniere, were sent out from Boston, by General Gage, in the latter part of February, to travel up through the country from Boston to Worcester, with instructions to make observations on the situation of the country, the roads, distances, &c. At great risk,

and with much difficulty, they made their way to Worcester and back again, in disguise. At Worcester, some gentlemen, in the Tory interests, sent them word secretly, "*that the friends of government at Petersham were disarmed by the rebels, and that they threatened to do the same at Worcester in a very little time.*"

The transaction here referred to was substantially as follows: —

One Dr. Ball, of Templeton (that part which has since borne the name of Gerry and Phillipston successively), a warm Whig, being in this town, chanced to fall into an altercation with one or two young men of the opposing party; one of them a son of Mr. David Stone, who lived at the place where Mr. Silas Hildreth now lives.

The disputants separated in no very amiable temper; and when Dr. Ball, after a time, was descending the hill just this side of the old tan-yard, on his way home, those who had had the contention with him waylaid him, and pelted him with stones. One of the missiles took effect, and wounded him seriously (it was afterwards said fatally). It needed but some such spark of provocation to set in a blaze the combustible passions with which the breasts of all were filled. The tidings of the outrage were quickly spread through the neighboring towns. The Templeton Whigs, in particular, were much exasperated, as the sufferer was one of their number. Gathering together a considerable force, they marched across to this town, where they were joined by those who sympathized

with them living here ; while many more were brought in, by their interest in the great struggle pending, from other towns round about. The Tories, meantime, having taken the alarm, and not knowing where the excited feelings of the people might stop, had assembled, with their arms and ammunition, at the house of Mr. Stone, which they barricaded and secured, preparing to defend themselves there, if the case should require it.

Around this house, Captain Holman, of Templeton, formed his company, with such reinforcements as had joined them, and the occupants found themselves in a state of siege.

Messengers were despatched to the towns adjoining, to call together their Committees of Safety for counsel. Meanwhile, the house was guarded strictly, through the remainder of the day and the night succeeding, under a heavy storm. Attempts were made, from time to time, to arrange a capitulation ; but without success. At length, the tradition says, that one of the besiegers, Mr. Samuel Byham, of Templeton, unable longer to restrain his impatience, declared his determination to shoot, if not with, then without, orders. This seemed to bring matters to a crisis. The party within, unwilling to cause the shedding of blood unnecessarily, and probably convinced that they were too few to maintain a successful resistance, listened to the suggestion of Joshua Willard, Esq., one of their number, who avowed himself in favor of a surrender. His counsel met with favor, and was adopted.

The party besieged accordingly threw open the doors of the house; and, as they came forth, were surrounded, and marched to the tavern kept by Mr. Winslow (the house which stood beneath the elm), and there an examination was held by a Council of the various Committees of Safety. The throwing of the stones was confessed to by the offender. This extemporaneous court decided that the royalists should give up their arms, and enter into an engagement not to act against the revolutionary movement for the future. Some of the traditions say, that they went much farther, placing them under the most stringent surveillance; forbidding them to go beyond the limits of the town, or even off their farms, without passports from the Committee of Safety. If these last orders were adopted, they were not long or rigorously enforced.

Here we begin to conceive the fearful nature of civil war. No, we do not conceive it. It was too long ago. The perspective is too far drawn. The images are indistinct. Set the imagination to work to bring the objects close, and the picture may become a reality. Here stand those who have been kind and agreeable neighbors, — yea, nearer than that, — those who were brought up around one hearthstone, — here they stand, gun in hand, liable to hear, at any moment, the command to point their deadly weapons at one another's breasts, and, worst of all, are ready to obey.'

Tradition says, that two anxious wives, one having a husband inside the beleaguered house, the other

having one outside, met in the solitary fields that lay between their respective dwellings, and there held tearful converse in the darkness; they cared kindly for each other, as in neighboring wives was becoming. But their husbands, they knew, were ranged in hostile ranks; and they lamented, as they foreboded evil on that stormy night.\*

The great drama of war soon opened. We have dwelt too long, perhaps, on the feelings and measures which preceded it. We must pass, with but a brief mention, some few events and facts belonging to the line of our story, and connected with the war itself. The history of the Revolutionary War is the familiar chapter in our nation's history. It, least of all, needs to be dwelt on to-day. This town bore its full part in all those burdens. In men and money, in patriotic zeal, and ready and efficient action, it was among the foremost.

It may be worthy of mention, that, on April 12, 1775, just one week before the battle of Lexington, the town being met, voted, "that the present assembly be directed to warn every male inhabitant, from sixteen years old and upwards, to meet at the meeting-house in Petersham, with arms and ammunition, on Monday next, at nine o'clock in the morning." So that there was a general muster of all the able-bodied men and youth in the town, on the day but one before the memorable 19th.

\* Mrs. Sylvanus How and Mrs. Seth Hapgood. The account of this affair at Mr. Stone's has been gathered from town-records, traditions, "Boston Evening Post" for March 13, 1775, MSS. of Mrs. Sarah How, &c.



The tidings from that first battle-field was the war-note that waked the nation. The sagacious saw what the colonies were come to, and that there was now no turning back. From this, as from all the towns, companies, hastily mustered, marched at once toward the theatre of war.

It deserves to be recorded perhaps, as an early symptom of the approaching assumption of independence, that the first town-meeting in this place not warned in the name of his majesty, the English king, was held on the 17th of July, 1775, just about a year before the formal Declaration of Independence. The Selectmen "requested" the Constable "to warn and notify the freeholders, and other inhabitants that have estate of freehold in land of [the value of] forty shillings per annum, or other estate to the value of forty pounds sterling."

In the May following, the voice of the town for independence was heard more distinctly. A meeting was called to be holden on the 27th of that month, "to see if the inhabitants will instruct their Representative to inform the Great and General Court of this Province, that they stand ready, and are fully determined, to support the Continental Congress with their lives and fortunes, on condition they should declare the American Colonies independent of corrupt and arbitrary Great Britain."

At the meeting thus warned, Colonel Doolittle was Chairman of the Committee appointed to report on the subject. And "when the question was put, whether they would stand by and support the Continental

Congress, on condition they should declare the American Colonies independent of corrupt and arbitrary Great Britain, with their lives and fortunes, it passed in the affirmative, with but one dissentient."

On the very day on which Congress were adopting the Declaration of Independence, and proclaiming it in the streets of Philadelphia, the inhabitants of Petersham were in session at their humble, weather-stained meeting-house, that stood over yonder by the gate of the burial-field, there devising and executing such measures as should make that declaration good. On that *July 4th*, 1776 (seventy-eight years ago this day and hour), Hancock, Adams, Jefferson, and the immortal train of patriots with whom they sat in council, decided at Philadelphia, that, "sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish," they gave heart and hand to that vote which severed the American Colonies from the English crown, and created a new empire.

That same day, the staunch patriots of this town, sitting in council on the spot just indicated, with Colonel Doolittle for their Moderator, were helping to provide the men and the means, without which that declaration would have been but waste paper. And it neither belittles the moral grandeur of that scene at Philadelphia, nor foists to an unbecoming conspicuity that which transpired here eight and seventy years ago, to associate them together.

Honored be the men that dared *declare* independence! Honored, *equally* with them, the men who, saving that declaration from becoming a hissing and a

by-word, made it the rock of foundation on which to build the foremost nation of this century!

I have spoken with an honest and a heartfelt enthusiasm of the time when, and of the men by whom, this nation had a beginning. Let those who can, render her unqualified honor for what she now is, and for what she now does. In all that exhibits a material prosperity and power, her career has indeed been one of unexampled, amazing splendor. But there was a promise in her birth which has not been kept. She promised that all of human-kind beneath her ægis should be recognized as having equal natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. She does not abide by her noble declaration. She has not only failed to make it good: she has lent herself to an oppression which flouts it with contempt.

Are these words discordant with your feelings? and do you hold none a true lover of his country who refuses to praise her on her great anniversary? It is because I love my country, that I desire for her a spotless, an honorable, an ever-brightening fame. She will never fulfil her early promise, never be great in the greatest way, till she honors man as man; till she protects with an impartial justice, and cherishes with an equal love, all her children.

The zeal with which the people of this town made their declarations for independence, and gave pledges of aid in securing it, did not end in words: their deeds corresponded with their promises. Through all the dark days of that trying period, they were steadfast in

their support of the cause of freedom. Every encouragement was given to the strong-handed sons of the town to enlist in the armies; liberal bounties were offered them in money; clothing was provided; they were exempted from taxation; and their families were provided for during their absence, so that none should want. But the time came, at length, when they felt that they were repaid for all their sacrifices and privations; the war was ended, and their liberties were secured.

In January, 1778, the town considered at length, and with much debate, the Articles of Confederation which Congress had submitted to the country; and, in their action upon them, partly approved, disapproved in part, and proposed various amendments.

In the same year, they *unanimously* voted their rejection of the State Constitution proposed by the General Court, though they could not agree upon a report embodying the grounds upon which they rejected it. A large Committee, of which Colonel Doolittle was Chairman, submitted an elaborate report to the town on the subject, which was not accepted; and when another large Committee had been appointed, and submitted another report, it was found no more satisfactory than that of their predecessors.\*

The contest with England was hardly well ended, before other dangers threatened, scarcely less formidable. The long war had exhausted the country. The habits which war naturally induces had unfitted many

\* Town Records.

for steady industry, and a ready obedience to law; “the yoke of old authorities had been thrown off, and men were not prompt to bow their necks to a new one, though contrived with wisdom and equity, and imposed by kind and impartial hands.” There was no currency. Individuals were in debt: so were the government. Wild expectations had been indulged in, of the immediate and happy results of emancipation from British rule. These false or exaggerated hopes meeting with disappointment, the real causes of disappointment were not well understood. Disorders arose. The people knew that things were not well: they knew not why. It was not very strange that many should attribute the distressed condition of the country to bad management in the government, or that jealousies should arise towards those who were supposed to possess the power to remedy the existing evils, and yet did not use it. Out of these causes arose what is known commonly as the *Shays Rebellion*; an insurrectionary movement, pretty much without plan in its origin, and which tended, during its progress, to no specific results of importance. The disaffection towards the government was greatest in the interior and western parts of the State. It was felt here; indeed, an uneasy feeling prevailed throughout the Commonwealth, and society was unsettled in its foundations. Nearly all classes saw that there were evils to be redressed; and the greater part of the citizens of this town were assiduous, with petitions and other means, to hasten and guide the action of the Legislature towards measures of relief: but not the

majority, not a very large number, could see how relief was to come by arming themselves, and resisting the government. There is no reason to think that it was because the insurrection had more adherents here than elsewhere, that their forces fled hither, when hotly pressed in other quarters. The nominal head and recognized leader of the insurgents was Daniel Shays, a person without any of those qualities which indicate one born to command, or one fitted to take the conduct of important affairs.

After various gatherings, risings, outbreaks of violence, and instances of armed interference with the courts, Shays found himself, at length, with about two thousand men around him, at Pelham, in Hampshire County, on the 2d of February, 1787; and General Lincoln, with a strong force, set down in his front.

On Saturday morning, Feb. 3d, there was some parleying between the two forces, but no change in the posture of affairs. In the evening of the same day, word was brought to General Lincoln at Hadley, that Shays had secretly decamped, and that he was retreating, with his followers, towards Petersham, where, it was given out, he would be strengthened by large additions to his force from the towns around, and would make a stand. General Lincoln put his troops in instant pursuit. By eight o'clock, they were in motion. The early part of the night was light, and the weather not inclement for the season. But, about two o'clock on the morning of the 4th, they having advanced as far as New Salem, a violent and intensely cold wind sprang up in the north and north-west,

accompanied with snow. For the distance of eight miles, — between New Salem and this place, — there was no means of obtaining shelter. The snow filled their path, and the biting blasts froze their limbs; they could not stop to take refreshment, on account of the danger of freezing to death; there was no alternative but to continue their march. Thirty miles they travelled, from Hadley to Petersham, through snow and cold; executing, says the historian, one of the most indefatigable marches that ever was performed in America. None of the men perished; but a great number were severely frost-bitten: indeed, the greater portion of Lincoln's men were frozen in some part or other, many of them very seriously; and "the sufferings of that dreadful night-march to Petersham were long remembered and spoken of in this part of the country." The pursuing troops reached this town about nine o'clock Sunday morning, where they were so little expected, that they found Shays's men, who had arrived the night before, unconcernedly cooking and eating their breakfasts. So secure were they, in the imagined impossibility of such a pursuit as their enemies had made, that they had even neglected to post proper guards and sentinels, and were taken entirely by surprise. Their kettles were left hanging over the fires; in some instances without their arms, in others but partially clothed even, they fled, singly or in squads, scattering in all directions. The larger number turned towards Athol, and thence in the direction of Northfield. But there was no farther gathering in any considerable strength. The rout was so com-



plete, that they were utterly broken and dispirited. About one hundred and fifty were made prisoners; and the greater part of the body would have been captured, doubtless, but for the blocking snow, which prevented Lincoln's pouring his men rapidly into the town. The captives, — excepting the officers, — on their taking the oath of allegiance, were at once released, and received passports to enable them to return to their respective towns.\*

The ecclesiastical affairs of the town demand here a brief survey. Mr. Whitney, as was before mentioned, was peremptorily excluded from the town's pulpit. He continued, till near the end of his life, to hold religious services at his own house.† He survived his expulsion about four years, and died in 1779, at the age of sixty-five. Mr. Whitney was a native of Littleton, in this State, and a son of Moses Whitney, of that place. He was born in 1714, graduated at Harvard College in 1737, and was ordained minister of the plantation of Nichewaug in December, 1738. He received the lot numbered fourteen, among the lots drawn by the original proprietors, at his settlement, and built a dwelling upon it. His house stood a few rods south and west of that now owned and occupied by George White, Esq.; while his farm embraced a considerable tract of land, extend-

\* Minot's History; Bowen's Biography of Gen. Lincoln, in Sparks's Biographies; newspapers of the period. — See Appendix I.

† Mr. Whitney claimed to be the minister of the town up to the end of his life. Whatever basis the claim might have had ecclesiastically viewed, it was practically a barren one, as the town proceeded as if the ministerial office were vacant.

ing chiefly to the south and west of the house, — the farm subsequently owned and occupied by two of his successors.\* Mr. Whitney appears not to have been one of those who make prominent the peculiarities of a sect; and he seems to have been universally respected for his virtues. The records of the church made during his ministry, though they are very brief and incomplete, indicate that the church was generally in a state of harmony and prosperity. He was very successful as a farmer; and the improvements which he made upon his land, particularly by judicious drainage, were such as to become the subject of frequent public comment, and are still mentioned by the aged as among the traditions they received from their fathers.† He had a numerous family, and educated four sons at Harvard College; one of whom, Rev. Peter Whitney, settled in the ministry at Northborough, was the historian of his native county. Descendants, through several generations, have followed him in the pastoral office, and the line is not yet extinct.‡ Councils were called to consider the relations of Mr. Whitney to the town; but no record of them has been preserved. Tradition says, that one ecclesi-

\* Mr. Reed and Mr. Willson.

† See Appendix F. — One of the productions of Rev. Mr. Whitney's farm was deemed such a curiosity in its time, that numerous visitors came from a distance to see it, and scientific naturalists studied it as a wonder. This was an apple-tree, whose fruit was sour upon one side, and sweet on the other. The tree stood south from Mr. Whitney's dwelling, a little way north from the present residence of Mr. Daniel Stowell. An account of it was written by Rev. Peter Whitney, of Northborough, and sent to President Willard, of Harvard University, who was also President of the American Academy. It may be found in the *Memoirs of the Academy*, vol. i. p. 386.

