

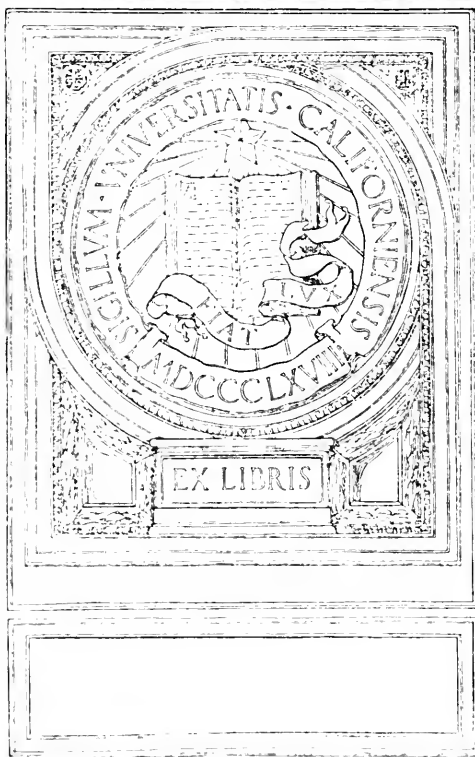
FOLKLORE  
*of*  
SPRINGFIELD  
VERMONT



CROWN POINT  
BLOCK HOUSE  
BUILT IN 1760

*by* M. Eva Baker

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES







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Folklore  
of  
Springfield



Robinson  
Smiley



Elizabeth  
Harkness Smiley



Elizabeth Patch Howe



Isaac Fisher



Elizabeth Glover Fisher



# Folklore of Springfield



*By*  
MARY EVA BAKER



*Illustrated by*  
RUSSELL W. PORTER *and* HORACE S. BROWN

SPRINGFIELD, VERMONT

1922



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*by M. E. Baker*

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— TO THE —  
 GENERAL LEWIS MORRIS CHAPTER,  
 DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,  
 DESCENDANTS OF THOSE HEROES  
 WHOSE FORTITUDE AND PATRIOTISM  
 IS UNPARALLELED IN HISTORY

— AND TO —  
 THE ALTRURIAN CLUB.  
 THAT SO LOYALLY SERVES ITS MOTTO,  
 “*Not for Ourselves. but for Others.*”  
 THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

\* \* \* \* \*

“*Thy work, faithful daughters, is noble as wise,  
 The soul with its love is aglow;  
 A nation will hail thee! thine own hearts approve,  
 And thy deeds through the centuries go.*”

*Credit is due the Misses Grace and Alice Wheeler, Mrs. Mary Townsend Bowen, Miss Edna I. Lockwood, Clarence E. Morse, H. G. Tupper and E. W. Barnard for some of the incidents found in this book; also Mr. and Mrs. Everett Eaton for help in tracing certain subjects.*

# Contents

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	PAGE NO.
I. Making a Wilderness Into a Township . . . . .	1
II. How a Swamp Became the Village Square . . . . .	7
III. The Common and Incidents Connected With It . . . . .	17
IV. Old Bridges . . . . .	24
V. The Romance of the Trees . . . . .	32
VI. Old Weathervanes and Old Bells . . . . .	39
VII. Revolutionary Heroes . . . . .	43
VIII. Early Days of Slavery . . . . .	62
IX. Early Artists and Writers of Springfield . . . . .	67
X. Old Taverns . . . . .	74
XI. Old Schools . . . . .	81
XII. An Original Crown Point Marker . . . . .	116
XIII. Folklore Tales . . . . .	120
XIV. Early Inventors of Springfield . . . . .	151
XV. Thumb Nail History . . . . .	154
XVI. Our State and Governor's Flags . . . . .	175



## List of Illustrations

---

	PAGE NO.
Spencer Hollow .....	1
First Home of Jennison Barnard in Eureka District .....	4
The Old Grist Mill Dam .....	7
W. H. Wheeler's Store, Built About 1800 .....	9
Mansion Hill as it Appeared in 1800 .....	12
The First Methodist Church. Built in 1806 .....	13
Village Square and Bandstand About 1860 .....	15
Approach to Springfield from the North .....	17
Old Wooden Cheshire Bridge. Built About 1800 .....	26
Isaac Fisher Bridge—Better Known as White's Bridge ...	30
Maples on Camp Hill .....	32
The Colburn Elm, Over 120 Years Old .....	33
Patriarch Buttonwood of 110 Years .....	31
Gabriel Weathervane .....	39
Weathervane on Old Cab Shop .....	40
Old Bell, Moulded in 1758—Hung in Cotton Factory in 1836.....	11
Old Cider Mill at Hardscrabble .....	62
Old Trip Hammer Shop, Field's Mill .....	67
Old Springfield House—Torn Down 1891 .....	78
Springfield Wesleyan Seminary .....	109
Original Crown Point Marker. Placed in 1760 .....	116
1760 Crown Point Marker Restored .....	117
The Old Ezekiel Whitcomb Residence .....	120
Kettle Used by Ashabel Draper in his Serenade to Father Smiley and Bride .....	123
Stencil Tool Works of A. J. Fullam .....	132
First Frame House in Town of Springfield .....	137
Workshop of Daniel Field .....	143
Vermont State Flag .....	175
First State Seal, Used Until 1821 .....	177
Present State Seal .....	177





## Foreword

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At the urgent request of the friends most interested in these pages, we will state briefly why we built the book.

As a child nothing was more alluring to me than the tales my elders had to tell of "when I was young and the country new." My interest in all these brought invitations to see the old furniture, dishes and handiwork of the kinds that had been handed down through the generations. Sometimes it took me to an old attic, and haircloth trunks with brass nails, and the initials of the owners set with these nails through the center of the cover, and it seemed to me the possession of such a treasure would be the height of untold wealth. Again I went to the old corner cupboards, and soon learned that the top shelf of these cupboards was a sacred spot where the choicest treasures were kept. Sometimes I was invited to look only on the lower shelves, as those were for such as poor me.

Blessed with grandparents and an abundance of great-aunts and uncles, much of my early life was spent with people older than myself, and there was engraved on my mind such a deep interest in these stories of olden times that nothing could efface it. I would leave my play at any time to listen. I remember well as a girl sitting in breathless silence when an old man (who was a stage driver across the Green mountains) used to come to see my father, and many were the tales he told of encounters with wild animals and narrow escapes when the snow was 20 feet deep. All these things but increased my desire to know more of the days of my ancestors.

In early years when I came to make my home in Springfield, it was such a rich field to explore no time was lost. There

was a goodly number of older people ranging from 75 to 98 and many were the quaint tales they told. These, with hundreds of letters containing other threads of history, filled my mind so full that I began to bubble over to others about the treasures secured, only to be confronted with the question: "Why don't you write it into a book?" It is to be regretted that the pictures in my mind of the dear faces of all those who told me of the past with such interest could not be portrayed. One old man who came to see me said. "We older people have watched for your coming a long time that we might pass on to you what our fathers told us before it was too late."

It is with keen regret my pen is laid down and the pages of this book are closed. Collecting its material has been a labor of love that has spanned more than 20 years, and the book is a tribute of esteem and deep regard to those who toiled so faithfully to do their part in making this beautiful spot we love so well a township.

M. EVA BAKER

Dated at Springfield, Vermont.  
this 1st day of March, 1922

## Introduction

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It is a pleasure to comply with the request to write an introductory note to Miss Baker's book of historic events, but the introduction must necessarily take on a personal character.

We have all found instances of cheerfulness and inspiration being radiated by those who are physically handicapped. Many globe-trotters know less of the globe than some of our "shut-ins." For long years Miss Baker has been a "shut-in" physically, but her mind and heart have never been limited by the walls of her home.

The keenness of her interest in many subjects, particularly the matter of preserving a record of these historic events, has made her life one of great inspiration. It has also been a great inspiration to others who have had a large measure of the world's opportunities.

Since history, after all, resolves itself into a record of the functioning of brain and heart, as well as work of hands, I feel that no history of Springfield can be complete that does not in some way indicate the value of Miss Baker's life, which has been a center continually radiating a cheerfulness and an enthusiasm that have made better and happier all the lives which have come within her influence.

JAMES HARTNESS

Springfield, Vermont  
February 22, 1922

Governor



## Springfield Folklore

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In this little volume an effort has been made to gather up the dropped stitches in Springfield's history, and with a thread of romance weave a tale of folklore: with the hope that certain facts and dates will stand out so clearly that our children will be interested to tell their grandchildren, and thus keep ever bright the record of the lives and deeds of those who worked with untiring effort in those early days to build well a foundation which should hold true to the line down through the generations to follow.





## CHAPTER I

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# Making a Wilderness Into a Township

*Springfield, fair daughter of Vermont,  
Cradled among hills,  
Whose charm the heart  
With rapture thrills.*

**T**READ where you will in the Green Mountain state, seldom will you find scenes of such wonderful natural beauty and historic interest combined as one beholds in Springfield. Just gray ribbons of road lying softly between hills of green, so full of green there is hardly a hint of the

usual brown of the woods in them—till you feel you are passing through a veritable aisle of some softly carved temple of the out-of-doors.

Turn back with me, if you will, to the days when Springfield was a wilderness and glance at some of the incidents connected with its first existence. History and tradition have made us more or less familiar with the Indian trails through this part of the state over which the Indians passed to and fro to scenes of greater activities.

The whole of this part of the country had from time immemorial been in possession of the native Indians. It does not appear that they resided here in great numbers, although the forests were well stocked with game, the streams abounded in excellent fish, and salmon in abundance were in the rivers. All these would have furnished food for a large number.

Lying as it did, on the frontier of several powerful tribes who were incessantly at war with each other, it was constantly exposed from every quarter. It was in passing over their trails in this vicinity that the Indians discovered the falls in the Black river, which had a great attraction for them. They came long distances to see the water as it pours over the rocks into the pocket under what is now the Falls bridge. This they called "Comtu" (great noise).

While there are no bloody battles to record and no overwhelming defeats to lament, it was an unguarded frontier unsafe for occupancy, constantly crossed and recrossed by armed parties of whites and marauding Indians, who were liable at any time to overrun the country. It can readily be seen that the same cause which prevented its becoming a permanent home for the red men prevented its settlement by civilized



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## MAKING A WILDERNESS INTO A TOWNSHIP

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people. Before 1750 a branch of the Abenaki Indians located on French Meadows. This is the first account we have of any Indians settling here for any length of time.

As early as 1752, Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire attempted to survey and lay out two townships on the Connecticut river, in the vicinity of what is now the town of Springfield, but was so repulsed by the Indians the project was given up. In that same year came John Nott and, with his clever scheme of using his half-breed Indian wife as an entrance wedge, he visited the tribe on French Meadows. He was invited to smoke the pipe of peace and remained there all winter, the Indians always maintaining the most friendly relations with him.

With the exception of a small settlement made in Springfield in 1753, no settlement was made in Windsor county until after Canada was subdued by the British in 1760. But in their expeditions against the French the English colonists had made themselves acquainted with the fertility and value of the land, and at the close of hostilities it was eagerly sought for by settlers.

To this soil came a strong people, men and women, too, whose hearts beat warm and true for the principles of civil liberty and civil government. Coming as they did from Massachusetts and Connecticut, they had traveled through an unbroken wilderness, infested with savages, to conquer not only all that is wild in nature, but to contend with a rigorous climate.

They were no mere adventurers, but actual home-makers, whose only belongings were a few domestic animals, an axe and a plow. The habitations they built were log cabins. One writer says of these early pioneers, "From the very first the

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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people of Springfield have been full of the spirit of enterprise and inventive genius. They were warm-hearted, generous-minded, self-reliant pioneers, and many of their descendants have the characteristics of that sturdy race."



FIRST HOME OF JENNISON BARNARD IN EUREKA DISTRICT

When Lord Amherst came in 1760 to build the Crown Point road, a long stride was made towards opening up this part of the country. While in these days it would scarcely be called much more than a wood road, for it was narrow and rough we are told, it was a road closely following the old Indian trail to Lake Champlain and a much shorter route for the troops to reach Canada.

General Goffe, with a regiment of 800 men from New Hampshire, was sent by Lord Amherst to build the road in the summer of 1760, and our friend John Nott was the ferryman who ferried them over. Having no title to his land, he was obliged to give up that first log cabin home and for many

years was the ferryman at Wentworth's ferry. Picture him if you can, a dapper little man, very neat in appearance, wearing smallclothes and knee buckles, ferrying the troops over at all times, day or night; for these were days that required courage to meet the foe on every side.

When they had reached this side of the Connecticut, they first built the Block house to have a place of safety. Too much cannot be said about the Block house that it may remain in the remembrance of young and old. While there never were any pictures of this old house, thanks to Daniel A. Gill a description of it was firmly impressed on the minds of several persons.

It was built up of stone 16 feet, then of hewn logs hanging over four feet all around, with four port holes on a side, and four in the floor made by the jutting logs, through which it would be possible to fire at an enemy creeping under the projection to undermine the stonework. The roof was thatched with bark. The timbers show that the holes for the wooden pegs were burned out with some kind of a heated iron, and the door was made of logs in the same way, with leather hinges. This was all enclosed by a picket fence, which was made of logs sharpened and set in the ground close together. As there was little time to remove the bark from these logs, when it was dry enough to peel, here and there, the Indians often set fire to it. To overcome this alarming disaster, the ingenious white man made something closely akin to the small boy's squirt gun, only on a larger scale. A log was chosen which, when a portion of the inside was removed, held about two pails of water. A wooden plunger was made, and with the aid of this, by put-

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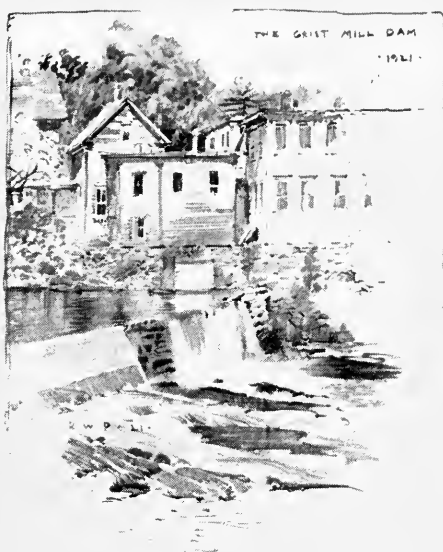
FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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ting the end of the log out of the port hole, a stream of water could be sent directly on the blazing bark.

After completing the Block house, General Goffe and his men were 44 days cutting the road through to the foot of the Green mountains, where it joined the portion which was built the year before. Rejoining their army July 31. 1760, they marched to Canada, leaving behind a lasting monument to their memory and a historic heirloom to all the generations following.





## CHAPTER II

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# How a Swamp Became the Village Square

**I**N 1772 Col. John Barrett owned the whole of the present village site, and in that year he sold to William Lockwood the portion on the west side of the river. The latter built a log cabin near the falls, and soon after a sawmill. Later he built a blockhouse near the residence of Dr. H. H. Lawrence on Park street. He and his sons cleared up the land, sawed lumber for buildings, and erected a gristmill on the west side of the river. Later he bought a portion of land on Summer street, which included the cemetery, and deeded the latter to the town in 1793.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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The bits of history herein related do not all appear in books, but were handed down in oft-repeated tales from generation to generation. When Daniel Howe and his wife, Elizabeth (Patch) Howe, came to Springfield from Fitzwilliam, N. H., in the spring of 1795, he left to us the record of his first impression of Main street and the square.

From the present site of the Methodist church to the bridge at the foot of Main street was a swamp, the banks above being full of springs. Where the hotel now stands the swamp contained logs and stumps from decayed trees. The brook that flows under Main street from Valley street at that time emptied into the river near Wheeler's store. Great pine and hemlock trees came to the bank of the river, which rolled along with great power and grandeur undisturbed by the hand of man. To Mr. Howe it was a most unpromising location for a village.

In 1791 William Griffith built the first frame house in the village, on the river bank near the Episcopal church. This was swept away in the freshet of 1869.

Messrs. Fling, Lewis and Seymour built a gristmill in 1795 on the site of the present mill back of the fire station. A little log house was put up near the fountain in the square for the miller. At the same time Samuel Lewis built a house where F. G. Ellison now lives, and after many years it was cut in two and moved up on Valley street, where it became the Jackman and Proctor houses. His office and woodshed were across the road in the block where Dr. C. W. Locke now lives, and a very small house was on the site of the present hotel. This was all there was in the square up to 1800. There were no roads, only bridle paths, and freight was carried on ox-sleds or drags.

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## HOW A SWAMP BECAME THE VILLAGE SQUARE

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The oldest building in the centre of the village and a most familiar landmark to us, is known as Wheeler's. The first account we have of its existence, Daniel Houghton dammed the brook and built a shop to make spinning wheels. Previous to 1800 Samuel M. Lewis had a shop there. It was next used by Mr. Day in the manufacture of hats. Afterwards it was used by Mr. Whipple, who moved from his store near Mrs. Franklin Barney's place on Summer street to this old building on the



W. H. WHEELER'S STORE, BUILT ABOUT 1800  
FIRST FRAME BUILDING IN VILLAGE

corner. He was succeeded by John Perkins, who disposed of his business to Miles Duncan. He went west, and Mr. Perkins again took the store until 1845. The next occupants were Adams & Bundy, who made several changes in the building, using it for a general store. Next came Charles Sabin, who added the drug business. The building was purchased by Mr. Sabin about 1850, then by Noble Crain and Frederick Porter, who added jewelry to the stock. On the death of the former, Mr.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Porter carried on the business alone, but in 1854 W. H. Wheeler became a partner, and from 1870 he carried it on alone.

In 1784 a small house was put up by Ichabod Grimes of Guilford, Mass., on the site of the Adnabrown hotel. Lease was granted him by William Lockwood for 10 years, with the understanding that he should entertain all who came to see the falls.

In 1800 Col. Jonathan Williams built the first hotel on Main street, and in 1803 a hat shop where the Leland block now stands. The hotel was a small affair at first with a wing on each end, and the nearby brook only required three planks for covering. Wash tubs could be seen here and there along the sides, where women dipped up water for laundry purposes. The land was leased from William Lockwood, and again it was stipulated that he (Jonathan Williams) should entertain all the people who came to see the falls. They attracted a great deal of attention for miles around.

As we turn back the pages of history, we read these lines: "Born in Natick, Mass., Nov. 5th, 1763, Isaac Fisher." What follows after should be of interest to us all, for this man was closely connected with our early days, and one whom we know by what he accomplished in developing our resources.

In 1799 Isaac Fisher moved to Charlestown, N. H., to follow the trade of carpenter. In 1806, a most eventful year in our history, he built the first bridge across the Connecticut between these two towns. In that same year he moved to Springfield and bought the gristmill of John White. At this time the only road to Lockwood's falls, as they were called, was the Crown Point road to the farm of Arthur Whitcomb, then by the Tower place (now owned by A. G. Woolson) to



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## HOW A SWAMP BECAME THE VILLAGE SQUARE

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the falls, where were a gristmill, sawmill, fulling mill and a few buildings.

The practical eye of Isaac Fisher discovered the possibilities here for business enterprise. He was not discouraged by the obstacles to be overcome as nature opposed the improvements of men. He bought land and rights until he controlled nearly the whole water power of the falls. He surveyed, planned and built the system of dams by which the water is made, over and over, to turn the wheels of industry.

Within the year, 1806, he had the road surveyed from Cheshire bridge up Black river to North Springfield and built a bridge at the latter place. In 1809, when the miller went to sleep and let the grist run out, setting the mill on fire, Isaac Fisher said to the farmers, "The machinery is left; bring your grists in one week and I will grind them." True to his word, the seventh day the mill was running again.

He built the "Tontine," now the Commonwealth or Sparrow block, for his residence. It was called "The Mansion," from which Mansion Hill receives its name. It was a fine house for the times, but its comeliness long since disappeared before the enlargements and additions of other hands. The writer often has heard the older people tell of Mrs. Fisher's well-kept garden and lawn, which extended down Main street almost to the present Bank block. with a beautiful white rose bush trained on the wall at the rear of the garden. back of where the lunch cart now stands.

They must have water for the home, and Isaac Fisher dug a well in front of his residence, now the center of the square, and a pump made by Steven Hasham, a descendant of Captive Johnson, was placed in it. Later this became the town pump

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

and was used as such until '52 or '53. Mr. Sparrow's original deed included the land in the square nearly to the hotel. Ansel Coburn went down into the well several times and said the stones were much larger than generally used for such purposes.



MANSION HILL AS IT APPEARED IN 1800

When Isaac Fisher's daughter married a Chase, he (Isaac Fisher) built the Chase block for her home. This is now the McKinley block. For his son he built the small house that William Wheeler owned, at the top of the bank, just back of the block: all going to the old well for water.

Father Smiley said at Isaac Fisher's funeral: "He was leader in all the village improvements, and the town was indebted to him more than to any other one man for its prosperous beginning."

In 1806 the Methodist people decided to build a place of

## HOW A SWAMP BECAME THE VILLAGE SQUARE

worship of their own. They selected a site on the brow of Seminary Hill, but the church was not completed until 1825. The first pastor was a circuit rider. On one occasion, being much fatigued with his long horseback ride through the woods, he took a nap on the bench back of the pulpit, while the people waited, and the story goes he snored lustily. After the nap he arose and preached with unusual vigor. But times have changed, and now the pastor waits, while the people sleep.



THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, BUILT IN 1806—USED AS  
WESLEYAN SEMINARY FROM 1846 TO 1866

In 1846, when the new church was built at the head of Main street, the old church became the Wesleyan seminary. In partial payment for this a mortgage was given, covering one-half the vestry, to Samuel Taylor, who furnished and drew the stone from his farm, more familiarly known as the old Latham place. Much to the annoyance of the church people, he used this for a meat market, and this story is told of him: Having a keen eye for business, he only killed half a beef creature at any one time for his market.

The Methodist clock was made by Steven Hasham in 1844 and was first used with a spider bell, like an inverted peach

basket. In 1866 or '67 a new bell was purchased, and the clock struck so fast you could not count it. A longer hammer was bought which remedied the trouble. Both bells were procured by subscription. One man on Seminary Hill refused to give a cent toward the bell. Those most interested said they did not want any hands on the dial facing the hill; if they could fix it so that he could not hear the clock strike, they would do so. But wiser heads predominated, and hands were placed on three sides.

In the early days of Springfield there was an old post road located up the Connecticut river to Windsor, and the inhabitants had to go to Charlestown, N. H., or Weathersfield Bow for their mail. In 1817 a postoffice was established in what is now Springfield market with Judge Porter as the first postmaster. The mail carrier route was from Charlestown, N. H., to Manchester, Vt., once a week, with the large salary of \$850 a year, the driver furnishing horses, vehicle, etc., and carrying occasional passengers. All farm produce and other things were drawn to Boston on freight teams with four, six, and eight horses attached.

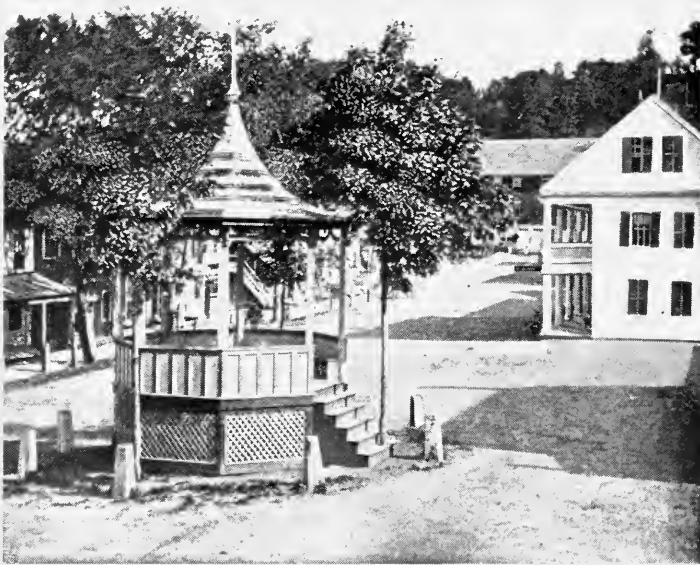
In 1824 a stage route was established between Charlestown, N. H., and Manchester, Vt., with a capital of \$500 at \$10 per share. After a time the railroad was built from Boston to Fitchburg, and the people thought the journey much shorter. Then it came to Keene and Walpole, N. H., and for a number of years the people had to go to Tucker's bridge in Bellows Falls to meet the Walpole train, for there was no road on this side. The writer has often heard the late Amasa Woolson tell of purchasing a sofa in Boston that came up on the freight teams and twelve miles of the distance it was drawn by oxen.

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## HOW A SWAMP BECAME THE VILLAGE SQUARE

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Then the railroad reached Charlestown, and they went over to meet a train a day. Later we went in Concord coaches to meet any train we wished, and F. G. Ellison looked after our comfort, in what we thought such a hard ride. Mr. Ellison paid \$1000 for the last Concord coach used on the stage route.



VILLAGE SQUARE AND BANDSTAND ABOUT 1860

The block where Dr. C. W. Locke now lives was built in 1833, and it is so recorded on the stone in the attic. George Washburn and Daniel Cushing bought the land of Isaac Fisher in 1832 and built the block the next year, Daniel Cushing doing the work. Each family had one-half the block, the whole of which was valued at \$5000, as it was the first block of any size in the town. Men came from far and near to see it and pass

their opinion on its merits. Mr. Washburn had the postoffice in his side of the block for many years.

The old bandstand has an amusing little tale to tell. Many years since there was a spring on Mineral street, the water of which was supposed to be very beneficial in assisting nature in her various cures. In the bright summer mornings such estimable ladies as Mrs. Daniel Rice, Mrs. B. F. Dana, Mrs. Helen (Porter) Crain, and others used to go to drink of the water. Mr. Rice, acting on the principle, "If a little is good, more would be better," built a summer house, where the ladies could go and take their sewing and drink freely of the water.

The Glorious Fourth was not so different in those days from the present time. On one of these Fourths some of the boys, wishing to celebrate, hired a man with a yoke of oxen and, loading the summer house on the wagon, started for the square. But it proved too heavy, and after much persuasion Ellis Eaton allowed four of his freight horses to be used, and the load was safely landed in the center of the square. To the great surprise of the boys it met with favor and, after being somewhat remodeled, it later became the bandstand and was used as such for many years. Ansel Coburn, Sam Chipman and John DeMary, in telling this story, always seemed pleased that they were among the "boys" that night.



### CHAPTER III

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## The Common and Incidents Connected With It

**T**HE story of the first meeting house in Springfield and the story of the Common are closely interwoven, because of the many controversies before it could be settled just which portion of the land should be used for said house of worship.

The early settlers of Springfield were a religious people, and long before a church was organized, when no man left home without being well armed, the hardy pioneers gathered on the Sabbath at private houses for worship. These meetings were usually held at Capt. Joseph Little's place (now owned by Norman L. Grow), and sermons were read by Lieut. Hezekiah Holmes.

It was considered a duty of the government to provide for the support of religious worship. The majority of the voters

being Congregationalists, that sect was supposed to constitute the established church or "standing order," and all taxpayers were required to pay their share of the expense.

It seems that in the days of the early settlement of the town there was much dissension about where the meeting house should be built. In 1781 it was voted to build a house to be 28 by 26 feet with 14 foot posts, on Lieut. Roger Bates' pea ground (formerly the Joseph Little place). After the frame was up the work stopped. The funds were not forthcoming to pay the bills, and the bats and owls were left in undisputed possession of the naked frame on Bates' pea ground.

Five years later the town voted to build a house 40 by 56 feet on the corner south of the Capt. George Hubbard farm (now known as the Boothby place). Lumber for that purpose was brought to the lot, but some of the most prominent men foresaw that a more central location would be better for the whole town and counseled delay.

September 1, 1789, the town voted to build a house 40 by 50 feet on James Dumphrey's flat, the present Common, and three days later they obtained from him a deed of about two acres of land, the purchase price being 1 pounds and 2 shillings, Deacon Whitney and Abner Bisbee advancing the money. The land was deeded to the "inhabitants and the future inhabitants of the town of Springfield." The tract extended north to about the present line of Circular street and was soon known as the "Meeting House Common." Two years later a little larger tract of land was bought of Orsamus Holmes, surrounding this on the north and east sides, extending north six rods and east twelve rods, and from the information at hand it seems probable that the house was erected on the east side of this Holmes lot.



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## THE COMMON AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH IT

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In the next year, 1792, the outside of the meeting house was finished, and on May 7th of that year town meeting was held there for the first time. The building stood on rising ground facing the cemetery, near what is now the corner of Summer Hill and Circular streets. The building committee submitted bills showing the cost to be 358 pounds, 1 shilling, 8½ pence.

It was three years before the inside of the house was finished, but services were held Sunday after Sunday when there was no floor even. In 1794 and '95 the "pew ground" was sold, pews in the gallery bringing from six to nine pounds, while Thomas Barrett paid 50 pounds for three pews in the body of the house. It was at this time also that the town succeeded in effecting an exchange of land with Lester Fling, who had purchased a lot on which to erect a tavern, almost under the eaves of the church, but who was finally persuaded to build his tavern on the site north of John T. Slack's home. This tavern was kept open for many years.

In 1801 Robinson Smiley was installed as the first settled minister of the town. The warning for the March meeting that year included an article:

"To see if the town will be so obliging as to let the inhabitants of the 7th school district build a schoolhouse on the Meeting House Common," and it was voted that they have liberty to build one on the northeast corner of the land deeded to the town by Lester Fling, which would bring the schoolhouse a little more than 100 feet north of the northeast corner of the present Common, on the lot of E. J. Fullam. Here the Hon. Justus Dartt taught a few terms of school. This building was

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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burned, and the second schoolhouse, a frame structure, was built on the south end of the Common.

About this time one store, two blacksmith shops, a church, a powder house, a tavern and a shoe shop, besides some log houses, all had their period of flourishing on the Common. The powder house stood about in front of W. L. Bryant's house, and the store near the old hearse house on the north side of the cemetery. The town pound was on the west side of the Common and was surrounded by a plank fence about 12 feet high, and into this enclosure not only the stray animals but, on training days or days of other public festivities, all such men who were too hilarious were put to remain until sundown for reflection.

James Whitney, who enjoyed the distinction of having it said of him that he remembered all that he ever knew and all that his father before him knew, told how, as a boy, he coasted from the Hartness farm down past W. L. Bryant's house, going on down to the Brook road, gathering force enough on the way to send him some distance on Main street, there being no trees or other obstructions. Mr. Whitney remembered all the old buildings on the Common and said it would seem, because the Common belonged to the town, that anyone, not having land of his own, felt free to build or take a piece there.

Thomas Stoughton, a harness maker, lived in a log house between John T. Slack's and the Boutelle house, and here, according to our town history, were born his two sons, Henry and Edward, who were destined to become noted lawyers. Edward settled in Windsor and was at one time associated with Secretary Evarts in his law office in New York city and built his home adjoining Evarts' in Windsor. He was at one time

our minister to Russia, where he gathered many beautiful and valuable treasures. Henry settled in Bellows Falls. His daughter accompanied her uncle to Russia on one of his trips. In the list of one thousand of the most distinguished men of Vermont appears the name of Edward Stoughton.

