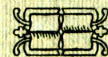


Vernon
and
Rockville
In the Olden Time



VERNON
AND
ROCKVILLE
IN THE OLDEN TIME

FOREWORD.

In justice to myself I would say that this sketch of Vernon and Rockville in the olden time was written for the entertainment of Sabra Trumbull Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and more especially for the older members of that Chapter. The limited time for the reading of this paper will partly account for its imperfections, and as there was no thought of publication, for its reminiscences of a somewhat personal nature. At the solicitation of several members of the Chapter I have consented to print this paper, hoping thereby to add quite materially to the D. A. R. fund for a free bed in the Rockville City Hospital.

CELIA E. PRESCOTT.

THE OLD CHURCH AT VERNON.

On the 28th day of November, 1760, while Vernon was still a part of Bolton, plans were formed to build a meeting-house at what is now called Vernon Center, to better accommodate the families living in that neighborhood, as some of the people were obliged to go eight or nine miles to attend church. The regular course of law demanded that they apply to the County Court for a committee to "Affix a place to build a meeting-house." The records at Hartford show that a committee was appointed. They fixed upon a spot about half a mile east of the present meeting-house, on top of the hill still known to some as Meeting House Hill, a beautiful spot. Let me say right here, that Mrs. George Maxwell has marked the spot with a white post.

This house was raised May 6, 1762, and was 46 by 36 with 22 foot posts. It was first used for divine service on the 20th of June. It could have been little more than a shelter, as it was not until 1768 that it was voted to "provide a lock and key and bolts to fasten up the meeting-house." Pews were put in two years later. The house was not plastered until 1774; twelve years after it was first used. This did not mean lack of zeal, but the people were poor, and money scarce to a degree hardly to be understood at the present time.

This meeting-house was of the prevailing style of architecture; a plain four-sided building with doors and windows in the east and west ends. The interior of the house was fitted with nearly square pews with straight-backed seats. There were galleries on three sides and high above the stairs, in each front corner, a negro pew. The pulpit was considerably elevated, with a sounding board above. The church records contain no account of the formation of the church except a single line written by Deacon Francis King, as late as 1818, "The Church of Vernon was formed October, 1762." This church was known in Bolton, as the "Second Church of Christ," until the town of Vernon was incorporated in October, 1808, when the church and society took the name of the town.

On the 29th of March, 1762, it was voted to call Mr. Ebenezer Kellogg on probation. At the end of three months he was settled. On the ninth of September, his salary was fixed at 60 pounds for the first year, to increase by 1 pound yearly until it reached 70 pounds. After the adoption of Federal Currency, it was expressed by \$333.33. Mr. Kellogg remained with this church as its pastor for nearly 55 years. His review of his work of

50 year's service is most interesting and touching. Not one of the 35 original members was present to listen to him on this occasion. With his own hand he recorded the last admission to the church during his lifetime.

Anno Domini 1817, Eliza, wife of George Kellogg, recommended by Rev. E. Cook of Orford (now Manchester). Mrs. Kellogg was the mother of Mrs. Maxwell and Rev. Ebenezer Kellogg was her great grandfather. Who can tell what a mighty influence for good could be wrought into a service of so many years? In speaking of this old church, I should not neglect to say that the schoolhouse was close beside the church, also the horse sheds; showing that religion, education, and mercy went hand in hand.

In this brick schoolhouse, the late Mrs. Dickinson said, there was always a rousing fire in the fireplace with plenty of live coals for the foot stoves of the ladies, for you must remember there was no heat in the meeting-house. I wonder what could have been done with the large families of children who, I understand, always went to church.

Mrs. Orcutt tells us that the small old house on the road from Vernon Center to Rockville, now owned by Mr. Patzold, stood quite near the old church. This house was built by her grandfather for her father, and there, the young women from the surrounding farms used to bring their shoes and stockings, and sometimes their dresses, and put them on before they started up the hill to church, changing again on their return from the afternoon service.

Mr. Kellogg was succeeded by Rev. Wm. Ely, Amzi Benedict, and Chester Humphry.

This church was removed to Rockville in 1831 or 1832, and made the east wing of the old Frank Mill. It served as a part of the mill operated by the James J. Regan Co., and was rented from the White, Corbin & Co. whose factory stands upon the site of the Frank Mill. This wing was destroyed by fire several years ago. Seven members of the old church became preachers of the gospel.

These extracts were taken from an Historical Address of Allen Stanley Kellogg:

"In 1827 the present Vernon Center Church was built."

"The church had increased largely in numbers, mostly from the north part of the town. The growing industries there brought many to this church. Attendance on divine service was expected, and was pretty general, many walking to and from Rockville. The most noticeable sight of the day was the team wagon of the Rock Mill with four horses, driven by John Chapman, Jr., loaded with girls from the Rock Factory." I know that Mrs. W. R. Orcutt, Mrs. George Maxwell, Mr. George Talcott, and Mr. A. T. Bissell attended this church for a time.

"The subject of instituting a second church was presented at a meeting held on the 11th of November, 1836. A petition was presented to a

committee consisting of the Pastor, Deacon Flavel Talcott, Thomas Wright Kellogg, John Chapman, and George Kellogg. The committee reported in favor of the petition. Thirty-five members were dismissed in 1837 and formed the First Church of Rockville."

"In 1789 Bolton was enlarged more than one-third by the annexation of a section of East Windsor. From this union the boundary line of Vernon was derived. It became a town in October, 1808."

THE OLD KING TAVERN.

The Old King Tavern was and is, a place of much interest. It was built by Lemuel King, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, enlisting when only sixteen. He was wounded and left for dead on the battlefield. As he lay there some British soldiers passed him, and one said, "Let's stick a bayonet through him," but his companion, giving him a kick, said, "Oh, he is dead enough," and passed on. His stiff knee was the result of his wounds.

The Brick House was built for his son Hezekiah, but he only kept the house a few years, when it was turned over to his brother-in-law, Burt McKinney. This house was built in 1820 and 1821.

Hezekiah King married Wealthy Warburton of Vernon, and went to St. Louis with his brother-in-law. It was the same Mr. Warburton who gave the Warburton Chapel in Hartford.

