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# HISTORY

OF

# ROCKVILLE,

FROM

## 1823 TO 1871.

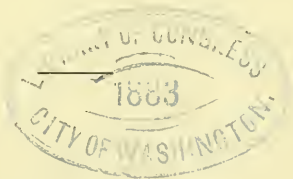
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INCLUDING ALSO A BRIEF SKETCH OF FACTS WHICH ANTE-DATE THE  
INCORPORATION OF VERNON, AND BRING DATES UP TO THE  
TIME WHEN THIS HISTORY BEGINS.

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BY WM. T. COGSWELL, ESQ.

[A RESIDENT OF THE VILLAGE FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY.]



ROCKVILLE:

PRINTED AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE.

1872.

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## P R E F A C E .

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In presenting to the public the contributions that have appeared from time to time in the TOLLAND COUNTY JOURNAL, entitled "Reminiscences of Rockville," it seems proper to state that the embodied facts were more the result of the love of the writer for this rural retreat, as it was in 1823 and subsequent years, than the hope of pecuniary reward or literary fame.

The first chapter was written in an idle hour, while the writer was meditating on the past and present condition of this once barren heath, and now the head center of business for Tolland County. The first number was passed through the Post Office, directed to THE JOURNAL, signed with the initial "C." Contrary to expectation, inquiry was raised to find the author, and demand more of the same sort of Rockville history. The Editor of THE JOURNAL was consulted whether he would print more than the first number. The answer was, "I will print all you'll write." Until I had written up to 1840 I had no expectation of having the articles printed in pamphlet form.

From the absence of any record to assist, and often conflicting memories,—and from the death of nearly all who were familiar with the early history and settlement of Rockville, it is probable that events as narrated are somewhat imperfect. Each chapter was written for the last or finale; which, being the case, many repetitions occur in two or three chapters which would not, if I had preserved my manuscript either written or printed.

The first chapter introduced into this volume is from the pen of Mr.

PETER DOBSON. This short narrative will be read with deep interest by all persons engaged in manufacturing. There is no other living man who can tell as much about the early history of manufacturing in this State as can Mr. DOBSON. I feel under obligations to him for this chapter, because it connects so well with my record, which begins in 1823.

The author of the following pages was not born in the Town of Vernon, but was nurtured among the hills of Tolland. He would be ungrateful not to acknowledge a kind and good Providence that directed his steps to this once almost desolate valley, and spared him to witness the changes that have come to this place for the past fifty years. Nearly all whom I met here forty-eight years ago have ceased from their labors and gone to their reward. In the light of this thought the question comes home, is our work done and well done? Is there nothing left for us to do to make life happier, and the world better? If so, ours is a happy condition, and the consciousness that we have done our whole duty will lighten the darkness of the future. But if anything remains to be done, let our efforts not cease until the great work of life is ended, and the Master calls for us to enter into the joys of the happy spirit land.

WM. T. COGSWELL.

ROCKVILLE, January 1, 1872.

[From the TOLLAND COUNTY JOURNAL of November 11, 1871.]

## REMINISCENCES OF VERNON.

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BY PETER DOBSON, ESQ.

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As you have from time to time published articles giving a history of the rise and progress of Rockville, permit me to give you an earlier history of the beginning of manufactory in North Bolton, now Vernon.

About the year 1794, John Warberton came from England to East Hartford, and went to work making wooden cider mill screws, and finally made a bargain with the Pitkin family of East Hartford to build some cotton machinery to spin cotton, to be placed at a fall on the Hockanum, where they had a Snuff Mill, now Manchester Mills. He built two water frames, and preparation, and set them to work. But he and the Pitkins did not agree, and he left, and went to Fuller's, now Talcott Brothers, in North Bolton, built a dam and buildings erected, and progressed slowly, so that eventually he got two small mules with preparations and a woolen card at a fall below, to card wool for customers, and built two brick houses.

In the fall of 1800, John Warberton sold Alexander McLean, Col. Francis McLean, L. P. Tinker and Irad Fuller. Alexander McLean moved to the mills, and was their agent, and run the mill till after the war of 1812, when they sold the property to Thomas Bull, of Hartford, part cash, and part new lands in Ohio.

In consequence of Warberton selling out, James Chapman and Chester King applied to me, (I was then at work in a small mill in Suffield,) to join them and build a mill at King's saw mills, (on the fall now occupied by R. B. Parker.) I saw them and made a bargain, and went to work in a lower room in McLean's wool-carding building, until a mill was built in the spring of 1810. We began to spin in the spring of 1811 on two mules of 192 spindles each, with preparations. We made stocking yarn, which we sold to Suffield peddlers, and also

yarn that we put out to farmer's wives to make into cloth, No. 12 yarn for a forty reed which they had to weave linen goods upon. Some of the women had reeds and harnesses to weave double work, such as bed-ticking, table cloth, etc., so that I gave out yarn to make shirting, sheeting, stripes, checks, and gingham of indigo blue, which we colored. Also table cloths. We also bleached some of the cloth and yarn, paid the weavers in cotton cloth, or yarn, as they chose.

We sold the articles manufactured principally to peddlers, as we could not sell at any price to the Hartford dry goods merchants. We found two, Nathaniel Potter and James Dodd, who would receive some goods and pay for them when sold, in goods from their store.

We received pay by giving orders to girls working in the mill. Before the war of 1812, there was a determination not to encourage manufacturing in the State.

In the fall of the year 1811, Delano Abbott, who lived a little east of the North-west School House in Vernon, called on me with a small piece of woolen cloth which was cut from the piece that the tailor was making up for Daniel Pitkin who lived on the bank of the river in East Hartford, opposite Ferry street, Hartford. By examining it we found the warp was cotton yarn, and the filling woolen yarn, five threads down and one up. He determined to make a similar article and wanted me to build a jack and jinny. I went to Middletown in the winter of 1811 and 1812. I went alone to the mill and saw a jack and jinny spinning wool. I had seen similar machines in England spinning cotton. In the spring of 1812 I agreed to build him a thirty spindle billey, and a sixty spindle jinny. He set the machines up in an out building near his house and a couple of looms in another building, had his wool carded into rolls at the McLean Mill carding building, which Warberton sold in 1809.

The cloth when woven was carried to Simeon Cooley's clothing works, at the place near where now stands the Panola Mills, to be fulled and finished for sale. Afterwards Dr. Hinkley joined Mr. Abbott and built a small mill afterwards used by Oliver Hunt for grinding bark. They also built another mill on the same stream just below. In a few years Col. Francis McLean joined them, and continued business together for two or three years before Col. McLean, George Kellogg and Ralph Talcott went to Rockville, and the present business of Rockville has sprung from their small beginning.

ROCKVILLE, Nov. 11, 1871.

# ROCKVILLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

Forty-six years ago your humble servant came to the Rock Factory (a name well understood in the town of Vernon) to work in the shop situated in the east half of the first floor of the factory. I regret that some one did not take a photographic view of the place—a good reason why is, no one ever thought of a photograph, or knew how to make a profile of any face that could be recognized unless it was labeled; therefore I will try to give you an imperfect description of the village in the years of 1823-4-5-6. Traveling westward from Tolland on the turnpike road three miles we arrive at the mansion of Deacon Jabez Kingsbury, or Col. John Kingsbury, now the residence of Geo. H. Kingsbury, Esq. Forty rods west the road turns to the right, and passing onward, one mile or so, we come to Pane's Mill, now Panola Mill. In 1777 this place was known by name of Iron Work and Gin Distillery. About 1803 Simeon Cooley established a clothiers works at this place. He made considerable money, built the brick house, and for a time was called a rich man. Passing onward the next building seen is Cooley's Fulling Mill, upon the little island east of Eaton & Fitch's stable; the same frame is now the dwelling nearest the said island. A little further west the road turns short in consequence of a steep hill and ledge. In front of Oliver Eaton's barn, at this point, a stranger pursues his way cautious and slow—the trees on the north side of the road cluster together and overhang the narrow pass, also the south. Here the Hockanum ran under an overhanging ledge crowned with ancient hemlocks, completely shutting the sunlight from the road. Passing along the road, bearing to the northwest, it ran over the hill about four rods south of J. N. Stickney's house. At this



point the traveller would hold on to shrubs and look down the steep one hundred feet, and now and then catch a glimpse of the cataract. What rendered this short piece of road more dismal in the night season was the old story of the haunted place—cries and moans were heard now and then—it was said Fox Hill had been inhabited by thieves and robbers.

I have said this to show you how the place looked forty-seven years ago. In 1823 there were five families in the Rock District, (so called in after years.) The old mill occupied in part the present site of the Rock Factory. To get to it you passed along now Prospect street to Judge Loomis's mansion, and turned to the left, and going southwardly until you came to the turnpike at Mr. Allen Kellogg's. Mr. George Kellogg, Sr., kept the men boarders, and Otis McLean the female boarders. Mr. Kellogg lived on the ground now occupied by Judge Loomis's house. Mr. Martin's house is the one, without any L. In those days the south-west room was the dining room. This same room, after supper, was occupied by the men and boys as their sanctum. Many arguments were discussed here with fervor; sometimes a little boisterous, but three raps on the door generally restored quiet.

In 1826 a meeting was called at this room to consult in relation to improving the minds of young and old. It was finally resolved to establish a debating society, and all the males must take a part in the debate or pay a fine.

The first question that was argued was this: "Ought Capital Punishment to be Abolished!" (The affirmative was, it ought not to be abolished.) The opening was on the side of the affirmative. Many quotations were used from the Old Testament to show the propriety of sustaining the statute, &c., &c.

Then arose the chairman of the negative, a man rather witty but illiterate, who had never listened to his own voice in a crowd, but he must speak, and the first shot was, "Well done, Blue Laws; for my part I think a man ought to be abolished." He began to choke up, and looking around on some of the faces, he finally said, "I am a bigger d—d fool than I thought I was," and took his seat, with his head down.

The judges said this was a superfine speech. At any rate, if laughter be a test, it was decidedly good.

I have given this outline of Rockville history in order to show up the difference to the masses that now occupy the waste places of forty-

five years ago. There were no cultivated fields to please the eye, no herds, or next to none, were seen on the surrounding hill-sides. With the exception of sixty acres of clearing, the surrounding on all sides, except on the west, was a forest. There were four dwellings then, without any paint on their walls; the factory showed no paint. Three horses and two cows comprised the list of stock. There were less than fifty souls of any age in this district from 1820 to 1825, and '26 even.

The hands in the mill wrought seventy-two hours for a week, and three hundred and twelve hours for one month's labor. The Sabbath, in those days, commenced on Saturday, a little before sundown. On the Sabbath we all, or nearly all, attended church. The old meeting-house stood directly east of George Hammond's one half mile. The school-house also stood near by. The church was forty by fifty, gallery on three sides. It had no long steeple, stove or chimney during all the years of occupancy. The foot-stoves were numerous. In the school-house good fires were kept up during church hours. At noon the people gathered in here to warm, and eat their dinners and tell the news.