Here on the Meeting House Common, on the level field north of the church, used to occur the semi-annual "trainings," when all men, within certain ages, were warned out for training in June and October. Mr. Whitney belonged to a company whose members considered themselves a little bigger than any of the others, because they knew four evolutions, while the others knew only three, and when one of their company went to Chester and learned two more, making six for them, great was their pride. The left-overs were gathered into a company named the "Stub Toes." Mounted cavalry, uniformed with red coats trimmed with gold lace, and carrying swords, drilled there; also an artillery company. Surely on these occasions the old Common must have appeared in holiday attire. It was not large enough for a muster field, so the musters were held on Lockwood's plain, between here and North Springfield.

When the church was about 21 years old it was called the East Meeting House to distinguish it from others that had been built in town, but it was not until 1832, forty years after the house was built, that the site on Main street was purchased by the Congregational society.

The road between the Common and the cemetery is an old road, but formerly ran farther east through what is now included in the cemetery. Common street was laid out in October, 1852, two and one-half years before Pleasant street was opened for travel. Front street and Orchard street were laid out in

1870, and it is probable that Circular street was made at the same time, as it is shown on the Fullam maps, although no record of it can be found.

The story of the Common would not be complete without some mention of A. J. Fullam and his connection with the land adjoining it. The old residents all know how, after he had started making a fortune in the stencil business, he purchased all the available land on top of the hill and contemplated building a castle, taking Jonah Bisbee to Wilmington, N. J., to see the castle he wished reproduced; how he blasted out a ledge, used the stone in building the stone barn, and brought quantities of soapstone for his house; how he abandoned his plans, and later how he laid out the land in house lots and streets, and divided his soapstone for the underpinning of a house on each lot. Where he blasted out this ledge, he determined to make a fish pond, much to the delight of the small boys, who danced around the edge, waiting for it to be filled with water and fish. But again this project was abandoned.

His methods of advertising were far ahead of his time. Maps and blueprints were prepared, posters printed, curious handbills were issued every day and, in face of everyone's doleful predictions, all arrangements were made for a great auction.

These handbills were surely a work of art. The first part foretold the future of Springfield, and the older inhabitants say much of it has come true. In the second part he advertised his building lots. In the last part he told how everyone who attended the auction would have all the cider and whiskey they wished, but the townspeople made such a disturbance about this that he was obliged to cross it off. Those who were present

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THE COMMON AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH IT

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say, however, that while not served in public, it was abundant in private. When night came all the lots were sold. The townspeople rubbed their eyes and could hardly believe it.

Agricultural fairs were held on the Common as late as 1869 or '70, using the stone barn when it was new for a Floral hall.

The trees on the Common were set out by A. J. Fullam on the southwest end, and Dr. Crain on the other side, taking what was left from the tree-planting in the cemetery.



## CHAPTER IV

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# Old Bridges

**T**HE story of the covered bridges of the old, and then in the new, world is one few persons have had the time or inclination to pursue, and it might prove uninteresting if given in detail, but full of interest, however, when relating to our old home town.

For 65 years, from the settlement of Charlestown, the Connecticut river, except in the winter, had to be crossed by boats. Three ferries were established. The first was called the lower landing, the second was known as the second landing, and the other was Wentworth's, named for Benning Wentworth. The first two were little used as passways to the country on the other side of the river, Wentworth's ferry being the great crossing to that region. This was the terminus on the river of the old Indian trails from Crown Point and Canada. Over this ferry all the forces of the various military expeditions in the Indian, French and Revolutionary wars were transported, as well as all provisions and military stores. It was over this ferry John Stark passed August 3, 1777, with 1200 men, one camp kettle and two bullet moulds. These were all his supplies for the Battle of Bennington. In that year James Miner was paid 20 pounds, 5 shillings, 2 pence for ferriage. Samuel Remington was paid 17 pounds, 7 shillings and 9 pence in the same year. These bills were for ferrying over the soldiers for Stark and

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## OLD BRIDGES

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others. On the erection of the bridge these ferries were discontinued.

The first covered bridge of which we have any record was built in Germany. It was a rude structure of stone and mortar, and it was many years before the wooden bridge took its place.

To read some of the controversies in the town meetings of the early days, both for and against covering the bridges, is most amusing. It was a long stride from felling the tallest trees nearest the river bank for stringers to covering the bridges, both sides and top, and was looked upon by many as a great piece of extravagance. One man, greatly exasperated, said in one of those meetings, "If they had any sense they would know it could not be done: for how could you draw a load across the bare planks in winter," never thinking snow could be shoveled onto the bare planks to meet the need. The other side argued that the planks would last enough longer to pay. But the covered bridge had come, and to stay; for it steadily grew in popular favor until it reached the Connecticut valley, where they had long felt the need of bridges at various points to connect the two states, Vermont and New Hampshire. But so slight was the knowledge of bridge building at the time that the erection of a structure across the stream which would remain permanent was looked upon as very doubtful until Col. Enoch Hale, who was a native of Rindge, N. H., moved to Walpole in 1784. In 1786 he erected a bridge at Bellows Falls that was the first ever to span the Connecticut river.

The spot to build the bridge was granted by the legislature of New Hampshire, and the toll was regulated by law. The "experiment," as many regarded it, attracted great atten-

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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tion at the time, and its successful completion was looked upon as such a triumph of mechanical art that Colonel Hale gained an extensive reputation. This remained the only bridge across the river until 1796. Its length was 365 feet, and the height above the water was 50 feet.



OLD WOODEN CHESHIRE BRIDGE BUILT ABOUT 1800

Between Charlestown and Springfield for a long time a bridge was deemed a necessity, as the ferries were the only means of crossing, and in urgent cases messages were written and fastened to a stone; then, after shouting and various gestures to attract attention on the other side, the stone was hurled across, bearing its important message. It was not until 1801 that steps were taken to secure a bridge, and in that year the Cheshire Bridge company was incorporated. The following persons were of the company:

*Copy of the Original Document*

Know all men by these presents that I, John Putnam of Springfield, in the County of Windsor and State of Vermont, husbandman, for and in consideration of the sum of Thirteen



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OLD BRIDGES

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Hundred and Fifty Dollars, to me well and truly paid, to wit:

By Lewis R. Morris of said Springfield, Esquire, One Hundred and Eight Dollars; by Jon. Baker, gentleman, Isaac Fisher, millwright, Horace Hall, gentleman, Roswell Hunt, yeoman, all of Charlestown in the County of Cheshire and State of New Hampshire, the sum of One Hundred and Eight Dollars each; by Oliver Hall of said Charlestown, Esquire, the sum of Two Hundred and Sixteen Dollars; by Aaron Dean, trader, John Willard, gentleman, Oliver Hastings, physician, Timothy Putnam, true husbandman, and William Briggs, gentleman, all of said Charlestown, the sum of Fifty-four Dollars each; by Isaac Baker of Marlow in said County of Cheshire, physician, the sum of Fifty-four Dollars; by Simon Stevens of said Springfield, Esquire, the sum of Fifty-four Dollars, and by Benj. West of said Charlestown, the sum of Two Hundred and Sixteen Dollars.

Witness my hand and seal this twenty-fourth day of March in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and six.

JOHN PUTNAM

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of

Aaron Parks

Julien Silsby

They early took measures to build the bridge, Isaac Fisher doing the carpenter work, and when completed it was considered an elegant structure. This bridge was used 31 years before another was needed to take its place.

The first bridge over the falls was built a little later than 1771 by felling two hemlock trees from each bank of the river across the chasm for stringers and it was called "Lockwood's bridge." In 1796 the records show that the town voted

to condemn this bridge and build a new one, but, crude as it may have been, the old bridge served them well for several years.

It now became necessary to go farther into the forests for the hemlock trees for stringers, as they had to be not less than two feet through, and once in four years every other stringer was put in new, so that the timbers were never all old at any time. This was considered the safest and most secure bridge to be found.

For many years Charles Butterfield had this contract from the town and filled it well, but it became more and more difficult to find straight trees of the required height and diameter to replace the stringers and the wooden bridge was finally given up for an iron structure, which was thought a great step forward in keeping pace with the times. During the years of repairing the bridge every fourth year, many stories are told of stringer-happenings, a few of which may prove of interest today.

A blind man coming from Seminary Hill, not knowing the bridge was up, had passed onto one of the stringers some distance before he was observed. No one dared speak lest he become frightened. Breathlessly they watched him, as, all unaware of danger, he passed safely to the opposite side. Mrs. Elizabeth Herrick and a friend walked a stringer in the evening, about 65 years ago, choosing a new one because it was whiter and could be more plainly seen. In relating this incident, Mrs. Herrick did not appear to think it much of a feat to accomplish.

We are told a physician, returning on horseback in the night, came to the bridge, when the horse stopped but, upon

being urged by his rider, went safely across on one stringer. the physician discovering, when too late to turn back, the danger he was in.

At the time of the great freshet in the fall of 1869, all the bridges over the Black river but one were swept away and the iron bridge over the falls, of which we have spoken, was included. Many persons witnessed this great loss to the town and not a few have contributed from their experiences to complete the description here given.

As the rain continued several days the river became more than full-banks, and all kinds of farm produce, together with household goods, began to come down to the bridge, among them being cradles, chicken coops, a pumpkin of more than ordinary size and, perched on the top of this, was a rooster sailing along. At first no serious alarm was felt, but when the water was within two feet of the bridge and still rising, danger signs were put up on either end and an effort was made to keep people away. The excitement, however, was very great and, when their homes were on the opposite side of the stream from where they stood, people persisted in crossing, even in face of danger. In one instance a chain was formed with a man in the lead and several women following him, each hanging to the garments of the one in front, and in this way they ran across. Iron and stone even cannot always withstand the pressure. With a terrible grinding and crash, the bridge gave way, taking ten feet of earth and rocks on the west bank with it, and sweeping one man, a Mr. Morey, away in the flood. He had stepped onto the bridge and stopped to look off at the water, which made him a little too late for safety. Not only did the town lose heavily in bridges by this freshet, but many of the shops were greatly damaged.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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The next structure was of wood. Stringers were placed, but the bridge was built in the street, between Wheeler's store and the Woolson block; then it was drawn into position by the means of a turn-pin placed on the opposite side. By some miscalculation the bridge did not come onto the stringers true, but hung so far over them it was feared for a time it would follow



Photo by Arthur Field

ISAAC FISHER BRIDGE BETTER KNOWN  
AS WHITE'S BRIDGE

the fate of its predecessor, and it was with great difficulty that it was placed in position. In a comparatively few years this bridge was succeeded by an iron bridge.

The oft-repeated tale that there was no bottom to the river under the bridge, that a plumb line had many times been lowered all to no purpose, that there was no bottom to be found,

has been proven false and the difficulty overcome. The water under the northeast corner of the bridge is 60 feet deep and at the southeast corner 40 feet deep; the distance from the bridge to the water is 38 feet.

The river at this point falls 110 feet in one-eighth of a mile, 50 feet of which are nearly perpendicular, and it is regarded as one of the greatest curiosities in the state. The river for 20 rods passes through a ravine lined by perpendicular walls of mica slate from 60 to 80 feet high, presenting a most interesting spectacle.

The first bridge at the point where White's bridge now spans the Black river was built by Isaac Fisher about 1807; while the bridge known as Button bridge was so called from the large buttonwood tree that stood at one end for many years.

To most of us it is surprising to learn that for many years there was a bridge over what is now the road between Mrs. Franklin Barney's home and Mrs. Lockwood's on Summer street. This was over 100 years ago, and Mrs. Barney's mother remembered well how the horse of Rollin Whitney's grandfather in crossing this bridge became unmanageable and driver and team went over into the ravine below. The water came from Cherry Hill, passing through one corner of the Common and the cemetery near the old hearse house, went under what is known as the Henry Mason place, now owned by John T. Slack, and the property of Maitland C. Lovell, down across the road into the ravine.

Quaint as the old wooden covered bridge may seem today, we miss it in storm and in sunshine. After being in favor in New England about 125 years, it will soon be numbered among the things of the past.



## CHAPTER V

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### The Romance of the Trees

**H**ENRY D. THOREAU tells us, "The trees speak only to those who listen." Can we not pause in our busy lives and listen for the message from some of the trees we pass in our daily routine of work, for many of them will tell their story, if only in a whisper. We may catch it if our ears are attune to nature. The Colburn Elm, near the Colburn house on Main street, is over 120 years old and has an interesting history. When Dr. Samuel Cobb came to Springfield from

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THE ROMANCE OF THE TREES

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Tolland, Conn., in 1781, wishing to bring something from his old home, he made choice of a few small elm trees, setting them out on the new home place, which is known as the Cortez Miller, or, later, as the Beal farm. When his son, Dr. Samuel



THE COLBURN ELM, OVER 120 YEARS OLD



PATRIARCH BUTTONWOOD OF 140 YEARS

Cobb, Jr., bought the Colburn place, he took a small one from the old Tolland elms and set it near his new home, where it has stood as one of our venerable landmarks, admired by all. It was written into the deed that it should never be destroyed as long it could weather the frosts and snows of winter, and



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## THE ROMANCE OF THE TREES

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hold up its grand old head with safety to mankind. Jonas Glynn at 16 sat under it (it being then quite a large tree) and ate his dinner, while at work carrying mortar to lay the brick in repairing the house.

A tree that is one hundred years old we call a patriarch. On the grounds of Walter W. Slack stands a sycamore, or buttonwood, tree that has the right to wear this title. It has withstood the elements of 140 years, and its history is of local interest. About 100 years ago the young men of the town, wishing to have a sham fight, obtained the consent of their elders after much persuasion, and the day was set. All business was suspended, and the old Litchfield hill was chosen as the scene of action.

Capt. Philip Cook, a half-breed Indian shoemaker, having his house and shop where the residence of the late Amasa Woolson now stands, contended that he and his braves would build a wigwam of boughs on the top of Litchfield hill and with half the young men of the town would defend the wigwam with bows and arrows, while the other half should have guns. The young men serving as Indians hatched flax to wear as hair, with feathers sticking around the crown, and painted their faces to look as much like real warriors as possible. Several old Revolutionary cannon were drawn to the base of the hill and placed around the road to make it seem like a real battle.

People came from surrounding towns to witness the fight. The Indians descended from the top of the hill. Captain Cook standing under the sycamore tree to give his orders as they met the foe. It was spoken of then as the "*old* buttonwood tree." The Indians were taken captives, Captain Cook alone escaping.

He ran down into the woods back of the old Jackman house, being able to retain his bow and arrows.

Rollin Whitney's mother remembered that the old folks stayed at home, worrying all day for fear, when the young blood was up, there would be a real, rather than a sham, fight, and the women were not allowed to go even as spectators.

James Whitney ran away from home and came down to where W. L. Bryant now lives and looked across at the fight with keen interest. Ezekiel Whitcomb, who took the part of one of the Indians, said he never had so good a time in his life; and B. F. Dana's father led him around all day by the hand, fearing he would get hurt.

The pine in front of the late H. F. Wyman's house on Valley street was set out by Miss Sarah Bingham. Wishing to celebrate her 18th birthday anniversary, she and her friend, Miss Mary Safford, went to the woods and selected a small pine which just filled a peck basket. The young ladies set it out Dec. 17, 1837, where for nearly 85 years

“Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,  
Which he with such benignant royalty  
Accepts, as only paying what is lent.”

Something close akin to romance is connected with the elms below the Town hall. It is nearly 70 years since Mr. Kimball built the four houses, so nearly alike, setting out an elm in front of each. Into the four houses came four brides, Mrs. Joseph Messenger, the first Mrs. Adna Brown, Mrs. C. K. Labaree and Mrs. Rice, wife of the Universalist minister. A rivalry sprung up as to which tree could be coaxed and petted to outshine its neighbors. Three of these are standing today, and it was never decided which was the winning bride.

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## THE ROMANCE OF THE TREES

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In the fork between the North Springfield road and the Gilman hill stand the elms set out by Henry Whitcomb, brother of Jairus Whitcomb. The trees in the square were set out by Gershom Closson. The elm in front of the Bank block, near the lower corner, was placed there by Henry Barnard. Adna Brown set out all the elms on the north end of Pleasant street in 1862.

About 1860 Charles Forbush made and carried a vote in town meeting to pay each person 25 cents for every tree set out about the village, or on their grounds, that was living at the close of one year. In this way a large number were added to beautify the town. In a few years many of them were considered in the way and were cut down, which proved so discouraging that no further effort was ever made to promote interest in shade trees about the village.

The first trees ever brought into town that were grown in a nursery, Daniel Rice procured about 60 years ago for what is now known as the Summer Hill cemetery. The ladies of the town, considering the cemetery somewhat neglected, and wishing to beautify it, held a two days' fair in the Town hall. From this, and those interested out of town, the goodly sum of \$1000 was raised to carry on the work. A committee of four ladies was chosen, Mrs. Frederick Porter, Mrs. Henry Mason, Miss Sarah Crain and Miss Sarah Whitcomb, who gave their time for a month to superintend the setting out of these trees. Mrs. Frederick Porter set out the willows around the tomb herself, and Henry Mason set out the pines by the fence next to his land. Dr. Crain, becoming much interested in the work, took all the trees that were left and set them out on the Common at his own expense.

Udna Burke set out in 1855 the two elms on the Burke grounds. The large horse-chestnut near the road his wife brought from Syracuse, N. Y., about 1850. It was so small she brought it home in an old-fashioned reticule, and it was one of the first in town.

On the grounds of Everett Eaton are two over-cup, or burr, oaks, not native here in Vermont, but sent Mr. Eaton's father by a cousin in Rockford, Ill., and planted to celebrate the birth of his son in 1875.

The large elm opposite the Tower place, now owned by A. Glenn Woolson, was set out by Stoddard Tower in the early part of 1800. Mrs. Daniel A. Gill, better known as Aunt Theda (Tower) Gill, remembered when they were living in the log house about half way between there and the Derby place. Her father was ill in bed but, looking out of the window, he saw a large bear under that elm and asked for his gun. They bolstered him up and, resting the weapon on the window sill, he fired, killing the bear. It was a very large one, the meat of which was salted and lasted all winter. About 25 years ago one limb of this tree was severed by lightning and made four cords of wood. The old tree measures 18 feet in circumference about five feet from the ground.

Hamilton Gibson says, "To most of us nature is not only a closed book, but with leaves uncut." If the leaves have been cut and the book opened wide enough to catch a glimpse of these ancient landmarks, an interest will be kindled that is sure to be lasting.

## CHAPTER VI

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### Old Weathervanes and Old Bells

**I**N this chapter we wish to bring to the attention of its readers a few rare and curious antiques which have enriched the town and furnished many an interesting hour to the "stranger within our gates."

When the first Methodist church was made over into the Wesleyan seminary, it was decided to place a weathervane on

the old belfry. The drawing teacher designed the Angel Gabriel in flight, blowing a twisted trumpet. This was made in sections, and it was compulsory in drawing class to draw these various parts. It was then



GABRIEL WEATHERVANE

taken to the tin shop of Whelden & Fisher, which was located near where the library now stands, and Mr. Whelden made the weathervane, which he called the "copper angel." It was put on an iron shaft 16 feet long and weighing 100 pounds. Above were the arms with N E S and W, surmounted by a brass ball. This was placed on the belfry of the seminary, where it endured the winds and storms of almost 50 years.

We are indebted to John Nourse for its rescue. At the time the building was torn down in 1896, Mr. Nourse, in passing, discovered it in a pile of rubbish. Upon request he was allowed to take it home, where it remained several years before it was again brought to light. The illustration will bring it to the minds of many who remember "Old Gabe" as one of the landmarks.

A stranger who had in some way heard of this old vane came to ask the writer what it could be purchased for. When told it was not for sale, as we wished it to remain in the town,

he replied, "I will give you a good round sum for it, and no one will ever know." But the Angel Gabriel is still with us.



WEATHERVANE ON OLD  
CAB SHOP

The weathervane originally on the cab shop is quaint, it being a perfect miniature of the first cab made by the company. It bears the inscription:

"Established, 1859. E. B. & E. Washed away, 1869. Vermont Novelty Works Company. Burned, 1878. Rebuilt, 1879. Vt. N. W. Co."

The vane went down in the fire two years ago but was rescued in a fairly good condition and will now be preserved with our other treasures.

In searching for old bells and their inscriptions, it was a great surprise to find one of the oldest of these in our own

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## OLD WEATHERVANES AND OLD BELLS

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town. The cotton factory was built in 1836 by Stephen Blanchard, brother of Mrs. Cynthia Farnham. At that time a bell was hung in the belfry, it being the first one in town used to call men to work. Little was known of its history, as the inscription upon it was in a foreign language. Permission was



OLD BELL, MOULDED IN 1758—HUNG IN  
COTTON FACTORY IN 1836

given to copy the inscription and over and over again it was sent away for translation. After many months it was returned with the following result:

“Moulded in Stockholm, Sweden,  
By Johan Fahlsten  
In the year 1758  
For the good ship Habile.”

“Habile” translated means “light and buoyant on the water,” which shows it was a ship’s bell before it was bought for the cotton factory. This venerable relic is now in the possession of John T. Slack.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

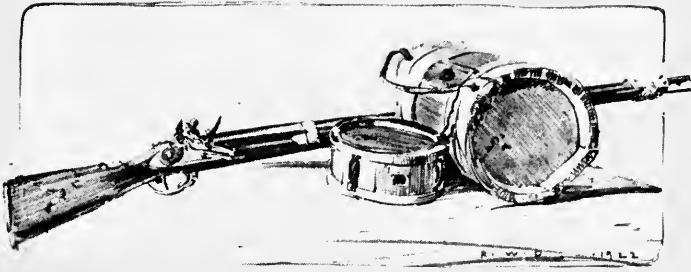
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The first cab shop bell was bought in about 1863. It was lost in the first freshet of that year, ringing as it went down, and becoming covered with sand. In 1864 the company, Ellis, Britton & Eaton, bought the Seminary bell—a bell of about 300 pounds weight and of the finest bell metal. In 1869 that was washed away and destroyed, although pieces were preserved for a long time. The freshet of 1869 uncovered the *old* bell of '63, which was placed in position and used through and after the fire of 1878, and was for a long time in the belfry of the shoddy mill.

The present Baptist church at North Springfield was erected in 1835. The first bell was purchased November 28th of that year. It weighed 1053 pounds, and the price paid was 25 cents per pound. When hung and all completed the expense was about \$275.00.

We leave to your tender care and remembrance these old vanes and bells, hoping they will be preserved for future generations.





## CHAPTER VII

# Revolutionary Heroes

**N**OT in vastness of territory, or the power that springs from material wealth, do we find our strongest fortifications, but in the souls of the men who made them. From the character and precepts of the fathers spring the wisdom and valor of the sons, and by their example each succeeding generation is uplifted and inspired.

The beginnings in the settlement of this portion of Vermont cannot be studied too long or too well, and we shall search in vain the annals of other places for higher examples of patriotism and lofty purpose or more generous and heroic deeds. "Forgotten generations live again within these pages." For them and all that may come after who care to look within, these records of the Revolutionary soldiers are prepared.

The following pages contain the scattered fragments of the life history of the Revolutionary soldiers who rest within our borders, with the intent that these true stories of brave men who struggled for home and honor may be kept fresh and green in the memory of the present generation, and that they in turn may transmit them to their children for safe keeping.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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In the early days when Springfield was in the making, it was customary for each little hamlet to have its cemetery with an occasional family lot on the old home farm. But as the town increased in size, and Summer Hill became the general cemetery, many were removed from the other cemeteries and placed here. This removal, together with the changing of roads within the cemetery to make extensions, and the removing of small stones to make room for monuments, has caused the loss of several names. The following list contains names of those whose available record indicates they were buried in town but whose stones cannot be found:—

*William Cone.*

*Thomas Corlew*, owned land and lived in the town in its early years of settlement. At his country's call he served in Colonel Wood's regiment in 1780.

*Nathaniel Dyke.*

*William Dyke.*

*John Nott*, served in Samuel Scott's company.

*Phineas Scott* was in Capt. Isaac Ticknor's company and was ordered to Saratoga by Col. Ebenezer Wallbridge.

*David Stimson*, who died Sept. 30, 1850, aged 88.

*Joseph Stone.*

*Frederick Temple.*

*Abner Whitney*, who died Jan. 6, 1826, aged 81.

### SUMMER HILL CEMETERY

*Lieut.-Col. John Barrett*, familiarly known as Col. John Barrett, was born in Boston, Mass., Dec. 7, 1731. In 1771 or '72 he moved to Springfield and settled on the Block house farm now owned by the Butterfield family. He at once built

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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

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the house now standing, which was the first frame house in town, and which he occupied until his death, Dec. 3, 1806.

Colonel Barrett was very active and influential in the business affairs of the town and colony. He took a leading part in the contest over the New Hampshire grants, was captain in Col. Seth Warner's regiment, was at Ticonderoga, and in 1776 went on the expedition to Quebec. Later he was chosen lieutenant-colonel of the Upper Regiment of the Cumberland.

He held all the important town offices, was master of the first Masonic lodge in the state of Vermont, which was located in Springfield in 1781. He was one of the original members of the Congregational church, a worthy compeer of Simon Stevens and, like him, contributed much to the prosperity of the town.

*Josiah Bates* was born in 1754 and died Nov. 22, 1823, aged 69, and for some reason was buried in the Spencer lot. The records do not state when he came to Springfield, but the Revolutionary war rolls list him as a private in Capt. Charles Parker's company, Col. Samuel Herrick's regiment of volunteers.

*Lieut. Lewis Bates* came to Springfield a little after 1790 and had his war record in Massachusetts. He was one of the earnest helpers for the good of the town and died in Springfield in 1832.

*Josiah Belknap* was a private in the Revolutionary war and died in Springfield, April 27, 1845, aged 85 years.

*John C. Bingham* came to Springfield during the Revolutionary war. He was a private in Capt. Jotham White's company, in Col. Samuel Fletcher's battalion, from July, 1781, to December, 1781. He enlisted and signed the papers in the

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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hotel which stood on the east side of the river at Gould's Mills, and Ira Allen was recruiting officer.

*Capt. Abner Bisbee* was born in Pembroke, Mass., July 31, 1734. He was an officer in the French and Indian war, having received his commission from George III. and was ever after known as Captain Bisbee. He served nearly through the war as a scout. There is a tradition that he piloted a small company of soldiers on snowshoes through the wilderness from Crown Point to Charlestown, N. H., in February, 1759, and marked out the Crown Point road, which was cut through the next summer by Colonel Goffe. He then selected his lot where he afterward built his log cabin, in 1763, near the north line of the town, on the farm now owned by Luther Boynton.

Captain Bisbee had three commissions, one from George III., one signed by Governor Clinton of New York, and one by Governor Chittenden of Vermont. He went out on first scout duty from Springfield, and later formed a company of militia and went out on the alarm call. He served through the Revolutionary war and, like many another war-worn soldier, hailed with gladness the day of peace.

Captain Bisbee became a successful farmer and built and owned the first painted house in town. He represented the town in the legislature and held many important town offices. He was a firm believer in the Christian religion and considered by Pastor Smiley as one of his firmest supporters. He died in Springfield, Sept. 25, 1805, aged 72 years, and his weight was 315 pounds.

*First-Lieut. John Bisbee* served in the Revolution with Captain Bisbee. Just what relationship existed between these two men is not known. Presumably John Bisbee was nephew

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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

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to Captain Bisbee. The war rolls of Vermont speak of his going from Springfield in 1777 on the alarm call. Later he served as second sergeant in Captain Little's company, as lieutenant in 1778, and in 1779 he was promoted to first lieutenant under Captain Bisbee in Colonel Wood's regiment. He died in Springfield and is buried in the Elisha Bisbee lot. The dates of his birth and death are unknown.

*Adonijah Bixby* was born May 23, 1753, at Shrewsbury, Mass., and died in Springfield, March 3, 1839. He served in the Revolutionary war at different times from 1775 to 1780. He was a drummer in Capt. Moses Hale's company and served also as corporal and sergeant. He was pensioned in 1819; then it was decided that he had too much property to have a pension, and his name was stricken from the list, but a few years later it was restored, and at the time of his death he was receiving a pension.

*Nicholas Bragg* came to Springfield in 1774 and settled first on the Holden place beyond the Bishop farm. He served in Lieut. Joseph Little's company, Colonel Marsh's regiment, October, 1778, and died in Springfield, Sept. 7, 1804.

*William Bragg*, brother of Nicholas, was a private in Capt. John Benjamin's company, 1781, and died in Springfield, Dec. 8, 1849, aged 86.

*Elisha Brown*, one of the noted men among the early settlers, was born in 1749 in Cohasset, Mass. He came to Springfield in 1778 on horseback, his wife riding behind on a pillion, their household effects being in a pillowcase. He bought land and settled first on the old Whitmore farm. In 1794 he sold this farm and purchased land on Seminary hill. At this time

there were no roads except bridle paths, marked by blazed trees, and the site of the village was a dense forest frequented by bears and wolves.

He well understood how to accumulate money and at the time of his death, Sept. 10, 1827, was able to leave a farm to each of his sons, except to David, who chose the tannery.

He fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill, and in Vermont served in 1778 as sergeant in Col. Timothy Bedell's regiment. In 1780 he went on the alarm call in Colonel Wood's regiment. He was familiarly known as Brigadier Elisha Brown.

*Moses Chase* was born in Hopkinton, N. H., Oct. 30, 1763. He came to Springfield in 1794 and settled on the Henry Arms farm. He enlisted in the Revolutionary war near its close and was never in active service. He died in Springfield, May 11, 1835, aged 72.

*Oliver Fairbanks* was born in Dedham, Mass., in 1752, lived in Hubbardston, Mass., then settled in Stoddard, N. H., moved to Springfield in 1793 and died here in 1839, aged 87 years.

He resided at what was then called Lower Falls on the Black river, had charge of a saw and grist mill and also kept a tavern, at the same time doing much work in farming.

He was a soldier in the Revolution, enlisting in 1775 at Hubbardston, was in the Battle of Harlem Heights, at Trenton, Princeton and Woodbridge. His descendants may take a just pride in the fact that he was one of the small handful of men who crossed the Delaware with Washington on that cold Christmas night, 1776, and by their courage won the victory at Trenton, which brought hope to the country when everything seemed lost, as did also the successful attack on Princeton.

## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

*Isaac Glynn* was born at Westford, Mass., July 7, 1761. He enlisted in 1775, was at the Battle of Bunker Hill and served through the war. He died here Dec. 30, 1835, aged 71 years.

*Jonathan Lake* served as private and died in Springfield, May 30, 1842. The stone erected to his memory bears evidence that he was a Revolutionary soldier.

