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History of the
Stockbridge House
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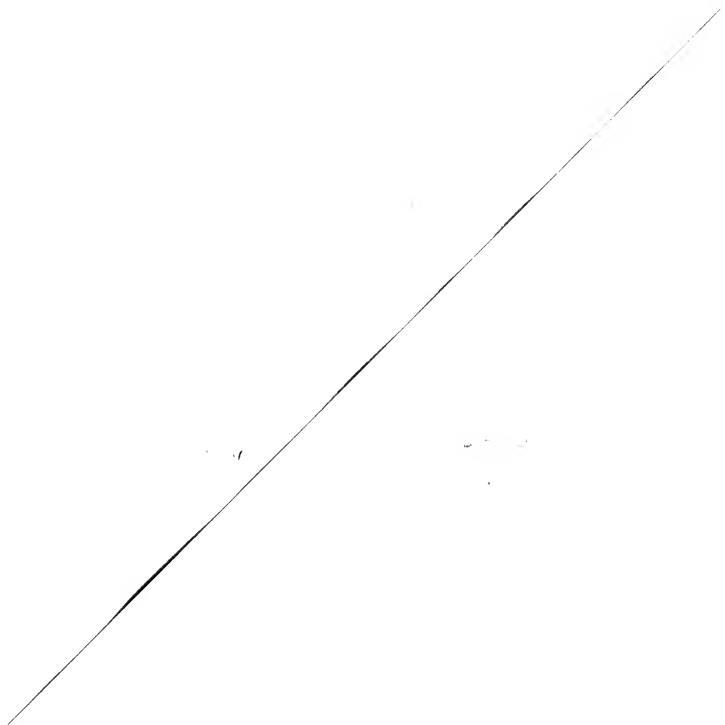
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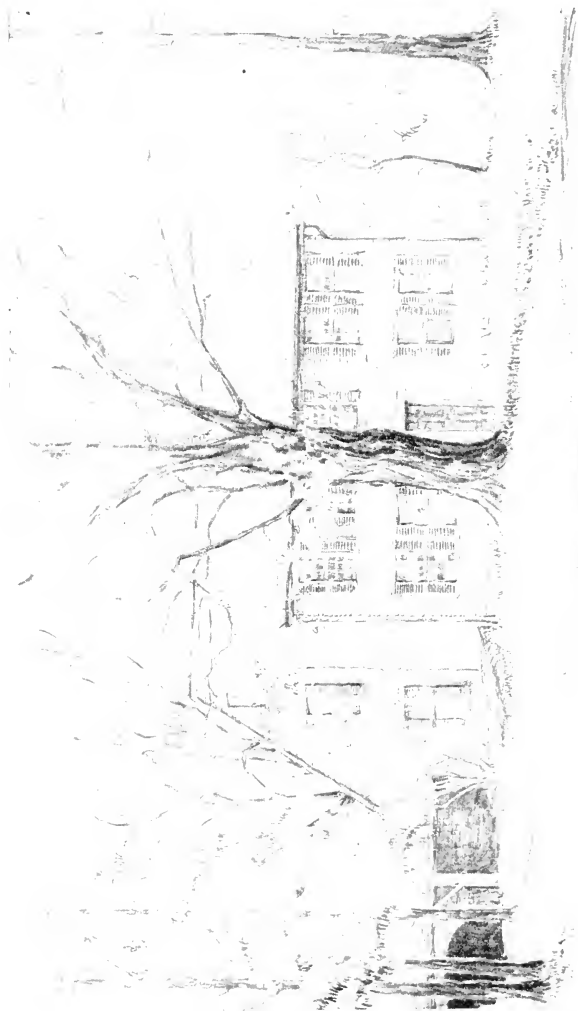
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**HISTORY OF THE STOCKBRIDGE HOUSE AT
MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGE**

BY

CHARLES HIRAM THAYER

Published under the auspices of the Faculty Club

This history was written at the suggestion of President Hugh P. Baker through whose efforts the Stockbridge House was restored in 1934. The house is now used as the home of the Faculty Club.

April
1936

History of the Stockbridge House

"Whose axe the wall of forest broke
And let the waiting sunshine
through?"

What goodwife sent the earliest
smoke

Up the great chimney flue?"

—Whittier

All who have enjoyed its hospitality and felt its charm have wondered as to the story of the old Stockbridge House. How much of Indian times and good old colony days has the house known? What man was its builder and who was the woman to make a home of the new house in the wilderness?

Fortunately for friends of the Stockbridge House the fragments of its history have been preserved in the old county records at Springfield and at Northampton and in the published histories of Hadley, Amherst, and Deerfield. These fragments can now be assembled, and the story told of Samuel Boltwood, who built the house in 1728, of Hannah Alexander, his wife, who was its first mistress, and of others who came after them.

Hannah was the daughter of Nathaniel Alexander of Northampton, who during his long life told tales of the Indian fight in which Capt. Turner was slain at the falls which now bear his name. Samuel was the son of Samuel Boltwood, a famous wolf hunter, sergeant in the garrison of Hadley. They were married on May 10, 1703, as Queen Anne's War was beginning, and Samuel, Jr. took his bride to live in Sergeant Boltwood's house in Hadley.

In the early morning of February 29, 1704, the lighted sky to the northward told the men of Hatfield and Hadley, even before runners, barefoot

and nearly naked, arrived over the snow, that the French and Indians were ravaging Deerfield. Sergeant Samuel Boltwood, with his two sons, Robert, twenty-one, and Samuel, twenty-three, now less than a year married, at once joined in a rescue party and "Repaired to Relief of that people." — "Accordingly as many as could then man out, being a little above forty in number hasted to their relief, who we found in the most Lamentable and pityous Circumstances and when we entered at one gate the enemy fled out at the other, & being joynd with fifteen of Deerfield men we pursued them with utmost earnestness and Resolution, and in our Pursuit had the Success of killing many of them, and haveing pursued them about one mile and a half they came to a River Bank where was a Numerous Company of the Enemy, fresh Hands, that had drawn off from the garrison before, who Rose up, fired upon us, and pursued us back, our breath being Spent, theirs in full strength, the battle was sore against us. We retreated with caution, facing and firing, so that those that first failed might be defended; notwithstanding many were Slain and others wounded whose loss can never be made up," (Sheldon, "History of Deerfield," page 301.)