‡ Appendix K.

astical Council, after declaring the pastor's moral and religious character blameless, and his ministerial fidelity unimpeachable, closed by adding, that nevertheless, inasmuch as he was the "enemy of his country," it was judged expedient that his connection with the town and church be dissolved.\* This was probably in 1777. It is certain, at least, that a mutual Council did meet sometime in that year, and advised the dissolution of the connection between the church and pastor. Up to this time, the church would seem to have adhered, for the most part, to their minister; and had indeed voted formally, though not without opposition, that they were satisfied with him, notwithstanding the course he had taken in various matters of public controversy. After the action of this Council, separating him from his pastorate, most of the members of the church, belonging to the families of his political friends, took letters of dismission, and scattered to the churches of the neighboring towns. The war possessed an absorbing interest; dissensions disturbed the Christian fold; attempts at conciliation were attended with only half success, which was virtual failure, and the institutions of religion were much neglected. Preachers were hired, from time to time, however; and in November, 1777, the church gave an invitation to Mr. Reuben Holcomb† to become their minister, which invitation was declined. Other preachers came and went, during two or three years,

\* Councils had been held previously, which had arrived at results less satisfactory to the town, though it is not known precisely what they were.

† Mr. Holcomb afterwards settled in Sterling, Mass., of which town he was the minister thirty-five years.

till, early in 1780, an invitation was extended to Mr. John Reed. This invitation was also declined, he having another invitation at the same time, which he preferred to accept.\* Very soon after Mr. John Reed had answered the call to settle here in the negative, a like call was extended to his younger brother, Solomon Reed; and it received a favorable answer.

Rev. Solomon Reed, the second minister of this town, was a son of Rev. Solomon Reed, of Framingham, and was born in that town in 1752. He graduated at Yale College in 1775, and was ordained in this place on the 28th of October, 1780; — “a beautiful autumnal day,” says one on whose memory the circumstances of that day yet remain vividly stamped. He was dismissed from his ministry on the 25th of June, 1800, and died on the second day of February, 1808, at the age of fifty-five years.

In the settlement of Mr. Reed, the differences by which the church had been disturbed were amicably adjusted. On the one hand, regrets and disapprobation were expressed at the treatment Mr. Whitney had been subjected to, particularly in exacting from him military duties and taxation; and, on the other side, the friends of Mr. Whitney came forward, and united in friendly relations with those who had been their opponents. Thus the parties which had been so long

\* Mr. Reed was settled in West Bridgewater, where he fulfilled a ministry of half a century. He was a man of eminence in other walks than those of his profession, filling, for six years, the office of Representative in the Congress of the United States. He received the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology from Brown University, in 1803, and was the author of many published occasional Discourses, as well as of a work on Baptism.

alienated, as a chronicler of the event expressed it, "hung the harp on the willow, and united," — a figure of speech, it is presumed, which had, in the writer's mind, much the same sense as that of burying the hatchet, or the other of beating their swords into ploughshares.

I am happy to be able to characterize Mr. Reed in the language of one who remembers him well, and than whom few could have had better opportunities of knowing him. "He was a man," says the venerated ex-pastor of the church in Deerfield, "of superior mental power; of great independence and freedom in his conduct and modes of expression; often hyperbolic in conversation; argumentative, and generally serious and impressive, in his public discourses. Unhappily, he bargained, in the early part of his ministry, for a very large farm, for which he was never able to pay; and the consequence was, that he was too much embarrassed, during the whole of his ministry, to have either time, or quietness of mind, for regular study; and these embarrassments of mind led indirectly to his dismissal.

"Mr. Reed, soon after his ordination, was married to Miss Susanna Willard, daughter of Colonel Josiah Willard, of Winchester, N.H.; and, in outward person, they were, I think, the most gigantic couple I ever saw together. It might be too much to say that their minds were in full proportion to their visible frames; but they were both distinguished for their mental powers, and she was deservedly esteemed and beloved. They had a numerous family of children,

most of whom survived both their parents, and were valuable members of society.”

It may be added, that Mr. Reed, though nominally of the Calvinistic school in theology, did not hold the system of that school in its integrity; and was, like his predecessor, rather inclined to urge the practical than the metaphysical aspects of the Christian religion upon his hearers.

That a kindly relation subsisted between Mr. Reed and his flock, up to the end of his ministry; that the occasion for its termination was sincerely lamented by the people; and that any frailty of will which may have hindered his ministerial usefulness was more compassionated than censured by them, — is attested by the fact, that the proposition to dissolve the connection originated with him; and that no charge whatever against his moral or ministerial character was laid before the Council called to dismiss him.

The first symptoms of a change from congregational to choir singing, in the public worship, began to show themselves about the year 1778. In the summer of '79, a town-meeting was held, at which one of the articles for action was “to see if the town will appropriate the two hind seats on the lower floor, on the men’s side of the alley, to the use of a number of people that will set in said seats and sing; and allow the said singers to build a door at each end of said seats, provided they build said doors on their own cost; and that said singers do not have the privilege of said seats any longer than they will carry on sing-

ing; and that said singers be not disturbed in the peaceful possession of said seats." Certainly not a very presuming proposition this, which came from "a number of people" willing to sing! It does not appear that the seats petitioned for were regarded as particularly eligible. They were at the back side of the house, and the front was generally deemed preferable. But then they would have doors (if the occupants would pay for them), and so far there would be a certain honorable exclusiveness in their position. However all this might be, the town was not disposed to be exacting; and therefore voted, with a gracious liberality, that "whenever a sufficient number of persons shall associate together, to fill the two hind seats on the lower floor, on the men's side, for the melodious purpose of improving their voices, and carrying on such part of publick worship on the sabbath and other divine service as is done by singing, that such persons shall then have full liberty to erect a pew, *at their own expenses*, on the ground where said seats are; and may enjoy the same, during their performance as singers *to the satisfaction of the town.*" This unparalleled generosity on the part of the town, we may conclude, was duly appreciated, and thankfully accepted, by the party interested. The habit of choosing choristers had begun a dozen years earlier than this. The first choristers chosen in this town, three in number, were Joseph Gleason, James Gleason, and James Wheeler.

The town began to agitate the question of building a new meeting-house about the time of Mr. Reed's set-



tlement, in 1780. Two or three years passed in preparatory discussions and canvassings. It was not till near the end of 1783, that any definite action in favor of building was set on foot by the town; and, even then, many steps and countersteps, actions and counteractions, had to be taken, before the design was carried out.\* In 1785, it was determined that it should have a belfry; and a special Committee of five was chosen, in addition to the regular Building Committee, "to manage the matter of building the belfry." Then it was voted, a few months later, to "disannull" altogether this vote to build a belfry; and, two thirds of a year after that, the town disannulled its disannulment, and renewed its vote to build. The house was probably in such a state of forwardness as to be used as early as 1788, though there appear to have been further works upon it during some four or five years succeeding. The edifice was finally made complete in its appointments by a gift of a bell from Eleazer Bradshaw, Esq., of Brookfield. Most of us remember this house, as having stood about in the centre of the Common, nearly in front of the present meeting-house of the First Parish, bearing a little to the north perhaps. Those who remember it, as it was thirty years ago, will remember that it had originally a simple balcony and turret above the belfry; a far less imposing structure than the tall and orna-

\* The late Mr. Wing Spooner told me, that the very large and heavy timbers of which the frame of this house was constructed were drawn to the building-place on a snow-crust, on the 22d of April; and that two months from that day, June 22, the farmers had commenced their haying.

mented spire, which, for the last fifteen or eighteen years that it stood, graced its tower. About seven years ago, this house, having been deprived of its tower and spire, and removed to the east side of the Common, and fitted up for secular uses, was consumed in one of those two desolating fires\* which were the most calamitous blows that the prosperity of this community ever suffered.

There was no *permanent* church or parochial organization in this town, distinct from the town and the first Congregational Church, during the last century. A Baptist Church was in existence, in the south-westerly part of the town, during the time of the Revolutionary War, and at least ten years later: it had for its ministers a Mr. Dennis and a Mr. Sellon, and probably others. There are no records, known to be preserved, of the date of its organization, or of its history. Its house of worship stood on the declivity of the hill descending to the Factory Village, so called, near the spot for some time occupied by the store of the late Mr. John L. Gallond. The meeting-house was subsequently removed to Dana, where it was for some time occupied by the same Baptist Church, and afterwards, it is believed, by the Universalist denomination: it has now ceased to be put to church purposes.

About the year 1783, the singular sect called Shakers made their appearance here. Some persons of substance joined them, and large numbers attended

\* See Appendix M. Casualties, &c.

their meetings, — some from curiosity, some from better motives than that, others from worse. One of their principal gathering-places was the house now occupied by Mr. Daniel Ward, then the residence of Mr. Thomas Hammond. If we may credit the affidavits, and various testimony, of several who were then with them, but who afterwards left them, their proceedings were scarcely better than the orgies of Pandemonium. So excited was the opposition at length aroused against them, in the popular feeling, that a mob collected about their place of resort, and they were violently assaulted. Mother Ann Lee is said to have fought valiantly against the assailants in person. The Shakers, though at one time considerably numerous in the vicinity, obtained no permanent foothold in Petersham, nor had they at any time a Society established here.\* One of your aged citizens† tells me he remembers “when there was more Shaker travel by his house, than all the present travel.”

After the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Reed, which took place June 25, 1800, the town was without a minister a little more than a year, when Mr. Festus Foster was settled as the third minister of the town; in which office he continued till near the end of the year 1817.

\* “Summary View of the Millennial Church,” &c., published by order of its ministers, pp. 20-22, 41, 68, 69; “Portraiture of Shakerism,” by Mary M. Dyer; traditions. The character known as “Hermit Allen,” whose eccentric life is a matter of familiar tradition, sometime belonged to them. He lived by himself, after the dispersion of the Shakers, in a hut in the fields south of the Clapp Spooner Place; and, as he sat among the boughs of his butternut-tree, in the calm summer nights, and gave voice to the wildest chants of a becrazed fanaticism, his vociferations are said to have been heard miles away, through the still air.

† Mr. George Bosworth.

Mr. Foster's ministry covered a period of the most intense political excitement; an excitement in which the people of this town took an earnest part. The questions and measures then in controversy were looked on by many wise and good men as fraught with the most vital consequences to the nation. I will attempt no elaborate explanations of the position of parties at this period, or try to follow the various courses of dispute which convulsed many a parochial community, as they did rock the very foundations of the government, and threaten the peace and welfare of the country. Such as have the disposition can read that chapter of history elsewhere.

In those controversies, the pastor of this church became involved. We will not revive them to-day; nay, we will question the right of any one to be called a true son of the town, who shall ever revive them *as our local controversies*. We will, as we have a mind, recall them in genial and pleasant mood, to hang green ivy over their unsightly rents and deformities; but, such as they were, let these places know them no more for ever.

Rev. Mr. Foster was the son of Standish Foster, and was born in Canterbury, Conn., September 30, 1776. He remained on his father's farm till the age of eighteen. His family, about that time, removing to Rowe, Mass., he was there prepared for College, under the tuition of Rev. Preserved Smith, the minister of that town, and was graduated at Williams College in the year 1800.

After leaving College, he took charge of a Grammar

School in Pittsfield, meanwhile entering on studies preparatory for the ministry, under the direction of Rev. Dr. Lathrop, of West Springfield. He was ordained in this place, Jan. 13, 1802, and was dismissed Nov. 26, 1817.

Mr. Foster removed to Brimfield in the spring of 1818, and engaged there in mercantile pursuits for a time ; afterward settled upon a farm in the same town, on which he spent the remainder of his days. He died on the 30th of April, 1846.

Mr. Foster always took an interest in public affairs, and filled several principal town-offices in Brimfield, besides representing that town two years in the State Legislature. He was a man of vigorous intellect, and knew how to put his thoughts in forcible words. As a reasoner, he was able, acute, and ingenious ; and he wielded a dangerous weapon — as well dangerous to him who carries it, as to him whom it wounds — in a talent for keenest sarcasm. Under the irritating provocations of sharp personal controversy, he did not find it easy to hold such a faculty always in check. But, in the calmer conferences and discussions of the deliberative assembly in which he participated later in life, that gift of stings would appear to have been sparingly used, if used at all. It is the uniform testimony of his contemporaries in the General Court, that, as a debater, he commanded attention on all occasions, and proved himself an influential and useful member of that body. He did not speak often ; but, waiting till he had studied his subject carefully from different aspects, and seen it by the light which other minds

could shed upon it, he seldom failed to sum up the whole matter with a judicial clearness, comprehensiveness, and justness of view, which satisfied and convinced.

Mr. Foster's social qualities were, however, quite as distinguishing traits of his character as any that he possessed. There was a quickness of wit, and a general freshness and raciness in his conversation, which made his talk peculiarly spirited and attractive.

He left various published writings, chiefly Sermons and occasional Addresses.

Of the successors of Rev. Mr. Foster in the pastoral office, I need not speak: they all survive.\*

In 1823, a church was gathered here, and a society formed, of Calvinistic faith; the church consisting originally of sixteen members. The house of worship which they now occupy was built about twenty-five years ago. The ministers of that Society have been

\* Their names, with a few other facts and dates, we give. They are —

*Luther Willson*, born in New Braintree in 1783; a graduate of Williams College in 1807; for some years, preceptor of Leicester Academy; pastor of the First Church in Brooklyn, Conn., from 1813 to 1817; installed at Petersham, June 23, 1819; dismissed, Oct. 18, 1834; and still living in this town.

*George R. Noyes*, a native of Newburyport; graduate of Harvard College, 1818; S.T.D., 1839; settled in Brookfield, 1827; installed in Petersham, October, 1834; elected to a professorship in the Theological School of Harvard University in 1840, which office he continues to hold.

*Nathaniel Gage*, graduated at Harvard College in 1822; previously pastor at Nashua and at Haverhill; installed in Petersham, Oct. 6, 1841; dismissed 1845; since of Lancaster and Westborough.

*Ephraim Nute, jun.*, ordained Oct. 15, 1845; dismissed in early part of 1848; since settled in Scituate and Chicopee.

*Martin W. Willis*, ordained at Walpole, N.H., in autumn of 1843; installed at Petersham, May, 1848; dismissed 1851; since pastor at Bath, Me., and at Nashua, N.H.

*John J. Putnam*, present pastor; previously settled in Bolton, Mass.; installed in Petersham, 1852.

the Rev. Messrs. Wolcott,\* Tracy,† Shumway, Clark, and Foster, the present pastor. The Society has a pleasant and convenient house of worship, and is in a prosperous condition.

In November, 1824, a branch of the Baptist Church in Athol was organized in this town. Their minister, Rev. Thomas Marshall, residing in the westerly part of the town, for some years held regular weekly sabbath services ; after his removal, they had preaching only a part of the time. In May, 1849, this branch church assumed an independent organization, and Rev. John Shephardson became their first and is their present pastor. The meeting-house built, and occupied for a time, by the Universalist Society, was purchased by this (Baptist) Society in 1849, and is now their house of worship.

A Society of Universalists was organized here in 1836 or 1837. They built the meeting-house now owned and occupied by the Baptist Society, about the year 1838. The Society had two clergymen successively settled over it, — Rev. Messrs. Willis and Coolidge. Since the year 1848 or '49, they have been without preaching.

A Methodist Society was formed here, some years ago, having preaching from the year 1843 to '48 or '49. They built a small chapel, now no longer used as a place of worship. Their ministers were Rev. Messrs. Dutton, Clarke, and Goodwin. A second church of

\* Ordained in October, 1830; dismissed in 1833.

† Had been installed in North Adams, in 1832; installed in Petersham, June, 1834.



Calvinistic faith was gathered in town, — the southwest part, on the borders of Dana and Hardwick, about the year 1836 or 1837; and a meeting-house was built.

It is a ground of honest pride, that we can say of our old mother to-day, that her fame has always been fair, and that she gives none of her children occasion to be ashamed at the mention of her name. We can celebrate her birthday, without wishing to conceal or to falsify any part of her history. There is as little in her story, which filial affection could wish unremembered or blotted, as in that of almost any town of the Commonwealth.

