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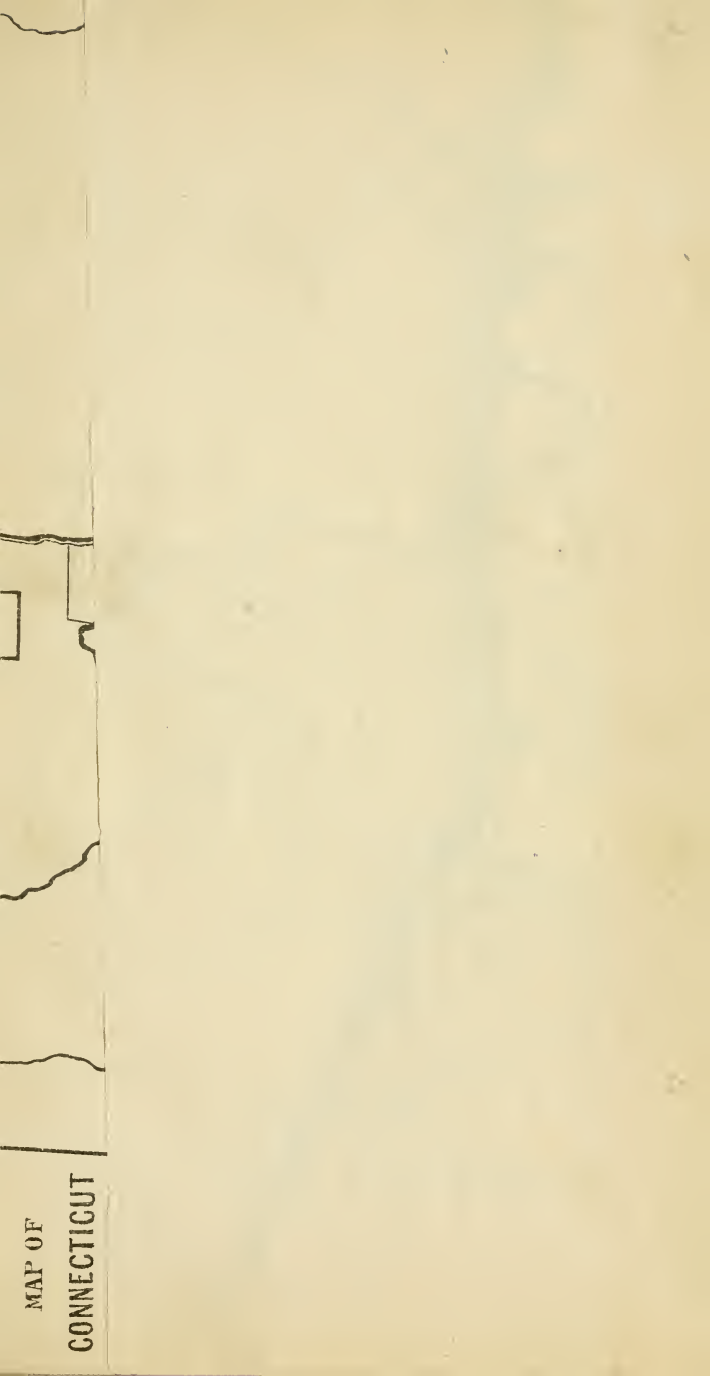
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MAP OF

CONNECTICUT



HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
M E R I D E N .

Cover

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BY G. W. PERKINS.



WEST MERIDEN:  
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1849.

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## PREFACE.

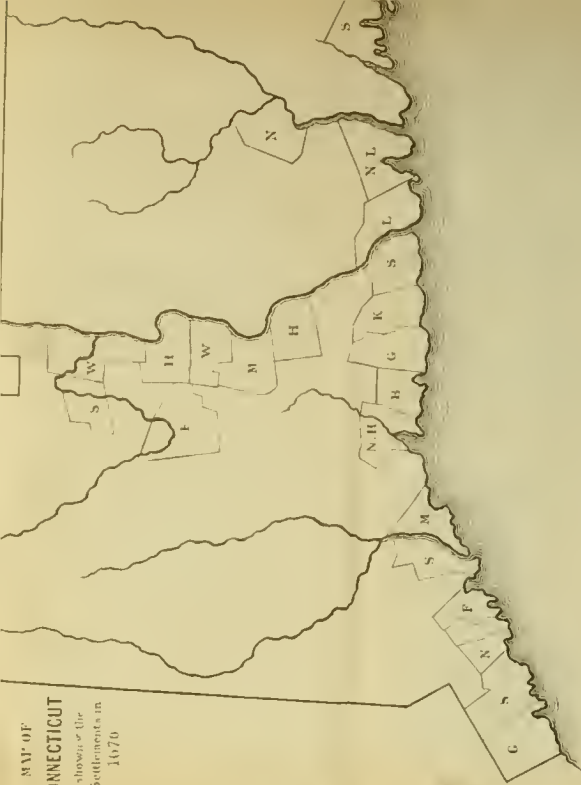
The compiler of the following pages, prepared a few historical sketches or reminiscences of Meriden, as a substitute for a Thanksgiving sermon; for the dreary sight of empty seats, on those annual occasions, in a house usually full, left him no heart to *preach* on that day. Quite to his astonishment, the hearers were enough interested in the sketches to ask for their publication, with such additions as might be accessible. With the expectation that a day or two spent in inquiries and reading, would enable him to comply with the wishes of his hearers, he began to prepare a few pages for the press. But he soon found himself involved in an expenditure of time and labor even for the meagre sketches here presented utterly inconceivable, to one who has not himself been enticed into local antiquarian researches. But unwilling to abandon what he had commenced, he has ransacked old documents, searched libraries, employed others to search for him, among whom he is specially indebted to Mr. Edwin Hubbard, run to and fro, from one "oldest inhabitant" to another, and after all has made a little book, which will probably be deemed unsatisfactory, and bearing little resemblance to the sermon out of which it sprung, except in the homiletic fragments, which may be found here and there in it. Although there are few formal references to names, books and documents, as authori-

MAP OF

# CONNECTICUT

showing the  
Settlements in

1676





ties for the statements on the following pages, on account of the space which would have been thereby filled, yet nothing has been stated for which the writer had not the best evidence, accessible to him at the time.

No one can be more sensible than the compiler, that many of the facts here printed, are very insignificant, and can have no possible interest out of our own neighborhood. Many perhaps will think that he has wasted paper and ink on trash; or on trifles at least. But he has inserted nothing but what had some interest for himself as a citizen of Meriden: and therefore he hopes it may gratify the curiosity of his neighbors and fellow-citizens. The history of a town like ours, must be a history of details; and transactions which seem to be trifles are sometimes the best indications of the principles and condition of community.

As Meriden was not a "town" until 1806, these pages embrace an account of the town of which we formed a part—Wallingford—until, Meriden became a distinct community as an ecclesiastical society, in 1729. Hence the reader will observe that the phrase "the town," "our town," &c. sometimes includes Wallingford.

The spelling, punctuation, and capitals, of the old documents have been exactly copied, in all those cases in which the reader finds any deviation from our modern modes of writing.

The Map is a mere Outline, only designed to show distinctly how few and feeble were the settlements in Connecticut, when Wallingford was settled.

## SKETCHES, & C.

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PSALMS 80: 8, 9, 10. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it and didst cause it to take deep root and it filled the land: the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

THIS brief and graphic sketch of Judea, is truthfully descriptive of the origin and growth of New England. Feeble at first like a transplanted vine, with a struggling and precarious existence, it has grown up to a strength, wealth and power, which neither friends nor enemies dreamed of. The history of each town is but a miniature copy of the history of the whole. Beginning in poverty, feebleness and hardship, many of these little territories have arrived at a degree of prosperity and improvement, in strong contrast with their early insignificance. To these facts my own mind always reverts with deep interest and grateful emotions. I have thought therefore, that I could not supply your minds with materials of more pleasant recollections, nor with better incentives to devout Thanksgiving this day, than by sketching the early history of our town. The latitude in the selection of topics usually allowed to the pulpit on occasions like these must be my apology for the introduction of some matters, not appropriate to the Sabbath.

Before the settlement of the white men, our town, of course, like all other parts of America was occupied or claimed by the Indians who lived or hunted here. My narrative will therefore naturally commence with tracing the transfer of these lands to the original white inhabitants.

#### PURCHASE OF INDIAN LANDS.

That part of our town which lies south of a line drawn east and west through the village of West Meriden, was very early purchased of the Indians, by the original settlers of New Haven. It appears that these settlers, in 1638, bought of "Momaugin, the Indian Sachem of Quinopiocke" and others of his council, the tract of land on which New Haven now stands, extending several miles to the northward,\* and embracing probably North Haven, also. In the same year 1638, they bought of "Mantowese, living at Mattabesick"—[or as it is usually spelt, Mattabesitt, being the tribe then living at and about the present city of Middletown,] "the land on both sides the river Quinnypiock, from the northerly bound of the land lately purchased by the said English of the Quinnypiock Indians, [i. e. extending northward from about the present limits of North Haven] to the head of the river at the great plain [probably Hanover] towards the plantation settled by the English upon the river

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\* Original Deed quoted at length, "Faxon's Historical Discourses, p. 331

of Quinticutt, which is about ten miles in length from north to south,"\* [i. e. was to extend ten miles north from North Haven, towards Hartford on the Connecticut.]

It thus appears that the territory originally called New Haven, was about ten miles wide, and twenty miles long, extending from the sound to just about the point where the village of West Meriden now stands, and embracing the present towns of New Haven, North Haven, Wallingford, and parts of Cheshire and Meriden. Subsequently the north half of this twenty mile tract was set off, as Wallingford.

As we hear much said of the gross frauds and wrongs perpetrated by the original white settlers, in their pretended purchases of land, from the Indians, the true history of these purchases ought to be understood. It is a well known historical fact, that the Indians living upon and west of the Connecticut river, had often suffered terrible defeats from the two most prominent tribes on their borders, the Pequots and Mohawks, and had been indeed grievously oppressed and crushed by them. They lived in constant terror of these formidable warriors. On this account they welcomed the arrival of the English among them. Nay, so desirous were they of English settlements on their territory that before the first settlement was made in the state a deputation of Indians appeared in

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\* Bacon's Historical Discourses. The deed is there copied at length.

Massachusetts,\* *requesting* the people of that state to send a colony and form a plantation among them in Connecticut. So in one of the deeds referred to, it is expressly stated as a reason why they give the deed and *wish the purchasers to settle among them*, "remembering the heavy taxes and imminent dangers lately felt and feared from the Pequots, Mohawks and other Indians in regard of which they durst not stay in their country, but were forced to flee and seek shelter among the English, and observing the safety and ease that other Indians enjoy, near the English, of which benefits they have a comfortable taste already, which with all thankfulness they now acknowledge, they grant," &c., &c., &c.

In this part of the country then, the original settlers were not intruders. It is true that the price or consideration paid for these lands was inconsiderable, when viewed from our stand point. For in one of the deeds alluded to, for a tract as large as Wallingford, Mantowese says "he is satisfied with twelve coats," and only wishes to reserve a small piece of land "for his small company being but ten men in number besides women and children." But the real value of the lands was then small; and the actual settlements of the English among them, were alone sufficient compensation for the territory they occupied.

It further appears from the documents which I have

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\* An account of this affair in Trumbull's history of Connecticut, chap. 2; also, chap. 6. Also in Winthrop's Journal.

examined, that the lands in many instances were bought and paid for, *several times over*. If, after any particular tract had been purchased, some sachem or tribe appeared with a claim to the same land, that title also was bought out, and if again other claimants appeared, the purchase was still made again. Part of Meriden was thus bought again and again. And in 1670, thirty-four years after the city of Hartford had been bought of the Indians, and had become populous, there arising some dispute about the title, the lands in Hartford were bought over again. The documents illustrative of this fact are too long for insertion here, but they are on record. So far were our ancestors from defrauding or wronging the original inhabitants out of these lands.

## ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS.

It thus appears that the south half of Meriden, was originally occupied or rather claimed by a little band of Mattabesitt Indians, not more than fifty in number, all told, and was sold to the original proprietors of New Haven, in 1638.

The north half of Meriden, was also claimed by portions of the same tribe, as I think. For when Farmington was settled by the English there was a band of the Mattabesitt tribe, in the south-east part of that town, probably near to Kensington. A glance at the map will show any one that the tribe which owned the territory at Middletown and Kensington,

and the south part of Meriden, must unquestionably have owned the north part of Meriden, also. It is not probable however that the tract of country embraced within the present limits of our town, was ever occupied by any Indian village. They usually selected the banks of rivers, where there were conveniences for fishing and rich alluvial meadows for cultivation—as the sites of their villages and forts. Accordingly we find them on the rivers “Tunxis” and “Quintecutt” in great numbers, while the hilly, broken country like ours, was used by them merely for hunting purposes. Deer and all kinds of game were plentiful among our hills and swamps; and there are several places, in our town, as at the outlet of Black Pond, where there are indications of beaver, the logs and sticks used for their dams and huts, being still found embedded and preserved in the black earth, with the marks of their teeth still upon them.

At the time of the settlement of New Haven, *Sowheag* was the great Sachem of the Mattabesitt tribe. He had a fort or capital at Middletown, on the high ground near the “narrows,” by the river, and, his power extended over Middletown, Wallingford and Meriden, and small portions of towns adjoining thereto.

#### ORIGIN OF THE NAME.

But the whole country between Hartford and New Haven, though portions of it were embraced within the nominal limits of towns, does not appear to have been

occupied with settlers for many years. A road was indeed cut very early between those two settlements, being the identical road passing through our town, and which we now term the "the old road." So early was it cut through the wilderness, that as early as 1670, 180 years ago in an old legislative grant it was called "the old road, to New Haven."\* But we have no evidence that for thirty years, there was a solitary house or settlement on the road.

But within this period, certain localities had acquired fixed and well-known names. The spot on which our village stands, was called "PILGRIM'S HARBOR," in an Indian deed of 1664.† There can be no reasonable doubt of the correctness of the following tradition; universally current, among the old residents of our town. When Charles 2d, came to the throne in 1660, those who had been engaged in dethroning and executing his father were compelled to flee. Some of them were concealed for a time in and near New Haven, but being in danger from the king's officers, fled to Massachusetts. On their journey up this road, they encamped on or near this spot for several days, it then being a swampy, tangled wilderness, well fitted for concealment. The place thence-forward as having afforded shelter or *harbor* to these men—who though denounced at home as regicides, were honored by our fathers as noble patriots—was called "Pilgrim's Harbor."

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\* See Appendix, No. 4.

† See Appendix, No. 1.

As early also as 1664, another locality lying northward of our village several miles was called Merideen; Meridan, or Meridon.\* For as early as that, an Indian deed conveying a large tract of land, describes it, or the locality about it, as "intitled and known by the name of Merrideen." Subsequent documents,† speak of land as lying between Pilgrim's Harbor and Meridan. Long before there were any settlements on this territory, and *as early* as there was any house, we find the name Merrideen or Meriden.

The origin of the name is involved in some dispute. There is a tradition that the word is compounded of two words, "merry" and "den:" and that in an old stone house built up there in that locality, there were so many merry meetings of travellers, that the place acquired the nickname of *Merry-den*. But I am inclined to reject this derivation for reasons which will presently appear. It appears that one Mr. Belcher, very early, but how early we cannot precisely ascertain, had a grant of a large tract of land lying on our present northern border. Whether this was a colonial grant or a royal grant, we do not know, for no trace of deed or grant can be found in the state records or town records. This Mr. Belcher built a stone house, on that tract and very near the spot now occupied by the house of Mr. Sidney Merriam, which old stone house served as a tavern for the very few travellers who journeyed through the wilderness then lying between Hartford

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\* See Appendix, No. 1.      † See Appendix, No. 9.

and New Haven, and was also built strong enough to resist the attacks of the Indians. The foundations of that old house were ploughed up a few years ago, by Mr. Merriam; and the remains of the cellar or vault used as a powder magazine, are still visible.

We also know that the names of nearly all our towns were borrowed from England, the emigrants and settlers, with a very natural feeling transferring to America, the appellations so familiar and dear to them in their own country. For Cotton Mather remarks, "there are few of our towns, but what have their namesakes in England," and the Legislature in the preamble to an act, concerning New *London*, assign as a reason for giving that name to the town, "whereas it hath been the commendable practice of all the colonies in these parts to give names to these plantations of *some cities and towns in England*."

It would be very natural, and almost certain therefore that Mr. Belcher in building a house midway between two growing cities, and on a fine tract of land, where from all analogy he might expect a village ultimately to grow up—to give it a name, and a *name derived from England*. Now we know that there is, or was a village in England called Meriden, for in an old English Gazetteer, in the Historical Library at Hartford, we are told: "MERIDEN or Mireden, 97 miles from London, near Coventry. There is an inn here, one of the first in this part of England, being built like a nobleman's seat." As Mr. Belcher built

this stone house as early as 1664, as we find the name Meriden applied to the locality on which the house stood as early as the house was built, as Meriden in England, was distinguished for its beautiful tavern, and as Mr. Belcher's stone tavern, was an unusually substantial and costly building for that period, there can be no reasonable doubt, that he gave the name to the north part of the town; which name was naturally transferred to the settlements which sprung up around it.