Among the slain in Deerfield meadow were Sergeant Samuel and his son Robert. Samuel, Jr. returned alone to his wife and mother in Hadley.

The fate of the captives from Deerfield and other places who had been carried away into Canada weighed heavily on their relatives in the valley towns. Several times during the next ten years small parties of Massachusetts men made the long

trip up Lake Champlain into Canada in hope to ransom their relatives. The records tell us that in 1714 William Boltwood, then twenty-seven years old, a younger brother of Samuel, died on a return from Canada. Whether he had been a captive or was a member of the ransom party is not known; as to this the records are silent.

The men of Hadley had built a stockade to guard the safety of their broad street, and during the Indian wars, though they were cramped for land and house room, none dared to build outside it. When Queen Anne's War was ended by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the danger of Indian raids abated. Samuel Boltwood, a resolute and adventurous man, was among the first of the Hadley men who moved out from the protection of the stockade to build themselves homes away from the older settlement. In 1720 he was living—"in the New Street on the Pine Plain," (Hadley Tax List 1720, Judd, "History of Hadley" page 278) a distant and dangerous location as it seemed to his old neighbors, but one which, as the town grew, became Middle Street of Hadley.

Not yet satisfied with his location and cramped by his small acreage Samuel Boltwood began to plan for a move still deeper into the forest.

Father Rasle's War between the colonies and the French and Indians now being over, a wave of settlement spread out to the south and east from Old Hadley. Some time before December of 1727 Samuel Boltwood had bought one hundred and eleven acres of land (Springfield 5-247) in the region called New Swamp and later, in turn: Hadley East Farms, Hadley Third Precinct, District of Amherst, and Town of Amherst. On this land, now a part of the property

of the Massachusetts State College, he built his new home. It still stands and is known as the Stockbridge House.

No record exists of the exact date when the house was built, yet since Samuel Boltwood sold to Ezekiel Kellogg of Hadley on November 1, 1728 "a certaine houselott in Hadley on the pine plain street so-called—with ye house barn orchard fencing etc." (Springfield E-448) we must assume that the new house was ready for him and his wife and daughters at that time.

On January 5, 1730, the Hadley town meeting voted that the East Inhabitants be granted leave to lay out a burying-place and chose John Ingram, Samuel Boltwood and John Nash as committee for this purpose.

By 1731, when a list of the "East Inhabitants" (Judd, "History of Hadley," page 284) appears for the first time in the town records of Hadley, there were eighteen families living in the new village. Most of these came from Hadley, but the Cowles brothers, young men from Hatfield, had built their house, now called The Homestead, and were next neighbors of the Boltwoods to the north.

In 1735, Samuel Boltwood was chosen with Samuel Hawley and John Ingram to call the first meeting of the voters of the precinct, and he served on the original committee to plan for building a church in the settlement.

Sometime soon after 1731 new neighbors came and settled just north and across the road from the Boltwoods. Zechariah Field, a man of nearly sixty years, built a house on the lot adjoining Boltwood's land and moved from Hatfield with his family and a negro slave.

Brother Solomon Boltwood also

came from Hadley and settled on the north side of the Hadley road, later to be known as Amity Street. Solomon Boltwood became the ancestor of a numerous family of active and illustrious citizens of Amherst. Samuel Boltwood left no male descendants. (Genealogy. Judd, "History of Hadley," page 13.)

Early in 1738 Zechariah Field died. In his will he bequeathed to his son, John Field, "all my land and buildings thereor whether in the township of Hadley & Hatfield or elsewhere"—"My will is that my son John Field maintain & provide for his mother viz. my wife Sarah with all suitable Necessaries & Conveniences for the Honourable & Comfortable support of her during the term of her Natural life & Particularly that he keep her a good cow ye term aforesd." This will may be found in the Probate Records at Northampton. With the will is filed the following:

"An inventory of Aprisal of ye Estate of Zacariah Field Deceased att Hadley third precinct by us John Nash John Coles Richard Chauncey Prisers. Taken Febery ye 24, 1737-8

A Negro man	£ 130 00 00
His homsted	£ 800 00 00
A greate swamp	
Lot Lying in ye	
first precinct in	
Hadley	£ 100 00 00

Signed by Sarah Field executrix."

her
X
mark

The double date 1737-8, to be read 1737 or 8, calls to notice the fact that until 1752 the legal year in England and its colonies began on March 25, and that before this time many people used the double date for

the period from January 1 to March 25.

Late in the fall of that same year, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, Samuel Boltwood made his will. Two months later the will was admitted to probate. There is no record of the exact date of his death.

"In the name of God Amen the 12th day of October Seventeen hundred & thirty eight: I Saml Boltwood of Hadley in the County of Hampshire and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England Husbandman being very weak in Body but of Perfect mind and memory Thanks be given unto God therefore Calling unto mind the mortallity of my Body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to Dye, do make and ordain this my Last will and Testement, that is to say Principally and first of all, I give and Recommend my Sou into the hands of God that gave it and my Body, I Recommend to the Earth to be decently buried: nothing doubting but at the generall Resurrection I shall Receive the Same again by the mighty Power of God and as touching such worldly Estate wherewith it has pleased God to Bless me in this Life, I give demise and disspose of the same in the following manner & form.

"Imprimis I give and Bequeath to Hannah my Beloved wife, whome I ordain make and Constitute to be sole Executrix of this my Last will and Testement: all and singular my whole Estate boath Real and Pearsional to her and Heirs and assigns forever: she paying all my just debts and the Legacies to my chiuren and grandchildren here after mentioned.