Lemuel King was a great land owner, possessing most of the Tankarouson Valley. At that time there was much travel on the mail route from New York to Boston.

A little west of the Brick House was the toll gate. When the stage reached the toll house the horn was sounded, and immediately the waffle irons were put into the coals to heat. Mrs. C. F. Harwood's mother, who was Persis King, and lived in the house across the street, said that, although only twelve years old when she heard the sound of the horn, she immediately ran over to the Brick House to tend one of the waffle irons. My father (Francis Keeney) used to say that the King Tavern was famous for miles around for its waffles. The house was finely built for those times.

The paper on the parlor was a French paper with mythological pictures, and was on the wall at the time of LaFayette's visit in 1824. He was expected to be at the Brick House in the evening, and a ball had been arranged in his honor. I am told that tickets for that ball are still in existence. The houses all along the route were illuminated. I also learn that the sign-board is in the attic of the town house. Would it not be a fine thing for our Chapter to hunt it up and hang it to one of the big maples, set out by the owner of the King Tavern, or to erect it in Lafayette Park?

In the spring of 1902 Sabra Trumbull Chapter, D. A. R., laid out a little plot of ground in front of the Old Tavern, curbing and turbing the enclosure and placed thereon a large boulder with a bronze inscription commemorating Lafayette's visit. This park was given to the city and dedicated (Lafayette Park) June 12, 1902. Hezekiah King was present with his son at the ceremony.

A BELATED POEM
DEDICATED TO SABRA TRUMBULL CHAPTER,

D. A. R.

Written by Mrs. C. F. Jackson.

It chanced, upon one August day
That Lafayette once passed this way,
And pausing here awhile to rest
Hallowed the soil his foot had pressed.
So matron grave, and maiden gay,
Came hither, in their bright array
Glad homage to his name to pay.
They brought no wreath of fragile flowers
To perish with the fleeting hours,
No laurel wreath, nor victor's crown
Such as we give to Washington.
But granite, strong, enduring, grand,
A boulder which for aye shall stand,
And speak to every passer by,
Of him, who heard our country's cry
For help. And in their hour of need
He gave himself; heroic deed!
Now earliest rays of morning sun
Shall glorify this dull gray stone,
And when at eve the sun shall set,
'Twill gild the name of Lafayette.
Dear name, forever shall it be
Enshrined within our memory,
And carved in bronze upon the stone
Be linked with that of Washington.

The McLean Tavern was also a stopping place for the stages. To show what the young ladies could do in those days, Mrs. Dickinson said that her mother died before she was eighteen, and she ran the house and looked after the younger children, and even entertained a ministers' convention there. This old Tavern served for several years as the County

Home for neglected children, and it made a good place for them. Upon the completion of the present Home it was moved to New England Avenue.

The first public house in Rockville was built by Mr. William T. Cogswell in 1843. Asaph McKinney, a most genial man and good landlord, moved in before the house was really finished. The dedication took place in Jan., 1844. He kept this house for three and a half years, paying a yearly rental of \$200. Oct. 5, 1847, Francis Keeney succeeded him, paying the same rent. He moved out in March, 1851, as the rent had been raised to \$300. In the fall of 1847, or spring of '48, Mr. Keeney set out a row of Elm trees south of the house. The first year they were girdled, and all died except one. That is the large tree at the west end of the terrace near the signpost.

At that time the terrace was not walled up. The land over which the road runs belonged to the hotel property. The large tree stands directly over the first aqueduct pipes. The prices in Mr. Keeney's time were 25 cents for each meal, and the same for a night's lodging. The house was uncomfortably crowded, eight men, all strangers, were sometimes compelled to occupy the four beds in one room on the second floor. You must remember that was in the day of stage coaches, running to Woodstock, Stafford, Springfield, Broad Brook and Hartford, and drivers must be cared for as well as passengers. The old Tavern was moved a few rods north and rented for a few years, when it was bought by Judge Benezet H. Bill and occupied by him for many years. It has since been moved to Ellington, and is now known as the Ellington Inn.

On the completion of the new hotel built on the site of the old one, Elisha Pember (father of Mrs. C. F. Harwood) took command for a year. He had had experience in hotel keeping as he had run one in Ellington years before and was very popular with the public. There is a legend in our family that Mrs. Pember made the cake served at a wedding reception given by Mr. and Mrs. Keeney, on their coming into Ellington to live, in 1830. I do not know as the cake was the ONLY reason for their years of warm friendship, but if it was as delicious as that which I have sampled in their home, I should consider it a good and sufficient reason. Several other landlords stayed for a short time. In the meantime Mr. George Kellogg had bought the hotel property of the company, and in February, 1858, sold the same to Francis Keeney for \$6,095. He kept the house for seventeen years and was commonly known as Father Keeney. In those days there were many men and women of national fame that came to the Keeney House. I remember Frederick Douglas and Wendell Phillips who came here to lecture, also Mrs. Livermore and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. There were many others whose names I do not now recall. These people were always given the seat of honor at Mr. Keeney's right hand at the table, and usually a ride up Fox Hill, and to the farm up Mountain Street. The goods made by the mills at that time were all sold through Commission Merchants in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston, and these

merchants came at least twice a year to decide upon the styles to manufacture. These men used to stay for a week or more, driving over to Stafford, Coventry, Broad Brook and other places to see the goods made there. Many of these gentlemen brought their wives, and their visits were anticipated with much pleasure by the family.

P. H. PEASE. "DIFF." FOR SHORT.

There was great excitement at the Keeney House one night along the last of 1863, when a stranger of rather distinguished appearance arrived on the evening stage with a quantity of baggage. He called for the best in the house and asked to place in the safe a large sum of money. One of his hands was badly disfigured. After his supper he sat by the fireplace in conversation with several of our townspeople. One of these men had kept his eye on that injured hand, and finally said to the stranger, "I believe you are Philander Pease who lost part of his hand in one of our mills years ago," and sure enough it was the same person. The next morning he deposited his money in the bank, also one or more drafts upon an English bank which were honored later. He gave liberally to the First and Second Church, a sewing machine to a widow and wood to the poor. He was very flush with his money. He went from here to Amesbury to get married, and brought back a nice sensible appearing woman for whom he delighted to buy fine clothes and jewelry. He had a carriage at his disposal, and seemed to enjoy meeting those he knew as a boy. One day he left town, and the next we heard of him in Ludlow Street Jail in New York. He wrote to an acquaintance from "Hotel de Ludlow" and said he was leading a very quiet life. When his case came up for trial he asked that the Secretary of War be notified, and he telegraphed at once ordering his release. It was thought that he had acted as a spy for the Confederacy and later for our government. John Brown, whose "soul is marching on," was in Rockville and sold wool to our factories.

