



**WASHINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS**

1777-1977 OUR 200th YEAR

1777 — 1977
Two Hundred Years

The history
of the
town of

**Washington,
Massachusetts**



Compiled &
Edited by
Mrs. Louise Elliot





Dedicated to the memory of:
Mrs. Genevieve Hutchinson

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The Town of Washington



quiet town laid out by lofty souls
Along the mountain top where clean winds blow,
Where waters trickle pure, down wooded hills,
What is the charm that makes men love you so?

It is the peace that broods on your fair fields,
That sings itself in wild birds' carolings,
That walks the lanes serene at evening-time,
And knows no value in what men call things.

It is the unsoiled country-side, still fair
As in the days when pioneers dreamed dreams,
Still free from smoke of industry and strain
Of striving after power that only seems.

It is the spirit of that heritage
Called liberty, that blossomed with your birth,
That made men glad to toil by sweat of brow
And strike their roots deep, knowing freedom's worth.

O quiet town built high on Berkshire hills,
Face set to other hill-tops and the sky,
There are men living proud to claim you theirs
By birth or heritage, - and of them, I.

Spring 1927.
Washington.

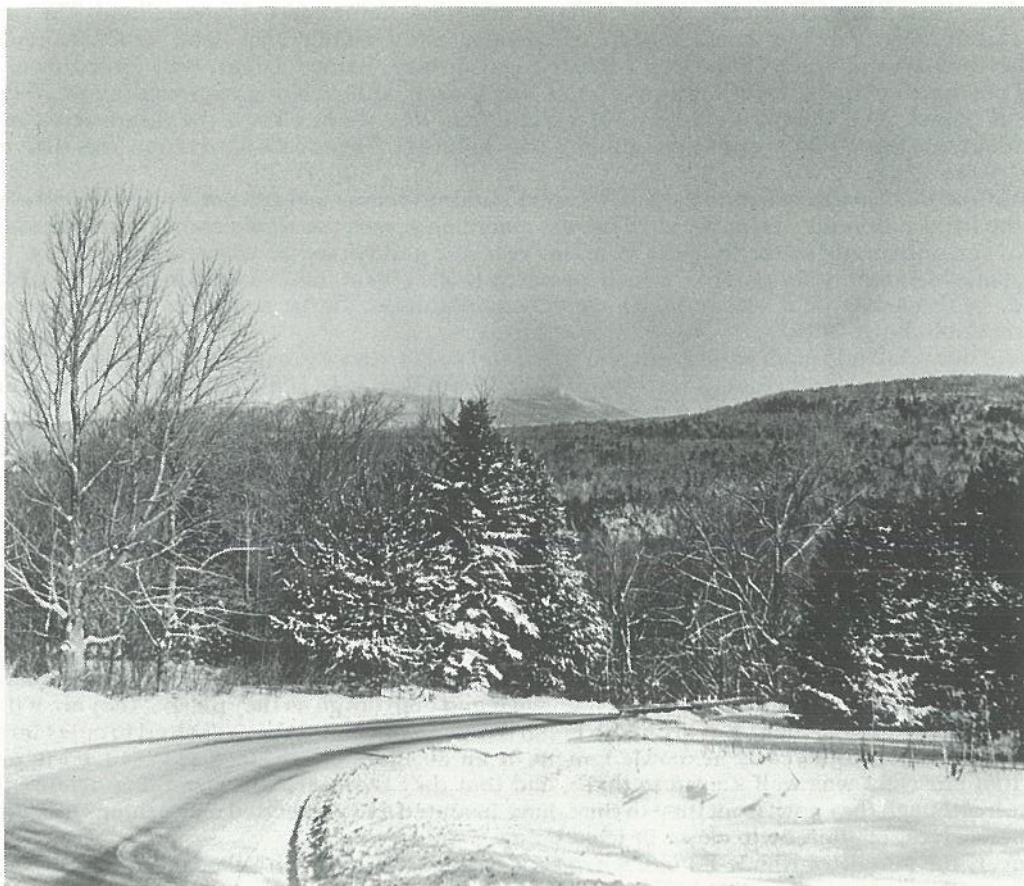
Mrs. Hutchinson's poem "Washington" from her book.

Washington Historical Commission

Louise E. Elliot
Andrew Methe
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Picture of Mt. Greylock from Washington Mountain.

Picture by Christy Butler

History of the Town of Washington, Massachusetts 1777—1977

This is the story of a little Berkshire town whose hopeful settlement did not lead to the prosperity and growth anticipated. By and large it is the same story as that of so many other towns not only in Berkshire County but across the country as circumstances beyond control force changes upon them.

The hilltop beauty lured settlers here and defeated them as farmers by late spring and early fall frosts. The beauty remains. The farmers who so hopefully settled here are gone. Although farming remained essentially the same since Biblical times, all of a sudden everything changed with the advent of machinery to eliminate much of the slow hand methods; but to afford the machinery the farmers needed large cleared fields, not the little patchwork clearings perched on steep hillsides that were our lot. So the early farmers left as new areas opened up west of us. New ones came through the years but didn't stay long. There has been such a continual change as waves of new owners came and went that there is no family in town with a thread through all our past.

In days of hope the population almost hit one thousand. In days when modern change and growth passed us by, the population dropped to under three hundred. Now that we fit the pattern of a bedroom community outside of Pittsfield, the population is inching up again to almost 500. New houses are going up at a faster rate than at any time since settlement.

The fields, cleared at such prodigious cost of labor and time, have reverted to woodland. The city of Pittsfield holds more than four thousand acres as its watershed around Ashley Lake, which it acquired before the Civil War and kept enlarging until the last farmer, named Loehr, was forced from his beautiful place at the top of the hill from Pittsfield and Dalton, and all along the mountaintop the old farms were taken. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has about eleven thousand acres in its October Mountain State Forest and keeps enlarging its holdings. The town's land is now less than nine thousand acres.

At a time like this, no one can predict what the next hundred years—or even one hundred days—will hold for the little community as patterns of life are changing across the whole country and across the world. We can only dimly sense the past from our records, and try to see where we are today.

The Appalachian mountain range on which we perch is the oldest, most weathered and liveable in the world. To the north the Presidential Range defies habitation. To the south the mountains again reach formidable heights.

In spite of our relatively modest hills ranging north and south, they were still a barrier to east—west travel by settlers. From the Plymouth Settlement in 1620 and Boston in 1630, it only took settlers until 1636 to reach Springfield.

The Dutch were already at the Connecticut River, but they were pushed out. Settlers went into what is now Connecticut and once more dislodged the few Dutch in possession of trading posts there. This whole area was claimed by the Dutch and they knew every brook and path, as evidenced by a map at Fort Crillo in Rensselaer, New York. This map is dated 1620 and shows the whole present Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of New Holland, and shows it in great detail to and along the coast and Cape Cod.

“Narratives of New Netherlands” states:

“All the islands, bays, havens, rivers, hills and places even to a great distance on the other side of New Holland or Cape Cod have Dutch names, which our Dutch shipmasters and traders gave them. These were the first to discover and trade to them, even before they had names, as the English themselves well know; but as long as they can manage it and matters go as they please, they are willing not to know it. And those of them who are at the Fresh River (Connecticut) have desired to enter into an agreement and to make a yearly acknowledgment or an absolute purchase, which indeed is proof positive that our right was well known to them, and that they themselves had nothing against it in conscience, although they now, from time to time, have invented and pretended many things in order to screen themselves, or thereby to cause at least delay.

“Moreover, the people of Rhode Island, when they were at variance with those of the Bay, sought refuge among the Dutch, and sojourn among them. For all these things, and what we shall relate in the following pages, there are proofs and documents enough, either with the secretary of the Company (West India Company) or with the directors.

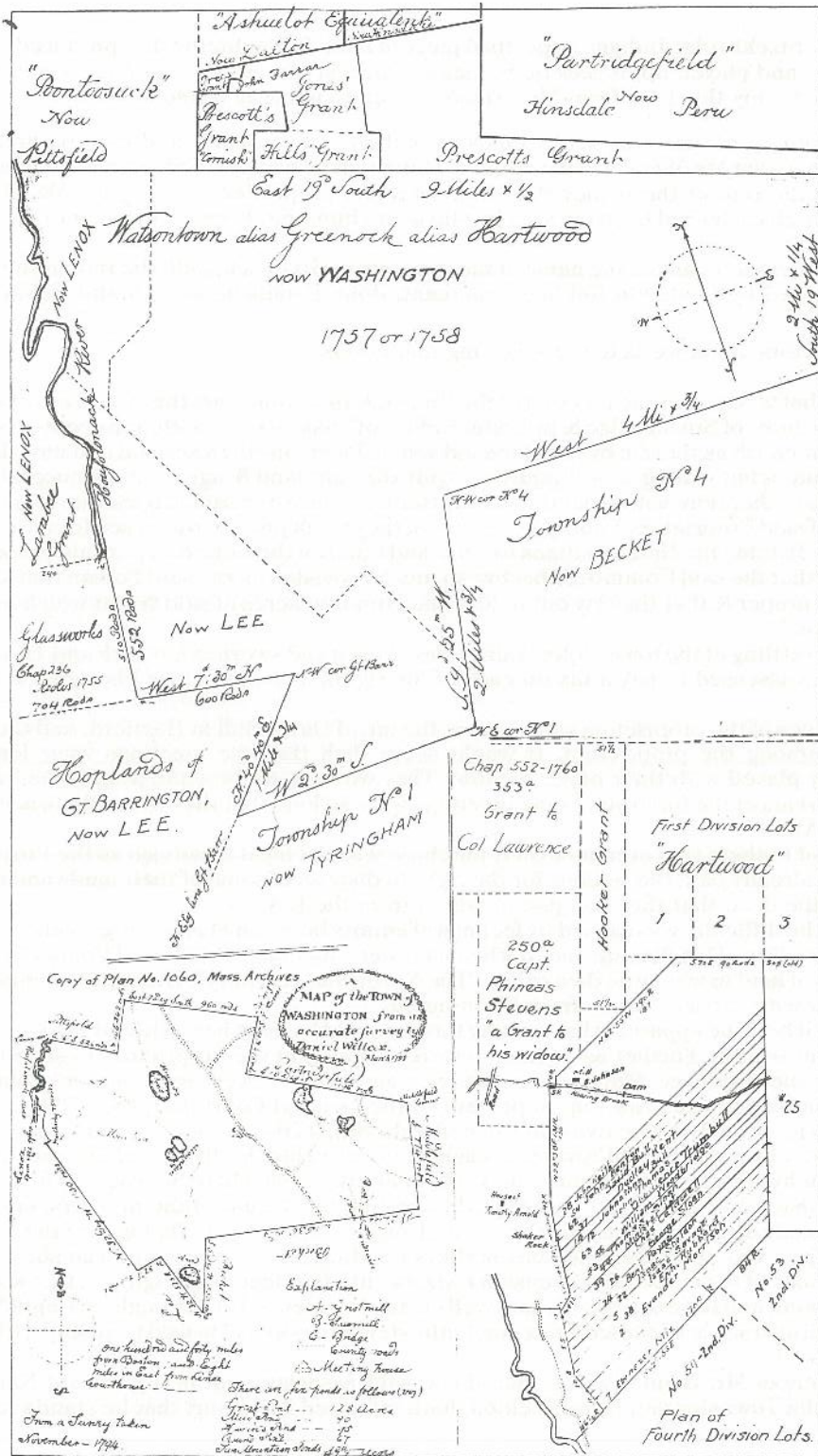
“In short, it is just this with the English, they are willing to know the Netherlanders, and to use them as a protection in time of need, but when that is past, they no longer regard them, but play the fool with them. This happens so only because we have neglected to populate the land; or, to speak more plainly and truly, because we have, out of regard for our own profit, wished to scrape all the fat into one or more pots, and thus secure the trade and neglect population.”

It further notes that the banks of the Connecticut River were purchased from the Indians in 1632. It also says that British settlers arriving in Boston in 1636 first dispossessed Dutch settlers there.

The Housatonic was the last river taken from the Dutch who had a trading post there. The question has been raised whether they ever lived here. It is now known that they did build in some other Berkshire communities. The oldest house in town apparently is that owned by Mrs. Cameron. One elderly man who used to live here says that years and years ago he helped put new sills under the Cameron house and that the old sills had slots for guns and observation which they jokingly said wouldn't be necessary any more.

As soon as the threat of French and Indian attacks against the frontier was gone, there was a surge of settlers waiting to push in to the new lands thus opened. We will focus only on Berkshire County, which was very sparsely settled. Under its mantle of primeval forest was land of unknown potential to be had for small cash outlay and hard work.

Land speculation was widespread all through the colonies even George Washington profiting by it. There is no absolute proof of what happened in the founding of this town; but apparently Robert Watson, of Sheffield, and his lawyer, David Ingersoll, convinced some men in Hartford that Watson



Maps of Grants
1757 or 1758

had bought from the Stockbridge Indians a specified piece of land. Undoubtedly they produced a rough map of the property and played up its assets. Sufficient interest was aroused to form a company of proprietors in 1757 to buy this land from Mr. Watson—even to name it Watstown.

Without doubt a group of men was sent to look over their new property and plan on selling it. Somehow they learned that Mr. Watson had no right to claim that he had paid the Indians for it, and the Indians demanded the rest of the money due. This sent the proprietors looking for Mr. Watson. Apparently someone else who had been cheated by him got to him first, because they found him jailed and bankrupt.

The proprietors hurriedly changed the name of the property to Greenock, paid the Indians and got a deed from them signed by Benjamin Kokhkewenaunant, John Pophnehauuwah and Robert Nunghauwot.

From the "Proprietors' Book we take the following quotations.

Nov. 13, 1761: "That whereas at the meeting of the Proprietors in June Last they voted a Lott of land unto Samuel Brown Junr. of Stockbridge & Ephraim Kidder of Yoakin-Town within the contents of the said Township of Greenock as therein by the aforesaid vote is Particularly Described and now the said Samual and Ephriam being willing to Relinquish & Quit the said land & agreement Concerning the same then made. Have therefore voted that the Committee Chosen by the said Proprietors to take care of the Prudentials of said Proprietors Employ some person they think proper to go & settle on the above said Grant they first Hiring the Native Indians to fence and build on the same & to put said Person into the Possession and that the said Committee bestow so much Provision on the said Person that shall so settle as they think proper & that they lay out to him one Hundred acres of said Grant which he shall ever hold as his own."

Plans went on for settling of the town. John Walker was chosen and sworn in as Clerk and Treasurer. Each proprietor was assessed to pay a tax on each of his rights and would lose his rights if late in making payment.

Most of the meetings of the proprietors were held at the inn of David Bull in Hartford, and there is a David Bull listed among the proprietors. It would seem then that the meetings were long and comfortable as they played with their paper records. They would vote for some project, and almost immediately vote to cancel the first vote. Some meetings were so long that they were adjourned to the next morning at 9 A.M.

Somehow word got to them that even now their purchase was not legal inasmuch as the Province of Massachusetts had already paid the Indians for the right to dispose of some of their lands and did not recognize as legal the deed that they had just obtained from the Indians.

Perhaps some of the difficulty was caused by feelings of enmity between Massachusetts and Connecticut over their borderline. This dispute ended when a border was finally drawn and Connecticut was appeased by a grant of land in what was then called "The Northwest Territory". Eventually Connecticut helped fill this land with settlers, many from Washington.

In the meantime, it became apparent that nothing further could be done here without the approval of the General Court in Boston. Further assessments were made upon the proprietors to send men to Boston "they to take such evidence, Plans or papers as they shall think Necessary for accomplishing the said grant". They had a petition drawn up to present to the General Court Jan. 18, 1762.

This petition was granted by the Provincial Council Feb. 8th, 1763, on these conditions:

"That security be given to the Province Treasurer to pay to him for the use of this province the sum of eight hundred pounds in one year without interest, that there be reserved for the first settled minister one sixty-third part of said township; for the use of the ministry, one sixty-third part, and the like quantity for the use and support of a school. That within the space of five years from this time there be sixty settlers residing in said township, who shall have a dwelling house of the following dimensions, viz: twenty-four feet long, eighteen feet wide and seven feet stud, and have one acre of land well cleared and fenced and brought to English grass or Ploughed; also settle a learned Protestant minister of the Gospel in said township within the time aforesaid.

"And whereas Mr. John Walker, one of the said associates, attorney to said Nathaniel Hooker, John Townsley and Isaac Sheldon, hath informed this Court that he stands ready to



give this security for the said eight hundred pounds:

"Therefore, resolved that upon his so doing, the grant aforesaid be made to said associates in manner aforesaid, upon their paying to said Walker their proportionable part of said eight hundred pounds, on one year, and upon failure of their so doing the right in said township of those so failing, to belong to said Walker, and he shall have full power to sell and dispose of the same to any person that shall perform the conditions aforesaid."

"Sent up for Concurrence,
Timothy Ruggles, Speaker
In Council February 9th, 1763,
Read and Concurred.
John Cotton, D. Secretary"

A more illuminating item is this:

"Voted that George Smith's bill for Expenses for wages horse hire & Expenses for going to Stockbridge this Month to Warn the Proprietors in Berkshire County be allowed to him amounting to fifty shillings lawful money."

This proves that there was travel back and forth from Hartford to this town, that it was possible to make the trip at least to Stockbridge on horseback, and that there were settlers already working on their lands. This may be the time to say that the first ten settlers were:

*George Sloan	Joseph Knox
*Andrew Mumford	Nathan Ingraham
William Milekan	Amos Beard
Elijah Crane	Joseph Chaplin
William Beard	Matthew DeWolf

*Proprietor

David Bull's inn must have been the real headquarters for Feb. 9, 1763 two rights were sold to men from Albany for twenty-five pounds each, and the sales were signed by "John Townley, Isaac Sheldon and David Bull, Committee".

June 29, 1763 name changed to Hartwood without explanation.

"Met the first Tuesday of September, 1763.

"Voted to choose a committee of Enquiry, empowering said committee to enquire of Mr. John Walker concerning the list of names in the grant who are esteemed as Strangers and Aliens Fraudiently imposed upon the propriety of Hartwood, And said Committee to make Report of the Answers Recd. from Mr. John Walker Concerning the above mentioned Articles."

Alas! For our curiosity there are no recorded answers. It would be nice to know who the strangers and aliens were.

March 20, 1765: "Voted that Colln. Samuel Talcot of Hartford & George Sloan of No. 4 Be a Committee to Treat with Sum Suitable Person that will Undertake to Build a Saw Mill in the Most Convenient Place in the Township and Mak Report thereof to the Proprietors at their Next adjourned Meeting."

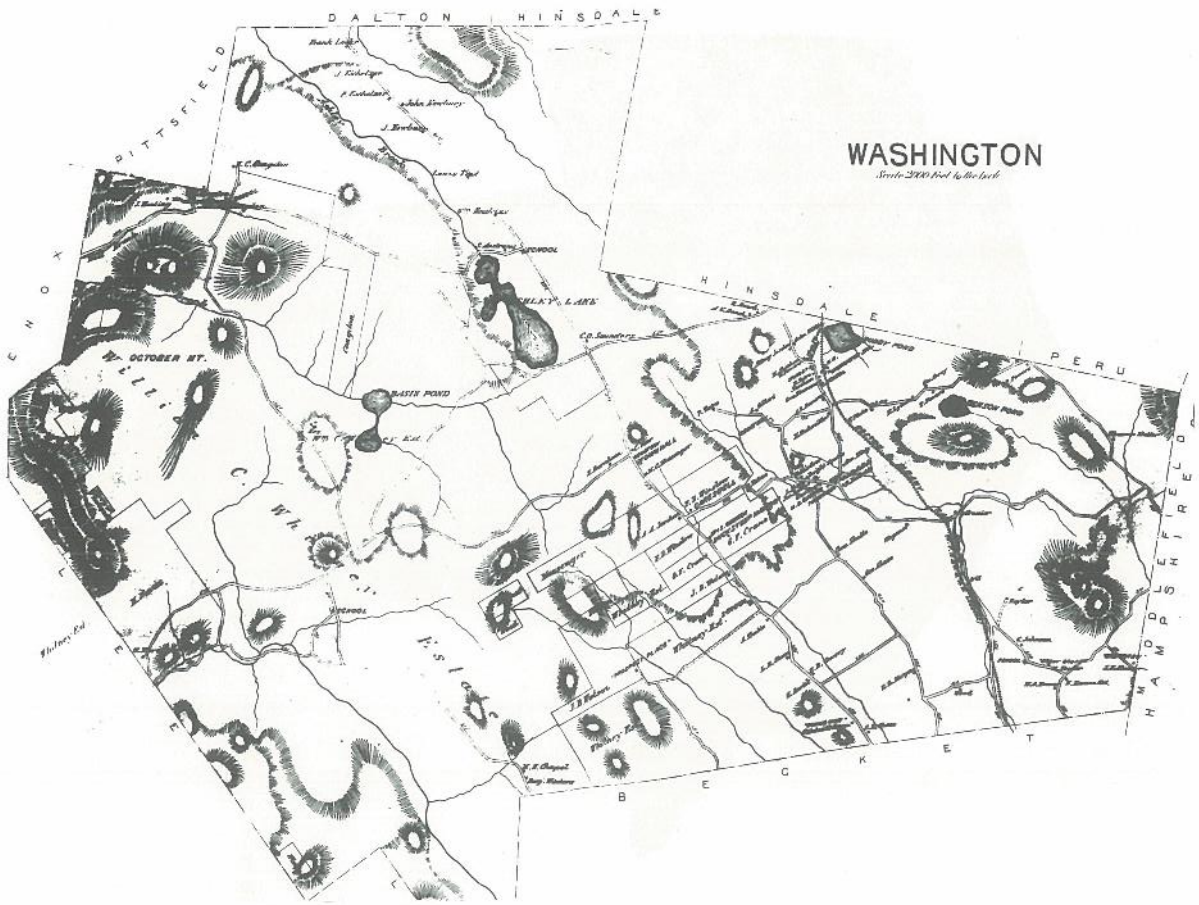
"Voted and Granted as an Encouragement for the first ten settlers that shall Settle in said Township agreeabel to the Grant Made by the Provence that twenty five Acres be Laid out, by lots In the Second Division in sd Township to Each Familiy To them or their heirs or assigns with their lots if they have any if not by it Self by lot or otherwise as the Proprietors shall Vote the division to be made."