From the beginning, this town has sustained more than a respectable reputation for intelligence, for patriotism, and for public virtue. Her schools have not been neglected. The annual appropriations for church and school stand uniformly side by side, from the first, till the time when the support of religion was separated from civil affairs altogether, and became wholly voluntary. At first the Selectmen, afterwards a Committee chosen by the town for the purpose, were entrusted with the expenditure of this money.

Among the earliest schoolmasters here were Joel Mathews, Jedediah Parker, Dr. Eleazar Hartshorn, Nathan Stone, Alexander McDowell, Abraham Wood, Ensign Man. Manasseh Smith, and Dr. Bennet Wait. Several of these names are found upon the Catalogues of Harvard and other Colleges: some of those who

bore them became useful pastors of churches, and members of the other professions.

I suppose it would be rather more difficult to trace the names of the school-*dames* of that period (as they were termed); not solely because they are not recorded on college catalogues, but partly because women's names resist the changes of time less sternly than do those of the other sex.

The earlier schoolhouses were mostly small and inconvenient, as they were nearly everywhere. It will show the progress which has been made in the provision of school accommodations, to state here a fact given me by Rev. Dr. Willard, viz., that the Bell Schoolhouse (as it has always been called), when erected in 1794, surpassed almost every structure of its kind in the interior of the country. John Chandler, Esq., at whose instance chiefly it was erected, gave the district a bell, whose vibrations were so powerful as to be heard through a compass of several miles.

Quite a respectable number from the natives of the town have been educated at college; and they have been not only respectable in their aggregate number, but generally of respectable, or more than respectable, scholarship, character, and influence.\*

This town occupied, *relatively*, a more prominent position in the last century than it has held of late years. In 1764, when the population of Worcester was 1,450, the population of Petersham was half as

\* Appendix L.

large as that, — 700; there were then in Petersham, 100 houses, and 115 families.

In 1776, the town had a white population of 1,235; an increase, in twelve years, of about 77 per cent. In 1790, the population was 1,560; and, in 1800, 1,794. Thus we see, that, at the beginning of the present century, the population was nearly 1,800; about as large, I suppose, as it has ever been. In the assessment of a State tax, levied in 1796, there were only four towns in Worcester County that paid a higher tax than Petersham.\* I find that one who has preceded me in sketching the town's history,† in remarking that the town claimed, in 1787, to have enough ratable polls to entitle them to two Representatives in the General Court, expresses doubts whether they were not mistaken in their estimate. Not to lay stress on the fact, that the right of the two Representatives to their seats was not contested in the General Court, a fact which he argues is not conclusive, I think the town must have grown to a greater size than he supposed. The number of ratable polls required by the Constitution to allow two Representatives was 375. In 1781, Petersham had 313 ratable polls, and, in 1784, 345 or 349 (there is some obscurity in the record). Taking the lower number only, the increase would be more than ten per cent in three years; and ten per cent increase, from 1784 to '87, would give four or five more than the requisite 375.

\* Worcester, Sutton, Brookfield, and Barre. Book of Statistics, by Rev. J. B. Felt.

† Jared Weed, Esq.

The prominent position which this town held in the latter part of the last century is farther attested by the fact, that strenuous and persevering efforts were made, during the years along from 1785 to '98, to form a new county, with this for the shire-town. There was an agreement among the towns petitioning, as to where the seat of the county should be fixed, if their petition should succeed; which would probably not have been the case, had this been a second-rate town among them. The petitions of 1785 were from Hardwick, Barre, Hubbardston, Petersham, Templeton, Winchendon, Athol, Royalston, Warwick, Wendell, New Salem, Shutesbury, Orange, and Greenwich. The latter six towns were not then, as now, of Franklin County; but of the old, undivided Hampshire. In subsequent petitions, citizens of Oakham, Gardner, and Gerry, joined. This town held out no other inducement for the establishment of the county-seat here, than to offer its old meeting-house for a court-house, "provided Petersham be made a shire-town within two years." \*

Before the tendency to a centralization of wealth, population, and talent in a few localities, had begun to show itself, the town held, in all respects, not only a high rank among the country towns, but it was one of the highest in social refinement and general intelligence in this section. I had hoped to be able to sketch some of the characters of leading influence in the town in times past. I have time to name

\* Town Records.

but a few of them, and those few scarcely more than name. Of the professional men, there were, for lawyers, — JOSHUA ATHERTON. He staid here only about three years, however, from 1763 to '68. He became distinguished after he left here, and filled honorable and important offices in New Hampshire. He was the ancestor of those of the name who have more recently attained to eminence in the same State and in the nation. — NATHANIEL CHANDLER (uncle of the late Nathaniel Chandler) established himself here, in the same profession, about 1772, and continued here till the breaking-out of the Revolution. In the war, he joined the English, and commanded a corps of volunteers in the British service in New York. He went to England afterward, returned in 1784, engaged in trade and in agricultural pursuits in this town, but finally removed to Worcester (from which place he had come to Petersham), and died there. His talents were of a high order. In early life, he had been a pupil of John Adams. "His personal appearance was pleasing; and his address, and great flow of spirits, with a fertile imagination, rendered him a great favorite in society." \* He lived, I think, in the house where the late Hutchins Hapgood lived and died. — Next was DANIEL BIGELOW. He was a native of Worcester, educated at Harvard University. For a time, he taught in Worcester, and then studied law there. He opened an office in this place in 1780, and remained here till his death, in 1806. He represented

\* Willard's Address before the Bar of the County. Diary of President John Adams.

this town in the General Court from 1791 to 1794; was Senator for the county for the four years succeeding, and a member of the Executive Council in 1801; he also filled the office of County Attorney. "He shared largely," says Willard,\* "in the esteem of his constituents, for his sound sense and for his integrity. Though not a facile speaker, he was well grounded in his profession, and was respected as a prudent and safe counsellor. And, more than all, he had that moral health, that fair and honorable mind, that shed a bright lustre upon the character." — LEWIS BIGELOW was a son of Daniel Bigelow, succeeded him in his profession here, and inherited his abilities. He was a native of this town, and a graduate of Williams College in 1803. He represented this district in the Seventeenth Congress of the United States. In his profession, he was well read, able, and successful. He left this town, for the Western country, in the year 1831; settled in Peoria, Ill., where he died, I think, about 1838.

A lawyer, named JOHN TAYLOR, was in practice here forty-five years ago. He came from Hampshire County, and had been in the office of Governor Strong, while he (Gov. Strong) was in Congress.†

Of the living, and of those well remembered even by the young, I do not speak.

Of the earliest physicians, I can say little. There were two teachers here, between 1762 and 1768, to whose names the title of Dr. was usually prefixed. —

\* Address before the Bar of Worcester County.

† Mrs. Sarah How's MS.

ELEAZER HARTSHORN and BENNET WAIT, though I know not whether they were ever in the practice of medicine: the former went to Athol, but I am unable to say how long he remained there, or whether he was professionally engaged in that place. — Dr. EPHRAIM WHITNEY, probably a nephew of Rev. Aaron Whitney, and a native of Lunenburgh or Fitchburgh,\* was a physician here many years; died in 1801, at the age of seventy-two years. He was a Tory, and an eccentric man; wore his beard the latter part of his life, and left directions that he should be buried with it unshaven. — Dr. RICHARD P. BRIDGE, a native of Framingham, and son of the minister of that town, superseded Dr. Whitney in practice; was regarded as a very skilful physician, and had almost the entire practice of the town till the time of his death. He died in 1797, at the age of forty. Dr. Bridge lived first at the “tan-yard house,” so called, and afterwards bought and occupied the place now owned by Jonas How, Esq. — A physician, by the name of BECKWITH, practised medicine in the south-west part of the town, I am told, between the years 1790 and 1800. — Dr. JOHN FLINT, a son of Dr. Edward Flint, of Shrewsbury, and a native of that town, came to Petersham about 1801, and took a high rank in his profession. He died, greatly lamented, in February, 1810, at the early age of thirty-two, falling a victim to the frightful “spotted fever” which appeared here in that year. That appalling disease was generally a fatal sickness

\* Fitchburgh was set off from Lunenburgh.



of but a few hours' duration: the best physicians confessed themselves at fault. Dr. Flint attended most of the cases, writing at the same time to skilful and experienced men of his profession abroad, desiring their attendance. Consternation and gloom pervaded the town; a fast-day was appointed and observed; and every thing betokened the presence of some dire calamity. Dr. Flint, when seized, was at some distance from his home, and immediately administered to himself the remedy then most relied on, but without the desired effect: he reached home with difficulty, and died in a few hours.—Dr. JOSEPH HENSHAW FLINT, son of Dr. Austin Flint, of Leicester, and nephew of the foregoing, succeeded him in his profession here. He had previously practised for a few years in Shrewsbury. He removed to Petersham about 1811, whence he removed, after a year or two, to Northampton, and thence to Springfield. He died in Leicester, in 1846.\*

Besides those filling professional offices, were other persons prominent for their intelligence and for influence, both within and without the town. JONATHAN GROUT, who was from Lunenburgh, was for seven years the Representative of the town in the General Court; one year Representative of the County in the Senate; and a member of the first Congress under the Constitution. He was also chosen a delegate to the Provincial Congress, held at Cambridge, in February, 1775. He was active on Committees and in

\* Ward's History of Shrewsbury.

other ways; was honored with various trusts during the war of the Revolution; and was a man of leading influence on the Whig side.

Towards the east side of the town, at the place now occupied by Mr. Brewer, lived and died Capt. WILLIAM BARRON; a civil magistrate, a gentleman of refined manners, and a brave soldier. He had served in the English army with credit, before the Revolution, and held himself bound not to assume arms against the king, by the oath of allegiance which his commission had required him to take. He sided with the royal party in opinion and feeling, during that struggle, though he did not engage actively in the contest. He died in April, 1784, greatly lamented.\* — JOHN CHANDLER (the father of the late brothers, John and Nathaniel Chandler) was born in Worcester; was a brother of Nathaniel, the lawyer; also a pupil, in early life, of John Adams; lived, and carried on trade extensively, at the place afterward occupied by his son Nathaniel, and, more recently, by Mr. Rufus Bryant. In 1768, he represented the town in the Legislature; and, at various times, held other offices of importance. In the social life of the town, his house and family held a conspicuous place. — The two sons of Mr. Chandler, just named, JOHN and NATHANIEL, were known here, in the earlier part of their active lives, as men of extensive business, of large information, of great enterprise, and of prominent influence in the affairs of the town. John, the elder,

\* His death is noticed, and his character briefly eulogized, in the "Massachusetts Spy" of May 6, 1784.

was graduated at Harvard University in 1787; and, in the full vigor of his powers, was active, capable, public-spirited, and successful. He died in 1846, aged about eighty. Nathaniel was graduated at Harvard College in 1792. He commenced the study of law with the Hon. Daniel Bigelow; but relinquished that study, and engaged in trade. His general information, united with a style of expression often picturesquely figurative, made his conversation at once instructive and entertaining. He removed to Lancaster, I think about twenty-five or thirty years ago, and died, within a few years, at an advanced age.

The first Representative sent by this town to the General Court was Joshua Willard, a son of Colonel Samuel Willard, of Lancaster, and brother of Colonel Samuel Willard, jun. (one of the first proprietors of this town), whose farm he took, after his death, in 1757. He represented the town in the years 1761 and 1763, the only years in which it was represented for the first fourteen years after its incorporation.\*

Of Ephraim Doolittle, I have already spoken. He came here from Worcester, before the Revolutionary War, and, not long after its close, removed to Shoreham, Vt., where he died.

There are many more of whom I should like to make particular mention; and of whom I would speak, if I

\* After 1767, the town continued to be, for the most part, regularly represented in the General Court. In 1768, the usual vote, not to send, was passed; but the Selectmen were petitioned to call a new meeting subsequently, and John Chandler was chosen. Theophilus Chandler was chosen in 1769; Ruggles Spooner in 1770, and again in 1790. There is no record of any election in 1771. Ephraim Doolittle represented the town in 1772, '73, and '74; Jonathan Grout, in 1775 and '77; Capt. Elisha Ward, in 1776 and '77.

did not suppose there might be a limit to your patience, and that by this time I must have found it. Of Ensign Man, I would say more. I would speak of Deacons Isaac Ward, David Sanderson, and William Willard; of Captain Park Holland; of Nathl. Macarty, who, though he was neither born nor died here, lived in town long enough to feel a deep interest in the prosperity and welfare of the place, which showed itself in generous gifts to the town for the support of public worship. I would speak of some of the earliest of the Spooners, Daniel, Wing, and Ruggles; of the Hapgoods, Hows, Neguses, Goddards, Wilders. Ah, well! I see not where would end the list of them of whom I would speak, were there time. I stop abruptly; not because my subject is exhausted, but because I am sure your patience must be.

Our annals are humble, as you see: not very many noted events have transpired here. The farmers and mechanics of the town have pursued their vocations industriously, living generally amid peace and plenty. Agriculture has been the main employment of the people, than which none is more favorable to health, content, wholesome morals, and a quiet life. If the inhabitants of this town have sometimes been pretty warm in their political disputes, they have been uniformly and steadfastly patriotic, and ever ready to do and to sacrifice their part for the common weal.

Some not unimportant manufactures have been carried on here. Who shall tell — somebody, I hope, will, before this day's sunset — how largely the labors

of the women of this town have contributed, not merely to the protection of manly toil beneath the summer's sun, east, west, north, and south, but how much they have contributed to the wealth and prosperity of this town ; not only putting hats on many a head abroad, but helping to put coats on many a back, and meat in many mouths, at home ? \*

Buttons and shoes in the later days, pearlsh in the former, have been produced here to a considerable extent.

In the time of the war, when gunpowder was a prime want, the town undertook the production of saltpetre and sulphur, not, I believe, with great success, or to much profit. It was not the hope of profit, however, but patriotism, that prompted the attempt.

The manufacture of salt was also carried on by the town for a while, down at Rochester Shore, when an interrupted commerce prevented the supply of that important article from abroad. It proved burdensome, and not very satisfactory in its results, and was ere long abandoned.

We who are gathered here to-day are doubtless a somewhat different type of men and women from the fathers and mothers who began a plantation here in 1733, and a town in 1754. Probably they who meet here to celebrate a second centennial, in 1954, will as much differ from us. May the history which we find well begun be found of them well continued ! May

\* The manufacture of palm-leaf hats has been extensively carried on in this place for many years. The hats are braided by women and children, whose labor has been, in many families, sufficient to maintain, wholly or in great part, the entire household.

the venerable old town, — I think we may now begin to call her venerable, — may she receive honor both from those who go out from her, and from those who stay at home! and may the day *never*, NEVER come, when one shall be ashamed to say that he had his birthplace within her borders!\*

\* Appendix M.

APPENDIX.





# A P P E N D I X.

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A. — PAGE 9.

