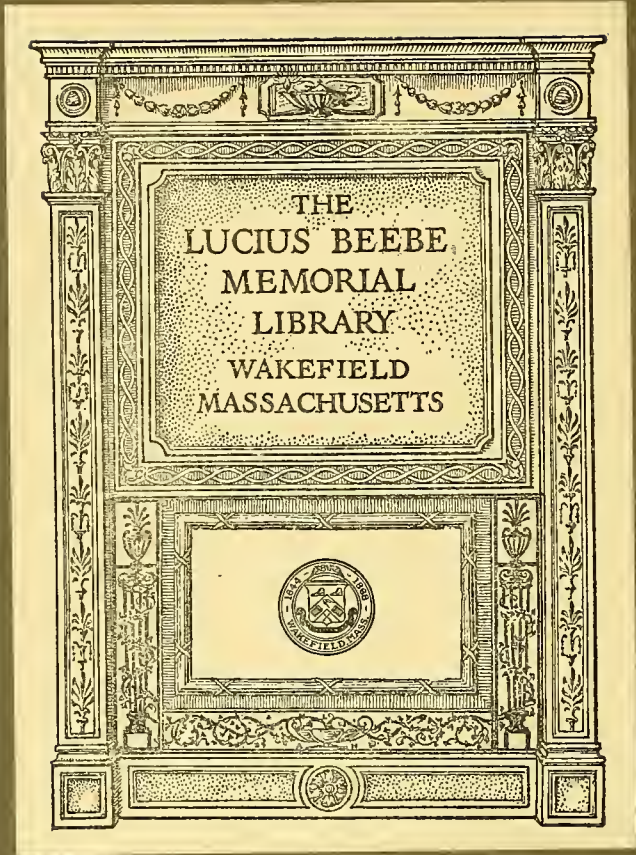


A TABLOID HISTORY  
OF THE  
TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

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## A TABLOID HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WAKEFIELD.

Condensed by Arthur A. Fulton of  
the Teaching Staff of the  
Wakefield High School.

### Foreword.

The chapters which follow were originally written for use in the author's classes in Community Civics in the Wakefield High School. They are, therefore, written in simple language which boys and girls from twelve to fifteen years of age may understand.

The aim throughout has been to inspire boys and girls of Wakefield with an interest and pride in their town and to teach them such facts about the town's government that will help to make them useful citizens.

No claim to originality is made in writing this brief history of Wakefield for the author is greatly indebted to many who have prepared historical papers from time to time and to which he has had access; much material also has been taken from Mr. Lilley Eaton's History of Reading published in 1872. Many of the facts concerning the past fifty years were obtained from the files of the Wakefield Daily Item.

The very purpose for which these chapters have been written forbids the including of a great wealth of historical data which is, of course, available; only a few facts taken here and there from the life of the people can be presented. It is earnestly hoped that the story of the town may prove interesting to those who read it.

(Signed) Arthur A. Fulton.

Wakefield, Mass.  
August, 1923.

### CHAPTER I. -- INTRODUCTION.

Most of us take more or less pride in the town or city in which we live. Now and then we meet people who express a dislike for their "home town" and we look upon them as belonging to an unfortunate minority, for by far the largest majority of people are happy in their own community and stand up for it in face of criticism.

If we were asked for a reason for our pride in our town, some of us would find difficulty in finding a ready answer. The fact is, we like our town because it is our town, just as the people of every other town take pride in their town for the same reason. It is just as natural for us to think that our town is the best town in the country as it is to think that our mother is the best mother. Because we are seldom called upon to give a reason we do not think much about it.

Considerable criticism of our public school education in the United States has been expressed because of the lack of emphasis placed upon our American institutions and the failure to develop an enthusiasm for the United States such as permeates the education in European schools. It is because of this fact that Community Civics has become a much more important subject in the curriculum during the past decade. We are trying to develop a wholesome kind of patriotism, not only national but also local, and to do this we must learn the facts of our history, both of the country and of the community.





Chapter I. Cont.