This simple story of Rock Factory, from 1823 to 1826, is identified with the writer's age. Forty-six years ago this month I became twenty-one years old, or a man in the law. Up to this time my home was with my parents in the south part of Tolland. They regretted I must leave them without gold to give me, but they gave me their blessing and I departed hence. From this period up to 1826 there was no improvement outside of the mill except the red paint on the mill and the two dwellings near by.

ROCKVILLE, Dec. 25, 1869.

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## CHAPTER II.

I said no improvement outside the Rock mill was visible, except the red paint on the mill and the two houses near by. The inside appearance was materially altered; the hand looms were cast out entirely. I will state here that in 1824 there were five hand looms, and five men to weave on them; also two power looms as they were call-

ed, very intricate in their construction. They did not run half the time, they needed repairing so often.

We will now take a walk through the mill in 1823. The first floor at the west or front end was finishing, boxing, &c. In this room was the desk that contained the books and accounts of the mill. By the side of this desk was a bed that turned up in the daytime, and turned down in the evening after the mill stopped, and was occupied by two supers for many years. In the middle of this room was the water-wheel. This wheel was twelve by sixteen, covered over top and sides. On the south was a space about ten feet wide, used as a gangway in and out of the machine shop. In this shop is a grindstone, two lathes, an iron vise, and a bench on the south side of the room, twenty-five feet long. Lewis Beach and the writer of this story worked together in this room three years. Beach contrived up a new loom, more simple than those in use. The first loom was started in the shop, a lady was called down from the weave room and she, with patience and long suffering, wove the first yard on the new loom. [This lady, Miss Leonard, now Mrs. Sherman Chapman, still [survives, the head of a happy household in Tolland.] This was in the early part of 1824.— We then went to work and set up ten looms; and the were run in the Rock Factory; and ten more were added in the course of a year or so. Let me say, the first ten looms were made with the tools made mention of. After a year or so we had an engine lathe and a buz saw, so called, added to the shop.

We will now walk up stairs in 1823. There are five looms, and Mulligan and McMahon, and two or three others, weaving the satinetts and getting seven cents per yard for weaving. In the room also was a machine for spinning, called the Brewster machine, complicated and expensive. In the course of two or three years this frame was thrown out and its place supplied by the spinning Jack, so called, of 140 spindles. We will now walk up stairs into the carding room. In the west end of this room was an old door laid on two barrels (what for?) to sort wool on. Do you wonder who worked here at this rude table? It was Mr. George Kellogg and Mr. Ralph Talcott. Here they would spend their spare time to sort wool. These men believed in the old adage:

“He that by the plow would thrive,  
Himself must either hold or drive.”

I will now add a few words more about the card room. There were two cards used for breakers, and two finishers. The machines were single, so called, because they had but one main cylinder each. These

*Spinning and Dyeing*



machines were moved by hand power, and made roping. The rolls were taken up and pieced one by one. This method made an endless string until the copp was filled. These coppes were transferred to the spinning jack, and twisted ready for weaviag.

I have been a little tedious in this description of the inside labor that was bestowed in making cloth in tohse days of 1823 and 1824.—There were many experiments to make the roping from the cards, so as to do away with the billies and rope-piecing. After much labor to 1827, the roping was drawn from the cards through tubes that gave a twist sufficient for spinning. Therefore after these improvements in spinning and weaving, the old Rock Factory began to improve. It turned out 200 yards of satinet per day, and population augmented one-third more. In 1828 there wae built one house and painted white. It occupied the site where Mr. George Kellogg, Sr., resides. The house was first occupied by Mr. Kellogg, and afterwards for a boarding house ; and after a few years was moved, and is now occupied by Mr. Harris. In 1830 the house where Mrs. Rose lives was built.

I have now glanced at a simple history (from recollection mostly) of Rockville from 1823 up to 1830. It was my intention to leave out the names of those whom I first met in the year 1823 at Rock Factory, but in order to show how improvements were made in the years alluded to I had to say by whom they were made. Shakspeare makes “the idolatrous fancy” of a surviving lover “sanctify the relics of a lover lost,” and the strongest memories of old age, it is well known, fasten upon the years and events of youth.

January, 8th, 1870.

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### CHAPTER III.

In a former number of the JOURNAL my remarks were confined principally to the district called Rock District. I used this language for the use of the readers of the JOURNAL, who now enjoy such privileges as here presented. In this East, or Brick Schoolhouse District, we had had no schoolhouse previous to 1836. Small children were taught in some room in private dwellings, and the larger children would go down to Grant street—now West street. Grant street was

an old settlement long before Rockville was thought of. Grant's mill occupied the place of J. Selden's factory—an old town mill and landmark familiar to many. Near the old mill was the county schoolhouse. This house was used for every kind of speaking, preaching, spelling schools and night assemblies, several years; and for many years the stated place for Methodist meetings. To the evening meetings the young people of both sexes of Rockville were wont to repair, some for good, others for evil, if my recollection is correct.

In connection with the old schoolhouse I will relate an anecdote:—There was a young lady who worked in in the factory who attracted the attention of the gents; one in particular. She wore a splendid bonnet, trimmed in front with swan's down, white as snow. At an evening meeting in the said schoolhouse a young man viewed the fine lady, ardent, o'er and o'er, and made up his mind to escort her home. The meeting ended, all hands came out, and the young man also.—His first purpose was to watch for the lady with the particular bonnet on. There was no moon, yet the night was not so dark as to prevent his seeing the bonnet in the crowd. He offered the lady his arm and she said "yeth, thir," and they took the path up stream across lots.—The path is now the street called Main street. The lady's boarding house stood directly in front of the Rockville National Bank. Instead of stopping here, she took the cart path running from the Rock Mill northeasterly, crossing Prospect street near E. F. Stoughton's house, thence on through the woods to the Hall Place. This is the spot now occupied by Mike Fay. The well by the roadside is the old well used by Deacon John Hall a century ago. Beyond the well, fifty feet to the right, stood the mansion and store attached. Here was the centre of business for many miles around; here the farmers drove their cattle to be slaughtered, &c. He was rich as Cræsus. His mind became diseased to such an extent he was considered crazy. About eighty years ago he hanged himself; therefore the place became a solitude. The young couple passed this place in silence. After traveling seventy-five rods further the lady was home. He stammered good night, and retraced a part of his steps, say one-third of them. He arrived home nearly exhausted. This mistake happened in consequence of another bonnet that had white fur on the front. The young man did not stay long in the place.

I have wandered far away from the history of Rock Factory. In the beginning of the year 1826 the people of Vernon resolved to build a new church edifice. They took hold of the work as one man, and

thus it went on to completion. The slips and pews were assessed for an amount sufficient to pay for the house, and were decded to the individuals embraced in the church and society. To this house the inhabitants of Rock Factory traveled for worship ten years nearly.

A few more words about Grant street. Nearly one hundred years ago a Mr. Grant, who lived in Bolton, owned a farm that interfered somewhat with the common, which was laid out very wide, and still remains a very broad street. This Mr. Grant exchanged his Bolton farm for lands in North Bolton. These lands comprised all of West street to the Hockanum on the south and west, north to Ellington line, and Easterly to the Carlisle Mill. There were four families of Grant's in West street many years, and Mr. Elnathan Grant who lived in the house now occupied by Mr. John Pitney, all brothers and settled on the lands that were exchanged for the Bolton farm.

January 15th, 1870.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

In my last chapter I carried the reader down to Grant street, or West street, and left him, there to look about the old Grant settlement. Traveling eastward on Main street from J. Selden's factory, we come to the Hockanum place.

Forty-seven years ago or more an attempt was made to make satinet in the old buildings, a part now standing on the side of the hill south of the stream. About the same time the old Grant Mill was made into a satinet factory. The Springville also was a factory twenty by thirty feet. At the Hockanum there were two small dwellings near the bridge; at the Springville one house on the south side of the stream.

I have now given the dimensions of Rockville in its infancy, for the benefit of the present generation. 'Where is the benefit,' some one says, 'to this generation?' My opinion is that the rational mind can take moral lessons to itself, and learn how to overcome difficulties by comparison. Fifty years ago, what then? Nearly every man and boy wore the cloth made in the family. Sixty years ago there were no woolen factories in this State; very few carding machines. There

is here and there an old lady who can tell of carding the rolls upon her lap, and spinning and weaving the same into flannel, and dyed the cloth red, and carded up the napp, and made herself a dress and wore it in winter; and in the summer linen or tow cloth. This is no fiction.

In 1812 the war with Great Britain began, and the United States Navy was feeble compared to Jonny Bull; therefore our ports became blockaded by the British, clothing for our soldiers became scarce, hence it was the object of many persons to make blue mixed satinets for soldiers' clothing. Many had just begun to make cloth in 1815, and the war ended; many failed, (nearly all of this class,) who had no capital or wealthy friends to help them. Col. McLean, or Francis McLean, was interested in some of the first efforts to manufacture, associated with Doctor Hineckley and Delano Abbott. Some of these little mills were soon obliged to stop work most of the time, and previous to 1818 had almost ceased to live.

About the beginning of 1820 Col. McLean surveyed the Hockanum and purchased the lands included in the East District, or Brick Schoolhouse in Rockville, bounded by the south bank of the Hockanum, with the privilege of building dams, &c. The stakes were stuek, and the work of digging the wheelpit and canal went forward, and in process of time the mill (Rock Mill) was raised and finished.

I hope to be pardoned for this lengthy history of Rockville. I began, thinking to tell the whole story of three years duration of the old Rock Factory life, and let some one write the remainder. But looking up friends to help me on, 'tis vain, almost; so, then, I take the pen thinking I will be more concise; but thoughts mature faster than I can write them.

I shall endeavor to confine myself hereafter to the progress made from 1828 to 1840.

January 22d, 1870.

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## CHAPTER V.

In my last chapter I proposed to narrate some things done from 1828 to 1840.

From 1823 to 1826 there were no improvements outside of the



## Rockville in 1872.

*Photographed by H. G. JONES, Cor. Main & Market Sts., Rockville, Conn.*

Rockville in 1823 consisted of six buildings, viz: Rock Factory, two dwellings, a barn, dye-house and wood-house, all located near where the church with the tall spire (as seen in the above photograph) now stands. The old Rock Mill occupied substantially the same site as the present Rock Manufacturing Company's Mill,—at the left of and near to the church above indicated.





mill. Every house was crowded with boarders. During the year 1827 the Rock Company resolved to build a house for Mr. Kellogg. The next spring, 1828, as soon as frost was out the ground was broken and leveled down, cellar dug and stoned. The timber was hauled and framed near by the spot now occupied by Mr. George Kellogg, Jr. The building was raised and completed the same year. The best part of the story is to be told, therefore take notice. No rum, gin or brandy was furnished or drank on the premises from the commencement to completion. Two years before the church edifice was raised at Vernon Center. The old and young men were there—every one. The raising went on one, two and three days, from morn till night, finally with the aid of a barrel of rum the raising was completed.