The arrival of the four-horse team of Mr. Fisk and his son Jim, were yearly events much enjoyed, as he brought with him fine silks, and did a thriving business through the country. Jim Fisk's tragic death was brought to mind by the recent newspaper notices of his wife's illness and poverty in Boston. She was a remarkably pretty young woman when she used to come to Rockville with her gay young husband.

Dr. J. B. Lewis and family lived at the hotel for several years on his return from the war where he had served as Surgeon General. He had charge of five hospitals in Fredericksburg, Cumberland and near-by places, and his family lived up in the Cumberland Mountains. Many times did they pack up their most precious belongings and have the horses saddled ready to make a hasty start for a place of safety when they heard of visits about to be made them by Southern raiders. They bought the house, later owned by Judge Loomis, and lived here many years. Their home is now

in Hartford, but their love for Rockville still remains. Many of the young men of that time brought their brides to the hotel, and in that way life-long friendships were formed by the family, among them E. E. Marvin, a brother of Mrs. Wm. Butler; Heber Townsend, Rev. E. B. Bingham, H. B. Murless, E. S. Henry and others.

THE OLD FIRST CHURCH OF ROCKVILLE.

The old First Church of Rockville stood where now stands our Memorial building. The first minister, Ansel Nash, lived in the first parsonage, which is, I suppose, a part of the Yost house. He was here about two and one-half years. Then came Horace Winslow. He was here a little over seven years. He organized a cold water army comprised of the children of the village, which, under his personal leadership, was wont to march through our streets with banners flying. He was very wide-awake and rather dramatic in the pulpit. Judge Loomis tells the story that a minister from Somers was to preach, but before the sermon, Mr. Winslow gave out several notices and walked back and forth on the platform. When the visiting clergyman, who was short and stout, rolled up to the pulpit, he said in his deepest bass, "Will my hearers now come down to the sober realities of gospel truth?"

John W. Ray, Smith B. Goodenow, Avery S. Walker, Henry S. Kelsey, E. B. Bingham, Joseph W. Backus, and C. H. Rickets followed; Mr. Bingham serving longest, nearly eight years. Quoting again from Judge Loomis, "Their average term was three years, ten months, and seventeen days." So you see we were pretty good Methodists, which may explain the fact that the organ of the First Church has now become the organ of the Methodist Church. I understand that Deacon Stickney played the organ twelve years, giving his services. He also drilled the boys and girls Saturday afternoons in singing the Sunday School tunes for the next day. The first organ was loaned to the church by Col. Thayer. The second was built by the Hooks of Boston. In November, 1854, appears this vote: "That Mr. Stebbins and the society committee look up the bass viol of this society." The people were evidently not afraid of a little rosin on the bow. Perhaps this was the double bass played in the church by Mr. Crosby or Henry Selden. In speaking about music and organs, I would mention Erastus McCollum, long an honored member of the church. He lived near where Armour's block now stands. His son Julius worked for the Hooks, and set up the organ here and was greatly interested in its construction. Fenelon, born here, is a maker of organ pipes, and is one of the best in this country.

Deacon Johnson lived on Park Street, about where Dr. Tillotson lives, and kept a shoe store where Liebe still sells shoes. He was a most worthy man, universally respected. Here is an incident showing what stuff he was

made of: The Sunday School had voted \$15.00 for the Seaman's Friend Society. It was handed to the Deacon who was standing by an open coal stove with some other papers in his hand, which he was intending to burn, and while talking with his friend, he threw them all into the fire. "There," said he, "I've done it, and will punish myself for it." He took from his pocket \$30.00 which he turned over to his visitor. According to his means, he was a very liberal man. John G. Bailey was an honored deacon in this church for many years.

Stephen G. Risley, our beloved physician, was a most interesting speaker in the evening meetings of the church, and for years taught a class of young girls in the Sunday School. Chauncey Winchell was always in his seat in church. He lived to be ninety-four. The inference is clear. Mrs. Preston's father was for a long time chorister. He had a remarkably sweet tenor voice. Edwin McLean was another worker. His son, President George McLean is moulding the minds of the young men of the West. William T. Cogswell sang bass in the old choir. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins, Mrs. Fisk, Mrs. Pond, Mrs. Gilfillan, Eliza Scott Calhoun, also Mrs. Thomas Barrows, who was a fine soprano singer. Later on, Mrs. Townsend, Mrs. Barber, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Ricketts, and George F. Talcott, with Mr. Badmington at the organ, and Mr. Durfee as bass and choir director, — there was real melody and a true interpretation of sacred music. Mrs. Maxwell tells me that she sang in the first choir of this church. For many years, Gelon W. West was the efficient clerk of the old ecclesiastical society.

Speaking of the old workers in this church, I must not forget Dr. Scott, grandfather of Mrs. F. M. Adams. He also lived in the Yost house. I have in this room a petition presented him by his fellow-townsmen, urging him to remain in Rockville. In his day, the Sabbath began at sundown, Saturday night. There is a story that Mrs. Risley used to relate, that one of the daughters went to play with another little girl friend, and thoughtlessly stayed after the sun had sunk to rest, whereupon the father of her playmate sent her home. Instead of Dr. Scott being provoked, he wrote his friend and thanked him for his interest in his daughter, expressing his sorrow that she was so careless in her observance of the Sabbath day.

Mr. William W. Andross, who came here when quite young, was always a willing worker in the church, also Mr. and Mrs. William Thompson. George M. Paulk and Mr. Thompson both remembered the Rockville Library in their wills. Henry Ransom was a regular attendant, as was his father, Lyman Ransom, before him. He always brought an apple or two with him, which he ate before the fire in the hotel office, between the morning and afternoon services.