*Lieut. Benjamin Lynde*, presumably brother of Elisha Lynde, who built the Boutelle house, was a Revolutionary soldier and died in 1824, aged 80 years.

*James Harrington Miller* was born in Grafton, Mass., Oct. 30, 1763, and there his war record is found. He settled in Springfield in 1806, on the old Miller farm in Eureka, where he lived until his death in 1844.

*Levi Nichols* was born in Hingham, Mass., Nov. 9, 1739, and died in Springfield, April 2, 1809. He came to this town in 1790 and bought land of Joseph Little, which was a portion of the Horace Hubbard farm. He built a saddler's shop and invented a crude machine for making nails.

He was a Revolutionary soldier, being chosen second of a committee of five to relieve the distress and dangerous condition of our country, and to draft measures for the defense of the same. He served as private in Captain Price's regiment and was discharged at West Point in 1780.

*David Oakes* was born in Neponset, Mass., Jan. 15, 1735, and died in Springfield, Oct. 17, 1813. He was a private in Colonel Walcott's regiment of Connecticut troops.

*Joseph Perham's* record is very brief. Nothing is known beyond the important fact that he was in the Revolution. He died in Springfield, Dec. 16, 1838, aged 75.

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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*Asahel Powers*, born Sept. 29, 1759, in Shirley, Mass., came to Springfield with his father in 1772. At the age of 15 he enlisted in the Revolutionary army for eight months and was in the Battle of Bunker Hill. At the expiration of his enlistment, he returned to Springfield and joined the expedition to Ticonderoga and Quebec. Being sick with smallpox, he was left at a place called Patrick's Hole, where he was taken prisoner and carried to Quebec. He was first placed in a jail and then in a hospital, and through the kindness of the surgeon in charge he was allowed to stay in the house of an Irish gentleman who was friendly to the cause and who helped him to escape and return to Springfield. He was among the foremost in building the Methodist church on Seminary Hill and was considered a shrewd lawyer. He died Jan. 14, 1841, aged 81 years.

*Jacob Sartwell* was one of the earliest settlers, as was Oliver, his brother. Both served in Colonel Wood's regiment, Capt. Abner Bisbee's detachment, in 1780 and are buried here, Jacob dying Nov. 30, 1807.

*Nathaniel Sawyer* was born in Lancaster, Mass., March 16, 1716, and died in Springfield in 1805. He was captain of a troop sent to the relief of Fort William Henry in 1757. He was third lieutenant in Col. John Wilcomb's regiment during the Revolution. He marched with his company at the Lexington alarm April 19 and then went into camp at Cambridge.

His grave and that of his brother were among the first in Summer Hill cemetery. The graves are now under the driveway that faces the Porter lot. In making this road, the grave-stones were destroyed.



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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

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*Capt. Samuel Scott* was one of the pioneers with Capt. Simon Stevens, Abner Bisbee and others. He came in 1763 and settled on the Crown Point road not far from the Town farm. He was one of the seven signers of the call for the first town meeting and the second representative of the town in 1778.

At the alarm call in 1780 Captain Scott went with his company in Colonel Wood's regiment, to the aid of his country, which he served long and well. He died here Oct. 2, 1811, aged 84 years.

*Simeon Spencer, Timothy Spencer and Taylor Spencer* were three brothers among the first settlers in the town. They located in what is now called Spencer Hollow. All were present and took part in the first town meeting and in organizing the town. When the call came for service in the Revolution, these three brothers responded. Taylor was an ensign and died on the field of battle. Timothy was an adjutant, and Simeon served as one of the first scouts sent out from Springfield. Timothy and Simeon are buried in Summer Hill cemetery, but the stones were taken down and broken to erect a monument, and the inscriptions were not preserved. Only the dates of Timothy's birth in 1740 and death in 1808 are obtainable.

*Capt. Simon Stevens* was born in Canterbury, Conn., Nov. 26, 1736. In August, 1771, Simon Stevens' name appears as one of the proprietors of this town, at a meeting held in the old Block house. He held all the important offices and was one of the men chosen to see if the town should accept the Crown Point road. His name appears on every committee for the

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

good and welfare of the town. As a soldier of the Revolution he had a record for undaunted courage and wisdom. He served as ranger, scout, captain and lieutenant in defense of the frontier along the Connecticut river and in decisive battles.

The following obituary notice appeared in the Windsor Journal the week after his death: "Died in Springfield, Feb. 13, 1817. Hon. Simon Stevens, Esq., aged 80 years. He was an active and useful young man in the French and Indian war, was taken prisoner by the Indians in 1757 and continued with them one year, when he made his escape at the risk of his life. He was the man who marked the first tree on the west side of the Connecticut river on the famous Crown Point road. He settled in this place in the year of 1762, and in 1766 held the commission of captain under the authority of His Majesty. In the American Revolution in 1776 he was appointed major of brigades by the government of New York for the counties of Gloucester and Cumberland. In the same year he held the commission of lieutenant-colonel under the government of Vermont. In 1765 he was appointed justice of the peace under His Majesty, which office he held until the day of his death, when he was the oldest justice in the state. He represented the town in the legislature and filled all these offices with great credit to himself and benefit to his country. He was an early professor of the religion of Christ and never spoke of His cause but with great tenderness and affection, and he contributed liberally to the support of the Gospel." His tombstone bears the following inscription: "Deus ipse jubet te meminisse mortis."

*Ensign Nathaniel Weston* was one of the early ones in town and built and settled on the Asahel Fairbanks farm. He

## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

was commissioner of highways in 1772, and from that time until 1791 he was mostly in town offices and represented the town several times in the legislature. He served in the Revolution, but no record of his service can be found.

### PINE GROVE CEMETERY, NORTH SPRINGFIELD

*Andrew Bradford* was a soldier of the Revolution and was in the War of 1812. He was at the battles of Bennington and Saratoga. He was grandfather of Mrs. Lewis Davis. He died Jan. 31, 1826, aged 78 years.

*William Brown* served his country in the Revolution and went on an alarm call in Col. Seth Warner's regiment. His death took place Aug. 3, 1855, at the age of 90.

*James Chittenden* came to North Springfield from Connecticut, cleared land for Daniel Griswold and built a log house in which he lived until 1790. He served in the Revolution and died April 12, 1839, aged 80 years.

*Daniel Griswold* entered the army at 16, served nine months, and received \$10 a month in service. Most of the time he was employed as teamster, part of the time at the skirmish in New Haven, Conn., and part of the time at Peekskill, N. Y. He lived to be 73 years of age, dying Aug. 4, 1836. Fred G. Field is a descendant of this man.

*John Haywood* served as private in Col. Benjamin Wait's battalion. He died April 30, 1825, aged 65 years.

*Paul Haywood* was born in Winchenden, Mass. Little is known of his life, except that he served in Capt. John Burt's company in 1781. He died April 7, 1808, at the age of 61.

*Simeon Keith* was another Revolutionary soldier whose war record is not obtainable. His granddaughter, however,

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Mrs. Lyman Fisher, recently deceased, told of going with him many times to get his pension.

*William Kirk* was a private, whose record is not known. He died Oct. 9, 1829, aged 65 years.

*Richard Lee* was a Revolutionary soldier, whose war record is in Providence, R. I., where he lived before coming to Springfield. He was a Baptist clergyman who preferred to mount a stump and preach out-of-doors. He wrote several short stories, so that his name appears also among the writers of Springfield. He lived in the house next to Francis Preston's and was familiarly known as Grandpa Lee until he died, March 26, 1823, at the age of 76.

*Thomas Leland* was born in Grafton, Mass., Aug. 16, 1760; married Lydia Sherman; died in Chester, Vt., May 23, 1830. The following is his army record: Thomas Leland, private, from Grafton, Mass. December 19, 1777, reported from Capt. Joseph Warren's company, 6th Worcester regiment. Joined Capt. Abraham Child's company, Col. J. Wesson's regiment. Reported Jan. 25, 1778, and April 9, 1779. Enlisted for three years. Twenty-one months, 13 days' service as private; 11 months, 9 days' service as corporal.

In 1795 Thomas Leland removed to Chester, Vt., and settled in a wilderness part of the town. The hardships and privations of new country life were his lot for several years; but by great effort and constant labor, in the course of a few years, he reclaimed from its native wilderness a well cultivated farm. This farm which he cleared was on the town line between Springfield and Chester and came within a mile of North Springfield, where he and all of his family are buried.

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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

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*Ephraim Martin's* enlistment was at Lunenburg, Mass., and his rank was that of sergeant in Capt. John Fuller's company in Col. William Shepherd's regiment. He died Aug. 3, 1833, aged 88 years.

*Matthew Pierce's* record is in Massachusetts, whence he came to Springfield in 1796. His death took place June 16, 1835, at the age of 79.

### CROWN POINT CEMETERY

*Capt. William Holden* was born in Groton, Mass., March 2, 1728, and died Nov. 8, 1807, in Springfield. He saw the capture of Louisburg, June 16, 1745, the surrender and massacre at Fort William Henry, 1757, and the second capture of Louisburg, 1758, the capture of Quebec, Sept. 13, 1759, the taking of Montreal, Sept. 8, 1760, and he figured in the campaign against Burgoyne in 1777.

*Jeremiah Parker* was born in 1741 and died Jan. 7, 1823. He served in Capt. Ichabod Robinson's company. He owned and died on what is known as the Robert Colburn farm. It is said that he was the first man to introduce grafted fruit into Vermont.

*Samuel Steele* was born May 6, 1757, in Tolland, Conn., and removed to Vermont in 1777 or '78, and died in Springfield, April 9, 1830. He served as drummer from May to December, 1775, in the Fifth company under Capt. Solomon Willis, Second Commanding regiment. This regiment was raised on the first call for troops by the legislature in 1775, and served during the siege of Boston until the expiration of service in December, 1775.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Samuel Steele was in Captain Skinner's company in Major Sheldon's regiment of lighthorse, which accompanied Washington on his retreat through New Jersey in 1776 and was discharged Dec. 24, 1776.

He also served in Colonel Burrough's regiment in Capt. John Stevens' company in the Northern department under General Schuyler, from 1776 to Jan. 19, 1777. This company reinforced the troops besieging Quebec under Arnold and Wooster. After the retreat from that position in April, 1776, it was stationed at Ticonderoga and vicinity, where the men suffered severely from smallpox.

### PARKER HILL CEMETERY

*Ichabod Closson* was son of Timothy Closson, who was a weaver by trade and early came to Jamestown, Va., then to Rockingham, Vt. He bought a farm on Parker Hill. Ichabod Closson, born 1764, was a member of Capt. William Simons' company, Rockingham, during the Revolution, and was afterward a citizen in Springfield until his death. He died Aug. 9, 1807, a man of great usefulness.

*Lieut. Isaac Parker* was born in Chelmsford, Mass., May 8, 1747. He was an officer in the Revolutionary war, holding three commissions, one from the Congress of the Colony of Massachusetts, dated May 19, 1775, one from the Continental Congress, dated July 1, 1775, signed by John Hancock, president of the congress, and one from the Council of Massachusetts Bay, dated Dec. 1, 1776. He was at the Battle of Bunker Hill and at Valley Forge, where he took the oath of office before Baron DeKalb, May 13, 1778. As early as 1788 he came to Springfield and settled on Parker Hill, where he died July 14, 1805, aged 59.

## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

*Silas Parker's* stone in the cemetery states the meagre fact that he was a Revolutionary soldier who died Sept. 9, 1742, aged 82 years.

*Lieut. Philip Safford* came from good old Puritan stock and began his military life at an early age as drummer boy in a Massachusetts company, which played an important part in the victory at Lake George. In 1757 he was drum major of his company, and the following seven years he served as lieutenant. He was one of the prominent men in the Westminster massacre, March 13, 1775, where the first blood of the Revolution was spilled. Being in the courthouse at the time of the attack, he made good his escape, though receiving several wounds about the head. He was also in the battles of Bennington and Ticonderoga, serving the greater part of the war. He took great interest in town affairs, always battling for the right. He died April 13, 1814, aged 74 years.

*Sergt. John Walker* served in the Revolution in Capt. Asaph Cook's company in Col. Gideon Warner's regiment. He died Feb. 28, 1813, aged 70 years.

### FIELD AND LOCKWOOD CEMETERY

*Daniel Field* was born Nov. 23, 1752. He was a soldier in Colonel Hitchcock's regiment of Rhode Island infantry, which served under Washington and was in the battles of White Plains, Trenton and Princeton. When his term of service in Rhode Island was about to expire, Washington went among the men and personally besought them to re-enlist, as it was the darkest time of the Revolution. Mr. Field would not re-enlist but told Washington he would stay a month longer. Washington replied with thanks, "Your word is as good as

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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your bond." During that month of voluntary service he was in the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

Probably before 1780 Daniel Field came with his wife, Hannah (Whitman) Field, who was of the same family as Walt Whitman, the poet, 200 miles through the forest from Rhode Island and bought 200 acres of land on Field brook in Springfield, where he built a log cabin to live in. There he left his family several winters and went back to Rhode Island to work at his trade, that of blacksmith, to pay for his land. It is said his great inducement to settle here was that a small piece of his meadow land near the mouth of the brook had been entirely cleared of timber by industrious beavers.

Our forbears endured hardships little known to the present generation. The Field family was often troubled with wild animals. Mrs. Field twice chased a panther from her door. At one time wolves attacked the cows and oxen but were driven back by the oxen.

Mrs. Field used to spin wool for some of the wealthy families in Charlestown, N. H., going through the woods to deliver it and taking her pay in articles most necessary for her family. Mr. Field, too, worked many times for men in Charlestown. His pay for a week's work was one bushel of shelled corn, which he brought home on his back.

Daniel Field was commonly called "Quaker" Field, from the fact that he always wore the Quaker style of dress, though not a member of that sect. He died July 6, 1824, in the old Field mansion, now owned by Mrs. E. C. Beers.

*Henry Lockwood* served in Capt. Samuel Scott's company in Colonel Wood's regiment. He died January 1, 1839, at the age of 76.



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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

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### BURIED ELSEWHERE

Two men prominent in the early settlement of the town, who went from here to serve in the Revolution but who were not buried in Springfield cemeteries, deserve honorable mention among her heroes, namely: *Lieut. Roger Bates* and *Orsamus Holmes*.

The first, of Scotch ancestry, gave most of his Revolutionary service from Massachusetts, but he also served in Vermont, in Capt. Abel Marsh's regiment, since he came to Springfield as early as 1777. He bought of Joseph Little the farm later known as the Christopher Ellis place, now owned by Norman Grow, and he built a tavern there.

In the days before a church was erected, religious services were held at private houses, and especially at Joseph Little's. So Roger Bates was anxious to have the first church built on his farm, and the town voted in 1781 to accept the site he offered. The frame was completed, but the work went no further for lack of funds, as the early settlers had great dissensions about the location of their church. Roger Bates was much grieved in spirit and took his departure to Canada in 1797, where he died at the age of 80.

*Orsamus Holmes* enlisted in Capt. Abner Bisbee's company and experienced most exciting times. In 1777, while on Lake Champlain in Capt. Ebenezer Allen's company of Rangers, he was taken prisoner and sent to Montreal and later to Quebec. He was kept on board a prison ship until the summer of 1778, when he made his escape with only two days' provisions. After being in the wilderness 17 days, Holmes and his companions were again captured by the savages and taken back to Montreal. There in some marvelous manner he

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

made a second escape by jumping over the walls of the city and after a long and perilous journey reached his home in Springfield. Later he petitioned the court at Windsor that he might be recompensed for the loss of his gun, valued at \$15. and his cartridge box, valued at \$2.50 in Continental money, or one-quarter of a dollar in silver, together with clothing to a small amount. The order for 30 pounds and 15 shillings, signed by Governor Chittenden, and Ira Allen as treasurer of Vermont, was duly forwarded by the state. Later Holmes removed to New York, where he spent the rest of his days.

### ONE OF NAPOLEON'S SOLDIERS

*Joseph Martin* was one of Napoleon's soldiers in his disastrous march over the Alps, so had no connection with our little town in his early days. But the strange turn of fortune's wheel makes him claim our interest along with all heroes.

Joseph Martin was captured at Moscow by the English and brought to this country to fight the Americans. At the first opportunity he deserted the English and, after repeated hardships and narrow escapes from recapture, he at last joined the American army, with which he fought the remainder of the second War of Independence. He came through the wars unharmed and lived in Springfield a number of years. In 1850, when 75 years old, he was killed in the south part of the town by the falling of a tree.

### EUREKA CEMETERY

Several soldiers of the Revolutionary army lie in Eureka burying ground. From E. Wellman Barnard's paper regarding the cemetery is quoted: "A vote of the town on report of Captain Bisbee, Lemuel Whitney and Roger Bates,

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## REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

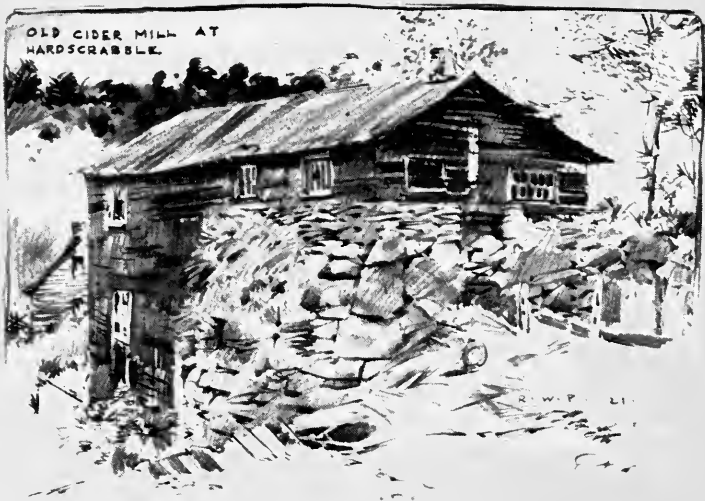
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committee, made this the official burial place in 1784, but interments had been made here before. We may assume that for a period of 25 years this ground was in universal use, for the Summer Hill cemetery land, first owned by William Lockwood, was not deeded to the town until 1793 and was not used very much before 1800."

After the land in Eureka had later been deeded to the town by Miss Mary Ellis and Horace Boothby, and an enclosure made around most of the graves, the General Lewis Morris chapter, D. A. R., through the generosity of Governor Hartness, erected here in 1918 a marker of Barre granite, inset with a bronze tablet made in Springfield and bearing this inscription: "In memory of the two-score pioneer soldiers and first inhabitants of the town, who are here buried, with unmarked graves."

The dedicatory poem, written for the unveiling of the marker by Rev. R. A. Beardslee, serves as a fitting close to the chapter:

The silent seed enfolds the stately tree:  
The tree, the forest. So the teeming earth  
Defeats decay with immortality,  
And life unfolds with re-expanding birth.  
The years, processional in single file,  
A single plan expanding endlessly  
Unfold: and dreams, delayed by Time awhile,  
By Time are nurtured to reality.  
The fathers forward to the children crying,  
The pregnant Morrow's prayers backward cast,  
Are pleading for Ideals time-defying,  
Work unbegun, unfinished, unsurpassed.  
Life! poised, expectant, the eternal Now,  
To thee our all we owe, our all we vow.



## CHAPTER VIII

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### Early Days of Slavery

**W**E read in history that Vermont was the first state in the Union to prohibit slavery. It was somewhat of a surprise to find that it existed in many parts of the state, and Springfield felt its influence, as will be seen from the following document:

“Know all men by these presents, that I, Jotham White, of Springfield, County of Windsor, State of Vermont, in payment of 35 pounds of silver money to me in hand, paid by Oliver Hastings of Charlestown, County of Cheshire, State of New Hampshire, physician, do sell and deliver to the said Oliver Hastings my negro boy, Anthony, eight and one-half

years of age, until said negro boy shall arrive at the age of 21 years. Dated March 2, 1790.

Signed: JOTHAM WHITE

Amanda Stone }  
Jed Read } Witnesses."

The history also adds that this bill of sale is now in a good state of preservation, and that Jotham White was a prominent man in the town and held many positions of trust. It appears that said Jotham White resided in Charlestown before coming to Springfield; for July 26, 1783, Stephen Jacobs of Windsor purchased of Jotham White of Charlestown a negro slave, Dinah, for 40 pounds. She lived with him and served as a slave until 1800. She became infirm, sick and almost blind, a public charge. The selectmen sued Judge Jacobs for her support. The case came up for trial, when it was proven that Judge Jacobs brought her into the state and after a few years others enticed her to work for them, her master making no effort to detain her, as he could not hold her by law. Therefore he refused to support her, and the case was decided in the judge's favor. This was a very famous case at that time and attracted much attention.

Col. John Barrett of Springfield purchased July 5, 1770, of Caleb Bull of Wallingford, Conn., one negro girl named Rose and brought her to town, where she lived and served him many years. She was known as "Old Rose," much respected throughout the town. The story is told that later she lived in a little log house, which was all her own, on what is known as the B. F. Dana place.

When Gen. Lewis Morris came to town, about 1785, he brought many slaves with him but did not call them such

after he had been here a short time, as he would have been unable to hold them in this state.

Even though these facts might prove misleading, most of the people were opposed to slavery, and there was a very warm place in their hearts for the hunted fugitives. Capt. Ebenezer Allen gave Dinah Matthews and her infant, slaves captured from the enemy, their deed of conscription, because he did not think it right in the sight of the Lord to keep slaves. And Judge Harrington decided against the slave master, because he could not show a deed from the original proprietor, God Almighty.

From the day when the name of the state was first adopted, no slave had been taken away from Vermont against his will. The fugitive who set foot upon her soil was safe, if not free.

Her north roads and her south roads were her underground railroads. There were Democrats who would send their teams to carry fugitives northward: while they themselves walked to a convention to shout for Douglas (the Democratic candidate for the presidency, in favor of slavery) and resolve that slavery must not be interfered with in states where it existed by law.

It is interesting to trace the underground railway through this part of the state. Noah Safford, who lived near the foundry in a house that has been recently moved to Olive street, while spending winters in the South selling straw-cutters of his own manufacture, saw enough of slavery to make him vow eternal vengeance upon it. From that time his home was one of the important stations where the fugitives were always safe—sometimes it might be weeks in the attic, again it might be only a few days in the barn.

## EARLY DAYS OF SLAVERY

His daughter, Mrs. Rebecca (Safford) Holmes, remembered when a little girl hearing teams drive up in the night and saw food carried to the barn in the morning; the following night she heard the sound of wheels again as fugitives were taken to the next station, which was usually Judge Pingree's office in Perkinsville. This office was a station where slaves were often secreted, fed and lodged, then sent to Col. Thomas Powers in Woodstock; from there to Deacon and Mrs. Morris' home in Strafford, which is just over the line in Orleans county. Judge Pingree had a very ingenious place for secreting these slaves. A movable panel by the fireplace gave entrance to a small closet, which was so arranged that none were ever discovered.

Ephraim Wright, a fugitive, remained with Mr. Safford for several years and was much afraid of being recaptured. One day he went to the store and came running back, asking to be hidden; for he saw, or thought he saw, what looked like his old master. It is said of him that he was as white as it is possible for a colored man to be.

This story is also told of him: From that time on he always walked with his head partially turned over his shoulder, that he might see anyone approaching from behind. One of the neighbors, meeting him one day, asked him what he should do if he saw his master coming. Ephraim replied, "I think I should fight."

He was a very large and powerful man, who had little to fear from other men physically.

Ephraim Wright later married a fugitive girl who came here on the underground railway, escaping to Canada. The house, owned at the present time by Mrs. Will Nourse on South street, was built for them. Ephraim and his wife became good citizens and, with their three children, united with the Con-

gregational church. He was the village barber for some time.

To return to our railroad: As early as 1848 the fugitives came through the mountain from Manchester, Vt., to Noah Safford's. From there they were passed, at whatever time seemed best, to the next station, which was the Warren place, later called the Deacon Boynton home, at North Springfield. From there they were helped to Felchville to the home of B. D. Bowen's grandfather, and Mr. Bowen's father as a lad of ten remembered going with his older brother on a wagon or sleigh, as the season might be, with a layer of hay or straw, then a layer of fugitives, and then more hay, sometimes by day, sometimes by night, to South Woodstock, to the home of Thomas Powers. It will be seen by this they passed around Windsor, which was done because that town was not very strongly in favor of abolition.

In passing from one station to another on foot, traveling by night and concealing themselves in the woods by day, and being unable to read or write, they were obliged to have some kind of passport. The most common of these was a portion of a broken knife blade, or a piece of old leather about two by four inches. This conveyed the unwritten message to pass them along.

It is interesting to notice the progress of events. Stephen Powers, a prominent lawyer, came to Woodstock, bringing with him his negro slave boy, Cato Boston, aged 13 years. His grandson, Hiram Powers, the sculptor, was able to make marble portray so vividly the sufferings of the Greek slave girl, set up in the market-place to be purchased by any chance buyer, that men stood in awe and women wept; while the home of Stephen Powers' great-great-grandson, Colonel Thomas Powers, was one of the most prominent underground railway stations in this state.





## CHAPTER IX

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# Early Artists and Writers of Springfield

*Springfield Echoes Span the World*

**T**HE writer of these pages, in questioning people and peering into attics to see just what treasures of the past this town *did* possess to call its own, often met with the rebuff that Springfield had no history, she had no artists or writers in those days.

Having a few bits of history to build on, we persevered, with what success the following pages will reveal.

Zedekiah, son of Hezekiah Belknap, was born March 8, 1781, just over the line in the town of Weathersfield. Of his

early days little is known, except that he lived on the farm with his parents. He was graduated from Dartmouth college in 1807 and early showed both a talent and desire to paint. In the sketch of the alumni at Dartmouth is recorded the following:—

“After graduation Zedekiah Belknap studied divinity and preached a few years, but was never ordained into the ministry. We know him only as a portrait painter, as no account is given of where he preached.” It is possible he was a circuit preacher, so common in those days. We do know he painted portraits for some years in New York city, and finally came back to spend the remainder of his life among the green hills of Springfield and Weathersfield, where he had many relatives and friends. He married Sophia Sherwin of Maine, and there were no children.

About 1812 he painted the portraits of Father and Mother Smiley, copies of which can be found in this volume. He also painted Gen. Lewis Morris and wife, Dexter Allen and wife, and many other prominent people of that time and their children.

When the daguerreotype began to appear, Mr. Belknap was quite worried, fearing it would become so much in favor it would take the place of the painted portrait and thus deprive him of work.

In the latter part of his life he bought the farm next above the Corliss place. His sister and husband lived with and cared for him until his death, which occurred in April, 1858, at the age of 77 years. He was buried in a small cemetery on the farm of Augustus Aldrich.

Aaron Dean Fletcher was born in Springfield, Sept. 15, 1817, and was the uncle of Henry and Charles Fletcher, well

known to most of us. When a small boy he learned to play the violin and soon developed considerable talent for it. People often tell of the wonderful tones he could bring out of this instrument. At the age of 13 he played for dances both in this town and in Charlestown, putting all the money he received for it in the savings bank at Charlestown, where it remained until his death.

When a youth he started out as a portrait painter, going from house to house painting family portraits. He also painted landscapes or whatever came to hand. He was self-taught, never having received any instruction. He not only made his own canvas, but his own paints as well. He made painting his life work, which he followed until his very last days. There are in town a dozen or more of the portraits he painted, and a landscape of the old Fletcher home attracted the attention of many.

Mr. Fletcher never married but died in Keeseville, N. Y., at the home of relatives with whom he had lived for several years, and who say of him that he lived a most exemplary life.

In the year of 1857 Rev. William L. Picknell came to North Springfield as pastor of the Baptist church, bringing with him a wife and little son, William Picknell, Jr., then about two years of age. About four years later George Picknell was born. Mr. Picknell remained pastor of the church until his death, which occurred in 1867. This sketch is of the two sons, who became by far the most distinguished artists going into the world from Springfield.

After the death of the father, the family moved to Boston, and the sister, Miss Ellen Picknell, writes of her brother William:

“At the age of 18 he went to Italy, where he spent two years studying with the older George Imess in Rome; thence to Paris, where he studied two or three years more in the Beaux Arts. From there he went to Brittany. When in Port Aven he worked four or five years, and from here he sent his first paintings to the Paris Salon, ‘The Route de Corcorrean,’ receiving honorable mention and establishing his reputation as a strong man in Europe. This picture is now owned and most splendidly hung in the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D. C., and in the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in New York are to be found ‘The River Samoa,’ and ‘Bleak December.’ ‘The Luxemburg’ was purchased one year after his death, which occurred at Marblehead, Mass., in the 42nd year of his life, from heart disease.

“He was an annual exhibitor in the Salon in the British Gallery, receiving many medals, including a bronze and silver one from the Salon. He was a member of several art societies, and was always much followed by younger men in the field of his work.”

“George Picknell, brother of William,” the sister continues, “began as an art student in Boston, later went to Paris and entered the studio of Julian, where he worked for three or four years. He then returned to Boston and took up illustrating there and in New York, which he followed for some years. He then returned to France, spent another year in Paris, and then went into Piccadilly, where he lived and painted several years. In 1913 he was a member of an art colony established in Silver Mine, Conn., where he is still pursuing his work. He, too, was an exhibitor in the Paris Salon. He shows much of William’s sense of color and composition but is less strong

and original in his work. We have a bronze medallion of William, made by St. Gaudens when both were youths in France.”

Horace Bundy, Advent preacher, was born in North Springfield, and the old homestead was near the sawmill in that place. He spent a part of each year here but was often away with friends for a few months, painting portraits and landscapes. Several of these can be seen in the town today. Among them are C. A. Leland when about 14 and Miss Mary Keyes at five years, which are a credit to the artist. He spent his last years at his old home and died about the year, 1893.

His son and namesake, Horace Bundy, Jr., died in 1918, aged 79 years. It is said of him he followed in his father's footsteps, only he used the camera instead of the brush. He made a specialty of artistic portraits and his daughter said, “He was the first man to introduce certain coloring in photographs that was very effective.”

There are doubtless many more artists who should be mentioned, but these were the most distinguished we have found. It is of great interest to go to the homes where these treasures are preserved and view the work of men who lived in other days.

Before closing this chapter we wish to speak of a few prominent early writers. Mrs. Ann (Emerson) Porter, wife of Charles Porter, was an own cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and those who knew her say the resemblance was most striking. Her early life seems uneventful, but at the age of 18 we find her at the head of a young ladies' seminary in Zanesville, Ohio. This seminary was poorly equipped and with but few students. She built it up into a strong school, leaving it to

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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marry Charles Porter of Springfield, who was engaged with his brother in the manufacture of carding machines.

At first they resided on Main street, but soon built the house familiarly known as the B. F. Dana place, now owned by Malcolm E. Stearns, and here she wrote most of her books and poems. One lady said the people of the town did not like to call too often or become too intimately acquainted with Mrs. Porter, fearing they would appear in her next book.