It is far from my intention to speak evil of those persons of whom I have received so many hospitalities. I return to my task. I have told of the first white house built in Rockville without the aid of alcohols. Since this house was built I have never known of any building being raised in this place by the use of rum.

It is not my design to lecture on temperance or intemperance, but in passing I felt constrained to say a few words that belong to the past ages of which I am an unworthy relic. It is my opinion that no man or woman from 1801 to 1821 believed it an evil to drink on all occasions. Alcohol was the balm for every wound. Everybody drank some kind of liquor for their particular infirmities. I will include the good old ministers—one in particular, who said, 'It was a very pleasant practice at a wedding to drink 'flip' and tell stories.' A reform was needed, and it came in good time for us all.

About the time of 1826 Col. McLean put up an oil mill at the New England bridge. This mill was brought from the Phoenix Mill, so called now-a-days. This mill was used for making linseed or flaxseed oil about three years. It was then sold and made a cotton mill for making warps for satinets.

In 1830 or 1831 Willard Fuller and Chauncey Winchell, Jr., moved into this place. Christopher Burdick worked here but traveled from Vernon Center here every day until 1832. He then moved into his own house. The first house this side of Widow Alonzo Bailey's is the same house. There was no public road that passed by it.

In 1831 and 1832 the old part of the Florence Mill was built. The east wing is the old meeting house. That was first built in the parish of North Bolton, so called for many years. The Rev. Ebenezer

Kellogg occupied the pulpit in this house fifty-four years and some months. His grave was made in the old graveyard. The inscription on the headstone reads, or did read, till a year ago, thus: 'Rev. Ebenezer Kellogg died Sept. 3, 1817, in the eighty-first year of his age and fifty-fifth year of his ministry in this place.' Standing by this stone the old church was in full view. Here follows the epitaph:

"In yonder sacred house he spent his breath,  
Now silent, senseless, here he sleeps in death;  
These lips again shall wake, and then declare  
Aloud, Amen, to truths they published there."

In the year 1832 the Leeds Mill, or most of the wood part, was built. This mill was, when built, an enlargement of the Rock Company. It was called the new Rock Mill. These new mills brought an increase of population and houses were built. From 1828 to 1834 there were built six comfortable houses west of the Rock Mills. Two of the number have been removed to make room for better and more costly structures. There were, about the same time, houses built for the Frank Factory, so called. The long house on the south side of the road was brought from Vernon Center. It was Dr. Hinekley's weave shop formerly. The cotton mill at the New England Bridge had houses. Mr. Fuller's house is the one opposite Bissell's store on the west corner.

I made a promise that I would write up to 1840, but I must dry up at 1832. On account of the great distance from the post office the roads are not worked, consequently news moves slow and sure. I calculated when I sat down to write this chapter that Col. Tinker would be along with our letters. He is generally on time. Some one has told him az how we are going to get a post office and have a store up here to keep it in.

This 1832 is a year long to be remembered. It was the year of the great Asiatic Cholera visitation in this country. Thousands fled from the large cities into the country for safety. Every cesspool was examined here in Rockville. There were, up to this time, a large pile of flocks south of the old Rock Mill. They were considered worthless in those days. After a heavy shower there came a bad odor from the flocks. They were carried far away, and every place made clean to ward off as much as possible the terrible scourge.

January 29th, 1870.



## CHAPTER VI.

In order to make myself understood by the present inhabitants of Rockville, I must be pardoned for any repetition that occurs now and then in my remarks. I made mention of Willard Fuller, Chauncey Winchell and Christopher Burdick. These three families became residents of Rockville 1831 and 1832. Mr. Fuller understood cotton machinery, and cotton dressing and spinning.

Mr. Burdick was a machinist; Mr. Winchell a wheelwright. Mr. Halsey Fuller came here about 1833—a cotton spinner, also. Rockville has improved wonderfully since 1822, in the opinion of many who happen along here by way of Prospect and Elm streets, (hard roads to travel with heavy loads.) About 1833 Main street was surveyed from the Rock factory to the Carlisle. The road down stream from Bissell's store had been surveyed a short time previous. Park street was surveyed in 1833, also the short piece of road that connects Prospect and Main streets at J. Selden's barn. I told you in my first chapter of the road that ran along the sidehill a little south of J. N. Stickney's house. This road was given up by the town for one now in use at Selden's barn. Main and Park streets remained as they were for a little time. The fences were pulled down that crossed the road, and fences made on either side some of the way. About this time Mr. Horace Thompson, (the faithful watchman) bought of the Rock Company the lot six by ten rods where Freeman's store occupies. Mr. Thompson put up a building on this spot 24x32, one-and-a-half stories high, and finished inside one front room, bedroom and pantry. The floors were laid below and above. This was the first house that was built east of Elm street up to 1833. This house was raised in 1831, I believe; some of the boys said Uncle Horace had gone up into the field to build a house on the very same spot where Beach buried his horses. (True.)

We will now, April 1st, 1833, take an inventory of the business in Rockville. The new Rock Mill has three sets of machinery; the old Rock Mill has also three sets; the Frank Factory has two sets; the Springville one set; the old Hockanum one set—all making satinets. The small Cotton Mill at New England bridge, is running night and day, almost. The place where J. Selden's Mill now stands, in 1833 was used for carding, grinding, and making hat bodies. I remark

that these satinets were made of good wool, well twisted and fast colors. Some were indigo blue, some blue mixed; some black and black mixed. Each one of these mills was striving to make the best cloth. I will venture to say if any man of polished education had come here and foretold the ways and means now employed in making satinets, and making money thereof, the response would have been,

“ Young man! I know you well,  
You are an imp of hell.”

I am willing to be understood emphatically that the men of whom I speak were honest and conscientious men without exception. It may be said, also, that scoffers and hypocrites found few friends in this place. I am not counting myself in as a settler or freeholder for some time yet to come. My home from 1828 to 1837 was in Tolland, about two miles east from Rockville.

In 1833 it was resolved by Col. McLean and others in the town to build a paper mill. Col. McLean went forward and purchased the lands and water-power now occupied by the Carlisle Mill, Rose's Silk Mill, and all visible structures in this locality. The waterfall was called eighty-five feet at the line of the Rock Company's land. Here was eighteen feet fall down to the level of the Rock Pond. This eighteen feet of waterfall was purchased by Rufus West and Horace Vinton, including a small parcel of land lying between the highway and the stream down to West's wagon and blacksmith shop, with the exception of a small gangway. On this land was a grist and saw mill. The grist mill occupied the land where the east half of the American Mill's machine shop stands. The mill was run up to 1847. It was then purchased by Phineas Talcott, Esq., for the use of the American Mill, except the site now occupied by the furnace (or cast iron foundry). Before I leave this place of the Grist Mill I will say, in 1847 the saw mill was taken down and the Grist Mill rebuilt of brick. This was used for grinding grain up to 1864 or '65.

I now turn back to the Paper Mill. The lands belonging to the Paper Mill extended from north to south about 175 rods. The wheel-house and high wall running in line of the American Mill's land, and built by Albert Dart, is the north and south line; thence easterly about eighty rods. This eighty rods ran from the woods now seen on Fox Hill, along by Willis Reed's house and Christy Jones's, toward East street; thence northerly to Main street. Grove Hill Cemetery is part and parcel of the same purchase. J. N. Stickney's houses and lawn occupy a portion of the land purchased by Col. McLean for the

Paper Mill. The building called the Paper Mill was 103 feet long by 38 feet wide, brick and stone, basement, and one-and-a-half story, posts of wood. It contained four engines that carried 125 pounds of rags each, also one 64-inch Foudrinier machine. The mill contained other and all necessary machines, presses, boiler, &c., for making paper for books and other printing material. Sixteen hundred pounds was considered a fair day's work, the engines running twenty-four hours. There were two houses of two tenements each for the use of the Paper Mill. The first name of this establishment was "Falls Company," afterwards incorporated under the name of "Vernon Company." The mill continued to run till 1840. It then made an assignment of all its effects for the benefit of creditors. Oliver H. King and Loren P. Waldo were trustees; William Field and Squire Woodworth of Stafford were commissioners; Mr. George Goodwin, paper manufacturer, and Mr. George Kellogg, Sr., were the appraisers. These trustees displayed great ability and discreteness in adjusting all the affairs of this concern. The property was sold, the bank debts paid in full, and all other creditors 79 cents on the dollar. The expenses of trustees, commissioners, appraisers, Judge of Probate, advertising, and all charges (appertaining to this failure) were less than three hundred dollars. What a change has come to this place in twenty-eight years! Instead of three hundred for the services of six men, it now costs twenty-three hundred dollars for two men to look after a little part of the same ground formerly occupied by the said Paper Mills.

In this same year, 1833, the building of the Stone Mill, so called, was commenced on the ground where stood Payne's Mill, so called, for many years. This factory was built for making warps for satinets. This mill increased the number of inhabitants in this locality in proportion to the increased facilities for business. And it came to pass in 1833 a building was erected nearly opposite S. W. Johnson's shoe store. This building was 22 by 36; the first floor was used for dry goods and groceries; the second floor was divided about midway with a board partition. There were no plastered walls in these chambers. The front chamber for a time was occupied as a common room for debates, &c. Many speeches were made here that would astonish the present generation. This store continued business up to 1844, and the only store in the place to 1840.

I forgot to tell where the Rock Company had their office in 1833-4-5-6-7 and 8. On the corner where Grove's store now stands was a

low, red building, the greatest portion of the building being used for horse-sheds. The south end of this building was finished coarsely for the office of the Rock Mills. The room was furnished with a plain butternut desk, a small box stove, and half a dozen wood seat chairs. This room was seven feet from floor to ceiling; it had three windows, twenty panes each, of six by eight glass. This room was called by many a pleasant one, for here was the place to call for pay, and all dues were promptly paid here.

I have now wandered along up to the beginning of 1834. I will add we have no post office, no Main street worked; Main street was traveled from the Rock Factory past the store, and then across lots to Prospect street, near Mrs. Gainer's.

February 12, 1870.

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## CHAPTER VII.

In my last chapter I intended to carry the mind of the reader through the years 1831, '32 and '33. I made mention of the business of 1833 and up to 1834. I am speaking in general terms in counting years. Therefore, I mean to be understood in making a period of time. It is to illustrate the greatest amount accomplished in a particular year, &c. I shall awaken no unpleasant sensation if I speak of the ways and means of doing business in Rockville during the first ten years of its life. The people were poor that came up here; they earned the money they had, and paid debts as fast as they could. I proceed. In 1834, Main street was graded from the store to the Carlisle mill. The grist mill was built this season. In 1835, the houses opposite the American mill were built for Rufus and Horace Vinton, the owners of the grist mill. We will now count up the buildings east of the Rock mill. The first building is the store; Horace Thompson's the second; the grist mill the third, and the two houses of West and Vinton make up the list. There were no houses on the south side of the stream up to 1836; no houses on Prospect street except the men's boarding-house—now Mr. Elisha Martin's house. The paper-mill and two houses were built, but could not be seen on account of the pines and hemlocks.