## PETITION AND GRANT.

“To His Excellency Jonathan Belcher Esq<sup>r</sup> Captain General & Governour in Chief In & Over His Majestis Province of the Massachusetts Bay the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Council & Representatives In Gen<sup>l</sup> Court assembled at Boston April the 5th 1733

“The memorial of John Bennet & Jeremiah Perley for themselves and the Reste of the persons whose Names are hereunto subscribed :

“Humbley Showeth That whereas your memorialists In the month of January 1731 & at the Beginning of this present session viz ; In May laste Severally prefered their Petishons or memorials to your Excel<sup>ty</sup> & Honours seting forth the Hardship & Difficult marches they vnderwent as volunteers under the Comand of the Late Cap<sup>o</sup> Lovell & Cap<sup>o</sup> White after the Inden Enemy and Into their Countrey & praying In consideration thereof to be favoured with the Grant of a township & as by the several Petishons aforsaid will fully aper unto which the memorialistes would Refer, & Inasmuch as Nothing has Ben acted or Done thareon for the Benifit of the memorialists by your Excellency & Honours They are therefore Nesesitated once more to apley to your Exellency & Honours Humbley praing that you will be pleased to take the Case of the memorialists into your wise & Gracious Consideration that so their former petitions may be Received & Reconsidered & that they may meet with Such Due Encouragement for their Paste Sarvis by the favour of your Excellency & Honours as to have the Grant

of a township of six miles square in the unappropriated Lands of Province they being a comptent Number for such a settlement ;— & the place which they are Desirous to settle on if it be your Excellency & Honours Plesure is situated In the Western parte of this Province beginning six miles from Rutland northweste Corner to the westward thereof and Running to the westward six miles & bounding southerly on Rutland Township which will leave and well accomodate the setlers for a town between this & the Narowganset township your memorialists being varry willing & desirous to be subject to such Conditions Rules & Restrictions in their settlement as your Excellency and Honours shall see meet & as in Duty bound shall ever pray &c

“ Benoni Boyenten, Moses Hazzen, William Hutchins, Caleb Dolton, John Hazzen, Jacob Perley, Samuel Stickney, Phinias Foster, Steven Merril, Benjamin Barker, Robart Ford, Abner Brown, Samuel Hiltton, John White, Benjamin Walkker, Joseph Reed, John Baker, John Goss, Joseph Wrighte, Richard Hall, Oliver Pollard, Samuel Fletcher, John Dunton, William Spalding, John Varnum, John Leveston Junr., Joseph Whelock, Robarte Phelps, Jonathan Houghton, Jacob Emes, Henry Willard, John Bennet, Jeremiah Perley, & in behalf of Joshua Hutchins, Jathro Eames, Jonas Houghton, Ezra Sawyer, James Houghton, Samuel Sawyer, Aron Rice, Jonathan \* Adams, Moses Chandler, Samuel Rugg, Jonathan Atherton, Ephraim Houghton, Jonathan Wilson, Steven Houghton, Heirs of Samuel Mossman, Benjamin Gates, Fairbanks Moores, Joseph Whitecomb, Samuel Larned, Danil Houghton, Peter Atherton, John Wilder, Edward Houghton, Henry Houghton, David Wheteomb, Timothy Hale, Jonathan Parling, Samuel Brown, John Sawyer, Joseph Willson, Samuel Willard, Ephraim Farnsworth, Edward Hartwell, Ruben Farnsworth.”

When the General Court acted on the above memorial, they required the following persons to be admitted among the proprietors, viz., Thomas Farmer, Henry Coulburn, Jonathan Farrer, Samuel Shaddock, Samuel Trull [sometimes written in other papers, Terril], Jacob Corey, Joshua Webster, Abiel Foster, Samuel Tarbol; and the following, among the petitioners to be excluded from becoming gran-

\* Incorrectly printed Jonas, on page 15 of the Address.

tees, viz., Edward Hartwell, Joseph Wright, Joseph Wheelock, Robert Phelps, and Jonathan Houghton, jun. After the nine were added and five excluded, the whole number was seventy-one.

On page 15 of the Address (note), the number of proprietors is said to be seventy-two. This is a mistake: there were seventy-two after the minister had settled upon his division; but he did not come till 1738.

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## B. — PAGE 12.

### KILLING OF THE TEN INDIANS.

More detailed accounts of this expedition may be found in Fox's History of Dunstable; New England Historical and Genealogical Register, vol. v.; Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. ii.; Penhallow's Indian Wars, in New Hampshire Historical Collection, vol. i.; and New England Courant of March 1, 1725.\* These accounts, though differing in minuteness and fulness, present no very material disagreements, except in the number of men belonging to Lovell's party. Penhallow says there were sixty men; the New England Courant rates them at fifty; Belknap (whose authority is Hugh Adams's MS.) says forty; Fox (citing "Report of Committees on the Subject in Massachusetts Records," as his authority) makes the number fifty-eight; while a paper is on file in the office of the Secretary of State, headed "dec<sup>a</sup> [declaration] of Persons w<sup>n</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 10 Indians were killed," and containing sixty-two names without that of Lovell. Two of these names, however, appear to be duplicates. I give this roll here, *Italicizing* the names of those who became proprietors in the plantation of Nichewaug.

\* It will be noticed by the careful reader, that the date, December, 1734, on page 11 of the Address, is a misprint for 1724.

Those printed in small capitals were among the petitioners, but were expressly excluded from *proprietorship* by the Legislature:—

*Jn<sup>o</sup> White, Sam: Tarbol, Jer: Hunt, Eben: Wright, Jos: Read, Sam. Moor, Phin. Foster, Fr<sup>a</sup> Doyen, S. Hilton, Jn<sup>o</sup> Pollard, Ben. Walker, JOS. WRIGHT, Jn<sup>o</sup> Varnum, Rob<sup>t</sup> Ford, Ben. Parker, Sam. Shattock, Jacob Ames, Jn<sup>o</sup> Stephens, JOS. WHEELOCK, Sam. Sawyer, Ezr<sup>a</sup> Sawyer, Jon<sup>a</sup> Houghton, James Houghton, Hen<sup>y</sup> Willard, Jacob Gates, Joseph Whitcomb, Sam<sup>l</sup> Learned, ROB<sup>T</sup> PHELPS, Moses Graves, Moses Hazzen, John Livingston, Jerem. Pearly, W<sup>m</sup> Hutchins, Jacob Cory, Oliver Pollard, Sam<sup>l</sup> Trull, W<sup>m</sup> Spalden, Sam<sup>ul</sup> Fletcher, Jn<sup>o</sup> Duncon, Jethro Ames, John Sawyer, Moses Chandler, Josep[h] Willson, Jon<sup>a</sup> Parks, Joshua Webster, Sam<sup>l</sup> Johnson, Steph. Murrill, Jacob Pearly, John Hazzen, Eb: [Abner?] Brown, Jon<sup>a</sup> Ferren [Farrer in the other list], Sam. Stickney, Joshua Hutchins, Benony Boynton, Eph. Farnsworth, Tho<sup>s</sup> Farmer, Reuben Farnsworth, Rich. Hall, Neh. Robinson, Caleb Dolton.*

For farther notices of Captain Lovell (whose name is frequently written Lovewell), see Worcester Magazine, vol. i., p. 20; Fox's History of Dunstable; New England Historical and Genealogical Register for January, 1853.

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C.—PAGE 15.

PROPRIETORS AND EARLY SETTLERS.

I subjoin here a few such additional particulars as I have been able to collect concerning the origin of some of those who began the town, proprietors, and early comers. Many of the facts here given, as well as those of the preceding pages upon the same topic, are derived from the Registry of Deeds in Worcester:—

Jonas Houghton, of Lancaster, was a surveyor, and was employed by the proprietors to make the first improvements in their roads.

Captain Fairbank Moor was of Lancaster, in 1731. In March, 1737, he removed with his family to Narragansett, No. 2 [Westminster], of which town, says Whitney, "he was the first planter."

Joseph Whitcomb, of Lancaster, conveyed land in Nichewaug to Jonathan Prescott, of Littleton, in 1740. A "famous" farm in Lancaster, on the road to Lunenburgh, "lately owned by Capt. Joseph Whitcomb," is advertised in the Massachusetts Spy of June 24, 1784.

Daniel and Jonathan Houghton lived in that part of Lancaster which became Bolton in 1738.

Benoni Boyenton had been of Townsend before he was of Lunenburgh.

Jethro Eames, who was of Lancaster, in 1718, is recorded in the Registry of Deeds at Worcester, as being of "Kingstown, county of Hampshire" in 1734.

Samuel Rugg, a blacksmith, was of Hadley, in 1734.

Samuel Larned was of Milford, Conn., in 1735.

Jonathan Farrin was of "Almsbury" [Amesbury?], Essex County, in 1735.

William Hutchins was of Exeter, in 1736.

Jonathan Atherton was of Hadley, in 1737.

John Hezin [Hazen] was of Rowley, in 1738-9.

The Mossmans were of Sudbury.

Abner Brown was a tanner, of North Yarmouth, in Maine, in 1735.

Joseph Read was of Woburn.

Richard Hall, a blacksmith, of "Tewsbury" [Tewksbury?], in 1738.

Oliver Pollard was of Bedford, in 1733.

John Duncan [or Dunton, or Dunkin, as it was variously written] was from Chelmsford or Worcester; Daniel Duncan, his son, came to Nichewaug from Worcester.

In compliance with a requisition from the General Court, made near the end of 1750, the proprietors' clerk returned a list of the actual settlers then in the town, as far as he was able to do so within the time granted him, naming also the proprietor on whose "right," or lot, each was settled.

The report closes thus:—

“There are divers others settled on Divisions belonging to the same Rights that are here settled; but the time being so short since I saw the act in the Prints that I am not able at present to give an exact account what particular Rights they are all settled on & convey the same to the General Assembly by the time appointed

“but the number of famalies in Said Township are sixty one.”

The number of settlers mentioned by name in the clerk's list is forty-seven. The names of so many of these as I have been able to couple with any information respecting them are here given, with such brief notices of them as I have been able to collect. A few other early settlers are also mentioned. Several of them will be recognized as still familiar names in the town:—

John Stowell, jun., was from Worcester. He lived first at the house where the widow Lydia Stowell last lived, then on the hill back of the Benjamin Chandler Place; next at the Doane Place, which he exchanged for the Rufus Stowell Place, his last residence. He was killed by the fall of a tree, in April, 1791, at the age of sixty-five. His wife Sarah, who was from Sudbury, lived till 1830, and died at the age of ninety-nine years and nine months.

Jacob Wheeler, the grandfather of Mr. David Wheeler, who now lives at the age of eighty-seven, was from Southborough, and settled at the Peter Chamberlain Place.

Samuel Willson, who is supposed to have been a brother of Joseph, and to have come from Lancaster, lived at the Peckham Place, opposite the house now occupied by Dr. William Parkhurst. He was here in 1738.

Nathaniel Sanderson, the grandfather of the late John and Curtis Sanderson, was from Framingham.

David Sanderson came from Weston, was chosen deacon of the church in July, 1750; for twenty years was clerk of the town, eleven years selectman, besides holding many other offices of trust and honor from the town.

Nathan Goddard was probably from Shrewsbury, from which place Robert (younger brother of Nathan?) came and settled



about 1752. Robert Goddard settled near the place where his son, Stephen Goddard, now lives at an advanced age. Mr. Stephen Goddard says, that, when his father built his house, there was no house between that and what is now called the Factory Village.

Isaac Ward, son of Obadiah Ward, of Worcester, was chosen first deacon of the church in Nichewaug, December 22, 1738. He removed from Petersham to Amherst, and thence to Leverett about 1775, where he died, October, 1777, "on the day the news reached there of the surrender of Burgoyne and his army. So electrified were the people by the welcome intelligence, all ran to communicate it, even to the dying. While in that situation, a neighbor came in, and told him that BURGoyNE HAD SURRENDERED! He roused a little, and asked, '*Can I depend upon it?*' 'Yes,' was the reply. He answered, '*Very well!*' which were his last words." — *Ward Family*, by Andrew Henshaw Ward.

Elisha Ward, the father of the late Henry Ward, Esq., removed to Petersham from Shrewsbury, in 1764. His father, Col. Nahum Ward, of Shrewsbury, was a cousin of Deacon Isaac, named above. Elisha was a younger brother of the distinguished Major-General Artemas Ward of the revolutionary army.

Christopher Page was from Hardwick, — came about 1749.

David Page, from Lunenburg, and came about the same time.

Sylvanus How, the father of Washington How, was the son of Jonathan How, of Marlborough. Preceding pages give evidence that he felt an active interest, and took a prominent part, in the revolutionary contest. He was born in 1727, and died in 1802.

Zedekiah Stone was a son of Samuel Stone, of Framingham. He was here as early as 1738. David Stone was his brother, and came in 1748 to Nichewaug, taking the farm which a younger brother, named Samuel, had occupied.

Daniel Miles was from Pomfret, Conn.

George Robbins, from Harvard, and was here in 1738, when the church was gathered.

William Negus came from Worcester. He was father of a numerous family of children; three of whom were born in Worcester and Framingham, before his removal to Nichewaug.

James Clements lived at the place afterwards owned and occupied by John Chandler, Esq. He must have been among the first settlers of the town; for he was one of the number gathered into the church in 1738. The farm on which he lived is now in the possession of a descendant.

Thomas Rogers was from Billerica ; came in 1740.

Mr. Daniel Spooner, father of Wing, and grandfather of the late Wing Spooner, was probably from Dartmouth, and came about 1749 ; he was chosen deacon of the church in 1750 ; lived at the place known more recently as the Clapp Spooner Place.

Thomas Adams was one of the original members of the church, and was chosen one of its first two deacons ; removed to Charlestown, N.H., 1754.

Josiah Lyon was from Dedham ; came about 1740 ; is supposed to have gone from here to Shrewsbury, and thence to Grafton.

Jonas Farnsworth was from Groton ; was here in 1738 ; kept a public house on the spot near which the large elm now stands, and where the public house, long kept by Mr. Silas Foster, was burned in the great fire of 1847. He went from here in 1757 to Groton. Kenelm Winslow was his successor as innkeeper, and remained at the same stand about twenty years.

Reuben Farnsworth, from Harvard, was here in 1738.

Samuel Chamberlain was here from Billerica about 1750.

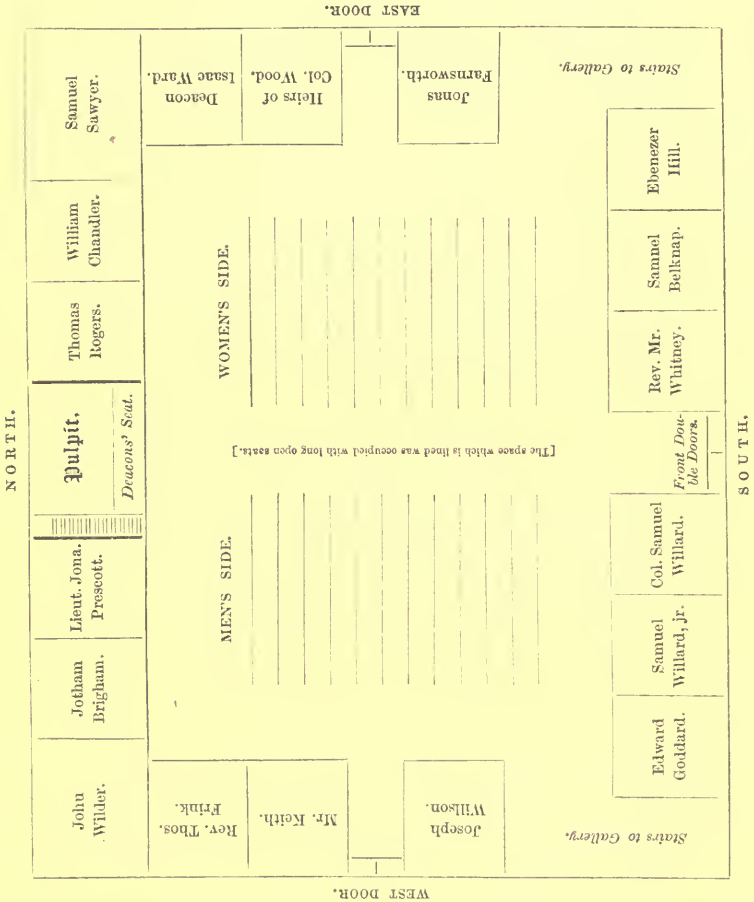
Earl Flagg came to Nichewaug about 1736, from Framingham.

Rev. Thomas Frink, successively pastor of churches in Rutland, Plymouth, and Barre, was quite an extensive proprietor of Nichewaug lands for some time. There is no positive evidence that he ever lived here himself, so far as is known ; though he may have done so in the interval between the time of his dismissal from the Rutland Church in 1740, and his settlement in Plymouth in 1744, or in that between 1748, when he left Plymouth, and 1753, when he was installed in Barre. A committee appointed to "seat the meeting-house" in Nichewaug, in 1744, assigned a pew to him, which gives some reason to think that he may have been at that time a resident in the place.