There were a couple of old men who used to strike consternation to the hearts of the older members of the congregation and the minister, and furnish amusement and excitement for the younger ones. The large man sat in one of the wing pews, and used to take his hat and tramp out of the

church, using his cane vigorously, whenever the minister made any remarks with which he did not agree. The other, a little man, used to fly out more like a bumblebee, but by the time he had reached the street his anger had taken wings. Conditions change, but human nature remains about the same.

Mrs. Stickney and Mrs. Rose were deaconesses in this church, and were women of rare wisdom. Mother Martin was a constant attendant nearly up to the close of her life. Mr. Stickney, speaking of her death, said, "With bowed head upon which rested the weight of ninety-four years, she doubtless passed erect through the pearly gates into the Celestial City."

This church was built by William T. Cogswell in 1839 and cost \$5,100. The lecture room, now a residence near the Minterburn Mill, was used for church purposes for three years. This was built in 1836 and stood upon the site of the Henry Building.

SECOND CHURCH.

While Horace Winslow was the pastor of the First Church of Rockville, a second church was started, made up in part of the old church members and of the new families who had come here to work. This church increased rapidly and was a mighty power for good here. This church was built in 1849 — ten years after the First Church was dedicated.

I remember when Addie Bissell, sister of Mrs. Hammond, married a missionary and immediately left for South Africa. The church was packed. I also recall the good music when Will Hammond played the organ, Mr. Hammond the flute, Mr. Selden the bass viol. Joseph Selden was a member of this choir for many years. Later Mrs. Murless, from the choir gallery, sang so sweetly, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow," accompanied by Hattie Selden on the organ. On April 3, 1888, this building was destroyed by fire. Soon after, the First Church sold their site for the Memorial Town Hall, and the two societies united and built the present beautiful church edifice. (I well remember a committee meeting in this room, when my father and husband were here; also Deacon George Maxwell, Deacon Stickney, and Judge Dwight Loomis were present.)

I am indebted to Mr. George Talcott, Mrs. George Maxwell, and Mrs. W. R. Orcutt for much valuable information, also to Mr. C. D. Talcott of Talcottville for gleanings from his historical address in 1908.

POST OFFICES.

The name of Rockville was adopted and the first Postmaster, Samuel P. Rose, appointed in 1841. The office was in his store near the Memorial

Building. George Brown, our only living stage driver, says that he used to carry the mail bag to the James Stewart place near the Springville office when he was a boy, receiving for his task one big copper cent. That was in '45 or '46. The office was at one time on the corner of West Main and New England Avenue; also in W. H. Cogswell's store and for a long time about where Preston's store now stands. A. W. Tracy, whose house stood upon the site of this house, was a very genial Postmaster.

George N. Brigham (father of Frank M.) enlisted in Company D, 14th Regiment, in 1862. He was promoted to Captain of his Company. He was wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, and twice afterwards. On account of his ill health he was honorably discharged in 1864. Under Johnson's administration he was appointed Postmaster and filled that office most acceptably for twenty years.

OLD STAGE LINES. GEORGE BROWN.

There was another generation of stage drivers after the building of the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill roads, in 1847-1848-1849. A line was run from here to Vernon Station, carrying the U. S. Mail. It was started by George Hammond who ran it for a few years when he sold it to Harvey King. Mr. King operated this line until the opening of the Rockville Railroad, Aug. 11, 1863. Besides this route he sent a stage to Warehouse Point through Ellington and Broad Brook to connect with the train from Hartford to Springfield, bringing back passengers from the down train, and also a stage to Tolland. Most of these drivers used four horses but there was one stage on which they drove six horses.

These Concord stages cost from \$1,200 to \$1,600. Thirty passengers have been carried in one of these coaches. George Brown says, "I came into Rockville from Vernon with a load of passengers on the night of Aug. 10, 1863. When I backed the old stage under the shed and unhitched the horses — that closed the history of the U. S. Mail and passenger stage route in Rockville."

An incident that caused considerable amusement among the passengers, one afternoon, was the arrival of one of our citizens with his bride No. 2. After she was safely landed, the driver lifted down from the top of the coach a baby carriage (not a common thing in those days), and the groom trundled the carriage home with him.

On August 11th, 1863, the Rockville Railroad started to run its trains. Many townspeople were invited to ride and afterwards there was a big dinner with speeches and plenty of fun in Keeney Hall.

PARKS.

Rev. Horace Winslow believed that this place should be made more beautiful, and by his efforts and appeals to his people our beautiful Central Park was started. It was formerly in two little parks, the one in front of the First Church oval in shape, with a small fountain, and the one in front of the Second Church, round with, I think, a larger fountain. Mr. Winslow's enthusiasm spread to the townspeople, and men and teams were freely offered and set to work in the woods and in the parks. Many trees were planted, I remember one quite large hemlock that stood near the east end of the park. A road ran between the parks, which not many years ago was covered over and seeded down, and the two small plots curbed and made into a beauty spot in our city.

He was also instrumental in starting Talcott Park. This land was formerly owned by the Leeds Co. Phineas Talcott was the largest giver and the park was named in his honor. The elms must have been set out about 1850 or a little later. My sister remembers when there was a Circus on the gravelly knoll, that now is so dear to us all.

Mrs. Hudson H. Kellogg, while living on Park Street, took great interest in the care and improvement of Talcott Park. Under her leadership the fountain which was then in the center of the park was repaired and gravel walks radiating from it were laid, and the grass and trees were better cared for. After her removal to Chicago many years ago, she was appointed to a place on the Board of Park Commissioners. I think she was the first woman to fill such a position in Chicago.

FACTORIES AND EARLY SETTLERS.

The early settlers, previous to 1808, were attracted by the power of the two streams familiarly known to us as the Tankarouson and the Hockanum. To Samuel Grant of Windsor belongs the honor of building the first house in Rockville. He was the owner of between 500 and 600 acres of land in Bolton. He, being a non-resident, was persuaded to swap off his original farm for the wild and rocky lands where now stands the city of Rockville.