We will now speak of 1836. These mills spoken of in Rockville. were incorporated. Every year about the first of January the accounts were made up and the members of the company came together to learn what had been done and what dividends there was for stockholders. The Rock company declared a dividend of 75 cents on the dollar; the little Springville, 160 cents on the dollar on their capital. This was in January 1836. During the season of 1836 it became known that the business in the sating mills was prosperous. The factory at the old Grant mill was built and called the Saxony factory for many years after. This mill within a few years has been enlarged one half, at least. The house and barn for Alonzo Bailey was built this season of 1836. There was another building erected this same year; this building is occupied at present by Dr. Wilson and Mr. Townsend (apothecaries.) This building, when first raised, occupied the space of ground between the First church and E. S. Henry's store; it was moved to its present site to make room for the First church edifice. The upper story of this building was finished up with slips and pulpit suitable for a small meetinghouse. The Rev. Diodate Brockway was employed to preach for many months, to the edification of a crowded house every Sabbath.

I would speak at length of the Rev. Mr. Brockway, if I had the ability to do justice to this excellent man. I would add a few words of history:—

Rev. Diodate Brockway came to Ellington in the year 1807 or '08. Ellington was originally a part of the township of East Windsor, called the 'great marsh.' It was incorporated as a town in 1786. The Indian name of the 'great marsh' was Weaxkashuck. For seventy years after settlements began east of the Connecticut river, Ellington remained an unbroken wilderness. Tolland, Bolton and Stafford had their ministers before any settlement began in Ellington. About the year 1808, the people of Ellington were engaged in building a meetinghouse. This house is now White's Opera House in Rockville. The house was partially finished outside, men were at work on the steeple near the top. Levi Wills, Esq., said to Mr. Brockway, 'let's go up into the steeple (both young men.) Wills went forward and Mr. B. after, up one ladder after another to the bell-deck. Here were slats nailed on the posts up to the next story. Wills arrived up safe, but the last slat came off, and down went Mr. Brockway about thirty feet; here was a board across the steeple. This checked his fall somewhat, but the board broke and down he



went forty-five feet, and fell on a workbench that was broken down to the floor. The distance was seventy-eight feet. I have heard the Rev. gentleman make mention of this fall to his hearers in a very solemn manner, to take heed, &c.

This building, called the Lecture Room, has been the 'hub' of Rockville in many respects. On the first floor was a school room. This room occupied about two-thirds of the north part of the first floor; there our schools were continued for years.

I could write an extended history in connection with this first meeting house and school house. It may be said that up to 1836, Rockville, so-called now-a-days, had no name as district or post office address. Therefore, to establish preaching permanently and maintain it, had to be done by one or two individuals living here. It may be said of a few individuals, they did well. But there is one who still lives who gave more than all the rest. If I should continue to write Rockville history, I will try to give a good account of the years 1837 and 1838.

February 26th, 1870.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

In my last chapter I made mention of the large dividends of 1836. The types made the little Springville one hundred and sixty, instead of one hundred and fifty cents on their capital stock. But a few months proved an over estimate of goods on hand in making up accounts. I will explain for the benefit of many persons the method of making up the yearly accounts of the mills. An inventory is made of all the finished goods on hand, the unfinished goods, wool, dye-stuffs, &c., and their value made up from sales previous to making inventory. The fall sales of '36 gave returns of prices averaging over one dollar per yard on satinets sold. Therefore, it is easy to calculate a great loss on cloths inventoried at one dollar, and sold at sixty cents per yard, and dull spring sales at that. I have now given nearly a true solution of the case.

Early in the year 1837, Mr. George Kellogg, Sen., and Capt. Allen Hammond bought the small cotton mill of Mr. Willard Fuller, at

New England bridge. Messrs. Kellogg & Hammond were members of the Rock Co., and continued their membership in said company for many years afterward. Mr. Fuller moved to the Phoenix mills, (so called afterward) and built the mill and other building at that place, and made warps for satinets. Mr. Fuller was agent for the company till his death, which, if I mistake not, took place in 1850. He was an upright, prosperous man. About the first of April '37, the building of the New England mill commenced in good earnest. Masons and carpenters were on hand; men came from all parts of the town with cattle and horses, hauling stone, lumber, &c. The mill was one hundred and twenty feet long, three stories and an attic high, and occupied the same ground as the present structure, in part. The mill erected in '37, was burned in the autumn of '41, together with its contents. The old cotton mill was used for storing and sorting wool, and was saved, but the wool was taken out and trodden under foot and considerably injured. The mill was insured for \$16,000, which was paid cheerfully. They had a gift of one thousand dollars. The mill was rebuilt the same fall and winter, and put in operation in the summer of 1842.

The new mill manufactured cassimere, and up to this time no other cloths than satinets had been made in Rockville.

I now turn back to '37; I have spoken of the large dividends of the Rock Co. in 1836; I have said, also, that Mr. George Kellogg and Capt. Allen Hammond were stockholders in the Rock Co., and their dividends were wanted to build the New England mill. But the Rock Co. had more cloth than cash—they had cloth on hand by the barnfull. Business in many mills was stagnant. The Rock Co. almost stopped work. The banks suspended specie payment for a time, yet the New England Co. kept up courage and good credit. I will venture to say that no man who labored here in any capacity expected to be cheated or lose a dime on any contract price agreed upon.

The first dwelling house erected in 1837 at the New England factory, was situated on the east side of Vernon avenue where the railroad is now located. The same house now stands south of the track, and near the cut. Mr. George Kellogg, Sen., occupied this dwelling until late in the fall; he then moved into the house now occupied by A. Park Hammond. The house west of this was made about the same time for Capt. Hammond. There were two houses near each other that stood on ground now occupied by the N. E. Co.'s ice house; here was a small cape of dry land and a well of good water.

These houses were moved—one of them to nearly opposite from where it formerly stood; the house south of Bissell's store was also owned by the New England Co. and included in the purchase of Willard Fuller.

There was another house erected in '37; it is the two-tenement house west of Mrs. Allen Hammond's. The house nearly opposite the office was finished in the spring of '38. The population of Rockville would number, July 1st, 1838, about three hundred souls. Early in that year the citizens of Rockville who had property invested, were invited to come together and see what could be done or how much money could be raised to build a house of worship. Every man came to the meeting—all felt alike that it was time to act. A subscription was started and an amount pledged sufficient to warrant a success in the matter of going forward. Contracts were soon made for building a church edifice. The present First church is the same edifice, except 20 feet added to the north end; which addition was made in 1845.

About the first of May, 1838, the timber for the meetinghouse was delivered on the ground a little distance east of the store. Before the first of the following July, the business in this place looked so bad, the building of the church was postponed for a while. In the fall, the building was erected and the body of the house closed in and shut up for the winter. The inside work for the church was made in the old cotton mill at New England Bridge. Early in the spring of 1839, the work on the church went forward to completion, and was dedicated in June of the same year. This meetinghouse cost \$5,100 above the foundation.

The building of this church was no small affair for a few individuals to accomplish. No tax was levied then nor since for building churches in Rockville.

We have no post office yet, no hotel, saloon or market; no poor house or town farm, neither had we any town paupers. It might be said we had the halt and blind, but they had good neighbors; and this town still maintains a good reputation for benevolence, individually and collectively. (Yes, that's so!)

The men who came up here to manufacture satinets were farmers; now and then among them was a clothier, so called, a man who knew how to color, knap, and shear homemade flannels; this was a trade. I make this remark to show how we had to live and labor to plant this goodly heritage.

March 12th, 1870.



## CHAPTER IX.

I will venture to offer a few more remarks concerning the village of Rockville thirty years ago. Thirty years is the full average of human life. In the spring of 1837 I commenced my permanent residence in Vernon or Rock factory. We had no name, as I have before said, as a society or post office address. We were a community made up by counting the mills and houses belonging to each corporation. Mr. Horace Thompson, the faithful watchman, was the first and only man for years who lived in the house owned by himself in the East District of Rockville. Mr. Rufus West and Mr. Horace Vinton, owned their houses, (built in 1835) and owned also the Grist and Saw Mill. We will now take an account of Rockville as it was thirty years ago. The Rock and Leeds factory had ten dwelling houses, also the store and lecture room, so called, and the old and red office standing where George A. Groves' store now stands. They had a blacksmith's shop, dye and woodhouse, woodshed and two barns. I forgot to mention the men's boarding house, now owned by Mr. Elisha Martin. I have now given the whole number of houses belonging to the Rock and Leeds Company. I use the terms Rock and Leeds Mills, because they were divided after 1840, and have remained two distinct corporations. They were the property of the Rock Company up to that time, I am sure. Traveling eastward we come to the Grist and Saw Mill, two houses and a small barn—the property of Messrs. West & Vinton. Further east we come to the Paper Mill; here were two houses calculated for two families each, three small barns and a small shop. A little further east we come to the old settlement called the "Iron Works," once owned by Deacon John Hall; afterward Payne's Mill up to 1834, and then called the Stone Mill, but now known as the Panola Mill. There were seven houses in all in 1840 at the Stone Mill. I have now given the whole number of buildings from Tolland line westward to the New England bridge. The New England factory and six houses made up the entire village (unless we include two barns, wool and woodhouses, etc., belonging to the New England factory.) A little way down the stream we come to the Frank factory; here are two houses; one calculated for four families, and the other for two, and a large barn on the north side of the road, in front of the long house on the opposite side. There were drying houses,

sorting and wool house, the latter being now used as an office at the Florence Mill. The next mill is the Springville; the houses belonging to this company were three in number, and three others belonging to members of the company—making six in all in 1840. Down stream sixty rods from the Springville stands the old Forest Saw Mill. This mill stood on the south end of the Hockanum Company's dam. A little further west is the old Hockanum or Twin Mill—a portion still standing on the south bank of the stream. Near the bridge were two small houses, in 1840, belonging to the mill. We next come to the Saxony; erected in 1826. There were two houses belonging to this company, and seven other houses belonging to individual settlers. South of the Saxony factory, on West street, were three houses in 1840, and they are still standing. I have made mention of the building of these mills and dwellings in former chapters, part and parcel at different times, and have now endeavored to present the whole village to the reader as it was in 1840. I beg pardon for too much repetition.