This derivation of our name seems far more probable than any other. For the word Meriden is evidently not of Indian origin. Moreover the name is given and applied in deeds, *immediately*—as far as we know—after the erection of the house, and *before* it could have acquired notoriety and a nickname, from the revelries practised there. It usually requires a long time for such kind of names to gain foothold. Moreover, the number of travellers there was *very small*, and their general character of that grave and even austere kind, that we may be sure that so far as their conduct was concerned, the house would be more likely to acquire the name of "the praying house," than the "*den of merriment*."

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT.

As our town, originally, and for many years constituted a part of the town of Wallingford, I shall commence my narrative with the history of that place. In the year 1670, the first settlement was made at

Wallingford. At that time Hartford and New Haven had been settled about 35 years and the whole population within the territory now called Connecticut was about 10,000. But as the whole process of commencing and carrying on the settlement of a new town, or a "*plantation*"—which was the term most commonly used—was very different from our modern processes, I will try to make the various steps intelligible.

It has already been stated that the original settlers of New Haven in their corporate capacity, owned the whole tract from the sound up to the present village of West Meriden, which tract was about twenty miles long and ten broad. But when the increase of population seemed to render it necessary to push settlements further into the interior upon the unoccupied lands, they did not sell out farms to such individuals as chose to buy, and allow matters of this kind to take what we should perhaps call the natural course. They proceeded in a much more orderly manner.

The people of New Haven, in their corporate capacity and in public meeting, voted to set off a certain portion of their territory to constitute a "village" or "*plantation*." The territory thus set off was to extend southward from the point where the "old road to New Haven goeth over Pilgrim's Harbor," ten miles, and to extend five miles each side of the Quinnipiock river."\* The town next appointed a Committee, in whose hands they vested the title to the whole land

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\* See Appendix, No. 4 Colony grant.

embraced within the limits of the new plantation, which Committee were to admit settlers and divide the lands among them, on certain stipulated conditions, and were to have the entire control of the affairs of the plantation, until the settlement had so far proceeded, that the "planters" themselves should assume all municipal powers. This Committee then received applications from such as chose to commence a new settlement and selected those who in their opinion were best qualified for the work. The persons thus selected, mutually covenanted with each other and with the said Committee to observe certain rules and conditions, in a written agreement to which their signatures were affixed.\*

The Committee then proceeded to select a site for the proposed village, which location is described, as being "upon the hill, on the east side of the great plain commonly called New Haven plain," which will be at once recognized as the spot on which the present village of Wallingford stands. They then allotted to each planter a few acres of land for a building spot and a home lot, "beginning at the south-east of said hill." Having laid out the south part of the village, then "next to the aforesaid house lots it is ordered that there shall be a highway crosse the hill, from east to west of six rods broade, [being the road, now leading from the Rail Road by the Congregational

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\* See Appendix, No. 6 and 7, where the action of the Committee, and the written covenant of the planters, are given in full from the original records.

Church, to the main street,] and from thence a long highway of six rods broad on the top of the hill to run northward, [being the north part of the present main street of Wallingford,] and on each side of it to ranges of house lots of six acres to a lot; and these lots to be distributed."

## ALLOTMENTS OF LAND.

After the planters had received their respective allotments, built their houses, and had assumed the form of a regular and settled community, then the Committee, who had arranged all the preliminaries and incipient stages of the new "plantation" surrendered all their power, and the title to the whole territory, into the hands of the "planters," who thereby became, a corporate body,—in other words, a town. The land within the town limits, became thus the property of the town as a corporate body; to be by them disposed of in such ways and to such persons as they might deem fit. One of their first acts was the allotment of certain portions of meadow and woodland to each planter at convenient distances from the village; which appropriations constituted the farms and private property of such individuals respectively. The land lying on the river as best adapted to their purposes was first used, and described as "the lots on the river called, New Haven east river, that are layd out to severall of the inhabitants as meddow land. They are to begin at the end of the hill caled Blew hill, where it comes to the river,

and so to run upward the river." At this first apportionment of land, *thirty-eight* lots were given out to as many individuals or families; some receiving eight, and some twelve acres.

In these various transfers of the land, from the town of New Haven, and from them to the Committee, thence to the associated planters, and ultimately to individual proprietors, no money or consideration of any kind was paid. The land was worth literally nothing; until actually settled and cleared.

#### HOW NEW SETTLERS WERE ADMITTED.

It would naturally occur that after the settlement was commenced, other individuals in addition to the original "planters" would desire to become residents in the town. Such an one was not expected, nor even allowed to *buy* any wild land. He was to make application to the town, both for permission to live in the town, and for a gratuitous allotment of land. The town in public meeting considered such a request and referred it to a Committee for consideration. That Committee after examining the testimonials which the applicant could produce touching his character, recommended a compliance with his request, if such testimonials were satisfactory. Accordingly we find in the records, many votes similar to the following.

"12th Feb. 1671. Agreed by y<sup>e</sup> Comitee for y<sup>e</sup> Towne of Wallingford that Isack Rise, and Nehimia Rise, shall have lotts granted y<sup>m</sup> provided they procure

sufficient testamoney of theyr good conversation in the place whear they formerly lived."

So careful were they in guarding the character of their new settlement, that even the land which was appropriated to individuals as their private property, was held under this condition, that no sale was to be made to any stranger, until the character of the proposed purchaser had also been examined and approved by the town, and leave granted by express vote of the town, for such transfer of land. Thus we find on the town records frequent entries like the following.

"23d Feb. 1677. The towne gave liberty to Nath'l Hickcok to sell his accomodation to any such men as y<sup>e</sup> towne shall approve of."

"20th Oct. 1674 voted that Good<sup>n</sup> Foote shall have liberty to buy the lott, y<sup>t</sup> is Joseph Eives provided he procure sufficient teastimony of his good conversation in y<sup>e</sup> plase wheare he now pretendeth to remove."

Next January, we find "the teastimony for Goo<sup>n</sup> foote being sevesente and axepted, he was admited a planter upon the lott that was Joseph eives."

Not only were those who wished to become permanent residents, necessitated to make application to the town, before they could receive an allotment of the public land, or be allowed to buy out a previous settler; but even temporary residents must obtain permission to sojourn for a time, within the town limits. For we find on the records votes similar to the one here copied.

"Sep. 1678. The towne gave liberty to Isack Curtice to abide in the town as a sojourner."

#### ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENTS.

From time to time as families became larger, and individuals became able to bring more land under cultivation, additional allotments of the wild lands were made by town vote, to each planter. At various times there were "divisions," in this manner made, until the whole territory was occupied. In arranging these divisions, the whole population was classed into three "ranks," as indicated in the following vote, according to their ability to pay taxes. In all assessments, the first rank paid double the amount of tax charged on the "loest" rank, and one-third more than the middle rank, and in the divisions of land the allotments were made out in the same ratio, as appears by this and other similar votes.

In June, 1673. Voted, "that there shall be allowed for the first division of lands to each planter taking in house lotts, river lotts, and all sorts of land, to the loest rank 40 acres; to the middle ranke, 60 acres, and to the hiest ranke 80 acres, and so to keep for the present."

#### FIRST ACTS OF THE TOWN.

Arrangements having been made in the year 1669, in the spring of 1670, the emigrants commenced their settlement on the spot already described, being the

site of the present village of Wallingford.\* The company consisted of about one hundred persons, men, women and children. Instead of scattering themselves on farms, as is now usual in new settlements, they erected their humble dwellings in a compact village. This arrangement, though inconvenient for an agricultural population, was necessary for defence, and safety in those perilous times, when savage wars, and the irregular incursions of the Indians were so frequent.

With the true spirit of New Englanders, they at once secured for themselves religious institutions and public worship. Though necessarily pressed with the excessive labor of erecting their own houses, and clearing away a heavy forest, to procure some land for cultivation, and the great expense involved therein, yet this little band had from the first, the stated preaching of the Gospel. For two years, one Mr. Harriman preached on the Sabbath. He was not a regularly ordained pastor, but was probably an "elder," a Church officer of that day who was appointed to discharge certain duties in the Church, and was authorised to preach, in case of the sickness or absence of the pastor. But they designed to secure the services of an ordained

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\* At that time, the whole population of the State was about 10,000 and settlements had been commenced in the following towns, Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, Farmington, Saybrook, Middletown, Lyme, Milford, Guilford, Fairfield, Norwalk, Stamford, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Branford, Greenwich, and Haddam. The rest of the State was a wilderness, inhabited by Indians. See the Map, representing the settled and unsettled parts of Connecticut, in 1670.

minister, as soon as one could be found, and the *first tax* ever imposed in the town was for this purpose.

The vote stands thus: "April 21, 1671. It was voated for the incouragment of any fitt person whose hart god may stire up to be helpfull in the ministrey, that what some soever shall be Requisitt to the attaining such a man shall be rayسد for this present yeare according to every man's proportion of land allotted to him on the river: the twelve acre lotts to pay 30/ and the eight acre lotts to pay 20/."

This tax was not only a heavy one in itself to persons in their circumstances, but pressed still heavier from a fact, the nature of which we at this day, can hardly appreciate; the almost entire destitution of money, or circulating medium. So scanty was the amount of gold and silver, that even as late as 1706, Trumbull asserts that "the whole circulating cash [in the state] was not more than £2000." In 1670, there must of course have been still less: and all taxes and debts must have pressed therefore with almost intolerable weight, except when payable in something else than gold and silver; Banks, then had no existence. We find on the early records accordingly very many votes, authorising payments to be made in various kinds of produce. As the New Haven people traded some with the West Indies, one common mode of raising funds was from hoops and staves, materials for which abounded in our woods and swamps, and for which there was then as now, a great demand, in the

islands. These were taken to New Haven, and sold to the merchants. Thus we find in relation to this first tax it was voted that

“John Mosse and three others, ingage to provide and deliver 1500 good Marchantable pipe staves and deliver them at the place called logmine wharfe,” “and others to pay their proportion in the like manner, in some other good pay.”

## SETTLEMENT OF MR. STREET.

In the year 1672, Rev. Mr. Street, a regularly ordained pastor, was invited to settle among them; and complied with the request. It may help convey some idea of the state of things at that time to mention that after Mr. Street had consented to become their minister, two Committees were appointed; one was to see that Mr. Street's goods were brought from New Haven and “*landed*” at some convenient place, the other to see that they were thence “*carted*” up to Wallingford. To us this seems to indicate a curious mode of intercourse between the two towns. But then owing to the state of the roads, it was no doubt easiest to send the goods from New Haven harbor, up the Quinnipiack river, as far perhaps as North Haven, and from thence by land to Wallingford.

It may serve also to convey some idea of the character of the people, that in 1673, when their own poor dwellings were hardly erected, and they were strug-

gling with all the untold difficulties of a wilderness, and when their whole number, men, women and children, hardly exceeded one hundred, they voted to build a house for their minister and to pay him a salary of £50. If our western settlements now had as much courage and energy, we should have small need of Home Missionary Societies.

#### FORMATION OF THE CHURCH.

Although from the first week of their settlement, regular worship had been maintained, and a regular pastor had been supported by the people; yet no Church was organized. In this transaction they proceeded with all the deliberation which the reader of our early histories will remember was characteristic of the original settlers of New Haven, and vicinity. In the year 1675, Feb. 3d after there had been ample time for the inhabitants to become acquainted with each other's religious views and feelings, a day of fasting and prayer was observed, with reference to the organization of a Church. On the 15th of the same month, the inhabitants again met; designated thirteen of their number, to "lay the foundation"—that is, to constitute by the due mode of organization, the Church. These thirteen, thus constituting the Church, were then to admit others, by the ordinary course of examination and profession.

The record of this transaction is worthy of insertion here.

“At a lawful meeting the inhabitants of the town of Wallingford and upon the 15th day of the 2d month, 1675, it was ordered and enacted by the town, that as there had been conference about establishing a Church of Christ, in the aforesaid town, and also a solemn fast set apart and celebrated by the town unanimously to seek God’s guidance in so great a work, they have now also freely and unanimously concluded if it be the will of God, that there shall be a Church of Christ gathered to walk according to the Congregational way, and have also all freely and unanimously left the management of the same in the hands of the persons whose names are underwritten, that if it be the will of God to incline their hearts, so many of them as may be a competent number for that work, may in his time, lay the foundation.

|                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| “Mr. Moss,        | Lieut. Merriam,   | Eliasaph Preston, |
| Mr. Sam’l Street, | Serg’t Doolittle, | John Hall, Sen’r, |
| Mr. Brockett,     | John Beach,       | John Hall, Jr,    |
| Thomas Yale,      | Nehemiah Royce,   | Nathan Andrews,   |
|                   | Benj. Lewis.”     |                   |

They had as yet no house of worship. They hardly needed one, for their numbers were so small that they could without much inconvenience assemble in a private house. For ten years they met on the Sabbath, in one of the houses of the village, and paid the proprietor *forty shillings* annually for the use of his dwelling. One reason however of this delay in erecting a “meeting house” must probably be found in the dan-

ger, alarm, and the impoverishing effect of the famous Indian war of that period, usually called

“KING PHILLIP'S WAR.”

A distinguished Indian Sachem of this name had formed a coalition of nearly all the Indian tribes in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, for the purpose of exterminating the white inhabitants. At that time they might hope to effect this; for there were only about 35,000 white inhabitants in all New England, and they were scattered over hundreds of miles of territory. The Indians were more numerous, very ferocious and warlike, and exasperated by the alleged encroachments on their rights. As the two races lived in close proximity, each man might expect the war at his own door. For a time, the conflict raged with terrible slaughter in the eastern parts of New England; great numbers of the whites were killed, towns burned and laid waste, and universal panic spread over the country. The war terminated with the death of Phillip, in 1676. But the derangement of business, and the heavy taxation consequent on the expenses of the war, impoverished the population, and pressed heavily on the new settlement at Wallingford. Though no battle was fought near them, yet they were kept in a constant state of alarm, which greatly hindered their agricultural operations and were compelled to fortify and garrison their little village, as if actually

in a state of seige. Their position may be inferred from the following votes.

"27 Aug. 1675. In respect of the present dainger of y<sup>e</sup> Indians itt was ordered that the inhabitants secure themselves and the principall of theyr goods by fortifying about too houses."

"Also that evrie man bring his armes and amunition compleat on the saboth day that he may be able in a fitt posture to doe service if need require."

"That select gaurd serve as sentinells on y<sup>e</sup> Saboth, and y<sup>e</sup> rest of the town ward 4 men every Saboth and 2 every weeke day: that they begin to ward when the watch breaks up and hould on till y<sup>e</sup> watch be sett again: that they begin and end, at the dawning and shutting in of day."

"15 Oct. 1675. That those persons at the end of the town if they see cause to fortifie on of theyr houses which they can agree upon for theyr saftie in these times of dainger what theyr full charg is shall be defraied out of y<sup>e</sup> town's tresury."

"Also that any that are willing to be asistant to mak too flankers att Left<sup>t</sup> Merriman's barne, shall have due recompens out of y<sup>e</sup> towne treasurie."

Their mode of "fortifying a house," appears to have been this. At a small distance from the house,—ten feet perhaps—and all around it a log wall was erected, with the ends of the logs dove-tailed into each other at the corners, and carried up to ten or twelve feet in height, with such openings as might suffice for pointing

muskets at an attacking enemy. Such erections, were ample protection against any strength which the Indians were able to exert.

#### A HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

Having recovered somewhat from the depression and impoverishment consequent on the war, we find them with true New England conscientiousness and public spirit, at work upon their Church and School. In 1679, they voted to build a "meeting house," twenty-eight feet long; twenty-four feet wide, and ten feet high, a building which now would be considered small for a district school house. But even this small house, they were not able to complete for several years, for in 1681, they voted to "go on and finish the house." Great must have been their poverty, when with all their high estimate of the value of religious institutions, and when we know that nothing but absolute inability, could have prevented the most ample accommodations for their Church—we find their whole united means, inadequate to build and finish a house, which now almost any single journeyman, could build out of his own resources. But as their population and wealth increased, we find the house of worship grows also. For in 1690, they enlarged the house, and made it *forty* feet long by twenty-eight feet wide, as their population had increased to seventy-three families. The next year, 1691, the *inside* of the house was completed, for at that date we find a vote for "ceiling the house,"

the interior having remained twelve years, rough and unfinished. This same year, 1691, the town voted that "two pews, should be built," an indication of growth, and even of luxury: for hitherto, the whole area of the house had been occupied with long seats, where all persons sat indiscriminately, except that the men and boys were on one side of the house, while the females in the Congregation sat on the other side. It is quite likely that some of the good people of that day, were quite shocked at the extravagance, pride and degeneracy developed by the innovation of pews. But growth and change kept on their course, for under date of April 30, 1706, we find "the town chose Deken Hall, Samuel Roys, and goodman Culvert, a commetee to procure workmen to come and buld gallers for the In largment of the meeting hous."

## SETTLEMENT OF MR. WHITTLESEY.

Mr. Street was pastor of the Church for about thirty-six years. But as he became unable to perform the duties of his office, it became necessary to provide a successor. The forethought and action of the people in the matter are set forth in the following votes.

"July 26, 1708. The town voted that they apprehended it was their duty to take care and Lock out to geat an other minester."