There are several dangers in studying history with this purpose in mind. First, it would be very easy to develop a kind of patriotism which would disregard the rights and feelings of others. We can see this in the intense love for the "Fatherland" which developed in Germany to her own destruction and injury to the whole world. We are, after all, creatures of circumstance. If you were born in Wakefield, it was not from choice - it was your good fortune. If your family moved to Wakefield after you were born, it was not upon your advice nor at your request. Few of us have looked over the country and chosen Wakefield because it seemed to be in our judgment the "best town". In the words of the frivolous song: "We're here because we're here".

We do not, therefore, wish to develop for a moment any feeling that Wakefield is the only place in which to live. Had we been born and bred in some other town our feeling would probably be quite the same toward that town as it is now toward Wakefield. We do not wish to make our neighbors and friends in other communities feel that we think they have met with misfortune in not being a resident or citizen of Wakefield. That is a kind of false patriotism which has outlived its day. There are still signs of such a spirit in certain sections of our country today, noticeably New York City and California. One cannot help noting a feeling of local snobbishness and superiority in talking with some of the natives of these places.

This does not mean that a spirit of friendly rivalry between communities is not to be encouraged; it is rather a most desirable thing; just as in athletics between rival schools, there is an educational factor. Keen competition and rivalry of the right kind are bound to bring good results and mean progress to the communities. It is only when such rivalry becomes full of hate and envy and breeds ill-will toward our fellowmen that it becomes dangerous. The study of local history must not develop that kind of spirit.

In the second place, the study of a long and notable history such as that of our town might easily have the tendency to make us "rest on our laurels". Communities like individuals may well beware of living on their reputation. We should rather in the study of our "glorious past" realize the responsibility to "carry on". As the possessors of a goodly heritage, made possible through the sacrifice and hard struggle of our ancestors, we have a duty to perform. We must pass on to those who come after, a fairer and better town for our having lived here.

While it is true that Wakefield is a very old town, much older than the United States itself, yet we must remember that in the history of civilization, it is comparatively young. We, like all Americans, are indebted to the peoples of the Old World for customs, laws, art, architecture, music and religion. Our ancestors were not "white savages" like the red men whom they found here; they were highly civilized men and women, who, transplanted here in America, were destined to make great strides in the progress of the human race.

We have suggested that the Indian was in possession of the land when our forefathers came here nearly three hundred years ago. How long they lived here or where they came from, history has not revealed. We do know that long before the time when our story begins, a race of men lived in this community, hunted in our woods, fished in our lakes, and walked and ran in our very streets. They like the red men of other parts of America gave way to the stronger white men and have now passed into obscurity.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

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Chapter II.The First Settlers.

In order to understand the story of the founding of any town, it is necessary to know a little about the founders and about the early history of the localities nereby.

As suggested in the previous chapter, long before the white man came to America, a race of red men lived here for how long no one knows. Our history must, therefore, begin, as does all history with written records. In 1629, a settlement was made on the Atlantic Coast near the present cities of Lynn and Salem. The settlers were not members of the "Pilgrim Band" which had settled at Plymouth, but were the sturdy Puritans, who, like the Pilgrims had come to the New World for religious freedom, although they were still "within" the Established Church which the Pilgrims had left.

The "Council of New England" had deeded a tract to Sir Henry Rosewell, Sir John Knight, John Endicott and others which extended from the Charles River to the Merrimac and reached inland to the "South Sea" (meaning possibly the Pacific Ocean). Later in order to insure their political rights they obtained a charter under the name of the "Province of Massachusetts Bay". It was under this charter that a grant of an inland tract of land was made to certain settlers from Lynn in 1639 and which comprised the territory now known as Wakefield and Reading.

We are led to believe that these settlers chose this site because of its natural beauty and the utility of the lakes. The Saugus tribe of Indians were living hereabouts and naturally had title to the land. Just what arrangements were made with them or what relation existed between them and the settlers we do not know for there are no authentic records covering this period. In 1686, however the settlers obtained a deed to the land from the chiefs of the tribe for the sum of ten pounds. This deed included all the land from the coast inland and is on file at Salem. It is signed by DAVID KUNKAMOOSHAW, ABIGAIL KUNKAMOOSHAW, CICELY, alias SU GEORGE, JAMES QUONOPHIT, and MARY QUONOPHIT. (See Eaton's History of Reading). It is interesting to note that James Quonopohit was the only one actually to sign his name to the deed, the others having been obliged to make their marks. This James Quonopohit later became a member of John Elliott's "praying band" and it was for him that Lake Quannapowitt was named.