In beginning these notices of persons and families early settled here, my purpose was to extend them much farther ; but my remoteness from many principal sources of information has made them so meagre, that it may be doubted, indeed, whether they were not as well omitted altogether. I have had such a doubt myself. As a hint, however, that here is a line of inquiry which ought to be pursued, I conclude to let them stand.

D. — PAGE 29.

FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.



A diagram is here given, which may be supposed to represent the division of the ground-floor of the meeting-house and its occupation in 1744 or '5; the data being given for it by the report of a committee appointed to seat the meeting-

house in 1744. (See Proprietors' Records.) The committee consisted of Daniel Miles, Isaac Ward, Samuel Willard, jun., and Samuel Stone. They were elected "to divide the pew-ground, and also to seat the meeting-house." It was voted, that their instructions "be these, to wit: that each man shall be seated according to what land they now possess." At an adjourned meeting, instructions were added "that the committee chosen for seating the meeting-house do have some regard to age."

In 1750, "the two hind seats on each side the middle alley" were granted to Lieut. Zedekiah Stone, Earl Flagg, James Clemence, and David Stone, "in order for building pews." — *Prop. Rec.*

At a reseating of the meeting-house in 1756, it was voted, "that Capt. Nathaniel Wilder, David Lawson, Jonathan Marble, and Ephraim Rice, be seated in the foreseat below:" the rest was left to the discretion of the committee. At different times subsequently, parties, consisting of several persons, were permitted to unite to build pews in different parts of the gallery, on condition of their keeping the windows against them in repair.

In June, 1762, at a town-meeting, it was "voted to give the number of young women the hind seat on the women's side gallery, in order to build a pew on their own cost; viz., Sarah Rice, Eunice Wilder, Parsis Bouker, Esther Holland, Mehitable Page, Hannah Walker, Ruth Page, Sarah Curtis, Molly Curtis, Susannah Miles, Jershua [Jerusha?] Hudson, Sarah Sanderson, Martha Negus, Haddasa Houghton, Ann Wheeler."

This house was sometimes so much crowded that boys sat on the gallery-stairs.

## E. — PAGE 31.

## ORIGIN OF THE TOWN'S NAME.—PETERSHAM IN ENGLAND.

This is the only Petersham in America. The name was left blank during the progress of the act of incorporation through the Legislature, and no name was inserted till it came up for final action. It does not appear at whose suggestion the name was inserted in the act. Quabin received the name of Greenwich at the same time; and it seems very much as if, in casting about uncertainly for names for the new towns, the Governor and his Council had picked up pretty much at hap-hazard the first two names suggested from a list of the old country-places around London. Petersham, in England, is a parish containing a population of six or seven hundred, situated about seven miles south-west by west from London, in the county of Surry. It gives the title of Viscount to the family of Stanhope, Earls of Harrington. "In the vicinity of this place are many elegant villas, particularly Petersham Lodge, formerly the residence of the Duke of Clarence. The pleasure-grounds are spacious and beautiful, extending to Richmond Park, a portion of which is in this parish, including the mount where, according to tradition, Henry VIII. stood to see the signal for Anne Boleyn's execution." It "contains also Ham House, where the 'cabal' met, and the great Duke of Argyle was born." Ham House was once a royal residence,—the abode of James I., Charles I., and Charles II. In the Domesday Book, this place is styled "Patricisham; that is, the Ham or dwelling of St. Peter." — *Gazetteers and Topographical Dictionaries.*

## F.—PAGE 36.

## NEWSPAPER ATTACK ON REV. MR. WHITNEY.

I find among manuscripts left by Mrs. Sarah How, what appears to be a copy of a communication addressed “To the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Aaron Whitney in Petersham,” signed “Philethetes,” and dated “Scituate, Nov. 10th, 1769.” Its tone is quite fierce. Alluding to the treatment which “Master Man” received from Mr. Whitney, the writer asks, “Would you be willing to have one of your sons treated in such a scurrilous manner as your great Chandler, Esq. treated Mr. Man, viz., after he had tryed Mr. Man, and proved him to be a good schoolmaster—then to hoist him away before some Irish Justice to be treated as a Fellow?”

Then comes the charge of ministerial unfaithfulness:—“Do you think you have been a faithful watchman to keep out Heresy from among your people, as he was a schoolmaster? if so, why is there so much slaughter among your flock? how many sects have you under your charge who have never been warned or instructed; are there not Enthusiasts, Free thinkers or Deists, Arminians, Arians, Antinomians, Ana-Baptists, and a great many of nothing at all except weather-cocks and strong asses!

“Can it be said that you are as good a Preacher as you are a Ditcher? if so, your character stands fair,” &c.

In explanation of one or two clauses here transcribed, it may be mentioned, 1st, That there were several persons in the town then, and afterwards, who, though of reputation for intelligence and morality, were known to hold deistical sentiments; and, 2d, That Rev. Mr. Whitney was reputed to be an excellent farmer, and particularly successful in certain ditching and draining operations.

## G. — PAGE 41.

ACTION OF THE TOWN OCCASIONED BY THE LETTER OF  
THE BOSTON COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE.

Below are the letter, resolves, and vote of instructions to the town's Representative in the General Court, as they were adopted in town-meeting on the fourth of January, 1773. They are given here to denote the temper of the times and the spirit of the people in this town, as well as to indicate to what extent one of the foremost men and patriots of Massachusetts had a hand in their preparation.

Those parts of the preamble and resolves which are included in brackets are known to have come from Mr. Quincy's hand, as the original draft remains in his own handwriting, in possession of his son, Hon. Josiah Quincy, senior, of Boston. After the close of the war, Mr. How did not hesitate to speak of his indebtedness to Mr. Quincy in the matter of the resolves, though, according to his account, the aid was proffered, in the first instance, rather than sought.

Lincoln asserts that *Mr. Doolittle* reported the answer to the Boston circular. We have shown that considerable portions of the resolves were prepared outside of the Committee. Mr. Doolittle *may* have written the letter which accompanied them. Those parts of the resolves, however, which originated within the Committee (and the same remark applies with nearly equal force to the letter), bear internal evidence, which to my mind is conclusive, that they were not drawn by Mr. Doolittle, who was of deistical sentiments. The phraseology and style render it far more probable that they were prepared by Rev. Samuel Dennis, a member of the Committee, pastor of a Baptist Church at the south part of the town, and a zealous and active Whig. I am aware that a deist may affect a religionist's style, and quote Scripture as freely as a Christian believer; but affecta-



tion is not a characteristic of such papers as that upon which these comments are made.

*“To the Committee of Correspondence for the Town of Boston.*

“Gentlemen, — The town of Petersham, having received the circular letter from the town of Boston, with the state [ment] of rights and grievances as published by them, most sensibly congratulate you on reflecting on that principle of virtue which must have induced your town, at so critical a day, to take the lead in so good a cause; and our admiration is heightened, when we consider your being exposed to the first efforts of the iron jaws of power. The time may come when, if you continue your integrity, that you may be driven from your goodly heritages; and if that should be the case (which God of his infinite mercy prevent), we invite you to share with us in our small supplies of the necessaries of life. And should the voracious jaws of tyranny still haunt us, and we should not be able to withstand them, we are determined to retire and seek refuge among the inland aboriginal natives of this country, with whom we doubt not but to find more humanity and brotherly love than we have lately received from our mother country.

“We are sensible that there is a number amongst us, who are wicked enough to make use of their whole influence to divide, and render the efforts making for a union abortive; and that they are induced to conduct in this manner from the low motives of expecting to be sharers in the arbitrary power which they are so active in endeavoring should take place, and of sharing in the unrighteous plunder of their fellow-men. But may God graciously disappoint their measures, and turn their hearts!

“We send herewith an attested copy of the doings of our town. If the nature of causes ever again bespeaks any more from us, we then again shall offer what then may appear right; for we read, that those that were faithful spake often one to the other; and may God of his infinite mercy, in his own time, deliver us!

“SILVANUS HOW, per order.

DAVID SANDERSON, Town Clerk.

[“At a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Petersham, in the county of Worcester, duly assembled according to law,] held by adjournment on the fourth of January,

1773, the Committee, on the 30th ult., made the following report, viz. :—

[“The town, having received a circular letter from the town of Boston, respecting the present grievances and abominable oppression under which this country groans, have thereupon taken into their most serious consideration the present policy of the British Government and administration with regard to Great Britain and their Colonies; have carefully reviewed the mode of election, and the quality of the electors of the Commons of that island; and have also attentively reflected upon the enormous and growing influence of the crown, and that bane of all free states, a standing army in the time of peace; and, in consequence thereof, are fully confirmed in the opinion, that the ancient rights of the nation are capitally invaded, and that the greatest part of the most precious and established liberties of Englishmen utterly destroyed.

“And whereas the Parliament of Great Britain, by various statutes and acts, have unrighteously distressed our trade, denied and precluded us from the setting up and carrying on manufactures highly beneficial to the inhabitants of these territories, restricted and prevented our lawful intercourse and commerce with other states and kingdoms; and have also made laws and institutions touching life and limb, in disherison of the ancient common law of the land; and moreover have, in these latter times, robbed and plundered the honest and laborious inhabitants of this extensive continent of their property by *mere force and power*; and are now draining this people of the fruits of their toil, by thus raising a revenue from them against the natural rights of man, and in open violation of the laws of God,—

“This town, in union with the worthy inhabitants of Boston, now think it their indispensable duty to consider of the premises and the present aspect of the times, and to take such steps as, upon mature deliberation, are judged right and expedient. And hereupon this town—

“*Resolved*, That, with a Governor appointed from Great Britain (especially at this day) during pleasure, with a large stipend dependent upon the will of the crown, and controlled by instructions from a British minister of state, with a council subject to the negative of such a Governor, and with all officers, civil and military, subject to his appointment or consent, with a castle in the hand of a standing army, stationed in the very bowels of the land,

and with that amazing number of placemen and dependents with which every maritime town already swarms, no people can ever be truly virtuous, free, or brave.

“*Resolved*, That the Parliament of Great Britain, usurping and exercising a legislative authority over, and extorting an unrighteous revenue from, those colonies, against all divine and human laws, and the late appointment of salaries to be paid to our Superior Court Judges, whose creation, pay, and commission depend on mere will and pleasure, completes a system of bondage equal to any ever before fabricated by the combined efforts of the ingenuity, malice, fraud, and wickedness of man.]

“*Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this town, that a despotic, arbitrary government is the kingdom of this world, as set forth in the New Testament, and is diametrically opposite to the establishment of Christianity in a society, and has a direct tendency to sink a people into a profound state of ignorance and irreligion; and that, if we have an eye to our own and posterity’s happiness (not only in this world, but in the world to come), it is our duty to oppose such a government. And further, —

“*Resolved*, That the depriving the colonies of their constitutional rights may be fitly compared to the dismembering the natural body, which will soon affect the heart; and it would be nothing unexpected for us to hear that those very persons who have been so active in robbing the colonies of their constitutional rights, — that *they* have delivered up the constitution of our mother country into the hands of our king. Therefore —

[“*Resolved*, That it is the first and highest social duty of this people to consider of, and seek ways and means for, a speedy redress of these mighty grievances and intolerable wrongs; and that, for the obtainment of this end, this people are warranted by the laws of God and nature in the use of every rightful art, and energy of policy, stratagem and force.] And while we are thus under these awful frowns of divine Providence, and involved, as this people are, in heavy calamities, which daily increase in number and severity, it is highly becoming towns and individuals to humble themselves before Almighty God, seriously to commune with their own hearts, and seek carefully with tears for the causes of the prevailing distresses of the land; and while it is apparent that pristine piety and purity of morals have given place to infidelity, dissipation, luxury, and gross corruption of mind and morals, there is a loud call

for public humility, lamentings, and reformation; and it is at this time eminently incumbent upon one and all to seek at the throne of the great God for those special and remarkable interpositions of divine providence, grace, and mercy, which have so often saved New England from both public and private distress and misery. And as there is great reason to believe, that in past times we have too much depended upon the exertions of worldly wisdom and political devices, it becomes us, in our present melancholy situation, to rely no longer on an arm of flesh, but on the arms of that all-powerful God who is able to unite the numerous inhabitants of this extensive territory as a band of brothers in one common cause, who can easily give that true religion which shall make us his people indeed, that spirit which shall fit us to endure temporary hardships for the procurement of future happiness, that spirit of valour and irresistible courage which shall occasion our aged and our youth to jeopard their lives with joy in the high places of the field, for his name and service' sake, for the preservation also of this goodly heritage of our fathers, for the sake of the living children of our loins, and the unborn millions of posterity.

“We believe that there are very many who, in these days, have kept their integrity and garments unspotted, and hope that God will deliver them and our nation for their sake; [that] God will not suffer this land, where the gospel hath flourished, to become a slave of the world; [that] he will stir up witnesses of the truth, and in his own time spirit his people to stand up for his cause and deliver them. In a similar belief, that patriot of patriots, ALGERNON SIDNEY, lived and died, and dying breathed a like sentiment and prophecy, touching his own and the then approaching times; a prophecy, however, not accomplished until a glorious revolution.

“SILVANUS HOW, per order.

“Approved of by vote of the town *without contradiction*.

“Attest:

EPHRAIM DOOLITTLE, Moderator,  
DAVID SANDERSON, Town Clerk.”

The town then adopted the following vote of instructions to their Representative:—

“*To Capt. Ephraim Doolittle.*

“As you represent us at the Great and General Court, in this dark, gloomy, and distressing day of the manifestation of God's

judgments against us, we think it our duty and interest to communicate some of our sentiments to you, and to instruct you in some of the most important concerns of the public. It is needless for us to recapitulate to you the many enormous encroachments on our Constitution. But when we consider the circumstances of our forefathers leaving their native country, the hardships they underwent in settling this then howling wilderness, without any cost to Great Britain, the profits they receive by our trade, the circumstance of the first charter or compact between our forefathers and Great Britain being wrested from them (and consequently from us), the humble, submissive temper our forefathers showed in receiving another, which abridged them of many, very many valuable and reasonable rights, which were contained in the former, without any colour of right; and, notwithstanding all the foregoing circumstances, to have the remaining privileges of our present charter wrested from us by mere power, notwithstanding they were granted by special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion; to have our honest earnings wrested from us without our consent; to have the public fountains of justice corrupted by private interest, in order to pave the way and enforce acts of injustice and tyranny, — we say that these capital instances of injustice indicate to us that the glory is departed from the English nation, and that it is our opinion that our mother country has lost that divine spirit of truth and righteousness which, in former times, have saved them and this country from ruin.

“Therefore it is our earnest desire, and we here direct you to use your utmost influence (as one of the legislative body), to convince the nation of Great Britain, that the measures that they have meted out to us will have a direct tendency to destroy both them and us; and petition the King and Parliament of Great Britain, in the most pathetic and striking manner, to relieve us from our aggravated grievances. But if all this should fail, we recommend it to your consideration, and direct you to move it to the consideration of the honorable Court, whether it would not best to call in the aid of some Protestant Power or Powers, requesting that they would use their kind and Christian influence with our mother country, that so we may be relieved, and that brotherly love and harmony may again take place, and that natural alliance again be restored between us and Great Britain which may continue until time shall be no more. Which God of his infinite mercy grant for Christ’s sake.

“Attest :

SILVANUS HOW, per order.

DAVID SANDERSON, Town Clerk.”