Samuel Grant was a courageous and fearless pioneer — a man of faith. April 29, 1726, he erected his home near the corner of Union and West Streets, and later built a mill where the Saxony now stands. The demand for lumber and flour started the building of the first dam, which was built by the Payne family on the site of the Minterburn Mill. From 1730 on the Grant and Payne families made use of the abundant power for the grinding of their grains and the sawing of lumber. In 1847 the mill owners bought the land around Snipsic Lake and raised the dam 10 feet at the out-

let. In 1865, a similar purchase was made, and the dam raised 8 feet. Since then, it has been raised 3 feet more.

The first carding and spinning was done by John Warburton, who came from England in 1794 and located in what is now called Talcottville. Here, after much preparation, were made the first stocking yarns and thread. Near the present iron bridge there still stands the two brick houses built by him. In 1809 this property was bought of Mr. Warburton by Alexander McLean, Col. Francis McLean, Lebbeus P. Tinker and Irad Fuller, and was known as the McLean Wool Carding Plant. In one part of this mill Peter Dobson made his first preparations for spinning cotton and together with James King and Chester King bought the water privilege, now known as the Ravine Mills, where Mr. Paul Ackerly is making cloth to cover the shade grown tobacco. Mr. Dobson was the first to assemble and develop the art of weaving, and may rightly be called the first manufacturer. He drew his own designs and constructed his own machines. There is a tradition that he brought over from England drawings which he had made, hidden under a false bottom to his chest. Think how laborious were their first efforts! Most of the new stock was carded by the McLeans, spun by Peter Dobson in his own mills, put out by him among the housewives for the weaving, and sold to peddlers, owing to the opposition to all goods of American manufacture. Up to 1811, Dobson's yarns had been used to meet the primal needs of the home — shirtings, sheetings, gingham, and table cloths.

In this year (1811) Delano Abbot, a farmer living near Vernon Center (I am told in the house owned by James Campbell), erected a small building beside his home, and there, with the assistance of Peter Dobson, wove the first piece of satinets. It was carried to Simeon Cooley's to be finished, near the Snipsic dam. To this vision of Delano Abbott, and his faith to act upon it, we are indebted for the beginning in Vernon of the first regular manufacture of woolens. Mr. Nash, a nephew of Delano Abbott's, was so encouraged by his uncle's success, that he built, two years later, a small mill on what is now the Hockanum property, Twin Mills the other side of the river. I think he was an ancestor of our town clerk, Francis B. Skinner.

Colonel Francis McLean, a man of great mental vigor, strong will and tireless energy, with George and Allen Kellogg, and Ralph Talcott, organized for the manufacture of satinets in 1821. (A brother of George and Allen Kellogg had, about this time, bought out the McLeans and started making satinets. The present Talcottville was then known as Kelloggville.) The Talcott family have enlarged their mills, and beautified their village, so that it is rightly considered one of the model manufacturing places in our State. The factory built by Mr. McLean and his associates was 80 by 30 feet and three stories high, and loomed up mightily among the rocks. It was called "The Rock."

When the Rock Mill was started, there were hardly 50 people in the place — at least one-third were Grants. At that early time, there were

only two dwellings in the vicinity of the mill — these served for owners and workmen alike. In 1826, power looms were placed in the mill, executed from designs of Lewis Beach and William T. Cogswell, grandfather of Mrs. Leroy Martin. There was a great increase in population soon, the actual number of families being thirteen. Two hundred yards of goods in a twelve-hour day was a big record up to 1827. Then a new house was built for Mr. George Kellogg and the capital of the mill was increased. About this time, Colonel McLean built the old Frank Mill on land now owned by the U. S. Envelope Co., an oil mill at New England bridge, and a paper mill where now is the Belding Silk Mill. He also did considerable surveying in the laying out of new roads. In 1831, he closed his relation with the Rock Mill, and Mr. George Kellogg succeeded him as head of the Company. Soon after, Mr. Kellogg with Allen Hammond organized the New England Company. (Mr. Hammond was the father of the late A. Park Hammond.)

To the N. E. Mill belongs the honor of making the first cassimeres in 1843, the first departure from the time-honored satinets. The friendship of Mr. Kellogg and Mr. Hammond was life-long, and has been handed on to their descendants. The Springville Mill, under the management of such men as Alonzo Bailey, Chauncey Winchell (great-grandfather of Mrs. Riley and Mrs. Geo. G. Smith's grandfather), Phineas Talcott (father of Mr. George Talcott), and Christopher Burdick, was a good paying investment. Lemuel Vibert, a man of blameless life, was connected with this mill for a great many years. Christopher Burdick lived for a time on the spot where Hon. Charles Phelps' house stands now. He afterwards built the house on the site of Mrs. George Sykes' home, where Dr. Lewis and Judge Loomis lived. He gave a large strip of land to Horace Winslow, second pastor of the old First Church. Mr. Winslow built upon it the house now owned by Mr. Mason. It originally stood nearly upon the spot where our Regent, Mrs. F. T. Maxwell, now lives. I have learned recently that Mr. George Kellogg lived for a time in a house that stood upon the site of Mrs. George Sykes' home, and it was in that house that Mrs. Maxwell was born. In 1828 a house was built for Mr. Kellogg on the present Maxwell place. Mr. Burdick occupied the old house for a time, and removed it across the street. Years afterward it was torn down to be replaced by the fine new house of Mr. Phelps. In 1847 the American Mill was built by Phineas Talcott. This was a great mill, and there was a big dinner given there in one of the rooms, July 4, 1848. The first five yards of cloth made in the American Mill was woven by Mrs. Brooks Parker. The American boarding house was built in the same year as the mill. Mr. George Harris was connected with this mill for 32 years, his brother Charles E. for about the same time.

Eli I. Smith, father of George G. Smith and twin brother of General Elijah Smith, was the trusted accountant of this mill for years. "The Rockville Journal" at the time of his death, stated that he lived to be nearly 90 years of age, and that his last illness was also his first. This could not

truthfully be said of many, but could be of Eli Ives Smith. He was connected with the American Mill for thirty-nine years. A man of strict integrity and clean life. Maro J. Thompson was the wool buyer for this mill for many years.

WILLIAM BUTLER.