This grant of this inland tract in 1639 was made to the settlers on condition that they should "make good proceeding in planting so as it may be a village, fit to contain a convenient number of inhabitants which may in time have a church there". The name of "Linn Village" was given to it.

It is evident that the settlers fulfilled the conditions imposed for in 1644 a charter was granted and the name changed from "Linn Village" to "Redding". This latter name was evidently after Reading in England from which it is probable some of the settlers had come to this country. Unfortunately several pages of the early records have been destroyed so that no details of the first few years can be given. We do not know, therefore, who the very first settlers were but Mr. Lilley Eaton, in his History of Reading gives the following list of inhabitants of the town as early as 1644:



Chapter II. Cont.

Nicholas Brown.  
 Thomas Clark.  
 William Cowdrey.  
 John Damon.  
 George Davis.  
 Robert Dunton.  
 Samuel Dunton  
 Josiah Dustin.  
 Jonas Eaton.  
 William Eaton.  
 Zackery Fitch.  
 Isaac Hart.  
 Thomas Hartshorn.  
 William Hooper.  
 Thomas Kendall.

John Laukin.  
 Thomas Marshall.  
 William Martin.  
 John Pearson.  
 John Poole.  
 Thomas Parker.  
 Francis Smith.  
 John Smith.  
 Jeremy Swain.  
 Edward Taylor.  
 Thomas Taylor.  
 Richard Walker.  
 Samuel Walker.  
 John Wiley.

These are all good old English names and it is interesting to note that many of them are still preserved in our town after nearly three hundred years, although this does not mean that all the families bearing "old" names attempt to claim that they are descendants from the original settlers. Just how many people in Wakefield claim to have "come over in the Mayflower" we do not know, nor have we a record to show just how many are lineal descendants of the above-named settlers. It is certain that none can make both claims.

Chapter III.Early Years.

One of the very earliest records of the town tell of a contract made between the town and one of the settlers, John Poole, in 1644, which gave to Poole the exclusive right to maintain a mill to grind corn for the inhabitants on certain days of the week. Poole later opened a saw-mill which was located near the present site of the rattan factory.

The settlers being very religious, it is not surprising to find that much attention was given to the establishment and maintenance of a church. The first church was organized in 1644, one of the very early churches in the colony, and a meetinghouse was subsequently built. The exact location of this meetinghouse is uncertain but it was not far from the present corner of Main and Albion streets. It was a crude building of logs and was occupied until 1689 when a larger and more commodious meetinghouse was built on a spot near the present Congregational Church which is the fifth building of the original parish.

It is to be observed that the early history of the town and that of the parish (the church society) is identical. Not until nearly a century later was there a complete separation of "church and state". Consequently the early town records contain many laws and edicts having to do with church worship, the use and care of the meetinghouse and its maintenance. While we are prone to say that the early colonists came to America for "freedom to worship God" yet there was quite the opposite of religious liberty. Their views were narrow and they were severe in dealing with those who differed with them.



Chapter III. Cont.

The records of the town contain many interesting anecdotes showing the business sagacity of the settlers and alas their religious intolerance. In 1646, for instance, we read of William Whitter summoned by a grand jury "to make public confession on the following Lord's Day" for having expressed an opinion against one of the practices of the church. Again in 1651, we read that three Baptists were arrested on a charge of disturbing the peace when, in fact, they were holding a prayer meeting in the house of one of the number. They were taken to Boston, kept in jail for two weeks, and later fined by the court. One of them refused to pay the fine and was accordingly locked up in jail for two months and finally released after he had been given thirty stripes. This kind of persecution reached its climax in 1656 and again in 1661 when two women were executed, one for practising witchcraft and the other for her heretical doctrines.

In 1645, it was voted to have a general division of the land among the inhabitants for it had been held in common up to this time. The Common, which has been kept throughout the years as public property, was the common pasture land for many years and the inhabitants were allowed to cut down trees on it for building and for fire wood under certain restrictions.

In 1651, an additional tract of land was given to the settlers by the General Court, which is now the town of North Reading. It was for many years called the "North Precinct". The present town of Reading was called "Wood End" because it was thickly wooded.