"Item I give to the two children of my daughter Hannah deceast

twenty pounds each in or as many
or Bills of the old Tenor.

"Item I give to my daughters
Martha Abegall and Jemima forty
Pounds each in or as money aforesd
the said Legacies to be paid as soon
after my Deceas as conveniently
may be or as they shall come of
age or stand in need. In witness
of which I set to my hand and seal
the date above said

Signed sealed and declared
by the sd Saml Boltwood to
be his last will & Testement

Samuel boltwood

in presence of us subscribers

Eleazer Porter
Samuel Hawley
Alexander Porter

Old tenor, mentioned in the be-
quests, was a rapidly depreciating
provincial currency. At the time of
the will, £40 old tenor was worth
about \$35. This currency continued to
depreciate until by 1750, forty-five
shillings were required to equal one
dollar. At this time it was superceded
by what was called "lawful money."
(Judd "History of Hadley," page
304.) In lawful money six shillings
were equal to one dollar. Many people
in the Valley towns, however, kept
their account books in old tenor until
as late as 1770.

Samuel Boltwood had been active
in the endeavor to build a church and
settle a minister in the community.
Widow Hannah carried on his interest
and one of the early meetings
to discuss church affairs was held in
our old Stockbridge House. In the
summer of 1739 a notice was posted
to call a precinct meeting:

"A Warrant for a preceinct Meet-
ing Hadley Third Preceinct

June ye 7th 1739

"This is to Notifi all the freeholders
and other Inhabitants Quallified Ac-

ording to Law to Voat in preceinct
Meetings that they Convean together
at ye Dwelling House of ye Widw
Hannah Boultwoods in this preceinct
on ye twenty sixth of this present
June at one of the Clock of said day:
then and thare to se what ye preceinct
will do to settle Mr David Parsons
Jnr in ye Gospel Ministry in this
preceinct & what may be thought
Best towards Building a house for ye
Minister: also how Den Mattoons first
Hundred & fifty pounds shall be
disposd with all

Given under oure hands

Solomon Boultwood

Committee

Jonathan Smith"

("History of Amherst" II-4)

On July 10, of the same year, Han-
nah Boltwood's daughter, Abigail, was
married to John Field, then a young
man of twenty-one. John Field soon
went with his wife to live in the
house of his mother-in-law. In 1743
he sold to Samuel Gaylord "the North
East part of the farm of land lately
belonging to my father Zechariah
Field, with dwelling house thereon."
(Springfield 3-380.)

The Widow Hannah Boltwood
reached the age allotted by Scripture
of three score years and ten in 1750.
Two deeds, preserved in the records
of Old Hampshire County at Spring-
field, show that she then handed the
reins to her son-in-law John Field, a
man of thirty-two, father of five
children.

The first is a warranty deed
(Springfield 5-201) dated "fourth day
of March in the twenty-fourth year
of his Majs Reign Annoque Domini
1750" from "Hannah Boltwood of
Hadley in the County of Hampshire
widow & Reliet of Samuel Boltwood
Sometime Since of Hadley Dec'd." to
"John Field of Hadley aforesd Hus-

bandman," conveying certain property "viz: the southerly half of the farm that the said Saml Boltwood died seized & possessed of with the edifices thereon and is bounded South on Samuel Hawley's land, North on the other part of sd Farm, East on a Highway, West on the Inner Commons, the sd half of the Farm contains fifty five acres & a half and also the whole of my personal Estate of what Sort Soever."

The second (Springfield 5-202.) is of the same date as the first except that it conveys: "viz, the northerly half of the farm that the Sd Samuel Boltwood died seized & possessed of and is bounded North on Field's land, South on the other part of Sd Farm, East upon a Highway, West upon the Inner Commons. The Said Half of ye Farm contains fifty five acres & half together also with the House that is standing on sd half of ye Farm."

With the ownership of the farm now in his hands John Field, Husbandman, was given a chance to show the quality of his husbandry. House and farm prospered and he begat sons and daughters. His wife Abigail Boltwood bore him ten children in all.

The East Precinct of Hadley grew rapidly. By 1756 its people outnumbered those of Old Hadley. In 1759 it was made a separate district with all the rights of a town except that a district sent no representative to the General Court. The new district was named Amherst in honor of General Jeffery Amherst, one of the most popular men of the time, who had taken the old fortress of Louisburg from the French the year before. General Amherst won still greater reputation during 1759 and 1760, when as Commander-in-Chief of all

the King's forces in America, he fought the Frenchmen and the Indians all the way from Ticonderoga and Crown Point to Montreal and ended French rule in Canada.

The first tax list of Amherst rates John Field as the largest property holder of the new district. In 1759 he owned three horses, eight oxen, two cows and one hog. His personal estate was valued at £25:8 and his real estate at £103:00. He was chosen selectman four times between 1761 and 1771. Our old Stockbridge House was kept as an inn during 1768 and John Field was a licensed retailer of liquors for five years thereafter.

In 1767 his son, John Field, Jr. married Elizabeth Henderson, daughter of Neighbor Gideon Henderson, who now owned and lived in John Field's old home nearby and across the road.

By 1773, the colonists, no longer at war against the French and Indians, were stirring to free themselves from the oppression by the mother country. The outbreaks of the colonists which culminated in the Boston Tea Party, drove England to retaliate by closing the port of Boston. A paralysis of business and scarcity of money resulted and extended even to the farmers of Amherst. Neighbor Moses Cook was forced to mortgage his farm, (Springfield 13-308) to William Phillips, a lawyer of Boston, and even John Field, prosperous though he had been, was compelled to borrow money from Nehemiah Strong, a brother of Neighbor Simeon Strong, and to give a mortgage on half his farm as security. Neither Cook nor Field was ever able to pay off his mortgage. Both were sold out under foreclosure in the even more deeply troubled times which followed the Revolution and

both were forced to move away from Amherst.