In a former chapter I gave an account of the tract of land on which the village of Rockville is at present situated, as belonging to the Grant family. Since I wrote the article referred to, I have obtained a history of these lands contained in a deed to Samuel Grant, a transcript of which here follows :

“ Know all men by these Presents that we, Timothy Olcott, Francis Smith, & John Bissell, all of Bolton, in the county of Hartford, & Colony of Connecticut, Agents to the propriation of ye Common Undivided land in Bolton, for and in consideration that Samuel Grant of Windsor is obliged to convey and confirm to us the said Timothy Olcott Francis Smith & John Bissell as Agents of the propriatory aforesaid all that Right and title which the said Grant now hath to a certain farm in Bolton formerly granted to one Thomas Bull & conveyed to him by one James Steel in Consideration aforesaid we the said Timothy Olcott Francis Smith & John Bissell for ourselves & in behalf of the proprietors aforesaid Do Give Grant Bargain Convey & Confirm unto the said Samuel Grant & to his heirs & assignes for ever one parcel or tract of land lying & being in ye township of Bolton att the nothend of said township in quantity five hundred acres bounded north on Windsor Commonly called Windsor Equivalent lands the whole breadth of the town of Bolton Except one parcel in the Northeast corner of said Bolton, under the improvement of one Whipple of about thirty aeres and said tract of land is to run so far south from the north end of said Bolton the whole breadth of said Town excepting the corner aforesaid as will make five hundred acres of land and abuts north on Windsor Equivalent Land East on Tolland

except the aforesaid corner on Whipple south on the proprietors of Bolton lands West on Windsor. To have and to hold said five hundred acres of land as above described, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto Belonging, to him the said Samuel Grant his heirs and assigns for ever and we the said Timothy Olcott Francis Smith & John Bissell for ourselves and in behalf of the proprietors aforesaid Do by these Presents Covenant promise & Grant to and with the said Samuel Grant his heirs & assigns that we will defend the above bargained premises to said Grant and his heirs against the Lawful Claims and Demands of all and every person whatsoever. In conformation whereof we do hereto sett to our hands and seal this 29th day of April A D 1726.

Signed Sealed & Delivered in the presence of Ozias Pitkin, Joseph Olmsted. Hartford, April 30th 1726.

JOHN BISSELL  
TIMOTHY OLCOTT { SEAL }  
FRANCIS SMITH

Lieut. John Bissell Timothy Olcott and Francis Smith the subscribers to the above written deed Personally appeared & acknowledged the same to be their voluntary act and Deed before me

OZIAS PITKIN Justice of the Peace.

Received to be Recorded April 30th A D 1726 and Recorded the same att Large in Bolton. Recorded Page 85.

LIEUT JOHN BISSELL Register.

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## CHAPTER X.

In my last, I gave an inventory of all the buildings in this village, including West and East streets—now Panola mills, as they were in 1840, except the new church and lecture room ; I mean the First church as it is now called. It was for a few years called the Second Ecclesiastical Society in Vernon, for we had no name or post-office address up to 1840. Before I proceed with my story, I desire the reader to take a walk up Fox Hill as far as the cottage that was built and occupied by Mr. Leavitt. Standing near this point you could look down upon nearly all of the buildings at that time. There were no buildings south of Hockanum river until you come to New England factory.—

There were no buildings on Prospect street or north of it to Ellington line in 1840, except the men's boarding house—now E. Martin's residence. Do you ask what could be seen from this point on Fox Hill? I answer: You could see the church, lecture room and school house all in one building. The little store that stood opposite of S. W. Johnson's shoe store, the two low houses that now stand west of the Methodist church, and two poor low houses that stood where the Rockville National Bank and Second Church lawn is situated. You could see the Rock factory, and two houses, one of them is now occupied by Mrs. Rose, and the others stood on the spot now occupied by Mr. George Kellogg, Sen. You could see the small low house, now occupied by E. Freeman as a store; then the residence of Mr. Horace Thompson, the faithful watchman. I have now given you a view of the "Hub" of Rockville as it was in 1840.

I must trespass on your patience while I offer a few words in relation to the First Church building. The lecture room, so called, was built in 1836, and occupied for three years every Sabbath as our meeting house, and for all reasonable lectures and the like, and was, in fact, a very useful edifice for many years.

The New England factory built in 1837, and went into operation the following year. This brought an increase of population, therefore our lecture room was crowded over much. Business looked bad, especially manufacturing; many looms were standing still, and bonds were given predicated on the best farms in town to secure money lenders, &c.

But there were men hold of the plow that did not turn back, if they dared. A New England village without a church or school house was just no village at all, in the estimation of many. So then a few men got together and said, let us join hands and build a church that will better accommodate us and those who may come among us from time to time. I repeat; the building of the church began in the spring of 1838, and the work was suspended after the timber was framed. The house was raised in the autumn of the same year and the outside partially finished, and then closed up for two and a half months in the winter. The inside was prepared in the shop at the New England factory. It was finished in the spring, and dedicated the 29th day of June, 1839. I am aware the reader of to-day will say this is a simple story; but if he reflects and realizes the condition of our finances, and the few in number who joined heart and hand in this work, he will say well done faithful servants.

I forbear giving the names of those who subscribed, or how much each gave into the treasury for the public. No man ever told any one how much he had given, and no one ever said he regretted his gift. I do not believe that any man or woman who began to worship in this house ever refused to aid in supporting the gospel. There were those who feared the house was too good for this place, or that somebody would say that Rockville was growing too proud for its purse. Does any one now say the First church edifice is too good? Far from it, says Pride. But recollect, Rockville was under age when the church was built—not quite 20 years old—a mere youth and headstrong I must confess. A few words more and I leave this subject. The seats in the First church were rented for the remainder of the year '49, and to April 1st, 1840. The slips sold readily—all classes buying a seat.—The first Sabbath after dedication was fair weather, and the house was well filled. Rev. Ansell Nash, our pastor, occupied the pulpit in the morning and afternoon. “Mr. Nash was a man of marked ability. In prayer he possessed peculiar gifts; he seemed to apprehend the secret desire of every worshipper present, and would present them at the mercy seat in language that raised the mind from earth to heaven, and imbued it with a fervency which makes prayer importunate and effectual.” Such was my impression on the first Sabbath in the new church. It was a solemn day to many; at least, it was a serious day to some seven or eight persons. They had taken heavy burdens upon themselves. Building the house of worship was but the beginning. There were other considerations beside the payment of money I can not say what were their secret thoughts, so let me call to my aid the beautiful and expressive lines of Heber, for a solution of them.

“Say, shall we yield him in costly devotion,  
 Odors of Edom, and offerings divine?  
 Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,  
 Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?  
 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
 Vainly with gold would his favor secure;  
 Richer, by far, is the heart's adoration.—  
 Dearer to God, are the prayers of the poor.”

I have now given the simple history of the commencement of Rockville. I have used the name for convenience many times, but we had no post-office till 1841, if my recollections are correct; if I am wrong, should like to be corrected. We had agreed to call the place by the name it now bears a little time before we had the office. I have desired that some pen would be employed to tell of the lives of some of the sons of this town who have contributed so much for its benefit.—The simple cutting on a stone, “Born in the year——, and died in ——,” is not enough.



## CHAPTER XI.

I will venture to offer a few words more of the rise and progress of Rockville.

In 1841 we had a post-office. Samuel P. Rose kept the office in his store, then standing nearly opposite S. W. Johnson's boot and shoe store. The mails were transported on stages and mail wagons. The large mail bags were carried on the turnpike through this town for many years. This route was the shortest from New York to Boston. The Brick Tavern, now the Town House, was altogether a very different place than from the present day. After we had the office the stage came from the Brick Tavern through Rockville, and then ran on to the pike again at Vernon Center.

I wish the reader could know how good we all felt for these privileges. We had had a meeting house without any bell; we had the office and the stage coach without a hotel or any place for a passenger to wait for the mail, or any house except the store, and small store too, but in cold weather passengers came in and warmed in the store around the box-stove, therefore a tavern must be talked of.—Business was rather poor. The few were in debt, somewhat on account of the outlay on the church, but something must be done. Mr. Samuel P. Rose, a new comer, and Mr. Hubbard Kellogg, of Vernon Center, were induced to build the first public house. As an inducement they were offered by the Rock Company all the land where the Brick School House now stands, and eastward to the American Mills Boarding House to Prospect street. The tavern grounds also included the site where Mr. Heasser occupies, and westward to the corner of School and Park streets. This strip was about six rods wide south of School street until you come to said corner, and then runs south and includes the grounds now occupied by houses and buildings of Mr. Francis Keeney and Benezett Bill, Esq. The tavern built first is the same building now occupied by Squire Bill, and stood where the present hotel stands. This house was finished in 1843, and opened to the public in the fall of the same year.

I will now turn back to 1841. The labors of Rev. Ansel Nash terminated this same year. No good reason was ever given to the public for the act. The New England factory was burned in the autumn of '41, and rebuilt during the fall and winter following. Business was

rather poor here about the years of '41 and '42. The burning of the New England Mill was a great loss for Rockville, but far greater to the owners. They had an insurance of six thousand dollars, which was cheerfully paid. The loss was three times the amount of insurance. It is an ill wind that blows no good. The making of cassimeres in Rockville commenced in the rebuilt mill, and proved to be an advantage over satinets. This change of business in consequence of the fire proved a success.

The year '40 was an exciteable year in politics. William Henry Harrison was the nominee of the Whig party, and was elected President. This was the campaign of hard eider and log cabins. Temperance men laid aside their abstemious principles and descended lower than they ascended afterward. A huge log cabin was built in Hartford opposite the Allyn House. The timber was hauled free gratis most of it. A certain deacon came into Hartford with two long sticks on wheels, and a barrel of eider, and the deacon astride the barrel. This movement and the like turned the tide of temperance almost beyond recovery. Rockville did some foolish things to look back upon. Well, the best part of the story is that many were ashamed of themselves afterwards. President Harrison was inaugurated March 4, 1841, and died April 4, 1841.

In 1842 a bell was placed in the tower of the First church. It was made at East Medway, by Geo. Holbrook. Its weight was twelve hundred pounds. So we went on getting things as fast as we could get the money to pay the bills. It was a common thing to hand round the hat once in every few days to get monay for singing, instruments, &c., &c. We had singing schools and rehearsals often. There were good singers in this First Church. I fancy I could see an animated face when there were sweet chords, and also her frowns when there were discords.

I pass to the year of 1842. I remark the winter of 1841-2 was the mildest winter ever known. The writer built his dwelling the winter aforesaid. The chimneys were laid in January, the plastering done in March following, and the house was occupied April 12, 1842. There was no freezing of plaster, and the house was made without the use of fire until after the 20th of March. There were a few tears shed at the thought of moving into this lonely domicil. There were no houses to be seen on either side in the spring of 1842.