After the new house was built, about 1850, Mr. Porter felt he had taken about all the money he could spare from the business, and only a plank board walk was laid from the street across the lawn to the house. This troubled Mrs. Porter, for she did not think it quite in keeping with the new home. She wrote a story, for which she received \$100 (quite a large sum for those days), and with the money she built the walk which has lasted until the present day.

After the birth of her son and only child, Mrs. Porter wrote what was considered her best poem, entitled "This One Thing I Do." Among her prose works were "Glencoe Parsonage" and a humorous temperance story, in which she drew the principal characters from town, and this created considerable feeling.

After her husband's death, she and her son made their home in Newbury, Mass., the remainder of their lives. Both are now resting in the family lot in Springfield.

Daniel Rice was born in Dummerston, Vt., in 1803. He was always a lover of the beautiful in nature, and he loved books also. He traveled extensively in the West and South with a horse and buggy, selling books. The nature of these works took him among the statesmen of the past generation,

such men as Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, John Audubon and others. From them he received friendly encouragement and inspiration to take up the work of publishing books, mostly of national interest. Among the most important were "North American Sylvia" and "History of the Indian Tribes," all beautifully illustrated.

"North American Sylvia" was a work of several volumes and of great beauty. Mr. Rice wrote this book, and it contained hand-painted steel engravings of all the trees native to our soil. His daughter said: "After his death the only complete set of this work was sold to Houghton, Mifflin Co. of Boston, and is displayed by them on rare occasions."

Many of the trees along our highways, about our school grounds, and in the cemetery where he now lies, were placed there by Mr. Rice. He died in 1888.

Rev. Richard Lee was a Baptist clergyman and resided in Providence, R. I., before coming to Springfield. He lived in the home next to Francis Preston's and was familiarly known as "Grandpa Lee." He distilled all kinds of herbs. The children gathered wintergreen for him and were paid with picture books of his own make.

He was a worker in brass and pewter, making porringers and skimmers, always marked "R. Lee." Several of these treasures are in the town at the present time.

He preferred to preach out-of-doors, and would mount a stump and hold forth. He wrote several short stories and books, mostly on religious subjects. He died March 26, 1823.

Let us hold in grateful memory those who have left behind so rich a legacy to the present generation.

## CHAPTER X

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# Old Taverns

GOOD authorities differ upon the definition of tavern. One says that tavern, a place of entertainment for man and beast, is not a legal term. Taverns are chiefly places for the sale of wines and liquors. A second informs us thus:—"A public house where entertainment and accommodation for travelers and other guests are provided; an inn; a hotel usually licensed to sell liquor in small quantities." Be these statements true or untrue, we will attempt to locate some of the old houses used as inns long ago, and certainly they partook of the tavern nature; for liquors in abundance were very easily obtained in them all, with one exception.

The taverns were located not more than five miles apart, as travelers did not feel they could comfortably continue their journeys for a greater distance without partaking of a dram.

Eureka, originally and phonetically spelled Urica, attracted early settlers on account of the fertility of the soil and accessibility of the Crown Point road. One of the first pioneers located here in 1772. The famous Wells & Newell store, on a corner of the Hubbard farm, was built in 1790 or a bit earlier. Here Ashabel Wells kept store in the same year, and a little later it was kept by Joseph Selden. A tavern, a courtroom and a jail were in the same building, which was in the center of the activity of the town. Here subscriptions and taxes for building the new meeting house on the Common were



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## OLD TAVERNS

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payable in beef and grain. The Gaylord store and tavern at a place still called the "Peggy Lot" were also located upon the old Hubbard farm. This building was 40 feet square with a basement and windows in the gable roof. Only one room was completely finished. The upper part was used for dancing. In many of the old taverns the lower floor alone was partitioned off into rooms, and the second story was all one room. Numerous beds were arranged in this apartment and the only privacy granted travelers and guests was afforded by the hanging of sheets and chintz or other convenient things between the beds. Mr. Gaylord was known as the Captain Esquire. He was town clerk and a Tory at heart. After his death his wife married James Martin, who kept the tavern in 1790.

Roger Bates, a Scotchman, came to Springfield in 1777 and bought of Joseph Little, an old pioneer, the farm so long known as the Christopher Ellis place, now occupied by Norman Grow. Here Mr. Bates kept a tavern for a goodly number of years, selling it in 1797 to Joseph Ellis. Mr. Bates had served in the army and was known as Lieut. Roger Bates. The Bates farm was highly honored in the early days. Not only were the first religious and town meetings convened here, but here was built the first frame for a meeting house and here were the stocks. Mr. Bates kept a store as well as a tavern, and it is thought probable that they were also kept by Joseph Little before him.

Parker Hill was a lively little settlement when hardly anything had been done in this village. It was on the county road, so called, from Rockingham through Springfield and Weathersfield over the hills to Windsor, which next to the Crown Point road was the most important highway in this

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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section. The place took its name from Lieut. Isaac Parker, who settled there about 1790. Leonard Walker, a young pioneer, who came from Dracut, Mass., settled in early life on Parker Hill and married Betsey, the second daughter of Isaac Parker. He kept a tavern for many years and was a notable and influential citizen. Being a prominent Mason, the lodge meetings were held in the hall at his house, where in fact the first meeting was held Oct. 21, 1811. He also owned the old Hall residence which has been a landmark for many years and was kept as a tavern for a long time.

Leonard Parker early settled on Parker Hill, built the house where Leon Cutler now lives, and kept a tavern for a long time. Luther Hammond was the last landlord at this house. For many years the little old bar where they dealt out New England rum at three cents per glass stood in the south-east room of the house. The dance hall was not changed until a few years ago. A daughter of Leonard Parker, named Betsey, married Charles Holt and they remained with her parents at the tavern for 25 years, when Mr. Holt bought a part of the Enos Brown farm on Seminary Hill and moved thither.

In 1800 James Whipple and his wife, Sarah, came to town from Grafton, Mass. They forded Black river below the falls, then called Lockwood's falls, wended their way up the hill past the old meeting house on the Common, past the Parson Sniley place to their new home in Eureka. The roads were mere bridle paths. Mrs. Whipple, who was noted as a skillful equestrienne, rode a very fine saddle which was a wedding present from her father. In 1807 Mr. Whipple and Eliot Lynde bought the building, which is now Wheeler's store, and traded there three years. A son, James, Jr., was five years old when his

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## OLD TAVERNS

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parents came to Springfield, and some time between then and 1820 the father and son hired of General Morris the farm and tavern so well known as the Dan O. Gill homestead on the Connecticut river. This tavern was built in 1789 by Whitford Gill. In 1820 James, Jr., while still keeping the public house, married Sabrina Brush, a Bennington lady, who was a governess in the family of General Morris for three years before her marriage.

The house now occupied by Arthur Whitcomb on the Arms farm was a tavern when the Crown Point road ran past the place. The main part of the house was of the original tavern, the old ell having been torn away and rebuilt. The house was built by John Walker, a grandfather of Luthera Whitney. The dance hall was in the second story on the southwest corner and was surrounded on two sides by benches. There was also a tavern in Spencer Hollow on the farm afterwards owned by John R. Gill.

A hostelry of much repute was kept at Morris Mills, afterwards Gould's Mills, at an early date by Jotham White. Oliver Fairbanks kept a tavern about 1793 at the same settlement. He also had a sawmill and gristmill. A tavern at this place was carried off by high water, and it is said that a person watching from the opposite bank of the river saw a well in the dooryard inundated and disappear.

For many years the large building on the farm so recently owned by Allen Brown in West Springfield was kept as a tavern by Moses and Jim Bates. The bar where toddy was passed out was kept intact until Finns, the present owners, purchased the property. The back of the house as it now stands is towards the highway. Long ago there was a bridle path each

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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side of the tavern, but the one at the rear of the house was used most, and so became the established road.

Simon Stevens, Esq., was born in Canterbury, Conn., in 1736. He came and settled in town in 1762, and located on the site of the present Town farm. Here he built a frame house and kept a tavern. There were then but three frame houses in town and 27 families, mostly on or near the Crown Point road. Tradition says that Mr. Stevens selected this point for his home when cutting the road in 1760. He died in 1817.



OLD SPRINGFIELD HOUSE TORN DOWN 1891

Previous to 1810, when the first tavern on the present hotel location was erected, there was kept a tavern in the building just below the library. Mr. Sparrow's block was the main building and the tenements over the stores were once a very popular ballroom as well as a meeting place of the Masonic order. At the left a gambrel roofed ell extended. This was sold separately from the main building about 1832, when the latter was purchased for a home by Dr. Eleazer

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## OLD TAVERNS

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Crain. The ell was divided into two tenements and still later was torn down, and the now extinct Pulsipher house and the present Chynoweth house took its place. Indeed, some of the timbers of this ell of the old tavern are said to be in the Chynoweth house. The tavern was generally known as the "Wales Tavern" and was kept by Daniel Darrah as early as 1802.

In 1800 Col. Jonathan Williams built so much of the tavern house as ran east and west on Main street, so long known as Black River Hotel and Springfield House. Later he built the house on the corner of South and Clinton streets, known as the "Williams Tavern," where he and afterwards his son, Luke, kept tavern. The Williams tavern was more sumptuous than most at that time, and evidently Colonel Williams believed in good sanitation; for his barns were on the left of Clinton street near the bridge. The building used at one time as a co-operative store was the ell to the tavern. One noticeable feature was a nice walk leading up to the door of the house. Colonel Williams also owned considerable land in this vicinity.

There was always at least one hotel in North Springfield. The building known as the D. J. Boynton house was the first tavern in the village; it formerly stood on the corner where Will Fuller now lives. It was built about 1800 and here the Indians used to stop and have their dances before the immense fireplace in the dining room.

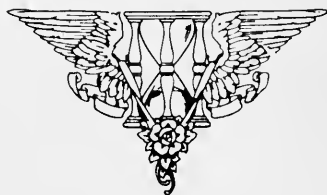
In 1821 a house was built by Joel Griswold on the corner of Main street and the road to Kendrick's Corners over the plain. This was kept as a tavern, was burned and rebuilt by Abel Brown, and was burned a second time when occupied by

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Isaac Gregory, who also kept a store there. The famous Joel Griswold tavern, now standing, a large brick house afterwards occupied by Wayland Bryant, was built about 1839. It was kept as a strictly temperance house. July 4, 1844, in which year the town voted not to license any house of public entertainment to sell intoxicating liquor, there was held a large temperance celebration at the Griswold tavern. In 1816 the town's population was about 2,700 and there were six taverns in operation. A few years later than this it was told as an evidence of the prosperity of the town that 16 hogsheads of rum were sold in one year from the old Springfield House, besides brandy and other liquors. Every store at one time sold drams and the other hotels were by no means kept on temperance principles.



## Old Schools of Springfield

THE years after the Revolution, till about 1840, form the most picturesque period in our educational history. This was pre-eminently the period of the district school. At first the prevailing poverty and rusticity and loose government made it difficult to maintain any school organization which was at all adequate.

The New England schools of the early days had a primitive picturesqueness that makes them seem of a much more remote past than they really are. The woodpile in the yard, the open fireplace, the backless benches, on which the smaller scholars sat, and the two terms—one in winter under a master and one in summer ruled by a mistress—have the flavor of pioneer days. In this seeming remoteness, coupled with its actual nearness, lies the chief reason for the charm that this period has for us. The intervening years have destroyed every vestige of the old sights and customs. We have only fragmentary reminiscences left; but the more the facts fade, the more they allure us. The same feeling which prompts the love for an ancient chair or “chest of drawers” makes us prize the reminiscences of bygone times as age gives them an increasing rarity.

The original charter of the town of Springfield was given by Governor Wentworth of the province of New Hampshire in the year of 1761. In this charter we find provision made

of—"One share for the benefit of a school in said town"; while in the confirmation charter from the province of New York, which was granted June 1, 1772, all the rights of the former grantees were confirmed, with certain reservations not contained in the New Hampshire charter. The new grantees were to share equally with the original ones. These reservations were as follows:—Four hundred acres to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; 400 acres to the minister of the Church of England, called the "Glebe Rights"; 400 acres to the first settled minister of the Gospel; and 100 acres thereof to the schoolmaster residing on the said tract. The reservations were situated in the southwest part of the town. The legislature of Vermont at an early day gave the propagation and glebe rights to the several towns in which they were situated for the support of schools. This town enjoyed the propagation rights for several years, when the society, by its agents and attorneys, brought suits against the tenants in some other towns.

The early inhabitants of Springfield, in common with those of all New England towns, were earnest supporters of schools and churches. Schools were for a time kept in private houses, where one was so fortunate as to have more than one room.

The first school of which we have any account was opened in the summer of 1773 in Lieut. Hezekiah Holmes' house, on the Dr. Hubbard farm. This was taught by Miss Sarah Stevens, a sister of Hon. Simon Stevens.

The first building used for a schoolhouse exclusively was near Roger Bates' house on the Christopher Ellis place, where Norman Grow now lives. It is said to have been built for bar-



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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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racks or for storage of supplies during the making of the Crown Point road. It was probably built of logs like some others of the earliest date. While owned by Mr. Arms some of the foundation was still there, but at the present time nothing remains to mark the site. Elisha Clark, an early master of this school, was long remembered for the savage ferocity of his discipline.

The second was the tiny house in Eureka built about the year of 1785, and, impossible as it may seem to a modern teacher, from 80 to 125 scholars have been packed into it when Eureka was the center of civilization in town. This house was erected by the owners of three farms, as individuals, Nicholas Bragg being the builder. It was a square block-roofed structure, its sides covered with blocked sheathing of wide pine boards and painted yellow. It stood in a one-acre enclosure walled in, near the present house owned by Arthur Lockwood. About 20 rods north stood the "Parsonage House," occupied by Rev. Robinson Smiley for about five years. About 1837, George Woodbury exchanged property with Dr. Brown and Abijah Miller and the schoolhouse was moved to its present location on the east side of the Eureka road, so that Mr. Woodbury might build where it formerly stood. This last site embraced one acre of land in the terms of exchange. About the same date the present road leading to Weathersfield Bow was built passing south of the schoolhouse and dividing its lot.

A Mr. Coffin came to Eureka about 1795 and taught school and preached as a Universalist.

Dr. Cobb states the name then incorrectly spelled "U-r-e-k-a," signifying "I have found it," was given to that district by an old schoolmaster named David Searle, who

came there about 1796 after a long journey on which he had sought in vain for employment, and upon sight of the new yellow schoolhouse he exclaimed, "Eureka! Eureka!" This Searle was a classical scholar and teacher and took the school off the hands of a Mr. Deane, who subsequently studied languages with Searle and was afterwards a professor in the University of Vermont at Burlington. Another anecdote is to the effect that it was so named by an old settler because of its resemblance to a place in England where he had formerly lived. The one hundredth anniversary of the opening of this school was celebrated on the 24th of October, 1885, at the schoolhouse.

Father Smiley's granddaughter said. "Grandmother Smiley, one of the best educated women of the time, opened a private school, which we term a kindergarten, in Eureka about the year, 1807, for the benefit of her own, as well as her neighbors', children."

A private school was at one time kept in the basement of Mr. Whitney's house, on what is now the Beal place. Miss Fannie Nichols was the teacher.

The town early took action looking toward the support of schools. In February, 1782, Simon Stevens, Daniel Gill, Emanuel Case, William Lockwood and Taylor Spencer were appointed a committee to take care of and look up the "school right" and in 1784 a committee of five men—Capt. George Hubbard, Capt. Abner Bisbee, Emanuel Case, William Lockwood and Oliver Sartwell—were chosen to divide the town into school districts and to take measures to maintain a school. In June, 1788, Simon Stevens, Daniel Gill and Nathaniel Weston were appointed a committee to join, in conjunction

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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with the selectmen, to take care of the school's right of land in this town and other perquisites belonging to the schools, agreeably to an act of this state, and it was not until this year that the town was laid out into school districts, Dr. Samuel Cobb, Capt. Nathaniel Weston and William Lockwood being chosen a committee for that purpose.

In March, 1789, it was "voted that the report of the committee provided for dividing town into school districts remain unaccepted till next town meeting, then said committee to bring a plan of the town with the school districts marked on it for perusal of the people." Then again at a town meeting held Dec. 30, 1794, a committee was elected to divide the town into districts for school purposes, and in March, 1795, we find the report was accepted to actually have the school districts formed.

It was accordingly divided into 14 districts of nearly equal territory and also of about equal school population. Later these were subdivided and this number was increased to 19 districts, each equipped with a substantial school building, and still later reduced to the original number of 14.

In October of this year it was "voted to accept the public lands, where laid out under New York jurisdiction, and the selectmen be directed to look up and ascertain the same and divide the same into three equal shares of 350 acres, each share beginning at Rockingham line, and 100 acres in a square form adjoining the same for the school, and that the same be and hereby is accepted by the town whenever Lewis R. Morris and John Barrett shall give a good deed to the town of 250 acres to belong to the school right and adjoining the same."

In 1803 an effort was made to vote a tax of three cents on a dollar of the grand list to be applied to the use of schools

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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to be divided amongst the several districts agreeably to the number of scholars in each district from four years old to 18, but this was negatived.

In March, 1816, it was voted "that the selectmen be authorized to give a durable loan or loans of the school right of land in this town to such persons and for such rent as they may think right and proper." In April, 1823, it was voted "to appropriate the rent arising from the ministerial land for the year ensuing for the use of schools"; also voted "to petition the next legislature to pass an act to authorize the town of Springfield to appropriate the rents arising from a certain tract of land, deeded by Rev. Robinson Smiley, to be paid the town for the purpose of supporting schools in the several school districts in proportion to the number of scholars each." Since this time the income has been devoted to that purpose.

At the annual meeting in 1827 it was voted "to appropriate and set apart the sum of \$600 of the avails arising from the school lands, which have accrued and will be due to the selectmen on the first day of April next. and add the same to the permanent school fund of the town for the support of common schools therein, and that said sum of \$600 be by the school trustees of the town placed at interest on good mortgage security and the interest accruing therefrom annually to be divided among the several districts for the support of common schools therein in the same manner and upon the same conditions as is now provided by law for the division of the town school tax."

Again in April, 1833, it was voted "to appropriate and set apart the further sum of \$100 of the avails of the rents arising from the school land and add the same to the \$600 voted the

28th day of March, 1827." Also at this same meeting, it was voted "to loan this \$1000 to the town for the purpose of applying it to the extinguishment of the debt created by the purchase of the Town farm." Besides the land already mentioned, the rental of which is applied for the support of schools, and the surplus revenue fund, we have a school fund of about \$1200, known as the Gaylord fund.

Tradition tells us that James Martin, of Scotland, fell in love with Margaret McRoberts, a lass of greater wealth than his own, and eloped with her. The Scottish law, it is said, imposes severe penalties for abducting an heiress, so he rode the pillion while she sat in the saddle and held the reins. Thus they reached the coast and sailed for America. After some years they came to Springfield, where they had a tavern and a store. The Hon. Capt. James Martin, as his headstone reads, was a man of good education and filled important offices in town. He was town clerk six years, writing the books in a handsome hand. His wife may have inherited more wealth than he, but the records show that she signed important papers with her mark. Mr. Martin died Oct. 5, 1789, and in 1791 Mrs. Martin married one Moses Gaylord, who a few years later deserted her, taking with him, it is said, much of her property. Mrs. Gaylord died, leaving a will which the court pronounced invalid, and the estate came by escheat to the town, no lawful heirs being found. Much discussion was excited at the time as to the propriety of the town's taking the money or the possibility of refusing it. There had been two Martin children, a daughter who died in childhood and a son, William Martin, who received a liberal education and was a teacher of some note. Later he became dissipated, and action was taken in town

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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meeting to appoint a guardian for him, lest he become a town charge, though the sworn appraisal of his estate was \$3346.67. He lived but a few years after this.

In 1838 the town "voted that the selectmen be authorized to loan the proceeds of Margaret Gaylord's estate on mortgage security, and the interest thereof be annually appropriated and divided for the support of common schools."

As before stated, the township was first divided into 14 districts, the original plan being to divide them across the town from east to west, the upper portion of the first five bordering on Weathersfield.

The district system resulted in many a "teapot tempest": for every person had decided ideas as to how affairs in his or her own neighborhood should be managed and, whatever action the committeeman took, he had to run a gauntlet of criticism that was often far from judicial or gentle. To settle the question of where one of the little frame schoolhouses should stand has been known to require several district meetings scattered over a period of time. The one point where it should be built, on which all agreed, was that it must be as near the geographical center of the district as possible. Most of the buildings were erected close to the highway, and often they encroached on the adjoining field a little. Usually they formed a part of the line fence. A favorite situation was at the meeting of two or more roads. The schoolhouses seldom had enclosures or shade trees, and the summer sun and winter winds had free play.

The number of pupils to be accommodated in a district was likely to be large, for the children in the old-time families were numerous. Nevertheless, no matter how many the

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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scholars, there was never any thought of providing more than a single teacher. The structure was usually small and lacking paint both outside and in. The schoolroom walls were distastefully vacant except for weather stains and grime from the smoke of the fireplace. Seats and desks were of pine or oak, rudely fashioned by some local carpenter. Their aspect was not improved by the passing years, for the unpainted wood became more and more browned with the umber of human contact, and every possessor of a jackknife labored over them with much idle hacking and carving. Ordinarily there was a narrow entry where the boys were supposed to hang their hats. The fireplace which warmed the schoolroom was large and deep; afterwards the boxstove came to be used.

Originally the districts went by number, while now we are more familiar with them by name. However, I am told that at the present day the listers always use the district number on the tax list to designate the section of the town where the person resides.

It certainly must have been a problem in the earlier days to know just what district, from time to time, a man lived in; for at nearly every town meeting we find records similar to the following one at the April meeting of 1823:—

“Voted to accept the report of the committee raised to inquire what alterations in any of the school districts ought to be made, as follows:—The committee report that on request they have made inquiry in districts, No. 15, 16 and 17. but that Josiah Belknap ought to be taken from district, No. 16. and annexed to district, No. 7. the line to be northerly, westerly and southerly lines of said Belknap’s real estate where he now lives.”

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Some one or more of the people in the different districts were always praying to be set off from one district to another, either because of taxes being less or some neighborhood feeling, or perhaps the distance not being so great. As they are given below the districts are in the order in which they lie, adjoining each other, and as they were originally numbered. There are three districts 13 for the reason that they are all in the 13th section of the town.

### DISTRICT NO. 1 — WALKER DISTRICT

District, No. 1, known as the "Walker district," is situated on the Connecticut river, extending at first from the Weathersfield line down to the Jonas Butterfield farm and comprising districts, No. 1 and 19.

These anecdotes are told as happening here in the year 1820, when the room was warmed by a fireplace: The teacher, who taught manners as well as the three "R's," made a rule that whenever one went before another, while warming at the fireplace, they had leave to push him or her into the fire. One cold morning a few days later the teacher, in replenishing the fire, stepped in front of one of the large girls, who immediately gave him a push that landed him on the firelog. Needless to say, the rule was changed, not being like the laws of the Medes and Persians. The big boys were the bane of the master's life. When they could not carry him out they used all manner of means to drive him out. Many of the boys were over 20 years of age and were not there to obtain an education, as is evidenced by one boy who, when asked to spell rattlesnake, began "re-re-re-e-e-a-a-attle-attle-attle-rattle-sne-e-e-a-k-snake-rattlesnake." (This was Daniel A. Gill and the story was related by the son of a schoolmate of Mr. Gill.)



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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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In 1852, Elizabeth L. Tenney of New Hampshire, an able teacher, taught the summer school, a 12 weeks' term, with an average attendance of 18 scholars; while the winter term of the same length was taught by J. Emeline Whitney. This same year there was but a single term taught in No. 19, the Gill district, and this was in the winter with Clara W. Haskell of Weathersfield as the teacher of eight pupils.

In 1860 some were dissatisfied with the teacher in the summer and turned her out. She sued for her pay. The court was held in the village when one man, trying to help the teacher, testified, "She was the best teacher we ever had. My girls never learned so much in a whole year before. Why, I thought I must take my daughter, Julia, out of school; she was studying so hard I was afraid she would crack her skull."

In 1861 district, No. 1, built a neat and commodious house, while in 1867 we find No. 19's house was decidedly poor. District 1 was said to be rich in dollars but numerically poor in scholars. Miss Mary Graham taught an eight weeks' summer school with only three pupils.

### DISTRICT NO. 2 — EUREKA

We have already spoken of the schoolhouse and the earliest teachers in this district. At times exhibitions were held here, a platform being built outside the building and people coming from miles away. Many of the students have been Dartmouth graduates. James Whipple attended a private school kept by Father Smiley about 1800.

William Wilson Whitney enjoyed such advantages as the common schools then afforded. These being meagre, he

studied algebra, geometry, surveying, navigation and the natural sciences either by himself or with the help of Samuel Henway, a scholarly old man then living in town, to whom many of the young men of his day owed the best of their knowledge. He began teaching in his 18th year and continued teaching in winter, working on the farm in summer. for several years, the same as many of the young men did in the early days.

Henry Barnard attended school here and afterwards recited to Rev. Robinson Smiley. He also attended Chester academy. Calvin Hubbard attended school in winter. He studied Latin and walked to the village to recite.

Other teachers in the early days were Col. Thomas Barrett, Fannie Stevens, Jane Smiley, John J. Barnard, Eunice Nichols and Rev. Dyer Burgess.

The summer school in 1852 was taught by Elizabeth Hubbard, while in 1862 Hattie Steel had the winter term.

In 1864 we find this article in the town meeting warrant: "To take the sense of the town upon the expediency of abolishing school district, No. 2. in said town on account of contention, strife and bitterness among the inhabitants thereof, growing out of the controversy among them upon the question whether the expense of board and wood for the schools therein shall be put upon the grand list or upon the scholar, for and thereby as far as practicable to remove the cause of these troubles." Because of these, the teacher engaged for the summer term, having only one scholar, declined to go on and no other teacher was engaged during the year. The following year, the district refusing to act in regard to repairing the school-house, the prudential committee repaired it in a thorough manner, painting it outside and in at a cost of \$500.

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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### DISTRICT NO. 3 — CRAGIN DISTRICT

Mrs. Bourne, mother of Abram and William Bourne and of Elizabeth E., later the wife of Dea. Joel Woodbury of North Springfield, lived on the road to the Town farm, where C. H. Haywood and later L. M. Cragin lived. She once had a private school and took unruly children to board and teach.

Joseph Whitcomb Ellis, a brother of Isaac Ellis, attended a family boarding school taught by Mrs. Joel Woodbury (nee Elizabeth E. Bourne) at her mother's place. He completed his preparation for college at Springfield Wesleyan seminary.

In 1852, Gracia Walker taught the summer school and Jane Holden the winter term. Ten years later Julia N. Barnard was the winter teacher; while in 1865 Hattie E. Bates taught her first term of school here in the summer. Six years later Lizzie Hawley was the teacher for the winter term, and the superintendent speaks thus of her:—"In knowledge of books Miss Hawley was well qualified to teach but, having never been a rogue in school herself, she failed in managing mischief." She undertook to keep her school by law. Ten degrees below zero was not cold enough to crack the rule that "no pupil can go to the fire in school hours." This chilled the goodwill of the parents, who ought to have heaped coals of the fire of sympathy and firm support on her head. Instead of this, all but five children left school and about the middle of the third week Miss Hawley resigned.

### DISTRICT NO. 4 — BAKER DISTRICT

The present schoolhouse was erected here in 1852. Martha Taylor taught the summer school, a 14 weeks' term, with an average of 20 scholars. The winter school was commenced by

Sarah Chandler of Pomfret but, owing to a misunderstanding between the prudential committee and herself, she was dismissed after six weeks, and Amelia White finished the term.

At the closing exercises of the school it is related that one of the fathers of stalwart sons who were pupils attended. At the "spelling-down" time he was passed the book to look over, which he took and held wrong-side-up all the time, much to the amusement of his children and the rest of the school. When called upon to make some "remarks" he did so, stating his admiration for the teacher and her work, also stating that he "oughter visited the school before and should ha done so, had it not been for his lousy calves he'd been obleeged to tend ter."

#### DISTRICT NO. 5 — NORTH SPRINGFIELD

This originally comprised, not only the present district, but so much of district, No. 13, Springfield and Weathersfield, as was in the town of Springfield, and a part if not all of district, No. 13, Springfield and Chester, as was in the town of Springfield. It is not known just when the first school was established. On the road toward Baltimore, near Leonard Redfield's house, was a blockhouse, said to have been built by Timothy Williams, whether for security against the Indians or for a substantial dwelling we cannot say. A school was kept here as early as 1793, perhaps earlier. Some of the timbers of this building were in the Redfield barn.

A Mr. Stoddard kept school in the early days in the Abraham Lockwood place bought of Joseph Little.

The first schoolhouse was built on the site of the present Baptist church, the date of building being uncertain. There was a petition to the selectmen dated May 2, 1807, to call a

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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school meeting, to meet at the schoolhouse in said district to choose officers and to see if the district would have a school the ensuing year. This schoolhouse was evidently burned in 1811 or '12; for at a school meeting held in March, 1813, it was voted "to allow the committee 42 cents for hiring Daniel Griswold, Jr., 'for to pick up the nails after the schoolhouse was burnt'." The nails were probably hand-made and could be used again. At the same school meeting it was voted to build a brick schoolhouse 22 feet square. This schoolhouse was afterwards made into a cabinetmaker's shop and is now a dwelling house.

The brick schoolhouse recently taken down and replaced by the present building was built in 1829. In a few years it was found that additional schoolroom was needed, and in 1838 a smaller wooden building was erected at the northwest corner of this schoolhouse. Some years later an addition was built on the west end of the brick schoolhouse, the small one sold and moved down the street opposite the manufacturing shop of Dexter Martin, later owned by Frank D. Martin; then it burned. At an early date schools were said to have been kept in barns, and at one time in a barn opposite the old brick church on the hill; also, we find after the schoolhouse was burned, the summer school was kept by Miss Belknap in the barn on Captain Redfield's place. Mrs. Field, mother of F. G. Field, states in the town history that the schools were maintained by subscription, and the next question which arose was, shall the board and wood be reckoned on the scholar? The contest was so strong that it resulted in two schools, each party supporting its own for two years or more. This was a great drawback to education.

In 1808 it was voted not to raise money for support of a school. Voted the use of the schoolhouse for a private school, also for public worship on Sundays. For many years the use of the house was voted for singing-schools and lyceums.

The board and wood were usually set up at vendue in olden days, and very frequently the teachers were obliged to board around a week in a place. In 1823 the teachers were boarded at rate of 40 cents to 50 cents a week, and the wood (probably two-foot wood) was bought at 30 cents to 35 cents a cord. In 1825, Dr. Webster boarded one week for nothing; Darius Streeter one week for 20 cents. For several years the prices of board and wood were exceedingly low. It was probably considered desirable to have the teachers in the family. The wages paid teachers seems to us of this later day exceedingly small. In 1812, ten dollars, with board, was paid the mistress for teaching two months. In 1814, they paid the mistress \$9 for teaching three months. In 1810, the master was paid \$12 for teaching three months, which may have included board. As late as 1813, Alvin Roundy and wife were paid only \$60 for teaching three months.