On April 1, 1847, William Butler located in Rockville with a stock of stoves, tinware, etc. At that time there was no plumbing business, as all the plumbing in a house consisted of an iron sink, a few feet of pipe and possibly a pump. In the same building with Mr. Butler was Cyrus White's blacksmith shop, N. A. Crane's harness shop, and Olmstead and Hickox, carriage painters—in all there were seven companies doing business in that building. Mr. Butler built a new shop near the old one, and remained in business longer than any other man in Rockville, sixty-one years. He retired on March 21, 1908, with the respect of everyone in the community for his honest dealing with all men.

You must try and remember that there was no Mountain or School Streets, the portion where the school houses and Park are was a cow pasture. There was no Market Street, only a foot bridge across the deep ravine. On the banks of the river there were big hemlocks and Mr. Talcott tells me there was a swimming pool back of Mrs. Orcutt's home. I think Brooklyn Street was the only one south of the river. Mr. White early built him a home on this street and he was called the "Mayor of Brooklyn." About 1866 Mr. White moved the old Ellington Church to the corner of Brooklyn and Market Streets and made it into the Opera House.

MR. NATHAN DOANE.

Mr. Nathan Doane came to Rockville from Ellington before 1847. He had a blacksmith shop here for some years. His home stood about where the Railway Station now stands. Back of the house there was a very steep bank down to the river. This bank had a heavy growth of hemlock trees. He moved the old Chapman store in Ellington down to the corner of Market Street and East Main Street and fitted it up for stores—this was destroyed by fire, and was replaced by the present Doane Block.

TRUMBULL NEWCOMB.

Trumbull Newcomb was born in Tolland in 1833. He came to Rockville and established the first store for the sale of seeds and agricultural implements about 1858. His store was located on the west side of Market Street. Later he removed to the Orcutt Block. After his death the business was sold to William M. Corbin and later to Brooks Parker and Ralph I. Barber, later still to Charles E. Harris. Trumbull Newcomb married Jane E., daughter of Francis Keeney.

WHITE, CORBIN & CO.

In 1855, the firm of White & Corbin began the manufacture of envelopes in the old blacksmith's shop. Mr. Louis A. Corbin was a stone mason by trade; he went to California in '49 or '50 with his brother John, Mr. George Talcott and a stage driver from here by the name of Lincoln Childs. Mr. Corbin on his return contracted for and built many of the foundations for our public buildings, which are still standing.

In the employ of the company was Milton G. Puffer, who for a long time had been working on a curious machine for making envelopes, something not in use and seemingly quite unnecessary. He perfected this machine so that it could fold thirty envelopes a minute. He was a great genius, and I suppose really was the first one to originate the idea. A little later the firm built a factory on Brooklyn Street. They used the basement for a machine shop, the third story for the manufacture of envelopes. Half of the first floor was rented for a grist mill, the other half to manufacture fulling mills and indigo grinders. Half of the second story was hired by a man who carried on the business of winding silk. Out of this humble beginning has grown the great Belding Brothers Silk Company. The other half was used for spooling cotton—from that beginning sprang the Carlile Thread Co. with Julius Rich, father of Miss Rowena Rich, as President, and the Glasgow Thread Co., organized by Clarks Holt, now the Regan Manufacturing Company, the attic was used as a box factory and made the boxes for the silk, thread and envelopes. Years afterwards the firm bought the Florence Mill and have used it since.

William Henry Prescott came to Rockville from Holyoke, Mass., and entered the office of White & Corbin in 1860. In 1865 he with Linus B. Plimpton started making envelopes in Hartford under the name of Prescott, Plimpton & Co. In 1866 he sold out his interest in the business to Mr. Plimpton and returned to Rockville where he became one of the firm of White, Corbin & Co. and was elected Vice President and Treasurer. He remained with that firm for twenty-nine years.

Both Mr. White and Corbin were large contributors to the Methodist Church and by their interest and generous gifts made the present building possible. This church was built in 1865 and cost \$65,000. The first Methodist Church was on West Street and was burned, then they built on West Main Street where the German Church stands. The third is the present commodious building.

LEBBEUS BISSELL.

In 1820, Lebbeus Bissell, then a little boy, left his home in Wolcottville to come and live with his uncle, Lebbeus P. Tinker in Vernon. Julia White, who married John Dobson, also lived in the Tinker family. In 1825, Mr. Bissell attended the first term of "The John Hall School" in Ellington. He

made his home with his uncle until he was of age, receiving valuable training for his mercantile and banking business. Colonel Tinker was the first Town Clerk of Vernon and a fine business man.

In the spring of 1847, Mr. Bissell came to Rockville and bought out Mr. Maxwell's interest in the White & Maxwell store. In 1858, the first savings bank was incorporated with Mr. Bissell as Treasurer. This bank was in his store on West Main Street and later removed to Park Place. In 1824 he took a trip with Simeon Cooley on a load of teasels to Sturbridge, Mass., and there he had the pleasure of seeing Lafayette. Mr. Bissell always took great pride and interest in our town, and his active figure and bright sayings were greatly missed when he left us at the age of 93.

MR. JOHN DAVIS.

Mr. John Davis came to Rockville from Stafford when twenty-one years of age, he bought a great deal of land on the west side of Ellington Ave., and laid out Davis Ave. and Florence Street. His was the only house for many years on Ellington Ave. As the place grew his land advanced rapidly in price, he was an extensive farmer and milk dealer. At the time of the blizzard in March, 1888, Mr. Davis was the first man to break out a path with his oxen and carry milk to all the babies in his neighborhood. He was a very kind man and there was always room on his sled team for one more boy or girl to ride.

MR. GEORGE MAXWELL.

Mr. George Maxwell came to Rockville from Charlemont, Mass., in 1844 to enter the dry goods business with Stanley White. He afterwards went into the office of the New England Mill. After a few years, he became President and Treasurer of the Hockanum Co. and continued as the head of the company until his death. Later, George Sykes was associated with him in the woolen industry. Mr. Maxwell early took an active interest in town affairs and worked earnestly for all that he felt would make our town truly prosperous. He once told a younger man that his first year here, he gave one-eighth of his income to the church and for charity. This habit of giving so early formed, grew with his income. We are indebted to his wise foresight for our Public Reading Room and our Public Library. Mr. Sykes also gave a large bequest to improve our school facilities.