## H. — PAGE 43.

## ADVICE TO PETERSHAM TORIES.

In the “Massachusetts Spy” of May 20, 1773, an illustration of this mode of warfare may be found. It contains a piece of rhyme, consisting of three stanzas of sixteen lines each, entitled “Advice to the TORY inhabitants of P——m.” A few specimen lines are inserted:—

“ With minds eclips’d and eke deprav’d,  
 As meek as any lamb,  
 The wretches who would be enslav’d,  
 That live in P-t--sh-m ;  
 For you, ye worthless Tory band !  
 Who would not lawless power withstand,  
 The scorn and scandal of the land,  
 Be endless plagues and fetters !  
 Ye want abilities and brains,  
 Tho’ headstrong as a ram ;  
 And seem to mourn the want of chains,  
 Ye tools of P-t--sh-m.  
 For slaves like you, the rod of power  
 Is pickling for some future hour ;  
 The taste will prove austere and sour,  
 E’en to the wretch that flatters.”

## I. — PAGE 58.

## SHAYS’S INSURRECTION.

There are persons still living, who remember well the events of that Sunday morning, Feb. 4, 1787. Col. Ephraim Stearns, father of Mr. Joel Stearns, led the government troops into town, and, on Wednesday morning, marched on with them to the barracks in Rutland.

The figure and movements of Mr. Eleazer Bradshaw, who was with Lincoln’s troops as a volunteer, appear to have made a lasting impression upon the memory of the young

persons who saw him that day, as they still graphically describe him, riding a fine white horse, and brandishing a hanger above his head.

A number of Shays's men thought to quarter themselves comfortably at the house of Rev. Mr. Reed. Mr. Reed, who was a man of large size and of great strength and courage, soon taught these "regulators," as they styled themselves, that he regulated his own house. He permitted them to occupy certain apartments, but peremptorily forbade them to appropriate any thing to their own use at their peril; and, through the night, he paced up and down the rooms, keeping guard (sword in hand, the tradition says), prepared to protect his family and his property against the slightest molestation.

"I well remember," writes the reverend Dr. Willard, of Deerfield, "the entrance of the insurgents into Petersham, and the alarm it excited among those who were known to be on the side of Government. Several insurgents had been arrested and condemned to death for having been found in arms the second time, in violation of the oath of allegiance, which had been imposed after their first capture; and their party had threatened to take prisoners, who should be held as hostages for the life and safety of those who were under condemnation. On this account, my father and some others secreted themselves when the insurgents approached their houses. The sudden and unexpected arrival of Lincoln the next morning, and the precipitate retreat of Shays and his army, dispersed all fear, but not all trouble. The army of the government was quartered upon us from Sunday morning till Wednesday, and left our houses in such a state as to inspire a dread of armies in every bosom.

"The insurgents were little prepared to act with efficiency. To say nothing of their want of personal qualifications, they were deficient in arms. I think they had few bayonets. Some of the *staff* officers were appropriately armed; for, in his flight, one of them left at our house the only weapon which I think he had,—a *cane*, which was nothing else than a stick stripped of its bark, with a pewter head, of which my boyhood took possession.



“One or two anecdotes will show the panic, and the want of military tactics which were apparent in the retreat:—

“I was out at the door on the approach of Lincoln’s army; and an officer of the insurgents came riding up at full speed, and gave to me — a boy of ten years — the oral commission: “Run into the house, and tell them to parade in a minute, for the enemy are upon us!” I went in, but found them in as much confusion as a hive of bees in swarming. After they were gone, it appeared that one of them had forgotten to take his gun, and a brother of mine took possession of it, and it was never called for.

“It was in the midst of a violent snow-storm, or rather the snow was flying, and it was very cold. Some poor wight had his hat taken from his head; and, I suppose, went without a hat against that furious north wind to Athol, where they halted. I myself found the hat the following spring in one of our lots; and, as my head was large for a boy of my age, it suited me very well, and I finished the wear of it.”

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K. — PAGE 59.

FAMILY OF REV. MR. WHITNEY.

Aaron Whitney was born in Littleton, Mass., 1714; was the son of Moses and Elizabeth, and was a brother of Sarah Salmon, Lydia, and Ephraim.\* He married, July 12, 1739, Alice Baker, of Phillipston, who died August 26, 1767; married, a second time, Madam Ruth Stearns, widow of Rev. David Stearns, of Lunenburgh, who survived him, and died at Keene, N. H., Nov. 1, 1788, in the seventy-second year of her age.

Rev. Mr. Whitney had eleven children:—

\* Dr. Ephraim Whitney was probably a son of this Ephraim, and nephew of Rev. Aaron. The father, and Jane his wife, were dismissed to the church in Chesterfield, in 1781. The doctor died in Petersham, July 26, 1801, aged seventy-two years. They were from Lunenburgh.

I. ABEL died while in college at Cambridge, March 15, 1756, aged sixteen.\*

II. PETER, born Sept. 6, 1744; graduated at Harvard University, in 1762; ordained Pastor of the First Church in Northborough, Nov. 4, 1767, where he died suddenly, Feb. 29, 1816. He was the father of Rev. Peter Whitney, of Quincy, and grandfather of Rev. George Whitney, successively Pastor of the Second and Third Churches in Roxbury, and of Rev. Frederic A. Whitney, now Pastor of the First Church in Brighton. He was the author of several occasional sermons, and of a History of Worcester County.

III. CHARLES; lived in Phillipston.

IV. AARON; merchant; lived in Northfield, Mass.

V. ALICE; married Ensign Man, of Petersham, where her descendants yet live.

VI. LUCY; married Dr. Samuel Kendall, of New Salem; settled at Weston; died 1784.

VII. PAUL; graduated at Harvard University, 1772; physician at Westfield; died 1795.

VIII. ABEL; born March 15, 1756 (see I., ABEL, and note); merchant in Westfield; died March 2, 1807, in the fifty-first year of his age.

Of the other children we have no account.

\* He was buried in Cambridge. The following inscription upon his headstone is copied from Harris's "Epitaphs:"—

"Hic sepultus est ABEL,  
Reverendi AARONIS  
WHITNEY Petershamensis,  
Filius. et Collegii  
Harvardini Alumnus; qui  
Anno .Ætas. 16mo occubuit  
Martii 15mo, A.D. 1756."

On the same day on which this son died, another son was born to Mr. Whitney, and took the same name. (See VIII., ABEL, above.)

## L. — PAGE 73.

## COLLEGE GRADUATES.

I had hoped to present a complete list of those native inhabitants of the town who have received a "liberal" education. It is scarcely probable that I have done so. So far as ascertained, they are as follows:—

Abel Whitney (I.), appears to have died while a member of College, though he is styled an Alumnus. (See preceding page.)

Peter Whitney . . . .	Graduated Harvard University,	1762.
Paul Whitney . . . . .	Harvard University,	1772.
Abel Whitney . . . . .	Harvard University,	1773.
William Amherst Barron . . . . .	Harvard University,	1787.
John Chandler, jun. . . . .	Harvard University,	1787.
Richard Whitney . . . . .	Harvard University,	1787.
Jonathan Grout, jun. . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1787.
Nathaniel Chandler . . . . .	Harvard University,	1792.
John Jackson . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1792.
William Ward . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1792.
Paul Grout . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1793.
George Grout . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1795.
Thomas Barron . . . . .	Harvard University,	1796.
Elisha Hammond . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1802.
Samuel Willard * . . . . .	Harvard University,	1803.
Daniel Bigelow, jun. . . . .	Williams College,	1803.
Lewis Bigelow . . . . .	Williams College,	1803.
Abiathar Hopkins . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1806.
Hutchins Hapgood . . . . .	Dartmouth College,	1813.
Aaron Brooks, jun. . . . .	Brown University,	1817.
Samuel Ward Chandler . . . . .	Harvard University,	1822.
Fisher Ames Foster . . . . .	Middletown College,	—
John Wells Foster . . . . .	Middletown College,	—
George Grout Hapgood * . . . . .	Union College,	1830.
Daniel Bigelow Parkhurst . . . . .	Yale College,	1836.
Charles Grosvenor Goddard . . . . .	Amherst College,	1841.
Francis Augustus Brooks . . . . .	Harvard University,	1842.
Andrew Jackson Wheeler . . . . .	Amherst College,	1846.

\* Mr. Willard in 1826, and Mr. Hapgood in 1852, received each the degree of "S.T.D."

The first four on the above list were sons of Rev. Aaron Whitney. Some notices of them may be found upon preceding pages.

WILLIAM AMHERST BARRON was the oldest son of William Barron, Esq.; was a Tutor in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Cambridge from 1793 to 1800. He had a remarkable faculty of communicating knowledge distinctly to persons of common apprehension. It is believed, that, after leaving Cambridge, he was employed in some branch of instruction under the patronage of the General Government. He died in 1825, at the age of fifty-seven, having never been married.

JOHN CHANDLER, jun., was a son of John Chandler, Esq. He was engaged in various business, especially in agriculture and merchandise. For thirty years, more or less, he and his brother, and one or two other men, were connected in a firm extending its operations to several different towns; and John was the mainspring of its action. In his early life, he was distinguished for sound judgment, quick discernment, and great activity. Enterprising and public-spirited, he was justly regarded as a useful citizen. In the latter part of his life, Mr. Chandler's mind lost its equipoise, and he died in the Hospital for the Insane at Worcester, in 1846. (See page 80.)

RICHARD WHITNEY, the third son of Dr. Ephraim Whitney, was a man of superior talents, and uncommon aptitude for teaching. He studied law, and entered on his profession in Brattleborough, Vt., with fair prospects of a brilliant career; but he fell a lamented victim of that well-known destroyer, by whose ravages the community was, and still is, deplorably afflicted,—a destroyer so well known that it need not be named. He died in 1806.

JONATHAN GROUT, jun., was the oldest son of Hon. Jonathan Grout. After leaving college, he taught for a time; and “to his thorough and effective mode of teaching some of the most important rudiments of our language,” writes Rev. Dr. Willard, “I was more indebted than to that of any other man.” For many subsequent years, he was engaged in planning and applying a mode of telegraphic communication; but, it is believed, without realizing much, if any, pecuniary profit.

NATHANIEL CHANDLER was brother of John Chandler, jun., above mentioned. He occupied for many years the house and

store which had belonged to his father. He was subject to depression of mind; but, in company, was generally in high spirits, expressing himself in metaphors and hyperboles, which were often original and peculiarly striking. Being remarkable also for his intimate acquaintance with the statistics of his times, he was able at once to engage the attention, and to impart instruction. (See page 81.)

JOHN JACKSON was the son of James Jackson; studied for the ministry with Rev. Judah Nash, of Montague; was settled for a few years in Gill; and was represented to be an Arminian in theological opinion. He removed to Canada after his dismissal, and officiated for some years in an Episcopal church. He died at an advanced age.

WILLIAM WARD, a classmate of Mr. Jackson, was a son of Capt. Elisha Ward; studied law; settled in Shutesbury; but was obliged to resort to other means than the profits of his office for a part of his support.

PAUL GROUT, a brother of Jonathan Grout, jun., early went to one of the Middle States (Maryland, it is believed), where he soon died.

GEORGE GROUT, brother of Jonathan, jun., and Paul, went to the South also, and did not long survive.

THOMAS BARRON was a son of William Barron, Esq., and brother of William A. Barron, above noticed. He studied law with Hon. Stephen R. Bradley, in Westminster, Vt., but did not continue many years in the practice. He was for some time in England; and, after his return, went to Ohio, where he probably died in 1830 or '31,—as he was then in a feeble state of health, and his nearest friends have not been able to learn any thing of him since. He had no family.

ELISHA HAMMOND was a son of Ebenezer Hammond, and was born in the south-west part of Petersham. It is believed that he went to the South as a teacher. Hon. J. H. Hammond, late Governor of South Carolina, is said to be his son.

SAMUEL WILLARD, son of Dea. William Willard, studied for the ministry; was settled in Deerfield, Sept. 23, 1807, and resigned his charge on the twenty-second anniversary. Though he has been for many years wholly deprived of sight, he has occasionally officiated in pulpits on the Sabbath, and still survives honored and loved among the flock of his former pastorate.

For the foregoing facts relative to college-graduates, I am chiefly indebted to the Rev. Dr. Willard, the last named.

DANIEL BIGELOW, jun., was a son of Hon. Daniel Bigelow. Whether he studied a profession, we do not know. He went to the State of Ohio, and there died.

LEWIS BIGELOW. See page 77.

ABIATHAR HOPKINS was the son of Samuel Hopkins, who lived in the south part of the town. He studied law, and opened an office in Harrisburg, Pa., where he was successful for a number of years. He died, while on a visit to his native town, on the 27th of September, 1821, at the age of forty years.

HUTCHINS HAPGOOD was the second son of Hutchins Hapgood. In the winter vacation of his Sophomore year, he was accidentally shot in Petersham Woods. By this event, his left arm was so badly fractured that he never regained its full use. He was unable to unite with his class till the autumn of 1811. He began the study of law in November, 1814, with John Taylor, Esq., of Northampton; went to Cavendish, N. Y., July, 1815, where he finished his professional studies. He afterwards went into mercantile pursuits in the city of New York. His health failing, he relinquished his business in 1825; and died at Petersham, June 2, 1828. — *From manuscript of Rev. J. B. Felt, his classmate.*

AARON BROOKS, jun., son of Major Aaron Brooks, studied law, and went into its practice in Petersham, in company with Hon. Lewis Bigelow. After Mr. Bigelow left town, he continued in an extensive and successful practice here till the time of his death, in May, 1845.

SAMUEL WARD CHANDLER, son of Nathaniel Chandler, Esq., engaged for some years in manufacturing business; and is at present a lithographer in the city of Boston.

FISHER AMES FOSTER, son of Rev. Festus Foster, was educated for the Bar, and was for many years editor of the "Cincinnati Atlas."

JOHN WELLS FOSTER, brother of the above, occupies a conspicuous place among the American scientific corps as United States Geologist for the Lake Superior Mining District.

GEORGE GROUT HAPGOOD, son of the late Eber Hapgood, taught an academical school a year or two in the State of New York; entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in

1832, and is now Presiding Elder of Syracuse District, Black River Conference, and resides in Oswego.

DANIEL BIGELOW PARKHURST, son of William Parkhurst, M.D., and grandson of Hon. Daniel Bigelow, studied for the Christian ministry in the Theological School of Harvard University; and at the close of his preparatory studies, not being strong in health, went to Savannah, Ga., in the autumn of 1840, to pass the winter. He returned early in the following spring, and was settled over the First Congregational Society in Deerfield, Mass., on the 21st of July, 1841. Excepting only the precariousness of his health, the auspices attending his settlement were all of the happiest kind. He preached to his people, however, but four and a half sabbaths, and survived his settlement only seven months. He died at Keene, N. H., whither he had gone for medical treatment, on the 16th of February, 1842, leaving his flock in deep grief at the sudden blight which had fallen on their hopes.

CHARLES G. GODDARD, son of Ashbel Goddard, studied divinity after leaving college, and was settled over a society in East Hartland, Conn., about three years, when he gave up preaching on account of poor health, and removed to East Windsor Hill, where he has been principal teacher in a seminary established at that place.

FRANCIS AUGUSTUS BROOKS, son of Aaron Brooks, jun., Esq., studied law, and began its practice in his native town in 1845. He removed to Boston in January, 1848, and remains in the practice of his profession in that city.

ANDREW J. WHEELER, son of Col. Josiah Wheeler, graduated from college with unusual honors, and gave promise of distinguished success and usefulness in the profession which he had chosen,—that of the ministry. But his health was already declining when his collegiate course was ended, and he died the year following, greatly lamented.

Besides those who have graduated from colleges, there have been several natives of the town, who have been partially educated in these institutions, but who have not completed a full course:—

WILLIAM SPENCER PRENTICE was nearly three years a member of Harvard College. He studied theology afterwards for a



year; but, on account of poor health, abandoned the life of a student, and went, some time later, to one of the Western States, where he has held the office of Judge of Probate, and, it is believed, other offices of responsibility.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS' HOUGHTON very nearly completed a full course of study in Dartmouth College; he left during his senior year, on account of ill health. He commenced the study of law, but soon after went to the West, and resided for some years in St. Louis, Mo. Returning to Massachusetts, he held the office of Secretary of the Commercial Insurance Company, in Boston, for five years. He is at present Cashier in the office of the City Treasury, Boston.