"The town voted that they would chouse a commetie to seeke out and to take the advice for the procuring and bring in a minester to seatle in the place."

Under these instructions the Committee invited Mr. Whittlesey to preach. The people being satisfied with his labors, invited him to become their pastor. The letter in which the call was communicated seems on various accounts worthy to be inserted entire. An exact copy of it is therefore given from the

*Wallingford Town Records.*

“Mr. Whittlesey, Sur. The subscribers hereof being a committe appointed and empowered by the town of Wallingford as may appear by their record bearing date April 4, 1709; to treat with yourself in order to a settlement with us in the ministry, and for your encouragement to comply with us therein doe propose to make such grants of Lands and other encouragements following—first we doe give and grant to you the said Mr. Samuel Whittlesey, a six acar lott of land lying neare the meting house; and one acar and a half of the west end Deaken John Hall's home lott for a building lott, to be bought for you: also a peace of Land at south ward side the Leatel quarter one the hill on which the town stands fifteen acars; and seaven acars of pasture land on the north side of Nath'l Ives home lott: also a meadow lott of land in the common field on the west side of the river of twenty acars and known by the name of the parsonage; and fore acars of plaine in the same field called the town lott, also a farm of one hundred and fifty acars of Land att

Pilgrim's Harbor called the \*town farm with all the un laid outt land adjoining, and one hundred pound right in commonage and in all undivided land, all which shall be to the said Mr. Sam'l Whittlesey, his heirs, executors and administrators and assigns for ever, as an estate of inheritance in fee simple: Likewise the said committe do agree to build a house for the s'd Mr. Sam'll Whittlesey of forty-two feets in Length and twenty feets in breadth, tow stories hye, with a porch and a back kitching and finish it deasantly the said Mr. Samuel Whittlesey to provide glass and nales: which house is to be soe built within tow years: the s'd committe doth farther agree that the said Mr. Whittlesey shall have a Sallery of Seaventy pound a yeare for the tow first years and the thurd yeare eighty pound and One hundred pound a yeare ever after, soe long as he carrieth on the work of the ministry: which Sallery shall be paid in wheat at five shillings par bushel, rye at three shillings sixpence par bushel, indian corne at two shillings sixpence par bushel, pork at threepence farding par pound, and if it soe fall out that there doth not come a suply of fire wood yearly to the s'd Mr. Whittlesey by parsons appearing to doe it gratis, then the town are

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\* This town farm, was set apart by the town about the year 1684. It lay on the north side of the river near Hanover, and on both sides of Pilgrim's Harbor brook, bounded west by a line on the ridge of the hill, now called "town rock," and east by the hill, which in the old records is called "milking yard hill:" the north line must have been near the southern boundary of the farms of Mr. Calvin Coe, and Mr. Ezekiel Rice.

obliged to take the care, and find him his wood in some other way—but if the providence of God should so order that the said Mr. Sam'll Whittlesey dye leaving no male Hare that is a natural issue of his bodye, then the six acar lott by the meeting house, and the meadow lott called the parsonage to returne to the town againe, to the true and honest intent and parformans of the preameses we the before named committie have sett our names.

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| “ Thomas Yale, | John Hall, sr. |
| Samuel Hall,   | John Meariman, |
| Thomas Curtis, | John Hall.”    |
| John Parker,   |                |

Mr. Whittlesey accepted the call, and continued to be the pastor for many years.

#### THE NEW HOUSE.

The old house with its “two pews,” and “gallers” could not well contain the growing population, for some of the hearers, had to put up with rather inconvenient Church accommodations. But of these they were cut short by the following peremptory and rather uncourteous vote of the town in 1716: “ordered that the alleys in the meeting house be cleared of chairs and stools, and the constable see that it be done.” Where the occupants of these “chairs and stools” bestowed themselves after this unceremonious ejection we do not know: but it is quite probable that they agitated effectually the project of a new and

better house, for in a few months we find a new Church edifice in progress. In Jan. 13, 1717, the town voted "that they thought it was their duty to begin a new meeting house, and the form of the house to be like gilford meeting house." Preparations were going forward during the whole of the year, and in 1718, the house was raised, and it was "voted that the metting hous floure shall be layed with good single Boards well Rabbited,"—also "the town voated that the metting hous shall have pues maid all round it and y<sup>e</sup> rest of y<sup>e</sup> hous shall be long seats." This last vote indicates the further increase of luxurious habits, inasmuch as the "two pews" of the old house were multiplied into a whole range of "puces," built all around the sides of the new house. The next vote illustrates what has been already stated of the mode of raising funds, for "April 28, 1719, the Town voated y<sup>t</sup> they wound git so many staves as will load a vessell and they chose Capt. Hall to make a bargain for y<sup>e</sup> town in y<sup>e</sup> Disposall of y<sup>e</sup> staves, they obliged themselves to git:—in buying glass and nales—and promise to indemnifie hall from any damages thereby if he shall need to stand or give bonds." The house was completed and occupied in 1720. It was a large house with two tiers of galleries, one above the other, somewhat in the manner of a theatre, a mode of building Churches quite common during the last century. The upper gallery was of course very high, and as its occupants were almost entirely out of sight, in furnished an ad-

mirable place for boys to cluster together and play. Even in the old house it had been found necessary to "vote that Eliazur Peck be desired to looke to y<sup>e</sup> boyes on y<sup>e</sup> saboth that they keep good order at meeting." In the new house they found it necessary to deny the boys admission altogether into so tempting a place as the upper gallery, for in "April 25, 1721, voated that no young man shall go up into the uper gallery to sett there on the Saboth day under eighteen yeare old."

#### DIGNIFYING THE NEW HOUSE.

The present custom of renting the seats in Churches was then unknown; and in the new house, there would be quite a choice between the "pues" and the "long seats." In order to arrange or prevent all disputes for precedence in the matter, a Committee was appointed "to dignify and seat the meeting house." In assigning seats to the respective individuals and families, this Committee were enjoined by vote "to respect the aged who had been serviceable to the town," and also, "to have respect to those who had borne commissions." After giving the best seats to these dignitaries, they were instructed to have "this general rule for seating the meeting hous, viz: the lists, on which the charges are raised." If a plan had been devised for creating and perpetuating envy, jealousy and pride, no more ingenious scheme could have been invented for that purpose, than this attempt to arrange people in the house of God, every Sabbath day, according to their

wealth and supposed rank. Many an individual, would probably form quite a different estimate of his "dignity" from the Committee. What feelings were engendered have been however forgotten, except we learn that one man to whom was assigned a position on "the long seats," having made known his grievance, had redress as follows : "the town by their voat gave Capt. John Hall, liberty to make him self a pew in the new metting hous, near the east Dore, on men's side on his own charge."

A belfry was built in 1727.

## SINGING.

We find no allusion whatever to the singing in public worship. It is almost certain that the old puritanical custom of "Congregational singing,"—as it is called—was followed. All who were present in the Church were expected to unite in this part of worship, and all instruments and choirs, were utterly eschewed. But it is quite evident that the young people of that day, fond of novelty or improvement,—as it would be differently viewed—after getting into their new Church, began to think of other new things, for in 1731, the town had before them a petition of certain persons for the use of the meeting house, that they might there meet and learn to sing. After some demur, the request was granted. But alas the wedge of innovation, having entered, was fast driven in. Having learned to sing, the singers naturally wished to give the Congre-

gation the benefit of their new acquisitions. This disturbed some old habits, and a town meeting was convened to hear the complaints of those who could not endure "the singing in the new way" as they termed it. The matter could not be settled: dispute arose, and the meeting adjourned. Another meeting was called—and after much debate, the matter was compromised by voting "that there should be singing on one Sabbath in the old way and on the next Sabbath in the new way, and so on alternately, for six weeks." There the curtain drops: and how long the controversy went on, we know not. We hope that the disputants are now together singing,

"Where music flows from countless harps,  
Nor pause, nor discord knows."

#### SCHOOLS.

We find no allusion to schools, on the town records until 1678, eight years after the settlement of the town. That notice however, evidently shows that a school had previously existed; it is quite probable that here as elsewhere, the school and the Church took root together, and grew up with the first log cabin in the forest. The vote in 1678 is, "the town leaves the matter of schools with the select men, to promote the same according to law," and the next month, the selectmen having reported their opinion; the town vote "to allow for the encouragement of such a school master as the select men shall approve of, ten pounds a year in general,

and three pence a week for all scholars, from six to sixteen, as long as they shall go to school."

Thus did our predecessors, like all the other founders of New England, develope a far-sighted religious wisdom, a profound sagacity, which none of the princes nor statesmen of this world knew. For all possible and conceivable ends had the power, blood, and wealth of nations been squandered for thousands of years: except for the only true ends of the state, the *formation and elevation of MEN*. The fathers of New England designed to raise up religious and intelligent men. They alone ever conceived, or at least actually carried out the scheme of educating the people. In this point of view, the everlasting pyramids, the matchless splendors of Babylon, the great master-piece of architecture, St. Peters, are less imposing and valuable than the log school-houses of primitive New England. The world had never yet seen such men, so poor that they could not build a hut 24 by 30 feet—so harassed and perilled by a savage war, that they went to their Sabbath worship armed with muskets—while night and day their little village was guarded by block houses and patrols—and yet in that deep poverty, and from their first day in the wilderness, nobly sustaining the preaching of the Gospel, and schools, virtually free to every child among them. True, as we shall see, these early schools were somewhat rude, and we may smile at their evident defects. But the germ of New England superiority was in them. Our elegant Acad.

emy and highly improved schools, are but the developments and natural growth of the early school at Wallingford.

It is a matter of some interest to know what sums were granted for schools. In 1684, the town granted £10 to the teacher, from the public treasury, and required the pupils to pay £5 in addition. In 1689, the town voted £5 for a school; the next year £4. In 1691, the town voted that all the school money should be raised by those who sent to the school. In 1694, they gave £6 to the school. In 1698, it was voted that each pupil should pay a penny a week. In 1702, they voted to build a school house, having hitherto hired a room for the school. In 1711, fifty acres of land and money also, were granted to the teacher. In 1714 each scholar was to pay 2/ per quarter, in addition to the town grant. In 1722 it became necessary to have several schools, and the rudiments of school districts begin to appear.

We find no allusion made to any branches of learning, except, reading, writing and spelling. It is quite probable that for a long time nothing else was taught, unless occasionally the rudiments of arithmetic, might have been studied. It cannot be denied, that our records exhibit some indications of lack of high culture both in teachers and pupils, as the following exact transcripts will show.

"Sep. 18, 1711. At the same Metting Mr. Henry

Bats scool Master, gave thes following proposals, namely.

"Gontel Men upon second considerations I doe hear-by propose that if y<sup>e</sup> town for incoragement will be pleased to make sure and conferme to me fifty acars of land whar i shall see case to take it up and whar it is not alredy taken up and let me have to improvement of y<sup>e</sup> old Mill pon so caled and all other lands that belongs to the scool and fifty pounds a year for y<sup>e</sup> time we shall agree upon the town appointing a commity to agree with me and all those that sends children to cast in thar mite towards purchaseing a hom sted and upon condition i may be

"yours to serve.

"HENRY BATES."

"At y<sup>e</sup> same meting y<sup>e</sup> town voatted thar accepttans of y<sup>e</sup> above s'd proposals."

"Dec. 20, 1713. The town voated yt the mony conserning y<sup>e</sup> scool, Respecting children shall be raised upon all y<sup>e</sup> children that live within a Mille and half of y<sup>e</sup> scool hous: from six year old to teen: whether they go to scool or nott: And all the children yt go to scool and enter y<sup>e</sup> scool a week shall pay for half a year."

"Chose John Moss and Sam'l Culver inspectors, to look after y<sup>e</sup> scool Meester to see he keeps his howers."

"Jan. 13, 1719. The town voated and maid choys of leftnt street and Sergnt yall thomas mills a comitte

to care of ye school, chose a schoole master and look after the prudentialls of that affair."

#### NORTH PART OF MERIDEN.

I have thus presented a few sketches of Wallingford, down to the year 1724, when we in Meriden began to emerge into a distinct community. But the territorial limits of Wallingford, extended northward, only to "Pilgrim's Harbor." The part of our town lying between that point, and the present limits of Berlin, is not embraced in the preceding sketch, and some facts respecting it will now be stated.

This north part of our town remained in possession of the Indians, long after they had sold all the adjacent territory. Between New Haven on the south, Middletown on the east, and Farmington on the north, and part of the west, there lay this tract of land, of somewhat undefined boundaries. The "old road" passed through it. Near its northern limit lay "the Belcher farm so called." This is all we know of it, until the year 1664; in that year, *Seaukeet*, an Indian sold and deeded to Edward Higbey, with boundaries somewhat obscurely stated, a large tract of land, which must have embraced nearly the whole northern half of Meriden, as now constituted.\*

But there were other claimants to the same land, for in 1682, another Indian by the name of Adam Puit,

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\* See Appendix, No. 1, where the deed is given in full :—and some explanations are also added.

sold to John Talcot, a tract, which from the description must have been identical with the one described in the deed of Seaukeet.\* The next year 1683, Mr. Talcot, assigned over to the town of Wallingford, all his right and title to this land.† The town of Wallingford also bought out all the other titles or claims, to this same territory, as appears by documents in the office of the Secretary of State at Hartford, but which are too long to be inserted here.

But this north part of Meriden, though *owned* by Wallingford, was not a *part* of Wallingford. The title or fee simple of the land, was in the town of Wallingford—the right of government was in the state: but there was no town authority in it or over it—it was neither a town, nor constituted a part of any town. It remained in this anomalous condition for several years, until the people residing in it, weary of the inconvenience of such a state of things, petitioned the town of Wallingford to be received, as citizens of that town, which petition is here annexed. So far as we can learn it was that petition and the vote of the town consequent thereon alone, without any action of the state legislature, which made the north part of our town, for a time, a constituent part of Wallingford.

The petition just alluded to, was presented in Sept. 1718, and reads as follows, in the original records of the

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\* See Appendix, No. 2, where the deed is copied in full, and remarks added.

† See Appendix, No. 3, where the assignment is copied in full.

town of Wallingford,—“ We, the inhabitants bordering and adjacent to, the town of Wallingford, do here entreat and request, that you would admit us the subscribers as wholesome and lawful inhabitants into the town of Wallingford. We the petitioners here request that if it may please you the inhabitants of the town of Wallingford to admit us your humble petitioners as town inhabitants, then your humble petitioners do promise and engage to be subject to your good and wholesome orders, laws and constitutions, as witness our hands.

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| “ Bartholomew Foster, | John Hoisington, |
| John Merriam,         | Solomon Goffe.”  |
| Joseph Hills.         |                  |

#### EARLY SETTLERS.

The town voted to comply with the request of the petitioners. But for a time, not all the inhabitants, residing in this north part of Meriden were considered citizens of Wallingford, subject to its laws, privileges and burthens, but merely those who had applied in form for citizenship. We find also on the records several special petitions from individuals residing in this same locality, to be allowed to attend public worship in the meeting house, and who were by special vote permitted to occupy a designated seat, on condition of paying a certain annual rent. Whereas citizens of Wallingford, being regularly taxed by town vote for the support of religious institutions, had a right as a

matter of course to seats in the Church without any price or rent whatever.

It would be tedious to trace out all the transfers of land in this neighborhood, after the Indian title was extinguished. It may be a matter of some interest however, to know some of the principal proprietors and residents, in this north part of Meriden about the year 1716. Northward and eastward of our present village of West Meriden, lay the farm of John Merriam,\* of Lynn, Mass., who is, I believe, the ancestor of the numerous families of that name still residing here. He bought 300 acres for £305. More northerly lay the farm of Bartholomew Foster, of 350 acres, which seems to have been west of the present old road, and northward as far probably as the present residence of Mr. Hiram Foster.† Further north, was the land of Henry Coles, called "the Coles' farm," extending east of Bartholomew Foster, so as to reach the land of John Merriam. North of the "Coles' farm" was the land of Nathaniel Roys; and still further northward was the Belcher farm, which—or on which—was the place called Meriden.

These documents, give us some information as to the residents in this part of the town, at that period. We derive some additional knowledge of the inhabitants, as well as of their situation, from the following paper

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\* See Appendix, No. 10: the deed is there quoted at length.

† See Appendix, No. 9. The deed to Mr. Foster is there given.

copied from the original petition, now on file in the office of the Secretary of State, at Hartford.

"To the Honorable the Governor and council and house of repretatives in General Cort assembled in his Majesties colony of Connecticutt att New Haven, Oct. 8, 1724.

"The Humble petition of the Subscribers Humbly Sheweth.

"That we are under great disadvantages for want of a Pound nere ye Merriden or Stone House and are compelled to drive unruly Cattell nere 6 or 9 miles to ye nearest pound, which if we had one nere it would save us a Great Deal of troble, and we would carry the marks and brands of those Cattell impounded where the Law directs, to the next towns unless the Honorable Assembly, would pleas to Constitute a man among us to Despose of Unruly Creatures as the Law directs.

"Therefor your Humble Petitioners Pray that there may be order for a Pound near ye Merriden, or Stone House, and an officer to Despose of impounded cattell, and your Petitioners as in duty bound will Ever Pray.