It is impossible to give the names of the earliest teachers. In 1818, Lucinda Griswold taught, while in 1823 Joshua Leland, the father of C. A. Leland, and Betsey Wilder taught. Among others who may be known or remembered were Drusilla Atwood, the mother of Dea. Joshua Upham; Judge William Rounds, Marcella Leland, Justus Dartt, Flora Pierce, Ella D. Rounds, Belle Eaton. In 1812 there were 72 scholars in the district; 30 years later 136, the largest number ever reported.

For many years the taxes were very light—for one or two years only one-half of one per cent on the dollar, or five

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OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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cents on \$1000—then three-fourths per cent of one per cent, and one per cent. As a rule, as the years went on, the taxes increased.

In 1871 the schools were graded, with Flora Pierce in the higher department, and Belle M. Eaton in the lower department.

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6—SPENCER HOLLOW

This district received its familiar name from three brothers, Timothy, Taylor and Simeon Spencer, who settled here at a very early date. Nearly every farm in this school district has been occupied by one of the Spencers or some one of their descendants.

The date of building the schoolhouse is uncertain. In Samuel Whitcomb's papers we find this note:—"The schoolhouse near Mr. Chase's was not built till about 1781." We find by the records that it needed repairing in 1801, and there was still a debt for money borrowed of Major John Gill to build the house. For some years the school seems to have been supported in the winter season only.

In 1799 the legal voters of this district, the 6th, voted to have a school for three months the winter ensuing.

"Voted Asahel Powers a committee to git a master.

"Voted to pay half money and half grain for a school.

"Voted to raise the money upon the grand list.

"Voted that no man shall send more than one scholar that has no children of his own family, and no man shall take in any scholars if he has children of his own.

"Voted to have a fourth of a cord of wood for each scholar."

The wood was probably furnished on the scholar, but in 1807 we find Major Gill appointed a committee to supply wood at \$2 per cord.

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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DISTRICT No. 11 — MERRITT DISTRICT

Soon after the Lockwoods settled at the Falls, where the village now stands, people began to locate westward on the hill, in what was at one time district, No. 11.

Mrs. Isaac Ellis related that her father, Eli Howe, and his brother, Isaac, went to school in an old dwelling house without any floor at the Fowler place, afterwards owned by Horace Howe on the west hill. Ranie Finney was the teacher. Eli also attended a log schoolhouse which stood between the Fullam place and Elmer Merritt's. Charles Holt's father lived on the Lovell place, and William Lewis' father taught the school. Charles Holt was a very poor mathematician, and it is said that he received unmerciful ferulings because he could not do his problems.

The schoolhouse which stood at the junction of the roads between the James Fullam farm and the Dea. Arba Holman farm on Hop hill (so called because hops were early raised there) was built in 1812. Hon. Justus Dartt taught his first term of school here in 1854. It was the custom in those early days for the scholars to furnish their own books, which made such a medley of kinds in the school that Mr. Dartt provided many of the books for them in order to have some degree of uniformity. He especially delighted in relating about the "spelling matches" of those days, how they used to take turns in spelling against the Slab City school. E. R. Fellows of Weathersfield was such an excellent speller that he even knew the location of the words in the entire book so well that you could not skip a page without his perceiving it.

Other teachers here were Selina Howe, Lucia Prouty, Sarah V. Howe, Myra Goodnow and Sophia Allbee.



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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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In 1877 it was voted to annex school district, No. 11, to No. 9.

Peres Whitcomb bought the old schoolhouse frame, tore it down and built the shed part of his house of it.

### DISTRICT NO. 9 — SLAB CITY

In the early days the schoolhouse stood in the corner of the Aaron Bisbee farm on French Meadows. The house was finally abandoned and the one on the Chester road was built, it being more centrally located.

In 1852, Mary Spencer taught the summer school, while the winter term was kept by Charles B. Eddy of Chester.

In 1861, George Bennett taught the winter term, at this time it being one of the largest schools in town.

In 1883 we find this record, evidently for the purpose of doing away with the "twin relics," tardiness and absence:—"Voted to pay out of the treasury of the district the sum of 25 cents to scholars under 15 whose record shall be clear from tardy or absent marks." This schoolhouse was at one time called the "Rock schoolhouse," taking the name from the large boulder so close by.

### DISTRICT NO. 10 — SCRABBLE

The first Scrabble schoolhouse was built of logs on the old road right south and close to the brook. It burned about 1848 or '50. The second was built just around the bend of the road upon the knoll about 80 years ago. These stories are told of some of the actions of the older boys:—

The road was just wide enough for a team. At recess time they saw Master Litchfield with a load of wood drawn by steers

going by, when Tom Dana from the top of the hill shouted as loud as he could, and off went the load down the side of the hill. Lucius Harlow, a brother of Clarissa Harlow, also taught school here. One boy who went to school was very green and the other boys were apt to make fun of him, especially Elias Damon and David Harlow. The teacher put out the word "drake." He spelt it "M-N-P-T." Seeing he was wrong, he exclaimed, "Now laugh, Elias and David."

In 1852, Rosella A. Frost taught the summer school with great success. In the winter Edgar Sherman, later Judge Sherman of Boston, was engaged to teach. This was his experience as he tells it: "I taught a 12 weeks' term in six weeks. A son and daughter of a wealthy and influential family in the district had attended school at the seminary with me and, as I learned afterwards, were opposed to my teaching their school. They attended school, conducted themselves with propriety but kept up a 'lively talk' outside. An honest farmer, who was the inefficient committeeman, waited upon me and asked 'How be ye gittin' on?' I replied that I thought well. 'You're not gittin' on at all well,' said the committeeman. 'How do you know, you have never honored us with your company,' said I. 'Oh, I have heard the talk,' said he. He paid me what was due and I was obliged to leave. I was terribly mortified. I had undertaken to teach school and had failed."

#### DISTRICT NO. 15 — PARKER HILL

This district was named from Eient, Isaac Parker, one of the first to settle here. The Springfield history states the first schoolhouse built in the south part of the town was the old "Society Home," so called. This is a mistake. The first school-

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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house was a log house and stood about 40 rods right east of Charles Cutler's house. There the Fletchers, the Harlows, the Damons, the Brittons, sons of the early settlers, took their first schooling.

In the winter of 1794, John Thayer's grandfather taught and used to take John's father, then a boy four years of age, to school, drawing him on a handsled. The well-remembered old citizen, Squire Elias Damon, was one of the larger boys; also the father of Henry Harlow.

This served as the Parker Hill schoolhouse until the "Society House of Worship" was built about 1800 or a little later perhaps. It was rather small for a church but pretty large for a schoolhouse. It was erected by the farmers living in the south part of the township and the north part of Rockingham township, who were zealous Universalists, and it was their first meeting house. At about this time, we must remember, there was a sizable village here of about 50 dwellings and a number of industries. What is now our village was a mere swamp. The land on which the house was built was given by Lieutenant Parker, as was also the cemetery. This was a brick house about 10 rods north of the town line, on the west side of the highway, where now may be seen an orchard of old fruit trees. It stood facing the east in front of the cemetery, on a line north and south with Leon Cutler's home. John Thayer gave this description of it in 1907:—

"It was built of brick, one story high, with a sort of steeple. The door was on the southeast corner. Leading into the schoolroom was a hall that reached to about the center of the house to the door opening into the large room, as it seems to me about 35 feet square. At the end of the hall in the south-

west corner of the house was a room as wide as the hall, extending to the west side, about 9x14 feet perhaps. This small room at one time had some kind of doors which could be used when needed in the home-talent exhibitions that were always enjoyed and patronized by the people for miles around. Some of the star actors were Richard Thompson, Tom and Sarah Litchfield, Hiram and George Gould, Ebenezer Lovell. There was a large fireplace on the west side that would take in 6-foot wood. The seats were old-fashioned benches such as are seen in the most ancient schoolhouses. The pulpit was an elevated one, something like that in the old Rockingham church, but smaller, having a flight of stairs leading to it upon each side. It stood until 1853, when Charles Holt took it down and moved the brick to Springfield village, whither he had removed his family, and these bricks became parts of structures there. It had not been used for a schoolhouse since the one at the foot of the hill was built. Rev. Russell Streeter was minister, shoemaker and teacher. There being no waterpower near Parker Hill, one family after another had moved to the central part of the town, forming a village there."

These little incidents have been told in connection with George Merritt as teacher:—

Three unruly boys, who refrained from getting their lessons in school, were kept after closing time. When finally they were permitted to leave, of course they must make their manners and, much to the consternation of the teacher, they said, "Good-by, old Merritt." They were ordered to their seats again and all were severely feruled.

Spelling-bees were held between the Scrabble and Parker Hill schools, the people bringing candles for lights. When

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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Lucius Harlow was teacher, one of the larger boys refused to spell, saying "I'd rather be excused." The teacher replied, "I think you'd better spell." Yet the youth was obstinate. Finally Mr. Harlow seized a stick of four-foot wood, preparatory to wielding the same, whereupon the spell was broken and the lad brought to terms.

### DISTRICT NO. 13 — DUTTON DISTRICT

In the early days there was a log schoolhouse set on a ridge as you come east of the old Nehemiah Woodward place. R. S. Herrick's father went to school there as a boy. At times there were 105 ratable scholars here.

In 1852, Henrietta Tower, also Stella Parker, were teachers. Ten years later Harriet Wright taught her 54th term here.

In 1865, with the schoolhouse unfit for use and the teacher having to "board around" at six different places, some of them a long distance from the schoolhouse, good schools would be an exception and not a rule. A year later this house was repaired.

### DISTRICT NO. 13 — SPRINGFIELD AND CHESTER

A commodious schoolhouse was erected in 1852. In 1869 there were only 16 weeks of school for the year, hardly enough to answer the requirements of the law. This school had much to do to keep pace with others in the town.

### DISTRICT NO. 13 — SPRINGFIELD AND WEATHERSFIELD

This district was what is known to us as Kendrick's Corners.

In the very earliest days there was no school in this district, the pupils having to attend school in North Springfield.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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In 1863, however, a building was started at the Corners, and Daniel Chittenden is mentioned as committeeman.

Among the early teachers were Rachel Elliot, who became Mrs. Wesley Lockwood; Emma White, daughter of Moses White; Marcia Bowen and Carrie Elliot, wife of Joel Woodbury. Mrs. Flora (Pierce) Brown, at the age of 14 or 15, taught a school of 20 pupils here.

It was in this schoolhouse that Henry Bowles of Springfield, Mass., received the rudiments of his education, as well as many another who went forth to fill a large place in the world.

### DISTRICT No. 12 — BUSH DISTRICT

This schoolhouse was built about 1840 by Dana Graham. Early teachers were Frances H. Fisher, Hattie Steele and Sarah V. Howe.

In 1867 the schoolroom was poor, the only apparatus a small blackboard and for furniture a broken chair. The scholars were meagrely provided with books. A reading class of nine had but two well-worn readers, while the teacher had none. In 1871 the principal need seemed to be pupils. The schoolroom was pleasant and comfortable when you entered it, but some pupils had to travel by "long measure" to reach it.

At the commencement of the fall term of 1896 the Bush district was discontinued and the scholars went to Goulds Mills.

### DISTRICT No. 13 — GOULDS MILLS

This was formerly called Morris Mills. The first schoolhouse here, a frame building covered with boards and clapboards, was erected on the present site.

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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In 1866 the schoolroom was repaired but not enlarged. It was too small and low for its requirements. At times in the winter there were as many as 60 scholars.

Some of the older teachers were Ephraim Walker, Samuel Hemenway, a Mr. Ball and Elizabeth Dartt. The pupils were the Whites, Towers, Eatons, Thorntons, Randalls, Rices, Whip-ple, Tyrrells, Allbees, etc.

It is stated that they had the best spellers in town here. At one time the village school came to spell them down. John C. Holmes was put forward to do it, but he had to sit down. James White's sister, Rachel White, stood up to the end.

Miss Nellie Brown taught here in 1871, and Luthera Whitney in 1879.

### DISTRICT No. 14

In March, 1813, it was voted to unite what was then districts, Nos. 17 and 18, into one with the name of No. 17, while in September, 1838, it was voted that the 17th district be divided and that Daniel Hall's south line should be the division line, and that the south part retain the name of No. 17 and the north part take the name of No. 19. This same year the 17th district built a schoolhouse, while in 1839 the 14th school district, having in the opinion of some become disorganized, was duly organized by John Perkins and one of the selectmen. A schoolhouse was built that year. In 1839 said district voted to unite with No. 17, and in 1840 it was voted by the town to combine Nos. 14 and 17—some of the lands in No. 19 being added—to form one district, No. 17, and annex some other lands of No. 19 to the ninth district.

After much agitation in several town meetings it was voted to set off the 14th district from the 17th, to which it was an-

nexed, and take the name of No. 14 as formerly. In 1852 the summer term in "Skunk Hollow, or Pleasant Valley," as No. 14 is called, was taught by Frelove Hawkes of Chester. In 1867 we find district No. 14 including No. 17, school being kept in the house of 17. In 1872 the house which before gave hardly "half the road" to passers-by was moved back, covered and painted outside, and partially renovated inside.

Other teachers here were Benjamin Hale, Stella Parker, Elsie Bradley and R. S. Herrick.

#### DISTRICT No. 7

It was formerly on the east side of the village, and the first schoolhouse near the village was situated on this side. The hill road, now called Cherry Hill street, passing by the homes of Eugene Stickney and E. R. Fellows, was once called Bragg's Hill, and the man whose name was used to designate this hill lived in a farmhouse which stood on the site of Dr. B. A. Chapman's residence. In 1849 the old cemetery house in the corner of the cemetery opposite the home of E. C. Davis, the farmhouse where Dr. Chapman's residence now stands, and the Smiley homestead were the only houses above the Mason place. The father of A. M. Allbee lived at one time in the cemetery house, and he stated that there was a shoemaker's shop where Mr. Davis now lives, and many years before a schoolhouse stood there.

In 1801 it was voted, "that the 7th school district have liberty to build a schoolhouse on the northeast corner of the land deeded to the town by Lester Fling." Later a second schoolhouse, a frame structure, was built on the south end of the Common.



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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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In the school report of 1862 we find:—"The exchange of the old worthless house for the neat and commodious brick house in this district does honor to the builders and is of decided advantage to the scholars."

Successful teachers here were Joseph W. Ellis, Mary Tolles, Edward H. Pettingill, Selina Howe and Justus Dartt.

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mrs. Charles Porter kept a private school at the Dana place for three or four fall terms in the 1840's. This was held just afternoons and was made up of six or eight scholars, including her son, Charles, and a girl who lived with them, Robert Colburn and Emma Cady. Mrs. Porter was excellent in book knowledge, but so far as the culinary art was concerned this is a sample: After boiling eggs for half an hour one day, she remarked, "Why, they're just as hard as when put on."

In those days in the fall of the year many times they had what they called "subscription schools." One such school was made up of about 20 scholars at 20 cents a week, with Miss Holden as teacher.

### DISTRICT No. 8

This district on the west side of the village was known as the Brown district; because in 1802, when Enos Brown's father built for a tavern the "Holt House," what is known as Seminary flat was Mr. Brown's farm, of which he was very proud. There were only three houses on Park street beyond the Brown place—the old house in which Mrs. Emery lived (which was burned and Bradford Harlow afterwards built on the spot) where a school was maintained taught by Rufus Ranstead; the

little brown house of Mr. Philbrook, which Isaac Ellis tore down, and one farther south where Tid Wright lived.

There were only two houses on Union street until the home of the late F. C. Davis was reached. A brick schoolhouse stood just across the ravine from the present home of Mrs. George Burke, and three dwelling houses now occupy the spot.

Misses Gratia Allbee, Stella Parker and Sarah Howe were teachers here. Miss Ursula Cotton taught here in 1859, while in 1853 the summer term was taught by Mary Pettingill of Grafton, with 28 scholars, and the winter school by Charles Brigham of Barnard.

#### SPRINGFIELD WESLEYAN SEMINARY

In the year of 1806 the Methodist society, small as it was, decided to build a house of worship. Hitherto they had held services in dwelling houses and schoolhouses. Land for the purpose, situated on the corner of Chester and Prospect streets, was bought of Elisha Brown and deeded by him to Asahel Powers, Samuel Haskins, Nathaniel Burgess, Lemuel Maynard and Jotham Britton, trustees of the Methodist church in Springfield, the 3th of May, 1806. The house was built of brick and, for the lack of funds, work was suspended in the fall, leaving the building enclosed but entirely unfinished inside. The main floor and the gallery which ran around the three sides had but rough board floors, and the seats were unplanned plank or slabs resting on shingle blocks. The pulpit on the north side was a carpenter's bench with a rude breastwork built above it, and the platform was raised two steps above the bench. For 20 years the people worshipped in it in this condition.

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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About 1825 the church was finished in a comfortable manner, through the efforts of Presiding Elder Fiske, who personally solicited funds in town and preached in schoolhouses, taking collections for that purpose. Scarcely had the brick church been comfortably finished than the subject of having a church in the village (for the village did not extend up the hill then) began to be agitated, and in 1843 the church in present use was built and the old house vacated.



SPRINGFIELD WESLEYAN SEMINARY

Leonard Chase was interested in the cause of education and first conceived the idea of establishing the Springfield Wesleyan seminary. When the church vacated the old building, he suggested to Mr. Aspinwall that it be converted into a denominational school. The conference which met in Springfield that year indorsed the proposition, and he with others was appointed a committee to consider the matter and establish the school if it were thought the circumstances would justify it. Thus the Springfield Wesleyan seminary, a literary and scientific institution, was formed by voluntary association July 11.

1846, under the patronage of the Vermont Annual conference of the Methodist church and used for its purpose the old brick meeting house. It was deeded to the trustees Oct. 20, 1846.

The school was accordingly opened in March, 1847, with F. S. Hoyt as principal for the first term. The people of Springfield had raised over \$1100 to fit up the house and for the purchase of apparatus. Very little notice had been given out of town, but the attendance was encouraging, with 80 students, 60 of whom were from the town.

The first board of trustees appointed by the conference included such man as Samuel Taylor, Russell Burke, Henry Closson and John W. Bisbee. In the catalogue for this year we find among the students were Clinton Chase, Walbridge Field, Rebecca Safford, Edmund C. Burke, J. Lincoln Ellis, Horace Hubbard, Joseph White, Ellen M. Howe, Elizabeth Hubbard, Stella Parker, Emily Royce, Abbie Tower. Olivia Burke.

There were three departments, the Classical, English and Primary. Total number of students attending for the year, 261; 116 males, 145 females. The school year was academically divided into four terms—two of 12 weeks, one of 11, and one of nine. Tuition, \$3 for 11 weeks; each language, 50 cents additional; ornamental branches, \$1; music with use of instrument, \$3; writing, including stationery, 12 lessons for \$1; incidentals, 1½ cents per week; board, \$1.50 per week, including fuel and lights. Many hired rooms and boarded themselves at a much cheaper rate. The pupils simply went to the seminary to recite, the recitation period being one hour. At one time there were about 300 students of both sexes.

Rev. Harvey C. Wood was principal after the first term, up to and including 1849, during which year a boarding house was constructed within a few rods of the seminary to meet the

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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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demands for accommodations. The main building was of gneiss and would accommodate more than 60. Some debt was incurred, and the attendance seems to have fallen off this year.

In 1865 a committee was appointed by the conference to consider the propriety of uniting the two seminaries, Newbury being the other, in a new location. Next year this committee reported favorably, the report was adopted, and a committee appointed to locate the new seminary. Montpelier was the place fixed upon, and in 1868 the trustees of both institutions were authorized to sell these school properties and turn the proceeds over to the new seminary. This building was purchased May 19, 1869, for \$5000 and was used for a high school until the winter of 1895-6.

Inasmuch as the citizens of Springfield had donated liberally to the funds for building up and supporting the seminary, it was agreed that one-half the proceeds of the sale should go to the conference for the benefit of the Montpelier school and one-half for the public benefit of the town of Springfield. The citizens of Springfield donated their part of the amount received to establish a permanent Village Library fund. By an act of legislature passed Nov. 14, 1870, the Springfield Wesleyan seminary was legislated out of existence. On March 18, 1871, an agreement was entered into between the trustees and the town of Springfield, by which the town became bound to receive and forever hold the fund given by the trustees of the seminary, the interest at the legal rate of the state to be paid to the trustees of the library each year. The amount of the fund thus received was \$2533.68. The town also became obligated to pay to the trustees the yearly sum of \$200 for the support of the town library.

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Many of our citizens today well remember attending the Wesleyan seminary and tell some interesting anecdotes concerning former days. August 25, 1909, a reunion and banquet of the Springfield Wesleyan seminary was held, the reunion being in charge of a committee appointed for Old Home day. The library has a complete file of the Wesleyan catalogues from 1847 to 1863, inclusive, excepting the year, 1857; also pictures of the graduating classes of 1863 and '64.

### DISTRICT No. 16

This comprised the valley of the town with a schoolhouse on Main street just north of the Universalist church, erected before the church about the year of 1830. It must have been used at times for town purposes; for Dec. 31, 1836, it was voted "to adjourn to the town room in the village schoolhouse and there assemble forthwith."

In 1837-8 there was a select school kept by Mr. and Mrs. Wilder in the Tontine (Sparrow block) and later in the school building on Main street. The pupils were all local or from nearby towns. The studies were arithmetic, grammar, history, chemistry, Latin, drawing and painting. They tried to write compositions, but it did not amount to much. It was a mixed school. Among the pupils were Mrs. Abbie Haskell, Louisa Williams, Albert Brown, the Chases and Whitcombs, Henry and Bigelow Safford, sons of Noah Safford, Rebecca Safford, mother of H. B. Holmes.

There was quite a celebrated class in drawing. They learned to draw by using the dividers, measuring everything, leaves and all. Minister Holmes, a full-blooded Englishman, used to visit the school. He approved of the study of chemistry

## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

on the grounds that he should be loath to marry a woman who did not know enough about chemistry to make a wholesome loaf of bread.

In 1853 there was a Primary and Principal school kept by Olivia Burke with 55 scholars all under eight years of age, and Jane S. Tower with 56 scholars. Between 1853 and 1862 the schools became so crowded that at one time a high school was kept in the north half of the Congregational vestry, also one in the Universalist vestry.

In the summer of 1859 and winter of 1860, Marcia Brown taught the upper department of a school in the building by the church. In the winter a higher department was taught by George Dresser in the building which stood where the Corliss Hardware company store is located. In 1862 it was voted "to let the Town hall for a school in the spring."

Much agitation occurred relative to a new schoolhouse, so much so that Joel A. H. Ellis, then one of the committee, went to work and staked out for a building directly in front of the Main street schoolhouse, as the law allowed one to build on property already owned. As a result, what is now the Catholic church was built, in the summer of 1862, at a cost of \$2600, and a higher department organized, which was taught by such teachers as Miss Holt, Mrs. Mary (Lynde) Foster and Marcia Brown.

In 1867 at the March meeting it was voted "to add district, No. 8, to 16, also to annex school district, No. 7, to 16 and that the district so united shall take the name of No. 7. At the same time the graded system of schools was introduced into this district by Miss Marcia Brown.

In May, 1869, the Wesleyan seminary was purchased and a high school established. The schoolhouse on the west side of

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## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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the river was then discarded, it not being a good location for a school, and the building was sold to the Catholic society in 1872.

In the first class to graduate from the high school July 1, 1870, were Nellie A. Brown, Mary E. Barnard and Mattie Hall, with Professor Shaw as teacher.

In 1871 we find amongst the roll of honor students, for being neither absent or tardy for a year, Lucia Jenkins, Alice Wheeler, Flora Prentiss, Emma Safford and Della White.

### THE TOWN SYSTEM

The question of adopting the town system of schools was agitated from year to year and finally, by a vote of 125 to 120, in 1886, it was decided to make a change. The act of the legislature giving the town the right to make this change provided that it should be for five years, but in 1887 the act was amended making the stipulated time two, instead of five, years.

The old order of things in relation to schools came to an end on the first of July, 1889, and the new order inaugurated when all town superintendents were relegated to the past. Rev. G. W. Bailey was the first one chosen in Springfield, also the last one to officiate in that capacity. In his report he stated truly, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

### THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

For many years the dilapidated seminary at the top of the hill served as the subject of verdant wit and pointless epigram, while the pressing need of a new school building was freely discussed and as freely pushed into the background by frugal taxpayers; but a dramatic crisis finally occurred when the



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## OLD SCHOOLS OF SPRINGFIELD

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beautiful Parks mansion burned to the ground, and the lot on which it stood was thus made available to the town for purchase. A wave of enthusiasm, taken advantage of by the right men at the right time, resulted in the town voting in 1894 to have a new school building. The school directors—W. H. H. Putnam, J. W. Pierce, C. A. Forbush, D. J. Boynton, L. M. Cragin and R. S. Herrick—were made a building committee. The Parks lot deeded to the town April 1, 1894, was bought for \$2500 and the Rice property adjoining it, deeded April 22, 1894, for \$2800.

The foundations were laid in the season of 1894 and work begun in the spring of 1895. The building was completed and occupied in the winter of 1895-6, and the class of 1896 was the first to graduate from it with Herman Dressel as principal and Frances Pierce as assistant. This was the largest class to graduate up to that time from the high school and had 18 members.

In 1896 it was voted to sell at auction or private sale the school property on Union, Park, Main and Summer Hill streets. R. M. Colburn bought the Main street property for \$1550, J. T. Slack the Common property for \$1038, Henry Howe the Union street property for \$312, and Maxim LaFountain, Frank Stone, James Beagle, Edmund Brown, K. T. Gifford and Dr. A. A. Haig the seminary property for \$1220.51.

The total cost of the new building was \$52,250.06, and this included the cost of moving and repairing the barn and making the road across the school lot to Mineral street.

The schools were consolidated and reorganized through the efforts of J. W. Pierce and Mr. Dressel on the basis of the then famous "Batavia system." This consisted of allotting one class to a teacher, who used half of the time for recitation and the rest for helping the pupils prepare their lessons. Also the number of grades was changed from nine to eight.

## CHAPTER XII

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### An Original Crown Point Marker

ONE of the choicest heirlooms left to the town of Springfield is that portion of the Crown Point road within its borders. In 1909 we were proud to place the granite markers along the old road, that those who come after may take a keen interest to care for their treasures. To Mark C. LaFontaine, one of Springfield's gifted sons, has come the honor of discovering, as far as is known, the only original marker ever located on the Crown Point road as it passes across our state.



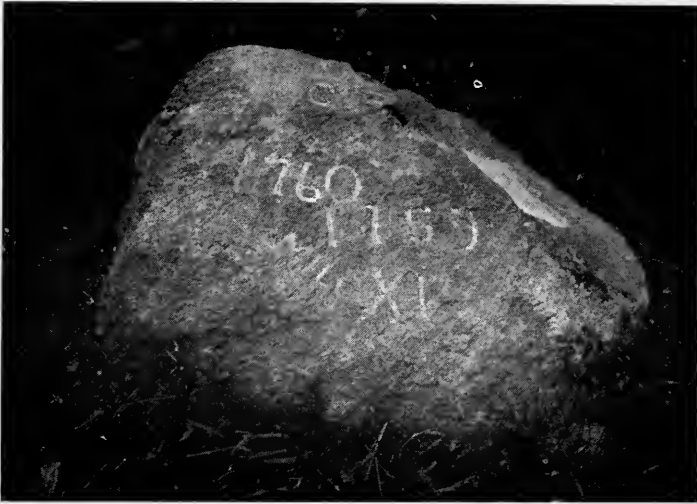
ORIGINAL CROWN POINT MARKER PLACED IN 1760

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AN ORIGINAL CROWN POINT MARKER

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History tells us that in the spring of 1760 Lord Amherst and General Goffe, with 800 men, started from Wentworth's ferry, after building the Block house, to complete the road that had been started the year previous at Crown Point. They built 26 miles of road to the foot of the mountain, placing a milestone at each mile. At Ascutney lodge, the summer home of the LaFontaines, situated in the small hamlet



1760 CROWN POINT MARKER RESTORED

of Amsden in the town of Weathersfield. Mr. LaFontaine found this original marker near the highway on their grounds. It is about three and one-half feet by two and a half, but rather triangular in shape. It bears the initials C. P., dates of 1759 and 1760, and in a lower corner "Mile XI."

To make sure that no error should creep into his find, Mr. LaFontaine sent for the Vermont state geologist, Prof. G. H.

Perkins, and Ernest W. Butterfield, commissioner of education of the state of New Hampshire. We quote from Mr. Perkins' letter as follows:—

“I think that your interpretation of the lettering on the larger stone, that on your own grounds, is quite correct. It seems to me that the “Mile XI 1759” is undoubtedly there. \* \* \* \* \* All in all, the find is an interesting one, and I see no reason to think it not genuine.”

The following is quoted from Professor Butterfield's letter:—

“Of course there were no settlers in your part of the town in 1759 and probably none before 1775. By 1783 the whole valley was well settled and it would appear that for convenience the swamp road was given up and the one built which runs by your house and around by the hillside.

“I think this is the case, because on February 11, 1783, the town of Weathersfield voted as follows:—

“‘February 11, 1783. Accept County road, Dr. Downer's to Mr. Elmore's.

“‘Accept Crown Point road. To make following alterations:—Beginning at Cavendish, turning a little by Stevens', then coming down to Potwine's road, then marked north of the old road, coming in again north of the hill. Soon turned again and joined the old road at the branch, then turned from Mr. Chamberlin's, crossing the old road a little north of where Mr. Dartt's road now comes in and continues on east of Mr. Asa Grout's house: then as the trees are marked along the side of the hill a little east of Esquire Chilson's house, then east as it is cut out between Captain Upham's and Captain Spofford's, or near it, as cut out then upon that line to Springfield.’ Book 1, page 31.

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AN ORIGINAL CROWN POINT MARKER

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“Only the first part of this quotation is of interest to you. as Mr. Chamberlin lived where Joseph Woodbury long lived, and the Grouts, Chilsons and Spoffords lived near Joshua Upham’s.

“Now as I understand this vote, it means that the traveled road of 1783 had diverged somewhat from the military road of 1759 and the traveled road was accepted for use. I suppose that the Stevens lived at the first house in Weathersfield after you leave the Cavendish line. It is likely that you will find the original road followed rather closely the highway from the Cavendish line to the main road from your house to Greenbush. This main road was called Potwine’s road.

“The accepted road, it would then appear, ran north, that is towards Downer’s from the earlier road, going probably back of your house and Kendall’s and joining the military road as originally built not far from the lime kilns in Amsden village. I should suppose that this road back of your house was the traveled Colonial road for many years but was straightened at some later time to practically its original location.

“I congratulate you upon your discovery; for I feel confident that you have found a genuine stone of Goffe’s time.”