A great variety of problems vexed these sturdy men and women although whatever influence they may have had at home the women had nothing whatever to do with the town's government. In 1649, three married women were fined for "scolding", and a man was fined for "swearing". The two cases do not necessarily have any connection except that they appear in the same record. Another interesting record of the same time is one in which the following edict is given: "If any males of less property than two hundred pounds wear gold or silver lace or buttons, or points at their knees, or walk in great boots (because leather is scarce) and if any females, not possessed of two hundred pounds, wear silk or tiffany hoods or scarfs, they shall be prosecuted and fined".

All these problems were met and settled, laws passed, permits given and grants made first by the common consent of a meeting of the settlers and in later years by a Board of Selectmen elected by them. Thus democracy had its beginnings in our midst and people learned to govern themselves not always without strife and divisions and contests but by rule of the majority, one of the principles of our government.

Chapter IV.Colonial Days.

It is difficult to realize that for considerably over a century this town was part of a colonial government, subject to the British Crown, years before the United States as a nation was even dreamed of. It is difficult, also, to realize that Wakefield, bounded as it is at the present time by towns and cities on all sides, was once a frontier village. The first settlers were pioneers into an unknown wilderness and for many years they were at the inland border of the white man's civilization.

PHILOSOPHY

The following is a list of the books and articles published by the University of Chicago Press during the year 1954. The list is arranged in alphabetical order of the author's name. The titles of the books and articles are given in full, and the names of the authors and editors are given in full. The prices of the books and articles are given in dollars and cents. The list is intended to provide a comprehensive record of the work published by the University of Chicago Press during the year 1954.



Chapter IV. Cont.

As early as 1645 a military company had been formed and all the young men were required to receive instruction in the use of small fire-arms and of bow and arrows so that the colonists would be amply protected against the Indians. The town furnished its quota for the famous "King Philip's War" and paid its share in the cost. The fear of the Indians was constant and at one time was so great that the building of a great wall or stockade was proposed.

One of the first bits of dissension that occurred in the town arose over the election of a captain of militia. The two contestants were Captains Swain and Poole, both capable men and both sons of first settlers. Captain Swain won the final election although only after a bitter contest during which the General Court was appealed to.

In 1676, Captain Swain was ordered to take a company and assist the colonists in the western part of the state at Hadley, Hatfield and Deerfield, in their stand against the Indians. This meant a journey by foot or horse of over one hundred miles but it was cheerfully taken, we assume, although no record of this campaign appears. One of the early commanders of the "Reading Infantry Company" was Captain Richard Walker. An early historian wrote the following lines regarding his record as an Indian fighter in the campaign at Saugus:

"He fought the Eastern Indians there  
Whose poisoned arrows filled the air,  
And two of which these savage foes  
Lodged safe in Captain Walker's clothes".

The Indians were evidently a source of considerable annoyance hereabouts but we find few records of actual attacks upon the inhabitants.

In 1680, the town was criticized by the General Court because it had no grammar school. It is presumed that immediate attention was given to the matter and some sort of school established. The first public record gives 1692 as the date when the town voted money to Master Brown for a school. Master Brown was a well-educated and very influential citizen and was probably the first schoolmaster.

The next year the town made an appropriation for a "free school" and was divided into three districts in which schools were established. These original districts comprised the territory now called Wakefield, Reading and North Reading. For a long time there was but one teacher who divided his time among these three schools, teaching a few weeks in each one.

It seems probable that a schoolhouse was built about 1700 but no exact date is given although in 1707 the records say repairs were made so that we are sure the building was erected prior to that time. This school stood close to the first meetinghouse (present corner of Albion and Main streets). The schools were under the control of the parish and later the several parishes and the money appropriated by them until 1780, when the appropriations were made from the town's funds.

In 1713, the North Precinct, having grown of sufficient size, was set off as a separate parish, called the "second parish". It was voted to give the North Precinct the sum of thirty pounds "one-half when they have finished the meetinghouse and the other half when they build a ministerial home". In 1720, a number of members of the first parish were dismissed at their request to join the Lynn End Parish (Lynnfield). In 1725, Stoneham (then called Charlestown End) was incorporated. In 1730, the town voted the sum of seventeen pounds a year for the support of preaching at Woodend (now Reading) for a term of ten years.



Chapter IV. Cont.