The mortgage from Field to Strong, stripped of a part of its legal verbiage, reads as follows:

"To all People to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting. Know Ye, That John Field of Amherst in the County of Hampshire and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England gentn. For and in consideration of the Sum of one hundred and forty two Pounds Currant Money of the Province aforesaid to me in Hand paid before the Ensealing hereof by Nehemiah Strong of New Haven in the County of New Haven & Collony of Connecticut, Clerk"——hereby give to Nehemiah Strong a mortgage deed of——" a certain tract of land in said Amherst with the appurtenances being the one half of my farm which is bounded South on the land of Moses Cook and North on Land of Gideon Handerson, the granted premises are the Northerly half of Said Farm and are bounded Northerly on land of Gideon Handerson, East on a way or land left for a way, West on Hadley line South on the Southerly half of Said farm at a line of the lotts directly in the middle between the said land of Cook & Handerson the premises are Supposed to Contain about Seventy five acres the lands in the King's Highway running through the same being not included in this Grant." Dated June 15, 1773, Registered June 16, 1773, (Springfield 13-124).

This Nehemiah Strong was a graduate of Yale in the class of 1755. He was for ten years Professor of Mathematics at Yale, and after resigning studied law though he practiced little. It is told of him that he married the supposed widow of a man lost at sea who later appeared and

claimed his wife. (Strong Family, page 1316).

In 1773 Governor Hutchinson appointed John Field Lieutenant of Militia in Capt. Josiah Chauncey's company. Governor Hutchinson was a firm loyalist; only staunch King's men received commissions from his hands.

Early in 1774 the patriots of Amherst began to organize and to work for American independence. Neighbor Henderson served on one of the Revolutionary committees, but John Field and Neighbor Moses Cook remained loyal to the Crown. It was estimated that half the inhabitants of Amherst were Tories or neutrals. The patriot committees of Shutesbury and Pelham offered to help Amherst to dispose of the Tories "in a mob way or otherwise" but Amherst preferred to use more formal methods. On November 11, 1774 Lieut. John Field and Capt. Chauncey were summoned with other officers to a meeting at Northampton. where they were compelled to renounce all authority they might hold under their commissions from Governor Hutchinson. Capt. Chauncey's commission was publicly burned by the patriots of Amherst. ("History of Amherst," page 82.)

Though John Field was loyalist and Tory and John Field, Jr. held his father's opinions, family sentiment was not altogether united. The roster of the Amherst companies shows the name of Samuel Field, a younger son, as one of the minute men who marched to Cambridge when news of the fight at Lexington came. He was made corporal before the end of his service two years later.

Feeling ran high between the patriots and Tories in Amherst. The town records of 1777 show how nearly balanced in voting strength the two

parties were, and how John Field was recognized as a Tory leader.

"July 7th Being met according to Adjournment the Selectmen exhibited to the Town a List of the Names of Such Persons as they supposed to be Inimical to the Interest of the United States (viz) Lt John Field, Ebenr Boltwood, Isaac Goodale, William Boltwood.

"Voted To Adjourn this meeting to tuesday ye 15th Day of July next at 1 'oClock afternoon. July 15th. Being met according to Adjournment. Voted that Lt John Field's name be erased from the list laid before the town by the Selectmen—Voted. To reconsider the last preceding vote—Voted. Elijah Baker procure and lay before the Court the Evidence that may be had against the Persons thought Inimical by the town—Voted. To Adjourn this meeting to Tuesday the 12th Day of August next at 1 'oClock afternoon.

"August 12th being met according to Adjournment

Voted—that Lt John Field's Name to be struck out of the List

Voted that Ebenr Boltwood's Name be struck out of the list

Voted that Isaac Goodale's Name be struck out of the list

Voted that William Boltwood's Name be struck out of the list

Attest Moses Dickinson Moderator"

This was the summer of Burgoyne's advance from Ticonderoga down past Lake George to the headwaters of the Hudson. The menace of his hated Hessian and Indian allies struck fear through all New York and New England. Just twenty years before, at Lake George, Montcalm's Indians had massacred the New England soldiers, as they marched out disarmed after Fort William Henry surrendered. Now, when Burgoyne sent a raiding

party of Hessians and Indians east into Bennington the men of western Massachusetts were stirred as never before. All the militia of the Valley towns hurried westward to fight Burgoyne.

The failure of the town meeting of August 12. to act in suppressing the Tories was a severe check to the plans of the Amherst Committee of Safety. Roused by the news of Stark's victory at Bennington on August 17, the Committee, taking matters into its own hands, imprisoned the Tories in our old Stockbridge house.

Joining with the men from Sunderland, Shutesbury and Leverett, the Amherst committee summoned thirteen of the Tories under guard to the meeting house and after examination and questioning jailed nine of the more recalcitrant, all together, in John Field's house. The proceedings of the meeting read:

"It is therefore the Steadfast Resolve of this Body that—Ebenr Boltwood John Field John Nash Simeon Strong Esq. John Field Jr. Saml Boltwood Moses Cook John Boltwood, Esq. Chauncey be confined all together at the house Mr. John Field now dwells in with a Sufficient guard to attend them on their own cost may have license if they please to attend publick worship under sd guard.—It is also resolved that all and every of the above named Persons make an immediate Surrender of their fire Arms powder Ball Sword, Bayonet Cutlass and every warlike implement that may be of quick and Dangerous use into the hands of this body"—(Memorandum from State Archives. "History of Amherst I-87.)

The men so imprisoned sent a petition dated Aug. 29, 1777 to the Council of Massachusetts, saying that they had done nothing against the interest

of the States and that "whatever were our private Sentiments respecting the War, we had done our full proportion in the expence of the War."

The Committee of Safety, not being quite sure what to do with their prisoners wrote to the General Court for advice, and received this rather curt reply.

"The Committee to whom was referred the inimical of John Billing in behalf of the Committee of Amherst, and also the Petition of sundry Inhabitants of said Town, have considered the same and are of opinion that the Laws of the State have made ample provision for the punishing of offenders.