Mr. LaFontaine is now restoring this marker and adding a bronze tablet, which will make the importance of his discovery so plain that the passer-by may know what it represents.



THE OLD EZIKEL WATCOMB  
RESIDENCE.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Folklore Tales

**T**O know a few of the quaint and humorous tales of the early home builders of the town may add to our interest and pleasure, and those which are of an amusing character all go to prove the constant vigilance necessary to existence when Springfield was in the making.

In the spring of 1795, Daniel Howe and Elizabeth (Patch) Howe, his wife, came through the woods on an ox sled from Fitzwilliam, N. H., to settle in the new town of Springfield. Their choice of a home was on Monument Hill. By much hard labor they cleared the land and made a large and very productive farm. Here they reared their ten children, whose descendants live in our midst today. They were very prudent, pious people and staunch supporters of the Methodist church.

The writer has often been told by some of the older residents of the town that Mrs. Howe was one of the most remarkable women that ever lived in Springfield. Her fortitude and

courage were never daunted. She was a famous spinner and weaver of linen, which she used to sell among the people and at the store, walking from her home to the town and carrying the baby. (Always a baby.) Sometimes she bought a cheese with the sale of her linen. To many of us the problem of transporting a cheese and a baby would require more than ordinary courage. But even this difficulty was quickly overcome by Mrs. Howe: for she carried the cheese some distance along the bridle path, then going back for the baby she would carry the child way past the cheese, and so on until home was reached, with baby and cheese, and in this manner she carried any other purchases she might make.

Again this remarkable woman used to start from her home on horseback with a babe in arms and a bag of corn at the back of the saddle, riding down a bridle path to Goulds Mills. She forded the river, going up over the hill to the mill in Eureka, where it was ground. Then Mrs. Howe returned the same way, baby and all.

Household utensils were very few and one day her only pail dropped into the well. Unable to get it up, she tied a rope around her waist and demanded to be let down into the well to get the pail. This was done, and she returned in triumph with her treasure.

At an early age she was called as a witness in court. Her father said she was too young to go and testify. He confined her in a hogshead for some time, taking her out at night. Light was admitted by the hogshead's being placed next a window and, while confined there, she embroidered a beautiful apron, the cloth for which she had woven the year before. This is kept as a choice treasure among her descendants in the town today.

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

Her grandson told of her that she was a "dreadful" worker, and that her husband was "dreadfully" willing she should work.

Mr. Howe, with a neighbor, purchased a dump-cart, each one owning a wheel. Later altercations occurred between them, and as neither one would sell to the other, the children of the two parties took the dump cart and placed it on the boundary line between the two farms. There it stood and went to decay, like "the wonderful one-hoss shay."

When past 75, on a Sabbath day, while all her family were at church and Mrs. Howe was alone, a hawk descended on her chickens. She ran out into the yard, caught up a sled-stake, killed the hawk and saved the chickens, receiving a deep wound in one hand. This attracted attention and mention was made of it in the local paper, much to the disgust of "Grandmam Howe," as she was called, and she said, "It was strange a person could not kill a hawk in her own dooryard without the whole town knowing it."

Not all these incidents, or the spinning and weaving of 1200 yards of linen annually, were Mrs. Howe's greatest achievements, but the Christian character she stamped on her children. Her sons and daughters were staunch and true, and her influence, with that of her husband, was felt throughout the town.

Frivolity of all kinds was frowned upon, as she firmly believed life was too serious a thing to waste many precious moments. She and her husband both lived to a great age, as did their children. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren are living in the town today.

Let us carry with us a breath of remembrance of the worthy couple who came in those early days to help in the



## FOLKLORE TALES

upbuilding of our town, and to whose memory their grandchildren piled up the rocks on Monument Hill, the highest point on their farm.

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No chapter of folklore tales would be complete without reference to Father and Mother Smiley.

With the completion of the meeting house on the Common and the settlement of a minister after so many years of contention and hard feeling, a new era began in the town and the advent of Father Smiley and his talented wife was an occasion of great rejoicing. A large delegation of the people, among them the most prominent in the place, met him at Wentworth's



KETTLE USED BY ASHABEL DRAPER IN HIS SERENADE  
TO FATHER SMILEY AND BRIDE

ferry and escorted him with great pomp to his residence, a few rods from the schoolhouse in Eureka.

The party took dinner at Jennison Barnard's, and a reception followed in the evening. There was one Ashabel Draper,

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

who sometimes allowed himself to be overcome by the too free use of ardent spirits, which prevailed on such occasions in those days. The leaders of this affair, wishing to preserve order in the presence of the new minister, gave Draper plainly to understand that his room would be better than his company. Thereupon Draper determined to celebrate the day in his own way and take a sweet revenge upon those whom he considered no better than himself. With the help of a few companions he procured a large potash kettle, inverted it and in some way mounted it like a bell near the route of the procession. Taking a hammer he crawled under it, and as the party went by he tolled the bell as a salute. This kettle is used today as a watering trough near the old Streeter place, now the home of Warren Aldrich.

It was said of Father Smiley, "He was a man of ability: for he could offer a prayer 30 minutes long, and stayed in his pastorate 25 years, which no one has been able to do since." In offering these prayers he always did so with his eyes open. When asked why, Father Smiley replied, "The Bible says, 'Watch and Pray'."

Near the close of his long sermons the men who had toiled early and late during the week would often be drowsy. At such times Parson Smiley, not hesitating to address them personally, would call out, "Mr. Brown" or "Squire Stevens, will you have the goodness to awake!"

Father Smiley was broad in his views. One of his best sermons was on "Worldliness." It came home so closely to one of his hearers that in exasperation he determined to be even with the minister. As he came out of the church he said, "You preached a very excellent sermon today, Mr. Smiley,

and I am obliged to you for it, but hadn't you better take a little of it to yourself?" "Oh, most of it, most of it, and what I don't take I hope you will make good use of."

When Father Smiley was a very old man, he would walk up the church aisle tall and straight. His snow white hair was braided in a cue, which was tied with a black ribbon. His face was as white as his hair, and he stood there in the pulpit as though lord of the land. He wore white cotton gloves during the sermon, but they were rarely buttoned and usually half drawn on his hands. His right arm moved slowly back and forth when speaking or praying, and the effect of the flopping fingertips of those white cotton gloves on the light-minded and observing young people may be imagined.

He never spoiled a point for relation's sake. One Sunday morning he preached eloquently on the folly of over-dressing and following after vain fashions when his daughters, as handsomely dressed as any in his church, sat opposite him in the choir. He closed as follows: "You may say, 'It is all very well to preach to others, but why don't you look at home!' My friends I do look at home every day, and my heart bleeds when I do it." If he could not rule his daughters, he did not hesitate to put his parishioners right when he thought they needed it.

Outside the pulpit Mr. Smiley was the real old Irish gentleman, the soul of fun and wit and very fond of his toddy, which was no disgrace then. They tell how a party climbed Ascutney mountain. Arriving at the spring, the parson and Hamlin Whitmore sat down to rest. After the others had gone on, Hamlin drew forth his flask. It was about the time of the first temperance crusade and Mr. Smiley said, "Hamlin, how

is this! I thought you had signed the pledge." "So I did, so I did, but you know the clause about its use at the advice of your physician, and I am my own physician." "Hamlin, Hamlin, you rogue, I will let you be my physician today." laughed the parson. The following description of Father Smiley is given us by one who remembers him as he used to come from his home on Cherry Hill. He wore a tall silk hat and a long broadcloth cape reaching nearly to the shoetops. As the wind blew back the folds of the cape, this little girl used to remark, "There comes Father Smiley with his wings spread."

In coming down from his home in Eureka one windy Sabbath morning, as he drew near Captain Lynde's, his tall hat blew off, the wind taking it towards Mt. Ararat, beyond his reach, with his sermons for the day in it. Calling at Mr. Lynde's, he told of his loss and they speedily dispatched a man for the missing hat, who soon brought it back with the sermons unharmed.

Mother Smiley was a quiet woman, not given to much humor or fun. She had a fashion of getting her own way, in the house and out of it. When Father Smiley came into possession of his land and decided to build a new home, Mother Smiley especially wished it to stand true with the compass, and when it was staked out she went home and told her husband it was all wrong. He interviewed the workmen, who maintained that they were right and Mrs. Smiley wrong. Father Smiley reported this to his wife, who said nothing. One very bright moonlight night, when they were living in the old Boutelle home, leaving Father Smiley and all the little Smileys tucked in their beds, she stole out and up the hill and moved the stakes right according to her viewpoint. With wise dis-

cretion she remained silent until it was too late to disarrange her civil engineering, and for years after Father Smiley used to delight in telling how once Mother Smiley got the best of him.

One of Mother Smiley's granddaughters writes this:—

“Grandma always sat up late to read by the south window, placing her light on the windowsill. This could be seen from the Common and many homes on the hillside, and the people used to watch for the light in the window; for they knew Mother Smiley was studying—first, her Bible, then history, politics, doings of congress, current events, etc. I do not think there was a woman in Springfield, perhaps not a man, so thoroughly well read as she in those early days. Grandma was never humorous, but more inclined to be serious; was not a great talker, was no gossip, and indulged in very little small talk. She enjoyed discussions on theology with her husband's ministerial friends better than an afternoon spent with her lady friends, hunting up the short-comings of her neighbors. She was a worth-while woman, full of loving charity for all, and ready to help everyone in every way possible.”

Father Smiley was chaplain of a regiment which at one time assembled for training in Bellows Falls. At inspection the officer of the day, who was a conceited sort of a fellow, found fault with some detail of the chaplain's uniform and reproved him in words unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The next public prayer by Chaplain Smiley began as usual, with petitions for the president, the governor, etc., and then—“Oh Lord, bless our inspector, pardon his honest blunders and send down upon him a large measure of wisdom and under-

standing" rolled out of his mouth in such oily brogue we may be sure the listeners appreciated the point.

The way the parson got his firewood was at least unique. His parishioners gathered one day each winter, when he lived on the farm, and went into the woodlot, felling trees and drawing up the logs to the house. One day's work brought a year's supply of wood. They made half a dozen trips, and the parson had the water over the fire and all the ingredients for a fine glass of hot toddy for the company—at every trip! He passed the toddy himself and, with "I will join you boys," he drank a glass with them. At the close of the day everyone had a very rosy view of life.

In 1825 Father Smiley resigned his pastorate after 24 years of service and spent the remainder of his life here among the people he had loved and served so well.

Mrs. Achsa Emery, for many years a tailoress, whose work brought her into many families in the town, told that she always knew when Parson Smiley arrived where she was working: for after the formal greetings he always inquired: "And how many children have you, madam?"—regardless of how short a time intervened between his calls.

\* \* \* \* \*

Levi Harlow came to Springfield in 1783, bringing his family on an ox sled. It is said that he made the first brick in town. In 1795 he made brick for Jennison Barnard in Eureka. They mixed the mortar with shovel and hoe.

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Elijah Whitney, son of Lemuel, about 1800 was a successful hunter with dog and gun. His sales of peltry were a source of considerable profit in his early life, and he was accustomed

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FOLKLORE TALES

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to say that he had killed more foxes than Samson turned into the Philistines' corn!

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EARLY THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS

The records of the Vermont Council of Public Safety contain the following item under date of November 14, 1777:—

“Resolved, That Thursday, the 4th day of December next, be and hereby is appointed to be observed as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer throughout the state of Vermont.

“By order of the Council.

JONAS FAY,

Sec’y.”

On October 9, 1778, the General Assembly of Vermont voted that Thursday, October 26, be observed as a day of Thanksgiving, and the governor issued, on October 18, a proclamation to that effect, which evidently was the first one ever issued in Vermont. The only copy extant of this proclamation is in the library of Dartmouth college.

The General Lewis Morris chapter, D. A. R., of Springfield has in its possession the original of the following letter of Lewis R. Morris:—

“Gentlemen:

“Inclosed I do myself the honor to transmit you the enclosed Proclamations for a Thanksgiving, that the town of Springfield may have the earliest information of that event. I send two copies that they may be published in the town in such places as they may think proper.

I am Gentlemen  
with respect and esteem  
your most obedt. servant

L. R. MORRIS.

General Assembly, 1795.”

One of the choice treasures of the Vermont Historical society is a chest of rare design, presented by a descendant of Gen. Lewis Morris. This chest was brought to America by the Hessians and was used as a strong box for the money and valuables of the regiment. It was captured at the Battle of Trenton and later fell into the hands of Richard Morris, chief justice of the Supreme court of New York. It was sent by him to his son, Lewis R. Morris, of Springfield, Vt., "to secure your valuables from that dishonest and reckless population of the Green Mountain state, who have held against the just and true claims of New York."

Gen. Lewis Morris was a gentleman educated and accomplished more than was common at that time, of a fine and imposing presence and pleasing manners, a leader in the society of his day. A military training and bearing made him often chosen as commanding officer in the military displays. These circumstances, together with his large property interests, gave him more prominence than perhaps any other man in Springfield or Charlestown enjoyed. His residence on the Connecticut river was for a long time the finest in the country. The location of the mansion fronting the river and meadow, with the rocky Skitchewaug in the background, would be hard to excell in variety and beauty of scenery anywhere. Here he raised a family of stalwart sons and one daughter.

General Morris prided himself on his dining room appointments and service, all meals being served with great dignity. He entertained most lavishly and distinguished guests from all parts of the country came to sit around his board. He dressed with greatest care for each meal and required all members of his family to do the same. Dr. Calvin Hubbard,



father of Mrs. Joseph White, was the Morris family physician for many years and, when called professionally, he was expected to wear the best clothes he possessed and remain to the following meal, at which a special topic, previously prepared, was the subject of conversation. A refusal would have been considered very discourteous.

Dr. Hubbard's sister, Ruth, was a tailoress and made all of General Morris' clothes. The finest of broadcloths and the most elegant satins for vests were sent, and Miss Hubbard was expected to cut and fit each and all garments to perfection.

\* \* \* \* \*

The site of the plant of the Fellows Gear Shaper company, which purchased its first parcel of land in 1896, seems to have been the chosen spot for numerous activities in the last one hundred and fifty years. We are told that at first the Indians and wolves held full sway, and until 1836 nothing is written of this particular spot. In that year the Village Falls Manufacturing company, a stock concern, was formed, which owned the woolen mill, cotton mill and other industries. The new company erected on this land a paper mill for making letter paper. The machinery was bought in Claremont, N. H., drawn over Ashley's ferry and thence to Eureka. The road had just been built from the little schoolhouse in Eureka to the ferry. The load was heavy and, when they came to Maple Hill near the Barnard place, they were unable to handle it. Jennison Barnard came to their assistance with five yoke of oxen and drew it up the hill. It being down grade the remainder of the way they met with no further difficulty.

During the business panic of 1837 the Village Falls Manufacturing company failed, and the property came into the

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

hands of Irving Blake, who ran the business until Nathan Wheeler of Grafton, Vt., took it over. At his death, about 1842, Dr. E. A. Knight, who had come to town, married Nathan Wheeler's only daughter and became superintendent of the paper mill, which position he held until 1845. In this year Henry Barnard bought the property and owned it until 1848, when it was destroyed by fire.



STENCIL TOOL WORKS OF A. J. FULLAM STOOD ON SITE OF  
PRESENT FELLOWS GEAR SHAPER CO. PLANT

Moses Barrett then purchased the lot and erected on it a fully equipped sawmill with all wood-working machinery. He made sash and blinds, doors and other parts for houses.

In 1860 Moses Barrett leased a part of this land to A. J. Fullam for his stencil tool works. This business grew rapidly, and quite a large shop for those times was built. The tools he

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## FOLKLORE TALES

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made cut the letters in a very thin brass sheet in all sizes for marking the largest boxes and also household linen. The receipts from this business reached the *high mark* of \$20,000 per year.

There was another rather unusual side to this business. Mr. Fullam was very fond of music and young people, and sang tenor in the Congregational choir. He had a room finished off in one end of the shop, which was handsomely furnished, including a fine piano. Here were held many choir rehearsals and other musical gatherings. Ladies, who were then children, remember numerous sugar parties held here, when tables were spread for the old-fashioned sugar-on-snow. The floor was then cleared and dancing followed. Others remember parties in the summer when they played grace hoops on the lawn and were even served with ice cream, a rare delicacy in those days.

This building was burned about 1867 one very windy night in the early spring. The shingles blew onto Summer street buildings and up onto what is now called Hillcrest, and many men were obliged to climb to the roofs of their houses and pour on water to extinguish fire caused by sparks from these burning shingles.

The next industry here was the Cab Ellis Co-operative Works, where they made fancy wooden boxes, paper boxes, wooden dolls and paper-mache baskets. This venture was not wholly successful and was followed by Slack, Burke & Whitmore, who made fertilizer from old bones and chemicals, which proved very disturbing to the village folks and resulted in its final removal.

From 1886 to 1891 Frank Spellman occupied this location for a paint shop, then J. O. Perkins and W. D. Woolson used it for a time as a dye works.

We will not tell in detail of the various business enterprises in what was known as Cab Shop hollow, or Mineral street; because from Isaac Fisher's small shop for repairing carding machines to the largest shoddy mill in the world is a long story, and we will only mention that there were vats for tanning leather, the making of farm baskets, the first doll cabs ever on the market, a woolen mill and several smaller industries.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometime between 1830 and 1837 Jewett Boynton built a cocoonery and hatching shed on what is now known as the Burroughs place in Weathersfield, near Springfield. Mulberry trees were cultivated quite extensively and an attempt was made to establish a profitable business, but the general understanding prevails that as a paying proposition it was a failure. Probably a good many people were familiar with the long shed-like structure which was attached to the residence on the Burroughs farm and which was destroyed by fire only a few years ago. This was the cocoonery and was provided with long tables on which were frames where the silk worms were fed. After they had grown about three inches in length, with plump green bodies, they began spinning the silken thread and winding it round and round themselves, until finally they were entirely enclosed in a cocoon of oval shape. The hatchery was a shed, detached from the other buildings, from which the worms were transferred to the cocoonery. In building these homes for the worms great precaution had to be taken to screen against the squirrels, who considered a few dozen of these, when full grown, a rare delicacy. Some of the mulberry trees are still to be found in the vicinity.

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## FOLKLORE TALES

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About 1839, an attempt to produce cocoons was made on the farm now owned by Horace Brown, but known to nearly everyone as the Slack farm. The two-story structure, at present forming the main part of the residence, was built for a cocoonery and was situated a little to the east of the site on which it now stands, the present ell being at that time the residence. After about two years' trial, the scheme was abandoned, and the building removed to its present location and converted into the main part of the house.

At nearly the same time Mr. Cady, the father of Mrs. John A. Slack of Park street, established a cocoonery on Summer Hill at his residence, which was located at the north-west corner of the cemetery, nearly opposite the house now owned by Egbert Davis. His experience was practically the same as already related, and he gave up the idea.

Joseph Messer, who for years lived in the house now occupied by Philip Stern at the foot of the stairs leading from Park to Prospect street, also engaged in the raising of silk worms and one year received the highest bounty from the state for producing the most cocoons. He invented a machine for reeling the silk from these. The silk was then sent to Newport, N. H., where it was twisted, colored and made into a good quality of sewing silk. This was before the seminary was established here, and Mr. Messer one year occupied the old meeting house for feeding and growing his silk worms. The meeting house was on the site of the old high school building, where John Hooper's residence at present stands. The business was not a success because of the climate. The mulberry trees winter killed and the worms sickened and died, and it was finally given up altogether.

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

Ezekiel Whitcomb had one of the largest cocooneries in this vicinity, on the place where Walter W. Slack now lives. This also was not a success and was destroyed by fire. In the most prosperous year of the industry more than 1000 pounds of cocoons were produced in town.

Raw silk is a continuous thread, and preparation for manufacture includes many distinct operations. The cocoons are first submitted to a treatment that will kill the worm before it begins to force its way out. If the worm eats its way through the walls of a self-constructed prison, the threads will be spoiled; they will be cut into numerous short pieces and will not be good for spinning or twisting.

The methods used are baking the cocoons in an oven heated from 140 degrees to 160 degrees Fahrenheit or by placing them in the hot sun under glass for a few days.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old deeds are often quaint in their wording and most emphatic and restraining in their demands. The following is a portion of the deed given in the transfer of the Frederick Porter estate, now owned by his daughter, Mrs. Anna Marsh:—

“In front of said house no building is ever to be erected within  $4\frac{1}{2}$  rods, beyond the east line of the premises hereby contained, towards the river \* \* \* \* no building shall ever be erected in front of said house, nor any obstruction that shall affect the view of the village from the house, but that the land towards the view \* \* \* \* in front of said house, shall be forever hereafter occupied solely for cultivation and a passageway to the land adjoining.”

There was to be no obstruction between the house now owned by Dr. H. H. Lawrence and the building just above that

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## FOLKLORE TALES

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occupied by the Corliss Hardware company. Strong and binding as this deed runs, not many years lapsed before the opposite side of the street was built up by manufacturing industries.

### A GROUP OF OUR OLDEST HOUSES

Among the most interesting sights in Springfield now is a group of houses of pioneer days, most of their dates of building clustering around 1800, a time in the history of our town when many obstacles had to be overcome to gather the material for the erection of the then pretentious dwellings. Every citizen in the town today should be justly proud to point these out to the visitor or the passing tourist.



FIRST FRAME HOUSE IN TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD

The oldest of these was built about 1772 by Col. John Barrett, who located on the Connecticut river on what is now the Butterfield farm, known then as the Block House farm.

It was the first frame dwelling in town, and the road at that time ran on the other side of the house, between it and the river, with the front door and main entrance on that side.

The Gen. Lewis Morris mansion, also on the Connecticut river a little above the Butterfield place, is perhaps the finest of the group. A tablet was found in the house bearing the date of building, 1795, with the carpenter's name, James Lewis.

According to L. S. Hayes, the interior of the main front part of the house retains the dominant characteristics of the architecture of its period. The original ell has been removed. This contained a large barnlike room that served as a kitchen and living room for the servants, with sleeping accommodations above, and was replaced with the present smaller ell. In the first one there were two eight-foot fireplaces and immense brick ovens. The style of architecture is pure Colonial, a spacious hall extending the width of the house with large rooms on either side and a wide fireplace in each. The lumber used in the construction of the house was cut from the forest nearby and the bricks for the great chimneys were made on the premises. The first shingles on the house were not replaced for a period of 80 years. The mantels, cornices and dadoes are all ornamented with hand carving, done with a penknife. The panels in the wainscotting are made with boards of such width that no joining is visible, and the finish of the interior is of fine selected woods.

Elisha Brown, familiarly known as "Brigadier" Brown, in 1797 built the house now owned by Milton Harlow at the corner of Park and Union streets. In 1802 he built the tavern known as the Holt house, now owned by Myron Whitcomb, in which he took great pride. At his death he left money for its



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## FOLKLORE TALES

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upkeep and his son, Jonathan, ran the tavern until his death and then another son, Enoch, had it for a time. When this tavern was built there were no roads, only bridle paths, marked by blazed trees.

In the old Daniel Field mansion, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Beers, we have a house of a type peculiar to itself. It was built in 1799, and its original length was 100 feet, 12 feet having been removed some years since. The fireplaces with their carved mantels and the panelling remain intact today.

The Boutelle house, now owned by J. T. Slack, belongs to this group, as it was built in 1802 by Eliot Lynde. It still retains its original shape.

Father Smiley's house on Cherry Hill was built in 1816, and here again the carved fireplaces have been preserved. We have previously mentioned its early history.

Many anecdotes are told of General Morris, among others the following, told by L. S. Hayes as showing the whole-hearted, generous nature of the man: At one time Mrs. Morris went to Brattleboro with her children for a few days. When General Lewis started to drive down after them, something which he heard in Charlestown changed his plans and he returned home at once. It seems that the kitchen and farm help conceived this to be a proper time for a merry-making and they were preparing a royal dinner, eggs, loaf sugar, raisins and other stores from the parlor larder being freely drawn upon, and all other business stopped. Suddenly the master of the house stood in the kitchen door. Horror seized them, but General Morris, without a frown, went in and, taking the proper utensils, helped prepare the feast, after which he sat down and ate with them, seeing that all were well served of the best. When

## FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

the meal was ended he said in a tone of confident authority something like this: "Now, boys and girls, you have had a fine frolic and a grand dinner, we have all had a good time, but this won't happen again."

The old house now occupied by Edward Hall and his sisters was built about 1802 or '01. It is of interest to note that the deed given to the grandfather, Caleb Hall, in 1835 was from Leonard Walker, familiarly known as Squire Walker. The wine cellar, 12 feet below the main cellar, is still intact. The barroom was on the south side and fitted up with several little cupboards for storing the wine.

James Litchfield came to Springfield from Scituate, Mass. In 1798 he built the house where Roy Whitney now lives, and the outline is practically the same today. In 1802 he bought land and erected the old Lincoln Ellis house on what was then called "Pine Hill" and there spent the remainder of his days.

In the old D. J. Boynton house at North Springfield we have the distinction of a place where the Indians held their dances. This was built in 1800, and Nathian Lockwood added the brick front in 1819 or '20.

### ONE OF OUR PIONEER WOMEN

Miss Betsey Barrett, or Aunt Betsey, as she was called by the old and young of two generations, was one of the pioneer women. In her youth she attended school on the Common and the famous school in Eureka, walking every day from her father's house, which he bought in 1791 of Thomas Cook, grandfather of Selden Cook (now the Charles Williams place above the old Lincoln Ellis home), and fitted herself for teaching.

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## FOLKLORE TALES

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Miss Barrett possessed a strong mind, had the courage of her convictions, and to believe a thing was right was with her to do it. It is related of her that a fire broke out on a Sunday in a building near the river, west of the Falls bridge and the men, not liking to wet their Sunday clothes, were very dainty in handling the water buckets. Aunt Betsey, seeing where the trouble lay, took a bucket and sprang into the mill pond where the water was waist deep and, filling the pail, called on the men to pass the water along.

In those days it was the custom for the taxpayers outside of the village to pay their highway taxes in labor, or "work it out," as it was called. Aunt Betsey, as the owner of a home-  
stead, had a small tax to pay, which she had asked to have abated. This being refused, she declared she would work it out with the men. True to her word, she appeared with her hoe and set the men an example of industry they were not accustomed to. This proved a little too much for them. At noon they told her she could go home and they would work out the remainder of her tax, and it will never be known whether they preferred the additional tax, worked out in their own time, or the quicker pace of Aunt Betsey.

She was very justly proud of her grandfather, Col. John Barrett, one of the pioneers of Springfield. In conversing with others, some incidents in his life she would bring very adroitly in at close intervals.

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When the country was new, this region especially was infested with wolves, and it was largely due to Col. Samuel Hunt that it was freed from them at a comparatively early date: for he was a noted hunter of this animal.

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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The last great public hunt of the kind, it is believed, took place about 1797. A most sagacious wolf had caused no end of disaster, not only in the sheepfolds of Charlestown but also of several other towns in the region. She was too wise to be entrapped, and no marksman was able to approach near enough to shoot her. The people, in desperation at their loss of stock, determined to put an end, not only to her destructive raids, but to her existence. In this the townships of Charlestown, Alstead, Acworth, Langdon, Walpole, Rockingham and Springfield were united. The day was appointed, and Colonel Hunt, who was the leader, laid the trap and all joined him. A circle wide enough to embrace her wolfship was formed at an appointed time, when all approached the center. The men from Springfield were the first to get a glimpse of the wily animal and to start her out. Finding that her territory was too much molested, she did not think best to stop to dispute it but crossed onto the New Hampshire side of the river. This state, affording her no better or safer retreat, the briefest time possible was sufficient to convince her that if there was any safety it must be in return. Again, therefore, she passed over the river, but it was only once more: for the gathering crowd drove her back and forth like a mad creature, vainly attempting to break through the line, when Colonel Hunt rode into the ring and at the first shot from his musket put a terminus both to the hunt and her life. The men were then invited to Colonel Hunt's for refreshment, after which they retired to their homes well satisfied with the day's work.

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After Daniel Field had built his log house, about 1780, he returned winters to Rhode Island to work at his trade, that

of blacksmith, to pay for his land. During his absence one year in the late fall, Mrs. Field noticed the cattle were being much troubled by some wild animal. She went out to investigate and



WORKSHOP OF DANIEL FIELD, A REVOLUTIONARY  
SOLDIER IN WASHINGTON'S ARMY

found a panther stretched along the top rail of the fence. It was of unusual size, and Mrs. Field stated it reached the whole length of the rail. With quick decision she ran into the cabin and snatching a firebrand from the fireplace, she rushed out to fearlessly wave it near the panther, which beat a hasty retreat and did not return.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mason Walker, whose home was where Will Corliss now lives, used to delight in telling his friends how, when a boy of about 10 years, he went for the cows to the hillside pasture, which was situated between what is now W. D. Woolson's

bungalow and the Wiley house. One night it was almost dark when he rounded up the cows to start for home. Suddenly without warning, they took to their heels and left him. Mr. Walker just had time to step into the bushes, when from a nearby thicket emerged a large panther, whose attention was fixed on the retreating cows, and the boy needed no urging to seize the opportunity to climb the nearest tree and await the disappearance of Mr. Panther. In relating this story, Mr. Walker said he never again was caught going for the cows at twilight.

\* \* \* \* \*

An interesting story is told in connection with the land near the Block house, known as the "heater piece" from its being in the shape of a flatiron. A little later than 1772 one of Col. John Barrett's men forgot to bring his horse from the pasture near the house until after dark. Taking the halter he went out and put it over the head of what he thought was the horse, when a huge black bear reared on its haunches and gave him a sharp cuff, which sent him to the ground, and bruin passed quickly into the nearby woods.

\* \* \* \* \*

The story is told that when "Brigadier" Elisha Brown had settled on the farm south of C. A. Woolson's present home, a blanket hung in the doorway in lieu of a door, and one night an old bear stuck his head under the blanket.

\* \* \* \* \*

January 31, 1867, a large panther was killed in the rocky crevices above Downer's hotel. It was believed by some that he came from New York state, while others were just as sure he strayed down along the mountain ranges from Canada. He had

been seen by different people for several months before he was finally located among these rocks.

E. Wellman Barnard saw him one time drinking at the spring of the "Big Iron Kettle" (the old iron kettle owned by Dr. Downer and imported from York, England, in 1780). At another time he had attempted to break into Mr. Barnard's sheepfold. He backtracked him from this place to Panther Rock, where he had sought shelter the night before, leaving a portion of his hair frozen to the rock. Mr. Barnard and a companion tracked him through the snow to the place where he was afterwards shot.

\* \* \* \* \*

These anecdotes furnish sufficient proof of the prevalence of wild animals in this region.

\* \* \* \* \*

Abner Bisbee, the paternal ancestor of the Springfield branch of the Bisbee family, was one of the first settlers in town. His wife was a resolute and courageous woman, and at one time, while the men were away and when there was an alarm of the approach of Indians, she yoked the oxen and, taking her little ones and other women and children, drove to the Block house, which had been built on the Connecticut river as a place of retreat in time of danger.