These facts show how the town began to break up into precincts, parishes, and finally into separate towns. Wakefield rightly claims, therefore, to be the mother town of several of the surrounding towns.

Chapter V.The Revolutionary War.

One of the first records of the town's sharing in the colony's unrest is a petition sent to the representative in the General Court in 1765, urging him to use his influence to secure the repeal of the notorious "Stamp Act". In the petition was an expression of loyalty to "our Gracious Sovereign" and sincere regard for the British Parliament. They concluded the petition with the statement that they were merely seeking the rights of free-born Englishmen.

During the few years following all "national" questions seem to have been overshadowed by the local differences which finally resulted in the establishment of the "third parish" at Woodend. But in 1773, a second petition to the representative in the General Court was made urging him to use every effort to secure redress of the grievances suffered by the colonists and urging an early and harmonious settlement of the differences between Great Britain and the colonists. In June of the following year, the town appointed a committee to inquire into the situation which was daily growing more acute, and to make recommendations. The report recommended what we would in modern terms call "watchful waiting". In December the town voted to adopt the sentiments of the Continental Congress as their own and "strictly to adhere to them".

When war was declared in 1775 the colonists here as elsewhere threw themselves with enthusiasm into the conflict. The town furnished more than four hundred men for the army during the war besides the minute men and those drafted to do guard duty of various kinds. It is impossible to chronicle here the details of this long struggle which taxed the resources of the colonists sorely. A few facts of interest, however, are given to show that Wakefield in her country's War for Independence as in every emergency was not lacking in support.

On April 19, at the battles of Lexington and Concord, a goodly number of the citizens of Reading took part. An interesting and doubtless true story is told of Reuben Eaton, a young man and the son of one of the early families. Young Eaton, being fond of hunting, was skilled in the use of his gun and a crack shot. In their retreat from Concord, the British were hotly pursued by the colonists and Eaton, getting in advance of the retreating British, concealed himself by the roadside and shot down a number of the enemy. He was in grave danger at one time, for upon discovering his hiding place, the British soldiers fired several shots at him. He fell forward, face down, as if dead, and the firing ceased. When he deemed it safe he started up again only to be fired upon again, whereupon he fell forward to the ground as before. A second time he jumped up and this time ran to safety and it is reported that the British soldiers exclaimed: "See that Yankee, we have killed him twice, and look, he can run yet!"



Chapter V. Cont.

In November, 1775, the inhabitants of Reading were called upon to assist in furnishing wood for the army. There was a ready response although difficulty was encountered because of the scarcity of labor - there being over one hundred men already in the army. The town voted, however, to supply about forty cords of wood each week. Other supplies were stored in the meetinghouse and sent to the army from time to time.

Following the battle of Bunker Hill and the subsequent fire in Charlestown, a number of residents of Charlestown, together with large numbers from Medford, Malden, Salem and elsewhere moved to Reading presumably for protection. These families added a great burden to the community and interfered for a time with the usual support which had been given to the army. Relief from this burden was finally sought from the Court.

An interesting anecdote of the battle of Bunker Hill is told of Amos Upton, one of the inhabitants of Reading, who in the retreat of the Americans, ran so fast that his queue (an appendage often worn by young men of the day) "stuck out straight behind" and as one historian observes "they were glorious even in retreat".

In May, 1776, the town voted relative to the resolutions for independence "to adhere to the determination of Congress and stand by it to the last with lives and fortunes". This was fully two months before the final adoption of the Declaration of Independence. In 1778, the town concurred in the adoption of the Articles of Confederation as presented for approval by the General Court.

During these eventful years the town was called upon continually for food and supplies and for men and for their training. Citizens of Reading took part in nearly all of the decisive battles of the war and were loyal to the colonial government and to their stand for independence from the first.

Chapter VI.Incorporation As South Reading.

Having won their independence the colonists turned much of their attention to purely local affairs and records show that considerable progress along the line of education was made in the next half century. In 1799, three new schools were built in the first parish. The central school was built at the northerly end of the Common and had a floor space 28 ft. by 24 ft. It had a gallery for the use of the committee at exhibitions and would probably seat about one hundred people. There was a set of old-fashioned hay scales on one side of the building with large frames from which chains were hung. These, it is said, were used by the pupils, for gymnastic exercises at recess. This building was used for school purposes and for town meetings until 1834. The building in the south district was in Greenwood (near Oak street) and the building in the east district was in Montrose, although the names of these districts came later.