"That the Persons apprehended & under Guard ought forthwith to be carried before the next Justice of the Peace for the County of Hampshire. And the Charges against them be exhibited in writing. That such Justice may, if the matter alledged shall appear to him a Violation of the Law of the State order them to Recognize in reasonable Sums with Surety, to appear before the next Superior Court of Judicature &c for Said County to answer thereto, and in the mean Time to keep the Peace and be of good behavior or Commit them to Gaol if the Nature of the crime shall appear to him to require it—and in case the charges exhibited against them shall not appear sufficient to induce the Justice to commit them to Prison for Trial, or to oblige them to find sureties to answer the cause before the Sup. Court The said Persons now under Guard be released from their confinement. D. Sewell

Sept 10th 1777 Read & approved
JNo Avery Dep Sec'y."

When Burgoyne, with his captured army, camped in the broad street of

Old Hadley, on the march from Saratoga to Boston, the men of Amherst saw clearly that the tide of war had turned. The March town meeting of 1778 voted "That Persons not owning Independance on the Crown of Great Britain agreeable to the Declaration of Congress shall not vote."

The Tories, being for the most part men of education and intelligence and property holders as well, accepted the situation, made peace with their neighbors, and soon resumed their activity in town affairs. After 1781, the year of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, John Field's name was seldom absent from the list of town committees.

The years which followed the Revolution brought hardships which drove the farmers of the western counties to desperation. Most of their farms mortgaged, taxed beyond their ability to pay, these men felt themselves unjustly oppressed by the more wealthy merchant class of the eastern counties. The town of Amherst, along with most of the other western towns, held conventions to discuss the situation. Amherst sent a petition to the General Court setting forth the grievances of the people and even threatening that Western Massachusetts would set up as separate state.

By 1786 the situation had become intolerable. Court dockets were choked with foreclosure suits, and lawyers prospered on the misery of the people. Half the men of the western counties knew that at the next sitting of the county courts they would be turned out of their homes and perhaps even thrown into jail for debts they could not pay.

The first of the county courts convened at Northampton to find a mob of 1500 men, most of them armed, surrounding the court house. Joel Bill-

ings came in with drawn sword at the head of a body of armed men from Amherst. Court did not sit, nor did the county courts of Middlesex, Worcester or Berkshire; all were broken up by mobs of armed men.

Having taken the first step, there was no turning back for the insurgents. Forced to organize for their own protection, they formed a military force under the command of Daniel Shays of Pelham, and followed his lead until his army, defeated in front of the arsenal at Springfield, was finally captured or scattered at Petersham on February 4, 1787.

After the collapse of Shays' Rebellion, all insurgents were required to sign the oath of allegiance. The names of 113 men of Amherst are found on the list of signers, among them, John Field, Moses Cook, and John Nash, three of the former Tory prisoners. Each of these three men was now burdened with debts he could not pay. How active a part they had taken in the rebellion is not known. Whatever John Field's part may have been, he was still held in high regard by his townsmen, who chose him that same year as selectman.

Sessions of the county courts were resumed. In 1787 Nehemiah Strong, who held the mortgage on John Field's farm, came up from Connecticut to collect on some of his overdue accounts. A writ of execution from the Northampton records tells how he forced a settlement from John Nash and shows that the law still permitted imprisonment for debt. The settlement also suggests that when neighbors in similar financial difficulties were chosen for the task, their appraisal was likely to be generous toward the debtor.

"Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To the Sheriff of the County of Hamp-

shire his under Sheriff or Deputy or either of the Constables of the Town of Amherst Greeting.

"Because John Nash of Amherst in our county of Hampshire on the Eleventh Day of May in the year of our Lord 1787 before me Eleazer Porter Esq. one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Hampshire acknowledged by non-appearance that he was indebted to Nehemiah Strong of Newtown in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut Gentleman in the sum of Seventy five Pounds sixteen shillings and ten pence, which he ought to have paid on the Eleventh Day of May last, and now appears to be due Seventy five Pounds sixteen shillings and ten pence We command you therefore that of the goods Chattles or real Estate of the said John Nash within your Precinct you cause to be paid and satisfied unto the said Nehemiah at the value thereof in Money the aforesaid sum of Seventy five Pounds sixteen shilling and ten pence together with Eighteen shillings & 2nd costs of Process and two shillings for this writ and thereof satisfy yourself your own lawfull Fees—and for want of goods, Chattles or real Estate of the said John within your Precinct to satisfy the sums aforesaid and your said Fees: We Command you to take the Body of the said John and him commit unto our Gaol in our County of Hampshire aforesaid there to be detained in the said gaol until he pay the full sums aforesaid with your said fees or that the said John be discharged by the said Nehemiah the Creditors or otherwise by order of Law.

"Herof fail not and make Return of this writ with your doings thereon unto the above said Eleazar Porter within Ninety Days from the

Date hereof. Witness the said Eleazar at Hadley the Twenty Eighth Day of July in the year of our Lord 1787.

Eleazar Porter

N. B. The Debtor hath a Right to tender real or personal Estate at an appraised value as the law directs."

Moses Rowe, Moses Cook and John Billings having made oath as appraisers, appraised six and a half acres of John Nash's land at £79:22. The sheriff delivered "seisin and possessions" of the same to Nehemiah Strong, who accepted the same in full satisfaction of "this Execution and all Fees."

Soon after appraising his neighbor's land Moses Cook lost his farm by foreclosure of the mortgage of 1773. He left Amherst in 1792 and moved to Vermont as did many other Massachusetts men at this time.

Nehemiah Strong had held a mortgage on one half of John Field's farm since 1773. Many papers of the time of the Revolution and of Shays' Rebellion are missing from the county files and no record of the foreclosure of this mortgage can be found. It is possible that Strong took the remainder of the farm for unpaid interest on the mortgage. By whatever means he had secured it, the warranty deed by which Strong sold the farm in 1794, proves that he had obtained full ownership before that date.