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| "Signed, N. Merriam, | J. Persons,        |
| N. Merriam, Jr.,     | Eleazer Aspinwall, |
| Wm. Meriam,          | J. Merriman, Jr.,  |
| Tim. Foster,         | B. Foster,         |
| J. Robinson,         | T. Andrews,        |
| T. Foster,           | D. Rich,           |
| T. Gerrum,           | J. Scofell."       |

I will now endeavor to trace the progress of settlements northward from Wallingford village into the bounds of what is now the south part of Meriden. But the information which I have been able to glean is quite scanty. It is quite clear that while the whole country was in alarm and peril, from the Indians, during "king Phillip's war" no settlements were made beyond the bounds of the compact little village, where the planters had clustered together for mutual protection, though some land which was "in the wilderness," was granted out at that time. But after the termination of that war, we find the records full of grants, of wild land in distant parts of Wallingford, to actual settlers, some of which were within the present southern limits of our town.

Some of the earliest grants of land were in and around a swamp called "dog's misery." It had acquired the name from the fact that wild animals, when hunted, took refuge in this swamp, which was so thick, tangled and miry, that the dogs of the hunters were baffled or killed in their attempts to reach their prey hidden in this jungle. This swamp is that tract of lowland [now partly reclaimed] and swamp, lying south of the Middletown turnpike, and south of the house of Mr. Thomas Baldwin, extending nearly a mile, in a southerly direction.

In 1679, "the town granted to Nathaniel Royce, David Hall, Thomas Hall, Dan. Mix, Joseph Holt, each 3 acres lying on the east side of the meadow,

called dog's misery, by the southward branch of Pilgrim's harbor," [brook,] that being the name of the whole stream from its mouth, up to the pond, whence it flows.

At the next town meeting, Nov. 1679, "granted to Neh. Royce, Isaac Curtiss, each 3 acres, and Nathaniel How, and Isaac Royce, each 2 acres, and all at *dog's misery*." At still another meeting, 1679, there was still another grant of swamp, meadow and upland "*about dog's misery*," to Yale, Curtiss, Royce and others. In 1685, granted to Walter Jonson 20 acres, "on long hill towards *dog's misery*."

1683, "granted to Daniel Hooper, 12 acres at *dog's misery*."

1700, the daughter of Nathaniel Royce, had three and a half acres, at "*dog's misery*," as her portion.

Another extract will indicate some quite curious facts, existing at that early period. Sep. 16, 1707, "the towne chose Eliezer peeck, Joshua culver, David Hall, a commetie to see that [dog's] missery hiway may not be pinsht [pinched] of the twenty rods in any place from the town to misserie whare it was not laid out before the graint was of s'd hiway."

It seems that here was a "hiway" *twenty rods* wide: which enormous allowance for a road was not uncommon in those days, as there are several other notices in the records of roads of the like width. Still oftener I find noticed highways *six* rods in width. It is quite evident too, that the special care of the town to pre-

serve the prodigious width of the "missery hiway" shows the importance and growth of the settlement in that quarter.

Whether these persons settled around dog's misery at the precise date of these grants we do not know: but there is evidence, that they were there soon after. For as early as 1696, there is some allusion in the records to a great contention about lands, among the owners of property at dog's misery. Of the nature and merits of the controversy we are not informed, but it plainly indicates that the lands about there were considered valuable, and that the place was inhabited.

From the time of the first settlement onward, population slowly increased around "dog's misery," and as we shall see, around "Pilgrim's Harbor," also. In 1724, the whole number of families on and around these localities, was thirty-five. The distance to Wallingford being great, and the roads bad, they naturally wished for public worship nearer to their residences. According to the custom of that day however, they did not proceed to accommodate themselves in the matter, until it had been laid before the town, and their express permission obtained. Accordingly in 1724, we find a vote that "in respect to the north farmers [farmers in the north part of the town, as that portion of our town was then the north part of Wallingford,] that they may hire a minister for four months this winter on their own charge." This was the commencement of the stated preaching of the

Gospel within the present limits of this town, just 124 years ago. A further account of their ecclesiastical organization and progress will be given, on a subsequent page.

#### WEST AND SOUTH-WEST PART OF MERIDEN.

Contemporaneous with the "plantations" around "dog's misery," the settlements began to creep up into the western and south-western parts of the present limits of Meriden. As early as Sept. 1677, it was "ordered that every planter shall have according to theyr ranks, 4 acers, 3 acers, and 2 acers of the choice land upon the River hopp ground land, beginning att pilgrim's harbor." This "hopp ground land" was that which produced the materials for making *hoops* [hoppes]. Such land though swampy, was then the most valuable in the town. For in the great dearth of a circulating medium, and of means for purchasing all foreign produce, these hoops, [and staves also,] always found a great demand, and a ready sale in the West Indies. Of course our farmers in trading with the New Haven merchants, found these hoop-poles as useful as cash. Accordingly we find in the records of the town that these "hopp ground lands," were most carefully managed, were granted out in very small quantities; and in the various grants recorded, each man was very careful that a piece of this precious land should be included in his farm.

In the year 1676, a farm was granted to Levi Fowler,

as part "compensation" for building a mill. This was at the place which we now call "*the farms*." Sixty acres were granted to him, and thus described: "the north stake to be pitched 10 rods to the north-ward of the brook, commonly called, Milking yard brook, as you go between Wallingford and Hartford, [this is the brook, which the old road crosses at the lower end of the present farm district, just north of the residence of Mr. Elias Parmelee and Mr. Linus Clarke, and so called, because cattle were of old, there driven into a pen to be milked,] and in the middle way between the mouth of said brook and the old path; and so to run a straight line southward so as to cut the edge of the red bank by the east river so called [this red bank is the little spur or projection around which the rail road sweeps, just before it passes the high stone viaduct, over the turnpike] at the utmost part eastward, and so from the northern stake westward 120 rods, and so to hold his depth on the south side." This land would be very nearly that which constitutes the present farm of Mr. Wyllys Smith.

## FARM'S DISTRICT SETTLED.

Near and around this farm, other settlers soon located themselves. In 1679, it was voted, "that the land about the milking yard, and on the north side of the brook at the head of the little plain, be granted," to planters, as these should be needed. This "little plain" was the upper part of the present "farm district,"

where is the farm of the late William Linsley. It was called little plain, in distinction, from "fall's plain," or "*the* plain," which is the locality we now term "Hanover." The same year, "The towne yielded to exchange with Sam'l Royce, the 3 acrs of his land att y<sup>e</sup> uper end of little plaine, for 3 acrs of y<sup>e</sup> swamp, in y<sup>e</sup> middle of said plaine joyning to Good<sup>n</sup> Lewes." In another grant to this Samuel Royce, this same spot is called "milein yard farms," as bounded south by milking yard brook, and west by milking yard hill.

Also in 1679, "the town granted to Good<sup>n</sup> Lewas 3 acrs of y<sup>e</sup> swamp that lieth about the middle of y<sup>e</sup> litle plaine." At the same time "the towne granted Tho. Yale 3 acrs of swamp land, joyning to his two acrs that was formerly granted for mendment of his river lott att the loer end of y<sup>e</sup> litle plaine."

#### HANOVER SETTLED.

In the year 1677, there was a grant of land to Nehemiah Royce and Samuel Royce, of some land "at the head of the plains," which is another phrase by which Hanover was then designated. A very natural phrase, for at that point, the stretch of level land which extends from New Haven, through North Haven and Wallingford, terminates. In 1680 a grant was made "to Sam'l Hough, to settle on the head of the plain near to Nehemiah Royce's." In 1689 this "head of the plain," or "falls' plaine," was considered so beautiful a spot, that it was regularly laid out for a village. The

main street was to be eighty rods long, and on each side of it were staked out building lots; the western lots extending to the hill, and the eastern ones, to the river. These lots were assigned by raffle, each "planter" in the town of Wallingford, being allowed to draw one lot. A map of this village as thus laid out, was made 160 years ago, and still remains on the town records. The main street of this contemplated village must have been nearly if not quite coincident with the road now in existence, running north and south, past the house of Mr. James Newton, and terminating near the house of Mr. Chester Rice. The street however, as then laid out, was continued northward to the river, instead of terminating at the house of Mr. Rice.

#### CHURCH AT MERIDEN.

I have thus given an outline of the progress of settlements in several localities within our present limits. In the year 1724, the number of families within those limits being thirty-five, they began to have public worship as a distinct community, in the manner already stated on a previous page. In 1725, they organised themselves into a distinct Ecclesiastical Society; and that society and the territory they occupied, received the present name of Meriden. For the next two years they had public worship only in the winter season, and their meetings were held in a private house. In 1727, a house of worship was erected in the eastern part of the town. But at the very outset, there arose a very

serious difficulty as to the location of their meeting house. The inhabitants around "dog's misery" would naturally desire that the Church should be as near as possible to their farms: and the people at "Pilgrim's Harbor," "the old road," and "milking yard farms," would be equally desirous of a site convenient to themselves. That part of our town, now constituting "the centre," was then either entirely uninhabited, or was of so little consequence, that its claims in the matter do not appear to have been thought of. At length it was decided that the meeting house should be built on the western slope of the hill, still known as the "meeting house hill," in which decision, the "dog's misery" party had the advantage. In accordance with this decision, the materials were all prepared, and collected at the chosen spot. But the aggrieved party, hoping yet to gain redress, collected men and teams at night, and hauled the timbers, over a brook, and up a hill, to a lot on or near which the house of Mr. Willard Hall now stands, that being the spot, where they wished the house to stand. Of course such a step would excite no small stir. But of the details of the controversy thence ensuing we know nothing. Authentic tradition only assures us that the very men and teams who toiled all night to carry the timbers westward, were all induced or compelled, to haul them all back to the old spot, in broad day light.

The house was then built on the spot first selected. It has long since disappeared, but from the best infor-

mation I can obtain, it was about thirty feet square, and built in the very plainest style. The first burying ground in Meriden, was near the top of "meeting house hill," east of the Church. It has long since been disused. But many of the old stones yet remain, and some of the inscriptions are still legible. Its neglected and dilapidated condition, rebukes us for our want of care in honoring and preserving the memories of our fathers, or predecessors.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.

In December 1728, Rev. Theophilus Hall began to preach in the new meeting house. Oct. 9, 1729, it was resolved to form a Church, and on Oct. 22, after a day of fasting and prayer the Church was duly organised. Fifty-one persons were thus gathered as the original members, and it may be interesting to know who they were. Their names are therefore here subjoined:

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Robert Royce,           | John Hecock and wife,  |
| Sam'l Royce and wife,   | John Cole,             |
| Thomas Yale and wife,   | The wife of Wm. Hough, |
| John Merriam,           | " " " John Yale,       |
| Bartholomew Foster,     | " " " Joseph Cole,     |
| Robert Collins,         | " " " Nath'l Royce,    |
| David Levit,            | " " " David Rich,      |
| Ezekiel Royce and wife, | " " " Daniel Harris,   |
| Abel Royce and wife,    | " " " S. Andrews,      |
| Benj. Royce and wife,   | " " " Tim. Jerom,      |

|                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nath'l Merriam and wife,     | The wife of Benj. Curtiss, |
| John Merriam, Jr., and wife, | " " " John Ives,           |
| Joseph Merriam,              | " " " J. Robinson,         |
| Dan. Balding and wife,       | " " " W. Merriam,          |
| Amos Camp and wife,          | " " " Jos. Royce,          |
| Benj. Whiting and wife,      | Widow Royce,               |
| Sam'l Ives and wife,         | Mary Hough,                |
| Ebenezer Prindle and wife,   | Eunice Cole.               |
| John Way and wife,           |                            |

## MINISTRY OF REV. MR. HALL.

The Rev. Theophilus Hall was the first pastor of the Church. He was ordained Oct. 29, 1729. His salary varied somewhat in different years, but was about £50, which in the colonial currency was about equal to \$175, annually. By express stipulation this sum might be paid in money *or* provisions : and when paid in provisions, they were to be received at the following prices : wheat at 4s. per bushel, rye at 2s. 6d., corn at 2s.

Mr. Hall was pastor of the Church about thirty-eight years, and died in March, 1767. During his ministry about 250 persons were added to the Church. In his personal appearance he is said to have been quite small of stature. He was "a man of strong intellectual powers, much esteemed as a preacher, of great firmness and stability, and a zealous advocate for civil and religious liberty." He lived in a house, not now in existence, which stood on the lot where the present residence of Mr. Willard Hall—one of his descend-

ants,—now stands. He also owned a farm of about one hundred acres which comprised all the central part of our town. It was bounded by a line, drawn from a point near the house of the late Roswell Cowles, and running southerly about one hundred rods, then easterly to a point on the main street opposite the old Episcopal Church, thence northerly to the house of Mr. Samuel Yale, and thence to the point of departure.

On this farm he built a house for his son. That house now stands, in its original location, and is occupied as the Central Hotel.

During his ministry, a new and much larger house of worship was erected. It was built in the year 1755, on land given by the Rev. Mr. Hall, out of his farm for that purpose, and stood nearly on the spot where the present Centre Congregational Church now stands. The population in the central and western portions of the town, had so much increased at this time, that we hear of no objections to the erection of the new Church, at a point distant nearly one mile from the spot where the old house stood.

#### MINISTRY OF THE REV. MR. HUBBARD.

In Nov. 1767, about seven months after the decease of Mr. Hall, the Church voted to invite Rev. John Hubbard to become their Pastor. This vote however was not unanimous, as 42 were in favor of the call, and 21 were opposed to it. At the Society meeting, the votes on the proposal to present a call to Mr.

Hubbard stood, 65 in the affirmative and 37 in the negative. They also voted to give him a settlement, as it was called, that is, a gift of £100 at his settlement, and an annual salary of £80, which was about equal to \$250; one-half of which was to be paid in wheat, rye, and corn.

But the division indicated by these votes appears to have been a very serious one, and the feelings excited in the Church very strong. For before these votes could be carried out, the minority opposed to Mr. Hubbard, invited the Consociation of the County to meet in Meriden, and laid before them certain charges against the orthodoxy of Mr. Hubbard. The Consociation cited Mr. Hubbard to appear before them. He refused on the ground that they had no authority in the case. Whereupon they voted to withdraw his license to preach, and so far as they were concerned, silenced him.

The Church proceeded nevertheless, and invited a Council to assemble Dec. 29, 1767, to ordain Mr. Hubbard. They met; but on the same day, the Consociation of the County, also assembled in Meriden at the invitation of the minority. The Council, prepared to ordain Mr. Hubbard, agreeably to the wishes of the majority; the Consociation, assembled to aid and advise the minority, in opposing the ordination. There was thus presented the unseemly spectacle of two ecclesiastical bodies, assembled as rallying points, for the two little parties into which the Church was divided.

Both of these bodies continued in session four days, sending from one to the other, letters, resolutions and remonstrances, becoming themselves more and more excited, and of course, exasperating the feud among the people which had already become intense. At length both bodies adjourned, and the ordination was deferred. But it seems the difficulties only became worse. For at the next session of the legislature in May, 1768, the minority party opposed to Mr. Hubbard presented a petition to that body, with an account of their condition and grievances. The legislature in Oct. 1768, heard the petition, and granted the minority a release from all taxes laid for the support of Mr. Hubbard. The legislature, further advised the Church, to refer the whole affair with all their difficulties to a certain number of ministers and laymen, selected by a Committee of the legislature, and to yield unreserved compliance with their decision. But the majority refused to assent to the recommendation of the legislature.

The affair seems to have excited a good deal of attention throughout the State ; for letters and statements respecting all these proceedings appeared in the papers, and several pamphlets were published, in which the affair, with all its bearings and the principles involved, were earnestly discussed. At length in June 22, 1769, after nearly two years of unhappy controversy, Mr. Hubbard was ordained. But so strong was the feeling among the ministers of the State, that few

or none of them would take any part in the ordination, and a Council, composed principally of persons out of the State, convened at Meriden, and performed the required ceremonies.

In consequence of his settlement a portion of the Church and Society seceded, organised themselves as a separate body and maintained public worship. They met for some years in a private house, belonging to Capt. Shaler, situated near the spot where the house of Mr. George Hall now stands, on the road leading to the north-east part of the town, and about one mile from the centre. In 1770, there were but eight or nine families who met there. Gradually they all returned. Mr. Hubbard was said to be a man of unusually kind and amiable disposition, and his persevering course of conciliatory conduct, slowly affected the minds of those who had opposed him, until they all returned to an attendance on his ministrations.

About the year 1783, Mr. Hubbard was seriously injured by being thrown from his sleigh, and thereby disabled from preaching. He lingered until Nov. 1786, and died. He built and occupied the house in which Mr. Joel Miller now resides, near the centre of the town.

By those persons now living who still remember him, he is said to have been a man of about the middle size, with an unusually pleasant and benignant countenance. His pleasing manners and amiable disposition won for him the affections of the people. As a preacher, he is said to have been animated and interesting.

Rev. John Willard was settled as colleague pastor in June 1786, a few months before the death of Mr. Hubbard. His salary was £100—about equal to \$330, and thirty cords of wood, annually, and by agreement the wood was to be taken at 8s. per cord. He also received a *settlement*, as it was then termed, of £200. Since that time, the custom of making donations at the settlement of a pastor—once almost universal in our Churches—has been entirely abandoned here, and throughout the State.