"Voted that George Sloan & Daniel Futt be Agents to prossicut Any Tressspases Comited in the Township of Hartwood."

March 18, 1766. "Voted that Mr. George Sloan be appointed an agent to keep in Repair the Country Road through the town of Hartwood." Voted a tax to defray this expense.

January 14, 1767: "Voted and granted that seventy two pounds be levied and assessed on the proprietors according to Law for the purpose of building an house of publick worship in the township of Hartwood that the aforesaid sum be collected and paid to the Treasurer by the first Day February 1768." "Voted that Coll Samuel Talcott Mess David Bill & George Sloan be a committee to contract with some person for a quantity of boards and shingles for the purpose of covering a Meeting House."

"Voted that Mr. Andrew Mumford, George Sloan & Daniel Foot be appointed to clear and frame one acre of land on the lot laid out for the use of the Ministry where they shall judge the most suitable place to erect a meeting house and improve for a burying ground."

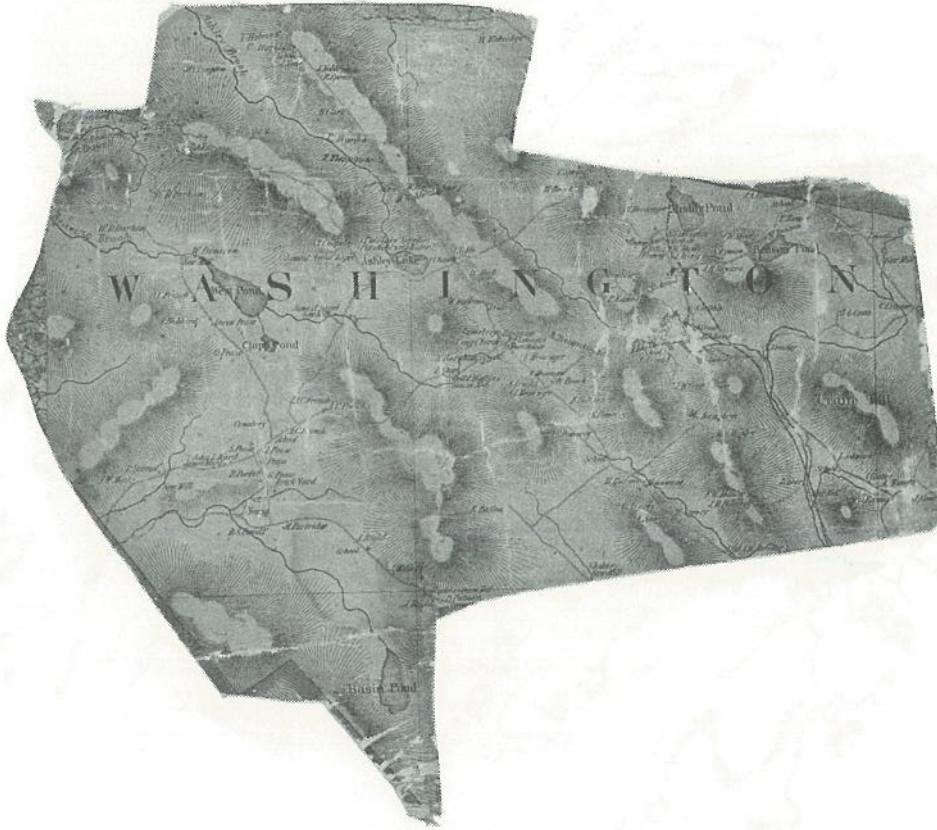


October 7, 1767: "Voted that Collo Saml Talcott Mess David Bull and George Sloan be a Committee to contract with some suitable Person to raise and cover an House for Publick Worship the dimensions to be thirty six feet by thirty feet."

Feb. 18, 1768: "Voted that Mess David Bull George Sloan and William Smith be a committee to Make a Lott by Making 63 Numbers on papers Cut and Roled alike to be put in one box and sixty three other papers of Equal dimensions with the Names of the original proprietors name on each paper the Minister on one and Ministry on another the school on another which papers they shall cause to be put into another Box and shall then to be fairly Drawn out in the presence of the Meeting and Each Proprietors Lot shall be first, second, third, etc. according to the Number that shall be drawn out of the other Box against his name which shall be entered on proprietors Book of Records and the committee appointed to Lay out the Division shall layout the Lots on the Original Rights in order and Number according to the Lot so drawn and entered."

June 15, 1768: "We the subscribers being appointed a Committee by the Proprietors of Hartwood to fix a spot for the Meeting House in said Township have attended said bussiness and have agreed to Report as follows that considering the situation of the Lots already layd out and votes of the Proprietors for Laying out their Second Division Lots we Do Judge and Determine that the North east end of the lot Number 22 on the New Plan Belonging to Mr. Isaac Sheldon where we affix a stake and stones be the Most Suitable place for the Erecting said house."

Wm. Williams
Moses Graves
Natl. Kingsley"



May 18, 1769: "Voted that the Meetinghouse be not set where the steak was set by the Comtee Chosen for that purpose but set east of that on the highway and that Squire Bliss George Sloan & Daniel foot be a comtee. to Set a Steak where sd. house shall stand & make their Report this meetings."

Nov. 22, 1769: "Voted that the Report of the Comtte Apointed to Ractify the Mistakes maid in those house lotts that Interfared on the County Grants that as they have laid out a lot No. 39 by Deweys Grant to James Coldwell that it Do Pass."

Oct. 27, 1773: "Voted that the Proprietors Concurr with the Church and Inhabitants in their Choice of Mr. Aaron Bliss for to settle with them in the work of the Gospel on Conditions he Relinquish his Right to the Ministry Right—" We don't know why Mr. Bliss lost out to Mr. Ballantine.

Now we are in the time period covered by the old Church records, and on March 14, 1774 they voted to make provisions for the ordination of Mr. William Gay Ballantine, which event is fully covered in the Church record.

This item may be interesting to anyone wanting to know who lived on the "Settling Lots" along the Street. On Page 94 of the Record Book the following names appear as abutters on the County Road, when the bounds were renewed.

Beginning at Hartwood south line then

Daniel Olds
Robert McKnight
Millikens Corner
Samuel Curtiss
Daniel Olds

Joseph Knox (proprietors clerk)
Bushes Corner
Andrew Mumford
Ministry Lot
Amos Beards
Crain
Meeting House
Stower Grant or Cassway
Zenos Noble
John Plum
Major Fairleghys

Sept. 9, 1783: "Voted that the following Persons hereafter Named their heirs and assigns be Entitled to the Grant of twenty-five acres Given them as an Encouragement for there being the ten first Settlers in said town at a Meeting held at Hartford the 20th Day of March 1765:

Mr. George Sloan	Wm. Beard
The heirs of Andrew Mumford	The heirs of Nathan Ingraham
William Millekan	Joseph Know
Elijah Crane	Matthew DeWolf
Amos Beard	The heirs of Doct. Joseph Chaplin

"Voted to Chuse an agent to go to Boston in order to git the Proprietors Book of Records Confirmed and git a Particular act of the General Court to Enable the Assessors and Collectors to Collect all arrearages of taxes Granted by the Proprietors.

"Voted and Chose Azariah Ashley to be our agent for the above business."

Oct. 4, 1784 (in Lee): "Voted that the report of the Committee appointed to ascertain the Quantity of Common and undivided lands be accepted which is as follows viz Wee the Subscribers being a Committee appointed by the Proprietors of the Common and undivided Lands belonging to the Original Proprietors of Hartwood now Washington beg leave to Report that having Surveyed several lines and takeing them from the plan--find that there is yet undivided land belonging to the said Proprietors or owners the Quantity of Eight thousand Six hundred and five Acres of Land Exclusive of all former Grants made by the Proprietors according to the best of our Knowledge.

"In witness whereof wee have hereunto Set our hands

Moses Ashley
Prince West
Azariah Ashley
Committee"

Lee, December 7, 1785. "Voted to Chuse a Committee of three Indifferent men to View and average Sundry Rights or Lots of Land which appear to be not equally divided and the Proprietors have thought fitt not to Establish them as Voted and Established at there former Meeting and the said Committee are to say what Number of Acres of Land shall be taken from those best lots and put to those Mountain or bad lots so called, and the said Committee are to say where the said lands shall be taken off and to judge of the Matter so as to make those mountain lots upon an average with the Right of the lots in the said Division."

This would seem an impossible task to anyone familiar with our area, where level land is in such short supply and there are ravines, precipices, swamps, and piles of glacial boulders. However, the committee did try, and there are several pages of adjustments which seem too complicated to understand. As it stands now, the good farms have disappeared with the bad, and most of them are reverting to the condition in which they were found--thickly forested and hiding again the contours of the land.

There are rumors that there were several Dutch homes in the area, and it is entirely possible. In 1749 a grant of 700 Acres was laid out to Elias Van Schaack, in present Hinsdale or Dalton judging by the sketch, and it is possible that this was to repay him for removing from the new grants, perhaps from Hartwood.

Last meeting of proprietors was Dec. 31, 1788 in Lee.

Washington Mountain is the highest portion of that part of the Hoosac Range which lies in the town. Once you climb the mountain, the top is surprisingly long and level, with steep hillsides dropping off on either side. Undoubtedly there was always some kind of path across the top from earlier times—deer trails, Indian trails, and later the Dutch investigating what they considered their territory in the New World.

When the original surveyors of the proposed new town decided on the geographical center of the town, it happened to be right on this hilltop. The first division of land was along the path as it ran from near Pittsfield to the Becket line. Becket looked mostly to Westfield and Springfield, but there was need of a route west to Pittsfield and Albany. It is hard to realize even now that Albany is a port city, but it was discovered early that goods could be shipped most easily and cheaply from Boston and other eastern ports to the port of Albany, where they could be collected and drawn to Berkshire County by oxcart.

The settlers lost no time in clearing their settling lots, and in building their homes. No information has come down to us about what the very first houses were like. Sawmills would be needed before frame houses could be built, but there was a pioneer tradition of almost one hundred fifty years behind these settlers so they would know how to go about it. Probably they built some sort of log houses, using the over-abundance of trees they had to clear away.

As the homes were built, it would be natural to walk back and forth between them to exchange help and companionship. Oxen are good at threading their way through woods, but eventually it was necessary to plan something better to keep up with the expanding population and more travel.

Soon each town meeting voted a group of men to be surveyors of roads, and these men were responsible for laying out new roads and directing the men who worked on them. New roads had to be accepted by vote in town meeting, and almost every meeting in those early days described a new road laid out and accepted. What work it must have been for the town clerk to push his quill pen through page after page of description of each proposed road. One road in 1790 took five pages in the clerk's record, the beginning of which is:

“Survey of Highway in Washington Beginning at a stake and stones at the corner of the road which leads from Gideon Bushes to Jesse Ladd's stand in a few rods southward of said Ladd's house—
Thence running S 54°E 39½ Rods to a Stake & Stones
Thence S 47°E 19¼ rods to a Small Elm tree marked
Thence S 26°E 15½ Rods to a dry Hemlock Stubb
Thence S 57°E 20 Rods to a Maple tree marked
Thence S 22°E 22 Rods to a hemlock tree marked”

and on and on for page after page. The whole town was eventually crisscrossed with “highways” leading to every building in town. Some were discontinued from time to time, and new ones added. Existing roads were rerouted frequently until they were confined by stonewalls bordering various properties.

Some of the roads were called “Pent Roads” meaning that they were roads with gates or bars to keep livestock in or out, as the case might be. There was some argument about who paid for having the gates or barways erected. The road across the mountain was variously known as “The Street” or County Road, and eventually most of the new roads converged on it. One of the oldest roads is Schulze Road (as it is now named) which connected the farms on The Street with other settling lots on what is now called Lovers Lane Road.

Taxpayers in each district were allowed to work out their road taxes, and it would be a good way of checking who lived in town at any particular time by the listing of names of men who took this opportunity of saving a little cash.

The earliest stage route from Springfield to Albany went over the highest hilltops through Washington Center. There were two taverns on The Street, one now owned by Mrs. Schuman, and the other up at the center. It is said that Daniel Webster, John Adams and other notables traveled over this turnpike.

When the Pontoosic Turnpike was built through the valley about 1830, it was so much easier on the horses (and passengers) that the old road over the mountain was left to the farmers living near it, and this was a severe blow to this part of the town.

The Pontoosic turnpike contracted with local land owners to chop all tress, clear a sufficient width for a twenty-six feet traveled road. The owner of the land was allowed to remove all the timber and logs except such as could be used in the road construction. The contract also specified that all rocks be removed, stone, and logs, and trees, stumps and roots. No stone was to be covered unless it would be at

least ten inches below the surface. A sufficient number of sluices were to be made of stone when practicable, and suitable swells (or "thank-you-ma'ams") were to be made in the road to prevent its washing. On all side hills, or in any place where the road required, railings were to be made, agreeable to the instructions of the directors. The price per rod for the work was \$56.00. The ruins of the Pontoosic Turnpike are still visible along the stream following the valley to Westfield.

Later the turnpike route was changed so that it ran past the Sibley grove, so called, and led down to the source of the stream which feeds Muddy Pond. In order to cross this swamp and muddy stream, it was necessary to cover it with a bridge which rested upon the water and this gave it the name of "floating bridge". It was some 700 feet in length. It was built in 1834. It is interesting to know that for this highway nine different bridges were built over the swamp, as each in turn sank when the planks and timbers gradually became heavy and water soaked, at last becoming dangerous for teams to drive over them. The last bridge was submerged in water to the depth of nearly two feet when it finally disappeared about the year 1853-4, and the present highway was opened for travel.

The stage coaches were run by relays of about ten miles to a lap. One of the relay stables was at the Crane homestead. There was also another at the Deming tavern, which was located at the edge of the village. Absalom Deming kept this tavern and with it a country store. The Deming tavern was long and favorably known. Dances and social gatherings were held there by the young people of the town.

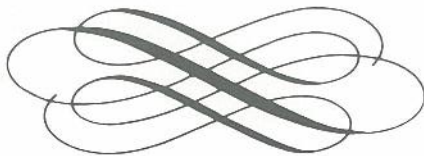
At this time the little village at the foot of the high hill upon which the church and town house stood was divided by a steep hill into what was known as the upper and lower village. In the lower village, through which the stage coach now passed, was the first Methodist Church, a woolen mill built and owned by Capt. Horace Herrick, a grist mill, a saw mill and carding factory owned by Daniel Higgins. The earliest built saw mill, known as the "flutter wheel mill," was then owned by Phillip Eames, who bought it from its early builder, Joel Crane.

In the upper village there was also a saw mill owned by William Donovan, a potash factory owned by Sylvester Arnold, and a blacksmith shop owned by John E. Stacy. There was also a Venetian slat curtain factory owned by Lon Jackson and Nelson Cross. It was at this time that this little village acquired the name of "Washington City".

Last but not least, in this upper village was the little school house on Valley Road. This was the most flourishing school of the town. Here on the snowy days of winter gathered sixty boys and girls.

The Pontoosic Turnpike became the main stage route from Boston to Albany. The stage coach was now in the heyday of its prosperity. The town was growing wealthy, its population was increasing, and the community felt itself in touch with the outer world.

The passing of the stage coach ended the most charming period of our New England life. With the coming of the railroad, the New Era was here. The turnpike, the stage and the tavern passed into history.



Revolutionary War Period



REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD

The first thing we find in tracing this period is that there are no official records — not a word — of what went on from June 1774 to April 16, 1778. Mention is made of searching the old records but there is no copy of what was found. It was August 10, 1778 that is was “Voted Sixty Pounds to Procure Clothing and a Town Book” and “Voted to send Jabez Cornish to Join Ye County Convention.” At that time George Sloan was town clerk and he copied several previous records of meetings in the new Town Book, but his ink must have been of poor quality because it is faded to such an extent that it is impossible to read everything written on the first few pages, to say nothing of the difficulty of translating the old fashioned letters and different spelling.

We know from other sources that in 1774 the counties held “Congresses” of deputies chosen by the several towns to consider “the alarming state of public affairs.” Berkshire was the first County in the State to call such a Congress and to deliberately and formally put its acts on record. The deputies from Washington were William Spencer and Moses Ashley, Jr., and although not mentioned again they were very probably the deputies to the several Congresses that followed.

Previous to the outbreak of hostilities the volunteers, the “Minute Men,” met and drilled under the direction of Captain Horace Bushnell and Captain George Sloan on what was known as the “parade ground,” ten acres around the meeting house.

The news of the Battle of Lexington reached Berkshire in the afternoon of April 20th, 1775, incredible as it may seem, and by the 23rd, Captain Peter Porter’s company of Minute Men of Becket and Hartwood were on their way to Cambridge. There was much marching across the State, as men walked to the fighting, walked home to do their planting, and walked to the next emergency, which was Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. A few of the men joined the Continental Army and fought their way to the conclusion at Yorktown in 1781. Most of them returned home.

On June 28, 1776 the Massachusetts Assembly resolved to raise 5,000 men to reinforce the Continental troops in Canada and New York, and the quota assigned to Washington was five men.

In 1777 came the plea for help against the British trying to take Bennington, Vt. Men from this town responded — it was really standing between a nearby enemy and their homes and families. The Battle of Bennington was fought over the line in New York State, and the British were defeated. Then most of the men came home.

It turned out that the region’s safety was assured by Thaddeus Kosciusko, from Poland. He had volunteered to General Washington in 1776 and was commissioned as Colonel of Engineers for \$60 a month and soon sent to Ticonderoga, then in the possession of American defenders. He saw immediately that men within the fort were at the mercy of guns of the enemy who might take Mount Defiance, and he urged that guns be put up there to prevent its capture. American General Schuyler ignored this advice. He was sure that the sides of Mt. Defiance were too steep for any men to carry cannons to the top.

General Burgoyne arrived at Ticonderoga on June 30, 1777 with a well disciplined and well equipped army of 7700 regulars and another 2500 Canadian, Hessian and Indians. Five days later the Americans in the fort could see “Gentleman Johnnie’s” troops hauling cannon to the top of Mount Defiance, and Ticonderoga was suddenly rendered untenable. The Americans beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind the supplies they could so ill afford to lose.

As the Americans retreated with the British in close pursuit, it was Kosciusko who directed the work of obstructing the progress of the pursuing British. Trees were felled across trails and creeks, bushy tops toward the British, bridges were destroyed, streams flooded and trenches dug to make quagmires of what was already swampy country.

The fall of Ticonderoga was very serious for the American cause, because if Burgoyne could follow through and reach Albany and the Hudson River, he would cut off the whole New England area from the rest of the country.

General Schuyler had been removed from command for losing Ticonderoga, and General Gates took over, preparing an offensive to save a very serious position. The call went out for help again, and Washington men were there in time for the action. Kosciusko went ahead to find the best site for the battle. He knew that the British were trying to send a force up the Hudson to meet up with Burgoyne somewhere near Albany. He knew that Burgoyne’s supply line from Canada was stretched to the utmost. Kosciusko picked a place called Bemis Heights, about halfway between Stillwater and

Saratoga. Although the Americans were in poor mental and physical condition, every able-bodied man was put to work building redoubts and entrenchments upon a series of steep slopes and terraces. Below the American position were ravines and woods as natural barriers.

Much has been written of this battle, the flanking movements, the charges and deployment of troops. Enough to say that through the confusion and deaths, the Americans won and in so doing really insured winning the war, because on the strength of hearing of this victory the French finally declared war on England and sent their fleet and many soldiers to help. They got it all together at Yorktown and were instrumental there in persuading General Cornwallis to surrender and finally end the war in 1781. The town of Washington went the whole way with a few of its men, through the many defeats, the winter at Valley Forge, the fighting and hardships until it was all over and the United States of America was born.

On October 17, 1777, Elijah Fisher wrote in his diary:

“Gen. Burgoin and his howl army surrendered themselves Prisoners of Ware and Come to Captelate with our army and Gen. Gates . . . Then at one of the Clock five Brigades was sent for Albany (for there came nuse that Gen. Clinton was a comin up the North river) . . . Gen. Clinton having nuse that Gen. Burgoyne had capetlated and had surrendered his army prisoners of war he Returned back to New York.”

It unfortunately was not actually a total surrender. General Burgoyne was able to persuade General Gates, the American commander, into making it a “convention” not a surrender. General Gates agreed to let the British army stack their arms in a secluded spot, out of sight of the Americans, allowed the officers to keep their swords to identify them as officers, and allowed some eleven hundred Tories, Canadians and Indians to return to Canada immediately. Of course General Gates thought he still had to fight the troops General Clinton was bringing up from New York so he was in a hurry to get Burgoyne out of the way. General Clinton never came, but that Convention sent General Burgoyne’s people on a five year path of wandering from Boston, to New York, through Pennsylvania and to Charlottesville, Virginia, back to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and eventually British officers were sent to East Windsor, Connecticut to the Old Newgate Prison. It wasn’t until April 15, 1782 that final arrangements were made for British ships to pick them up, with other British prisoners, and sail them home.

At the beginning, there were nearly 5,900 officers and soldiers, 3,379 were British and 2,492 were German troops mostly from the Duchy of Brunswick Luneburg, whose hereditary prince had married a sister of King George III. In addition, there were about a thousand women and children. The British had permitted these camp followers to accompany the soldiers to America and they issued them daily rations from the commissary.