This deed, dated January 15, 1794 transferred from Nehemiah Strong, Esq. to Elijah Hastings, Blacksmith, "a certain tract of land, in the first division of lands in Amherst, being the farm on which John Field now dwells." (Northampton 12-456.)

John Field, now dispossessed at the age of seventy-six, after moving to Brattleboro in Vermont, disappears

from the records. Not even the date of his death is known.

Elijah Hastings, the blacksmith, who now moved on to the farm, brought his wife Jerusha; three young daughters,—Lucinda, Lydia and Nancy; and a son, Elijah, youngest of all. Elijah Hastings had served as one of the minute men in the early days of the Revolution and also with the government troops during Shays' Rebellion. He built himself a blacksmith shop across the road from the old house and carried on his trade.

His wife, Jerusha, died in 1798, and he soon married a second wife, Rebeckah. When Elijah Hastings himself died in 1803, he left all his property to his son, still a young boy. Rebeckah, thinking this unfair to her step-daughters, contested the will, which was disallowed on the grounds of mental derangement. The property was then divided equally between the four children, with Rebeckah, who retained dower rights, herself appointed administratrix.

An inventory of the estate (Northampton Probate 68-34.) gives a complete list of the equipment of the farm and of the household furnishings. It includes:

"Homestead with buildings thereon, with a Blacksmith shop on the other side of the road \$3070.

2 oxen \$68 pr 2 yr old steers \$40
1 brown cow 17: 1 red do 17, 1 pided do 18,
1 pided do 16, brown heifer 15, 1 sparked do 14
1 Brindle heifer 15, 1 Sparked do 14
1 pr red whiteface Steers 25, 1 pr yearlings 22
1 dapple grey mare 42, 1 2 yr old colt 26
2 fatt hogs \$22, 5 pigs \$9
22 sheep \$27, 2 calves \$5"

In the house there were: "Best bed

with the Bedstead, Bolster, Pillows
& Bedding \$35

Next best bed \$29

Pr brass top hand Irons, shovel &
tongs \$17

1 brass kettle \$8; 25 lbs pewter \$7.50

1 axe \$1 Beetle & one wedge 75
cents," and other articles too nu-
merous to mention.

Rebeckah Hastings did not long re-
main a widow. On Christmas Day of
1805 she married Levi Cowls, who
then became master of the farm, and
joined with her in the final settle-
ment of her former husband's estate.

Rebeckah took quite seriously her
responsibility for her step-children,
the Hastings girls, and saw them all
well married. There were three wed-
dings in the old house from 1807 to
1810. Nancy Hastings was given the
best education that the times afforded
for young ladies. Miss Abby Wright,
predecessor of Mary Lyon, had open-
ed in South Hadley one of the earliest
schools for girls in New England.
Here Nancy was trained in all the
genteel accomplishments and became
a notable needlewoman. A bit of tap-
estry which she embroidered in the
summer of 1805 is still a prized pos-
session of her descendant, George
Cutler, in Amherst.

The boy, Elijah, was apprenticed
to a tanner and learned the "art, trade
or mystery" of tanning. When he be-
came of legal age, in 1812, he sold
to Levi Cowls, yeoman, "one fourth
part in common and undivided of the
farm and buildings in Hadley and
Amherst whereof my Hon. father died
seized." (Northampton 33-461).

The Hastings girls had left, one
after another, each with her marriage
portion, and after the death of his
wife, Rebeckah, in 1826, Levi Cowls
held full ownership of the farm. He
married the widow Submit Bangs and

soon after the elderly and childless
couple took his nephew Chester Cowls
to live with them and help in working
the farm. When Levi Cowls was near-
ing his three score and ten, in 1834,
the farm was passed on to Chester
Cowls, (Northampton 79-582) who
carried it on until, in 1864, it was
bought by the trustees as a part of
the first purchase of land for the
Massachusetts Agricultural College.
(Northampton 223-274).

Because the trustees of the College
had voted to appoint "a president
who shall reside on the farm" Henry
Flagg French moved into the old
house in 1865 and undertook the task
of planning a campus and erecting
buildings for the college which was
to receive its first students in 1867.
With him was his fifteen-year-old son,
Daniel, who worked all that summer
on the farm and in spare moments
covered the plastered walls of the old
shed-chamber with charcoal drawings
of kings and queens in royal robes
and crowns. The old shed chamber of
the Stockbridge house was the first
studio of Daniel Chester French, who,
as dean of American sculptors was
to be known for his statue of the
Minute Man at Concord and for the
bronze Lincoln in the Memorial at
Washington.

In April 1867, Levi Stockbridge
moved his family from his homestead
in North Hadley into the house which
was to bear his name. His daughter,
Anna Stockbridge Tuttle, vividly de-
scribes the house at that time, sur-
rounded by big trees and an apple
orchard, with an iron fence and hem-
lock hedge in front. There were three
attics in which the children played,
a big milk pantry, and the enormous
chimney with its fire-places and brick
oven and the "smoke hole" in which
hams and bacon had been cured.

Often, on the back of the stove in the old farm kitchen, there was a pot of beef tea for such ailing students as needed the kindly ministrations of Mrs. Stockbridge.

Levi Stockbridge took the shed chamber, at the end of the south ell-part, for his office. Here, for a few months in 1867, all college business was transacted, and here from a table at the foot of the stairs, the men were paid off on Saturday night. In this shed chamber he laid out his courses of study, wrote his lectures and planned his experiments. Here came, for more than fifteen years, students, faculty and townspeople for advice, instruction, and consultation.

In 1892, not long after Levi Stockbridge had moved to Lessey Street, the house was occupied by Sumner Dickinson with his family, who lived here for twenty-two years. Many a cold night he sat up late to watch lest fire break out from the ancient chimney. Mr. Dickinson, a man wise in handling horses, was in charge of the "Hort. Barn" and of the team work of the Division of Horticulture. His son Lawrence, grew up in the house, and with Sumner, the son of Dr. William P. Brooks, played in the woodshed, explored the secret closets and raided the pantry.