At the time of Mr. Willard's ordination, serious difficulties arose in the Congregation, similar in their origin, to those which appeared at the settlement of Mr. Hubbard. The theological doctrines, styled Arminianism and Calvinism, were then warmly debated throughout the State, and had their respective advocates among the ministers and Churches. It seems that Mr. Willard's doctrinal sentiments on some of these controverted points, were distasteful to a portion of the people, and they consequently opposed his settlement. Although there was no organized secession from the Church on account of these differences, yet the dissatisfaction remained and increased. Very great numbers during his ministry, either deserted public worship altogether, or transferred themselves to other denominations, so that the Congregation, was very much diminished and weakened. In consequence of which, Mr. Willard was dismissed in the year 1802. He

subsequently removed to Vermont and died there not many years since.

He is said to have been in his personal appearance very tall and slender: and to have preached with a good deal of animation. While residing in Meriden, he built and occupied the house, now owned and used by Mr. Samuel Yale, on North Market street, just at the head of Liberty street.

In Feb. 1803, Rev. Erastus Ripley, was settled. His salary was fixed at \$400. In the course of his ministry, the Congregation rapidly diminished. Great numbers joined themselves to other denominations, and at one time it seemed as if the Church, would become quite extinct. He was dismissed in Feb. 1822, after a ministry of 19 years.

He was a very large, and commanding man in his personal appearance, and possessed of a strong mind. But his manner of preaching was dry, metaphysical, and destitute of all animation. While here he built and occupied the house opposite the residence of Dea. Walter Booth. He was subsequently settled in the eastern part of this state; and returned here to spend his old age. He died, Nov. 16, 1843.

In Nov. 1822, Rev. Charles J. Hinsdale, was settled. His salary was \$550. During his ministry, the Church and Congregation increased very much in numbers and prosperity; there were repeated revivals of religion, and a new house of worship was erected. He was dismissed in Dec. 1833, after a ministry of *eleven* years.

In March, 1836, Rev. Arthur Granger was settled, and after a brief and troubled ministry of about two years, was dismissed, in July, 1838. The present pastor was settled May, 1841. Salary, \$700, and a house.

## HOUSES OF WORSHIP.

The erection and location of the first house of worship within the limits of our town has been already noticed. It was occupied twenty-eight years. A second house was built in the year 1755, which was about sixty feet long and fifty broad. Originally it was without steeple or bell. It so remained until the year 1803, when a steeple was added, and a bell procured. This house was occupied for public worship, seventy-six years. In June, 1831, a new house was erected on the spot where the former one stood, and is now occupied by the Centre Congregational Church. The cost of this house was about \$7,000. Its dimensions were 78 feet long, and 50 feet wide. But as the population increased rapidly, there soon was need of another house of worship. As this increase was mainly in the western part of the town, it was decided to erect a new house at the point usually styled "the Corner," or "West Meriden." Accordingly the house we occupy at this time was here built, at an expense of \$8000. It is 90 feet in length, and 56 feet in width. In addition to the cost of the house, the land was purchased for \$800; a large bell and a town clock of superior workmanship, were also

procured; and the interior of the house furnished with elegant lamps, with carpets, and cushions throughout for every pew, and with two furnaces; all of which raised the cost of the house as we now have it, to about eleven thousand dollars. In the rear of the Church is a lecture room, 50 feet long and 36 feet wide, erected at a cost of about \$1200. It may perhaps be proper also to insert here, that in the year 1841, a beautiful parsonage was erected on the hill, which in 1847 was sold, and another was built near the new Church, the cost of which was about \$3000.

#### OLD CUSTOMS.

For many years it was the custom in Meriden,—as it had been in their parent Church, in Wallingford, and indeed throughout the State—to “dignify and seat the meeting house.” On this practice and its consequent evils, a few words have already been said on a previous page. The custom was maintained here until the occupation of the house which was built in 1831. The Society then adopted the plan of renting the pews annually, at public auction, thus giving to each person the opportunity of selecting a pew suited to his taste.

The younger part of my readers may be interested in some information relative to another custom, now obsolete and fast passing into oblivion. In the “good old times,” the houses of public worship were never warmed. Indeed, some would have deemed it an innovation sadly ominous of degeneracy, if not of actual

profanation, to make the house of God, comfortable. Of course, the hearers, in the cold weather, must have sat in an atmosphere, the very thought of which makes one shiver. Those who had travelled several miles to reach the place of public worship, as many of them did, and entered the house half-frozen, literally found "cold comfort." As prayers and sermons then, were much longer than moderns will endure, the winter hearers of those days must have endured a species of martyrdom. It is said that sometimes preachers complained bitterly that their voices were drowned by the noise of persons stamping, or knocking their feet together, in the attempt to get up a little warmth.

As a partial relief to such suffering, some persons built near the Church, what are often mentioned in the old records, as "Sabbath day houses"—little cabins about ten feet square, furnished with a fire-place, chimney and some chairs. Here the owner retired with his family at the intermission, and partook of some refreshment preparatory to the freezing process of the afternoon. It is a curious illustration of the tenacity with which old habits are cherished, that here as elsewhere, the proposal to make the house of God comfortable and healthful by means of stoves, was met with very decided opposition. Even in 1831, when the new house was built, it was with great difficulty that the Society could be induced even to allow chimneys to be built, though they were to be erected gratuitously. But warmth is *now* esteemed as appropriate to

the house of God, as to one's parlor ; and the "Sabbath day houses" which once nestled down around the Church, have all disappeared.

#### THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Of the general state of religion in this Church, in the earlier periods of its existence, we have very scanty information. But we know that from the year 1700 and onward, throughout all New England, experimental and vital godliness had very much decayed. This is not the place to enter upon a discussion, or even a full enumeration of the causes of this declension. The "half way covenant"—the numerous and almost incessant wars which oppressed and harrassed the people, fierce political agitations of the day, were, no doubt, among these causes. But in the *fact* of such declension, all accounts agree.

An accurate historian speaking of those times says, "there is a fearful decay creeping, I cannot say, but *rushing* in upon these Churches, a visible *shrink*, in all orders of men, of that greatness and goodness which was the first grain that our God brought into this land."

In 1715, the General Association say, "that there was a great want of Bibles, great neglect of public worship on the Sabbath," and complain of intemperance and other vices. Trumbull remarks, "that there was little of the power of religion, that professors were worldly and lukewarm—the young people were

loose and vicious—family prayer was neglected—the Sabbath was profaned—taverns were haunted, intemperance and other vices increased; and many of the ministers preached a cold and lifeless morality.”

We may therefore conclude with almost entire certainty, that Meriden did not differ much in these respects from the rest of New England: and that in our town, as elsewhere, formality, irreligion and declension, prevailed to a mournful extent. So far as the records of our Church, throw any light on the subject, we are led to the same inference: for we find that year after year, not more than one or two, united with the Church annually.

But in 1735, commenced a series of stupendous revivals in New England. They originated at Northampton under the preaching of the great and good Jonathan Edwards; and were characterised by wonderful extent and power. They extended into Connecticut. In some places, not a solitary person could be found, whose mind was not concerned for his soul's interest. In 1740, and 1741, various towns in Connecticut were most wonderfully affected—people flocked together on all days in the week, in great crowds to hear the word of God—they would fill the houses, and then stand clustered around the doors and windows, pressing eagerly to hear—they would go from one town to another, wherever there was public worship. The results of these revivals were most delightful and permanent—the morals of the community became

wonderfully improved; intemperance, sabbath breaking and profanity disappeared, and it was said that if bags of gold or diamonds had been left lying about in the streets, no person would have touched them.

About this time also, the celebrated Whitfield travelled through the country, preaching. In 1740, he passed through Connecticut on this very road, from Hartford to New Haven, and once at least, if not several times preached at Wallingford, then our own town. There can be no reasonable doubt that Meriden shared to some extent in the revivals which attended the labors of Whitfield, and our records inform us of considerable accessions to the Church at that time. But I have not been able to obtain any definite information, of the nature and progress of the revival.

From that period, I have not been able to learn that there was any season of revival in this town for the space of *seventy-four* years. As a natural consequence, both religion and the Church, had arrived at a point of very great declension, and feebleness. The Congregation had become very thin, and was daily becoming weaker. But in 1814, there commenced a very precious and powerful work of grace, and it was thought that *one hundred* were converted. In 1829 there was another revival, and it was hoped that about *fifty* were led to Christ. In 1833, God again granted his blessing, and about *seventy*, it is believed, repented of sin. In 1837, this Church was once more favored with a season of refreshing, and *forty* professed to have

experienced religion. In 1840, there was still another work of grace, and it is stated that as many as *one hundred and forty* were converted. In 1847-8, there was some special interest in religious subjects, and it is hoped that nearly one hundred became true Christians.

### THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

For about seventy years after the settlement of our town, there was no organized body of Christians within our limits except the Congregational Church. In the year 1739, a Baptist Church was formed, of which Rev. John Merriman was pastor. This Church however, by the emigration of its members, and from other causes, ceased to exist, about the year, 1750.

Various individuals, however, continued to prefer the faith and practice of the Baptists, and ministers of that denomination occasionally preached at private houses, in different parts of the town. In 1786 another Baptist Church was organised in the town, consisting of twelve members. Then, and subsequently, individuals became members of this Church, who resided in Cheshire, North Haven and Westfield, as no churches of this denomination of their preference existed in those places. For fourteen years their assemblies for public worship convened in private houses, in the south-east part of Meriden. In the year 1801, their first house of worship was built, in that same part of the town, south of the present residence of Mr. Ivah-

Curtiss. It was about thirty-five feet long and twenty-five feet wide. In 1816, they abandoned this house, and erected a new Church, in the centre of Meriden. In 1831 the house was enlarged, and adorned with a steeple. In 1848, the Baptist Society, increasing with the growth of the town, erected for themselves a large and beautiful Church, not far from the site of the former one. The cost of the new house, completed and furnished, together with the land, and the lecture room, was \$9,500. Its dimensions are 76 feet long, and 54 feet wide.

For a long time the Baptist Church had no stated pastor. During this period, when not supplied with preaching by regularly ordained ministers, their public services were conducted by some of the brethren selected and appointed for that purpose by the Church. In the year 1806, Rev. Samuel Miller was ordained as their pastor, and continued with them until his death in 1829. He will be long remembered in the town for his indefatigable zeal, and estimable character. Subsequently, Rev. Messrs. William Bentley, Russell Jennings, Nathaniel Hervey, George B. Atwell and Malcom, were successively pastors. In 1838, Rev. Harvey Miller, son of the first pastor, was installed. During his ministry, the Congregation has gained rapidly in numbers and strength, having been favored with repeated revivals of religion. He is still with them; no less loved and esteemed than his venerable parent.

The Episcopal Church in this town, was organized about the year 1789. For several years their assemblies for public worship convened at a private house in the western part of the town. Their present house of worship in the central village in Meriden, was erected in the year 1809; it is 45 feet long and 36 feet wide. A new and elegant Gothic Church of stone, is now in the process of completion, the cost of which will probably be about \$12,000. It is 80 feet long, and 45 feet wide.

The Episcopal Church has been supplied with quite a numerous succession of pastors, who have individually remained here but for very brief periods, and all their names I cannot ascertain. With great regret I am compelled to state that many of the details of the history of this Church are lost; as on application to the present pastor, for facts to be embodied in these sketches, he informed me that the records had been so imperfectly kept, that nothing of any value could be gleaned from them.

#### THE METHODIST CHURCH.

The establishment of the Methodist Church in this place, is an occurrence so very recent that very little information can here be communicated. The Christians of this denomination were associated as a Church, and commenced the stated worship of the Sabbath, in the year 1844. In 1847, they completed and occupied their new and beautiful house of worship at the

"centre," built at an expense of \$6,000. Its dimensions are 60 feet long and 40 feet wide.

#### CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The account of this Church has been virtually included in the previous sketch of that Church of which it was a part. When the increase of numbers necessitated the erection of a new house at the "Corner," in the year 1848, a part of the brethren preferred to retain and use the old house of worship. They were accordingly organized into "the Centre Congregational Church and Society," and the property was equally divided between them and the "First Congregational Church and Society." In 1848 their first pastor, Rev. A. A. Stevens was ordained.

OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS.

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MANUFACTURES.

The manufactories of Meriden, constitute so prominent a feature in its present condition, that one naturally feels some curiosity to know something of their origin. Indeed, such is the surface of our town, so much of it is covered with rocky and barren ridges ; or with swamps unfit for tillage, that if we had remained exclusively an agricultural town, our population would not have increased, probably for the last thirty years ; and our pecuniary circumstances would have been equally cramped. For with our soil, we could never have competed in the market with the rich lands of the South and West, in the production and sale of agricultural products. But the home market furnished by manufactures has stimulated and rewarded the farmer, giving new value both to his land and his crops. One who was acquainted with this place thirty-five years ago, wearing every appearance of stagnation and dilapidation, must, with high gratification, contrast that decay with the life, thrift and taste, now so characteristic of Meriden.

According to the best information I can obtain, the first effort which bore a faint resemblance to a "factory" appeared in 1791. Mr. Samuel Yale began to manufacture *cut nails*. He and his son worked in a small shop on the hill, near the present site of the Centre Congregational Church. Their little machine was worked by their own hands, and each nail was "headed" separately and by hand. About the year 1794, the same Mr. Yale, commenced the manufacture of *buttons* on a small scale. They were made of pewter, and would be considered by us a coarse and rough article. But at that time they met a ready sale. For a long time, only two or three men were employed in the business.

From that time onward, various articles were manufactured in our town; but the business was conducted on a very small scale. The manufacturing career of our town, did not really commence until about the year 1820. Some branches of business established about that time have been growing in importance ever since, and many other manufactories have been commenced. Those who are best acquainted with the business of our town, are confident, that the value of articles manufactured here cannot now be less than *one million* of dollars annually.

It should also be known and recorded, that nearly all the proprietors of our manufacturing establishments have been the decided friends of morality and religion; have aimed to introduce into our population only per-

sons of correct habits ; and endeavored to promote the highest good of those whom they employed. The results have been most gratifying. Large numbers of the young persons who came here for employment, have been led, it is hoped, to the true knowledge of Christ. The general tone of morals, will compare favorably with that of almost any town in our State.

A minute historical and statistical account of each branch of manufactures among us would be a very interesting and valuable document. But this kind of information, many proprietors, for obvious reasons, think it inexpedient to furnish, and therefore it cannot be presented here. Should these pages however be in existence one hundred years from this time, the reader of that day would no doubt like to know what articles are now manufactured in Meriden. Such information as can be procured, will be given in the appendix. \*

Of all these branches of business, no one is more interesting than the "Ivory Comb Manufactory," whether one regards its origin and growth, or the great beauty and admirable mechanism of the machinery employed. According to the best means of information, ivory combs were first made in this country by Andrew Lord of Saybrook, about sixty years ago. He cut out the "plates," and the teeth, by hand with a hand-saw: a slow and expensive process. John Graham of Boston, and Mr. Tryon of Glastenbury, made

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\* See Appendix, No. 12, where the statistics so far as they could be obtained are given.

ivory combs about the same time, on a small scale: the latter person used machinery. Ezra and Elisha Pratt of Hartford, also manufactured the article about fifty-five years ago, cutting the teeth by hand, like Mr. Lord. Abel Pratt, of Saybrook, made ivory combs fifty-one years ago. He sawed the "plates" by hand, and two hundred and fifty was considered a good day's work; whereas by the present improved processes four thousand plates can be sawed out in one day by one man. He cut the teeth however, with circular saws, and machinery moved by hand and afterwards by wind. Ezra Williams also commenced the same business in Saybrook, soon after Mr. Pratt, and began to saw the "plates" with machinery moved by water power. This establishment has continued to the present time, and is now known by the name of George Read & Co. Great improvements have been made there, in the machinery, and at one time nearly all the ivory comb business in the country was done by that firm. Various other attempts to carry on this business have been made, most of which have not succeeded. At the present time, all the ivory combs made in America, are manufactured in Connecticut, and nearly two-thirds of the whole, are made in Meriden. The business was commenced in this town in 1819 by Merriam & Collins, who used the best machinery known at that time. Their establishment was not long continued. Howard, Pratt & Co., began to manufacture ivory combs in Meriden in 1822. This firm is now in existence under

the name of Julius Pratt & Co. In this establishment, very great improvements have been made in the machinery by which the work is executed. The slow processes of the hand have been discarded, and machines which almost seem to have intelligence, perform the work with such rapidity, precision and beauty, that while the value of the raw material remains as it was thirty years ago, a far better article can now be sold at less than half the price formerly demanded.

Walter Webb & Co., commenced the business in 1831: Philo Pratt & Co., in 1836. The business of this latter firm was subsequently transferred to W. Webb & Co., and Mr. Pratt became a partner. In this establishment also, the best machinery is used.

The three firms of Geo. Read & Co., of Deep River, Julius Pratt & Co., Walter Webb & Co., of Meriden, now turn out about 15,000 or 18,000 combs daily, or about five and a half millions, annually; of these probably more than three millions and a half are made in Meriden. Quantities of these are exported to all parts of North and South America, and some are even sent to England.