HON. E. S. HENRY.

Hon. E. Stevens Henry came here with his father from Gill, Mass., in 1849. He kept a dry goods store for many years. In 1870 he was one of the organizers of the People's Savings Bank and has always been its Treasurer. In 1894 he was elected our representative to the United States Congress and has all these years rendered good service on the Committee of Agriculture.

GEORGE M. PAULK.

George M. Paulk moved to Rockville from Tolland in 1841 when twenty-two years of age. He either built or assisted in building nearly every mill in town, he served as Deputy Sheriff and was three times elected as Sheriff for Tolland County. He was a sustaining member of the old First Church Ecclesiastical Society and at his death left a bequest for the Rockville Library. This fund is set aside to purchase books and papers upon building and architecture and is known as the George M. Paulk fund.

MR. ORCUTT AND OTHERS.

To Mr. Wm. R. Orcutt and O. C. West, we are indebted for greatly improved roadways. Mr. Orcutt building the walls on the lower and upper terrace and grading the unsightly bank; and Mr. West for widening and improving Grove Street. Mr. Albert Dart built the stone bridge across Market Street and put in the beautiful arched bridge above the silk mill. Mr. Orcutt was the first one to introduce the envelope to the banks in the neighboring towns, showing and explaining their use. He met with good success and ready sales.

DR. GOODRICH.

Dr. A. R. Goodrich removed to Vernon from Greenfield, Mass. He was always much interested in the schools and was one of the visiting committee for many years. He was a prominent physician and interested in town affairs. He married Charlotte, daughter of Peter Dobson. She had the name of being the handsomest girl for miles around. She also inherited the high order of intelligence of her father.

Dr. Cummings lived in the house on Park Street in 1847. Later it was occupied by Dr. Alden Skinner.

Dr. Dickinson came here from Willington and built his house on Prospect Street.

Dr. E. F. Wilson was one of our older physicians and druggists, coming here with his wife from New Hampshire. He lived for many years on Elm Street and later built a house on Park Street.

Dr. Leonard was from Broad Brook and built on Elm Street. All these men were much beloved.

Mr. Caleb Leavitt was the only jeweler here for many years. He built the first house on the east end of Fox Hill. He was a most ingenious man, with quite a gift for writing verses.

I should not forget to speak of a few of the noble women who have helped to make Rockville what it is. Among the younger women was Catherine Burr, wife of Joseph C. Hammond, a woman of rare charm and lovely personality. She had great musical talent and while her health permitted was helpful in all good works, her gracious manner and kind deeds endeared her to all with whom she came in contact. I recall with affection Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Risley, Mrs. Skinner, and Mrs. Dickinson, all doctor's wives, Mrs. Henry Selden, Mrs. Gibson, Mrs. George Kellogg, Mrs. Wm. T. Cogswell, Mrs. Novatus Chapman, Mrs. James J. Robinson, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Allen Hammond, Mrs. Adison Fuller whose presence was such a comfort to the sick and sorrowing, and my mother (Mrs. Francis Keeney) and her sister Mrs. Nathan Doane.

In 1823 there were only five families in the Rock District. There were less than fifty souls of any age from 1820 to 1825. In this East or Brick Schoolhouse District there was no schoolhouse previous to 1836. Small children were taught in private dwellings, and the older ones were sent to Grant Street, now West Street, which was an old settlement long before Rockville was thought of. The lecture room spoken of in connection with the First Church of Rockville, was used for a schoolhouse until the old High School building was built in 1849, and the school children marched up to it from the old rooms in the building which stood upon the site of the present Henry Building. The night after the new schoolhouse was occupied, it was much injured by fire. Mr. Mason, who was the principal of the High School, became supervisor of schools in Boston and died only a few years ago. He was succeeded by several others, but the teacher who spent the most time here was John M. Turner. He taught eleven years and was very thorough in his work. His old pupils appreciate him more and more as the years go by.

Rockville had no saloons, restaurants, or lawyers in 1848.

In 1889 Rockville became a city. Mr. Samuel Fitch was the first Mayor. He was also several times a representative from this town and Rail Road Commissioner. He established here the first mill for the manufacture of stockinets.

WAR TIMES.

Our little village had grown to be quite a large place when, in 1860, the fear of war hung like a black cloud over our land; but when, on April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter was fired upon, excitement ran high in this town, and many of our brave boys gave themselves for the defense of our country. The day our Company left to go into camp, there were addresses and prayers made from a platform on the park in front of the Second Church. Then,

Mrs. Aurelia West Stebbins came to the front carrying a large flag, which was to be presented to the Company, and with the staff in her hand, sang "The Star Spangled Banner." She was a large fair young woman, with a wonderful voice, and put her soul into the inspiring words. Then came the parting from home and friends, and our Rockville boys started for Vernon Station by stage.

Captain E. E. Marvin, now of Hartford, has written a most interesting story of the enlistment of our First Company, and other items of interest which will now be read.

At the beginning of the rally which followed the firing upon Fort Sumter, in 1861, the first paper that brought news of it brought also the news that President Lincoln had called for 75,000 men to fill the United States Army, and was followed the next day by a proclamation from Governor Buckingham for volunteers from Connecticut, for three months service. Rockville responded at once by holding a public meeting in Keeney's Hall, April 19, 1861, where Captain Thomas F. Burpee, commander of the local military company appeared and stated that his command contained only about forty-five men, and that he could properly take on forty-eight more to make a full company for service in the field. Speeches galore followed. Judge Dwight Loomis, the usual adviser of the community on public questions, was absent in Congress at that time, so his voice could not be heard. E. E. Marvin, a younger lawyer, said that he was profoundly grieved that the country could not get on harmoniously and that so many states felt compelled to resort to forcible secession. Such a resort was to be prevented at all hazards and he offered to put his name upon the rolls of Captain Burpee's Company as soon as the books would be opened. Superintendent Orcutt said that he was not only profoundly grieved but confoundedly mad, and red hot, that the South had made this audacious attempt and that if everybody felt as he did it would not take three months to sweep every rebellious state from the map of the country, and many others made speeches as to what ought to be done, but in general they all conceded that Captain Burpee's Company should at once be filled up and offered to the Governor. The Company was immediately filled up to ninety-three men who then and there appeared and signed the roll, and the Captain was directed to immediately offer it to the Governor. A fund was also then and there raised to uniform the Company and put it into shape to march at once. Four thousand dollars was at once subscribed and Mr. Marvin was sent to Hartford to buy the necessary cloth. On the following day he went to Hartford and bought the cloth of Messrs. Day and Owen on Asylum Street and had it shipped to Rockville. Mr. Chandler T. Ward and Mitchell Kaufman, the principal tailors in town offered to do the measuring and cutting of the uniforms and the sewing societies of the First and Second Congregational Churches, also one in Ellington, one in Vernon Center and one in Tolland, were set to work to make the uniforms. Justice George Talcott threw open his office as the rendezvous where the garments were tried on and distributed