Financially, the British army was better off than the Americans, and they had money to buy food and shelter on their march to Boston. They had “hard” money and the Americans were anxious to exchange their continentals for it. Around Albany the Americans were offering to trade nine continentals for a guinea. At Williamstown, Mass., they were offering eighteen or twenty dollars for the same coin. In business dealings with the British Convention Army, the Congress specified that the British pay in hard money, partly because the same British refused to accept continental money in any of their transactions with the American army. Actually the British were busily counterfeiting American money to increase its already disastrous depreciation.

There was also vigorous argument that the British did not live up to the rules of the convention in that they did not surrender their regimental colors. Burgoyne swore “upon my honor” that they had been left in Canada. Actually, Baroness Riedesel, wife of a German officer and traveling with the army, had sewn the colors of the German regiments into her mattress; and British officers had hidden their regimental colors in their personal baggage. This Baroness Riedesel was not alone in accompanying her husband, but also had their three daughters, aged six, three and nineteen months.

One British officer paid his money to a farm family south of Williamstown to sleep for the night out of the cold rain. He noticed that there were only two beds in the house and asked which was his. The mother said she and her husband needed one, and that he could bundle with the “pretty, black eyed” young lady in the other. She piped up that she had bundled with many a man before, but never an Englishman — but he spent the night on the floor.

The German soldiers were much impressed with the American affluence they saw in their travels, especially “The incredible stores of grain” in the barns around Albany. They noted that the Dutch farmers breakfasted on milk, tea, roast meat, baked apples and all kinds of rich butter cakes.

The prisoners being marched through the Berkshires agreed on one thing — the weather was just abominable. A severe snowstorm struck. One British soldier wrote: “After this, it is impossible to

describe the confusion that ensued. Carts breaking down, others sticking fast, some oversetting, horses tumbling with their loads of baggage, men cursing, women shrieking and children squalling." He saw a soldier's wife giving birth to a baby, sheltered from the storm by nothing but a bit of old oilcloth.

The Germans, on the 28th of October, near Great Barrington encountered "alternately hail, rain and snow. The wind was so piercing, that no matter how warmly we wrapped ourselves in our cloaks, it penetrated to the very marrow. In addition, our wet clothes froze as stiff as iron. The oldest soldiers admitted that they had never before experienced such a march."

Two of our own Washington soldiers, Gideon Bush and John Walker, were part of the escort of these prisoners. Most of our local men were involved with the part of the War that centered around this area — Bunker Hill, Bennington, and the longer ordeal of Ticonderoga and points south. We can sympathize with the discomforts of the Convention Army, but they apparently were better organized and equipped in most ways than the Americans. After all, most of our soldiers in these encounters were men who suddenly grabbed up their guns, left their farm chores and joined in bands to march informally to the trouble spots. Their uniforms, if any were issued, were nondescript, consisting of anything the men might have already and the addition of white shirts and white knee stockings for uniformity on the battlefield. They were laden like pack animals with heavy long-barreled rifles, lead shot and wadding, iron cooking kettles, anything available for blankets rolled in a pack, home knit wool stockings and cowhide boots, and everything else they might need. All the vicissitudes of the weather were shared equally, the only difference being that the Americans were on home territory and would soon rejoin their families and interrupted routines. The prisoners didn't know it then at the beginning, but their journey would last five years.

Desertions from the prisoners were numerous. It was reported from Boston "that the whole band of the 62nd regiment, excepting the Master, deserted in a body, and are now playing to an American regiment." By the fall of 1778 there were only 2300 British and 1900 Germans on the muster rolls. Most of the men didn't desert to join the American cause but to try to get back within the British lines.

The nearest the war came to town was shown in Lt. Hildreth's diary of his route from Ticonderoga with prisoners. They camped in town for two days while waiting for a man to die — he could have had smallpox which was of epidemic proportions at the time, or he could have succumbed to wounds from a skirmish a few days before. Rumor has it that the campsite was in back of where Daniel Phillips now lives. There is a bountiful spring there, and the campsite showed plainly a hundred years ago — large flat rocks on formation for the campfires they needed for cooking and warmth, a pile of small cannon balls left neatly piled beside the spring, a well-built narrow opening in the stone wall, and an apparent grave marked with an upright flat rock in almost the shape of a regular headstone. At the same place, almost a hundred years ago, was a big old tree, thickly carved with initials and regimental numbers, but the tree fell and disappeared completely years ago. It is said that another similar group of soldiers and prisoners followed the hilltops through Middlefield and the two forces could signal with campfires.

The few Hildreth and Capt. Ford notations show how expenses were figured.

From the Diary of Micah Hildreth of Dracut (Lieutenant in Capt. Ford's company) are given the routes taken by the troops on their march from Chelmsford on July 25, 1776 and on their return, leaving Ticonderoga Nov. 26, 1776 and taking until the end of December 1776: to Fort George; Albany; then across the River to Green Bush; Scoduck; New Lebanon; Green Groves, called Philipstown; Pittsfield; Patridgefield; Washington, etc.

Abstract from Capt. Ford's expense account for travel from "Fort George and for mileage from Albany home at one penny per mile and one day's pay for every twenty miles from Albany home.

1 Capt.	for travel 265 miles and 200 mile mileage	3.	15.	5.	
2 Lieuts.	do	5.	16.	2.	
1 Ensign	do	2.	8.	9.	
4 Seargt.	do	7.	7.	6.	
4 Corpl.	do	7.	4.	4.	
2 Drum & fife	do	3.	12.	2.	
76 Privates	do	134.	11.	8.	
		Total	165.	16.	0."

Capt. Ford's Company was at the taking of Burgoyne and brought back with them between forty and fifty of the prisoners from Stillwater to Cambridge."

"An abstract for pay Due to Capt. John Ford and his Company for pack horses to carry their baggage to Stillwater and for horses Expences and for the men to bring back their horses and for Extroydenary Expence in their Return as they Brought back the prisoners.

9 horses for 53 men at 6d pr mile each 160 miles each	L36—0—0
for 2 men to bring back the pack horses 15 days at 3s. per man per day	4—10—0
and for their expenses for the men to Bring back the horses	4—10—0
and for the expence for the above horses at 1L-16s-0 per horse	16—4—0
for milage to Bennington 53 men 160 miles 2 pence per mile each	35—6—8
for Extraordinary Expense from Stillwater to Cambridge in bringing back the prisoners 250 miles Each and one penny per mile	51—0—10"

There is no indication of why they came through Washington. Perhaps they were guided by a Washington man on his way home. It is rumored that they came to visit Isaac Brooker who lived just south of the camp site.

ACTS AND RESOLVES

Some idea of how the supplies for the army were acquired is given by reading the Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts. Towns were assigned quotas, agents were appointed to receive the things requested and there is much highflown oratory by the Legislature as they made their various requests.

Chapter 1092 is fairly direct. William Williams, Esq. of Pittsfield is to receive as Washington's share thirteen pairs of shoes, thirteen pairs of white stockings, thirteen white shirts, and six blankets. If the towns cannot furnish the actual articles, they can pay a cash equivalent to allow purchase elsewhere.

In 1780 a demand was made for 3,220 pounds of beef or its cash equivalent. The demand began:

"The good people of this State need not be informed that those who now call on them are subject and willing to bear an equal share of every burthen on this community; burthens which have been felt by every nation who have been obliged to contend for their liberties, and resist the lawless hand of tyranny; and must appear very small when compared with the dreadful alternative, an alternative fraught with the compleatest misery, a subjugation to a cruel and unfeeling enemy, whose pride would lead them to insult us for want of public virtue, should any necessary supply be withheld from our army; and whose avarice would strip us of the property which an ill-timed parsimony may endeavour to preserve."

Washington was to produce 6 men in 1780, and it was resolved: "Each person procured shall supply himself with a good firelock, bayonet, cartouch-box, haversack and blanket, and shall at the expiration of his service, if he produce a certificate from his Captain or other Commanding Officer of his company, that he hath been constantly provided therewith at his own expense, receive, for the use of his firelock, bayonet and cartouch-box, five Pounds, and for the use of his blanket, fifteen Pounds, and in like proportion for any or either of them."

In Chapter 121, there is a more fervid plea for horses, of which Washington was to furnish four.

"Whereas the state of the treasury renders it impracticable to procure said horses with money; as guardians of the public security, this Court is constrained to apply to the patriotism and public spirit of the good people of this State, in an unusual, indeed, but absolutely necessary method: Be it therefore

"Resolved, That the Agents appointed to procure said horses, be, and they are respectively directed, as soon as possible, to apply to the selectmen of the several towns within their respective limits; and the selectmen aforesaid are hereby earnestly requested (as they would prevent the further effusion of blood; as they would restore their country to security and happiness; and as they would avoid a most ignominious bondage to a cruel, haughty and implacable enemy) to procure, in the most speedy and effectual manner, on the terms prescribed in said resolve, the number of good and serviceable horses allotted their respective towns in the schedule hereto annexed . . ."

At that time, our representative in Boston was Mr. Artemas Easton.

This book of Acts and Resolves (1779-1780) is full of interesting and puzzling items such as a list of supplies which Col. John Allen got to "proceed to finish the Fort at Machias, or build two Block Houses, as he shall think best."

"Articles which the Board of War can supply viz. "5 hhd Rum and 5hhd Molasses, Coarse Cloath as a substitute for 10 ps Stroud, 200 steel Indian Knives, 50 barrels Beef, 2 boxes Glass, 20 lb Thread and three Casks Nails.

"They can borrow from James Richardson, a Continental Commissary 50 barrels Carolina Pork not very good, 2,000 lb. Rice, 30 bushel Peas: of Messieurs Samuel Allyn, Otis & David Henley 12 ps Shalloon as a substitute for Calimanco.

"Remains to be purchased with money

"3 ps. Broad Cloath, qs 75 yds.

10 ps Stroud

400 white shirts, qs 1,400 yds.

50 ps Ribbon, qs 900 yds

50 ps Binding, 1,200 yds

12 ps Calico, 144 yards

20 ps Ferret

80 pounds of Thread

6 doz scissors

24 Shott Moulds

5 hhd weight of Tobacco

2 boxes pipes

100 small Hatchetts

6 doz Silk Handkerchiefs

4 doz linnen ditto

12 ps Linnen, 300 yds

6 ps Chex, 150 yds

1,000 shott

100 barrels Flour

1 pipe wine qs 120 gallons

600 lb. Butter or hogs fatt

70 bushel peas or Beans

200 bushells Corn

2 whale boats and 1 yawl"

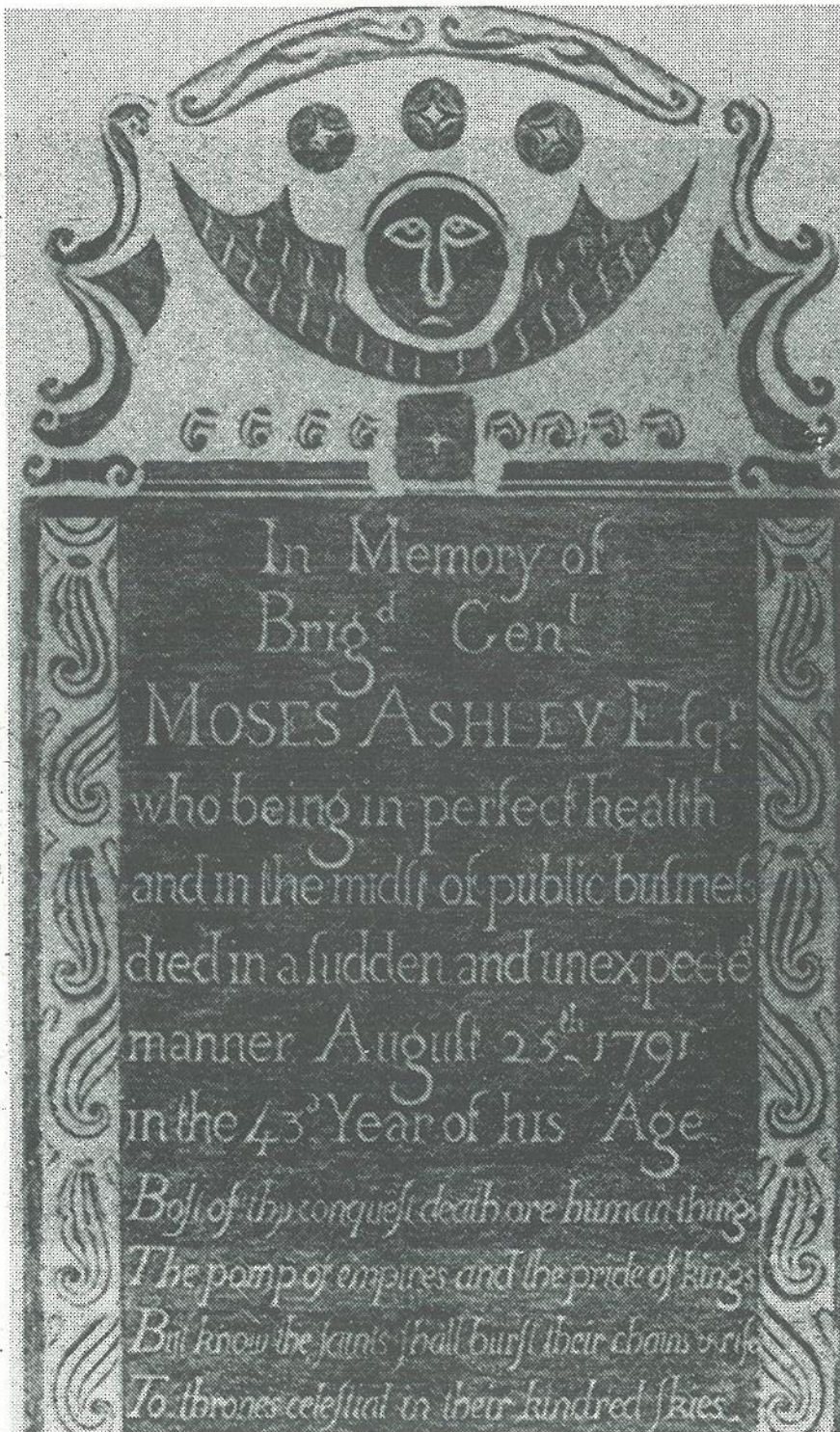
Two hundred years from now, our own war supplies will probably be just as puzzling as this list is to us.

During the Revolution, since the fighting was so near home, a large part of the Washington men saw service, marching off for a few days' fighting at Bunker Hill, Bennington or the series of fights from Ticonderoga to Stillwater. Some enlisted in the Continental Army and served until the end of the war. The records are confused and contradictory. Men moved from town to town and enlisted from where they happened to be at the time. Also Hartwood had recently become Washington, and had lost many inhabitants to the new town of Lee.

General Moses Ashley, Jr. was by far the most prominent man that went out from Washington, and one of the most distinguished sent by the State of Massachusetts to the Revolutionary War. He was born in Westfield, Mass., June 16, 1749. He was graduated at the early age of eighteen from Yale College in the class of 1767. It was said of him that "while at college he was distinguished by industry and decency of behavior."

He came to Washington with his father and family in the spring of 1772, and at once assumed a prominent place in the town affairs, being appointed an ensign in the Militia soon after his arrival there. He was sent as one of the representatives of the town to the County Convention held in Stockbridge July 6, 1774. On the alarm from Lexington he went as Lieutenant in Captain Peter Porter's Company, Colonel Paterson's Regiment, which left Becket April 23, 1775. He did not return to Washington with his Company, but entered the army at First Lieutenant in Colonel Fellow's Massachusetts Regiment, May 23, 1775. He was in the Battle of Bunker Hill, and a letter to his brother giving a description of the battle has been preserved, and is given in full in the Ashley Genealogy. In September 1775 he was recruiting officer for his regiment, and was commissioned as Captain November 5, 1775, and served as such in the Fifteenth Continental Infantry for 1776, being at the Siege of Boston. During the summer and fall of 1776, he served in the Northern Department, and then marched south to Washington's Camp and was doubtless with him at Trenton and Princeton.

January 1, 1777 he was made Captain in the First Massachusetts Regiment, and served with it throughout the Saratoga Campaign, and witnessed Burgoyne's surrender. He then joined Washington and wintered with him at Valley Forge, 1777-78. In June 1778 he was in the Battle of Monmouth and in August following in the Battle of Rhode Island. From 1779 to the close of the war he was stationed with the main army on the Hudson watching the British in New York. He was made Major of Colonel Vose's



Gravestone rubbing of Moses Ashley's stone.

Photo courtesy of The Berkshire Eagle.

Regiment January 6, 1780, and from July 25th was Major of the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment under Colonel Rufus Putnam. He was afterwards transferred to the Sixth Massachusetts and served for a time as Brigade Inspector. He was honorably discharged June 12, 1783, after having given his country over eight years of continuous service.

While still in the army in 1782 he married the widow of Colonel Thomas Williams, one of his fellow officers, Thankful Ashley Williams, a descendent of Robert Ashley, their common ancestor by another line.

After the war he settled in Stockbridge and was an active businessman and became possessed of considerable property. In 1787 he was one of the Commissioners appointed to treat with the Indians for the purchase of a tract of land near Binghamton, New York, involving ten whole townships. He was County Treasurer in 1785 and Brigadier General of the State Militia in 1790. He was a member of the Massachusetts Society of Cincinnati, his certificate being dated May 5, 1784, and signed by George Washington, President, and General Israel Knox, Secretary. He had a forge on a pond in South Lee, and while engaged in repairing a dam on it was drowned August 25, 1791.

He left two sons and one daughter.

Gen. Ashley still owned many acres in Washington at the time of his death, and there are references to settling his estate in the town records of the time.

It seems that all the following men also saw service: James Allen, Justus Allen, Timothy Arnold, Azariah Ashley, Simon Babcock, Amos Bacon, Jacob Bacon, Amos Beard, William Bill, Aaron Bixbee, Silas Blinn, Peter Brown, Gideon Bush, Thomas Chadwick, John Chaplin, Joseph Chaplin, Joseph Chapel, Phineas Cole, Timothy Cole, Adam Collins, Jabez Cornish, Jabez Cornish, Jr., and Abel Crane.

Also listed are Asahel Dodge, Alimaz Easton, Harvey Ensign, Daniel Foote, George Foote, Jonathan Foote, Philip Foote, Daniel Franklin, Frederick Frost, Seth Gillett, Ithamer Granger, Thomas Granger, Ebenezer Handy and Asa Hill.

Others are John Ingraham, Samuel Ingraham, Joseph Isham, John Kent, Sr. (Conn.), Thomas Lewis, Jonathan Lyndes, Abel Mattoon, Patrick McGee, James, John, Robert and Thomas McKnight, Bille Messenger, William Milliken, Perez Moore, John Morse and Henry Mumford.

The list continues with James Penoyer, John Phelps, John Plum, Daniel Olds, Daniel Shaw, Samuel Sherman, George Sloan, George Sloan, Jr., John Sloan, Norman Loan, William Sloan, Alpheus Spencer, John Steward, Asa Stowers, John Sweeney, Isaac Tillotson, John Wade, John Walker, Stephen Warren, Abraham Williamson and William Wilson.

After the Revolution most of these names do not show up in the old town records so they probably moved on to other places. However, the town gained two erstwhile enemies who did stay. John Henry Seagers was a Hessian hired to fight with the British Army. He was mustered out at West Point, N.Y. in April 1781, bought a farm in Washington in 1802 and lived there for the rest of his life. He was a founder of the Methodist church in the days of the "circuit riders." His son Henry was a soldier in the Civil War.

David Cairn Cross was born April 6, 1757 in Steamergate, near Dundee, Scotland. In 1777, contrary to the wishes of his parents, he enlisted in the British Army. Twice his father bought him off, but he succeeded in joining the Burgoyne Army as it was about to embark for America. He fought with Burgoyne's troops until the surrender at Saratoga.

Under guard of James Mulholland of Chester, he was among the detachment of prisoners who passed through Washington, Westfield and Springfield, with a stop at Chester where James Mulholland visited his family and where David Cross saw Nancy Mulholland, and fell in love at first sight. When the prisoners resumed their march toward Boston, David Cross found an opportunity to desert, and as soon as it seemed safe he returned to the Mulholland home and declared his intention to marry Nancy. In 1787 he and Nancy were married, and some time later he purchased a large tract of land in Washington near the Middlefield line, which he developed into one of the best farms in town. The buildings are now gone but the name still clings to Cross Place Road, and Cross Place.

David and Nancy Cross joined the Methodist class in 1810, and he lived to be 96. Originally there was a family burying ground on his farm where he and his wife were buried, together with some of his children. When the farm was about to be sold, his children had the remains removed to the cemetery in Becket village. His granddaughter married Charles Crosier who was a long-time resident of Washington.

John Coates, who had been a Revolutionary War soldier from Lenox, came alone to Washington. His land was unbroken forest and for the first year his home was by a large rock which supported a shelter of overlapping pieces of hemlock bark. Later he built a log house and raised a large family of sons and daughters. His brother Charles at that time owned the farm now occupied by Curtis Roosevelt.

SHAY'S REBELLION

Shay's Rebellion was a sad little local war. Farmers who had fought for years came home weary and flat broke. They were paid with Continental dollars. To this day the saying is of something worthless, "Not worth a Continental." Their farms were neglected, high taxes and high mortgage payments were due. The laws of the day permitted a man to be thrown in jail if he couldn't pay his debts, and the courts were busily turning out such judgments.

In 1786 a three day convention was held in Hatfield to decide on a course of action, and they started by attacking the County Courthouse in Northampton. The enraged farmers also tried to take the federal arsenal at Springfield, led by Daniel Shay of Pelham and Luke Day of West Springfield. The attempt failed and from then on it was continual retreat with a few pitched battles. It is said that Washington proved a hiding place toward the end of the little rebellion, and presumably some Washington men were involved, notably Mark and Anthony Eames who refused to take the oath of Allegiance so they could take town offices to which they were elected in 1789. They must have taken such an oath later because once again they were elected to various town offices. We have no record of how many others took the oath under more private circumstances.