After 1914, the house was in many ways neglected until 1934, when President Baker undertook and completed its restoration. Very few changes were necessary. A southwest ell was added for the accommodation of the caretaker. The woodshed was converted into a card room. A few partitions were removed, fireplaces and some of the woodwork rebuilt and rooms appropriately furnished. The old house became available as a clubhouse for the college staff and a fitting remind-

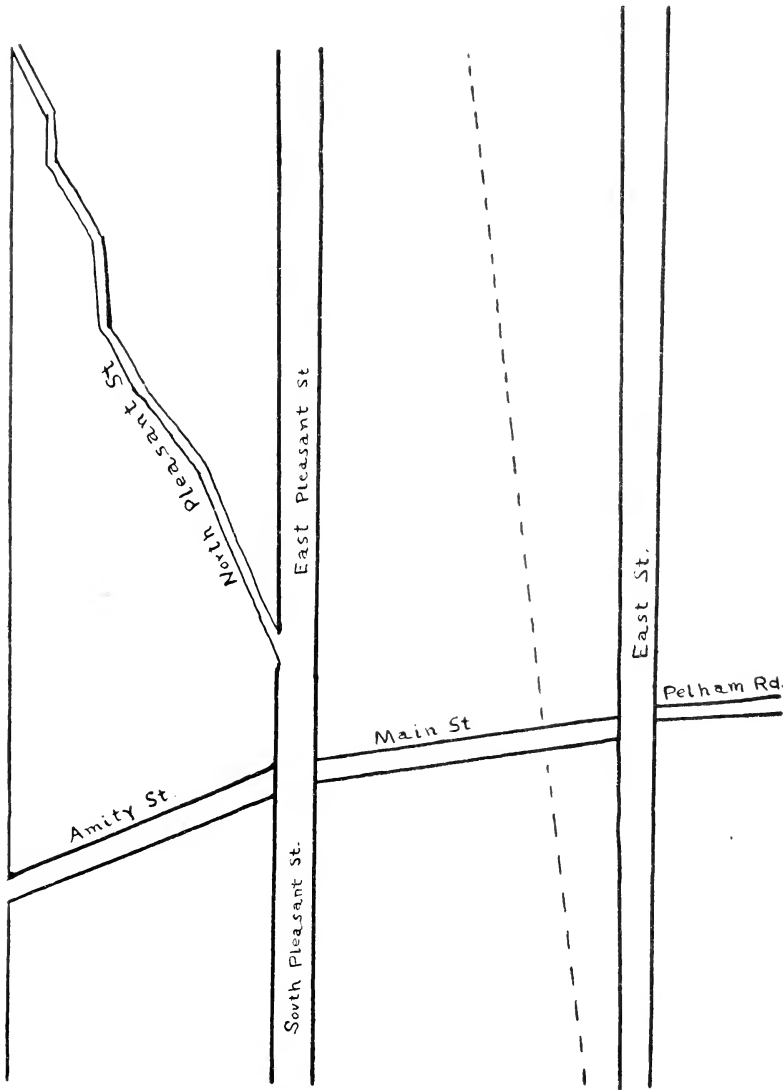
er of Levi Stockbridge, its distinguished occupant.

Supplementary Notes Explaining Map and Land Title

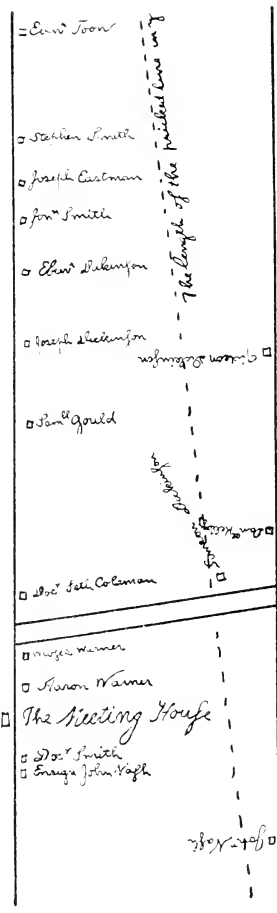
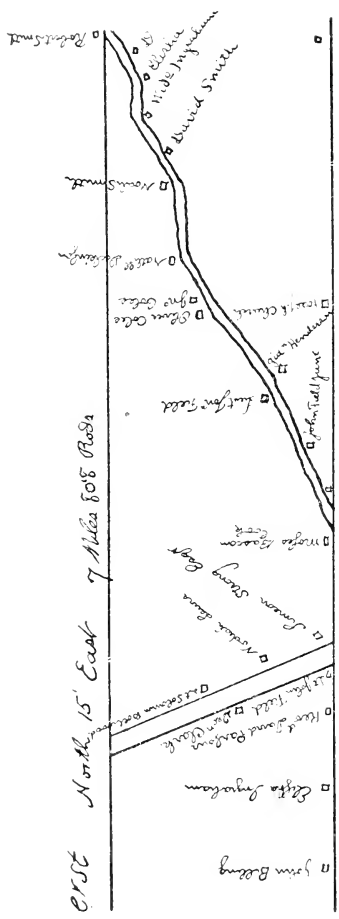
The Historical collection of the Jones Library contains the original of the earliest known map of the town, which is copied in the "History of Amherst," published by Carpenter and Morehouse. This map, believed to date from 1772, shows the town very much as it was laid out by the town measures of Hadley in "Aprill, 1703." The northwest section of this map is here reproduced, with an explanatory map giving the present names of the streets.

The first move of the town measurers was to lay down a line approximately north and south $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of the Hadley meeting house, which has remained, with a few changes, as the Hadley-Amherst town line. Then shifting three-quarters of a mile to the east they laid out a north and south highway 40 rods or an eighth of a mile wide, which still remains as West Street, of South Amherst, Pleasant Street, through the center of Amherst, and East Pleasant Street to the north of the town.