and Captain Burpee commenced at once drilling the recruits two hours in the forenoon or afternoon and two in the evening. In the meantime Parsons Walker of the First Church and Clapp of the Second sounded the call to arms with no uncertain sound on each succeeding Sabbath from their respective pulpits. The drilling was kept up until May 4th, when it was found that forty-four companies of volunteers in Connecticut had offered themselves for the war, and only thirty would be accepted by the President and the allotment having been made, Captain Burpee's Company was left out. On the next day, however, May 5th, there was a new call for 300,000 men to enlist for three years. Twenty of the German recruits who had been enlisted, uniformed and drilled, went through the war "Mit Siegel." Most of the other recruits enlisted for three years and General Elijah W. Smith, the veteran military general of the State Militia, took the recruits in hand and prepared them for service in the field and they adopted the name of "Smith Guard" and went into Hartford May 20th, as such, and were assigned to the First Regiment of Colt's Revolving Rifles, which was then assembling at the Colt's Pistol Factory and saw their first weeks of service sleeping on the floors of the freight house of the Colt Company. Substantially the main part of the old Company remained at home, as they had families and responsible positions in the different mills, which they could not leave immediately, and were drilled by Captain Burpee more or less, when most of them went out for fifteen months as Company D of the 14th.

Captain Marvin then being in service as a Captain in the Volunteer Service and being at home on a twenty days' furlough in July, 1862, was called upon by Captain Burpee to swear in some of the Company as to whose staying qualities he had some doubt. And he did so to a small number of them in Keeney Hall. One day one of them, a veteran wood sawyer, Fay by name, stood in the group behind another man, but he raised himself up on tip-toe and when the mustering officer had enunciated the long oath he said, "Be Gob, Yes, I do, and I won't come back until there isn't a rebel left in the land. So help me God."

In January, 1864, Company F of the 5th, came home on its veteran furlough of sixty days, and were around town from that time until March, when they went back to the field to complete their term of service in the army of the Cumberland with Sherman. While home, the citizens gave them a reception and a dinner which was as good as Father Keeney could furnish and good enough for anybody. At the table gathered the veterans, their wives, sweethearts, intermingled with the well-to-do citizens of the village with their wives and daughters and many of the wives of the soldiers of the 14th who were then in the field. Very eulogistic speeches were made by the more eloquent of the citizens, probably that of the late Honorable Dwight Loomis, than a member of Congress, was the most eloquent of any, but the one that abounded with the most fun was that of the late L. B. Plimpton, who was called out to represent the prodigious services of the Home Guard, which he did in such an extravagant manner that all who

heard it enjoyed it to the limit. Late in July, 1865, they all came back and there was a similar gathering but not attended by the hilarity and mock eloquence of that of February, 1864, for our beloved physician, Dr. Alden Skinner and our able and distinguished drill-master and organizer, Colonel Burpee and Sergeants Frank Stoughton and Harry Owen, distinguished for bravery and coolness in battle on many fields, and a score more who had given their lives for the good of the cause, were not with us.

Captain Marvin married Cynthia, daughter of Judge Loren P. Waldo of Tolland. Their son, Loren P. Waldo Marvin, Judge of Probate for Hartford, is a worthy successor to both the honored names which he bears.

In speaking of the old soldiers, we must not forget Colonel C. F. Jackson, Wm. H. Loomis, and Thomas S. Pratt, who for so many years have been identified with our town, though enlisting from other states, Samuel K. Ellis, A. Park Hammond, Judge Lester Phelps, Daniel F. Chapman in the navy and John Simonds, who has walked our streets in darkness for nearly fifty years, that our boys and girls might look upon this beautiful land and see the stars and stripes floating over a united country. These and many others left all for "Home and Country."

The first Irishman, Christie Jones, came to Rockville in 1845, his sister Dolly coming with him. She married Patrick Brothers. Mr. Edward Carroll came about the same time. Mr. Carroll was the superintendent of a paper mill which stood upon the site of the present silk mill. The Germans came a little later. Such a little time before the war, yet look upon the muster rolls, and see how freely they gave themselves for the defense of their new home.

In conclusion, quoting once more from Judge Dwight Loomis, I would say with him, "But dear as the past and its associations may be to us, our concern is with the present and the future. If we ever turn back, as now, to the past, let it be to gather strength and inspiration from the brave words and noble lives that have gone before. Let these come to us continually, 'as songs in the house of our pilgrimage,' to encourage us as we bravely set our faces to the future and enter on the work set before us."

LINES WRITTEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JUDGE DWIGHT LOOMIS.

By his daughter, Jennie G. Loomis Williams.

While still on earth the light of heaven
Shone in his face;
Within his heart, God's love was given
The larger place.

Nor did he fail in love to man:
'Twas his delight
In utter self-forgetfulness
To speed the right.

His tongue the law of kindness kept,
Knew not of wrath,
Where'er he went God's sunshine swept
Along the path.

And few who passed beside the road
His footsteps pressed
But felt an easing of life's load
Because he blessed.

His soul grew never old or sear
As time took flight
With him, the autumn of life's year
Found spring flowers bright.

Those flowers seemed too pure for earth
To angel eyes,
So God transplanted, gave new birth
In Paradise.