#### MINES.

Very soon after the settlement of the town, it was conjectured that mineral wealth lay hidden within our hills. Various attempts have been made to find these buried treasures; and the old shafts and excavations still attest the zeal and industry of the miners. But it is utterly impossible to ascertain when or by whom

the mining business was commenced. We know that as early as 1712, the legislature passed a law for the encouragement of proprietors of mines in Simsbury and Wallingford [Meriden], and from the phraseology of the act it is evident that the mines had been worked, (though unsuccessfully;) previous to that time. But we have no more information on the subject until the year 1737. At that time a company was formed for the purpose of working the abandoned mines, and of this attempt we have an authentic account, as some of the papers relative to it, have been preserved by Deacon Silas Royce, the descendant of one of the partners in the company. These mines were on "milking-yard hill," and the shafts may still be seen, in the rear of the present residence of Mr. Norman Wood.

As matters of this kind are now exciting special interest, and as loose papers will not probably long be preserved in manuscript, it has been thought advisable to print them in full in these "Sketches." Although it is now generally supposed that these excavations were made solely as *copper* mines, yet these papers indicate an expectation of finding *gold*. Indeed it is probable that the hope of obtaining this more precious metal was the main inducement to re-opening the abandoned works. Several of the old inhabitants of our town have informed me, that in their boyhood they heard it spoken of as matter of current and universal belief, that small quantities of gold had actually been found in these mines. A very considerable quantity

of the ore was once shipped to England, as the means of smelting it were not to be found in America, but the ship was lost at sea. Tradition asserts that the foreigners who wrought in the mines concealed, and appropriated to themselves, whatever gold they found. For these reasons or for other causes of failure, the works were once more abandoned, and have never been resumed. Indeed, the Geological character of the "formation" around these mines, indicates *neither copper nor gold*, unless at very great depths.

Annexed is the document containing the articles of co-partnership.

#### GOLDEN PARLOR MINES.

"Articles of Agreement made and Concluded upon this twenty-Seventh day of April Anno Domini, 1737, Between Edward Higbee of Middletown, and Walter Henderson of Hartford, both of y<sup>e</sup> County of Hartford, and Thomas Thomas of New York, Arthur Rexford, Sam'l Androus, Benj. Royse, all of Wallingford, in y<sup>e</sup> County of Newhaven, and Colony of Connecticut, and Daniel Higbay of Middletown in ye County of Hartford afores'd, and Josiah Grizwold, Thomas Goodwin, Benjamin Stillman, John Pierce, all of Wethersfield in ye County aforesaid, Proprietors and Joint owners of a certain peice of land, or Mines in said Wallingford, as leased out to them by Timothy Royce of s'd Wallingford, as will appear by said Lease, reference there unto being had to carry on the work

in said Mines, Wittnesseth that we the s'd partys do covenant and agree to, and with each other, and do hereby oblidge and bind our Selves to Stand to, and perform the following articles, viz:

"1. That the Name of S'd Mine, Shall be the GOLDEN PARLOUR.

"2. That the Work to be done in said Mines, Shall be ordered by a vote of ye Majority of ye owners, and ye Costs and Charge arising on ye work in said mines shall be paid according to ye proportions of each owner's part.

"3. That Each owner's vote shall be in proportion to what part he owns.

"4. That if any owner or owners cannot attend ye meeting or meetings, appointed by ye Majority of ye owners in order to manage ye affairs of said mine, they shall have liberty to appoint any of ye owners to vote or act in his or their behalf, and said owner so appointed shall vote or act there in shall be Esteemed as good and valid as if the owner appointing was himself present.

"5. That Mr. Benj. Royce be a Clark to Enter and Keep ye votes that may from time to time be passed by the owners or the majority of said owners untill ye said owners shall chuse another in his room in which case, ye said Royce is to deliver all ye votes he has Entered and kept in ye Hands of said owners.

"6. That the last Wednesday of July, October, January and April, be days, Stated for ye Meeting of Said owners at Meriden, to make up the acc'tts of said mine and also to pay what Charge or Cost may arise between each Meeting to ye Satisfaction of ye undertaker, and if ye majority of ye owners shall think fitt to order a meeting on any other time, or times besides

those herein Stated ye meetings so ordered and ye affairs managed therein shall be good and valid.

"7. That these articles be committed into ye Hands of ye Clark for ye time being, and if any of ye owners desire a Copy hereof. ye said Clark shall give it him attested under his Hand, he or they satisfying him therefor.

"In confirmation of ye above mentioned articles, we the Subscribers, have hereunto Sett our Hands and Seals in Meriden, the Day and Date above mentioned.

|                  |       |                |       |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| "Edward Higbee,  | L. s. | Thos. Thomas,  | L. s. |
| Josiah Griswold, | L. s. | Thos. Goodwin, | L. s. |
| Arthur Rexford,  | L. s. | Benjamin Roys, | L. s. |
| Samuel Andrus,   | L. s. | B. Stilman,    | L. s. |
| John Pierce,     | L. s. |                |       |

"In Presence of

Amos hall,      Moses Parse, Jr.,      Wm. Hough."

It appears however that previous to the formal organization of the company on paper, a partnership had actually existed, for a few months at least, as we find a paper dated the previous February. It is as follows.

"A Record kept by Benjamin Roys, Clark of the proprietors of the mines in the land of Timothy Roys in wollingford.

"February ye 11, 1736-7. Then the owners of the mines in the land of Timothy Roys in Wollingford, being Regularly met together at the hous of John Way in Wallingford, did then make up their Acounts

of the Charg expended in the mines, from 8 of november, 1736, Which Charg did amount to the Sum of 86£, 4s, 2d.

“At a meeting of the proprietors of the mines in the land of Timothy Roys in Wallingford, February ye 11, 1736-7. The said oneers did make A fair agreement with Arther Rexford, one of the owners, to Dig ten foot in the north Shaft of said mines keeping the Smoth wals east and west and about five foot wide finding himself Tools and materials for the Same, to be done in five months, for which work the said proprietors did unanimously agree to give Said Rexford the Sum of eighty-one pounds,—81£-0-0.”

We have also the record of two other meetings of the company, as here annexed.

“At a meeting of the Proprietors of ye Mine in Meriden on ye 27th day of April, 1737.

“Voted, that mr. Griswold Shold be moderator for Said meeting.

“That Thomas Thomas be an undertaker to carry on the work in Said Mine for ye Space of three months next ensuing.

“That ye s'd Thos. Thomas be allowed at the rate of fifteen pounds per month, for so much time as he spends in said service, the time of pay to begin when the Hands begin to work in said mine.

“That Arthur Rexford having desired to be released from a bargain he made to sink a Shaft of ten feet deep in s'd mine that he be released.

“At a meeting of ye proprietors of ye Mine in Meriden, on ye 27th day of July, 1737.

“Voted, That Mr. Grizwold be Moderator for s'd Meeting. Also, Voted, by a full Vote the majority of ye owners, that ye owners according to their proportionable parts, pay to Georg Bell the Sum of fourty pounds, upon his finishing a job of work he had undertaken to do in the Golden Parler, viz: to sink twelve feet in the deeper Shaft nerest to docter houghs and to leave the bottom of the Shaft nere the wedth and length that it now is, to find him Self withall materials, &c. necesary and Sutable to cary on and finish Said work.

“And at s'd meeting, July ye 27, 1737, the s'd owners made up their accounts which did amount to the Sum of 132£, 13s. 1d.”

These documents contain all the information we now have relative to the mines on “milking-yard hill.” They were probably again abandoned after the unprofitable labor of two or three years.

Mining operations on a much smaller scale were commenced in another part of the town. The excavations are about fifty rods east of the turnpike road to Hartford, about one mile and three-quarters, from the centre of the town. Dr. Percival in his “Geological Survey,” speaks of them as excavations for copper: but tradition says, that small quantities of gold were found there. But there is no other information whatever as to the mine, its proprietors, products, or the time when it was worked.

More than one hundred years ago, Mr. Dan. Johnson, bought of Mr. Yale who was one of the first "planters" in Wallingford, a large tract of land, lying south of the "Hanging Hills," and within "the Notch" so called, the picturesque pass or glen opening northerly from the gate on the Waterbury road, towards Kensington. This land was purchased on account of its probable value for mining purposes, and has been retained in the family of Mr. Johnson ever since: though the necessary expense of searching for ores, has hitherto prevented them from undertaking mining operations. Within "the Notch" is an elevation called "Mining Hill," which is said by those acquainted with Geology to abound in indications of valuable minerals.

About sixty years ago, one Mr. Parsons commenced an excavation a short distance west of the Hanging Hills, just over the line between Southington and Meriden, and found gold in small quantities. It was taken to Hartford, assayed, and found to be pure gold. The search was not continued probably on account of the cost: for mining operations are usually so expensive, that individual enterprise and wealth, can rarely afford the cost and risk. Large and wealthy stock companies, are needed for such undertakings.

In "Sketches" like these it has been thought best to preserve a variety of other miscellaneous facts, which, though individually unimportant, have some local interest for one who is desirous of information

about former times. Such facts are accordingly here stated.

#### PHYSICIANS.

The first physician in Meriden, was *Dr. Isaac Hall*, he died in 1781, and probably had practised here twenty or thirty years previously. He resided, while living, quite in the easterly part of the town, on that road which now passes the residence of Mr. Charles Paddock, and Dea. Silas Royce. *Dr. Ensign Hough*, commenced business in this town, in 1769, and fixed his residence near the centre of the town. He was well known, and highly esteemed. He died in 1813. His son, *Dr. Isaac I. Hough*, still surviving, commenced medical practice in this town, in 1802. *Dr. Wyllys Woodruff*, entered on his profession here, about 1825, and died in 1842, universally beloved for his many estimable qualities, and highly esteemed for his medical skill. The medical gentlemen, now in practice here, are of course well-known.

#### REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS.

In that eventful war which terminated in the "Independence" of the United States, Meriden, whose whole population embraced but 123 families, nobly bore her share of exertion and peril, if we may judge by the numbers of her citizens, who were personally engaged in the contest. In addition to those who, as militia men, were called occasionally into service, the

persons whose names are annexed, were soldiers in the regular army. There were probably others, of whom no information has reached me.

|                  |                    |                 |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| *John Couch,     | Jotham Hall,       | Oliver Collins, |
| †Joseph Shaler,  | James Baldwin,     | Lem. Collins,   |
| Joseph Twiss,    | John Ives,         | David Hall,     |
| B. Rexford, Jr., | ‡Chatham Freeman,  | Enos Hall, Jr.  |
| Abner Andrews,   | §Black Boss,       | Joash Hall,     |
| Lamberton Clark, | Ambrose Hotchkiss, | A. Merriam,     |
| Edmund Merriam,  | Ephraim Merriam,   | Dan. Crane,     |
| David Roberts,   | Josiah Merriman.   |                 |

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\* JOHN COUCH, held a commission, and was prisoner for several years on Long Island.

† JOSEPH SHALER, was a Lieutenant in the regiment of Col. Meigs, a corps distinguished for its gallantry and efficiency. Subsequently he was engaged in the frontier war with the Indian tribes in the year 1791. Having received a Captain's commission he raised a company of soldiers from this town and vicinity, and joined the forces of Gen. St. Clair, in their expedition against the Indians on the Miami. At the time of St. Clair's disastrous defeat, with terrible slaughter of his troops, Capt. Shaler was absent as commander it is believed of some garrisoned fort, in the rear. About that time he and his son venturing to hunt a short distance from the fort, were attacked by Indians. His son was killed and scalped. Capt. Shaler escaped. He settled in Ohio at the close of the war and died there.

‡ CHATHAM FREEMAN, was the slave of Mr. Noah Yale. According to the State law of that period, any able-bodied male slave who enlisted in the army became thereby FREE. So far as these pages shall be read and preserved, the writer is happy to perpetuate in them the memory of a colored "revolutionary hero."

§ BLACK BOSS. He was the slave of Abel Curtiss, and like his colored friend preferred the harsh discipline of the camp, and the perils of battle, even to that very mild form of slavery which existed in Connecticut. The name here given is a nickname; but is the only one by which he was ever known, according to the information of those elderly people who remember him.

For some of the preceding information, I am indebted to Dea. Phineas Hough.

## SLAVERY.

It is painful to be compelled to place side by side with the facts just narrated, some features of olden time, not so creditable to our predecessors. *Slavery* had existed in Connecticut, though to a very limited extent, from an early period. In 1646, we are told that "an Indian woman fled from her master" to the Dutch.\* "Though her master demanded her *as his property*, they would not restore her," as was most assuredly right. Even at that early period, *in a few cases*, some Indians or Indian families, who had become by treachery or crime peculiarly obnoxious, were sold as slaves.

Negro slavery did not exist in the Colony, I believe, until about the year 1680. At that time *thirty* slaves were brought from Barbadoes and sold at an average price of £22 each. From that time their numbers slowly grew by natural increase and by importation. But it is worthy of remark, that in this case, as in nearly, if not quite, *all other cases*, slavery commenced and grew *without any positive law*. It became established in Connecticut without law; it grew up in the Southern States without law; it will grow up in New

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\* This took place at Hartford; near which, at a place still called "Dutch Point," the Dutch had then a small fort and garrison.

Mexico and California without law. The man who supposes or pretends that there is no danger of its taking root firmly and speedily, because no law expressly authorises it, or who denies the necessity of an express prohibitory law to keep it out; must have forgotten the manifold lessons of the past.

Some few slaves were owned in this town. But that their condition living singly in the families of their masters, and laboring side by side with them, was very different from that of slaves, held and worked in large gangs, under a brutal overseer, is unquestionable. They were indeed considered as members of the family and baptized as such on the plan of "household baptism." For we meet with entries on our Church records like the following. "March 1, 1741, baptized London, servant of John Webb." "Sep. 12, 1742, baptized Primus, servant of Lazarus Ives." "Sep. 6, 1747, baptized Champe, a negro of Lazarus Ives." "April 24th, 1748, baptized negro child of John Merriam." About twenty of these baptisms are recorded within a period of forty years.

The deaths among the slaves were also recorded no less carefully than the decease of the whites, though in somewhat less respectful terms. Thus in the register of burials for 1736, is this entry, "Aaron Lyman's negro," and "Nov. 15, 1737, Theo. Mix's negro man." "Feb. 25, 1745, a negro of Serg't Jerom." "Feb. 28, 1748, Serg't Jerom's negro child." Even the reverend

man who officiated at funerals, met with losses of the same nature, for I find this entry, "June 8, 1758, *my* negro child, Gin."

On the records of deaths for thirty-eight years, from 1728 to 1766, there are three hundred and sixteen names. Of these, twenty-nine are recorded in a manner which indicates that they were slaves, which is almost exactly *one-eleventh* of the whole number. If this be taken as an index to the relative proportion of the numbers, of slaves and whites, we reach the following results. In 1729 there were in Meriden, 35 families, and giving to each family the average number of five persons—175 inhabitants. In 1770, there were 123 families, or 615 inhabitants. Supposing the slaves to be as one to eleven, we have in 1729, sixteen slaves, and in 1770, fifty-six.

The slave trade, as such, never existed here, and yet transfers of slaves, as personal property not unfrequently took place. Some singular documents being legal instruments of sale, are in my possession. Exact copies of two of them, which are regularly signed, sealed and witnessed by the parties respectively, like deeds of land, and which are here annexed, with the names of the contracting parties omitted.

"Know all men by these presents that I \_\_\_\_\_ of Meriden, Widow, for the consideration of thirteen pounds, Lawful money, already Received of \_\_\_\_\_ of s'd Meriden, do sell and make over unto the s'd

—— his Heirs and assigns *forever*,\* all my Right and title to and in Interest in the Negro Girl named time, that was the Estate of the s'd deceased, and that was let out to me for the settlement of s'd estate, and do hereby promise to warrant the same against all claims whatsoever. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this Second day of May, Anno Domini, 1760.

——, L. S.

“Signed, Sealed and Delivered in presence of

——,  
——.”

“Know all men by thees presents, that I ——, of Wallingford, the County of New Haven, and colony of Conecticut in New england, Have Sold and Delivered unto ——, of s'd Wallingford, one negro man called by the name of Steep, about eighteen years old who is in perfect health acording to the best of my knowlidg, for which negro I have Received of s'd ——, the sum of one hundred and eighty pounds, †old tenor, to my full satisfaction, and do promise to warrant and defend the sale of the above s'd negro,

\* We hope the benevolent seller did not suppose that the servitude was to extend to a future world.

† This “old tenor” money consisted bills ofered it, issued by the State, in the terrible embarrassments and debts consequent on the English, French and Spanish wars: which wars always involved the colonies, in great danger and expense. These bills, at one time became so depreciated, that they were received as 10 for 1, and even 20 for 1.

dureing the term of his natureall life against all the lawfull claims of any person whatsoever, in witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this first day of March, A. D. 1743.

\_\_\_\_\_, L. S.

"Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of

\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_."

### THE FIRST WAGON.

In 1789, or 60 years ago, the *first wagon* was brought into Meriden. It was owned by Mr. Ezra Rice. It was of a very rude construction, being simply a square framed box placed on four wheels, drawn by two horses, with ropes for traces, and cords for the guiding or driving lines. Yet it was then thought to be a very elegant establishment. Previous to that time, there had never been owned in the town, but three two-wheel carriages, being very rude, awkward chaise bodies or uncovered seats hung on two wheels, in the manner of our modern chaise.