Although in 1791 it was voted not to hire "schooldames" to teach in the public schools, yet in 1792 a woman was hired to teach and women have taught continuously since that time. In 1792 a regular school committee was elected and since that date the schools have been in charge of a duly elected committee. The first school report on record is that



Chapter VI. Cont.

of 1798 and was as follows:

"That the Committee have visited the several schools and have the satisfaction to observe that our youth have made proficiency equal to our expectations."

The report is certainly brief and to the point.

The War of 1812 did not have the united sympathy as did the first struggle with England. The whole country was divided as to the wisdom of engaging in another conflict. Although George Washington had advised against it, the colonists had formed political parties and party feeling had become very bitter. The first or south parish was almost unanimously of the Democratic-Republican Party while the other two parishes were very strong Federalists. The feeling between the parties has never been so bitter since that time and we cannot realize that a mere difference in party politics could cause such prejudice and ill-feeling.

Mr. John Damon, of the west parish was quoted as saying that if he were obliged to fight he would start on the residents of the first parish whom he said he "deemed worse than the British". On the other hand, Cornelius Sweetser, of the first parish, said of the Federalists: "Federalists, they all ought to be damned,- except some few of my acquaintance, who do not know enough".

The result of this unfortunate split in the town was the petition of the first parish to be incorporated as a separate town of South Reading which was granted in 1812. In spite of the opposition to the war, both the parishes which opposed it were most loyal in their support of the government, once war was declared, and willingly furnished their quota in both men and supplies.

South Reading received considerable of a shock in 1814 when it suddenly found itself transferred from the Middlesex Representative District to the Essex North District. A hasty and urgent appeal to the legislature resulted to its being restored to its original district the following year.

The organization of a Baptist Society in 1798 followed closely by the organization of a Universalist Society shows the growing tolerance of the times although the relations between the various churches were stained, to say the least. In 1829, the South Reading Academy was established as a preparatory school for the Baptist Theological School at Newton. It was, however, open to all children of the town and flourished for a time and paved the way for the establishment of a public high school in 1845. The Academy building was finally sold to the town in 1849. In 1860, a regular course of study was arranged and the first class to complete it graduated in 1863, twelve pupils receiving diplomas.

Just 200 years after the incorporation of the town as "Redding" the Boston and Maine Railroad extended its line from Wilmington to Boston and on July 4, 1845, the first regular passenger trains were operated. The town fathers had estimated that there would be about thirty regular passengers daily. The first available record shows that there was a daily average of 146 passengers in 1848. Conservative estimates place the number of commuters from Wakefield to Boston alone, at the present time, as well over two thousand. The branch roads to Danvers and Salem were subsequently built and eventually became part of the Boston and Maine System. The branch road to Salem is still listed in the time table as the "South Reading Branch".





Chapter VI. Cont.

The opening of the first railroad marks the beginning of the industrial life of the town and to the advent of the railroad we owe much of our progress as a town. The rattan business developed by Cyrus Wakefield, Sr., about this time has grown to be the largest industry. Other industries followed and Wakefield became an industrial town, instead of the farming community it was before the days of the railroad.

Chapter VII.Civil War Days.

The town grew rapidly in the middle of the nineteenth century and the records tell of the erection of many houses, schools and other buildings. In 1847, the names of many of our present streets were officially adopted by the town. The name, "Wappahtuck" was given to what is now Crystal Lake. From time to time new streets were laid out and named and the various sections were given their present names instead of being designated as wards or "ends". Greenwood and Montrose were the names given to the south and east wards respectively while Woodville had long had its present title.

In 1856, St. Joseph's Church was organized and a church building erected near the site of the present church. It is the only church to have retained practically its original location. The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1865 but did not erect a building until 1874. Emmanuel Church was organized in 1871, an edifice built in 1881, on Water Street, and the present location taken ten years later, the old church being moved to this site. Both the Methodists and the Episcopalians used the Universalist Church for services for a time, the Methodist finally hiring Albion Hall which they used for several years before they built the present edifice.