Rockville has now attained the age of manhood. We could mail our letters every day and have a return mail the same day; and what

a comfort it was to get into the stage coach and ride to Hartford, especially in bad weather. Methinks I hear the remark, why say so much about those trifling things of old? I answer, the men of Vernon came here from the farms without large quantities of gold; and took up the shovel and the hoe and began at the small beginning of building this pleasant village. Does any one ask who they were or who turned the waters of Hockanum? It was Francis McLean, commonly known by the title of Colonel McLean. A man of uncommon energy and enterprise. Without him Rockville might have remained a barren heath. If a water dam was to be made he would say, "come boys," and into the water he went, and the rest must come. You may understand the reason of going into the water in a few words. After laying the foundation stone for the dam he would cart in gravel, and while carting he would spread it about and level it with the hoe and let the loam wash away, therefore the work was solid and enduring.

I did not intend to write up the history of any man, but I am constrained to say this much of Col. McLean in connection with my dull history of Rockville. I have a secret desire to have some of the sons of Vernon write a history of the business men who have contributed so much for this town to build it up.

In my allusions to the early men of Rockville I do not wish to be understood that they were faultless or superior to other men of Vernon, or the towns generally. I may be understood, however, to say they were men who had their education, every one, in the old small school house, (such as we have been told by modern men were not fit for pig pens.) Our schools generally kept three and a half months in winter, now and then one four months. I know very well what I am talking about. Yea, verily, and I had to chop my cord of wood at the schoolhouse before and after school hours. Gentle reader, spare the tear! It did not hurt me to do it, neither does it humble me to tell of it.

July 9th, 1870.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Since the last chapter of 'Rockville History,' which was written up to 1842, I have been requested many times to say more on the same subject. The requests came principally from abroad—in and out of



the State from those who once were inhabitants and co-workers here thirty years ago, more or less.

I am urged, also, to have the numbers printed in pamphlet form for those who feel an interest in this once a solitude that has now become the Mecca of Tolland County.

I proceed to speak on. As the commencement of the year 1842 Rockville commenced its manhood—arriving to full twenty-one years of age. We had a meetinghouse and post office and one small store in the East district, so called now-a-days, and about this time a small store on West street was built.

There was very little building in 1840, '41 and '42, all hands were working hard to pay up and keep ourselves in good credit, a credit founded on conscientious duty and integrity which almost begets in my mind the fancy of idolatry. In 1843 Samuel P. Rose and Hubbard Kellogg built the hotel on the site of the present hotel now owned and occupied by Francis Keeney. The old hotel is the same building now owned and occupied by B. H. Bill, Esq.

The building of the first hotel was considered a bountiful outlay for the welfare of Rockville and the community at large.

The establishing and building the First church was the greatest event for Rockville that had ever transpired up to 1840; then a post office and the hotel made Rockville a place in fact. It may be said that up to the time of building the hotel Rockville afforded no place for amusement—such as balls and other social parties so common in all ages past, whereby young gentlemen and ladies were, and ought to be tolerated social interchange of rustic conviviality. The spell must come to an end, and on the completion of the hotel a great party came together to hold a fair for the benefit of the hotel. A variety of charming things were there and charming young ladies were on hand to show themselves and sell the sugars, as round they came with sugar-kisses for six and a quarter cents apiece—cheap at that and plenty.

It occurred during the evening that an offer was made by a prepossessing young man from East Windsor, saying he would give a quarter to one or all of the ladies present for a real kiss (an act performed with the lips in former times.) \* The proposition was received with slight disdain, if my recollection is good. I fancy I can see the change of mouths among the young ladies, but the whisper went round who should step up first. A married lady presented herself and then another and so on, till the young gent said that once round

was all he bargained for. He said he felt somewhat exhausted. It was evident his purse was some twenty dollars lighter, but he paid up promptly. Some few who staid at home said it was a shameful affair, while those present never complained. Thus ends the chapter for 1843.

“’Tis hard to say if greater want of skill,  
Appear in writing or in judging ill;  
But, of the two less dangerous is the offense,  
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.”

April 22d, 1871.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

I will venture to ask you to print a little more of the same sort of history called “Reminiscences of Rockville.” Since I first began to write, there has been a demand for a continuance of these particulars of the rise and progress of this village from 1820 to 1870.

I will commence this chapter with the year 1844. I have said, or do say now, that this village up to this date, was owned and built by the inhabitants or those who came here to dwell from the adjoining towns. The number of inhabitants in Rockville in 1844 was less than one thousand, and less than three thousand in the whole town in 1850.

When I first began to write out the simple story of this village, I began in the year 1823—the time that I began to work here; but for convenience I make the commencement of Rockville in the year 1820. During this year, very little could be seen except the dirt thrown up in digging the canal for the Rock Mill and making the dam. The mill was put up and covered with boards from ten to twelve inches wide: this being the cheapest covering in those days. Therefore, during the year 1821, and up to 1822, cloth called “satinetts” was made in the said Rock factory.

I have repeated these stories as an excuse for showing up the caution exercised by those men having the enterprise in hand. Therefore, the beginning was small and progress slow. Improvements were made as fast as proprietors could make them after providing for current expenses and paying up their interest accounts. (Six per cent. was lawful rate; no man dared to ask more.)

The year 1843 brought in some new inhabitants. West street, so called, carried on quite a large business in the manufacture of ladies' shoes; Chauncey Hibbard was proprietor. He employed Edwin Walden, and Edward P. Allen, from Lynn, Mass. Mr. Walden went back after three years' stay here; Mr. Allen remained here until three years ago, when he moved to the city of Lynn. Edwin Walden is now mayor of the city, and E. P. Allen is captain or chief of police. Captain Hibbard was a stirring man, and active as a military officer. He married three wives, and buried them within fifteen years, and married the fourth, and himself died in about twenty years from his first marriage. His fourth wife is now living, and married. I have made mention of Captain Hibbard for a reason to show up the whims that occur in the course of a few years of time.

The best and finest military parade that has ever been seen in Rockville, was "cowed" down by "Invincibles," encouraged by the first men in the place, by the furnishing of money and tin swords, and every invention to cast ridicule and reproach on Capt. Hibbard and the company who were doing duty according to the laws of the State. The company of course went down disgraced and discouraged. The bright muskets were laid aside and became rusty and useless. All were enrolling themselves in one great peace-party, and non-resistance men. The ministers preached the doctrine, and tracts were to be seen in every domicile; in fact, the doctrine was spreading that differences were to be settled by arbitration and the swords made into plowshares and pruning hooks. I have no desire to hold up in derision any man or men concerning their motives in putting our ancient military system into disrepute, although their acts were rebellious and revolutionary. In passing my mind over the past, I have narrated these facts to show to the present generation that there lived men thirty years ago in Rockville, capable of doing dirty work. I now return to the building and enlarging of the village.

Up to 1840 the entire south side of the Hockanum down to the New England and up to the Paper Mill, (now A. Dart's line) was owned by Mr. Francis Grant. He was induced to sell it to Cyrus White for the sum of about eighteen hundred dollars. It was easy to see a little contempt stirred up on the north side of Hockanum, therefore men began to bestir themselves to show the eligible spots for building lots on the north side of the stream. The grounds now occupied by Mr. Harvey King, and eastward in line, were considered pleasant, but their inaccessibility was quite a hindrance to their occupation. There was

a great gulf a little west of where Mr. Keeney's shed stands, which hindered travel of every kind in that direction. To overcome that difficulty a deep culvert was formed of stone, and covered with broad stones and earth, and so made passable over the hillside to the American Mill. The first house erected occupied a portion of the site now occupied by E. S. Henry's mansion. The second house erected is the one now occupied by Mr. Preston, Cashier of the Rockville National Bank. The first house west of the Catholic church was next added; a portion yet remains on the same ground. The houses now owned by Mr. King and Mr. North were built in 1847. The house that was built on the ground by Henry, was removed north on School street, and is now occupied by Mrs. Geckler. The house now owned by Mrs. Doctor Skinner, was finished and occupied by Mr. Ralph Talcott in 1843-44. Mr. Talcott soon after built the house now owned by Mrs. Allen Talcott. Mr. Ralph Talcott was one of the first who came here to help build the Rock factory. He was an owner in part and an estimable man. He died in 1847. The house now occupied by Mrs. Samuel P. Rose, was built by the Rock Company for Mr. Talcott, and occupied by him about ten years—say from 1830 to 1840. For the first twenty-six years after the commencement of this village, the rank and file of the number who came here to dwell, and even those who came later, were unbroken until the death of Mr. R. Talcott.

About this same time Brooklyn began to populate. The name Brooklyn was used because Rockville resembled New York, and across the river resembled Brooklyn Heights; so the name of Brooklyn has been spoken many thousand times, while the name of New York has never been applied to the north or west side of the river. Mr. Cyrus White was the mayor of Brooklyn by common consent, and was active in building it up. His blacksmith shop was the first building erected the south side of Hockatum. This building was made the dwelling house of Jerome Heath, afterwards occupied and owned by Jehial Fuller. Mr. Fuller made it a two-story house. After Mr. Fuller's death it became the residence of R. W. Holton. It was purchased of him for the railroad's use. It is the first house west of B. Hirst's. I must be excused henceforth from numbering the houses that were built from time to time, since 1842. Brooklyn grew rapidly; it shows for itself. Thirty years ago \$1,800 was considered an extravagant price for the real value of the said Brooklyn lands. This Brooklyn tract of land is a part and parcel of the same lands which were conveyed to one Samuel Grant of Bolton, in exchange for his (Grant's)

“farm of one hundred acres,” he receiving five hundred acres therefor by deed in 1726.

It may be said as a fact that Vernon for many years manufactured an article called rye gin, and good gin it was called by many good judges of the article. To look back upon the years from 1822 to 1827, it would seem to be dangerous for any family to retire for the night without some kind of alcoholic liquor in the house. Of one thing I am certain, had I espoused the subject of temperance as boldly in 1823 as many did six years afterwards, I should have got leave to go home. It has been said that every act has a moral for good or evil. The good moral of the age of universal drinking was in the inquiry, among those starting in the world, as well as some in middle life, how to avoid the expenses that accrued from using it ourselves and furnishing it to friends and fellows. The worst part of the history of those days is the idea that drinking liquor on all occasions is a benefit and could not be dispensed with. In fact it was constitutional with old blood, and the young were contaminated.

Therefore, I am bold in saying that fifty years ago, and even forty years ago, drinking liquor was no sin in this town, but drunkenness was a crime. It was not my intention in writing this chapter to justify men in drinking liquor, or condemn them for so doing. I am more inclined to testify in behalf of the men of this town, that no town three and a half miles wide and about six miles long, contained a more sober, conscientious and honest class of citizens than were here fifty years ago, and since died in their native town.