Quite in keeping with this fact is another, stated to me by a gentleman whose business led him at various times, into every house, and of course enabled him to know whereof he affirmed. He assured me that in 1802, there was *but one carpet* in the whole town of Meriden.

Until the year 1802, there was not a single road in town, which was made by being rounded from the centre to the sides, in the manner of a turnpike, and as our roads are all now made. They were more frequently *lower* than the sides, by continual wear of use, and washing of the rains, rather than raised above them. There can be little doubt that we find in this fact, the reason for laying out roads of the enormous width of *six* and even *twenty* rods. For as one track became worn, full of ruts, and sunk below the surface, the traveller could find sufficient room to pick out for himself a another and still another track, yet fresh and unworn, in the broad space of one hundred, or three hundred feet, reserved for a highway. As there were few laborers and plenty of land, this mode working the roads was cheaper than our modern process of laboriously constructing one good, rounded track. As to the comfort of the traveller, there could not be much question. The present Hartford and New Haven turnpike which passes through the centre of the town, was completed about the year 1800. It was considered a vast, wonderful and curious work at the time, so that people came to see it, just as they afterwards flocked to see the first rail road.

#### TAVERNS.

So far as the morals of the town are concerned, there are some rather curious facts. The number of taverns was astonishingly great. In 1790, and for some time

before, when the whole population of the town was not more than 900, and as late as 1812, there were *five* if not *eight* taverns within the limits of Meriden. As these taverns always kept ardent spirits, and as the population of the town was small, and as the amount of travel then, was much less than it is now, these facts, indicate a low state of morals.

There are at present but two taverns in Meriden, with a population of about 3000. At only one of these, are spirituous liquors sold.

## SUBSTITUTE FOR A BELL.

We find in the old records frequent mention, of a curious custom, that of *beating the drum* on the Sabbath. As there was no bell, a substitute was procured in the form of a drum, which was beat all over the village, [of Wallingford] on the Sabbath, to call the people to the Church, and as the signal for all other public meetings. As early as 1673, is the following vote.

“June 17, 1673. Sam’l Monson shall be allowed 40s. for maintaining and beating the Drum in good order for the yeare ensuing.”

And in 1675, voted, “that Jeremiah How, have 40s. allowed him, for beating the drum, Sabbath days and other days.” In 1676, 2£, 16s., was allowed “for beating the drum, Sabbaths, lecture days, and for town meetings.” Again is voted “for beating drum, sabbaths, lecture days, trainings, and *keeping in repair*, 20s.” In 1694, the town voted 3£ to purchase a new

drum." With an increase of population, more sound was needed, and of course a larger drum. We find therefore a vote for the purchase of the instrument, with the order to sell the old one as follows, "Dec. 25, 1705. The town sould the litle drum to Thomas Hall at an outery for fifteen shilings and threepens to be paid this yeare." As late as 1714, we find the practice still continued. There is little doubt that it was kept up, till a bell was purchased, in 1727, when the town voted to build a belfry, and we may suppose that they then purchased a bell, and gave up the drum after it had done service about 60 years.

#### WOLVES.

As in every new country, wild animals were numerous and troublesome. The town offered a bounty for killing them. As early as 1678, eight years after the town was settled, we find it voted, that "2s. more be *added* to the bounty given for killing each wolf." As late as 1702, this reward for killing wolves was still continued, and in Feb. 1713, I find this vote.

"Feb. 17, 1713. The town voatted yt they would allow five shillings to him that tracks a wolf or wolfs into a swamp, and then giv notis of ye same, and then raises a company of men so that ye wolf or wolfs be killed."

#### FIRST CIDER MILL.

How soon orchards were planted, and cider made, is

unknown. But in 1718, about 40 years after the settlement of the town, the town granted permission to one person, "to set up a cider mill."

### REGISTRY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY.

There appears from the records another custom now entirely abolished. Our present custom of entering on town records, all sales, and mortgages of real estate, was then in existence. But it was also customary to enter on the town records the *sale and transfer, and description of personal property*, and particularly of *animals* of all kinds. There is a large volume entirely filled with these entries. I will copy only two, as specimens of several thousands.

"The 5 of March, 1709, for sayd hall, a Blackish culered mare colt, one yeare coming a few whit hars in the forhad a few whit hars Below the Eys sum whit Bee twene y<sup>e</sup> Nostrils Brandid y on the Left shoulder."

"The begining of Janewary, 1706, Sold by Samuell Roys to me, Joseph Whitin of harford, a bay hors a bout 5 year old sum whit one won of his foore feet 2 notchis, one the back sid of Left Ear brandid y one the left shoulder."

### PRICES.

For many years, the amount of money in the country was very small, and allusion has been made to the subject on a previous page. In Massachusetts, at one

time, the scarcity of small coin was so great, that a law was enacted, declaring that *bullets* should pass for farthings. Very naturally, therefore, it was common in contracts for work, salaries, and taxes, to make a specific agreement that payments might be made in various kinds of produce, with the prices attached. I have thought that some curiosity might be gratified by a statement of these prices, in this town, at different periods, which I have extracted from various old documents.

In 1673, Corn was 3s. per bushel.

In 1674, Winter wheat 5s. 6d.—summer wheat 5s.—Peas 4s.—Corn 3s.

In 1679, Winter Wheat 5s.—Summer Wheat 4s. 6d.—Peas 3s. 6d.—Corn 2s. 6d.—Pork 3 1-2d. per lb.—Beef 2d.

In 1710, Wheat 5s.—Rye 3s. 6d.—Corn 2s. 6d.

In 1755, Wheat 4s.—Rye 2s. 6d.—Corn 2s.

In 1770, Wheat 6s. 8d.—Rye 4s. 6d.—Corn 3s. 6d.—Oats 2s. 1d.—Pork 3 1-2d. per lb.—Beef 3d.—Butter 1s.—Cheese 7d.

In 1641, Mechanic's wages, 1s. 8d. per day, in Massachusetts.

#### POPULATION.

Some items relative to population not only in this town, but in the State, which I have found scattered in books and documents, may also gratify a rational curiosity, and hereafter may be of real value. They

suggest many interesting thoughts though consisting only of figures.

In 1655, there were but 775 taxable inhabitants in the whole State.

In 1665, there were about 1700 families in Connecticut.

In 1713, there were about 17,000 inhabitants in the State.

In 1748, about 70,000 inhabitants in the State.

In 1672, there were 42 "planters" in Wallingford.

In 1690, there were 73 families in Wallingford.

In 1709, there were about 700 inhabitants in Wallingford.

In 1729, there were 25 families in Meriden.

In 1770, there were 123 families in Meriden.

#### MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS.

In the year 1680, the home government sent over to the Colonies, a long list of questions relative to their condition, agricultural, financial, political and ecclesiastical. A full reply to these queries was sent back by the Legislature of Connecticut, from which I have gleaned a few facts, here annexed.

"The country is a mountainous country, full of rocks, swamps, and hills; and most that is fit for plantations *is taken up*." Yet the whole state then contained but about 10,000 inhabitants.

Again they say, "The imports into the Colony are about of the value of £9000 annually."

"The whole property of the Colony is rated at £110,788."

"There are 21 Churches in the Colony: the salaries of the ministers, are from £50 to £100."

"There are twenty merchants in the Colony."

"There are owned in the Colony, 4 ships, 3 pinks, 8 sloops, and 12 other smaller vessels."

The Post Office system was first established in Connecticut in 1693, by special authority from the king. The mail went through the Colony from Boston to New York, *once every week*. The postage from Boston to Hartford was 9d.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have thus presented my readers with a few sketches of olden time. But I am well aware that the previous pages give a very imperfect view of the real worth of our fathers. For records and documents usually present only the bad or ludicrous side of human nature. The Church, really holy and energetic, has but little business which goes on the records, though its members work like true men, and leave deep and permanent their mark on the community. But when offences and divisions, and cases of discipline occur, these fill up the records. One who reads such documents, therefore, finds the evil which has transpired, fully embalmed, while the remembrance of the good has perished, or must be sought in other monuments. So has it been with our fathers. Something which is

bad or ludicrous, something defective or rough according to our views of civilization and progress, attracts our notice, and we insensibly form an unfavorable opinion of their character. I fear that these pages may be charged with fostering such a mistake. We ought not therefore to forget, the true heroism, the noble conscientiousness, the far-reaching sagacity of those stern men in the wilderness: who in the midst of perils, discouragements, and poverty, laid broad and deep the foundations of New England institutions. Let me therefore in conclusion suggest some thoughts which may serve to bring out more distinctly both their disadvantage and their excellencies.

Let us go back, one hundred and eighty years, and look at them and their circumstances, on the spot where the first village in the town was built. It is Sabbath morning; but how different from our Sabbaths. With the exception of that little spot where the village stands, the eye wanders over a wide wilderness and forest, in whose deep recesses the savage was then lurking. You look around for the Church, and see a little low building 28 by 24, and ten feet high, built of logs, without chimney, or steeple. About twenty-five houses, small and low, make up the whole of the village. As the time of public worship approaches, each man steps out of his house with a loaded musket on his shoulder, and powder-horn, and shot-bag, slung around his neck. The little congregation are soon gathered into the house of God, and the humble settlement is

still, save the tramp of armed sentinels, who pace backwards and forwards in the narrow space which they call a street. For there is war, not war a thousand miles off, fought by hired mercenaries, whom we send away to butcher, or be butchered, as the case may be, and whose marches and exploits just serve to make the newspapers interesting and exciting; but war around their own houses, war from savages who have conspired to exterminate the white man; war which may burst like thunder on their homes, and let loose the tomahawk and scalping-knife on their families at any moment.

We will enter the Church. There, on rough board seats are about 60 or 70 men, women and children, and on a little block or platform stands the minister. He prays for protection from the Lord God of hosts, and that prayer *means something*, when the next note they hear, may be the war-whoop ringing out from the adjacent forest: and there is not a solitary house, nor an arm to help them, nearer than Hartford or New Haven. He preaches: and the hopes of heaven, the consolations of religion mean something, when within their earthly horizon there is only wilderness, poverty and war. The congregation looks poor and rough in their apparel, and there is sad meaning in the loaded musket on which each manly head is bent as he stands up for prayer.

But there are manly and earnest hearts, underneath that unpromising exterior, and there is the deep devo-

tion of men who from their inmost souls honor God, and feel their dependence on him.

Mark the contrasts *now*. Look over that same landscape, and see on every valley and hill-top, the marks of labor, wealth and taste. Hundreds elegantly dressed—perhaps too much so—are crowding into a spacious Church, where art has done its utmost to gratify the taste and promote the comfort of the worshipper. I wish I could say that all who lounge on these elegant and luxurious seats, sent up as devout homage to God as went up from that old log Church. Luxuries and improvements which those old “planters” never dreamed of, are lavishly scattered through our houses, and over our town.

Look again : you see a traveller starting from Hartford, on his way to New Haven. He is on horseback, with heavy saddle-bags depending from the saddle, and perhaps with pistols at his saddle-bow. After passing Wethersfield, he drives into the forest, where there is only a “bridle path,” cut out through the trees. Slowly picking his way among stumps and swamps, with now and then some trepidation as an Indian crosses his path, he reaches towards nightfall, the old stone house called Meriden, and is glad to find that its stout doors and shutters can resist all hostile attacks. The next morning, at early dawn, he commences another hard day’s journey, and has hardly gone beyond the tavern door, when he spies a troop of gaunt wolves upon Mount Lamentation, just returning from their

night's hunt. He gets almost bemired in passing the swamp and unbridged stream at Pilgrim's Harbor, and about noon reaches the little settlement at Wallingford. In that day when mails and newspapers were unknown, but human curiosity was no less intense than it is now, the traveller was the news bearer. So our horseman as he enters the street is quickly besieged with the townspeople, inquisitive for the most recent intelligence. He tells them perhaps that a letter was received in Hartford but a week before he left, which had been brought through from Boston in three days. In this letter was the latest intelligence from Europe. The "Seabird," after a quick passage of two months, had brought the news of the death of Charles 2d, and of the accession of James, four months ago. He gives them the latest account of the elections in Massachusetts and Plymouth, which took place three weeks previous, and adds a few items about the state of the Indians, and the arrivals of emigrants. But he must hasten on; so leaving the country people to digest their news, he proceeds, wades through deep sands, and salt marshes, and by sunset, of the second day, arrives safely at New Haven.

Contrast that journey, with the telegraph which carries news from Boston to New Haven in less than a second, and the rail road car which transports the traveller in one hour from Hartford to New Haven, in what may be appropriately styled a flying palace.

Contrast their poverty with our wealth, their inabil-

ity for some years, to build for a house of worship a log cabin, such as any single journeyman *now*, could pay for out of his own pocket without feeling it. Contrast their poor schools and poorer school houses, with our elegant school houses and academies, where are the most lavish aids for the comfort and intellectual progress of the pupils. Let us look at these contrasts, and be thankful.

But while we may smile at some of the awkwardness and roughness of our fathers, let us remember that we have reached our present stage of progress, because *those fathers of ours were* MEN, Christian men, New England men. One hundred and eighty years ago, there was *more* of the outward adornments and indications of civilization in *China*, than in *Connecticut*. But China has stood still, and Connecticut has made progress. Why? because in Connecticut God had breathed into the souls of our fathers the breath of life—Christianity and all the invigorating and elevating influences which ever accompany a true Christianity. Had they been vicious, heathenish, mean-souled, and degraded, we should now have been the ever degenerating sons of a degenerate race.

Back to the institutions which they founded, the character which they transmitted to their children, must we trace the causes of the growth, intelligence, and wonderful improvement of the present day. Whatever is really valuable in Meriden now, stands out as the true history, and the best monument of our fathers.

Let us then this day, with grateful hearts, THANK God, that such men lived and toiled before us; and embalm their memories, by imitating their virtues.

## A P P E N D I X .

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### APPENDIX NO. 1

*Earliest deed of what appears to have been the north half of Meriden.*

“ OCT. 15, 1664.

“ Know all men by these presents, that I \*Seaukett, Indian, (abiding in or about Hartford, on Conec't) Sachem, owner and true proprietor of a large tract of Land in the Woods towards New Haven att and about the land now in possession of Mr. Jonathan Gilbert, intituled and known by the name *Merideen*, doe sell unto Edward Higbey, one pareell of land adjoining to the lands of Jonathan Gilbert, aforesaid,—Hills, Rocks, brooks, swamps and all other appurtenances, bounded and formerly delivered, by marked trees, and by the land of say'd †Jonathan Gilbert and Pilgrim's Harber

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\* Of this Seaukett, we know nothing. He was probably one of the Mattabesitt tribe, who like many others, wandered away from their original habitations as their respective tribes gradually crumbled to pieces, before the combined influence of vice and civilization.

† This land of Jonathan Gilbert was a tract lying in the southerly part of Berlin. Of course, land lying between that and Pilgrim's Harbor Brook, can be easily traced now. Its eastern and western boundaries are not here stated.

Brook or River—all which sayd parcell of land with all prerogatives, privileges and any kind of appurtenances thereon, and thereunto belonging, it shall be Lawful for the sayd Edward Higbey, his heirs and assigns, to improve, possess, enjoy and that forever, as fully and as freely as the said Seaket ever did or might have done, in witnesswhereof by these presents, I bind myself, my heirs and assigns, quietly and peaceably to leave in the full possession of all the premises, the sayd Edward Higbey never to be molested by me the sayd Seakit, my heirs, or any other Indian or Indians, whatsoever, and so subscribe my name.

“ the mark of  Seaukeet.

“In presence and witness of Bryan Rossetter and Mary Gilbert.”

## APPENDIX NO. 2.

*Another deed, which seems to have covered very nearly the same territory, conveyed by a previous deed of “Seaukett.”*

“HARTFORD, AUGUST 10, 1684. (date of record.)

“Know all men whom this may concerne, that I Adam puit, Indian, belonging and now residing at \*Podunk,

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\* Podunk, was the original name of a river in Windsor, and was also the name of an Indian tribe, residing near that river.

have and doe hereby morgage all my land lyeing upon the Road towards Newhaven, beyond and next adjoyning to Jonathan Gilberts \*farme which tract of land being in length East and West Six Miles, and in breadth North and South five miles, with all the swamps, Rivers and meadow Land lyeing within the sayd Bounds and limits thereof, to John Talcot of Hartford in Conecticut Colony and his heires for ever. And in case the said Adam Puit do pay for and make full satisfaction for one parcell of Trucking cloaths in hand received of the said John Talcot within one full year after the sale hereof, and in case we the said partyes agree about the said land before the end and term of one year, (to say) for the purchase or sale thereof the said Adam is to receive foure coats more, as full satisfaction for the purchase thereof, the premises not being performed as above said, I the said Adam Puit doe fully and freely resigne and deliver up the said land to John Talcott and his heires forever, to be theirs to possess to enjoy, and to hold as their own, for ever, as witnesseth my mark on the day and year above said.

“ The mark of Adam  Puit.