NELSON BROOKS, son of Aaron Brooks, sen., was for a time a member of Amherst College; he died young.

EDMUND B. WILLSON was for a short time in Yale College; studied for the ministry; and has been settled in Grafton and West Roxbury, Mass.

CHARLES K. WETHERELL was a member of Yale College for a time; studied law; practised a few years in Petersham, and removed thence to Barre, where he now pursues his profession.

J. SUMNER SANDERSON was in Amherst College two years; left on account of sickness.

There are as many as six natives of the town now in various colleges; and quite a number of others have gone from families in this town to obtain a collegiate education, though not natives.

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#### M. — PAGES 66 and 84.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Besides the foregoing notes, which have been immediately suggested by passages in the preceding Address, some other facts, which have been incidentally collected in the course of its preparation, it is thought may be worthy of preservation here as possessing an interest for such as are curious in matters connected with the town's history.

APPEARANCE AND CONDITION OF PETERSHAM IN THE LATTER  
PART OF THE LAST CENTURY.

Wishing to reproduce as far as possible a picture of the appearance of this town, as it was fifty or sixty years since, I appealed to the Rev. Dr. Willard, of Deerfield, to give me some of the reminiscences of his boyhood. I have been kindly furnished by him with the following enumeration and description of the houses as he remembers them in his early youth (mostly those within a mile of the meeting-house). I cannot do better than employ his own words:—

“Of all the houses in Petersham prior to the year 1790, I think it would be safe to affirm that there were not more than fifteen or eighteen that were ever painted; and, of these, not one was of lighter color than yellow ochre. Five or six were painted with Spanish brown; viz., that which was successively owned by Mr. Lyndes, Daniel Bigelow, Esq., his son Lewis, and Seth Hapgood, Esq.; that on the west side of the Common, built by William Peckham, afterwards owned by Dr. Bridge; that of the elder John Stowell; Capt. Parmenter’s, near the division of the road, a mile south of the meeting-house; Joseph Gleason’s, the elder, a mile west of the meeting-house; Samuel Bryant’s, in the easterly part of the town; and, I think, Col. Grout’s, on the road to Athol. The yellow houses were, the old part of the house next above the Bell schoolhouse, on the west, then belonging to the Rogers Family; the house of John Chandler, Esq., the elder, near his store; that which was called “the tan-yard house,” also belonging to him; that which is now occupied by Dr. Parkhurst; and the one immediately opposite, which was owned by Capt. John Peckham, and his son Robert; and that which was then owned by John Wilder, in the east part of the town, and is now occupied by Col. Josiah White. If other houses had been painted, they had become of nearly the same color with timber tarnished by the weather.

“In the times of which I am speaking, there were no clusters of houses. From Chandler’s store on the east side of the street, there were only five houses for about a mile and a half, ending at Mr. Stowell’s, excepting a small tenement of one room, which was

soon demolished, and another dwelling, in which the house was united with a tannery, and was soon after converted into a pottery. Those houses were my father's, now my brother's;\* the house afterwards owned and occupied by John Chandler, jun.; Ivory Holland's, a little south-east of Dr. Whitney's, afterwards Thomas Hapgood's; Nathan Wheeler's, opposite to Esquire Bigelow's; and Robert Peckham's. The house now belonging to Jared Weed, Esq., was built in 1784 or '5, as I know from the fact that one of my brothers at the raising fell into the cellar, struck the back of his head on a stone, and when taken up was supposed to be dead, but afterwards recovered. Mr. Maccarty's house was built some years afterwards.

“In the same distance, on the west side, there were about ten houses: the bevelled-roofed house opposite my father's [where Col. Doolittle had lived]; the one opposite to that of John Chandler, jun.; the “tan-yard house,” so called; that which was successively owned by Dr. Whitney and the Hapgoods; Esquire Bigelow's; the one on the opposite corner, in which dwelling and store or shop were combined; the old tavern-house, north of the church, then called the Winslow House; that on the west side of the Common [Mr. Jonas How's]; a low house at the south-eastern corner of the Common, belonging to Josiah Peckham; what is now Dr. Parkhurst's; and the old mansion of Rev. Mr. Whitney, which gave place to the larger house built by Mr. Reed.

“From the old Stowell House to the south end of the three-miles street, there were, I think, only two dwellings; one belonging to Joab Stowell, and the other to Benjamin Chandler.† Mr. Reed's house was built about the year 1788, perhaps a year or two after or before. The old mansion of Mr. Whitney, which stood three or four rods farther to the west, and two or three farther to the south, continued in being several years after, and was inhabited part of the time by Joseph Smith, a tailor, whose widow died in Northfield at the close of 1738, or beginning of '39, in her hundred and first year.

\* Dea. Cephas Willard's.

† This Mr. Chandler seems to have given himself and the town some uneasiness, on the subject of roads. In a warrant for a town-meeting, to be held in 1779, was an article: “To hear the request of Benjamin Chandler respecting a road through his land, and for the town to alter the same as they may think best; or make him easy in such manner as he may not plaguo the selectmen any more.”

“On the road leading to the west from the house successively owned by Samuel Peckham, Samuel Cutler,\* Festus Foster, and Dr. Parkhurst, there was, in my early recollections, only one house for nearly or quite a mile,—that of Jonathan Hunter. Martin Rice afterwards built a house a hundred rods, more or less, from Dr. Parkhurst’s.

“On the road leading from the same point easterly to the upper mill, there were four houses: one owned, and I believe inhabited, by the Maccarty family; one by Ebenezer Winslow, and afterwards by Simon Whitney; one at the corner, formed by the eastern road and a lane running towards the south, owned and occupied by Philip Spooner, and afterwards by his grandson, Clapp Spooner; and that which belonged to Ruggles Spooner, about half-way to the mill. The road leading from Ruggles Spooner’s directly to the meeting-house was not laid till near the close of the century, and, I think, remained without any dwelling-house upon it for twelve or fifteen years.

“On the road leading from the meeting-house towards New Salem, the old house belonging to Joseph Gleason, the elder, was the third; the other two being that of Capt. Wing Spooner, and that of Dea. Amos Stone.

“On the parallel road running west from Esquire Bigelow’s, there were only two houses for more than a mile: one within about fifty rods of the street, successively occupied by various tenants, and that of David Stone, the elder.

“On the lane running north-westerly from Hapgood’s tan-yard, there were two houses,—Luther Holland’s, and Capt. Ebenezer Bragg’s.

“These, I think, were all the houses within a mile of the church, on the roads in various directions, prior to the erection of the three-story house between the old tavern and the Common. Possibly I may have forgotten one or two. The house owned and occupied by William Clark was a cooper’s shop, erected for the accommodation of Chandler’s pearlsh. and was afterwards moved and fitted for a dwelling.

“In early times, Petersham was the thoroughfare for teams passing with merchandise from Boston through Sudbury, Shrewsbury, Holden, Rutland, and Barre, to Athol, Orange, Warwick,

\* Kept as a public house by Peckham and Cutler.

Northfield, and the south-eastern part of Vermont. On this road there were four taverns in Petersham: that of Bryant's, in the eastern part of the town; Rogers's and Dean's, near the Bell schoolhouse; and Capt. Elisha Ward's, at the North End. Rogers's and Dean's were on the opposite sides of the street; and I well remember that Dean's sign was somewhat emblematic of what a tavern should be, viz., a tea-kettle hung from the arm of the post.

“In the early times of which I am speaking, the grounds and fences about the houses were universally in a rude state; for instance, those of John Chandler, Esq., were very nearly as nature left them, excepting that the trees had been cut away, and heavy teams constantly passed across the corner of what is now the front-yard, between the house and store. It was not till about 1787 or '8 that the terraces were formed, and the grounds enclosed with a handsome fence; and yet Mr. Chandler was probably the first man in Petersham, both in wealth and taste. As an evidence of taste, I need only advert to the fact, that he had a park for deer, comprising seventy acres, more or less, and encompassed with a zigzag or Virginia fence, ten or twelve rails high, sufficient, as was supposed, to prevent, on the one hand, the escape of deer, and, on the other, the intrusion of wolves and dogs. To say nothing of preparing the timber, the labor and cost of lifting such an amount of rails to such a height must have been great, when we consider that the whole extent of the fence was something like a mile and a half. . . . This fence remained at its full height for several years.”

#### REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS.

“A muster-roll of Capt. John Wheeler's company as minute-men, commanded by Col. Ephraim Doolittle, from the 19th of April, 1775, as libertines to the cause they are now in.”

They were allowed *1d.* a mile for travel. Those marked \* were paid for one hundred and forty miles travel, — about the distance to and from Cambridge. Those marked † were in Capt. Joel Fletcher's company in camp at Winter Hill, Charlestown, Oct. 6, 1775, — Col. Doolittle's regiment. Those marked ‡ were in Capt. Jonathan Holman's company

in camp at the same time and place, and belonging to the same regiment:—

†John Wheeler, Captain.  
 \*Edw. Barker [or Bowker], Lieut.  
 ‡John Bowker, Ensign [Lieutenant  
 in October].  
 ‡Thos. Davenport, Sergeant.  
 \*John Holland,            ,,  
   John Rogers,            ,,  
 \*Joel Doolittle,           ,,  
 ‡Thad. Houghton, Corporal.  
 ‡Israel Houghton.  
 ‡Caleb Perry.  
 ‡David Perry.  
 ‡Thomas Wheeler, Drummer.  
 †Caleb Bryant, Fifer.  
 †Aaron Allen.  
 †Bezile Amsdel [Bezaleel Ams-  
 del?].  
 \*Sam. Bryant.  
 \*Thomas Bouker.  
 ‡Ezekiel Bouker.  
 †Nat. Bozworth.  
 \*David Clarke.  
 \*Reuben Cummings.  
 †Ephraim Clafin.  
 †David [Daniel?] Clafin.  
 †John Finney ["Fiendly" or Find-  
 lay?].  
 \*Benjamin Ganson.  
 \*Joanna [?] Gallen.

\*Peter Gore.  
 Luther Holland.  
 \*Phazez [?] Houghton.  
 \*Silvanus How.  
 \*John How.  
 ‡Jacob Houghton.  
 †Henry W. Hunt.  
 \*James Hawkes.  
 \*Thos. Jackson.  
 †Benj. Knapp.  
 \*Dan'l Mills [Miles?].  
 \*Joab Mills [Miles?].  
 William Peckham.  
 \*Eph. Bill.  
 Amos Bill.  
 John Bill.  
 \*Luke Bill.  
 \*Abel Rogers.  
 ‡Jabez Spear.  
 \*Dav. Sanderson.  
 \*Eph. Sterns.  
 †John Stores [Stowell?].  
 \*Ruggles Spooner.  
 \*Eliak[im] Spooner.  
 \*Wing Spooner.  
 ‡John Warden.  
 \*John Wilder.  
 \*Cornelius Wilder.  
 \*Joseph Wilson.

Of Petersham men in Capt. Fletcher's company, besides those already mentioned and marked †, were the following: Jotham Houghton, Ebenezer Ingersoll, William Clements, Daniel Duncan, David Fling, Silas Harris (died July 7th), Stephen Hall, Robert Hill, Jonas Negus, Abel Wheeler.

Capt. Fletcher was of Templeton.

The following, besides those marked ‡ on the preceding pages, were of Petersham, and in Capt. Holman's company: Martin Rice [fifer], David Bruce, Thomas Groce, Daniel

Hastings, Isaac Palmer, Amos Rice, Ebenezer Wilson. Capt. Holman was of Templeton.

The staff-officers of Col. Doolittle's regiment were Col., Ephraim Doolittle, of Petersham ; Lieut.-Colonel, Benjamin Holden, of Princeton ; Major, Willard Moore, of Paxton ; Chaplain, Rev. Benjamin Balch, of Danvers ; Adjutant, John Woodward, of Westminster ; Quartermaster, Benjamin Howard, of Shrewsbury ; Surgeon, Enoch Dole, of Lancaster ; Surgeon's Mate, Nathan Burnap, of Hopkinton. — *Document in office of Secretary of State.*

Several of those above named, continued in the service through, or nearly through, the war. Some of these, and many other names, are on the town-books as having received money from the town in compensation for military service, or as having their taxes "sunk." Bounties and various encouragements were given to the soldiers who enlisted during the latter part of the war. It would appear from a vote of the town, adopted in September, 1778, that Lieut. John Wheeler had rendered services at Dorchester ; that Lieut. Stearns had been at Bennington six weeks, in 1777 ; and in June, 1782, Jos. Smith asked the town to pay him the value of a gun which he lost "at Bunker Hill fight."

#### SLAVES.

The number of slaves in Petersham was never very large. There appear to have been none in 1754. Ten years later, there were eight. Kenelm Winslow, who kept the tavern, had two or three ; one of them — Tack by name — appears to have been quite a public character. Earl Flagg had one ; William Barron, one ; Andrew Dalrymple, one ; Daniel Spooner, one ; Elisha Ward, one. It is mentioned in Rev. Mr. Clarke's Centennial Sermon at Athol, that a negro boy, named Titus, was given to Rev. Mr. Humphrey, the first minister of Athol, by Rev. Mr. Whitney, of Petersham. He died in Mr. Humphrey's family, Nov. 7, 1773, at the age of three years and a half. At his funeral, his late master



preached a sermon from this text: "The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master."

CASUALTIES, EPIDEMICS, ETC.

Mr. Jotham Houghton, living on Chimney Hill, being absent with Mrs. Houghton from their house one evening, and their children being left in it, it took fire, and was burned together with the inmates. The number of children that perished is differently stated by different narrators; the lowest number given by any, being two; the highest, four.

The small-pox visited Petersham in the winter of 1760-61. Stephen Hall died of it. Two Province soldiers had it.

In September, 1776, the town voted to allow an inoculation hospital for the small-pox, which was afterwards appointed to be at Mr. Frederick Rogers's. Ephraim Woolson (sometimes titled Esq., and sometimes Dr.) was "preferred to superintend the business." In the following spring, the hospital was voted to be discontinued, "by a great majority."

A severe tornado is mentioned in the newspapers as having swept over this town on the 19th of August, 1788.

A brief notice of the ravages of the spotted fever in 1810 will be found on pages 78-9. It is said to have made its first appearance on the borders of Dana and Petersham. A daughter of Dr. Flint died about the same time with her father; and another daughter, about three days after. This plague seemed, at one moment, almost to threaten the depopulation of the place. It raged in Barre, also, with great violence; five persons are said to have been buried there in one day. A day of fasting was kept in Petersham, at which five ministers attended. Other towns around likewise observed fasts to avert its coming.—*Manuscript of Mrs. S. How.*

A very extensive and disastrous fire occurred in Petersham on the 15th of April, 1847, sweeping off a large part

of the dwellings which surrounded the Common. A previous fire had, on February 5, 1845, burnt down the town-house and old meeting-house, the latter of which had been removed to the east side of the Common, and fitted up into schoolrooms, and a spacious hall for public uses. The fire of 1847 laid waste the westerly side of the Common, leaving but two or three buildings standing between the corner of the road leading west from the Common and the Orthodox meeting-house. Fourteen buildings were burned; among them one, one hundred feet in length, with a steam-engine and other machinery, used in the manufacture of lasting-buttons; two large tavern-houses (one, three stories in height), with their stables, barns, and outbuildings. Besides these, were one dwelling-house, one large store, one building occupied by shops, offices, &c. The loss by these fires was estimated at about fifty thousand dollars. But, as a calamitous stroke upon the industry and prosperity of the town, it was more injurious than figures can show. Following, as it did, upon the heels of other reverses and misfortunes, from which the place was suffering, it seemed to prostrate and paralyze the business of the beautiful village, throughout which were to be seen previously the marks of enterprise and thrift on every side.