I will beg pardon for getting off the track in the history of Rockville. Before I close I will state that this village from 1843 began to grow in population and wealth. In '44, the store now occupied by P. R. Moore, was built and occupied by Samuel P. Rose and Edwin McLean. In autumn of the same year the old office was taken away and the store now occupied by Geo. A. Groves was put up. In 1845 the old store that stood nearly opposite S. W. Johnson's was moved and fitted up to live in. It stands on the east side of Park street nearly opposite Mr. Wm. Butler's. In the west end of the store of G. A. Groves may be seen an iron door; should you ask how it came there, I answer, Mr. George Kellogg had it placed there for a safe place to keep the Rock Company's books and money. Mr. Kellogg's office was in the south-west corner of the present store for a time. About this time Doctor Stephen Griggs came here and occupied the front part of the store now used by Dr. Wilson. The rear part of said



building was our school room up to 1849. The room overhead was also a school and lecture room during the same time. From 1841 to '45 we had no settled minister. Rev. Horace Winslow became the pastor of the First Church in 1845. This First Church, so called, was in 1845 and later, called the Second Ecclesiastical Society in Vernon.

As may be supposed, our meeting house was filled to overflowing. There was an addition of 20 feet added to the north end of the church, but it was still too small to accommodate all. Before I close I will say, we had no lawyer in 1844—cause why, we couldn't afford it. We thought we couldn't support a doctor, but after he got a going he supported himself as well as the rest of us.

June 10, 1870.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

In order to arrive at the end of my Rockville history I must omit particulars of small importance, that belonged to the every day transactions of this village twenty-five or thirty years ago. Previous to 1840, and '42 even, I could give the details of everything that had come to pass within the youthful days of this village, with considerable accuracy. But I am admonished to make haste, and do quickly the work required of me.

During the years 1844 and 1845 many comfortable houses were built in different localities, several on Brooklyn side, and Park street, and Main street, and New England and Mountain street, stone mill, &c. Also two stores, and the greater part of the present Rock factory. In '45 and '46 the east part of the mill, extending westward so as to admit of the wheel-house, was first built,—the old mill standing during the time the new part was building. The one-story portion of the building was occupied by Mr. George Kellogg for an office. It became necessary to cover the waterwheel, therefore the west part was used as the Rock Company's office for several years,—a poor place to keep papers and books of value. I mention this to show how economical the business men of Rockville were for one-

quarter of a century, and especially the venerable man whose name comes to my recollection often.

I have narrated some of the incidents of Rockville history during the interval of twenty-five years from its beginning. I must call this period the most interesting of the whole duration of fifty years. The first inhabitants who came here were poor in purse but persevering and self-reliant. Every man was 'alive' and well who first began to build the place, and could rejoice one with another for that good Providence by whose care they were preserved. For twenty-five years the solid men could not boast of great wealth, if called upon to pay their dues. But all pulled together, so far as business was considered.

Politics ran high in the year 1844. Mr. Polk was elected—'nuff sed. (The universal Yankee nation survived.) The panic of 1837 was forgotten, and many families had come here to dwell in this rural retreat, and their labors were crowned with success. Rockville could boast of two good places of trade in 1845 and '46. The store now occupied by Geo. A. Groves was first occupied by White & Maxwell, and afterwards by White & Bissell. At the same time the store now occupied by P. R. Moore was owned by S. P. Rose; Edwin McLean (now in Great Barrington) was a partner with Mr. Rose in trade.

Rockville in 1845 and '46 showed no plate glass in any show window here or in the town; Brooklyn crown glass was good enough for this place. The idea of showing more goods outside than were to be seen inside did not belong to this people in those days. We might be called a one-horse village by some men, because one horse was considered sufficient to draw one or two men to Hartford and back the same day. We did our heavy work with heavy horses, but the fancy spans and blood horses were scarce in this village. Our first class wagons cost seventy-five dollars; the more common in use cost forty. There was here and there a chaise and rockaway in town, but none here twenty-five years ago. We had no difficulty in getting goods transported. The farmers down town were ready to go to Hartford for lumber, especially in winter. Thirty-six years ago, and before, goods were carried overland in winter to New London, New Haven and Providence for shipment, after the Connecticut River closed.

There were nine manufacturing establishments at this time, and one grist and saw mill. Previous to 1842 all cloths made here were satinets. The New England Mill burned in 1841; rebuilt and made the first cassimeres in 1842 and '43 that were made here.



The number of inhabitants in Rockville, commencing with the year 1846, was less than fifteen hundred souls. The proportion of children was less than at a later period. Our population were nearly all Americans, and acquainted with each other. Our schools were kept in that memorable building now occupied by Townsend and Dr. Wilson. The upper room was our high school, our sanctuary, lecture room, music hall, lyceum, theatre. We had many lectures in this room, the first were spoken by the Rev. George A. Calhoun. They were instructive lessons to all who heard them. Then again came the phrenological lectures, and two lectures on telegraphing. The elder people attended these lectures. The telegraph wires were strung around the room, the battery was placed on the desk at the speaker's stand,—in fact it was the whole apparatus for telegraphing, complete. These lectures were listened to by the elder spectators with great attention; most persons were ignorant for a time concerning the wonderful discovery or revelation made known to the civilized world by the inspired mind of Morse, who took the lightning in his hand and tamed it, and gave it to the world for a motive power to illuminate the whole universe of civilization. I am aware of straying away from my story.

“ Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,  
 And fondly broods with miser care!  
 Time but the impression deeper makes,  
 As streams their channels deeper wear.”

I could speak of many things that occurred during these years above mentioned, if I had the faculty to tell a superfine story. I will mention one incident connected with the telegraph lecture. It happened during the second evening of those lectures that our friend, Arza Chapman, came in and took a seat near the speaker's desk. This man, in his whole character, lacks wisdom in most respects sufficiently to be useful; yet he enjoys himself as well as anybody, and is a mimick. Our professor, in order to explain the pranks of electricity, cast out two buttons attached to this little battery or machine, gave the privilege to any one to take them while he gave a slight shock. A person said to Arza, ‘Take them up,’ and, contrary to expectation, he did take them in his hands. After he had taken the proper position the electric current was let on, and forth came such a yell or noise as these valleys and rocks never heard. The professor let up and Arza dropped the buttons and flew down stairs, and the people laughed and laughed till they cried. Shakspeare was outdone. Reader, if you had been there you'd laughed.

I cannot narrate the occurrences of those years above noticed without a degree of gravity. I never have pretended the men were perfect in all things who lived here twenty-five years ago. But they loved mercy, and walked humbly. Therefore when the circumstances of the times in which they lived are taken into account, we may say they have left a good record. I hope it will be said of the generations who have survived, and lived the last twenty-five years in this village, that they have added to the talents committed to them.

July 1st, 1871.

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## CHAPTER XV.

I have a few more recollections to offer about Rockville in general that may interest the man with gray hairs, who, may be, once lived here during some part of his life, or has been conversant with the affairs of this busy village.

Twenty-five years ago we had no names for streets, except Grant street (now West street). Rockville was made up of small localities known by different names, to wit: Rock, New England and Stone mills, Paper mill, Leeds mill, Grist mill, Saw mill, Frank factory. Springville, Hockanum and Saxony mills. We had two stores, White & Bissell's, Rose & McLean's; in West street, Austin McKinney's store. This building is now the dwelling house of Mr. Doane. Union street and School street were not opened twenty-five years ago. There were no houses on either street except the Elnathan Grant house, now occupied by Mr. Pitney. This house frame is about ninety years old.

I recapitulate in order to show the present generation the difference in the magnitude that Rockville had attained, say twenty-five years ago, compared with 1870. During the first quarter of a century property, real and personal, remained in the same hands from nearly the beginning. Therefore, when the mind turns back to 1726, thence onward to 1846, it may be said in truth that one Samuel Grant, who received 500 acres of land (now Rockville) for his 100 acres in North Bolton, made a good bargain. It is possible that Samuel Grant died without a correct idea of how much his farm was capable of producing. His son was capable of guessing into futurity, if tradition is correct in

relating his wonderful stories. He tells of a remarkably mild autumn and first of winter; the frogs were all happy in the mill pond, making melody with their voices, when all at once the weather changed suddenly to intense cold, froze the mill pond so quick that all the frogs' heads were sticking up through the ice in such quantities that he kicked off a bushel the next morning.

The year of our Lord 1846 will be remembered by many in this nation as a remarkable year. In March the army of occupation under General Taylor, 3,500 strong, arrived at the Rio Grande and took post opposite Matamoras. April 24th, hostilities commenced between the Mexican and American armies on the Rio Grande, Capt. Thornton and a detachment of 70 or 80 men being killed or taken. May 8th and 9th, battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—in both which the Americans were signally triumphant. July 7th, Commodore Sloat took possession of Monterey on the coast of California.

I have taken liberty this year to speak of some occurrences that transpired a century ago and more that do not belong to Rockville history, but they belong to the Grant farm, now Rockville territory.

The year 1846 I call the middle or center of fifty-one years. It might be called the year of jubilee. We all, or nearly all, attended the same church. Great attention was paid to singing, and it became attractive and profitable in the sanctuary. We were a united community for good. People from the cities began to think well of Rockville. Men of wealth offered to furnish capital to enlarge and build up new mills; hence the plans and preparations were made for great work to be done in the year of 1847. I must make haste to tell the tales of twenty-five years yet untold.

“Nor will life's stream from observation stay,  
It hurries all too fast to mark their way:  
In vain sedate reflections we would make,  
When half our knowledge we must snatch, not take.

Of in the passion's wide rotation toss'd,  
Our spring of action to ourselves is lost;  
Tired, not determined, to the last we yield,  
And what comes then is master of the field.  
As the last image of the troubled heap,  
When sense subsides and fancy sports in sleep,  
(Though past the recollection of the thought.)  
Becomes the stuff of which our dream is wrought:  
Something as dim to our internal view  
Is this, perhaps, the cause of most we do.”

July 22, 1871.

## CHAPTER XVI.

I proceed to give an account of the doings of Rockville, beginning the year of 1847.

Early in the Spring the work began on the foundation of the American Mills. Bills of timber were made for the frame and other lumber, and sent away to Alleghany county, in Western New York. There was a firm at Mount Morris at this time doing business under the name of Hunt & Talcott, or Sanford Hunt and Frederick Talcott.—Mr. Hunt was a relative of Lucius A. Hunt and Samuel P. Rose; his father moved from North Coventry after the war of 1812; he lived in Hunt's Hollow, so called, about twenty miles from Mount Morris, in the region of the Genesee River. Frederick Talcott was the eldest son of Phineas Talcott, Esq., of this town, and brother of George Talcott, Esq., now a resident of this town. The firm of Hunt & Talcott furnished all the timber for the frame and other lumber for the American Mill, and also the timber and lumber for the Frank Company's mill. They also furnished about two hundred thousand shaved pine shingles, and large quantities of pine lumber, from one to two inches thick, for finishing lumber; the whole bill amounting to one million feet at least. It was delivered in Rockville before the first of October 1847.

I have made mention of this firm of H. & T., because they were indented with Rockville and its welfare. They had made extensive preparations to furnish lumber many years to come. Mr. Hunt, the young man, was attacked with a fatal malady, and died about the first days of the year 1849. Frederick Talcott laid down and died the same year of consumption. I visited Mount Morris in forty-nine, and about the first sign that met my eye was Hunt & Talcott. There were many mourners for the loss of these men and the business they had created, so well calculated to bring money to this then infant village. Mount Morris was the terminus of the Genesee canal, at the time I am writing of. A little east was the village of Geneseeo, owned by the Wadsworths, formerly from Hartford, and the birth place of Col. Wadsworth, who gave his life in the late rebellion.