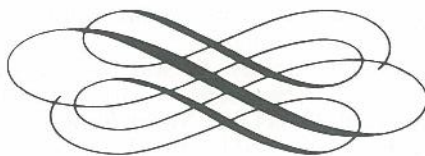
George Washington in Virginia urged reforms to make such protests unnecessary in the future. The financial situation of the whole country was in disarray for some years until the new government could get finances on a firm basis. There was a severe depression and new communities still hacking farms out of wilderness would not have the resources to hold out for long.

WAR OF 1812

This short war with Great Britain made no real impact upon this town because it isn't even mentioned in the Clerk's Record Book. However, apparently we were represented by Lt. Daniel Eames, Musician Meded Eames, Jonathan Chapel, William Milliken, Hiram Savery. Phillip Eames recruited a Company but it did not see active service. A rule was passed ordering all able-bodied men to drill and train on holidays.

A further random military note: In 1826, forty men from Washington greeted Lafayette on his visit to Pittsfield.

Now we enter a prolonged period of peace — as far as wars are concerned.



Indians



INDIANS

Since all phases of this history tend to overlap, perhaps this would be a good place to say a few words about our Indian neighbors of the period. There probably never were any great numbers of resident Indians, but this was their hunting and fishing grounds as far back as we can fathom. The Indians from eastern Massachusetts, western Massachusetts and in the vicinity of the Hudson River were all of more or less the same tribe, and generally called Mohegans. The Indians of Stockbridge served valiantly as the only Indian tribe enlisted on the American side of the Revolution. They went to Concord and were voted a blanket and ribbon per man by the Provincial Congress meeting in Lexington on April 1, 1775. They fought so bravely at White Plains that a monument was erected to commemorate their valor. Some were at Valley Forge, and at Yorktown for the final act of the Revolution. Perhaps our own Gen. Moses Ashley was in touch with them. Konkapot was appointed a Captain, and Umpachenee a Lieutenant, and a son of each was later taken to Yale for private instruction.

At the end of the war, on General Washington's authorization, a whole ox was donated to the tribe for a feast, together with whiskey rations to celebrate the eventual victory. Four had been killed at White Plains and others died in hospitals. In spite of this good will, their land was constantly taken from them under various pretenses, and as shortly after the Revolution as 1786-8 there was a general migration from their home lands to the Oneida's reservation in Central New York State, and then several moves later to Shawnee County, Wisconsin.

They kept alive the tradition of their homeland, and representatives would come back occasionally to pray at certain holy places here. One of our oldest former residents says that his mother was half Fox Indian, and two or three Indian men would arrive without warning, refuse to sleep in beds but would sleep on the floor, would stay several days, and talk in a soft musical Indian language, and then leave, also without warning. While they were here, they made it a point to visit several stone monuments in town—one in what is now the State Forest, and perhaps the puzzling pile of stones on the Jarvie Property is also an Indian monument.



Jarvie stone monument

There was formerly a stone monument at Monument Mountain, from which the mountain is named, long since destroyed by vandals.

As long ago as 1734 Mr. Sergeant's interpreter in Stockbridge informed him "that though they (the Indians) still throw each his stone as he passed, they had entirely lost the knowledge of their reason for doing so. He supposed it might be an expression of gratitude for their safe return to the place; but all certainty was lost then, and cannot, of course, have been recovered since."

The native Indians built houses of long poles covered with mats of finely dressed birch or chestnut bark. It is possible that our settlers made use of such temporary dwellings, The Indians girdled trees for their gardens by building fires around the trunks. Perhaps that was partially the method our first settlers used, and from the Indians they would learn how to plant between the killed but standing trees, their Indian corn, beans and squashes.

The Indians did grind corn here. When the Jarvies bought their place there was a stone that apparently long had been used for that purpose. It is now down on the little lawn in Becket across from the library. Also at Jarvie's and at Phillips' was an array of very flat large stones which had apparently been used in connection with camp sites, perhaps to keep fires from burning into the ground.

There is a lot of information about the Stockbridge Indians whose descendants keep in touch with their homeland to this day, even going to court to claim their old Bible now at the Mission House.

What isn't so obvious is why they were such tried and true friends of the whites. They must have heard of the massacres of the Indians in Connecticut in 1637 when a stockaded Pequot town near the Mystic River in Connecticut was surrounded and burned, and 600 inhabitants, men, women and children, were burned or shot as they tried to run out of their lodges to escape the fire. The Plymouth governor wrote, "It was a fearful sight to see them frying in the fire—and horrible was the stink and stench thereof. But the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave praise thereof to God." . . . Later the white men surrounded a crowd of Indians in a swamp. The adult male captives were killed, boys sold to the West Indies, women and girls parceled out among the colonists as slaves.

At approximately the same time, the Dutch settlers on the Hudson, after living peaceably alongside an Indian village where the Indians had gardened and camped for generations, suddenly set upon the Indians one dark night, murdering men, women and children with knives, hatchets and by throwing them into the water and pushing them down with sticks until they died. This was apparently the land from which the Stockbridge Indians had formerly come. Surely there must have been enough of a link to carry this dreadful news.

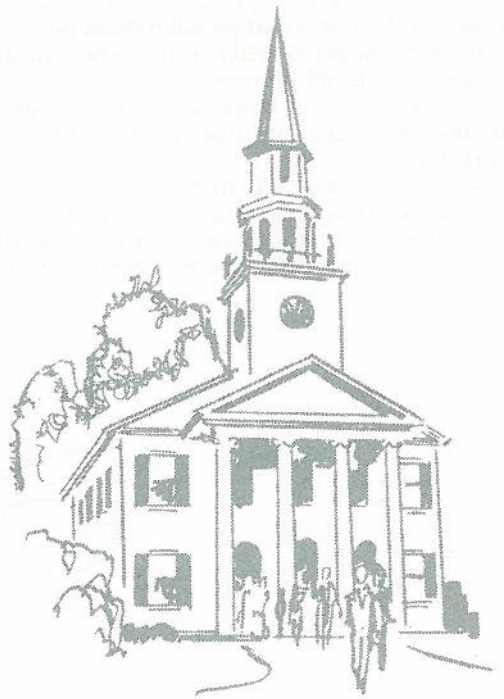
There were many more atrocities against the Indians in New England and right here in Massachusetts, especially during the King Philip War. Surely word must have filtered this comparatively short distance.

As a matter of fact, the first recorded history of the English coming into Berkshire County was when they were chasing some wounded, bleeding Indians from a fight further east, leaving a trail of blood on the ground and on the bushes as the Indians helped their wounded on their flight toward the west.

Whatever the reason, the Stockbridge Indians were faithful allies during the Revolution.



Churches



HISTORY OF CHURCHES

This section may be disproportionately long, but only because it is better documented in the Proprietors' records, the Congregational Church record, and in the Town Clerk's Record Book beginning in 1778. It is only incidental in the church records that anything is said about the buildings. Apparently the first meeting house was built prior to 1774 on Washington "Street". It was, of course, also the Town Hall.

For nearly two hundred years after the settlement of New England by the Pilgrims and the Puritans, the church and town governments were closely related. For many years none but church members were legal voters. Invariably when a grant was made for a new settlement, provision was made for the church and minister. As we have seen there was no exception in the case of Hartwood, the site of the meeting house was decided at a meeting held June 15, 1768 viz,—“The North East end of Lot #23 on the plan belonging to Isaac Sheldon.”

Even by November 27, 1770 the house does not appear to have been finished for it was then voted “that Daniel Foot be paid for building the meeting house as fast as any sum shall become due to him.”

In October 1773 the proprietors concurred with the town in extending a call to Rev. Aaron Bliss of Springfield “to settle with them in the work of the gospel” and in the following December his letter of acceptance was recorded in the proprietors book. A committee was appointed to make the preparations for his ordination. Mr. Bliss was never settled, however. Apparently he had a grievance against the town and was going to bring a suit for damages because we find that the town in January 1784 voted to send Azariah Ashley, town clerk, to Springfield to effect a settlement with him but was apparently unsuccessful. Mr. Bliss was nothing if not persistent because on April 1, 1793 it was “voted to allow the sum of six shillings to Elijah Crain for one Days sarvis as a Committeeman for the purpose of retaining Sqr. Strong with respect to Mr. Aaron Blyss case.” Nothing more appears in the records to tell what happened next.

In April 1774 a call was extended to the Rev. William Gay Ballantine to settle as minister and “four dollars on each right for settlement” was levied “one-fourth to be paid in money and three-fourths to be paid in work and materials toward building a house.” His salary was to be “45 pounds a year for the first five years and then rise three pounds a year till it rise to 60 pounds, to continue at that during his ministry to the township of Hartwood.” The inhabitants were also to furnish him with 40 cords of wood yearly.

From here on, the chief source of information is the handwritten “Record of the Church in Washington, formerly called Hartwood. This church is Congregational & truly evangelical or orthodox.”

NOTE: It was on April 9, 1827, under Rev. Knight, that it was voted to procure a suitable book, at the cost of the church, to keep the Church records in, and Br. Absalom Deming was appointed assistant in revising and transcribing the old records. It is obvious that Absalom Deming enjoyed this task as he filled page after page with his distinctive writing, with no better light than candles, with homemade ink and quill pens. The old records must have been in terrible condition for he will note that he has just found a loose scrap of paper with some important record that he must incorporate out of sequence. There are pages cataloging the members, even more pages of baptisms beginning with Oct. 2, 1774, Margaret, daughter of Gideon and Margaret Bush; and Oct. 30, 1774, Marion Milliken, daughter of William and Mary Milliken. Marriages are listed in the official town records, and deaths are listed there, too; but we cannot find any cemetery records from the past.

After Mr. Deming brought the book up to date, it was kept by the ministers and church scribes fitfully and the writing is sometimes impossible to follow.

There is a copy of this church record in the Local History Room in the Pittsfield Library for anyone who wants more information.

A personal glimpse of the ordination proceedings comes to light in the diary of the elder Ballantine, as follows:

“June 14, 1774. Set out for Hartwood with my wife, son John and Esq. Taylor, baited at Pease's Blandford, Dined with Rev. Mr. Hunn, Becket, lodged at Mr. Foot's Hartwood. My son examined and approved by all but Mr. Keep who dissents because he—William—holds that unregenerate man may partake of the Lord's supper.

" June 15, 1774. My son William ordained pastor of the Church at Hartwood. Rev. Mr. Whitman Welch of Williamstown began with prayer. I preached from 2nd Cor. 2:16 Rev. Adonijah Bidwell prayed during the imposition of hands. Rev. Ebenezer Gay of Suffield gave the charge. Rev. Mr. Zadoc Hume of Becket gave the right hand of fellowship. Rev. Mr. Allen of Pittsfield made the last prayer. Sung the 132 psalm. Dismiss with a blessing. Showers, Council dined at Mr. Foot's and lodged there.

So there is the ordination of William Gay Ballantine, twenty three years old, and a recent graduate of Harvard. He wrote a long letter of acceptance which is in the Church records. "We the subscribers members of the Church in Hartwood having for some time attended upon the preaching of Mr. William Gay Ballantine and being satisfied as to his gifts and qualifications proceeded to make choice of the said Wm. Gay Ballantine to settle in the work of the Ministry among us and presented our said Choice to the proprietors for their concurring.

Hartwood June 15th, 1774 Thomas Beard
George Sloan
Daniel Foote"

"At an Ecclesiastical Council convened at Hartwood June the 15th 1774 in consequence of letters missive directed to us from the Church and people of Hartwood

Present: The Rev. Mr.

John Ballantine
Ebenezer Gay
Thomas Allen
Whitman Welch
Tadock Hume
Aaron Bascom
John Heep
Adonijah Bidwell

Delegates Present

Eldad Taylor
Aschel Hathaway
Eli Root
Isaac Stratton
Nathaniel Kingsley
James Hamilton
Silas Kellogg

Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Gay (his uncle) was chosen Moderator by the Council and Thomas Allen, Scribe. After Mr. William Gay Ballantine presented himself for examination it was unanimously voted by this Council, that Mr. Wm. Gay Ballantine is in our opinion duly qualified for the work of the gospel ministry and that we proceed to set him apart to it over this Church and people according to the Holy Scriptures. The Council then proceeded to the Meeting House and after prayer and a sermon preached by the Rev. John Ballantine (his father) adapted to the Occasion, he was regularly invested with the ministerial office by prayer and the laying on the hands of the Prespytery.

"Attest

Rev. Thomas Allen Scribe

Rev. Ebenezer Gay, Moderator"

It was a surprise to meet Rev. Thomas Allen's name when it first appeared in the Church Record because of his fame as "The Fighting Parson" of the Revolutionary War. Much has been written about his exploits. One little story about him and the battle after Ticonderoga:

"Their post by the river was attacked by a party led by the fiery Parson Allen. Recognizing some of the Tories who came from his own district, Allen went forward, stood on a log and exhorted them in his best pulpit manner to defect to the American cause. 'there's Parson Allen. Let's pot him', came the cry from the redoubt. His neighbors' volley failed to harm Allen, who led the rush over the breastwork."

Then the Church Covenant, and on June 20, 1774 twenty-three members signed.

George Sloan and Sarah his wife

David Ensign and Elizabeth his wife

Daniel Foot and wife

Sarah Chaplin wife of Wm. Chaplin

Thomas Beard

Joanne Morse, wife of John Morse

Moses Ashley

Jesse Ladd and Rachel his wife

Philip Mattoon and Elinor

Richard Church and wife

Nathan Ingraham and Mary, his wife

James Mathews and wife

William Spencer

John Steele and wife

From then on, several new members were added each year until one hundred twenty-six names are listed by 1816 followed by the notation: "Such above as are stated to have been admitted must be understood to have professed religion in this Church. Record of admissions under Rev. Mr. Ballantine are ended."

From the Town Record, "November 16, 1778 it was voted that the Rev. Dr. Ballantine's salary for the present year be paid at ye Rate of Wheat at 6 per bushel, that Rye at 4—6 per bushel, Indian Corn at 3

per bushel. Labour at 3 per day and all other Mechanicks at ye sd rate."

Then there is this notation on page 19, "Sept. 10, 1820. The last Sabbath on which that dear and good man the Rev. William Gay Ballantine was able to attend the services of this Sanctuary. He baptized my son Lorenzo Jarvis. Attest: Absalom Deming, Scribe to the Church. Appointed to copy the ancient Record of the Church."

On the very first page of the Town Record Book are the following notations, showing how the Congregational Church was losing its financial support in the town.

"June ye 25th, 1778 Voted George Sloan, Jabez Cornish and Andrew Mumford be a Committee to Treet with the Anabaptize. Voted Instructions to the above sd. comtee as follows viz them to treet with Anabaptize and that they have Power to Discharge them if they agree and in Order for that they must agree by themselves and if they cannot Do that they Must Settle it by indifirent men."

"July ye 17, 1778. Voted Nathan Ingraham and William Spencer be a Comee. to go and treet with the Town of Lee Confirming the Province Tax. The Commtee. Chose to treet with the Baptize Brought in their Agreement and the Town Voted fifteen of the Inhabitants who have imbodyed themselves into a Society of Anibaptize they are to pay all Back rates from the Date hereof and then to be Cleared from all Minister Rates So Long as they Shall Continue in Such Society". The men listed are:

Jacob Bacon	Jonth arret
Elisha Smith	Saml. Smith
Ephraham Smith	William Smith
Barnabas Dixon	Asel Brown
Elisha Smith Jun.	Ruben Draper
Amos Bacon	William Congdon
	Isaac Hodgkins

Here is a different view of the church. From "A Narrative of a Tour through the State of Vermont from April 27 to June 12, 1789" by Rev. Nathan Perkins of Hartford. Out of print but a copy is at Forbes Library in Northampton.

"3 o'clock journeyed to Becket and was richly and sumptuously entertained at my brother's—Wednesday 10 o'clock left his house, one of the best in the County. Dined with Rev. Balantine of Washington—a poor town and a disgrace to the exalted name which it bears—cold land—bad for grain—good for grass—Came to Mr. Moses Steele's. They were overjoyed to see me—ready to eat me up with love and kindness. Wished and wished I could preach there that the people might see the house once crowded and that the people might know what preaching was. Left Washington 4 o'clock, and reached Pittsfield about sun-set."

On the return trip—"Rode on to Becket. At Washington called on Mr. Steele—see Col Steele—Mrs. Milicken—all overwhelmed with joy to see me. Reached my brother's about dark, fatigued very much overcome with the suffering of my journey. Brother Samuel is coming to preach at Becket. How mysterious the events of Providence! hope he will do good."

The catalog of members continues in some confusion and with increasingly illegible penmanship. From 1823 there is a steady listing, and in 1827 eighteen names were added.

On page 33 of the church record, we come to "Cases of Discipline" wherein husbands and wives were confessing guilt of "bedding together before marriage", probably based upon the arrival of offspring in less than the approved nine months.

"3rd Nov. 1796—It appears that disaffection in the church existed respecting "the Conduct of Ezeckiel Case and Sarah Mattoon in going after the Methodists, that various church meetings were called to consider the matter" but there is no record of its outcome., Five pages are devoted to problems with Mr. Elijah Crane, beginning with the complaint on March 10th, 1803 "which humbly sheweth that the said Elijah Crane not having the fear of God before his eyes has Violated the laws of Christ and given offence to the Christian Brethren in the following particulars, viz

"1st, By making advances toward Mrs. Byxbee's bed manifesting a desire to get into bed with her at a time when Col. Byxbee her husband was absent. This took place at a time when Col. Byxbee's family lived in Mr. Crane's house, and a time when Mr. Crane was building a back lintel to his house.

"2d By endeavoring to vilify the Character of the Rev. William G. Ballantine in the following instances, viz

"1st Saying that the said Wm. G. Ballantine was a dishonest man one instance of the alledged dishonesty was exhibited in a deal respecting a yoke of oxen said Crane Bought of W.G. B. Another instance of alledged dishonesty consisted in refusing to pay Nathaniel Hardy and Samuel Daniels a Contribution which said Wm. G. B. agreed to make to Maj. Stephens for removing a Certain rock out of the road

"2d By declaring that the sd. W.G. B. blasphemed whenever he went into the pulpit.

"3d Repeatedly delcaring that W.G.B. was a damned Fool.

"4th Repeatedly defaming W.G.B. in his own family and before strangers.

"5th by allowing a horse to be brought into his house on Saturday evening of the 12th Dec. last and joining the sport made with the horse while in the house.

"6th By forsaking our worship and following after strange preachers thereby violating his Covenant engagement with this church."

"April 27th, 1803—After the meeting was opened Mrs. Byxbe made the following declaration before the Church viz: That in the year that the meeting house was built & While Mr. Byxbe was gone to New York one Night or toward day some person trod upon her foot as she lay in bed: she perceiving it to be Mr. Crane Called out to him and says Mr. Crane be gone! he said that if she would say no more he would go. That then she got up and called up Mr. Haws and sat up the remainder of the night."

* * * *

"July sixth: Voted 1st to suspend judgment further on the first article in the Complaint and that Mrs. Byxbe be notified that it was the opinion of the Chh her incumbent duty to procure further evidence to support the first article in the Complaint if further evidence was to be had."

There were several other meetings on this matter, and then it was agreed to "call a Council of five Ministers of the Congregational order to Consider of the matter of Complaint against Mr. Crane.—

* * * *

"Sept. 2 . . , 1804: At the appointed time four of the Gentlemen who were Chosen appeared and sat in Council viz—

"The Rev. Thomas Allen of Pittsfield

Rev. Alvin Hyde of Lee

Rev. Jonathan Nash of Middlefield

Rev. Samuel Shepherd of Lenox

"These Gentlemen in the result of their deliberations on the matters which were laid before them say as follows—"The Council are of opinion that the evidence exhibited in support of the first Article of Charge in the Complaint tho it is such as may excite strong suspicions against Mr. Crane Yet is not so clear and full as warrants us to condemn him of Lascivious Conduct. Respecting the 2d article of Charge in the Complaint the council agree that it stands supported and that Mr. Crane from his own Confession before us, has been guilty of Vilifying the Character of Rev. Mr. Ballantine and of wounding the cause of Christ.

"In regard to the 3d Article of Charge the Council are of opinion that Mr Crane was guilty of unchristian Conduct in the affairs which took place at his house on the Saturday evening Specified in the Charge, and that as a friend to the holy sabbath he ought to condemn himself therefor. Respecting his foresaking the worship of God in this place and going after strange preachers as specified in the last Article of Charge his proceedings Notwithstanding all the provokations which he supposes he had, we are Unanimously of opinion were unwise and irregular. The Council then exhort Mr. Crane to review his conduct and to his duty That he may let his light shine before his Brethren and before the world!"

"They furthermore press it as their opinion that if Mr. Crane publicly on the Lords day accede to this result—it will be the duty of this Church to forgive him and to consider all matters specified in the Complaint to be settled.

"As Mr. Crane did not accede to the result at the time specified nor has since done it, He is by the foregoing Resolve of the Church cut off from any special relation to it.

This read publicly

April 14th 1805

William Gay Ballantine, Pastor"

April 29, 1804 there is an account of how Absolam Deming, church scribe, and Reuben Bollis were

charged with intemperance. Both made confessions before the church and were continued as brethren as attested by John Knight, Pastor.

"At a Church Meeting holden July 1st, 1825 the following Request was presented by the Rev. Hempstead with his reasons for making it.

"It is well known that I have long doubted whether it be my duty to Continue any longer my relation with this Church and people which I now sustain—this doubt has been increased since the last town meeting on the Subject Whereas then only 4 voted for my salary for the ensuing Year. Therefore I request that the church agree with me in Calling a Council to advise what is my duty under my present Circumstances and if they think it expedient to dissolve the Connection This request being presented before them they voted unanimously not to grant it."

"At a meeting of the Church holden Feb. 20th, 1826 Deac Eames stated that the town could no longer raise money for the support of the minister and expressing a wish that the Connection be dissolved that they had Chosen a Committee to effect the above purpose."