\* \* \* \* \*

In James Whitney's diary is found this rather humorous turkey story: Deacon Lewis, on one occasion while calling at Mr. Whitney's, hitched his horse to the fence, which was fastened to a small tree where the turkeys roosted. The horse, becoming restless, pulled down the fence, which frightened the turkeys and they flew in all directions. Before they could

be quieted and persuaded to return to the tree, the foxes secured several of the birds, injuring others so they had to be killed. Deacon Lewis refused to reward Mr. Whitney for the loss. The following night the latter went to Deacon Lewis' house to see what could be done about it. The deacon finally purchased two, weighing four and a half pounds each, at 10 cents per pound, declaring that it was more than the birds were worth to pick their bones.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following incident was often related by George G. Barnard, son of Jennison Barnard, one of the pioneers of Springfield. Those who remember his pleasant smile and genial manner can imagine him as he told this story which he considered a good joke upon himself: About 100 years ago he used to drive down over the hills from Eureka to call at the home of Deacon Hawkins, where Mrs. Franklin Barney now lives on Summer street. The object of these oft-repeated and prolonged visits was to become better acquainted with the daughter, Mary, who later became his wife. On one of these extended calls Mr. Barnard admitted he stayed later than usual. As he started for home and was just beyond Mt. Ararat, his horse stopped still in the road and refused to go another step. Mr. Barnard, looking about to determine the cause of this abrupt standstill, discovered several peculiar looking objects waving back and forth close by the wall. In telling the story, he admitted his hair "stood on end," and it was some time before he could get up courage to investigate these ghost-like forms. To his surprise he found a flock of geese, disturbed by his late passing, were wagging their heads in mute disapproval. These geese were the property of a colored woman



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FOLKLORE TALES

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known as "black Lucy," who had a small log house near and by the sale of feathers managed to supply her simple wants. This was her only means of support.

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The famous Wells & Newell store on the Hubbard farm in Eureka (now known as the Boothby place) was where the farmers carried their produce to be converted into money to help build the meeting house. Years after when this store was torn down, a secret panel was found in a lower room and, by removing this, all the implements were found for making counterfeit money; also eight dollars in pewter money and as much more of genuine coin. The rats had destroyed most of the script, but a two-dollar bill having the design of an Indian standing upright in a canoe as it passed rapidly down the stream, which to the initiated might imply that this currency must be rapidly passed along, was considered of enough value to be sent to the historical rooms of the Boston Museum, where it has remained until the present time.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Fletcher seminary, situated in what is now known as Kingdom Valley, just over the line in Chester, deserves more than passing notice.

Daniel Fletcher was born in Chester in 1800. He first taught school in Spencer Hollow. After leaving the neighborhood he became much interested in Christian work and sought to interest his former pupils in the subject of religion. His efforts proved successful and he began to hold meetings in the schoolhouse. He then entered the ministry and married Mary Ann Carley, a governess in Gen. Lewis Morris' family, an educated and accomplished teacher. After retiring from con-

ference work in 1830, he established a young ladies' seminary, to be in charge of Mrs. Fletcher as teacher. It was called Fletcher seminary and had a prosperous existence for six years as to patronage. At one time there were 40 boarding pupils besides some day pupils, the larger portion of them girls. Not proving a financial success, at the end of six years, or about the time the Wesleyan seminary came into existence, it was closed, and the building is now used as a farm house, known today as the Kingdom Valley farm.

\* \* \* \* \*

If perchance in your rambles for "vantage ground to view the country o'er" you should chance on the top of Sam's Hill, looking to the northwest you will observe the Skitchewaug range, while far away to the northward looms "Old Ascutney."

With a good glass, looking across the intervening meadows and the winding Connecticut, in the high part of the crest of the former mountain, at a point nearly opposite the old Gen. Lewis Morris place, can be seen a smooth faced overhanging ledge, and at the right an opening. This is the mouth or entrance of the famed and historic "Tory Hole," once a roof aperture or cave several feet in length and breadth, sufficiently roomy to accommodate several persons. From the mouth is a short descent of several hundred feet.

A nearer view can be obtained by passing along the river road, although the way to reach the goal is not from the river side but by a detour either through Spencer Hollow or up through the walnut grove of the old Daniel Gill farm. If you attempt a closer inspection, take along an Alpine staff and cordage and save yourself from the fate of the woman who

went a-blueberrying up those rugged sides; and a companion who knows the way may not come amiss.

Before a portion of the roof fell in it was a most blind spot to locate in the pine and hemlock grove about, and you will readily perceive why it might have been a safe retreat for the sympathizers of King George who were not exceedingly popular with their neighbors during and after the period of the Revolutionary war.

If you prefer to tramp it, take the old Crown Point road, visit the oldest burying ground in Springfield on the way, go past the cabin site of Bettergneaw, the first man to hunt beaver along the meadows, and so on to the Hollow road near White's and Wiley's, then along the Weathersfield Bow road to the horse trough, then over a wood road to the walnut grove before mentioned. Passing down the hill and to the right is the wooded crest above the "Tory Hole."

There can be no doubt that the cave was used by both Indians and whites, as it is well adapted for a place of refuge.

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The story of Shem Kemfield and his treacherous career, while familiar to some, seems of sufficient interest to bear repeating.

Previous to 1781 a desperate character and a Tory (Shem Kemfield) lived in town and, because of his many unlawful deeds, was warned to leave and move to Canada. He went, vowing revenge on the inhabitants. In the month of March, 1781, he returned with comrades and took up his abode in the old Tory cave. One morning, the last of the month, the following incident occurred:

He, with three companions, in crossing the Eureka road near the north line of the town was overtaken by Dr. Downer of Weathersfield, returning from Charlestown, N. H., where he had been to see a patient. They made known to the doctor their business, told him they were the vanguard of 50 men who had come to destroy Charlestown and Eureka, and they further told him that it was necessary to take his life to prevent discovery. After much expostulation it was concluded to swear him, Dr. Downer declaring that should they take his life it would be discovered before they could escape. They demanded that he should dismount and kneel before them, crossing himself and vowing to keep the whole affair a profound secret.

Dr. Downer passed on to Lemuel Whitney's and Dr. Cobb's and appeared so singular that they feared for his mental condition. After much hesitation he revealed the whole story to Mr. Whitney and, at the end of some deliberation, the latter sent forth the report that he (Mr. Whitney) had discovered Tories upon the hill east of his house. A messenger was sent down to the river bank opposite Charlestown to signal them. A warning was written on paper, which was attached to a stone and thrown across. A party of armed men soon collected and started pursuit upon the tracks of Kemfield and his band. During the night the inhabitants were everywhere on the alert. The next day three of the invaders were captured on Skitchewaug mountain, near Tory hole, and three others were taken in Charlestown, among them Kemfield, the leader, who was sent to West Point, tried and executed. Before his execution he spent much time trying to figure out who had discovered his plans, but at last he decided that it must have been Dr. Downer, and he longed for an opportunity of revenge.

## CHAPTER XIV

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### Early Inventors of Springfield

*John Davidson*

Vibrating Shear for Shearing Cloth, Revolving Blades for the same purpose.

*Amasa Woolson*

Shearing Machine, with list-guard. (Eight patents).

*Adna Brown*

Egg Holder, Tricycle, Flock Protector for Shear, Cloth-measuring Machine, Cloth-folding Machine, Cloth-steaming Machine, Worsted Polishing Machine, Brushing Machine for Cloth, Combination Napper and Gig.

*Frederick A. Porter*

Machine for making Card Clothing. (Automatic).

*David M. Smith*

Awl Haft, Combination Lock (non-pickable); Iron Lathe Dog (still in common use); Blanket Hook and Eye (used in army); Corn Planter, Broom Holder, Spring Match Box, Adding Machine, Breech-loading Firearm, Jointed Rule.

*Miles Smith*

Improvements in Scythe Snaths.

*Joel A. H. Ellis*

Steam Excavator (or steam shovel). Farm Basket, Child's Cab or Carriage, Toy Carts, Doll Carriages, Jointed Dolls, Principle of Utilizing Exhaust Steam Applied to Bisulphate of Carbon for Motive Power (1870).

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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*Luke W. Taylor*

Mop.

*Jonathan Woodbury*

Sweep Horse-power Machine.

*L. T. Guernsey*

Improvement in Printing Press.

*Moses H. Grinnell*

Improved Marble Polishing Process.

*Dr. Eleazer Crain*

Abdominal Supporter.

*A. J. Fullam*

Stencil Dies and Machinery for Making Same, Sheep Shearing Machine. (Later this developed into a Horse Clipper).

*B. B. Choate*

Mop Wringer.

*G. A. Watkins*

Process for Weaving Cane into Webbing for Chair Seats.

*Asahel Burr. Joseph Smith. Isaac B. Smith*

Various Improvements in the Manufacture of Harness Hames.

*Rev. Pinckney Frost*

Improvement in Scythe Snath.

*Noah Safford*

Hay and Straw Cutter.

*Jesse Warren*

The "Warren" Plow.

*Herbert M. Warren*

Improved Gravel Roofing (Warren's Roofing).

*F. B. Gilman*

Improvements in Lathes.

*Alvin Mason*

Machine for Making Hooks and Eyes.

*W. L. Bryant*

Bryant Chucking Grinder.

*Parks & Woolson Machine Co.*

Cloth Measuring Machine, Stretch Rolls, Shears,  
Trade-marking Cloth.

*Gilman & Son*

Lathes for the following uses: Shoe Lasts, Boot  
Trees, Hat Blocks, Artificial Limbs, Improvement in  
Abrasive Metal Cutters.

*F. S. Weatherhead*

Harness Check Hook.

*The Fellows Gear Shaper Co.*

Apparatus for Turning Irregular Shapes, Cutters and  
Cutter Heads for Gear Shaping Machines, Gear  
Shaping Machines, Gear Generating Machines, Rack  
Generating Machines, Gear Generating Cutters,  
Machines for Grinding Gear Generating Cutters,  
Turret Gear Cutters, Rotary Hack Saw, Machine for  
Cutting Crown Gears; Planing or Shaping Machines  
for Cutting Toothed Wheels. Sprocket Wheels and  
other articles.

*James Hartness* (partial list of patents)

Original Flat Turret Lathe, Original Automatic Die;  
Automatic Die, Lead Controlling; Tandem Die,  
Rotating Automatic Die, Roller Feed, First Auto-  
matic Hydraulic Chucking Lathe, Pneumatic Auto-  
matic Convertible Bar Work Lathe, Automatic Chuck,  
Automatic Turret Lathe, All-gearred Turret Lathe,  
Cross-feeding Head, Lo-swing Lathe, Safety Razor,  
Turret Telescope, Double-spindle Lathe.

## CHAPTER XV

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# Thumb Nail History

THE object of this chapter is briefly to call the attention of the reader to a few of the more important facts connected with the early days of our state and township, hoping it may prove a ready reference in time of need.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was not until 1777 that the men who were building this state found time to hold a convention to name it. On January 28th of that year they met in Westminster and gave it the name of New Connecticut, but at a later meeting held in Windsor (in June of the same year) it was changed to Vermont.

On July 2nd, 1777, a chosen committee assembled in Windsor to draft our constitution for state government. While alarming news of the British was received and as the very elements seemed to conspire against these builders of a state, for a violent storm was raging and voices were scarcely to be heard as they sat in a little room in the old Constitution House at Windsor, they held to their task and drafted their constitution and discussed it, regardless of war or elements. They produced what has been pronounced by high authority as the best formulation of state rights the world had ever seen up to that time.

Vermont was admitted as one of the Federal states March 4th, 1791.

Vermont is the only state in the Union requiring a free-man's oath.



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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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The first history of the state ever published, "National and Civil History of Vermont," by Samuel Miller, was printed in Walpole, N. H., in 1794 by Isaac Thomas and Daniel Carlisle.

Bismark once said, when two official Vermonters were visiting him, that his ideal of democratic government was the state of Vermont, and to be a citizen of that state was honor enough for any man.

Through the efforts of Nathaniel Chipman and Gen. Lewis Morris, the final struggle with congress to admit Vermont into the Union was accomplished.

\* \* \* \* \*

Springfield, Vermont, was the first namesake of Springfield, Massachusetts.

\* \* \* \* \*

The original charter of the town, in 1761, was granted to Gideon Lyman and 61 others. Of these men, who were mostly residents of Northampton, Mass., Joseph Little was the only one to settle here.

\* \* \* \* \*

The stone used to hold the bronze tablet that marks the site of the old Block house was originally the doorstep to the first Methodist church. It continued to be used through the Wesleyan seminary and high school days, a period of nearly 100 years of constant service, before it found its present historic resting place, where it holds the tablet that points the passer-by to the beginning of the town.

\* \* \* \* \*

With all the diversity and beauty of its scenery, the fertility of its meadows, the unlimited supply of fish in its waters

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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and the game on its shores, it is not strange that the Indians, who lived close to nature, should have called the Connecticut valley the "Smile of God."

\* \* \* \* \*

When the first Methodist church was built on Seminary Hill the brick house at the corner of Pearl street, known as the "Spindler house," was the first parsonage. Later, when the present edifice was built, the house now occupied by Milton Slack became the parsonage. Then it was removed to Pleasant street.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lord Amherst came across the Connecticut river in the spring of 1760, first erecting the Block house to protect his men as they built the old Crown Point road through Springfield.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1771 or '72. Col. John Barrett bought the old Block House farm, now known as the Butterfield place, and that year built the first frame house in town.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first school of which we have any account was held in the summer of 1773 in Lieut. Hezekiah Holmes' house on the Dr. Hubbard farm in Eureka.

\* \* \* \* \*

Springfield has the original charter of the town given by Gov. Benning Wentworth of the Province of New Hampshire, August 20th, 1761. It has also a New York charter, executed by Tryon, captain-general and governor-in-chief of the Province of New York, and attested by Banyar, deputy secretary and deputy auditor. This charter is written on sheepskin and

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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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dated May 25th, 1772. The ink is so little faded that now, after 150 years, it is plainly legible.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first Masonic lodge in Vermont was located in Springfield, receiving its charter from the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and bearing date of November 10th, 1781.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1781 land was valued at 10 shillings per acre. In 1842 Springfield ranked third in size among the towns in the state.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first meeting house was built on the Common in 1789. It was voted that this should be 40x50 feet. It was also "voted that said committee erect said house, kiver the outside, bord, shingle and clabord, glaze, lay the flowers and make the doors, within one year from this day." The frame of this meeting house is standing today near the office of the Vermont Snath company, and the original clapboards, hand-hewn and pegged together, can be seen at the back side.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1790 W. H. Wheeler's store was built and was the first frame building in the village.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1792, when the first census was taken, Springfield had 1097 inhabitants.

\* \* \* \* \*

The house now owned by John T. Slack, and the former residence of Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Boutelle, was built in 1800 and has been the home of several well-known men and women in our town. James Whitney used to tell that, when living there, on hot summer nights he went out on the roof by the chimney

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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at the west end of the house, and declared that he never slept so well. Mrs. Franklin Barney also spent a portion of her childhood days in this old house. When Rev. Daniel O. Morton was pastor of the Congregational church, from 1832-36, the house was used as a parsonage. At this time his son, the late ex-Vice Pres. Levi P. Morton, was a small boy. It was the testimony of several demure maidens of that time that he was the best boy to make mud pies with they ever knew.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first cotton cloth in the state was made in Springfield in 1820. At a very early date Isaac Fisher, Jr., made cotton warp and filling, and it was sent to the State's prison, where it was woven by hand into cotton cloth.

\* \* \* \* \*

The present Congregational church was built in 1834.

\* \* \* \* \*

A wooden building on the corner of Park and Factory streets, where mill D of the John T. Slack Corporation now stands, was used by Horace Hawkins to manufacture furniture as early as 1842, and in the plant just below John Holmes made lead pipe and pumps.

\* \* \* \* \*

August 1st, 1891, the streets were lighted for the first time with electricity.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first Methodist church became the Wesleyan seminary in 1847, with 70 pupils from town and 30 from outside. In 1849 a large boarding house was built to accommodate 60 or more. At one time as many as 300 pupils attended the school. The last year it was used as a seminary was in 1865. There

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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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being no bell on this seminary, the Congregational church bell was rung morning and noon by a student for the opening of the school.

\* \* \* \* \*

The house that stood where Dr. Chapman's house now stands was built about the time of the Revolution by a Mr. Gregg; then it was bought by William Belknap, who married Father Smiley's sister. It was burned in 1900.

\* \* \* \* \*

Richard Morris bought 2650 acres of land from several men who were the original grantees, and it was this that induced his son, Lewis Morris, to settle here about 1785.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first apple trees in town were set out in 1771 on the old Cortez Miller place.

\* \* \* \* \*

Calvin Hubbard, grandfather of Mrs. Joseph White, came to Springfield about 1782 and was the first man to purchase a wagon. It was without springs but of such grandeur that his family rode to church in it from the old Hubbard place in Eureka. His relatives and friends considered the vehicle a shocking piece of extravagance and, if Calvin Hubbard was going to spend his good money in such a reckless manner, they openly announced that he should have a guardian.

\* \* \* \* \*

Notice on page 120 sketch of the fine old house built by Ezekiel Whitcomb and his brother-in-law, Joshua Davis, about 1828. It stood on the site of Walter W. Slack's present home, and on the piazza hung the bell Mrs. Whitcomb used in calling the men to dinner. It was a double house, occupied by

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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the two families. When Mr. Davis moved from town, Sam Chipman's father and mother took his part of the house.

\* \* \* \* \*

The total receipts of the postoffice, with Samuel W. Porter as postmaster, records now being in the possession of Mrs. Anna (Porter) Marsh, from Nov. 24th, 1818, to July 1st, 1828, nine years and seven months, were \$1305.07. The average annual receipts were \$137. Total receipts from July 1st, 1828, to July 1st, 1834, six years, were \$1670.97. with annual receipts of \$278.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1852 steamboats were used on the Connecticut river from Hartford, Conn., to Wells River, Vt., by means of locks at Bellows Falls.

\* \* \* \* \*

April 20th, 1780, ten gentlemen mounted their horses and rode from Charlestown up the Connecticut river two miles on the ice to Wentworth's ferry and back again. This was done that the memory of their exploit and the lateness of the season that year be preserved for future generations.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first doll carriages were made in Springfield in 1880. The first slat farm baskets were made in Springfield also.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the site of Charles Johnson's present home on Summer street there stood a small one-story house, plastered on the outside. It was built by Moses Chase and occupied by Joshua Davis. With the Davis family lived a young man, Thomas Brown, who assisted in the tannery, which Mr. Davis owned farther up the brook. It contained two or three vats.

which were set in the ground, and each held a couple of hogsheads. At the rear of the house was a mill for grinding the huge piles of bark used in tanning the leather. The hides were put in the vats and often remained a year. Work was discontinued here some time in the '40's.

\* \* \* \* \*

Capt. Simon Stevens and Abner Bisbee were the closest of friends and were in the Revolutionary war together. They settled in Springfield about 1763—Captain Stevens on what is now the Town farm and Abner Bisbee near, with Samuel Scott settling between them. The latter's wife, formerly a Widow Taylor, had one daughter, Isabella Taylor, of marriageable age. The two soldiers both sought to capture the prize. She was willing to take either but could not marry both. For a while it looked as if the friendship of many years would be severed. Just at this time, however, another settler, George Hall, appeared with his wife and daughter, and the problem was solved. Bisbee took Mary Hall behind him on his horse, while Isabella Taylor rode pillion fashion behind Captain Stevens, and both couples went to Charlestown and were married in 1767.

Capt. Simon Stevens was the first constable in town and issued the call for the first town meeting, the record of which is as follows:—

“Province of New Hampshire: To Simon Stevens, constable of Springfield and province aforesaid, Greeting:

“In His Majesties Name you are hereby Required forthwith to Notifie and warn ye Freeholders & Other Inhabitants of sd Town that are Duely qualified by Law to Vote in Town Meetings that they assemble & meet at ye House of Joseph

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Little in Springfield aforesd, on Tuesday ye 13th of this Instant at 10 of ye Clock in ye forenoon, then and there, when met, to vote and act on ye following articles, viz:—

“First to Choose a Moderator to Govern sd Meeting.

“2ndly to Choose Town Officers Agreeable to Charter.

“Hereof Fail not & make Due Return of this warrant and your Doings therein to some one of us ye subscribers at or before ye Time of sd Meeting.

“Given under our Hands and seal this first Day of March and in ye fourth year of His Majesties Reign 1764.

Robert Parker

Samuel Scott

Simon Stevens

George Hall

Timothy Spencer

Taylor Spencer

Abner Bisbee

“March ye 13 I, having Read the warrant in said meeting, hereby make a Return as the Law Requires.

“By Simon Stevens, Constable.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Extracts from James Whitney's dairy:—

“March 29, 1856. There was a meeting held of the town to see if there was interest enough to get up a fair.

“Was invited June 14, 1856, to the raising of Father Arms' large barn. The day was fair. Everything went together nicely and no accident happened. There were 60 hands present. We put up the frame of the body part.

“August 19, 1856. Finished shingling Mr. Arms' barn today. It is a great shell. There ought to be a steeple and bell on it.



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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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“June 27, 1857. The boys are trying out their new cannon on the Common tonight. It weighs 500 pounds and is two and a half inches across.”

The following is a unique description by Mr. Whitney of the 4th of July celebration in 1859:—

“The citizens of Springfield gathered for the purpose of celebrating this day. A table was set in the grove near Noah Safford’s (where the lower J. & L. shop now stands) for the refreshments of all who might be there. Joseph Colburn was president of the day, Charles Forbush marshal. The procession, headed by the cornet band, marched to Noah’s woods. As many as could be were seated, the rest remained standing. Some display of talent by James Whitney, Noah Safford, Jesse Steadman and others.”

\* \* \* \* \*

James Whitney told the writer the exact center of the town was at the top of the hill on South street where Clarence Pratt’s house now stands; for Mr. Whitney’s father-in-law, Bartlett Damon, surveyed it.

\* \* \* \* \*

The brick in the house where Dr. H. H. Lawrence now lives were made on the old Barnard farm in Eureka.

\* \* \* \* \*

The land where the old Daniel Field blacksmith shop stood was sold by him to his son, Arthur, Aug. 16, 1824, and the shop remained for many years as a landmark. The young man learned the blacksmith trade of his father and followed it for some time, but finally discontinued horse-shoeing to make hammers, hoes, forks and other farming tools. The tradition in the family has been that his success in building

his specialty of hoes was due to the peculiar hang of the hoe to the handle, which enabled the farmer to accomplish more work. The high grade of material used, also, gave a much longer life to the hoe than had the average tool of that kind.

Intensely interesting is the old account book of Arthur Field, containing many things beside sales of hoes and hammers. In 1813 we find "shoeing horse, 20c"; in 1819, "1 gal. soap, 22c; 15½ lbs. veal, 50c." In 1845 the sale of hoes for the year was \$306 at \$1 per hoe. In 1846 the sale of pitchforks for the year was \$11 at \$1 per fork. March 1st, 1847, "making 2 pair door hinges, 67c." March 12, "mending kettle with copper rivits, 25c; shoeing oxen, \$1.50."

\* \* \* \* \*

Spencer Hollow received its familiar name from three brothers, Timothy, Taylor and Simeon Spencer, who settled here at a very early date.

Timothy and Taylor Spencer were two of the seven inhabitants of Springfield who signed the first call for a town meeting in March, 1764, and Simeon Spencer was elected one of the town officers at the first town meeting of which there is any complete record; this was in April 1769.

Timothy Spencer settled on the Crown Point road, not far from the Henry Arms place, and Taylor Spencer nearby.

Simeon Spencer lived on the farm now owned by Dwight Chase. He had many children and Jonas, one of his sons, built on and owned the farm known to us as the Harvey Slade place, a picture of which can be seen on page 1.

\* \* \* \* \*

In these early days there came a minister by the name of Babcock, who was somewhat of a revival preacher, and back

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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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of this old Spencer house he dammed the brook and used it to immerse the converts. Afterwards there was a sawmill erected on this same spot. He also dammed the brook near the home of Dwight Chase and owned at that time by Simeon Spencer. In the pasture near this brook are three little mounds, unmarked and set by stones from the wall nearby. Here were buried the three infant sons of Mr. Babcock.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the large rock between the old Daniel Field place (where Mrs. E. C. Beers now lives) and the bridge can be found the following date:—"3 mo. 25 d. 1826," which was the high watermark up to that time. The oldest inhabitants have never known it to reach this height, but in the June cloudburst, 1922, the water rose to within five inches of the 1826 mark.

\* \* \* \* \*

According to L. S. Hayes, the last and most noted battle with the Indians in this vicinity was fought across the Connecticut river from Bellows Falls in the town of Walpole, N. H., near the south end of Mt. Kilburn, Aug. 17, 1755. On that day 197 savages surrounded the cabin of John Kilburn, the first white settler in Walpole, who, with his family and two other men, defended the cabin all day. Only one white man was wounded, and he soon died. The Indians disappeared and never returned again to this vicinity until after the French and Indian war, when they came on a more peaceful errand. The spot where the cabin stood was marked a few years ago by the Walpole chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution with a suitable bronze tablet, standing by the side of the road

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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leading to Walpole, a short distance south of the Cold River bridge.

\* \* \* \* \*

The older inhabitants will remember Isaac Wiswell, but few may know of his sundial. For many years the iron standard was fastened to a rock just where the water to run the cab shop poured from the raceway up into the shop, and the sundial was placed on it. For many years Isaac Wiswell cared for the clock in the Methodist church, and as there was no way in those days of getting the time from Washington, he set the town clock from that sundial, watching each day very carefully for the noon mark that the clock might always be exact. The dial was burned with the shop in 1878.

\* \* \* \* \*

Capt. Abner Bisbee and Capt. Simon Stevens were among the first to go out on scout duty in the Revolution, and Col. John Barrett formed a company and went from here. Stevens and Bisbee saw nearly the whole period of the war.

\* \* \* \* \*

Previous to 1825, Litchfield's hill (now known as Hillcrest) was used for a general training ground. Here they pitched their tents and trained for several days at a time.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are indebted to George G. Barnard for building the road from Valley street to Eureka.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following account is taken from Ernest W. Butterfield's centennial address in Weathersfield:—

“Through Weathersfield in the depth of the winter snows came the 50 cannon taken from the fort at Ticonderoga and rushed to Boston to aid Washington in forcing Howe to

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THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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evacuate the city. They were drawn by oxen on stout sleds and the oxen were then slain and eaten by Washington and his soldiers. There are still living those who in their youth heard aged eyewitnesses tell of this procession of cannon and steaming oxen.”

In going over this, the Crown Point road in Weathersfield, they passed through the Crown Point road in Springfield to Charlestown.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hiram Moore Smith was born in Springfield in 1809. He learned the machinist's trade of his uncle, Noah Safford. He also learned the carpenter's trade and helped build the Congregational church in Chester. He later went to Richmond, Va., where he made fuses for the shells that were fired at Fort Sumter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Samuel Herrick, a carpenter, was the first man in Springfield to use rollers to move a building.

\* \* \* \* \*

Notice should be given of Charles Brooks Hoard and his inventions. He was born in Springfield, June 28th, 1805, christened by Father Smiley, and his early life was spent among our green hills. Sometime in the '20's he went with his father to Antwerp, N. Y. He was clerk in the land office of George Parish, afterward serving an apprenticeship as a silversmith and watchmaker. While following this trade he conceived the idea of making a portable steam engine, compact and simple, and within the reach of all where moderate power was required. One of its first uses was in running a printing press. This attracted the attention of Horace Greeley, and in a letter to the New York Tribune he called the atten-

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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tion of people in all parts of the country to the new power, which was soon in general use. In 1856 Mr. Hoard was elected to congress from the 23rd district in New York and again in 1858. In 1862 he took a contract from the government to manufacture 50,000 stands of arms, having previously moved his shops to Watertown, N. Y. In 1869 he moved to Ceredo, W. Va., where he died in 1886.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following story is told of Lucy Perkins, wife of Otis Litchfield and a woman of sterling ability and character. Their home was a model of neatness and good order, and a place where a cordial welcome always seasoned the bounty of their well-supplied table.

“Before the days of cheese factories, the Windsor County Agricultural society offered a premium of \$10 for the best six cheeses made by any one family in the county. Mr. Litchfield, well knowing that his wife’s cheese was unsurpassed, selected six and carried them to the fair. The committee began testing the different entries in that department by boring in the usual way and, after sampling, replaced the part taken out so the cheese would look as before. When they reached Mr. Litchfield’s they found him waiting with a long-bladed knife and, asking the committee to select a fair sample, he cut it in quarters, saying ‘This is the way to sample cheese,’ and then distributed generous slices to those standing by as well as to each of the committee, not forgetting to eat a large slice himself. All were unanimous in the verdict that it was ‘A No. 1’ and the premium was taken in triumph by Mr. Litchfield.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The following incidents in regard to the old Block house and the Crown Point road may prove of more than passing interest:—

*General Amherst to Governor Wentworth, 1759*

Camp at Crown Point, 13th August, 1759.

Sir: Since I have been in possession of this Ground One of my particular Attentions has been to Improve the Advantages it gives me of most Effectually Covering and Securing this Country & Opening Such Communications as will Render the Access between the provinces & the Army easy, Safe & Short. Accordingly I sent to explore the Otter River, in order to Erect such Posts on Each Side of it as will Obstruct all scalping parties from going up that River to Annoy any of his Majesty's Subjects that may now Chuse to Come & Settle between No. 4 & that; but I Cannot say that that River by any means Answers the Idea I had Conceived of it from description and Report. Wherefore I shall defer the work I Intended, until I have had the Whole Survey'd, which I have order'd to be done.

Meanwhile I am to Inform you, as I do by this Conveyance the Govr. of the Massachusetts Bay, that When these Posts are Established upon Otter River I shall Expect that Each of your provinces, instead of Garrisoning No. 4, Fort Dummer, Canoe Meadow, Great Meadow, &c, with two Companies of 100 men each, & Officers in proportion, You do each of you Send a Like Company of 100 men & Officers in proportion to the Posts upon Otter River, where, by their being thus Collected, they will be of Infinite greater security to the Whole Country than by being dispersed as they were at the Above

mentioned Places, which, from my being here, are Already Out of all kind of Danger, & therefore I have ordered those Companies to Joyn their Respective Regiments.

And for the Easier Communication of Your two provinces with this Post, I have Already for these Some Days past had a Number of men in the Woods, that Are Employed in Cutting a Road between this and No. 4, which will be finished before You Receive this; to Compleat it quite up to Pennycook, which must be still of Greater Advantage to Your Province, Whom I doubt not but will Very Gladly Improve so favourable & promising an Opportunity, the Rangers, Who Are busy on the Road to No. 4, are Ordered to Mark the Trees In the proper direction, So that your people will have only to Cut them, to make the Communication open between Pennycook & No. 4, Which I would have You to Recommend to them to Set about without delay. I am, With great Regard Sir,

Your most Obedt. hble Servt.