When the threatening news of war came early in 1861, South Reading stood ready to answer her country's call. Ten years before this, the Richardson Light Guard, a company of infantry, had been formed. It was named after Dr. Solon Richardson, who presented it with five hundred dollars and who, during his lifetime was an interested friend of the organization. It may be of interest to boys taking military drill that this company had five commissioned officers; a captain and four lieutenants.

When in January, 1861, the Governor of Massachusetts asked how many of the company would be ready to answer a call the company responded to a man. Those were days of anxious waiting. It is a singular co-incidence that the call came on April 19th, the same day that the first call had come in the Revolutionary War. The first one had sent them to Lexington and Concord, only a few miles away, this second call of April 19, 1861, sent them to the capital of the country. Amid the ringing of bells, and with a rousing farewell reception on the Common the company left the town for its three months' enlistment where it did valiant service in protecting the city of Washington from the enemy. The company also took part in the first Battle of Bull Run where several of the members were captured. These prisoners were released later and returned home on June 14, 1862.



Chapter VII. Cont.

In July, 1861, a company of volunteers ("three year men") was recruited from South Reading and the surrounding towns and attached to the Sixteenth Massachusetts Regiment and after a few weeks' training left for the South where the local soldiers served in many engagements.

In 1862 the Richardson Light Guard again enlisted for a period of nine months and together with a company from Reading and Wilmington went to Boxford for training. They were both attached to the 50th Massachusetts Infantry and served until August, 1863, when they returned home. Again in 1864 this company enlisted for a term of one hundred days and this time were sent to Baltimore, returning at the close of the war.

There were many individual responses to the numerous calls for volunteers during the long struggle and well over five hundred men served in the Union Army, some twenty of whom never returned. Not only with men but with money and supplies the town aided in the cause. The sum of ten thousand dollars was raised by subscription and families of soldiers were supported and gifts to hospitals made.

The following verses are taken from a song sung to the tune of "America" at the reception given to the Richardson Light Guard when the prisoners returned home after the first campaign. The words were written by Hon. P. H. Sweetser for the occasion:

"Land that our fathers trod,  
The favored land of God,  
Light of the age!  
Foul treason doth defame,  
And with its tongues of shame  
Becloud thy glorious name,  
Thy history's page!

May heaven our efforts bless,  
And crown them with success,  
Hence evermore.  
O, let our watchwords be  
Union and Liberty  
And Death or Victory,  
Till time is o'er!

Through God's preserving care,  
His bounties still we share,  
And hither come  
To greet our sons who gave  
Bold fight our land to save!  
Welcome, ye tried and brave!  
Thrice welcome home!

An excellent description of the details of this period is given in Eaton's History of Reading (page 574).



Chapter VIII.South Reading Becomes Wakefield.

For a long time before the days of the Civil War the people of the town had desired a change of name because of the feeling toward the town of Reading and because of the fact that strangers were led to think that South Reading was a part of Reading. The name of Winthrop was proposed but for some reason was not adopted. In 1868, Mr. Cyrus Wakefield, long one of the town's most influential citizens, offered to build a new town hall. In view of this generous gift, the town voted to petition the Legislature for permission to change its name to Wakefield which was granted. At the same time Mr. Lucius Beebe made a generous contribution to the public library which was to be housed in the town hall and the trustees voted to adopt the name of "Beebe Public Library of Wakefield".

In the year 1872, the town dedicated a new high school (now the Lafayette School) which was one of the finest buildings of its kind in New England. We are apt to think of it as an old building, over-crowded and unsatisfactory, yet we must remember that it was in its day a model of its kind and the people who went to the dedication in 1872 were doubtless as much impressed with the "modern" features of it as we were fifty years later when the present school was opened.

Without doubt one of the finest pieces of architecture in Wakefield is the Congregational Church. A stone church much similar to the present church was built in 1890 which was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1909. The present church was dedicated in 1912. This fire and the famous Cutler fire (corner Main and Water Streets) were the most serious in the history of the town. The result of the burning of the old Armory, at this time, however, was the building of a new Armory a few years later by the State.

Once more in 1898, the people of Wakefield were called upon to aid the country in a war. The Richardson Light Guard under the leadership of Capt. Gihon was mustered at South Framingham on May 12, 1898 and after a brief period of training embarked on the "Yale" on July 8th for the active participation in the war. The company saw considerable service in the brief duration of the war and returned home on October 27 and were mustered out of service early in 1899.