The timber for the American mill was delivered in School street, so called now-a-days,—there was no street laid out in 1847; no buildings

occupied the grounds in School street; but men stood there, broad-axe in hands, re-hewing those large pine sticks and planing them smooth. Other men were near by drilling and blasting the rocks that showed their heads since the flood. Finally the American mill was produced, as you see to-day, in less than one year. The Frank factory was built the same year, and burned in 1853. I have spoken in particular of the American mill, because it was a new creation in Rockville. The new Frank factory was built by a company that began in 1832. The east buildings at the Florence Mill are the same that were built by Col. McLean. That part of the old building, the roof fronting the highway, is the old meeting house, and some of the same windows are visible that were in the house of worship. Tradition says, that every man in town of lawful age, could and did sit on the sills before the raising, a common sign, in those days of unity.— If the reader enquires what was done in Rockville except the building of two mills, I answer the store near the American Mill, the house where Mr. North lives, the American boarding house, Mr. Stickney's house, Mr. Harvey King's, also, and like manner from West street to East street. During the years of forty-seven, forty-eight and forty-nine, there were wrought out such great changes in the buildings, and change of population, that many natives were astonished. There were many things done, and said to be done, which need no repetition, during the years of forty-seven and forty-eight. Early in the season of forty-seven, a survey for the Aqueduct was made by Col. McLean, Ralph Talcott and myself, (afterwards surveyed by Mr. Butler from Springfield.) Mr. Talcott was taken sick and died soon after; this was the first death that took place among the first settlers in Rockville. Mr. Talcott was a live man, an upright and modest christian. He was my friend and acquaintance. No man ever called him a hypocrite or dishonest. "An honest man's the noblest work of God."

One thing more was done in 1847. The frigate "Macedonian," sailed from New York, freighted with provisions for the starving poor of Ireland. Rockville gave largely according to our wealth and people.

Aug. 12, 1871.



## CHAPTER XVII.

I made an offer to write Rockville up to 1870. In order so to do, I must be brief. To be concise and note down every building erected since 1847, would take up time without compensation. I will mention some of the principal buildings that have been erected since 1847.

In 1848 in consequence of the increase in population, the First church and the only church was over-crowded, and many complained for want of comfortable seats. A meeting of the society was called and a committee was appointed to solicit subscriptions, and if the sum of five thousand dollars could be raised it was deemed advisable to build a second house of the same denomination. A building committee was chosen and the work of building went forward. For some time after it was determined to build the house, there was no action to form a second society. After deliberation and consultation it was resolved to form a second society. It was done. The second society must come from the first, so it came to pass that a few of the strongest men came to the new society. The house was dedicated in 1849, ten years after the First church was dedicated. I shall make no attempt to prove how much better off Rockville would have been had we continued to worship together in one house. In 1848, Rockville had no district schoolhouse. Our schools were convened in the building now occupied by Townsend Brothers, Dr. Wilson and others, formerly the lecture room so called. The brick schoolhouse was built in 1849 and occupied in December of the same year. This house cost when completed between nine and ten thousand dollars. Until this schoolhouse was built, the facilities all around us for comfortable schools were too poor to be called decent. Building this house taxed the few who had estates severely. Yet there was no complaint except among those who paid the smallest tax.

This school gave Rockville a high reputation, for liberality, to say the least. The west district soon rallied and built a comfortable house. I am now writing Rockville up to 1850.

To the young and middle aged please take notice. These churches and schoolhouses were built by the contributions since 1837 of a small company of men who believed in living, not wholly for themselves, but for posterity. To the youth let me say, who now enjoy so freely your schoolday hours.



The fathers who have provided such rich blessings for you, lived through their schooldays occupying seats made of slabs and planks with legs made of round wood and placed through two inch auger holes in either end of the bench and wedged in on the top of the bench to hold them fast. This is no fiction. The schoolhouses that contained the furniture above mentioned were not worth on an average more than two hundred dollars, shovel, tongs, andirons, etc. And the generation are now gone who have done so much for your 'benefit.' I have made a few words in reference to these public buildings to show how much has been done and can be done by a few individuals when their heart and hands are united.

I will explain the method how we lived in the former day of Rockville life. The business men of Rockville from the beginning, up to 1850, were self-made men, and were not ashamed to work with their hands. They were economical in their living and wardrobes, yet they lived well and dressed well, and in truth were courteous and hospitable. They had no fancy spans to move them through the streets in Rockville, but were satisfied with one horse to take them on the way for business or pleasure. Rockville in 1848 had no saloons, restaurants or lawyers. We lived in such an economical way that we had to dispense with all such luxuries.

I have now solved the problem how to get wealth. I have been something more than a looker on in Rockville the last forty-eight years. When I look back from 1871 to 1823, I can see all things pertaining to Rockville during its rise and progress. I have seen an increase in population from 45 to 4,500 souls. The number of families residing here in 1823 were five; if I include Mr. Elnathan Grant it would make six. I mean to include this district only. I cannot find but one adult person in this district that lived here in 1823. Mrs. George Kellogg is the lady. She prepared the first meal that I ate here. Mrs. Kellogg is all the adult I can find here up to 1830, including the west district.

The number of adults living here from 1830 to 1840, and now living, are, including the west district, Mrs. Kellogg, Mr. Chauncey Winchel and his wife, Mr. Gideon Colton, (came in '34,) Mr. J. T. Thompson and wife, (came in '37, I think,) and Mr. Nathan Doane.

The population of Rockville in 1850 was nineteen hundred, in the town, twenty-nine hundred.

During the years from 1850 to 1860, the Methodist built a comfort-

able meetinghouse in West street. This house took fire and burned on a Sabbath morning.

The German Lutheran Church was a Baptist Church till after the Methodist Church burned. It was bought and occupied by the Methodist society up to the time of building the present Methodist Episcopal Church. This brick house was built in 1865 and 1866. Cost \$65,000. The Hockanum factory was burned and rebuilt between 1849 and 1859.

In 1847 the mill owners bought the right all around Snipsie Lake and raised the dam at the outlet 10 feet; in 1865 a similar purchase was made and the dam raised about eight feet. This year, 1871, the dam is being raised three feet more. The Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad was building in 1847 and 1848 and 1849. The Rockville branch Railroad was made in 1863. For a description of Rockville, full and complete as it was in 1870, I refer the reader to an atlas of Hartford and Tolland Counties published by Baker & Tilden. See map of Rockville. I must apologise for writing this lengthy chapter, but it is the closing one, and the reader will excuse its length.

December 23, 1871.

## FAMILIES IN ROCKVILLE IN 1836.

HEADS OF FAMILIES.				HEADS OF FAMILIES.					
	Members of Cong. Churches,	Mem. of Co. Ch. in Vernon,	Mem. of Cong. Chs. elsewhere,	Whole Number of Persons,—		Members of Cong. Churches,	Mem. of Co. Ch. in Vernon,	Mem. of Cong. Chs. elsewhere,	Whole Number of Persons,—
				Persons under 10 yrs. of age,					Persons under 10 yrs. of age,
Horace Vinton, - - - - -	4	4	1	5	Joel Snow, - - - - -				1
Rufus West, - - - - -	2	2	6	6	William Kent, - - - - -				1
Charles T. Talcott, - - - - -	2	2			William Wiston, - - - - -				2
Seth W. Johnson, - - - - -	1	1			David Packard, - - - - -				1
Nehemiah Daniels, - - - - -	3	3	3	11	Gurdon Grant, - - - - -	2	2		1
James Stewart, - - - - -			5	5	Elisha Grant, - - - - -	1	1		3
John Williams, - - - - -			11	11	Francis Grant, - - - - -	1	1		1
Mrs. Northrop, - - - - -			2	2	Samuel Moredock, - - - - -	2	2		1
George C. Weston, - - - - -			1	6	Horace Thompson, - - - - -			2	4
Channey Loomis, - - - - -	2	1	2	5	Benjamin Waller, - - - - -			2	10
Winslow Woods, - - - - -	1	1	2	5	Joel Vinton, - - - - -				3
Trumbull Tracy, - - - - -	3	3	6	6	Ralph Barber, - - - - -				1
J. F. Judd, - - - - -			2	8	Enoch W. Daniels, - - - - -				3
George Kellogg, - - - - -	4	3	1	6	Ephraim Sanford, and } Isaac L. Sanford, }				5
Lucius Hinckley, - - - - -	2	2	2	6	A. G. Fitch, - - - - -				8
Billings Bugbee, - - - - -			4	11	Andrew W. Tracy, - - - - -	1	1		4
Mrs. Parmelia Dimmock, - - - - -	3	3	1	11	Simon C. Chapman, - - - - -	2	2		4
Selden and Austin McKinney, - - - - -	6	2	4	27	William Champin, - - - - -	3	2	1	3
Willard Fuller, - - - - -	1	1	1	6	Miner Preston, - - - - -	3	3		7
Loomis Thompson, - - - - -			15	15	Charles A. Buckland, - - - - -				3
Jehiel Fuller, - - - - -			4	8	William T. Lyman, - - - - -	1	1		1
W. O. Hough, - - - - -	5	6	2	15	Joseph D. Metcalf, - - - - -				8
Sanford Grant, - - - - -	1	1	2	4	Ephraim Parker, - - - - -				2
John Gilmore, - - - - -			2	6	Benjamin Johnson, - - - - -				4
Eh Hammond, - - - - -	3	3	7	7	Carlo West, - - - - -	2	2		1
Wm. T. Cogswell, - - - - -			2	14	Halsey Fuller, - - - - -	3	3		4
Widow Otis McLean, Jr., - - - - -			10	10	Mrs. John Stebbins, - - - - -	1	1		6
George Lee, - - - - -	2	2	2	13	Elizur Hurlbut, - - - - -				4
Christopher Burdick, - - - - -			4	11	Elijah Payne, - - - - -				2
Chauncey Winchell, - - - - -	1	1	2	13					3
John Wyman, - - - - -	1	1	3	3					

Members of Congregational Churches, 75.

Members of Congregational Churches in Vernon, 53.

Members of Congregational Churches elsewhere, 22.

Persons under ten years of age, 89.

Whole number of persons in Rockville, 411.

HISTORY  
OF  
ROCKVILLE

FROM

1823 TO 1871.

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INCLUDING ALSO A BRIEF SKETCH OF FACTS WHICH ANTE-DATE THE  
INCORPORATION OF VERNON, AND BRING DATES UP TO THE  
TIME WHEN THIS HISTORY BEGINS.

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BY WM. T. COGSWELL, ESQ.

[A RESIDENT OF THE VILLAGE FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY.]



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1872.















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