JEFF. AMHERST

P. S.—Enclosed I Send you a Copy of the Cartel Concluded between us & France, which I Received Yesterday from the War Office.

J. A.

*Petition of Joseph Swett*

To his Excellence the Govener Benning Wintworth. Esqr., Captain-Generale and Commander-in-Cheaf in and over His Majesty's Province of New Hampshir in New England and to His Majesty's Honorable Council and General Assembly Convent at Portsmouth your Potisinor Humbly sheweth that he was in his Majesty's Serves at Crown Point, the last year's Campain in Cornel John Gouff. Esqr., Rigement and Carried



with me a horse and Left him at the Block house at Wintworth's ferry, so Called, and that on the fall Major Samuel Gerrish was ordered from Crown Point with invelads from Every Rigement of Provincials for the Block house and when Major Gerrish arrived at the Block house there was many men left in the Woods unable to travail, among them was left Jeremiah Davis of Captain Jacob Tilton's Company, for which Major Gerrish ordred Ensign Berry to Send a Horse for Said Davis and he Did Send mine and She was lost in that Serves which Will appear by Timothy Blacke Dipposion.

I Humbly pray that your Honours will take this under your wise Consideration and Do as in your Grate Wisdom Shall think Proper and I as in Duty Bound Shall Ever Pray.

JOSEPH SWETT

*Deposition of Timothy Blake, Jr.*

Timothy Blake, jnr., of Hampton Falls of Lawfull Age Testifies and Says that he, this Deponent, being a Soldier in the service of this Province the last fall About the beginning of Octobr According to the best of his Remembrance he was at Wentworth's ferry, so Called, on Connecticut river, And Ensign Joseph Swett had a horse there under the Care of Ensign Berry, And this Deponent well Knows that Majr. Saml Gerrish borrow'd said Horse of said Ensign Berry in Order to go and Bring one Jeremiah Davis belonging to Capt. Tilton's Company, who was unable to travail Down to Connecticut River: and said Horse was Sent for to bring said Davis But the Horse was lost in that business And Could not be found while this Deponent tarried there or since that he has heard of But was looked upon by all that were there to be wholly lost.

TIMOTHY BLAKE, JR.

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FOLKLORE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Province of New Hampse, May 26, 1761, Then Timothy Blake, Jr., made Solemn Oath to the truth of the Above Deposition by him subscribed Before Meschech Weare. Jusc. of Pea.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the year of 1770 Daniel Gill, who was a carpenter and wheelwright, with his wife Mercy (Whitford) Gill came to Springfield from Exeter, R. I., and built a log cabin on the hillside beyond what is known to us as the Gill homestead. Here they lived for many years and reared their children.

At a proprietors' meeting held in 1763 it was voted to give any person starting a sawmill a grant of 20 acres of land and they would furnish a set of irons for the mill, on condition that said mill should be kept in good repair for 15 years. This right had been secured by Simon Stevens and Page Harri-man, and they on date of Feb. 8, 1771, transferred it by deed to Daniel Gill, the tract in question being located at Lower Falls on the Black river, on the site of what is now Goulds Mills. Mr. Gill proceeded to blast the rock on his property and prepared to build his mill, expending considerable time and money. Richard Morris claimed the tract by title from the Province of New York and, though Mr. Morris afterward tried to right the difficulty and made overtures to Mr. Gill, the project was abandoned. Mr. Gill was elected a member of the legislature in 1781 and again in 1792. While attending the latter session at Rutland, Vt., he received a petition signed by 195 persons from Springfield and vicinity, bearing date of Oct. 19, 1792, appointing him and Capt. Abner Bisbee agents to select homesteads for them in Upper Canada, on acceptance of a proclamation issued by the governor of that province.

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## THUMB NAIL HISTORY

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Returning from this mission he was taken sick at Sing Sing, N. Y., and died Dec. 7, 1793.

Soon after his death Mercy (Whitford) Gill was confronted with a disputed title of her land and told she must abandon it, but with her strong resolution she refused to be ejected and she lived peacefully on in her log cabin. In 1789 her son, Whitford Gill, built the old Gill homestead for a tavern, and in the chimney is a stone slab bearing date of building. This old tavern became very famous, as it was on the direct stage road from Quebec to Boston, and the oldest inhabitants remember the long sheds where the stages were sheltered and where they stopped to exchange horses on the journey.

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Viewed from almost any angle, the peaks and hills of Springfield as they stand out against the horizon attract the attention of both the passing tourist and those living among them. Many times the question has been asked: Which is the higher, Camp Hill or Mt. Ephraim? Inquiries are also made in regard to the nearest way to reach them.

We are indebted to C. F. Grosvenor for ascertaining the fact that the Adnabrown hotel is 425 feet above sea level. Taking that as a base, O. S. Marshall finds that Camp Hill rises to a height of 1538 feet above sea level. This eminence is situated in a long ridge in the east part of the town and derives its name from the fact that General Hawks and his troops camped on or near it while building the Crown Point road.

Mt. Ephraim, in the Dutton district in the southern part of the town, is 1427 feet above sea level. It once belonged to Ephraim Walker, one of Springfield's earliest farmers, and

the ancient home site can still be readily identified by a luxuriant growth of wild roses, which are a sight to delight any lover of this old-fashioned flower who may pass that way in June. Barring Ascutney mountain, the highest pinnacle of Ephraim offers one of the richest panoramic views to be seen in this part of the state. From it Killington peak with nearby cluster of hills is on exhibition almost any day; while under a clear sky the White mountains 90 miles away are visible to an unaided eye.

Monument Hill in the west towers 1316 feet, and Mt. Ararat, on the farm of W. D. Whitcomb, has a height of 1226 feet.

To the lover of the hills these few facts will serve to prove that the lofty peaks of Springfield are beautiful at any season of the year whether they are clothed in summer verdure, the brilliant tints of autumn or the dazzling snows of winter.





VERMONT STATE FLAG

*“Let no shame bedim the starshine on its  
field of heavenly blue,  
For it’s OUR FLAG, friend, it’s OUR  
FLAG; I’m proud of it—are YOU?”*

## CHAPTER XVI

---

### Our State and Governor’s Flags

**T**HIS chapter with the accompanying illustrations is intended to bring to the reader’s notice our state and governor’s flags, hoping it may awaken so much interest that at no distant day our town shall own a state flag of such size and dimensions as to be displayed with our national colors on all suitable occasions. Then the oft-repeated questions: Have we a state flag? What does it look like? And is the governor’s the same? will no longer be a bewildering problem.

To each and every loyal Vermonter it would seem a knowledge of our flag were a necessary part of our education. As we seldom see it displayed our information must come from other sources.

Chapter 26 of the Laws of 1803: "An act establishing the flag of the militia of this state, it is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, that from and after the first day of May, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and four, the flag of this state be seventeen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be seventeen stars, white, in a blue field, with the VERMONT in capitals above the said stripes and stars."

Section 1 of the Acts of 1837: "It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly \* \* \* \* the flag of this state be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be one large star, white, in a blue field, with the coat of arms of the state of Vermont therein."

Section 3 of the Acts of 1862: "The flag of the state shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; the union shall be one large star, white, in a blue field, with the coat of arms of the state therein."

Section 304 of the General Laws, 1917: "The flag of the state shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; the union shall be one large star, white, in a blue field, with the coat of arms of the state therein."

The law as it is in effect at the present time reads as follows: Acts of 1919—"The flag of the state shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; the union shall be one large five-pointed star, white, in a blue field, with the coat of arms of the state therein."

## OUR STATE AND GOVERNOR'S FLAGS

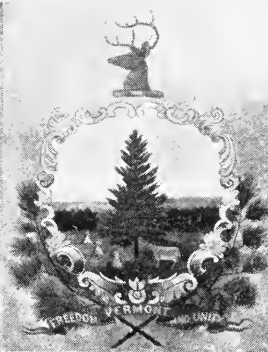
The flag of our governor is the state seal on a field of blue, without the stripes. His Excellency, like all governors, is the executive of the *state* only, and the stripes belong to the nation. We, being one of the states of the Union, can have the stripes on our State flag alone.

### STATE SEALS—OLD AND NEW

In our state seal we have a unique design. The first one, crude as it appears, was used until 1821, when the “cow” was



FIRST STATE SEAL  
USED UNTIL 1821



PRESENT STATE  
SEAL

brought over the fence into the field of grain, and the seal began to take on a more artistic appearance. To all true Vermonters it stands today as the most impressive seal of all the states.





# Index

---

— A —	Page No.	Page No.	
Abeniqui Indians.....	3	Bisbee, Capt. Abner, 18, 46, 47, 51, 60, 84, 145, 161, 166, 172	
Adams & Bundy.....	9	Bisbee, Lieut. John.....	46, 47, 110
Allbee, Gratia.....	108	Bisbee, Jonah.....	22
Allbee, Sophia.....	98	Bixby, Adonijah.....	47
Allen, Dexter.....	68	Black River.....	2
Allen, Capt. Ebenezer.....	64	Blake, Irving.....	132
Amherst, Lord Jeffrey, 4, 116, 156, 169		Blake, Timothy Jr.....	171
Artists.....	67 to 71	Blanchard, Stephen.....	41
Atwood, Drusilla.....	96	Blockhouse, 5, 6, 116, 145, 155, 156, 169, 171	
		Blockhouse Farm (Butterfield), 137, 144, 145, 156	
— B —		Boston, Cato.....	66
Bailey, G. W. (Rev.).....	114	Bourne, Elizabeth E. (Mrs. Joel Woodbury).....	93
Barnard, E. Wellman.....	60, 145	Boutelle House.....	139, 157
Barnard, George.....	146, 166	Bowen, Marcia.....	104
Barnard, Henry.....	37, 92, 132	Bowen, Henry.....	104
Barnard, Jennison, 123, 128, 131, 146		Boynton, D. J.....	140
Barnard, John J.....	92	Boynton, Jewett.....	134
Barnard, Julia N.....	93	Bradford, Andrew.....	53
Barnard, Mary E.....	114	Bradley, Elsie.....	106
Barney, Franklin (Mrs.), 9, 31, 146, 158		Bragg, Nicholas.....	47, 83
Barrett, Betsey.....	140, 141	Bragg, William.....	47, 53
Barrett, Col. John, 7, 44, 45, 63, 85, 137, 141, 156, 166		Bragg's Hill.....	106
Barrett, Moses.....	132	Bridge, Button.....	31
Barrett, Thomas.....	19, 92	Bridge, Lockwood's (Falls), 27, 28, 29, 30	
Bates, Hattie E.....	93	Bridge, White's (Fisher's).....	31
Bates, Jim.....	77	Britton, Jotham.....	108
Bates, Josiah.....	45	Brown, Abel.....	79
Bates, Lieut. Lewis.....	45	Brown, Adna.....	37, 151
Bates, Moses.....	77	Brown, Adna (Mrs.).....	36
Bates, Lieut. Roger, 18, 59, 60, 75		Brown, Albert.....	112
Beardsley, Rev. R. A.....	61	Brown, Elisha, 47, 48, 108, 138, 144	
Belknap, Hezekiah.....	67	Brown, Enoch.....	139
Belknap, Zedekiah.....	67, 68	Brown, Jonathan.....	139
Belknap, Josiah.....	45, 89	Brown, Marcia.....	113
Belknap, William.....	159	Brown, Nell.....	105, 114
Bells.....	14, 40, 41, 42	Brown, William.....	53
Bennett, George.....	99	Bryant, W. L.....	153
Betternew.....	149	Bundy, Horace.....	71
Bingham, John C.....	45	Bundy, Horace Jr.....	71
Bingham, Sarah.....	36	Burgess, Dycr (Rev.).....	92
		Burgess, Nathaniel.....	108
		Burke, Edmund C.....	110

## INDEX

	Page No.
Burke, Olivia.....	110, 113
Burke, Russell.....	110
Burke, Udna.....	38
Burr, Asahel.....	152
Butterfield, Charles.....	28
Butterfield, Ernest W.....	117, 166
Button Bridge.....	31

— C —

Cab-Ellis Co-operative Works..	133
Cady, Emma.....	107
Camp Hill.....	173
Carley, Mary Ann.....	147
Carlisle, Daniel.....	155
Case, Emanuel.....	84
Cemetery, Crown Point.....	55
Cemetery, Eureka.....	60
Cemetery, Field & Lockwood....	57
Cemetery, Parker Hill.....	56
Cemetery, Pine Grove, No. Spring- field.....	51
Cemetery, Summer Hill, 37, 44,	61
Chandler, Sarah.....	94
Charter, Original.....	155, 156
Chase Block.....	12
Chase, Clinton.....	110
Chase, Leonard.....	109
Chase, Moses.....	48, 130
Cheshire Bridge.....	11, 26, 27
Chipman, Nathaniel.....	155
Chipman, Sam.....	16, 160
Chittenden, Daniel.....	104
Chittenden, James.....	53
Choate, B. B.....	152
Church, Baptist.....	42, 69
Church, Catholic.....	113, 114
Church, Congregational....	158, 159
Church, Methodist, 12, 13, 14,	39,
50, 108, 109, 120, 155, 156,	158,
166	
Clark, Elisha.....	83
Closson, Gershom.....	37
Closson, Henry.....	110
Closson, Ichabod.....	56
Cobb, Dr. Samuel, 32, 34, 83, 85,	85,
159	
Coburn, Ansel.....	12, 16
Cocoonery.....	134, 135, 136
Colburn Elm.....	32
Colburn, Robert.....	55, 107, 115

	Page No.
Common, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,	37, 76, 106, 115, 123, 127, 140,
157, 163	
Cone, William.....	44
Constitution of Vermont.....	154
Cook, Capt. Philip.....	35
Cook, Thomas.....	140
Corlew, Thomas.....	44
Cotton, Ursula.....	108
Counterfeit Money.....	147
Crain, Dr. Eleazer, 23, 37, 79,	152
Crain, Helen (Porter).....	16
Crain, Noble.....	9
Crain, Sarah.....	37
Crown Point Marker.....	116
Crown Point Road, 4, 10, 46, 51, 52,	74, 75, 77, 78, 83, 116, 117, 149,
156, 164, 167, 169, 170, 173	
Cushing, Daniel.....	15

— D —

Damon, Elias.....	100, 101
Dana, B. F.....	36, 72
Dana, B. F. (Mrs.).....	16
Dana, Tom.....	100
D. A. R., Gen. Lewis Morris Chapter.....	61, 129
Darrah, Daniel.....	79
Dartt, Elizabeth.....	105
Dartt, Hon. Justus, 19, 96, 98,	107
Davidson, John.....	151
Davis, Joshua.....	159, 160
Deeds.....	61, 136
DeMary, John.....	16
Downer, Dr.....	145, 149, 150
Draper, Ashabel.....	123, 124
Dressel, Herman.....	115
Dresser, George.....	113
Duncan, Miles.....	9
Dyke, Nathaniel.....	44
Dyke, William.....	44

E

Eaton, Belle.....	96, 97
Eaton, Ellis.....	16
Eaton, Everett.....	38
Eddy, Charles B.....	99
Elliot, Carrie.....	104
Elliot, Rachel.....	104
Ellis, Isaac.....	93, 108
Ellis, J. Lincoln.....	110, 140

## INDEX

	Page No.
Ellis, Joel A. H.....	151
Ellis, Joseph Whitcomb, 75, 93, 107	
Ellison, F. G.....	8, 15
Emery, Mrs. Achsa.....	128
Eureka, 60, 61, 74, 83, 84, 91, 120, 123, 126, 128, 131, 140, 146, 147, 150, 156, 163, 166	
— F —	
Fairbanks, Oliver.....	48, 77
Fay, Jonas.....	129
Fellows, E. R.....	98
Fellows Gear Shaper Co... 131, 153	
Ferry, Ashley.....	131
Ferry, Wentworth's.....	122
Field, Arthur.....	163, 164
Field, Daniel, 57, 58, 139, 142, 163, 165	
Field, Fred G.....	53, 95
Field, Hannah Whitman... 58, 143	
Field, Walbridge.....	119
Finney, Ranie.....	98
Fisher, Frances H.....	104
Fisher, Isaac, 10, 11, 12, 15, 27, 31, 134	
Fisher, Isaac Jr.....	153
Flags, Governor's.....	175, 177
Flags, State.....	175, 176
Fletcher, Aaron Dean.....	68, 69
Fletcher, Chas.....	68
Fletcher, Daniel.....	147
Fletcher, Henry.....	68
Fling, Lester.....	8, 19, 106
Folklore Tales.....	120 to 150
Forbush, Charles.....	37
Frost, Pinckney (Rev.).....	152
Frost, Rosella.....	100
Fullam, A. J., 22, 23, 132, 133, 152	
— G —	
Gaylord Fund.....	87, 88
Gaylord, Moses.....	75, 87
Gill, Daniel A.....	5, 84, 90, 172
Gill, Daniel A. (Mrs. Theda Tower) 38	
Gill, Major John.....	97
Gill, Whitford.....	77, 173
Gill, Mercy Whitford.....	172, 173
Gilman, F. B.....	152
Gilman & Son.....	153
Glynn, Isaac.....	49

	Page No.
Glynn, Jonas.....	35
Goffe, General... 4, 6, 46, 116, 170	
Goodnow, Myra.....	98
Gould's Mills.....	77, 120
Graham, Dana.....	104
Graham, Mary.....	91
Gregory, Isaac.....	80
Griffith, William.....	8
Grimes, Ichabod.....	10
Grinnell, Moses H.....	152
Griswold, Daniel.....	53
Griswold, Daniel Jr.....	95
Griswold, Lucinda.....	96
Guernsey, L. T.....	152
— H —	
Hale, Benjamin.....	106
Hale, Col. Enoch.....	25, 26
Hall, Caleb.....	140
Hall, Mary.....	161
Hall, Mattie.....	114
Hammond, Luther.....	76
Harlow, Bradford.....	107
Harlow, David.....	100
Harlow, Levi.....	128
Harlow, Lucius.....	100, 103
Harrington, Judge.....	64
Harriman, Page.....	172
Hartness, James.....	61, 153
Hasham, Steven.....	11, 13
Haskell, Abbie (Mrs.).....	112
Haskell, Clara W.....	91
Haskins, Samuel.....	108
Hawkins, Horace.....	158
Hawley, Lizzie.....	93
Hawkes, Freeloove.....	106
Hayes, L. S.....	138, 139, 165
Haywood, John.....	53
Haywood, Paul.....	53
Heminway, Samuel.....	92, 105
Herrick, Elizabeth.....	28
Herrick, R. S.....	106, 115
Herrick, Samuel.....	167
History, Thumbnail.... 154 to 174	
History, National and Civil... 155	
Hoard, Charles Brooks.....	167
Holden, Jane.....	93
Holden, Capt. William.....	55
Holmes, Lieut. Hezekiah, 17, 82, 156	
Holmes, John C.....	105, 158
Holmes, Orsamus.....	18, 59, 60

## INDEX

	Page No.
Holmes, Rebecca Safford.....	65
Holt, Charles.....	76, 98, 102
Holt House.....	107
Hotel, Black River.....	79
Houghton, Daniel.....	9
Houses, Old... 137 to 140, 157, 165	
Howe, Daniel.....	8, 120, 122
Howe, Eli.....	98
Howe, Elizabeth (Patch), 8, 120, 122	
Howe, Ellen M.....	110
Howe, Horace.....	98
Howe, Isaac.....	98
Howe, Sarah V.....	98, 104, 108
Howe, Selina.....	98, 107
Hoyt, F. S.....	110
Hubbard, Calvin (M. D.), 92, 130, 159	
Hubbard, Elizabeth.....	92, 110
Hubbard, Capt. George.....	18, 84
Hubbard, Horace.....	49, 110
Hubbard, Ruth.....	131
Hunt, Col. Samuel.....	141, 142
Hunt, Public Wolf.....	142

— I —

Indians, Abenacui.....	3, 165
Inventors.....	151, 153, 167

— J —

Jacobs, Stephen.....	63
Jenkins, Lucia.....	114

— K —

Keith, Simeon.....	53, 54
Kemfield, Shem.....	149, 150
Kilburn, John.....	165
Kirk, William.....	54
Knight, Dr. E. A.....	132

L

Larabee, C. K. (Mrs.).....	36
LaFontaine, Mark C.....	116, 119
Lake, Jonathan.....	49
Lee, Richard (Rev.).....	54, 73
Leland, Joshua.....	96
Leland, Marcella.....	96
Leland, Thomas.....	54, 55

	Page No.
Lewis, Deacon.....	145, 146
Lewis, James.....	138
Lewis, Samuel.....	8, 9
Litchfield, James.....	140
Litchfield Hill (Hillcrest).....	166
Litchfield, Lucy (Perkins).....	168
Litchfield, Otis.....	168
Little, Capt. Joseph, 17, 18, 47, 49, 59, 75, 94, 155, 162	
Lockwood, Henry.....	58
Lockwood, Nathan.....	140
Lockwood, William, 7, 10, 61, 84, 85	
Lockwood's Bridge... 27, 28, 29, 30	
Lockwood's Falls.....	76
Lyman, Gideon.....	155
Lynde, Lieut. Benjamin....	49, 126
Lynde, Eliot.....	76, 139

— M —

Martin, Dexter.....	95
Martin, Ephriam.....	54
Martin, Frank D.....	95
Martin, James.....	75, 87
Martin, Joseph.....	60
Martin, William.....	87
Mason, Alvin.....	153
Mason, Henry.....	37
Mason, Henry (Mrs.).....	37
Masonic Lodge.... 45, 76, 78, 157	
Mathews, Dinah.....	64
Maynard, Lemuel.....	108
McRoberts, Margaret.....	87
Merritt, George.....	102
Messer, Joseph.....	135
Messenger, Joseph (Mrs.).....	36
Meeting House (First, East), 17, 18, 19, 21, 74, 75, 76, 123, 147, 157	
Meeting House, First Methodist, 135	
Miller, Abijah.....	83
Miller, James Harrington.....	49
Miller, Samuel.....	155
Miner, James.....	24
Monument Hill.....	120, 123, 174
Morris, Gen. Lewis, 26, 63, 68, 77, 85, 129, 130, 138, 139, 155, 159	
Morris (Gould's) Mills.... 77, 104	
Morris, Richard.....	130, 159, 172
Morton, Daniel O. (Rev.)....	158
Morton, Levi.....	158
Mt. Ararat.....	174
Mt. Ephraim.....	173

## INDEX

— N —	Page No.	— S —	Page No.
New Connecticut.....	154	Rice, Daniel (Mrs.).....	16
Nichols, Eunice.....	92	Rice, Daniel.....	37, 72, 73
Nichols, Fannie.....	84	Road, Potwine's.....	119
Nicholas, Levi.....	49	Road, County.....	75, 119
Nott, John.....	3, 4, 44	Rounds, Ella.....	96
Nourse, John.....	40	Rounds, Judge William.....	96
		Royce, Emily.....	110
— O —			
Oakes, David.....	49		
— P —			
Panther Rock.....	145	Sabin, Charles.....	9
Parker Hill.....	75, 76, 100, 101	Safford, Bigelow.....	112
Parker, Lieut. Isaac, 56, 76, 100, 101		Safford, Emma.....	114
Parker, Jeremiah.....	55	Safford, Henry.....	112
Parker, Leonard.....	76	Safford, Mary.....	36
Parker, Silas.....	57	Safford, Noah, 64, 65, 66, 152, 167	
Parker, Stella, . . . 103, 106, 108, 110		Safford, Lieut. Philip.....	57
Parks & Woolson Machine Co., 153		Safford, Rebecca.....	65, 110, 112
Perham, Joseph.....	49	Sartwell, Jacob.....	50
Perkins, Prof. G. H.....	117	Sartwell, Oliver.....	50, 84
Perkins, John.....	9, 105	Sawyer, Nathaniel.....	50
Perkins, J. O.....	133	Schools.....	81, 115
Pettengill, Edward H.....	107	District No. 1, Walker... 90, 91	
Picknell, George.....	69, 70	District No. 2, Eureka... 91, 92	
Picknell, Rev. William L... 69, 70		District No. 3, Cragin..... 93	
Picknell, Wm. Jr.....	69	District No. 4, Baker..... 93	
Pierce, Flora.....	96, 97, 104	District No. 5, No. Springfield, 94	
Pierce, Frances.....	115	District No. 6, Spencer Hollow, 97	
Pierce, Matthew.....	54	District No. 7, . . . . 89, 106, 113	
Porter, Ann Emerson (Mrs. Charles)		District No. 8, . . . . . 107, 113	
71, 72, 107		District No. 9, Slab City.... 99	
Porter, Charles.....	71, 72	District No. 10, Scrabble..... 99	
Porter, Frederick.....	9, 10, 136	District No. 11, Merritt... 98, 99	
Porter, Frederick (Mrs.).....	37	District No. 12, Bush..... 104	
Porter, Judge Samuel W... 14, 160		District No. 13, Dutton..... 103	
Postoffice.....	160	District No. 13, Springfield and Chester..... 94, 103	
Powers, Asahel.....	50, 97	District No. 13, Springfield and Weathersfield..... 94, 103	
Powers, Hiram.....	66	District No. 14, . . . . . 105, 106	
Powers, Stephen.....	66	District No. 15, Parker Hill, 89, 100	
Powers, Col. Thomas.....	65, 66	District No. 16, . . . . 89, 112, 113	
Prentiss, Flora.....	114	District No. 17, . . . . 89, 105, 106	
Prouty, Lucia.....	98	District No. 18, Gould's Mills, 104, 105	
— R —		District No. 19, Gill... 90, 91, 105 High..... 114, 155	
Railroad, Underground.. 64, 65, 66		Old..... 109	
Ranstead, Rufus.....	107	Private..... 107, 112	
Remington, Samuel.....	24	Town System..... 114	
Revolutionary Soldiers.... 43 to 61		Scott, Phineas.....	44

## INDEX

Page No.	Page No.
Scott, Capt. Samuel..... 51, 161	-- T --
Seals, State..... 177	Tannery..... 160
Searle, David..... 83, 84	Taverns..... 74 to 80
Selden, Joseph..... 74	Tavern, Gaylord..... 75
Seminary, Fletcher..... 147, 148	Tavern, Joel Griswold..... 79, 80
Seminary, Wesleyan..... 13	Tavern, Holt..... 76, 138, 139
Seymour..... 8	Tavern, Wales..... 79
Sherman, Edgar (Judge)..... 100	Tavern, Williams..... 79
Slack, Burke & Whitmore..... 133	Taylor, Isabella..... 161
Slavery..... 62 to 66	Taylor, Luke W..... 152
Smiley, Father Robinson, 12, 19, 46, 68, 76, 83, 86, 91, 92, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 139	Taylor, Martha..... 93
Reception of..... 123	Taylor, Samuel..... 13, 110
Smiley, Jane..... 92	Temple, Frederick..... 44
Smiley, Mother, 68, 84, 123, 126, 127	Tenney, Elizabeth L..... 91
Smith, David M..... 151	Thanksgiving Proclamations... 129
Smith, Hiram Moore..... 167	Thomas, Isaac..... 155
Smith, Isaac B..... 152	Tolles, Mary..... 107
Smith, Joseph..... 152	Tontine..... 11
Smith, Miles..... 151	Tory Hole..... 148, 149, 150
Society House of Worship.... 101	Tower, Abbie..... 110
Spellman, Frank..... 133	Tower, Henrietta..... 103
Spencer Hollow..... 77, 164	Tower, Jane S..... 113
Spencer, Mary..... 99	Tower, Stoddard..... 38
Spencer, Simeon... 51, 97, 164, 165	Town Meeting, First..... 161
Spencer, Taylor... 51, 84, 97, 164	Trails, Indian..... 24
Spencer, Timothy..... 51, 97, 164	Trees.. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 73
Springfield.. 155, 156, 157, 158, 160	-- V --
Springfield House..... 79, 80	Vermont..... 154, 155
Springfield, North..... 79, 103, 140	Village Falls Mfg. Co..... 131
Springfield Wesleyan Seminary, 13, 93, 108 to 113	-- W --
Springfield, West..... 77	Walker, Ephraim..... 105, 173
Stark, John..... 24	Walker, Gracia..... 93
Stcamboats..... 160	Walker, Sergt. John..... 57, 77
Steele, Hattie..... 92, 104	Walker, Leonard..... 76, 140
Steele, Samuel..... 55, 56	Walker, Mason..... 143
Stevens, Capt. Samuel..... 27	Warren, Herbert M..... 152
Stevens, Capt. Simon, 51, 52, 78, 82, 84, 124, 161, 166, 172	Warren, Jesse..... 152
Stevens, Fannie..... 92	Washburn, George..... 15, 16
Stevens, Sarah..... 82	Watkins, G. A..... 152
Stimson, David..... 44	Weatherhead, F. S..... 153
Stocks..... 75	Weathervanes..... 39, 40
Stone, Joseph..... 44	Wells, Ashabel..... 74
Stoughton, Edward..... 20, 21	Wells and Newell..... 147
Stoughton, Henry..... 20, 21	Wentworth, Benning, 3, 24, 81, 156, 169, 170
Stoughton, Thomas..... 20	Wentworth's Ferry, 5, 24, 116, 123, 160, 171
Streeter, Rev. Russell..... 102	Wesleyan Seminary, 13, 39, 148, 155, 158
Sundial..... 166	
Swett, Joseph..... 170, 171	

---

## INDEX

---

	Page No.		Page No.
Weston, Nathaniel..	52, 53, 84, 85	Whitney, Elijah.....	128
Wheeler, Alice.....	114	Whitney, Deacon Lemuel,	18, 60, 150
Wheeler, Nathan.....	132	Whitney, James—diary of,	20, 21, 36, 145, 157, 162, 163
Wheeler, Store of W. H.,	9, 10, 76, 157	Whitney, J. Emeline.....	91
Whipple, James.....	9, 76, 91	Whitney, Luthera.....	77, 105
Whipple, James Jr.....	76, 77	Whitney, William Wilson.....	91
Whitcomb, Arthur.....	10	Wilder, Betsey.....	96
Whitcomb, Ezekial....	36, 136, 159	Williams, Col. Jonathan....	10, 79
Whitcomb, Henry.....	37	Williams, Louisa.....	112
Whitcomb, Peres.....	99	Williams, Timothy.....	94
Whitcomb, Sarah.....	37	Wiswell, Isaac.....	166
White, Amelia.....	94	Women, Pioneer.....	140
White, Della.....	114	Wood, Harvey C. (Rev.).....	110
White, Emma.....	104	Woodbury, George.....	83
White, John.....	10	Woodbury, Jonathan.....	152
White, Joseph.....	110	Woolson, Amasa.....	14, 151
White, Jotham.....	45, 62, 63, 77	Woolson, W. D.....	133
White, Rachel.....	105	Wright, Ephraim.....	65
Whitmore, Hamlin.....	125	Wright, Harriet.....	103
Whitney, Abner.....	44	Writers.....	71 to 73















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