One of the many generous gifts which Wakefield has received from her citizens is the beautiful Soldiers' Monument which was given to the town by Harriet N. Flint. The monument is a massive granite shaft, costing \$10,000 and was dedicated in 1902.

The Y.M.C.A. building was built in 1908 with money raised by subscriptions from the citizens of the town. Many of the other buildings of the town including the bank and other business blocks were built during the last years of the nineteenth or the early years of the twentieth century.

With the advent of the automobile, the trolley lines which had been developed in practically all directions have either been abandoned or service curtailed. As the trolley car replaced the horse car so the automobile is taking the place of the trolley.



Chapter VIII. Cont.

The Wakefield Banner, the original newspaper of the town was established in 1838, and was eventually succeeded by the Wakefield Daily Item. These newspapers have chronicled the progress of the community, advertised its stores and places of business, and done much to mold public opinion upon civic questions. They have given loyal support to every enterprise for the benefit of the town throughout the years and the "Item" is one of the "institutions" of the town without which the town would not know how to get along.

Chapter IX.

The World War And Since.

When we come to the days of the World War, we come to days within the memory of all. To some of us, it seems like a dream and yet for a few years it was an awful reality. When in August 1914 the world was informed of an outbreak of hostilities between two European countries, little did we realize that it would engage the forces of nearly every nation of consequence on the globe. But as the clouds grew blacker and blacker, every town and city began to prepare itself for the crash when it should come. Within a few hours from the time the news came that America had declared war on April 6, 1917, the Richardson Light Guard was ready to leave for immediate duty. In August, the company was formally inducted into the service of the United States and was early in the conflict.

There were enlistments also in many branches of the service and a ready response to the draft orders issued by the government. Wakefield had no room for slackers and patriotism was at high tide. In every walk of life men and women did their "bit" in helping the government, whether it was in a Liberty Loan drive, or Red Cross, or Home Guard, or the conservation of food, or a war garden. For two years in France and in the camps on this side, Wakefield youths served their country faithfully and well.

The women and girls of the town did splendid work in the Red Cross units organized in Wakefield. The estate of the late Cyrus Wakefield, which was torn down when the new high school was built, was made the headquarters of the Red Cross work which consisted largely of the making of surgical dressings and other material used in the hospitals and camps.

Wakefield came in direct contact with thousands of men in uniform who were sent to the Rifle Range for training. These young men came here from all parts of the United States for a period of two or three weeks and were tendered many courtesies by the townspeople and by various organizations.

When the news of the Armistice came on that eventful day in November 1918, bells and whistles joined with those all over this land, rejoicing that soon the boys would come marching home. During the two years of hostilities twenty-nine Wakefield boys paid the supreme price with their lives and nearly one hundred came home wounded.

On October 13, 1919, a grand "Welcome Home" celebration was held by the town for the hundreds of returned service men. It will be long remembered as one of the greatest events in the town's history. Many of these men had been cited for bravery by other countries and by the United States government but this was the recognition of the "home town" to the boys who had gone out at their country's call. To each was presented a





Chapter IX. Cont.

bronze medal with the town seal on one side and words of recognition of the service on the other.

The year 1923 will stand out in the annals of the town as a year of signal progress. The opening of the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, the gift of Mr. Junius Beebe, and the subsequent gifts to it by members of the family, was a notable event. Following closely afterwards was the dedication of the new high school building which gives to Wakefield one of the most modern buildings in the country. The announcement of the Wakefield Trust Company of plans to erect a large bank at the corner of Main and Chestnut Streets will add another fine building in the business district.

Thus we have traced briefly the history of Wakefield through various crises and in its onward march and growth. Wakefield combines the suburban characteristics of the bedroom of a great city with no small industrial and agricultural activity of its own. It is near a large city, yet it is an ideal "small town". It has natural beauty in its lakes and shaded streets, easy facility to the shore and to the city; a government as democratic as any in the world, yet near enough the metropolitan area to receive some of its benefits. Wakefield is not a perfect town. It may be questioned whether it is wise to apply the much used slogan "the best town" but Wakefield is a good town in which to live; we are proud of its history and proud to be living here. It is our duty to make Wakefield grow "better and better in every way."

The End.











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