This Council met and decided to dissolve the agreement between Rev. Hempsted and the Church. Apparently he had been awarded \$500 for settling in the town, and the church argued that some part of this settlement fee be returned because of his comparatively short service. After some argument it was decided to deduct \$51.75 from what was due him.

On the 2nd of October 1826, the Rev. Hempsted was still in town apparently and joined in deciding to call Rev. Caleb Knight to settle with them. Rev. Knight wrote in part, "The sum you have offered as a Salary tho probably as much as you can feel safe to engage at present you all undoubtedly feel is too low to afford me a Comfortable support, but you were encouraged to hope for aid from the Domestic Missionary Society to supply the deficiency—I seem to hear a voice saying this is the way, walk ye in it."

A Council was called and Mr. Knight was installed December 13, 1826.

There was a flurry of new regulations and a sudden surge in church membership.

Nov. 2, 1830 Deacon Eames was delegate to a meeting at Chester called by the Mountain Association where Reuben Tinker was ordained as a Missionary destined to the Sandwich Islands.

On Friday the 13th of April, Brother Simeon Clapp was "called up" on the charge of profanity, which he denied. "After an explanation of the word, profanity by the moderator, the witnesses were called & solemnized.

"A. Wells first witness testified that in answer to a question respecting a pair of cattle Mr. Clapp replied that he might as well undertake to make an Almighty as to tame them & further that if God Almighty's Creation stood between them & hell they would break through & further that the cattle were no more raised in Pittsfield than they were in heaven.

"Mr. Squiers 2d witness deposed that in conversation respecting the steers Mr. Clapp said that hell & damnation could not stop them."

Brother Clapp was found guilty, did not officially repent, and after several meetings and many prayers he was excommunicated.

Then it was the turn (again) of Brother Absalom Deming. On Friday, October 26, 1832 "a Complaint was presented by Deac. Pitts against Brother Absalom Deming for the following faults viz 1st for immoral unchristian conduct committed at the annual Town Meeting in March 1831. 2 for committing an assault on the person of Capt. Phillip Eames on his way home and for making use of unchristian language. 3d For intemperate & immoderate use of ardent spirits and for profaneness committed at different times & places 4th for refusing publicly and at other times to do anything for the support of the Gospel in this Society. The Complaint being read— Voted to adjourn 2 weeks from today."

At a later meeting the 4th article of complaint was struck out, and later meetings were cancelled on account of a funeral, a severe storm, and a couple times by lack of a quorum.

Finally on March 1st, 1833 he read his confession to the congregation, and it is in his own writing, over his large and flourished signature, as follows: "Brothers and Sisters, I acknowledge that I grievously offended in the assault on Capt. Eames in the road from the town meeting, both in the assault & in profane language. I by no means justify myself nor can I say I was wholly free from excitement by ardent spirits—but this I say that I thought myself so when I went from the town meeting—and I freely confess that I may have indulged myself in its use to a dangerous extent at other times & places than I have been aware. But this sin having been so plainly pointed out to me by your faithfulness it shall be my official endeavor to avoid that in the course of this case of Discipline I have spoken hard and offensive things against the officers of the Church I acknowledge of this. I am heartily sorry. I wish to be forgiven & to live with them on amicable & Christian terms. Brothers & Sisters in the

Church I ask your forgiveness for every offence by which I have grieved you. I desire to return to my duty & walk with you in the fellowship of the Gospel. Pray for me, that I may be watchful & faithful & kept by the almighty power of God from again falling into sin. I abhor myself and have no reliance on my own Goodness. To God alone I look for help. May his grace be sufficient for us—his blessing rest upon us—may we love & pray for one another."

On June 16, 1835 an ecclesiastical council met at the house of William Morgan "for the purpose of hearing statements of the circumstances and difficulties of pastor & people" and adjourned to the following day at 7 A.M. "The pastoral relation existing between Rev. Caleb Knight & and the Church & Society be and it hereby is dissolved.

There are several pages about random meetings and discipline against a Dr. Little, apparently for intoxication which he denied, and he was excommunicated.

Rev. Kinsman Atkinson served the Church from May 1840 until April 1842 when another council convened to dismiss Mr. Atkinson from his duties here, with "feelings of fraternal kindness & love",

Next called was Rev. Francis Norwood.

The record is silent for five years when, in his own handwriting, Mr. Norwood copied his communication to the Church as follows:

"September 13, 1851: Gentlemen: It is now five years last spring since I came among you & have labored among you as a minister of Jesus Christ. You were then in a very low and broken state, like a few sheep scattered upon the mountains. Since that time a convenient parsonage house has been erected. The Society has been reorganized, a goodly number have been added to the Church; a new and comfortable house of worship has been completed. And had it not been for a large number of substantial supporters of worship, who left here last season, you would have had strength enough to maintain the gospel independently of foreign aid."

In 1859 there is the notation: The ministry of Rev. M.M. Longley commenced April 1859 by vote of both M.E. & Congl. Societies to become 'Pastor' for one year. Vote passed March 3rd, 1859. Rev. Longley makes a notation that when he became pastor of the Congregational Church there were no male members, and seven females, five of them widows.

Communions were listed as taking place "at Street" or "at City". In 1860 there were a number of admissions—it doesn't specify to which church but presumably the Congregational, including Justin Morgan and his wife Hannah from West Springfield, he descended from the Justin Morgan who started the Morgan breed of horses.

Also admitted were M.M. Longley and his wife from Peru, but to which church? In 1862 there is a notice signed "M.M. Longley, Pastor"

"Nov. 2nd, 1862—Lord's Supper at Street. Brethren L. Crosier, C. Abbot & M. Spring present for last time before leaving us to join army"

March 14, 1863. At a church meeting held at Town House, the Union Society being in session at the same place during the afternoon, there are reports of all sorts of plans for the Union Church, including plans for special instruction "till such time as giving good evidence of being born again" When they may be recommended for membership.

On Dec. 4, 1864, "Voted unanimously the following: The members of the M.E. and Congregational Churches present here tonight, having for nearly five years past walked in union with each other, & believing this is pleasing to Christ & the best way to support the Gospel, are ready to come into one church on a Union plan, with full liberty for Sisters to speak & pray in social meetings, and whatever may be God's will in the future."

A committee was formed to ask Rev. M.M. Longley who had "labored with us in the Gospel ministry for nearly five years" to continue as minister of the new Union Church, and he accepted.

The last page of the membership list seems written under stress of emotion, a hurried scrawl with underlined words and dark, long crossings of "it's", quite unlike other previous writing of Rev. Longley.

"The work of the Congregational Church in aiding to organize the Union Church of Washington and being resolved into the same, was sanctioned by Berkshire North Association and the New Church recognized by a Council to which both Methodist and Congregationalist were invited. See minutes which are back and minutes of Council.

"There ends the history of a church at least 91 years old. If not ended, it assumes a new form.

M.M. Longley
Pastor of the M.E. & Congl. Churches
for more than four years

"Who here leaves on record that Christians of different names can walk as one; & that if this Union fails at all, it fails for want of encouragement, or letting alone of Denominational Leaders, out of the Township.

"Who here records, that it is precious to work for the unity of Christ's flock, even if reproached therefore.

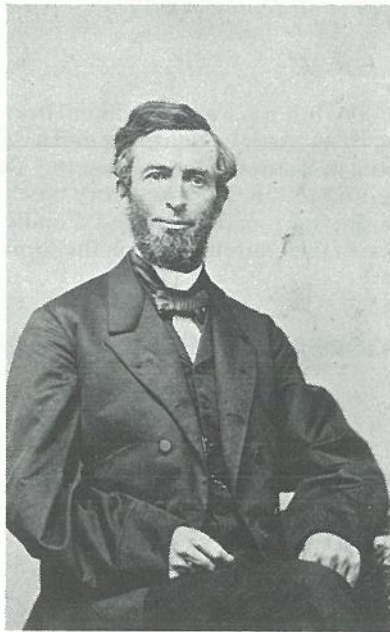
"May CA's last prayer soon be answered.

"That they may be one."

"Feb. 9th, 1865, MML"

The Union Church records show that Rev. Longley was persuaded to withdraw his resignation as pastor of that church, but it is soon recorded that Rev. Longley was elected to the General Court in November, 1865 and was granted a leave of absence to attend.

In 1866, Rev. Longley again submitted his resignation, and this time it was accepted. Rev. Longley, his wife, and his son Lawrence were dismissed from the Union Church at their request, and recommended for admission to the Unitarian Church in Fitchburg, Mass.



Rev. Longley

A letter from Rev. Longley years later,

"Belvidere Boone Co. Ill.
Mch 2, 1899

"Mr. Curtis Messenger

"My dear Brother,

"Do you ever think of your old Pastor, of our Long rides together, one to a wedding in "West Woods" round by Chapel's, long, long. To meetings, one the last "Union" of which Dr. Carhart agreed to report "Union pleasing to God and ought to continue". Draw a veil over what he did. Language fails. Hard to believe of a man, not say a Christian! Even now, I shudder as I think. Near your home snow, water slush in hollow! Do you remember how deep? But we got through though it seemed impossible! Do you remember in that little study? You bowed before God, conferred, gave up, promised to serve. Prayed; After that I laid you in the water, in the name of the F. & S. & Holy Spirit! Do you remember? Were I near I would come with some brethren & break the bread & take of the cup (unfermented) together! I should love to do it. I trust somebody has done it. But it is not necessary to Salvation—"Whoever

confesseth & forsaketh shall find Mercy!" Do you stand fast there? If not let us renew confession and consecration & accepting Christ together to this day. I say "God be merciful to me a sinner"—me, Moses Maynard Longley. Me, me Lord! I will think of you as thus saying, for "Curtis Messenger". I would love to say it with you. Were I sick & live till summer I should be strongly inclined to come to the dear old Hills & see you who are still there & if you are "shut in" we would have the Lord's Supper together! We would. Pray for me. I have been almost laid aside for 3 years. Short breath. Catarrh, Grippe & age 83! And we have a great work, Bro. Pomeroy can tell you. It needs more than we can give of Time, Strength, Money! Only I never know their Homes! & Now worship in S.S. part of new Church Home, left the Dance Hall, the rent 17.00 per month for Sunday and Tues. Eve. Even this part of house not finished outside, but seats 400. Come and see us.

Good Daughter & New Son Fred Jones will give a welcome. Dear wife before me & in two weeks for days too feeble to speak whispering "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms" she went Home to Heaven. One of God's Best. She lived for others. "Little Henry" (I wish his body dear could lie in old Hawley or in Joliet beside dear mother, but it matters not). "Little Henry", for whom you bought that beautiful casket, is with dear wife and two of Laurence children.

Rev 21.24-27 & 22. 11 & 14.—God bids all "come" 22-17

Yours in Christ
M.M. Longley"

The old Congregational Church on the hill top was abandoned because so many of the congregation left for western homes. The building was struck by lightning and a dismal word picture is painted in a later quotation from "Carriage Driving in Western Massachusetts" There is a picture of the building in the Pittsfield Library too dim for reproduction. It looked very much like the old meeting house now standing across the road — a very plain, one storied building. Finally a man who had formerly lived in town gathered up the broken remains of the church and took the lumber to Pittsfield to use in building a six family house there.

"Manual of the Union Church in Washington, Mass., Organized December 23, 1863. "That they all may be one."

ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY

The Congregational Church in Washington, (formerly Hartwood) was organized as early as 1772, and has had the following Pastors:

Rev. William Gay Ballantine from 1774, 46 years

Rev. John A. Hempstead from 1823, 3 years

Rev. Caleb Knight from 1829, 9 years

Rev. Kingman Atkinson from 1840, 2 years

Rev. Francis Norwood from 1846, 5 years. During his Pastorate, a new House of Worship, also a Parsonage, was erected.

Rev. E.L. Clark from 1853, nearly 4 years.

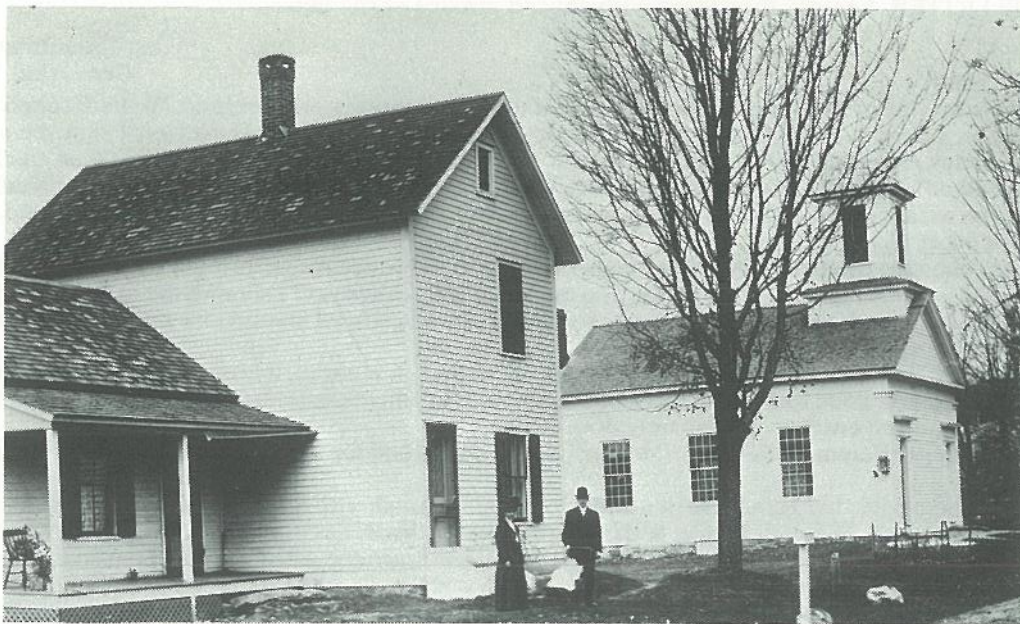
A Methodist Class was formed about 1815, in the east part of the town, also one in the north part in 1831, and a House of Worship built in the valley in 1833 or 34.

A Wesleyan Church was organized in 1844, and the third house of Worship erected. This Church was ere long given up and the House purchased by the Methodists.

Early in 1859, the town having been for some time without regular preaching, the two societies, Methodist and Congregational, both being in a low state, made a union effort, and March 3d, unanimously elected Rev. M.M. Longley "Pastor for one year," the meetings to be held alternately in their respective Houses of Worship. To sustain this movement, "The Washington Union Society" was legally organized June 13th, 1859.

* * * *

"That the council advise, so far as they understand the condition of things in Washington, that the same kind of bond and union be continued, so long as it seems to be the will of Christ.



The church is gone but the parsonage is now the home of the James Poulton family.

Dec. 23, 1863, said council met (only one Methodist minister being present, and he declining any part save in the discussions) and "the Union Church of Washington" was formally recognized as the church of Christ, with as members; 28 Methodist, 37 Congregational, and Rev. M.M. Longley was installed Pastor.

The church was organized, not to divide but to unite and to maintain Gospel Institutions; it was organized with the hope even of a permanent union of Christians in Washington, "believing this is pleasing to Christ and the best way to support the Gospel."

Following are:

"Principles of Organization"

"Articles of Faith"

Covenant"

Rules" including

"12. Those who become members of this church are considered as pledging themselves not to traffic in or use any intoxicating liquor as a drink; but only when needed strictly for medicine.

"13. This church believes the Sabbath to be an institution of Divine appointment, and that the observance of it is essential to the social, civil and religious interests of men, and its members are expected by example and influence to persuade all persons to abstain from worldly business, traveling and amusement, and to attend the public worship of God on that day.

Pastor—M.M. Longley

Deacons—J.M. Chapel, Lewis Crosier."

Occasionally someone finds an old letter that paints a better picture of the time than we can reconstruct from dry records. This one was written to the wife of a minister at the Union Church. It would really have been even better if we had Mrs. Lawrence's answer giving information of the town of Washington as she found it. The parsonage where she must have lived is still on Route 8, and that was near the railroad, post office and other activities of the town.

Copy of note with old letter "On Thanksgiving day 1879 Emma Wilkes married Rev. Alphonso Lawrence. This letter was written by Ella Wilkes (my grandmother). The couple was married in the Wilkes home in West Cummington. Their wedding trip was by horse and sleigh to his new parish in the town of Washington. Uncle Phon, as we called him, was a grand old fellow who lived to be 93 or 94 years old.

Lila T. Sears
Windsor, Mass."

COPY OF LETTER, beautifully written with shaded strokes of the pen.

“West Cummington
Dec. 10th, 1879

My Dear Sister:—

Your welcome letter was received this evening, and its contents eagerly perused. We had looked for a letter before. I went to the P.O. Monday & Tuesday nights, but did not get any letter. I sent you some papers Monday night—I hope you won't get sick over your housework. You must take it as easily as possible and not fuss over it.—Don't you worry about not earning any thing last fall, for we shall get along nicely; we are living on the top shelf, plum pudding, wedding cake, three kinds of pie, and nice roast pork every day.

Was the cake that you carried with you good? How long did your brother remain with you. Have you had good success with your cooking? Have you made any jelly cakes yet? I should like to step in tonight and see what you are doing? I do want to see your little Bennie. How I should love him! Can't you send him to me in a letter.

I visited Mrs. Hawley last week and played upon Mr. Polly's new organ, it is one of the Beatty organ, it is a fine instrument, good tone, has nine stops and a knee swell; a music stool and an instruction book were given, and the entire cost was only \$60.

The Virginia gentleman called here Monday, split some wood for Mother, and then started for the North Pole.

The paper is so poor that I can't use pen and ink & so shall finish with a pencil. I want you should write me about the church, and your house, & the people that you visit. Do you have any company? Are you near a school house? Have you become acquainted with any teachers yet? Mrs. Spencer Tirrell has lost a little girl babe & she is quite low.

Have you become acquainted with many young people? Anything lively going on in Washington? How many houses are there near you?

Mother sends her love and would be delighted to make you a visit and wash your dishes for you, but she dreads to go in the stage & cars, if we could only ride from here direct to your house she would like to go. Mr. Morris returned home last Saturday but Mrs. Morris did not come.

Velpean Wilkes sends his best respects to Bennie Lawrence. Mr. Wilkins is teaching the Winter term No. 6 in Savoy. I want you should write me a long letter soon. Send it to Ashfield, but don't write it when you are tired. I shall go to Aunt Sarah's Friday night, and reach Ashfield Saturday. Please write to Mother as soon as you can for she will be lonesome after I-----(remainder written upside down at the top of the first page) leave. I will close with my love to Brother Alphonso & your self.

From sister Ella “



Installing new bell at church

In the old Congregational record book is the following:

"A Brief History of the Beginning of St. Andrew's Church in the town of Washington."

"On the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1899, the Rev. Wm. C. Hicks, the minister in charge, turned the first sod for the building of St. Andrew's Church in the town of Washington upon the land selected for the purpose on the main road from Becket to Pittsfield. The building which together with the land is the gift of Mr. George F. Crane of New York City is a memorial to Mrs. Crane's parents, the Reverend Andrew Oliver D.D. and Adelaid Imlay his wife. It stands on the site of the house of the Rev. Wm. Gay Ballantine who was minister of the township of Hartwood (now Washington) from 1774—1820, and marks the beginning of the second movement to establish the Episcopal Church in Washington. The first Church St. John's and marks the beginning of the second movement to establish the Episcopal Church in Washington. The first Church St. John's was established with 6 communicants in 1825 under probably a lay Reader and was discontinued in a few years.

"St. Andrew's Church, which is an Early English Gothic Structure is build of field stone after the plans of Mr. George C. Harding of Pittsfield, Mass. The corner stone was laid by the Rev. William H. Vibbert DD, Vicor of Trinity Chapel, New York City on Monday, Sept. 4, 1899, assisted by Rev. Wm. C. Hicks. The following articles were placed in the corner stone. A copy of the Holy Bible and of the prayer Book and Hymnal, a memorial sketch of Rev. Dr. Oliver: The Oliver memorial number of the Seminarian by Rev. Philander K. Cady. A service card of St. Andrew's Church for the first season 1899. A copy of The churchman, a United States half-dollar and one cent piece for 1899, a copy of the Springfield Republican for August 31, 1899 containing a picture and description of St. Andrews, and a copy of the Pittsfield Sun. The Church was consecrated on Friday, June 15, 1900 by the Bishop of Massachusetts, the Rt. Rev. Lawrence D.D. Bishop Lawrence, assisted by Archdeacon Tebbetts celebrated the Holy Communion, and the Rev. Wm. H. Vibbert, D.D. preached the sermon, his text being "This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven." Among the memorials presented with the church are the Alter Cross and Vases given by Wm. H.P. Oliver, the Organ given by F.D. Winslow and the Litany of Mrs. S. J. Whyte. The original Trustees were George F. Crane, Frank D. Winslow, S.J. Whyte (Treasurer) J.B. Colt and George W. Messenger who and their successors, by the deed of gift, hold the property together with the endowment J.B. Colt and George W. Messenger who and their successors, by the deed of gift, hold the property together with the endowment given at the same time by Mr. Crane for the benefit of the Town of Washington under the spiritual direction of the Bishop of the Diocese of that part of Massachusetts in which Washington lies. The above was written by Rev. Charles Smith Lewis, attest John B. Watson, Town Clerk"

Services at St. Andrews were held when the Crane family was in residence at Bucksteep Manor. They had Christmas parties at the church for neighboring children, giving oranges, small gifts, and candy to each child. In the meantime, the horses with their carriages or sleighs were blanketed and tied in the horsesheds that stood across the road from the gateway to Bucksteep.