# ACCOUNT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS ON THE DAY OF CELEBRATION.

PREPARED BY FRANCIS A. BROOKS, ESQ.

THE Town of Petersham, having the present year attained the venerable age of one hundred years of corporate existence, voted at its regular Annual Meeting, held March 6, 1854, to commemorate the event; and made an appropriation of money, and appointed a Committee of Arrangement, for the purpose, consisting of the following citizens:—

WM. PARKHURST.  
CEPHAS WILLARD.  
SETH HAPGOOD.  
PHINEHAS W. BARR.  
LEWIS WHITNEY.  
JOHN G. MUDGE.  
JOS. G. PARMENTER.  
DANIEL STOWELL.

WM. H. BANCROFT.  
HUBBARD PECKHAM.  
J. P. PILLSBURY.  
JOHN M. HOLMAN.  
JESSE ROGERS.  
WILLIAM COOK.  
COLLINS ANDREWS.

The Fourth of July was fixed upon as the day of celebration. Rev. EDMUND B. WILLSON was selected to deliver an Address; and the following persons were appointed officers of the day:—

## DR. WILLIAM PARKHURST, PRESIDENT.

*Vice-Presidents.*

SETH HAPGOOD.	WILLIAM H. FOSTER.
CEPHAS WILLARD.	FRANCIS A. BROOKS.
ARTEMAS BRYANT.	PARLEY HAMMOND.
JESSE GALE.	N. F. BRYANT.
THEODORE CLEMENT.	AVERY CLARK.

F. A. BROOKS . . . . .	<i>Toast-master.</i>
LEWIS WHITNEY . . . . .	<i>Chief Marshal.</i>

*Assistant Marshals.*

JOHN G. MUDGE.	FRANCIS G. PARMENTER.
WELCOME WADSWORTH.	AMORY BIGELOW.
HENRY BROOKS.	JAMES W. BROOKS.
STEPHEN HOWE.	LYMAN WHITE.
GEORGE GALLOND.	

The day itself, always grateful to American freemen, but doubly so to the sons and daughters of Petersham on this occasion, was greeted with the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon. The weather was fair, though oppressively warm.

The town-hall was opened as a place of rendezvous for citizens and returning friends, who gathered there to exchange greetings, hear again the sound of familiar voices, and renew old acquaintance and friendships. Cordial shakings of the hand and kind looks abounded there, and were as pleasant to behold as to partake. Then, too, the events of many years passed through the mind in rapid succession; and forms and faces, existing in the memory alone, flitted around like phantoms, and, for the time, the present scene was lost in visions and recollections of the past. But this most interesting re-union was interrupted much too soon, by the forming of a procession, under the direction of the Chief Marshal. At the head of the procession was a volunteer escort-company, raised for the occasion, under the command of Capt. Giles Shattuck. Their uniform was that of the "Continental" soldiers, and their unique appearance added much to the interest of the day.

Another remnant of the past, in the procession, consisted of a couple on horseback, representing man and wife, attired in antique costume, — she riding on a pillion ; and their novel appearance, together with the suavity and soberness of their demeanor, excited much mirth.

At ten o'clock, this procession (and so large a one had never before measured the streets of the quiet old town) marched to a bower, erected at the south-west corner of the Common, where the exercises were as follows : —

INVOCATION AND READING OF SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. J. SHEPARDSON.

---

H Y M N .

---

P R A Y E R .

BY REV. J. J. PUTNAM.

---

ORIGINAL ODE.

BY MISS MARY ANN HOWE.

THE birthday of Freedom ! a jubilee sound,  
From hill-top to hill-top re-echo it round ;  
Our sires fought for Freedom, — their sons know its worth,  
And a nation of freemen have sprung into birth.

And we, who a Century count, since our sires  
First planted their hearthstones and kindled their fires,  
Assemble to thank Him whose watch and whose ward  
Hath ever been o'er us to guide and to guard.

We boast not of riches, — our wealth is the soil,  
Our wants are supplied by the fruit of our toil :  
The sons of New England, as freemen we stand,  
And warm is the grasp of the toil-hardened hand.

No iron-horse tramples our valleys so fair,  
No lightning-flash speedeth a message through air ;  
But Hygeia sitteth enthroned on our hills,  
Whose picturesque beauty with ecstasy thrills.

Old NICHEWAUG welcomes her gathering sons,  
 And greets with delight all her wandering ones,  
 Returned to their birthplace, — the links of a chain,  
 Long severed, once more are united again.

Heaven's arch bendeth o'er us in sheltering love,  
 A pledge of re-union in mansions above :  
 A hymn of thanksgiving and gratitude raise,  
 A song of rejoicing, — a pæan of praise.

At the close of the services at the bower, the procession was again formed, and moved to a large pavilion, where the dinner-tables, sufficiently large to accommodate thirteen hundred and fifty persons, were fully occupied. A blessing was invoked by Rev. Luther Willson ; and, after the company had partaken of the food before them, they joined in singing the following hymn to the tune of " St. Martins : " —

LET children hear the mighty deeds  
 Which God performed of old,  
 Which in our younger years we saw,  
 And which our fathers told.

He bids us make his glories known,  
 His works of power and grace ;  
 And we'll convey his wonders down  
 Through every rising race.

Our lips shall tell them to our sons,  
 And they again to theirs,  
 That generations yet unborn  
 May teach them to their heirs.

Thus shall they learn, in God alone  
 Their hope securely stands,  
 That they may ne'er forget his works,  
 But practise his commands.

Dr. WILLIAM PARKHURST, the President of the day, then welcomed them in an address at once genial, lively, familiar,

grave, and humorous ; in the course of which he exhibited the original weapon of Indian warfare, somewhat notorious in its day, invented and made by Col. Ephraim Doolittle, a former citizen of Petersham. It was a rude and very primitive-looking instrument, in the likeness of a pitchfork, and certainly seemed a relic of a very remote antiquity. It is the property of the American Antiquarian Society, of Worcester. At the conclusion of the President's Address, which was very well received, the regular toasts, prepared by the toast-master, were announced by him, and responded to as follows :—

1. THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF PETERSHAM.—They unite to-day in grateful recollections, and in social and fraternal greetings.

“SWEET HOME” — BY THE BAND.

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2. THE PIONEERS AND FIRST SETTLERS OF PETERSHAM.—In danger, privation, and suffering, they planted : we reap in peace, plenty, and joy.

Rev. LUTHER WILLSON responded to the last sentiment in a pertinent and happy manner.

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3. OUR REVOLUTIONARY SIREs, the PATRIOTS OF '76.—Their lofty and patriotic daring and wise counsels have acquired and handed down to us a liberty the most perfect, and a national existence the most beneficent and glorious, in the world's history. Let us not prove unworthy of the rich inheritance, by ungratefully depreciating those blessings, or failing to preserve and transmit them.

SONG — “OUR COUNTRY'S FLAG.”

N. F. BRYANT, Esq., of Barre, responded to the last sentiment, and gave as a sentiment —

JULY 4th, '76.—A date never to be obliterated, while history or tradition bears from age to age the words, “American Revolution,” “Liberty or death.”

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4. THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

MUSIC — “YANKEE DOODLE.”



The following letter from His Excellency, Governor WASHBURN, was read, —

WORCESTER, June 14, 1854.

My dear Sir, — I duly received your kind note of invitation to attend your celebration on the 4th. I should be most happy to accept it if I could; for I approve of the plan as an admirable one. To bring back to their homes the sons of any of the towns of Massachusetts, on any occasion, cannot fail to be fraught with salutary influences; and to do it on such an anniversary must be adding to the ordinary hallowed associations of home, the pride and love of country which the memory of those who took part in the struggles of that period cannot fail to awaken.

Petersham took an early and active part, in the firm and patriotic resolutions which her citizens adopted at that time, and which form an interesting part of the history of that period; and her sons, from whatever quarter they may come, can hardly fail to derive new inspiration from the spot and the occasion.

But I am allowing my train of thought to run away with me, instead of saying, what I regret to do, that, if I shall be able to accept any invitation for that day, I am already engaged to be in Boston, and therefore am obliged to decline.

I am, very truly and respectfully,

Your obedient Servant,

EMORY WASHBURN.

His Excellency also enclosed the sentiment which follows: —

PETERSHAM. — On the spot where the fathers lighted the flame of Freedom, may their sons never forget how to keep the fire still bright and glowing!

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5. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

“HAIL COLUMBIA” — BY THE BAND.

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6. OUR TOWNSHIP. — In its varied surface of green hills and fertile valleys, nature shines forth in beauty and sublimity. May the minds and hearts of its people be ever open to the sweet influences of these her teachings!

This sentiment was responded to by Rev. Mr. BARTOL, of Lancaster, in a very familiar and graceful manner.

7. THE CLERGY. — One of the main pillars in the social structure. Ever faithful to the arduous but noble calling to which they have been devoted.

Responded to by Rev. J. J. PUTNAM.

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8. COMMON SCHOOLS. — The means by which we have become the most intelligent of nations. In remembering our Pilgrim Fathers, let us not forget that they first introduced and established them.

Responded to by Rev. A. B. FOSTER.

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9. THE MEMORY OF OUR MOTHERS. — We, their children, “rise up, and call them blessed.”

Responded to in an appropriate manner by Rev. E. B. WILLSON.

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10. THE HOMESTEAD. —

“I’ve wandered on through many a clime where flowers of beauty grew,  
Where all was blissful to the heart, and lovely to the view;  
I’ve seen them in their twilight pride, and in their dress of morn,—  
But none appeared so sweet to me as the place where I was born.”

“THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET” — BY THE BAND.

C. K. WETHERELL, Esq., of Barre, responded to the above, and closed with the following sentiment:—

OUR EARLY HOME. — Amid toil, or pleasure’s gay scenes, wherever we may roam, the dearest spot in our memory is our native home.

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11. THE MEMORY OF OUR DECEASED FRIENDS AND RELATIVES.

MUSIC — BY THE BAND.

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12. THE FARMERS OF PETERSHAM. — While they cultivate, with untiring industry, their land, may they not neglect the richer soil of their minds!

Hon. FRANCIS B. FAY, of Chelsea, responded in a witty and excellent speech, which was well received.

13. OUR MILITARY ESCORT OF "'76," "CHIPS OF THE OLD BLOCK," — As ready to take up arms against their country's foes, as they have been willing to-day to bear them for their neighbors and friends.

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Col. WADSWORTH, in behalf of the Escort Company, offered the following sentiment: —

THE ENEMY OF OUR COUNTRY. — When he steps upon our shores in pursuit of "beauty and booty," we'll give him cotton bags and bullets.

The following are some of the volunteer sentiments given: —

THE TOWN OF PETERSHAM. — For its prosperity, much indebted to the intelligence and independence of its *men*; still more to the industry, education, and discretion of its *women*. (By Rev. Dr. NOYES.)

THE ORATOR OF THE DAY, — Himself a prophet, and the son of a prophet; yet not without honor in his own country. (By F. A. BROOKS.)

OUR FRIENDS FROM ABROAD. — We trust they will not wait for the next centennial anniversary before again joining in festivities which will at least commemorate our national anniversary. (By SETH HAPGOOD.)

THE SON OF THE SECOND MINISTER OF PETERSHAM. (By Rev. E. B. WILLSON.)

Responded to by SAMUEL H. REED, Esq., High Sheriff of Franklin Co., who gave —

MY NATIVE TOWN. — May she long continue to prosper; and, above all, may she ever maintain her present high patriotic and moral position among her sister towns, which mutually form the great body of the "Heart of the Commonwealth!"

OUR NATIVE TOWN. — The good foster-mother of us all, and especially the mother of good FOSTERS. (By F. A. BROOKS.)

Responded to by WM. H. FOSTER, Esq., of Boston, who gave —

OUR NATIVE HOME. — Its recollections shall be ever fresh in our remembrance.

PETERSHAM, — Once the thoroughfare from East to West, and North and South; now isolated. Her sons have honorably filled positions in all the learned professions; have been members of both branches of the State Legislature, Representatives in the Congress of the United States; one a member of the first Congress under the Federal Constitution, and one a Governor of the Palmetto State. May she remain like a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid! (By CEPHAS WILLARD.)

THE WOMEN OF PETERSHAM PRESENT HERE TO-DAY. — The town cannot degenerate or decay as long as she can point to such as these, and claim them as her jewels. (By F. A. BROOKS.)

THE HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND PROSPERITY OF ALL THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF OLD NICHEWAUG. — (By AVERY CLARK, Esq., of New York.)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE DAY. — May he live an hundred years to come, and wear his age as lightly as he wears his honors!

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF PETERSHAM. — May their characters be read, their worth appreciated, and memories richly cherished, by their children's children for ever! (By DAVID LEE, Esq., of Barre.)

OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS. — The one gave us sound constitutions for our bodies; the others, for the State. Be it ours to preserve them. (By GEORGE B. LINCOLN, of New York.)

THE HOME OF OUR CHILDHOOD. —

“Green for ever be the groves,  
And bright the flowery sod,  
Where first the child's glad spirit loves  
Its country and its God.”

(By F. A. BROOKS.)

BURNSHIRT HILL, — Remarkable as being the birthplace of two distinguished individuals.

“Old Grimes is dead;”

but, we thank God, the other is spared to preside with so much dignity on the present occasion. (By J. HENRY GODDARD, of Barre.)

THE “FAIR WOMEN AND BRAVE MEN” who may stand here one hundred years hence. — May they be, in blood and spirit, fully equal to their generation!

FREDERIC CHANDLER, of Lancaster, in response to a call made upon him by the President, related an interesting

anecdote, illustrative of the spirit of his maternal ancestor, by which she acquired a fame for "grit" (a quality of female character, more common and more necessary to our grandmothers than it is to their daughters of to-day), in allusion to which he offered the following sentiment:—

THE MEMORY OF LYDIA CHANDLER.—May the sons and daughters of Petersham inherit the "true grit!"

PETERSHAM.—"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." (By P. H. BABBITT, of Barre.)

An aged man, wearing the costume of the past generation, was represented by Alfred D. Gates, who sustained the character during the day with amusing accuracy; in this spirit, he offered the following sentiment:—

THE FIRST SETTLERS OF PETERSHAM; of whom I regret to say I am the only survivor.—May the principles which they inculcated be strictly followed by the present generation!

Interesting speeches were made both by the gentlemen above named, and by several others present; but as they were mostly occasional, and familiar in style, and not made for "bunkum," or intended to be reported or preserved, no attempt has been made to give them here at large. The best praise which can be bestowed on them is, that they were well received, and answered their purpose at the time. There were present at dinner, eight persons, residing in the town, respectively upwards of *eighty* years of age; one of whom (Capt. Joel Brooks) is in his ninety-sixth year, but is still able to do a good day's work on his farm. Mrs. Farrar, a resident, widow of the late Rev. Joseph Farrar, and sister of Capt. Brooks just mentioned, was *ninety-nine* last February. She was not able to be present. At six o'clock, the company united in singing "Old Hundred," and voted that the meeting stand adjourned for one hundred

years. Before separating, the non-resident natives gave three hearty cheers for their old town.

In the evening, brilliant fireworks, procured by liberal subscriptions of the citizens and natives, were displayed on the Common to the great delight of a large concourse of people, many of whom had never before witnessed any exhibition of the kind. The last piece attracted particular attention by its appropriate design, representing an Indian, equipped with bow and arrow, with the word "Nichewaug" in letters of flame, and the date 1754.

The spirit of fellowship and good-will, and the absence of other *spirit* (none of which could be had), rendered the day entirely peaceable and orderly; and the special constables, who were sworn in that day to preserve law and order, found no cause to exercise the power they wielded.

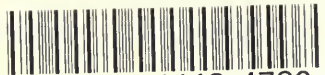
The occasion was a happy one to all; and, though designed as a remembrancer of the past, it will itself prove a subject of pleasing remembrance to many.











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