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\* This land of Jonathan Gilbert, has been mentioned in the previous deed and note. Of course, land lying “beyond” that or south of it, must have been in the north half of Meriden.

"Witnessed buy us: Sammuell Talcott, Dorothy Talcott.

*"Hartford, October 18, 1682."*

### APPENDIX NO. 3.

*John Talcot's deed of assignment to the town of Wallingford.*

"Know all men by these presents, that I John Talcott of Hartford, In Conecticut colony, do fully, freely, clearely and absolutely, Alienate, assign and set over, resign and deliver up all my right, title, and interest, in the within written deed of sale,\* to Mr. Sammuel Street, Mr. John Moss, Lieut. nathaniell Meriman, Mr. John Brocket, Serg't Abraham dowlittle of Wallingford, within the said Colony of conecticut, to themselves for their proper use only benefit and behoof, of themselves and the inhabitants of the sayd towne of wallingford within the said colony; to them, their heires and assigns forever, to hold, use, occupy and improve the same, withall the emoluments, rents, emunitys, privilidges, franchises, comoditys and appurtenances, whatsoever and herein consigned, grant-

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\* The land is not described and bounded in this assignment: but in the original records this assignment is accompanied by a copy of the Adam Puit deed, and also by a letter of Mr. Talcot to the town of Wallingford, too long to be inserted, and of no material value, in which he speaks of this "deed of sale," as the one received by him from Puit.

ing him and every one of them, full power and authority to Record the same to themselves, their heires and assignes for ever, for the confirmation of the premises, for my selfe, heires, executors and Administrators doe fully ratifie and confirm this assignment unto Mr. Sammuell Street, Mr. John Moss, and to their associates the inhabitants of Wallingford, them, their heires and assigns for ever, as witnesseth my hand and seal this fifteenth of may in the year of our lord, one thousand six hundred eighty and three.

“ John Talcott, seal.  ”

“ Witnessed by John church, Daniell Butler.”

#### APPENDIX NO. 4.

*Confirmation or grant by the State, to the town of Wallingford, of that territory previously assigned and set off to them by the action of the town of New Haven.*

“ At a Court of Election held at Hearford, May 12, 1670. This court having been moved to state the bounds of the new village, that is settling upon the plaine as you goe to New Haven, doe grant that the bounds shall come from the little brook at the south end of the great plain to the northward ten miles, and from the said brook Southward to Branford Bounds, and on each side of the river five miles. That is five

miles on the east side and five miles on the west side the river, Provided, that the said village be carried on and made a plantation, without any relation or subordination to any other town, and provided the bounds hereby granted to ye said village do not predjudice any bounds formerly granted to any plantation or particular person, or do not extend to the north any farther than where the old road to New Haven goeth over Pilgrim's Harbor; and this court orders that the plantation on the plains, on the road to New Haven, shall be called Wallingford."

#### APPENDIX NO. 5.

*The document to be inserted here, has already been printed on Page 30.*

#### APPENDIX NO. 6.

*Action of the town of New Haven, originating the "plantation" at Wallingford, and appointing Committee with instructions, to carry out the design; referred to on page 17.*

"Extract from Wallingford Plantation Records, Vol. 1. 31st 11th month, 1669.

1. The Committee do consent to put the said village designe into ye hands of a competent number of per-

sons fitly qualified for that work, provided, they seasonably appear and engage to undertake y<sup>e</sup> same upon their articles and further shall appoint some fit persons of y<sup>e</sup> said number to be a committe with full power to manage their plantation affairs, untill the place come to be an orderly establishment within itself.

“2. For y<sup>e</sup> safety and well being of church affairs, for y<sup>e</sup> Ministry and maintainance, the Committe do order yt y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> undertakers and successors, before (they are) admitted shall subscribe to the following engagement, Vide He, or they, as afs<sup>d</sup> shall not by any means Disturb y<sup>e</sup> church when settled there, in their choice of Minister or Ministers, or other ch<sup>h</sup> officers—or in any of their Ch<sup>h</sup> Rights, Liberties, or administrations, nor shall refuse nor withdraw due maintainance from such ministry and untill such Ch<sup>h</sup> be settled, shall submit to such order as y<sup>e</sup> said committe shall make, for a Godly Minister to dispence y<sup>e</sup> word of God among them.

“3. That the said Committe to be appointed and their successors, in receiving of Planters, shall have due respect to New Haven persons, being fit and offering themselves, so far as it can consist with the good of the place and capacity thereof.

“4. Lastly. These articles being accepted, the s<sup>d</sup> Company and all others admitted planters among them, shall enjoy their accommodations and Lands, without payment of purchase money to New Haven; to themselves, their heirs, successors and assigns, for

ever, so far as concerns New Haven town's purchase within the village bounds, the said town of New Haven consenting there unto.

"And we do nominate, Mr. Samuel Street, John Moss, John Brockett and Abraham Doolittle to be a Committe whom we hereby impower to manage all plantation affairs in ye said village according to, and in pursuance of the above written articles, and to see the same attended and performed by the planters, either, are or shall be by them the said committe, and also for to disposal and distribution of allotments in some such equal way as shall best suit the condition of the place and ye inhabitants thereof, and to use their best means, they can for procurement of some able and fit man to dispense the word of God among them, and lastly, we do impower them, the above-named committe to make choice of such other fit persons into the exercise of their power and trust with themselves, for their assistance, if any such shall appear among them, and the major part of the said committe, hereby appointed or intended, have full power to act in all the premises, as they shall see cause, in pursuance of the said articles and undertakings. In testimony whereof, and to all the said articles and premises, We the Committe appointed by New Haven, thereunto, have set to our hands.

"William Jones,

Mathew Gilbert,

Wm. Broadley,

Jeremiah Osbern,

John Harriman,

John Humiston,

Abraham Dickerman."

## APPENDIX NO. 7.

*The covenant or original agreement of the first planters at Wallingford, referred to on page 17.*

“ We whose names are underwritten, being accepted by the Committee of New Haven, for ye intended Village as planters, and desiring that the worship and ordinances of God may in due time, be set up and encouraged among us, as the main concernment of a christian people, doe sincerely and in the fear of God, promise and engage ourselves that we shall not neither directly nor indirectly, do anything to hinder or obstruct any good means that shall be used by the said committe, or others intrusted by them, to promote the premises, by securing a Godly and able ministry among us to dispense to us the word of God, and when such ministry, or a Church of Christ shall be settled among us, we engage by no means to disturb the same in their choice of a minister or ministers or other ch'h officers, or in any other of their ch'h rights, liberties, or administrations, nor shall refuse or withdraw due maintainance from such minister, or ministry, and farther we doe engage ourselves peaceably to submit to such settlement, and Civil order as the said committe shall direct among us either by themselves, or some others as a committe by them appointed, upon the place, untill the said village come to be an orderly establishment within itself, and lastly we doe engage personally to settle upon the place, by May next, come twelve month, if God's providence inevitably hinder not, and to observe

and perform all and every the other articles agreed upon.

|                  |                    |                  |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| " Samuel Street, | John Mosse,        | John Brockett,   |
| Nath'l Merriman, | Abraham Dowlittle, | Jero How,        |
| William Johnson, | Daniel Hogge,      | Sam'l Whitehead, |
| Benjamin Lewis,  | Thomas Curtiss,    | Thomas Yale,     |
| Thomas Hall,     | John Beech,        | Elisaph Preston, |
| Jehiel Preston,  | Eliazer Holt,      | Samuel Andrews,  |
| Daniel Sherman,  | John Hall,         | Samuel Hall,     |
| Samuel Cook,     | Zac'h How,         | Nath'l How,      |
| Joseph Benham,   | Samuel Potter,     | Joseph Ives,     |
| William Johnson, | Eleazer Peck,      | Samuel Munson,   |
| John Peck,       | Samuel Browne,     | John Milles,     |
| Nathan Andrews,  | John Ives,         | Simon Tuttell,   |
| Samuel Milles,   | John Harriman,     | Frances Heaton." |

#### APPENDIX NO. 8.

*The document to be inserted here, has already been printed on Page 27.*

#### APPENDIX NO. 9.

*Deed to Bartholomew Foster.*

" SEPT. 19, 1710.

" Thomas Yale, John Merriman and Thomas Hall, committee of Wallingford, to sell Indian lands, grant to Bartholomew Foster, the Town right to a certain Tract of land of 350 Acres, situated between Pilgrim's Harbor and Merridan, bounded on ye N. E. corner by a Black Oak tree, thence by the road that goeth to hartford 207 Rods to a W. Oak tree, thence

westward 312 Rods to a Black oak tree, that side bounds by land of Mr. John Hudson, thence Northwardly 112 to a Bl'k oak tree, thence 120 Rods to a Walnut tree, thence on a line to the first station 266 Rods."

## APPENDIX NO. 10.

*Deed of land, north and east of Pilgrim's Harbor, to John Merriam, 1716.*

" Know all men by these presents, that I John Prout Sen'r, of New Haven, and Col. of Conn. Gent., for and in consideration of ye sum of Three Hundred and five pounds, current money, to me in hand well and truly paid by John Merriam of Wallingford, have sold, granted and C. a certain tract or parcel of Land, known by ye name of ye Country farme formerly granted to James Bishop of New Haven, by the Governor and Company of ye said Colony of Conn., containing three hundred Acres Abutting south on ye old line of Wallingford Township, North on ye Coles farm, East on a brook, or land formerly Mr. William Jones' Esqr., west on commons or land of late years laid out to sundry persons of ye said town of Wallingford, situate lying and being the wilderness at a place,\* commonly called

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\* This part of the deed, shows that there was a precise locality, called Pilgrim's Harbor : and that West Meriden, was that place. The stream running though it is sometimes called Pilgrim's Harbor brook—and sometimes Pilgrim's Harbor simply, without putting on the word brook—just as we sometimes speak of Connecticut river ; and sometimes speak of the Connecticut merely, without adding the word river.

Pilgrim's Harbor, northward of Wallingford old bounds and 5 1-2 Acres of hoop land, situated in Wallingford, aforesaid nere ye said farm be ye same more or less, formerly belonging to Robert and Isaac Roys, as witnesseth my hand at New Haven, this 3 day of November in the year 1716.

"JOHN PROUT,  
"MARY PROUT."

### APPENDIX NO. 11.

*The document to be inserted here is omitted.*

### APPENDIX NO. 12.

*Manufactures in Meriden in 1849,*

[omitting the ordinary mechanic arts, which furnish articles for use in town.]

Julius Pratt & Co.—Ivory Combs, of great variety of sizes and qualities; 42 hands.

Walter Webb & Co.—Ivory Combs of great variety of sizes and qualities; 33 hands.

Pratt, Ropes, Webb & Co.—Table cutlery of great variety of size, finish and cost; 75 hands.

Curtiss, Morgan & Co.—Locks and latches in great variety, with a large assortment of small iron castings; 50 hands; raw material \$12,000.\*

Charles Parker.—Coffee mills, latches, vises, brittania and plated spoons, of each a great variety, with a large miscellaneous assortment of other iron castings; 60 hands.

C. & E. Parker.—All kinds of brass and iron castings.

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\* In this and all cases, the sum attached to the words "raw material," indicates the value *annually consumed*.

Oliver Snow & Co.—Iron Pumps, and all kinds of machinery to order ; 20 hands.

Foster, Merriam & Co.—Castors, and a variety of brass and iron castings ; 14 hands ; raw material \$8000.

Julius Parker.—Harness trimmings, hinges and iron castings ; 8 hands.

Henry M. Foster.—Spring balances and Steelyards ; 3 hands.

Julius Ives.—Cast iron inkstands ; 3 hands.

H. T. Wilcox.—Steelyards and bit braces ; 7 hands ; raw material \$4000.

Sanford, Parmelee & Co.—Augurs, skates, rakes and bitts, in great variety ; about 40 hands.

Stedman & Clarke.—All kind of plain and japaned tin ware ; about 40 hands ; raw material \$20,000.

Goodrich & Ratty.—All kinds of plain and japaned tin ware ; 18 hands ; raw material \$10,000.

Lauren T. Merriam.—All kinds of plain and japaned tin ware ; 25 hands ; raw material \$6000.

H. W. Curtiss.—All kinds of plain and japaned tin ware ; 8 hands ; raw material \$6000.

Charles Pomeroy.—All kinds of plain and japaned tin ware ; 18 hands.

Blakeslee, Stiles & Co.—Plain and japaned tin ware ; 4 hands.

Charles Waterman.—Kettle ears and candlesticks ; about 5 hands.

Frary & Benham.—Brittania ware of various kinds ; 10 hands ; raw material \$20,000.

Wm. Lyman.—Britannia ware of various kinds ; 6 hands.

L. C. Lewis.—Britannia ware of various kinds ; 8 hands ; raw material \$8000.

S. L. Cone.—Britannia ware of various kinds ; 4 hands.

L. G. Baldwin.—Britannia ware and spoons ; 5 hands.

Crocker & Pratt.—Brass and plated articles, like letters for signs, lamp chains, stove ornaments, &c. ; 20 hands.

Edwin Birdsey.—Wood turning, wooden combs and packing boxes ; 15 hands ; raw material \$8000.

Birdsey & Williams.—Bone buttons ; 12 hands ; raw material \$7000.

H. Griswold. Bone buttons ; 20 hands ; raw material \$8000.

Calvin Coe. Neats foot oil, ground bones and gypsum ; 4 hands.

Wm. Hale. Suspenders ; hands work at their own homes ; raw material \$20,000.

Jedediah Wilcox.—Carpet bags.

W. K. & S. L. Treat.—Sashes, blinds and doors ; 5 hands.

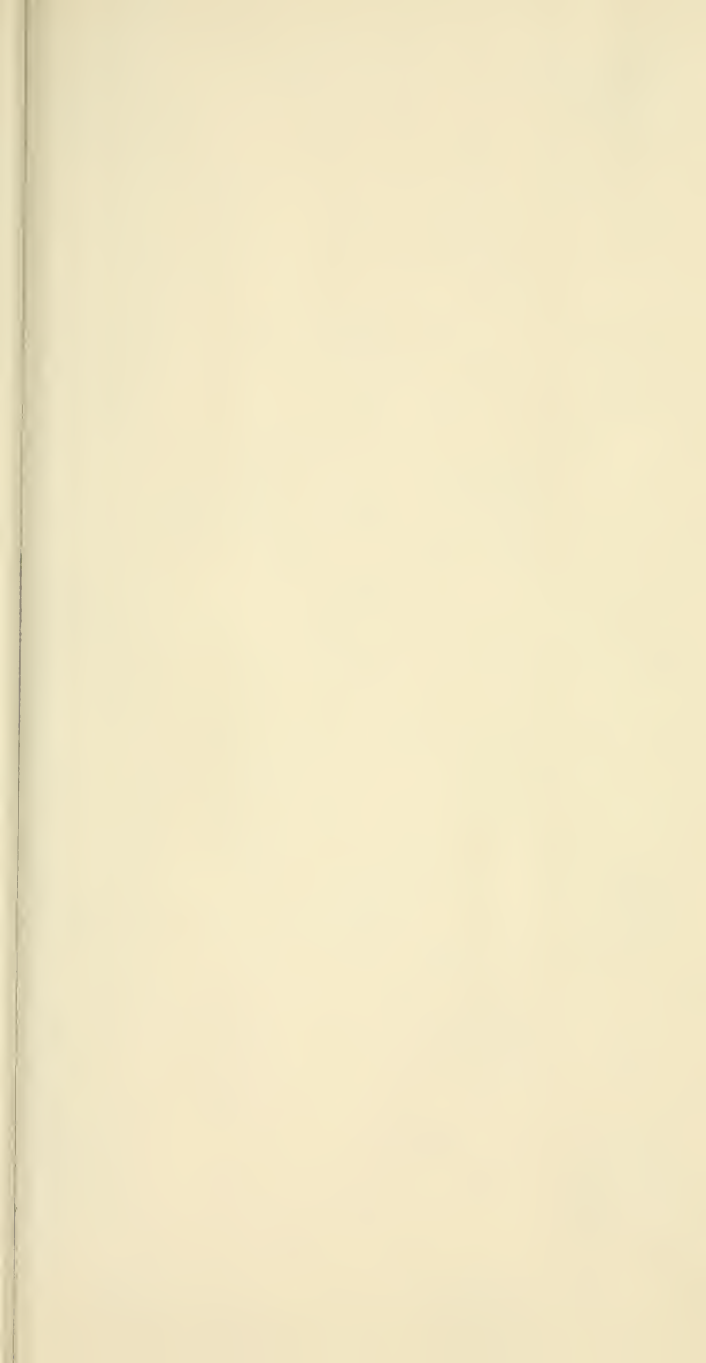
Osgood & Co. Platform Scales ; 3 hands.

Samuel Yale. Tin ware and lamp screws ; 4 hands.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS of Meriden, in 1845, as taken by the Assessors. Firewood, 1,147 cords ; Wool, 1,191 lbs. ; Corn, 8,523 bush. ; Buckwheat, 2,114 ; Rye, 5,206 ; Oats, 7,180 ; Potatoes, 8,590 ; Hay, 1,656 tons ; Tobacco, 8,000 lbs. ; Butter, 52,560 lbs. ; Cheese, 5,675 lbs. ; Honey 706 lbs.







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