Eventually, as the Crane children grew up, the need for Bucksteep lessened. Mr. Crane gave it to what became the diocese of Western Massachusetts. For many years it was used as a conference center and summer camp for the Girls Friendly Society, and as such became well known all over New England. Services were held in chapel during the summer months. Then its use was discontinued and all the property stood deserted except that David Watson lived as caretaker in a farmhouse that formerly stood south of the chapel. Occasionally the chapel was opened for a funeral service of some former member, but after Mr. Watson died, and his house was bulldozed down, the property was sold to Judge Rudolph Sacco, with the exception of the chapel. In 1976 the Bishop decided to sell the chapel to a young man to convert into his dwelling; but as the chapel stands on only one-quarter acre of land and the zoning requirement is two acres, this was denied. There the matter stands as we enter 1977.

Newspaper accounts of church activities

"Fred Stone and Miss Grace Chase were married in the St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Sunday morning by the rector, Rev. Mr. Arnold. The bride was gowned in a pretty white muslin dress, white hat and carried bride's roses. The wedding march was by Mrs. George F. Crane of New York. Mr. and Mrs. Stone will reside in one of Mr. Crane's cottages at Washington." (First marriage in the chapel) St. Andrew's July 29, 1903

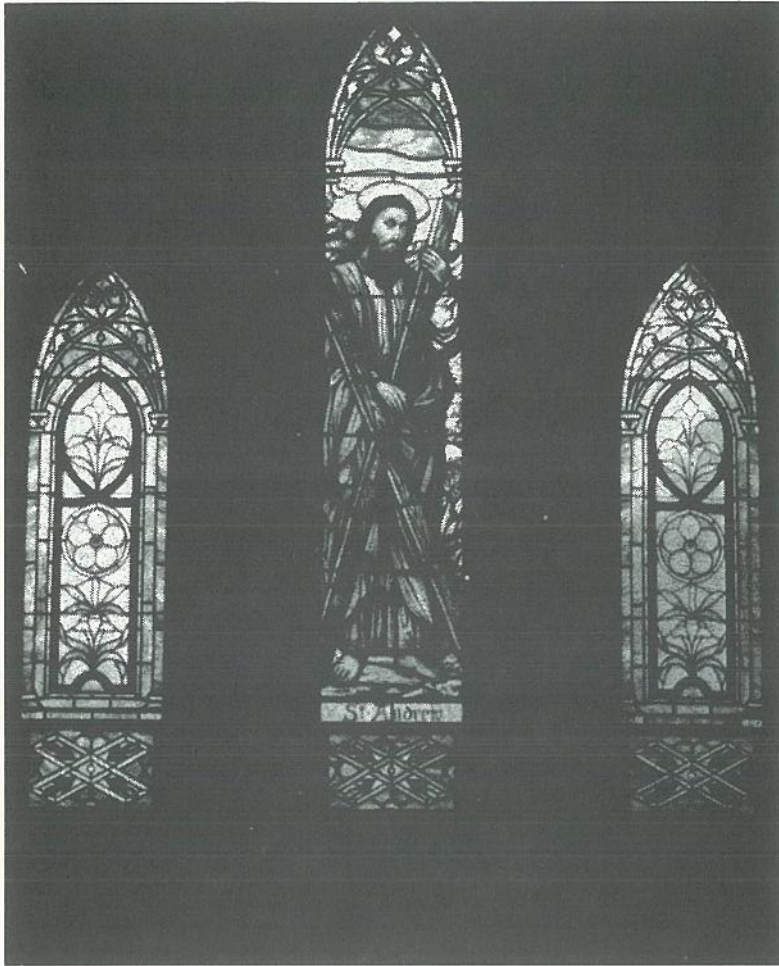
MARRIED IN CHAPEL. The marriage of Miss Agnes Watson, daughter of John R. Watson, to Charles R. Johnson took place at St. Andrews Episcopal chapel in Washington last Wednesday evening, July 28th, at 8 o'clock in the presence of a large number of friends and relatives from that town, Becket, Dalton, Holyoke, Great Barrington and this city. The Rev. Mr. Houghton officiated, the full Episcopal service being used. Mrs. Crane played the wedding march. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion with white carnations, sweet peas, ferns and smilax, the work of artistic friends, the affect being wrought out by a beautiful chandelier, which Mr. Crane presented to the church, this being the first time the church had been used in the evening. John Watson, brother of the bride, was best man, and Miss Jennie Allen of this city was bridesmaid. The bride was attired in white peau de soie with white satin trimmings and wore a veil caught up by carnations and maiden hair fern. She carried a bouquet of carnations and maiden hair ferns. The bridesmaid wore mousseline de soie and also carried carnations. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson held a reception immediately following the ceremony at their future home, "Prospect Place", which adjoins the home of the bride's parents, to which 65 friends and relatives adjourned, where a social evening was held, dancing, varied with songs and recitations, music being furnished by Alexander Allen. They were the recipients of many useful and valuable presents as well as the best wishes of many friends. The young couple is well and favorably known and there is every reason to believe a happy life awaits them. Mr. Johnson is employed on the Crane place. They were presented by Mr. and Mrs. Crane with table linen, also a beautiful sideboard, ornamental lamp. Among the presents deserving special mention is a set of china received as a present by the bride's mother on her wedding day and which originally came from Scotland.

"Bishop Thomas F. Davies had charge of the service at St. Andrews church on Sunday confirming a class of 12 candidates. This was the largest class confirmed at one time in St. Andrew's for many years. The spiritual influence of Wolcott Coil Treat who has had charge of the little church during the summer months is being felt in this vicinity. Mr. Treat has taken a great interest in his parish and is well liked by his people. Mr. Treat will be in charge of the service. There will be choir rehearsal Friday evening at 8 o'clock.

"The list of candidates confirmed by Bishop Davies on Sunday includes Mr. and Mrs. E. Wood, Frank Wood, Mrs. C.E. Anderson, Miss Doris Anderson, Chauncey Corey, Frebon Corey, Miss Ruth Corey, Miss Alma Corey, L.E. Stone, Murray Stone and Harold Horne."



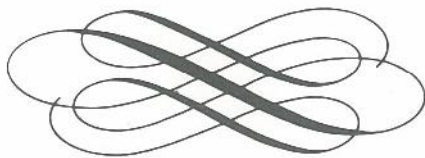
Congregation at St. Andrew's, August 11, 1912



Picture of stained glass windows in St. Andrew's Chapel



First choir at St. Andrew's, about 1900: Dick Messenger, Fred Stone, Mrs. White, Mrs. Crane, Charles Johnson, Mrs. Lewis, Grace Stone, May Sanders Watson, and Agnes Watson Johnson



Cemeteries



TOWN CEMETERIES

There are four cemeteries in town and they were surveyed and mapped in 1975, but many graves were unrecognizable. The West Branch Road Cemetery (called the Chapel Cemetery in some old records) has been nearly destroyed by vandalism by groups partying there in seclusion. The cemetery around the old town hall needs expensive and extensive repairs as the stones succumb to the weather. The Stonehouse Road cemetery is in fairly good condition. Almost no one knows of the little Kent cemetery off by itself near the Middlefield line.

Mr. Crane explains that in the earliest days a spot was usually selected in close proximity to the church which was across the road from where the old town hall now stands. The soil there was so thin above the rocks that they soon moved the graves to their present location, having bought and fenced this cemetery around 1805.

The Stonehouse cemetery was bought in April 1805 when Anthony Eames was paid six dollars and sixty seven cents in full compensation for this land out of the town treasury. Then Anthony Eames was one of the first to be buried there where his old gravestone still stands.



Eames monument

However, since Mr. Eames' death was on a public highway, the town followed an old English custom by erecting a suitable monument for this first traffic death which occurred in 1808 between the present Poland home and Elliot's. Anthony Eames, one of the earliest settlers, was taking a sleigh load of handmade shingles to Hartford, but the load overturned and he was instantly killed on February 24, 1808, "in the 55th year of his age." A suitable white marble monument was erected at the spot beside the little dirt road with this inscription:

"Death like an everflowing stream
Sweeps us away; our life's a dream,
An empty tale, a morning flower,
Cut down and withered in an hour."

This monument stood beside the road from the Town Hall to the village of Becket for almost a century, frequently scaring horses into running away with more or less disastrous results, horses considering anything standing white and still on the roadside an object of great concern and a just excuse for excitement.

About 1900 some juvenile delinquents of the day took drastic action. They blew up the monument with a big charge of dynamite, the foundation stones were thrown apart and the monument disappeared for years and was eventually forgotten.

Around 1940, some summer people who lived in the old Watson house across from the Vagabond bar moved away and were forgotten. Then, some years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Eames in Becket received a telephone call saying these people were moving again (this time away from Westfield) and that their conscience made them look in the local telephone book for the name "Eames" to report that they had found the monument in their Washington house basement, had taken it to Westfield to use as a garden seat, and now wanted to return it to any interested local person. Stuart and Josephine Eames were real sports! They went to Westfield, found the old Eames monument, and somehow shoved and pushed this three hundred pounds of marble into the rear trunk of their car and brought it to Becket. When they learned its history, they offered it to Washington as an historical monument, and it was put in the old Town Hall. However, it is crumbling away at an accelerating rate and soon the inscription will be totally unreadable.



William Chapel Monument

There was at least one other local roadside monument near Ashley Lake which said, "Stephen Chapel, son of William Chapel was instantly killed by a fall from a horse at this place, September 6, 1813, aged 18 years.

"This dark event contains the truth,
In middle age and blooming youth
You must your active limbs resign,
And be a mouldering Corpse like mine."

This monument was on the road on Washington Mountain formerly known as Monument Road, which led down October Mountain into Lenoxdale. It is now the property of Pittsfield Watershed, and it is said that hunters were using the monument for target practice, so the Pittsfield caretakers eventually loaded it on a pick-up truck and took it away to an unknown destination.

Mr. John Crane made a survey of two of the cemeteries sixty years ago when undoubtedly they were in much better condition. He copied interesting epitaphs as follows:

Town Hall cemetery

Dear lady do not in your beauty trust,
The brightest steel is eaten up with rust,
The fairest flower through time will fade away,
And you so handsome must return to clay.

One man who had had several wives had their graves marked with marble slabs standing side by side, and on the last one was this tribute to woman:

What highest prize has woman won
In science or in art,
What slightest work by woman done
Boasts city, field or mart?

The oldest stone in the cemetery is that for Robert McKnight who died April 27, 1776, aged 76. Mary Ann, his widow, died Jan. 22, 1801, aged 100 years and 10 months, the longest lived of any person in Washington.

Why should we mourn departing friends
Or shake at Death's alarms
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call his children to his arms.

Mr. Wilson died 1779, aged 93 years.

I'd leap at once my 90 years
I'd rush into his arms
And lose my breath and all my cares
Amidst those heavenly charms
Joyful I'd lay this body down
And leave this lifeless clay
Without a sigh, without a groan
And stretch and soar away

A tall white stone right behind the town hall commemorates the town's first resident minister. It says:

Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Wm. G. Ballantine,
first minister of this town. Deceased Nov. 30,
1820, in the 70th year of his age, and 47th of
his ministry.

The remembrance of the just is Blessed.
Learned and pious, the affectionate Pastor and
firm defender of the faith, delivered to the
saints. A strong light in the kingdom of our
Lord. Resting in many hopes of a blessed immortality.

Anne, widow of Wm. G. Ballantine died Feb. 23rd, 1842, aged 80.

Benoni Messenger, died 1809, aged 92 years.

He leaves 5 children, 49 grandchildren, 92 great-grandchildren and 11 of the 5th generation.

Dolly, T.T.

Stop my friends and take another view
The dust that molders here
Was once beloved like you
No longer than on future time rely
Improve the present and prepare to die.

Charles E. Son of Peleg and Annie Bronson, Aug. 10, 1850, 3 mos.
When God selects the victim
He ne'er witholds the blow
Though our hearts with anguish bleed
Or tears in torrents flow.

Harriet Danks 1810. Also 3 infants
Life like a morn glows, then flees away
Man's frail existence seems but a day.

John S. Lawrence 1872, aged 84
A most honest, worthy pious man.

Little Henry went home Sept. 20th, 1861, aged 2½ years.
Son of Rev. M.M. Longley

Lester Haskell died 1819 aged 74, Hinsdale
He has gone to the upper blue
Where he is free from care and blame
For he was to our Savior true
And never was profane.

Ezra Pole died 1843 aged 86, Hinsdale
Suppress your grief, dry up your tears
His dust must rest till Christ appears
My friend be still and eye the rod
And know the hand that strikes was God's.

Sally, Wife of George Smith died Sept. 4th, 1795, aged 26
This body must now turn to dust
And there it shall remain
Till God shall call and wake it up
Where 'twill in glory reign.

In memory of Mrs. Mary Ann Miliken, who departed this life May 10th, 1813 in the 81st year of her age.
Tired with the sorrows and common cares
A tedious train four score years
The prisoner smiled to be released
She felt her fetters loosened and
mounted to her rest.

Elizabeth wife of Alonzo B. Messenger, died Jan. 6th, 1853, aged 37 years.
Dear E. when months and years have flown
And I am far from thee
Read this; as not from one unknown
But read and think of me

Samuel Brooker died Nov. 8th, 1845, aged 87 years and 25 days. Polly his wife died Sept. 9th, 1858, aged 78 years 3 mos.

Zenas Noble died Feb. 25th, 1813, aged 70

Jonathan Chapel died Aug. 22, 1825, aged 80.

Chapel Cemetery

Cobb Codding, died Nov. 14, 1845, aged 77

Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him
Who will say unto him, what doest thou.

Philena, wife of Cobb Codding, died June 21, 1854, aged 86.

Jonathan Chapel, died Nov. 18, 1852, aged 77

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

Martha, wife of Jonathan Chapel, died Aug. 10, 1851, aged 52.

Rest dear wife, rest from care
From sin and toil and every snare.

Miss Persis Chapel, daughter of Jonathan and Martha Chapel, in the 22d year of her age.

Patty, wife of Ira Higgins, died Aug. 30, 1850, age 30

John 11:26

Jasper E. son of Otis and Ruth Sparks, died Jan. 8, 1811, age 22.

Ruth N., daughter of Steros and Lorinda Sparks, died Dec. 21, 1842.

Here lies our little child within
Free from sorrow and from sin
Lent to us for months and hours
Then cut down like all the flowers

Mr. Daniel Sanger, died Sept. 26, 1844, aged 84

But now his suffering all is o'er
His enemies may rage no more
Eternal rest he sure shall have
Alas he molders in the grave

Allen P., son of Allen C. and Nancy French, died Sept. 9, 1861, aged 17 years and 6 mos.

Farewell dear father and my brothers
Death has called me although I am young

Russell, died Apr. 2, 1843, aged 8 months

Martin A.C., Feb. 11, 1841, aged 2 months, sons of Allen C. and Nancy French

Dear Parents from you Christ has took us
For he thought it to be best
We hope in heaven you will serve to meet us
And live with us among the blest.

Allen P. French, born July 6, 1816, died Mch. 6, 1830, At rest.

Matilda, wife of Azariah Sanger, died Apr. 12, 1851.

She lives in hearts that keep her image there
She lives in heaven released from every care.

Irving, son of Edward and Anna Wright, died Oct. 11, 1849 aged 13 yrs. 11 mo.

Farewell dear friends I must be gone
I can no longer stay with you
My Savior calls and I must go
And leave all earthly things below.

Harriet S., daughter of Edward and Anna Wright, died May 29, 1849, aged 7 years and 2 mos.
My parents dear adieu, adieu,
Sister a long farewell to you
Farewell my brothers one, two, three
Prepare to die and follow me.

Emily G., wife of David P. Ingalls, died Nov. 18, 1850, aged 21
Them also which sleep in Jesus
Will God bring with him.

Benjamin Porter, died Sept. 23, 1857, aged 55 years.
Adaline, wife of Benjamin Porter, died Feb. 20, 1843, age 29 years, 2 mos.
Many days of life have swiftly past
The appointed hour has come
Now I bid my friends farewell
And dwell with Christ above.

Isaac Nelson Barnum, died Nov. 24, 1856, aged 46 years.
Farewell my wife and children dear
Prepare for death while I sleep here
Could you but know as much as I
How soon you would prepare to die.
Friends nor physicians could not save
This mortal body from the grave
Nor can the grave confine it here
When Christ commands it to appear.

Katherine A. Pease, wife of Oliver Pease, died June 1, 1841, aged 56 years.
Dearest mother thou hast left us
Here thy loss we deeply feel
But 'tis God who hast bereft us
Each and all our sorrow heal.

Lucinda Pease, died Jan. 19, 1863, aged 52
Through life in virtuous paths she trod
In death her hope was placed in God.

Death was a constant caller in early days when modern medicine was unknown, before anyone knew of bacteria or virus infections, and people died of illnesses that today would easily yield to treatment. People lived by their own resources, were sick at home, and died at home in the normal course of events. Even people unfortunate enough to have strokes or other debilitating sickness had to be cared for in the home. Sometimes it was necessary to put the helpless person in a grown-up sized wooden cradle, near the hearth. Can you imagine the plight of the busy housewife with perhaps a baby in a cradle on one side of the fireplace and an old grandparent in a large wooden cradle on the other? It is just hard to see how anyone could cope with such a situation.

Funerals were almost always held at home until fifty years ago or so. When a person died, friends or neighbors came to "lay out" the body. In earliest times, coffins were homemade of planks—every man was a handyman and could hurriedly put together a suitable one. (At least one man my grandfather knew about had his coffin made while he was relatively young, and he kept it with him wherever he moved, usually putting it under his bed and making it utilitarian by storing his beans and other seeds in it.)

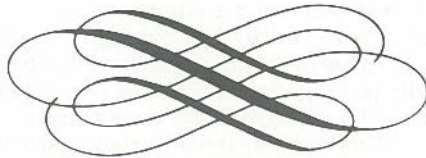
The minister came to the home to preach the funeral service. Then chosen men nailed the cover on the coffin, shouldered it and slowly marched out the door. After the earliest primitive cabins, every house had a side door leading from the parlor so that a coffin could be easily taken out. That is why these doors were called "coffin Doors". As old homes went through various stages of modernization,

most of these doors were eliminated. The burial might be in a private family plot right on the farm. Or the coffin might be taken by horse and wagon to one of the town cemeteries, or shipped by freight to some distant family lot. As families left for new regions, they often decided to clear out the family plot by removing their loved ones to the town cemeteries. Many bought lots in North Becket, Hinsdale, or New Lenox for the same purpose.

Sometimes the weather was too harsh for burial in the proper place, and a temporary grave was dug under a nearby apple tree or elsewhere near the house to wait for spring and good weather. One of the saddest stories is of a family in town who lost two children within a couple hours. There was a raging blizzard that lasted for several days, so the sorrowing parents laid out the little bodies near a window in a north bedroom and opened the windows so that they would freeze until the storm subsided and the roads were opened. Later it was learned that this was not uncommon throughout the area.



At old Town Hall



The Early Years



The town of Hartwood wished to be incorporated and made application to the General Court, which at the same time was trying to set the boundaries for the proposed town of Lee, taking parts from Great Barrington, Hartwood and various provincial grants. Most of the land being annexed by Lee still belonged to the Hartwood proprietors, and there was great confusion over tax assessments. Some of the Hartwood people wanted to belong to Lee because they thought they were too far from the Hartwood meeting house and that the steep mountain would not easily yield to having a safe road made up its incline.

All in all, these were busy and exciting years, with men sent to Boston to bring about incorporation of Hartwood, men in violent disagreement about losing part of the town's land to Lee, and the over-riding concern of the Revolution, with men from this town taking part in the County Conventions which preceded the War; and most important of all they were just in the beginning of their tremendous job of subduing the wilderness and trying to build shelters for their families and to bring land into cultivation so that they could support them.

The petition for incorporation was in part as follows:

"To His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson Esqr. Capt'n General and Commander in Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, to the Honorable his Majesty's Council and House of Representatives in General Court Assembled May the 25th 1774.

The petition of the Inhabitants of the Township of Hartwood So Colled in the County of Berkshire Humbly Sheweth-

That they Labour under Great Inconveniency in their Preasent Scituation Having No Power to Call and Settle a Minister Lay out and Establish Roads & Build Bridges in sd Township and Many Other Deficultys your Petitioners Labour under By Reason of their Not Being Incorporated Wee therefore Most Humbly Pray your Excellency and Honrs to Incorporate Sd Township into a Town, Invested with all the Powers Priviledges and Immunitys that Towns in this Province by Law Injoy.

The petition was granted April 12, 1777. We emerged with a new name, Washington, in honor of George Washington who at that time was far from having won the Revolution. No one has found a word of explanation for the change of name.

October 21, 1777 a part of Washington was included in the new town of Lee. March 12, 1783, a part of Washington was included in the new town of Middlefield. January 30, 1795, a part of Washington was annexed to Lenox. February 18, 1802, another part of Washington was annexed to Lenox.

It is puzzling to know what the very earliest settlers ate when they got here with such small loads as could be carried in person or on a pack animal. Apparently they depended to a large extent on corn meal - mixed with cold water to a gruel when not making a fire, and cooked with water and perhaps molasses or maple sugar for a gourmet treat. They also followed the Indian's example by eating ground nuts and other native plants in season. There is one account to show how differently they ate in a little story about a pioneer family getting their first milch cow. They hadn't had milk for a long time. They didn't have any bread to eat with it, so the children rushed around gathering a supply of clover blossoms to eat with their milk.

Once more the work of settling the town went on but there were so many settling lots that were useless for farming even after the backbreaking work of cutting the trees and making the stonewall boundary lines. People started to leave believing that it was hopeless here.

A handmade book, beautifully written, gives the tax list of 1803, the oldest we can find. Anthony Eames can be the example of listing "No. of polls - 3, poll tax \$1.26, real estate tax \$2.34, personal tax and income \$2.10, total \$5.70". Non-residents were identified by lot number; but the residents are in alphabetical order with no indication of the original lot number, number of acres, or location in the town.