A second shift of three-quarters of a mile to the east and another parallel highway was laid out also 40 rods wide which still remains as Middle and North East Streets of South Amherst, continuing as South East and North East Streets of Amherst. Since these highways were laid out with no regard to the lay of the land, it was hoped that somewhere in their 40-rod width, the settlers might be able to make a passable road. It was said of the early roads through new land that if they were not made nearly half a mile wide they were likely, in the spring, to be half a mile



CRST North 15' East of Alice 806 Rods



- John Ingr
- Gideon Dale
- Ruben
- John Morlan
- Nathan
- John Dick
- David Blod
- Nou
- Timothy
- Oliver C
- Noah & Sis
- Dr. E
- Aaron h
- Tho
- Joel Bellin
- Nathan D

deep. As Judd has written in the History of Hadley, "It is supposed that the highways were left 40 rods wide, to enable the future inhabitants to deviate many rods from a straight course, on the public land, in forming the ways for travel and thus avoid swamps, steep ascents and other bad places."

These highways were narrowed by town vote in 1754, and again in 1788, leaving only the wide commons of Amherst center, South Amherst and East Street.

The western strip of land, between the present town line and the western highway was called the First Division, that between the western and eastern highways, the Second Division, and that to the east of the eastern highway, the Third Division.

Each householder of Hadley was allowed from the first two divisions 26½ acres for himself and half as much for each son between 16 and 21. This allowance accounted for a little less than half the land. The rest was divided in proportion to the meadow land the householder already owned in Hadley; the more he already had, the more he got. As the old Yankee saying runs, "Them as has, gits."

Each proprietor of Hadley drew a number out of a box and if he drew No. 1 his was the first lot north of the Bay Road on the west side of West Street, while No. 60 was the last lot at the North end of East Pleasant Street.

But Queen Anne's War broke out soon after this land was divided, the French and Indians came down upon Deerfield, and the men of Hadley dared not settle outside the stockade. No use could be made of their newly acquired land. Its value during this time of war was about one shilling

an acre. When Queen Anne's War ended men began to venture out from the towns and to take more interest in the out-lands. There was much swapping of lots and some few sales. The land was still of little worth, while a lawyer's fee for drawing the deed was expensive, and the trip to the Registry of Deeds in Springfield was long and difficult. Many of these early transfers of title were not recorded until 40 years after and others never recorded at all. In such cases the first deed to be recorded often names the original owners of the land, as when John Field (Springfield 3-380) sold to Samuel Gaylord "the North East part of the farm of land lately belonging to my father Zechariah Field originally belonging to James and Preserved Smith" or when Eleazer Porter on November 6, 1727 (Springfield 0-678, 679) sold to John and Jonathan Cowls the land on which the Homestead was soon after built, "all the Remainder of three Lotts that was laid out to Mrs. Hannah Porter, Samll Porter Esq. and Mr. Hezekiah Porter formerly all of Hadley aforesd other than what Ebenezer Kellogg abovesd has heretofore had conveyance of to him."

The men who first settled on the northerly lots in the First Division found that the highway past the east end of their land ran along the crest and on the east side of the hill now known as Mt. Pleasant. Instead of building their houses and barns beside the highway as did most of the early settlers in town, they located their buildings on better and more level land to the west. The road they made past their houses is called, in deeds before the Revolution, a King's Highway, and after that time a county road. This is now the road to North

Amherst which passes by the Stockbridge House.

No record exists to tell us from whom Samuel Boltwood bought the land on which he built his house, but it is possible from deeds of adjoining land to tell who the original owners were. The lots which Sergeant Samuel Boltwood, slain at Deerfield, drew for himself, lot 7 (Judd 275) in the Second Division and lot 67 ("History of Amherst" II-152) in the Third Division were sold by his heirs, Samuel, Jr. and Solomon, in 1730 (Springfield E 447, 461).

Eleazer Warner drew lot 44 in the First Division. When he sold this lot in 1727 it was described as "bounded north on land of Samuel Boltwood." (Springfield 5-247.)

When John Field sold part of his father's farm in 1743 (Springfield 3-380) it was described as "bounded south on land lately of Samuel Boltwood" and as "originally belonging to James and Preserved Smith."

Preserved Smith drew lot 51, James lot 50, and their father Samuel Smith, who died in 1703, the year in which the land was divided by the town, drew lot 49. (Judd p. 275) These two items from deeds of adjoining land, must be accepted as proof that Samuel Boltwood's land included the lots lying between No. 44 and No. 49. These four lots were drawn by the following men:

- Lot 45 John Hilyard
- Lot 46 William Brown
- Lot 47 Nathaniel Dickinson
- Lot 48 Edward Church

The area of these four lots may be calculated from the measurements given in the town records (Judd,

"History of Hadley" p. 275) as 111 acres. When Hannah Boltwood deeded her farm to her son-in-law, John Field, in 1750, the two deeds (Springfield 5-201, 202) transfer 111 acres.

The houses of several of the men who have been mentioned in the foregoing article may be located from the old map of Amherst. John Field's house is shown on the northwest King's Highway, where it still stands, known as the Stockbridge House. The house of Oliver Cowles still stands as the Homestead, and that of Simeon Strong, Esq. is still known as the Old Strong House. Gideon Henderson's house stood nearly opposite John Field's and John Field, Jr.'s a short distance farther south. John Nash lived just south of the Meeting House. Moses Cook lived on the next farm south of John Field, though the name given on the map is Moses "Bascom," corrected in pencil to read "Cook." John Field's house is apparently labeled Lieut. Jono Field. The supposed date of the map, 1772, may be questioned from the fact that John Field was not commissioned Lieutenant until 1773.

The map shows the house of a Lieut. John Field at the southwest corner of Pleasant and Amity Streets, but this is an obvious error. The town records ("History of Amherst" II-121) of 1788 mention land "at the west end of Esq. Strong's lot near Jonathan Field's dwelling hous." The only Jonathan Field of Amherst named in the Field genealogy is Jonathan, younger son of Lieut. John, who became twenty-one in 1781 and is on record (Springfield 26-244) as owning land "bounded north upon a common or town road" in 1784.