By 1828 Mr. Chapel had a cidermill listed. It is a little surprising that apple trees could mature and produce sufficient apples for cider in such a comparatively short time. Cider was a main staple from then on, every farmer putting one or more barrels in his cellar and drinking it off in various stages of fermentation, and of course they learned how to make vinegar for pickling and such purposes. Again the list is very vague, but it does give the number of acres taxed. These old records are full of mysteries. For instance, Amherst Institution is listed as a non-resident owner of 50 acres. And in 1828 the Rev. Ballantine's son paid the highest tax in town of \$12.35.

The fact that each settler was required to seed new land which was not plowed for other crops to English grass probably accounts for the fact that most of best loved and most widespread wild flowers were inadvertently planted with the grass seed. Our fields and roadsides would lose most of their

beauty if we eliminated these alien flowers: daisies, dandelions, black mustard, red clover, white clover, Bouncing Bet, wild carrot, spearmint, peppermint, mullein, butter-and-eggs, buttercup, teasel, chicory and many others.

The settlers brought cherished plants, such as the lilacs that still fight for life in the new growth of timber around old cellar holes. The new forests find it hard to eliminate apple trees and their seedlings which give positive proof that the area was cleared at some time long ago and the original apple trees planted. Over back near the State Forest is mute evidence of a former home and clearing - the stoned up well covered with a flat rock, the apple trees reaching for light through the encroaching forest trees, and most thought-provoking of all the rose that struggled to live for almost a hundred years after being abandoned. Finally, as the clump got smaller and smaller, a hunter who had watched it for many years dug up what remained and it is now flourishing around another old house. It is not an ordinary wild rose, so where did it come from? Who brought it to Washington? It is plain why the people left, for the area there is swampy, in the shadow of the hills, and obviously no place to earn a living farming.

Lumbering has always played a large part in Washington affairs, from the early original clearing when beams and sills were shaped by hand and pit sawmills made the boards, through the era of saw mills located on brooks for waterpower, through the period of providing vast quantities of wood for the railroad during its era of woodburning locomotives, and when charcoal was produced in quantity for Richmond Iron Works and early glass making.

When these outlets became obsolete, private sawmills were moved into likely locations as farmers sold their standing timber to lumber dealers. Men, horses and equipment were moved in to cut the trees and process them into boards which were drawn out to the headquarters of the owner of the operation. When the useful trees were all gone, the men and their equipment moved out, leaving enormous piles of sawdust and slabs behind to be overgrown gradually by new young forests. Perhaps after sixty years or more, the whole operation could be performed again. By contrast, today the standing trees are usually marked for improvement cutting, sold to the highest bidder, and power saws take down and trim the trees, tractors haul the logs to be loaded on great trucks, and the logs are taken to the sawmill of the buyer.

In spite of all the attacks upon the original forest, the area is now almost all forested. Only the slowly tumbling stone walls indicate to one walking through the woods that so many years ago hopeful settlers marked their boundaries and their pastures, fields and home lots with these evidences of tremendous work and hope. Stop sometime near one of these walls and think how you would face the task with your bare hands, levers and perhaps a team of oxen. Don't just take them for granted as something that grew there. In some other areas, the rocks were taken off the fields and just roughly thrown in long ridges. Here they are beautifully fitted and laid with skill.

The long beautiful stone walls put up at one of the original lots of the first division of land show the owner's high hope and ambition. This particular land was unusually good and supported an active farm longer than many others, with relatively large fields, good springs and sunny location. At the turn of the century the large home served as a summer boarding house. It is said that Alexander Graham Bell stayed there at least one summer. The farm eventually became a losing proposition through no fault of the hard-working farmer, and summer boarding at farm homes became unfashionable, so at long last even this place was allowed to revert to woodland.

The oldest houses in town have witnessed it all, and in themselves are proof of how comparatively young the country really is. Wooden houses are obviously transient objects, but during their existence they saw the United States born two hundred years ago.

Exerpts from the First Clerk's Book

March 8, 1778 "Voted that those Cattle Brought out of Other Towns in this Town to take the Privilege of the Woods Shall be Taken up and Pounded till Damages Shall be Paid as Damages assessed. Voted that their shall be a Pound Erected at the Corner of the Meetinghouse. Voted that Elijah Crain be Pound Keeper." For years there was lively complaint that animals from other towns were deliberately put on Washington's common. Only one old map shows such a common and it was toward the Becket end of the present Lovers Lane Road. Making cleared fields and open pastures was long, slow work so animals were allowed to run loose on the common and through the woods with certain restrictions. Hogs had to be ringed and yolked, rams weren't permitted during the breeding season, stallions or horses of known bad disposition were to be kept home, and through the years pounds were put in all

parts of the town. The first one, though, can still be seen on Mr. Keabian's property, on the right side of the road going toward Pittsfield.

To identify owners of animals, each farmer was given ear markings, and these markings are shown in a book of mixed records, such as cutting off the tip of one ear and making certain slits or cuts in the other.

The Clerk's book only hints at what was important in the town at any given time, but some items are different enough to warrant copying.

Nov., 11, 1778 "Voted that Doc. Baker may set up an Innoekulation for Small Pox at ye house of Mr. Arnold's"

June 26, 1779 "Voted for a New Constitution & Bill of Rights Eunanimosly. Voted Six Dollars a Day for working on ye Rodes." (This shows that the inflation of currency was at a high point.)

October ye 28th 1779 "Voted to raise three hundred Pounds to Procure eleven suits of clothes for the Continental Army, the remainder to be Paid into ye Town Treasury and if any man bring in any Clothing Shall have 30 dollars per shoes 30 dollars per shirt, 20 dollars per stockings."

January 11, 1779 "Voted Capt. George Sloan to Join the Convention at Pittsfield. Voted that the Town of Washington Join the Towns of Stockbridge and Great Barrington Concerning the Township of Lee which was made of the three sd Towns Referring a Petitioning to the General Assembly for a Settlement Before the Incorporation of sd. Town of Lee the Reson of their not Complying with the Order of the Court."

April 24, 1780 "Voted that the Selectmen Should have the Care of the Tory Lands." Not listed. "Voted that there Be A comt. for to Replace the Meetinghouse". May 22, 1780 "Voted to pay the Wid. Abigail Messenger 120 pounds 18 S wich was for the necessary expence We Were at in moving the Meetinghouse." "Voted that Lt. Danl. Foot & John Morse Underpin the Meetinghouse According to the agreement Made With the Comtee." There is no explanation of what this was all about, but proves that buildings were moved about quite easily.

May 29, 1780 "Voted that they Approve of the Comtee. Report Respecting the Constitution." "Voted that the Money given as an incouragement to the Six Months Men Shall be Raised in proportion to Service Done."

"Voted that the Money paid by the Selectmen the year 1780 be refunded to them together With Depreciation of it forty to one." "Voted the men Drafted for the six month Shall if they serve out their time Be intitled to a premium of twelve pounds in gold or silver or an equivalent in produce or other Money."

Oct. 3, 1780 "Voted to Raise the Sum of Twelve Hundred pounds for Purchasing of Clothing for the Soldiers. Voted to Raise four Hundred pounds in addition to the Clothes for Defraying the town Charges or the Expenses of the Claims the Summer past. Voted to Raise or assess the Sum of Ninty pounds in this New States Money or Old Continental money at Forty for one for the two years Salary for the Rev. Wm. Ballentine."

Oct. 19, 1780. "Voted to raise four thousand pounds to procure Beef by order of Genl. Cort."

Dec. 22, 1780 "Voted to Raise four Men for the Continental Service for three years or During the War." "Voted to class the Town into Classes and each Shall procure one Man at the Cheapest Rate and the Cost of Each Class Shall be averaged according to Interest upon the Town and if any Class cannot procure Sd Man the Cost of the man Deficient Shall Be Paid by the Town."

March 12, 1781 "That Whereas James McKnight has been by particular persons accused of Being five Hundred pounds Dammage to this Town that He is acquit from that Charge in Publick Town Meeting." To this day, town officials are accused of various misdeameanors, but perhaps this is the only time that public apology is recorded. Also "voted that person Shall have five Shillings Per Day for Every Day he Shall Work and for a yoke of oxen two and Six pence in Silver Money or other Money Equivalent." And "Voted that We Will at this time have our Freemason Meeting".

April 2, 1781 was the election for governor, Lieut. Governor and Senator. John Hancock was candidate for governor.

July 16, 1781 "Voted a Bounty of three pounds Hard Money to Each three-Month Man per Month."

Dec. 2, 1781 "Voted Universally to Send a Memorial to General Court praying that Honourable Body to Repeal that Vote Called the Excize Bill it appearing to be very grievous to us."

March 11, 1782 "Voted Capt. Ebenezer Merry as A Delligate to join the County Convention at Pittsfield."

March 19, 1782 "Voted that the Collectorship Should be Set up at Venue to the Lowest Bidder he to Procure Good and Sufficient Bonds to the Selectmen - Accordingly the Collectorship was Bid of by Hoven Sherman at one Per Cent. Chosen and Sworn as Collector." "Voted for Dear Reavs John Morse, John Phelps and Simeon Babcock". (These men probably assessed damage done by deer.) "Voted to allow Capt. Merry and Azariah Ashley the Privilege of Building a Pew the South Side of the Great Doors to be subject to be Removed When other Pews are Erected and they are to be allowed the Cost of Building there PewVoted to allow the Same Privilege to any other Person in town."

April 2, 1782 "Voted to take this Method to Raise the Continental Soldier Sent for by General Court by Setting it up at Vendue to the Lowest Bidder on Certain Conditions that is if he pass muster then to receive his pay. Voted to Raise the Sum of fifty five L 18 S to pay the above Soldier and a further Sum Sufficient to Defray all necessary Charges in Gitting Sd man mustered."

May 16, 1782 "Voted that the Cost of the Horses Purchased in the year 1780 shall be assessed on the Inhabitants and nonresident Proprietors Lands and Paid out of the Bills of Abatement."

June 20, 1782 "Voted Mr. John Lankton to be Master Workman to build a Bridge over the River from Washington to Lenox. Voted to allow Mr. Lankton six Shillings per day for work Done before haying and five Shillings for his men and 5 shillings for Sd Lankton per Day after haying & 4 shillings for his men per day. Voted that Mr. Lankton Call on the Selectmen for a sufficient Quantity of Rhum to carry on sd work and they to purchase sd Rhum as cheap as they Can and the Cost Shall bee allowed."

"Voted to allow to Mssrs Lankton and Chaplin Collectors for the Year 1781 the Sum of 32 L 4 pence for taxes that was assessed on the Tory Lands in this town in the year 1781."

December 24, 1782 "Voted that the present Selectmen of this town shall have sufficient power and authority to Call Mr. Phineas Easton to an account and Settlement for the fifteen hundred and twelve pounds and proceed with him according to Law & to carry on a process in Law if they Shall Judge it Expedient on Behalf of the town. Voted that the Selectmen make a Demand on Mr. Easton for one Casement of Sash of glass and the Door tackling and if not returned to Enter a process against him therefor."

"Voted to Leese out the Minestry and School Land in this town for the term of Nine hundred and Ninety Nine years . . . Voted to Chose a Committee of three persons to Dispos of the above sd. Lands under Certain Restrictions.

"Voted that Forty Shillings be paid out of the Town Treasury for Each Wolfkilled by any inhabitant of this town they producing the Ear and Scalp to the Selectmen according to law. "Voted that Every Inhabitant of this town having a creature Die by the Bite of a Mad Dog shall Bury it within two hours after his Death or Shall be Subject to pay a fine of five pounds to be Recorded by an action of Dept. Voted that Every Dog that is Seen to Run at Large that it Shall be Lawful for any person to kill him within six weeks from this day."

March 10, 1783 "Voted to raise the sum of forty pounds to maintain a Grammar School in this town. Voted to Chuse a Committee of five persons to Divide the town into four Districts and Each District to have the proportion of the Sum according to the List and the Sum they have to pay."

May 12, 1783 "Voted and allowed to Lt. Sipehus Spencer the Sum of 13 Shillings for service due as a Constable to warning old Mr. Shered and Reuben Lewis out of town, and in carrying a woman and Child to Pittsfield."

July 12, 1784 "Voted that Azariah Ashley Shall have Liberty to take what old Continental Money that belongs to the town he being accountable to the town at the Discount of one hundred and twenty for one if he Can Make it Answer him at that Lay."

Dec. 24, 1787 "Voted to Chuse a Committee of five men to Peruse the Constitution and state their objections against the sd Constitution."

March 10, 1788 "Voted the Select Men Procure a Berring Cloath upon the Town's cost."

April 7, 1788 Neat saleable cattle or grain to be used to pay taxes.

May 12, 1788 "Voted that the Select Men Shall furnish the town with a Stock of Powder and Led according as the law directs."

Dec. 10, 1788 was held the election for a representative to Congress, and for electors to elect the President and vice-president "agreeably to the Constitution".

The only official indication of Shay's Rebellion is on April 6th, 1789 when Anthony Eames and Mark Eames, who had been elected to town office, refused to take the oath of allegiance and were forced to give up their offices and be replaced by other men. Also the tax collector agreed "to receive of the

Inhabitants in Discharge of said taxes Good Merchantable Beef Pork and Good Saleable Neat Cattle wheat Ry Indian Corn Peas or oats Provided that the article or any of them are delivered to him at his dwelling house at Least two month before the time that is Set in the warrant for him to pay the same to their State or County Treasury and the Said articles are to be at the Common market price given by Messrs. Larned & H. Danforth Merchants in Pittsfield."

May 11, 1789 there were more rules about damage of property by animals running loose upon the common and through the woods.

"Voted that all Horse Kind Except Seed Horses that are more than one year old may Run on the Commons with out being fettered or Hampered Provided they Belong to any of the Inhabitants of Said Town and if any of the Inhabitants of Said town having a horse or horse kind that Shall be known to be unruly and shall Presume to Let the Said Horse Runn at Liberty on the Common and he Shall do any damage or shall be taken with other horses which are known to be orderly the owner of that horse Shall be subject to make all Damages good to the person so suffering the damages."

May 10, 1790 was all about highways. It might be interesting to know where they were located but the only clues are such as "thence W 32° south 16 Rod to a Beach tree marked by a Rock," etc.

An interesting reminder of early times is a collection of original tax bills and receipts, all written on small scraps of paper. There are all on Lot 44 of the Second Division, a piece of property now in the October Mountain State Forest. Some of the oldest tax books list the names of property owners over and over again as they figure separately the State tax, school tax, town tax, minister tax, county tax, meeting house and Highway tax. Citizens were permitted to work out their highway taxes, usually on the road nearest to their homes.

Taxes on Lot No 44 in the
Second Division of - it in Weymouth
for the year 1792

Town tax	0.0.6.3
minister	0.2.2.3
County tax	0.0.4.0
School tax	0.0.10.0
<hr/>	
for the year 1798	
State tax	0.0.10.0
School tax	0.1.1.2
Town tax	0.2.5.3
minister tax	0.2.0.0
State meeting	0.0.8.1
County tax	0.0.5.0
meeting house	0.3.10.2
Highway tax	0.2.9.0
<hr/>	
18:1:2	

Mr Hooker paid the highway tax for 1792 at Lenox

Old tax bill, dated 1792.

Mr Hooker Sir please to send the money by the bearer the post for the the taxes on the above mentioned Lot and you will oblig me
Gideon Bush collector

June 12, 1794. "Voted to choose a committee of three persons for the purpose of taking suitable measures to prevent the spreading of the small pox lately breaking out in said town." "Voted that North District on the County Road shall have the privilege of taking the old School House in said District for the purpose of Erecting a New One."

May 6, 1795 "Voted not to have any of the inhabitants set off to Middlefield."

Sept. 7, 1795 "Voted to raise the sum of Sixty pounds for purpose of plastering and painting the Meeting House." Previously there had been much discussion through various town meetings asking why the building wasn't finished according to contract, raising money for furnishing the meeting house, so plastering and painting should be the final work.

Sept. 5, 1796. "Voted to Raise the sum of Seventy Dollars in addition to the sallery of the Rev. William Gay Ballentine for the purpos of Making up Differences that may happen by Different Denominations."

All these years the selectmen have also been serving as assessors.

March 12, 1798 "Voted that the Collectorship be set up at vendue and proceed as has been the practice in years past and the Collectorship was struck off to William Congden for nothing."

"Voted to adopt the System Reported by the Committee Chosen to form a System to accommodate the Several Denominations in Supporting Public Teachers of Piety and Morality. Each Denomination to Chuse one of their own Sect to act as agent for the rest and the agent so Chosen to exhibit a List of the Names of his sect to the Selectmen and a Certificate from their Teacher that each person named in the List does actually attend his meetings and Contribute to his support.

"And it shall be the duty of the Selectmen to Issue an order to each agent on the Collectors for so much as their Respective Sects proportion of the grant shall be and the agent Receiving Such an order Shall therewith pay the said Tax to the Collector in behalf of his Constituents Provided nevertheless that such enrollment and Certificate be considered and understood as a full and Complete quit claim to the privilege of a Seat in the meeting house..'

"Voted to allow Nathan Webb the Privilege of Schooling out his School Tax at his own house Separate from the District."

Jan. 4, 1799. "Voted to send a petition to the general court for a turnpike Road where the old County Road now runs from Westfield to Pittsfield through Blandford, Becket and Washington."

Nov. 5, 1799 "Voted that all the swine now in the Town Belonging to other Towns Shall Immediately be Driven out and none shall in future be allowed to Run at large belonging to other Towns without Leave from the Selectmen. Voted that the man owning these swine Shall have the Privilege to Stay with them until the first day of January Next by paying into the Treasury of the Town 20 Dollars and likewise in the same proportion for all other swine in any part of the Town."

March 11, 1799. "Voted and Chose William More and Pitt Steele for pound keepers. Voted that Pitt Steeles Barnyard be used as a Pound (he having to repair it for that use at his own expence) the year ensuing."

October 21, 1799 "Voted and raised Nine hundred Dollars to Pay the Damage and Cost obtained by James Sears at the Last Supreme Judicial Cort and other Legal Demands against said town." This is a very substantial amount of money, when land was selling for \$1.00 an acre, labor on the roads was at 75 cents for a day, and 50 cents a day after the first of October, and only \$150 was raised for the support of schooling. But there is no indication what the damage was.

April 5, 1802. Divided the town into seven school districts.

March 14, 1803. "Voted and Raised 35 dollars To be paid Mr. Leonard for his Horse Which had his leg broke in sd. Town on the Highway." There are other instances of damages to animals and vehicles on the highway for which the town is held responsible.

May 7th, 1804 "Voted to Chose an agent to treat with Dr. Daniel Foot and Procure a Deed or title for the town of the Land Improved by the Meetinghouse, and yard adjacent." "Voted that the Treasurer Shall Pay out of the Treasury of the Town 12 cents for every Crow's head that Shall be Killed in the Town from the first of May until the twentieth of June the Present Year."

Page 354-355 "For Recording two leaves were turned over by mistake. A Blundering piece of Business. Attest Absalom Deming, T. Clerk"

March 13, 1815 "Voted that the Selectmen sell the tents." (What tents?)

Record of town meetings ends April 1819 in the first Town Clerk's book.

The next town record book goes from 1819 to 1848. It was a period of great changes not mentioned in the record books as waves of people left this area for more fertile land and less rigorous climate. As early as Sept. 10, 1810 Washington men had joined with Becket settlers in entering into an agreement for the purpose of obtaining a Township of land in the State of Ohio. They promised "to pay the expense of exploring and viewing a Township of land in New Connecticut now owned by the Honorable Caleb Strong of Northampton" who owned three quarters of the land of Township No. 4 in the sixth range of the Connecticut Western Reserve.

Dillingham Clark, owner of the tavern on the Washington Mountain Road, was one of the men voted agents to explore this new land. The report was so favorable that Dillingham Clark Esqr. was appointed to apply to Caleb Strong (a seven term Governor of Massachusetts) for the purchase of said Township.

The purchase of the land was completed by the spring of 1811, and the Becket and Washington families packed up all their possessions and moved westward.

This was only the beginning. In some instances, a man or party was sent from here to investigate new lands personally before making such a drastic decision. It took about three months of walking to go out there and back. The path west became well-beaten with use most of the way, but at the other end it got harder to follow. Sometimes families had to set up camp again as the man of the family cut down the great trees blocking his way, so his team and wagon could finally reach the new homesite.

The urge to get to more hospitable territory could only be accelerated by the summerless summer of 1816 when a hard freeze occurred every month of the spring and summer except in July. Our people couldn't know in those days of poor communication that the area affected was widespread and by no means confined to Washington and surrounding towns. However, in any year here, we aren't surprised by killing frosts in June and sometimes killing frosts in August. During the time of World War II we had a fall of twelve or fourteen inches of snow in the middle of May when the apple blossoms were beautifully in bloom, and in reading the old records it is not unusual to see the amazed comment "Snow covered the ground in June."

To make it easier for people to exchange their land here for land in the Connecticut Western Reserve, an agent lived in Becket and busily exchanged mortgages on local land for mortgages on new land in the west. In due course of time, the State of Connecticut owned a considerable part of Washington. As late as 1910 we have a receipt from their School Fund for a final payment by Charles E. Schultz. As fast as Connecticut acquired the Washington land, they sold it to other people who kept the mortgage with Connecticut, so the State of Connecticut did not appear on the tax rolls.

In our settlers' urge to get away, let us hope that none were drawn into *Renesselaerwyck*. Just after the Revolution, Stephen Van *Renesselaer* advertised a Free Introductory Offer. Patriots were offered a hundred and twenty acres of land rent-free for seven years. After that the tenant could sign a lease with the patroon and pay an annual rent of so many bushels of wheat per year, four fat fowl, and a day's labor with horse and team, and thousands of farmers from New England thought it sounded attractive. The State of New York had a law against feudal rents, so they called these deals "incomplete sales" that forever remained incomplete.

A farmer could clear his one hundred twenty acres, build a house and barns, and live on that land for generations, still paying annual rent and subject to being thrown off the property without compensation for the improvements if the tenant became delinquent in his rent. It wasn't until after 1852 that this feudal system became illegal after violent uprisings by the tens of thousands of farmers living on the more than one million acres involved.

Although the number of people in town dropped, still the rapid turn-over of property kept new ones coming in waves, and in their turn leaving for other parts. Title searching any property in town is an exhausting proposition because there were such frequent changes of owners. There were also changes in farming as men tried to find a way of earning a living. Sheep raising had its day but was doomed by the damages done by dogs. Aside from the dollar and cents loss, it was a hard-hearted man who could find his sheep torn apart but still so much alive that he had to put them out of their misery. There is something so pathetic about the sounds that injured sheep make and in their frightened eyes. For a while the raising of beef was seriously tried. There were cattle drives to the loading pen of the railroad, and dooryards along the roads had to be fenced to keep strays out of the gardens. However, the growth of huge cattle ranches out west closed this market.

The Washington post office was established in 1826. Prior to that the mail was delivered by "post"—the mail carrier on horseback.

Daniel Sibley was the first postmaster of whom there is any record. Soon after the election of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Manley, a Republican, was appointed. The office remained at the station and Mr. Manley held it to the time of his death. Then Henry Speer, who had a store across the way, was postmaster until his removal. The station agents, John Manley and George Simmons successively acted as postmasters for a number of years. Then Edwin H. Eames, who kept the store near the depot, succeeded in the office until the Wilson administration, when Carl Peer, a Democrat living in the "city" was appointed. This was the first time that the office had been removed from the near vicinity of the station, where the mail was tossed off the trains in sturdy mail bags. Ida Peer, the last postmistress had the post office in her home on Frost Road.

For many years, after establishment of R.F.D., the mail carrier for the town was John Meiers and he really lived up to the motto of the postal service. Regardless of the condition of the roads and the weather, "Johnnie" Meiers got through somehow. For years he drove his horse with a buckboard in summer and a sleigh in winter. He was one of the first to have a Model T. Ford. Sometimes he arrived on a motorcycle. Sometimes he was on snowshoes with the bag of mail on his back. Except when he was in the Army in World War I, people on his route were certain that their mail would get to them every day. Many years ago he even improvised what probably would be classified as a snowmobile, putting his car on skis.

The Washington post office was discontinued in 1936. Then mail for the western part of the town came directed to Hinsdale, and for the eastern part of the town it was addressed to Becket. The delivery routes for Hinsdale and Becket were consolidated under the same postal delivery man, at present Harry Horn.

Back to Town Clerks' Book No. 2. A lot of space is given to elections of representatives to go to Boston, elections of governors (it was satisfying to see the names of John Hancock and Samuel Adams, etc. in the first book), elections of senators and representatives to Congress. it was a disappointment in the elections of presidents and vice-presidents not even to give their names—just the names of their electors. On April 9, 1821 the voters of Washington, apparently almost a hundred of them, voted on "A Resolution of the Convention Delegates Assembled at Boston on the 15th of November A. D. 1820 for the purpose of revising the Constitution of the Commonwealth." The Selectmen and Town Clerk must have considered the fourteen articles of amendment important because the vote of "Yeas" and "Nays" is so clearly and neatly set forth.

On the 21st day of May, 1821 there was a flurry of votes on how to finance a new preacher of the gospel, Mr. Ballantine having died.

April 4, 1825 "Voted that every family in Town may let one cow run in the Highway."

April 6, 1829 "Voted to dispose of the Town poor to the lowest bidder." "The Town poor were put up and auctioned off to Philip Eames for one year at \$193." The poor consisted of a man, his wife and four children; a man; a widow and four children and another woman.

May 11, 1829 "Voted to warn Town meetings by posting up four warnings at full length viz. at the tavern near the meeting house—on the mill in the east part of the town, on the school house near O. Pease's & on the school house in the McKnight District."

Mar. 12, 1838 "Voted that the town Paupers be put up in parcels to the lowest bidder to be supported including support as to food, clothing, doctoring and all expenses to Clear the town."

In the 1838 warrant they start saying that meetings will be held at the Congregational Meeting House instead of the plain Meeting house of previous years. Philip Eames bid for most of the paupers, including a boy to whom he is to give three months schooling.

April 1839 "Voted 10 hours for a Days work on the highways and \$1.00 per Day for a Man.

Mar. 6, 1843—Voted to raise 38 dollars to pay for stoves and pipes for Congregational Meeting house. "Voted to break roads the next Winter at ten Cts. per hour."

March 22, 1847—Voted to appropriate Ten Dollars for cleaning and taking care of the Congregational Meeting House in Washington." "Voted to abate the taxes of the Irishmen living near the Round Pond so called by their making their own road."

Nov. 13, 1848 "Voted to build a Town House. Voted to choose a Committee to make a plan of said House.

Dec. 1848. Voted to accept the Plan of the Town House made by the Committee. Chose a building Committee by vote. Chose Wm. J. Bell, Simpson Bell and Seymour Dibble. Voted that the house be done by the first day of Oct. Next.

That is the end of the Clerk's Record book from 1819 to 1848.

A little notebook bought by John Noble, March 6, 1833 gives an idea of what people owned of enough value to pledge for credit, and how one enterprising citizen got equipment to work on the Western Railroad.

(1833)—A loan of \$300 was secured by "one pair of Brindle Oxen 6 or 7 years old, 1 pair of Brown oxen 6 or 7 years old, 2 ox Iron Bound Wagons, one of which is wood and the other iron, valued at & worth three hundred dollars."

(1833)—A loan of \$130 was secured by "fifteen sheep being all those I have on hand, two cows one of them a brindle one the other red white faced one, one single horse harness, two swine all I have on hand, two heifers two years old being both red and all I have."

Sheep, horses, cows, oxen, wagons are all listed many times. Some of the the following list different items.

(1831)—\$260. "Seven cows, seven head of two year old heifers & Stears & one yoak of four year old stags & two calfs & two 'breeding' sows and fifty sheep & 'breeding mair' & thirty tons of Hay that is now in the home barns."

(1836)—5000 ft. ash planks at the value of 50 dollars, 60 ash logs at the value of 60 dollars, one grindstone, one fanning mill, "one hundred fifty sheep & all the grass which is now growing on the farm".

"One bureau, one clock, one bed and bedding, one set of cane bottom chairs, one stove and the furniture belonging to said stove for cooking & one brass kettle, also thirty sheep marked with the letter 'L' on the side."

"One piece of oats about two acres also one piece of potatoes about three quarters of an acre."

(1837)—"One hundred eighty fleeces of wool, one horse, one mare, and one one-horse wagon, one set of double harness, one hundred and fifty sheep, and the grass and oats on the farm I now occupy"

(1837)—"viz 2 feather beds & bedstead, 4 pillow & bead quilts & 2 coverlids, 7 pair cotton sheets and 4 do woolen, one mahogany front bureau, one fall leaf table, do wash stand, 12 chairs, 2 rocking chairs, crockedware, two tea sets, 5 dozen plates, one dozen glass plates, 2 tea waiter silver, 4 large spoons 12 do small spoons, one furniture time piece, sugar tongs, milk spoon, 1 brass kettle, 2 looking glasses, one pair andiron and tongs, 2 pails, one tub, one iron pot, tea kettle and spider"

1838—"Peck & Phelps" had a store in town and sold "one cook stove & stove pipe together with boiler, Pot & spider valued at fifteen dollars"

1838—\$1053—Absalom Deming to R. L. Deming

"One gray horse nine years old, 1 black horse five years old, one stud horse three years old, said horses valued at one hundred and fifty dollars, one bull and one stag three years old, and one yoke of red steers three years old, one yoke of red steers two years old, one yoke of red steers one year old together with 3 red cows all on the farm on which I now live except the cow called the Brown cow, all which cattle together with the calves belonging to the cows are intended to be conveyed said cattle are valued at two hundred and two dollars. Also ninety sheep together with the lambs they now have and may have this season valued at one hundred and eighty dollars, also one spotted sow and five pigs valued at twenty dollars, also one hive of bees with their increase valued at ten dollars, also one green one horse wagon, one cart, three plows, one barrow, three draught chains, two potash kettles, two hundred sap tubs including 4 large tubs for storing sap, also four feather beds with bed steads and bedding, two large looking glasses, one dozen dining chairs, three tables, three low priced bureaus, one cook stove and furniture, one franklin stove, three light stands, two pair of steelyards, two crow bars, three good axes, four hoes, two shovels, one dung fork, three pitch forks, twenty dollars worth of hooks, one large brass kettle, twenty cord of wood, seventy bushel oats, twelve bushel of rye, fifty bushels of potatoes, five tons of hay in the barn with the hay the corn, oats, potatoes and wheat which may be grown on the farm the present season, and one fancy clock to have and to hold the before granted property to him the said Ransom L. Deming, his heirs and assigns Provided nevertheless that I the said Absalom Deming shall pay one certain note of hand which I have this day given the said Ransom for the sum of one thousand and fifty three dollars with the annual interest payable in three years from the date which note was given for six years labor and also for a debt of three hundred dollars which the said Ransom undertook to pay for me then this obligation to be void otherwise to remain in full force.

1839—"Whereas I this day contracted to cut and a quantity of wood west of the house where I now live and some corners of woodland southeast of said house near the Chapel lot and do the whole in a good clean and work-man-like manner and deliver the same on the furnace bank of said company free from all or any expense to said company for five dollars and twenty-five cents per hundred bushel measured in the ten bushel box of said company or estimated to the satisfaction of the said company's banksman. Also I have contracted to cut a quantity of wood at the bottom of a hill it being a lot of wood sets for coaling the past season and deliver the same in every way and condition above at five dollars and seventy-five cents per hundred bushel the last lot of wood estimated at sixty cords more or less."

1839—one ox yoke, three draft chains, two sleds, four hundred logs at and about the mill consisting of spruce, hemlock and hard wood together with all the lumber sawed at the mill including slabs, one cross cut saw, one sawmill saw, one black horse six years old, two cooking stoves, one clock, two beds and bedding, two bedsteds and cords, two looking glasses, one brass kettle, two iron kettles, two chests, two trunks, two stands and twenty dining chairs.

1840—7 horses, 10 one horse carts, 2 cart harnesses, 1 two horse wagon & harness 1 two horse buggy, harness & pole, 1 buggy and harness, 1 blacksmiths bellows, 1 set of blacksmith's tools & drills, 1 cutting machine, 1 doz. shovels, 6 trucks which are now employed by me on the Western Railroad in said Washington.

1840—Edward P. Weld and Solomon Brewster trading in partnership in said Washington under the firm of Weld & Brewster.

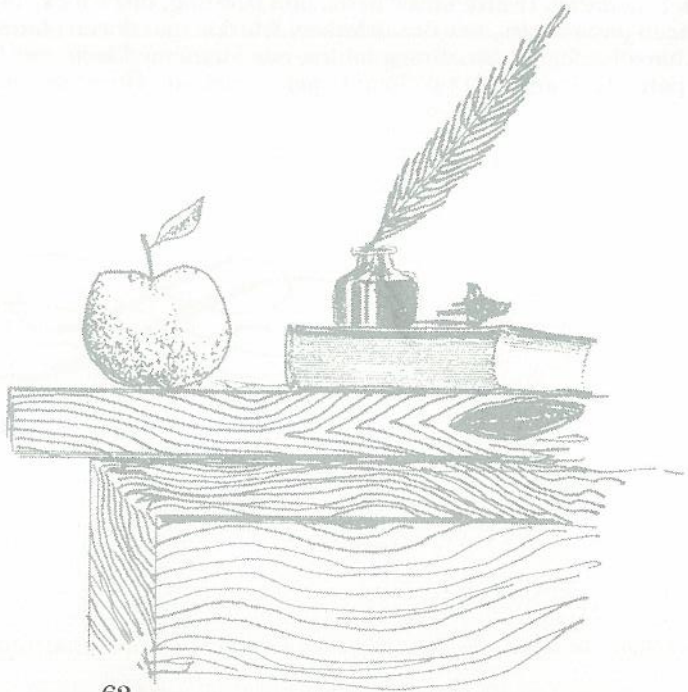
1841—Two white or gray horses about ten or eleven years old, the same had of Nelson Cross about the first Novr. last also one set new harness for two horses had of Cyrus A. Chapman of Pittsfield sometime last summer. Also one light yellow cow about five years old (farrow) also seventy spruce saw logs lying at said Barnard's saw mill & saw mill & at the saw mill the said Barnard "highered" of the Western Rail Road Co. said logs are numbered from No. 1 to 70 inclusive with Red Chalk with letters P.E. in Red Chalk. Also one hundred and thirty hemlock saw logs lying at the said mills numbered with Red Chalk from No. 1 to No. 130 inclusive with the letters P.E. on them with Red Chalk & twenty-five white birch saw logs lying at the said saw mills marked with Red Chalk with the letters P.E. and numbered with Red Chalk from No. 1 to 29 inclusive."

1841—"Two cows one three years old deep red, one cow light red, one featherbed and bedding, one fancy clock." when William Gay Ballantine (the second) was town clerk.

1841—Harvey Nash & Co. merchants of said Washington "One feather bed & bedding, two Flock Beds & bedding, twelve straw beds, and bedding, one Clock, two cooking Stoves Utensils complete, fourteen plain chairs, two dozen knives & forks, four dozen plates, two dozen dishes, two dozen bowls, four barrels of cider, two dining tables, one Medicine Chest, one Carpenters Tool Chest with sundries, one pair Steelyards (?) two long benches and one Horse or one Mare coloured Bay."



Schools



SCHOOLS

At a town meeting March 10, 1783 an unusual amount of business was voted upon. The 26th article voted was to raise the sum of forty pounds to maintain a grammar school in this town. The 27th article was a vote to choose a committee of five persons to divide the town into four districts, each district to have the proportion of the sum according to the list and the sum they have to pay. Article 28: Voted and chose for the above committee Lt. Jabez Cornish, Jesse Ladd, Simon Babcock, Azariah Ashley and William Millikan.

At the same meeting it was voted to raise sixty pounds to repair the meeting house (apparently to repaint it), so the priorities seem a little mixed.

There was another town meeting on December 25, 1783 and perhaps it reflects some thinking and planning with regard to the schools, because it was Voted to raise the sum of eighty pounds to build four school houses, one in each of the four districts as set off by the town.

From this modest beginning, schooling our children has grown into the biggest and most expensive item in each year's budget.

March 12, 1798, Voted to allow Nathan Webb the privilege of schooling out his school tax at his own house separate from the district. At this time they were electing quite large school committees, one or two from each district, and making independent decisions, subject to ratification at town meeting. For a number of years, another committee was appointed to inspect schools by visiting them to evaluate the teacher and progress. Big boys went to school in the winter when there weren't as many chores as the rest of the year; and so for winter terms it was deemed advisable to have men for teachers so they could (in theory) control the big boys, who made it their main objective to test the teacher's mettle to the limit — or beyond. Girls went to school in the summer terms when traveling back and forth (almost always walking) was easier. Of course, as always, the pupil who wanted to learn managed somehow. The pupils who didn't want to learn or were incapable just passed the time in school — even as today.

For more than a hundred years, the town records inform us that the town appropriated a certain small sum for schooling. The districts are re-arranged quite often. Then there is record of the Committee to Inspect Schools. Nothing is said of the teachers, the buildings or the actual mechanics of running the schools.

Some new rules about schools must have been passed in 1876 because there is a special meeting noted for May 24, 1876 when it was "Voted unanimously to loan the town the use of all school district property for the present year." "Voted that the Chair appoint a committee of three to appraise the school property in town and report at the November meeting." On November 4, 1876 "The Committee appointed to appraise School houses in the Town of Washington submit the following:

District No. 1	\$ 83	District No. 5	98
District No. 2	80	District No. 6	73
District No. 3	100	District No. 7	80
District No. 4	76	District No. 8	35"

"Voted to give the town the school property therein."

There is much debate over what to do with the old houses, how much to raise to build new schools and in what locations. Also, April 1st, 1878, for the first time on record, a woman was appointed to town office. Mary A. Collins was appointed for a three year term on the new type school committee. It was voted to build a new school house in the Valley district, and that "The cost of the New School House to the Town shall not exceed \$500 in any case Whatsoever."

April 7, 1879, \$800 was appropriated for schools. It was also voted to build a new school house in the south center district on the same site as the previous school. "Voted to raise \$300 for building sd School House. Voted to raise \$60 for seating said house. Voted to choose a committee of three to build or cause such house to be built. Choose Robert M. Savery, Charles V. Abbott, Alanson B. Pomeroy. Voted that School Committee engage teachers as cheaply as possible and equalize their wages."

Eventually a State Board of Education was formed under the famous educator, Horace Mann. Each town was supposed to answer annual questionnaires and submit reports, in early years by the school committee and later by the school superintendent after the State had mandated that small towns join together as Unions to hire a common superintendent. It was now part of the superintendent's job to visit the schools in his district and suggest to local school committees how the schools could be improved. He had to keep abreast of new State laws regarding education.

There is a set of Massachusetts School Returns in the old town hall, and they are certainly fascinating to anyone interested in education and its progress. It has seemed best to list the facts in some reports, after first noting that in 1842 pupils were listed as being under 4 or over 16, those ages changed to 5 to 15, then 7 to 14, and present compulsory school age is 5 to 15.

Date	Population	No. of schools	No. of pupils	
1842-43	991	7	197	Sum appro. \$300; \$1.52 each
1860-61	948	9	179	Wages, inc. board Per mo., Men \$25, Women \$17.08 Town listed as 141st in State in support of schools
1861-62			225	Listed as 295th in State

"The committee would again raise the voice of warning, yes, of entreaty, in respect to the loss we continually suffer, by the neglect of parents to send their children to school at all; the neglect to send them punctually at the hour of school; the neglect to send them steadily. We say parents, for on them rests the responsibility. The whole town lost last year by irregular attendance nearly one-fourth of the school money, \$150; in some districts almost one-half; in district No. 9 more than 47 per cent! Who would be content to lose such per cent on any other sum of money due from the town? But the value of schooling is not to be computed in dollars and cents. In two schools this year, the loss by absence, the week they were visited, was 33 and 50 per cent respectively. And this is by no means all. The absence of pupils dampens the enthusiasm for study in those present; their returns hinder the regular attendants still more; and if they come little, or none at all, they are a dead weight in the district, a continual clog to education, and are responsible (rather their parents) for much of the ignorance and willingness to be ignorant existing in the district in which they reside . . ."

1863-64 — "We would not say that any of our teachers have used the rod too much, but we think several have used it too much as a terror, if they would govern well and secure the best moral influence . . ."

1864-65	859	9	199	
		(1 private-\$40 tuition)	pupils	\$700 raised. Expenses of supt. & printing school report \$26

1869-70 Listed 311th in State. 184 pupils \$800 raised.

1892-93 — 10 female teachers, only one of whom had "attended" normal school, none graduated. Wages still averaged \$20 a mo.

Raised by taxation \$750. No transportation. \$12 for repairs. (323rd in State)

1920-21 — Population 240 — 3 teachers — 42 pupils			
Textbooks	\$ 15.13		
Jan., fuel & misc.	231.27		
Repairs, replacement	11.69	7 pupils in H.S.	
Libraries	39.50	Total tuition \$788.00	
Trans. outside town	326.74	1 one room building	
		1 two room building	

FROM WASHINGTON TOWN REPORTS

1898 — Mar. 83 pupils, 6 schools (West closed until 1899) Budget \$1,834. 24 weeks of school compulsory. "Homesickness takes its toll among the city girls. For this reason local girls are urged to return here to teach after high school."

1901 — 7 schools, \$2,618. "The school problem in Washington is a peculiarly difficult one because of the size of the township and widely separated homes. Two-thirds of the children are in 6 of the 7 schools. Consolidation is practically impossible. The schools average 9 students. High grade teachers seldom remain more than a year because competition and enthusiasm are difficult to arouse. Resources of the town are wasted in maintaining so many schools. Textbooks are in shortage and each school should have \$5.00 to start a library of general literature. Valley and Mottor schools should be combined. Sanitary conditions need careful attention at all schools."

1903 — 100 pupils. Mottor school closed. To relieve the crowded conditions at Valley school, a Washington Station primary and grammar school will be maintained.

1904 — 102 pupils. Mottor and Congdon closed. "So. Center has only 1 outhouse and needs 1 more. The addition to Valley school enables us to dispense with the cottage previously hired. West school is too small and only 3 pupils attend so it is closed and school was kept in the home of Mr. Kent. Mrs. Kent, a former teacher here, instructed. Teachers at So. Center are Alice Redding and Margaret Carey."

1906 — School legislation now requires physical exams after illness, and eye and ear exams. 4 buildings in use. 88 pupils, budget \$2106.00. Una Peck teacher at S. Cen.

1909 — 53 pupils, \$23.31 per pupil per year cost. Suggest Valley school be raised to put a cellar under for wood or coal stove. Free public library voted in at Town meeting. A music and an art teacher added to school personnel. A sound tongue lashing to parents to see to it that unnecessary tardiness and foolish absence be stopped.

1910 — North school closed, pupils go to unoccupied dwelling owned by City of Pittsfield in neighborhood. East school not opened in fall. Clara Stevens teacher at St. Center.

1912 — 39 pupils. Ruth Harvey teacher at So. Center. Washington breaks 22 year union with Chester, Becket & Middlefield to join with Hinsdale.

1915 — 3 school terms, winter, spring and fall. 59 students, 275 population, \$2,552.

1917 — Budget \$2,856. No. Center school closed for winter having a 2 year record of 99% attendance average unequalled in the whole state. The thrift stamp campaign in No. and So. schools have urged or helped buy \$1,050 of Liberty Bonds. Norbert Wagner and Howard Levernoch had perfect attendance.

1920 — 40 pupils, \$3,357. No. school reopened in Feb. 1920. It had been closed because of illness in teacher's family.

1921 — 9 pupils So. Center, Miss Mary Labbe; 24 pupils Valley, Miss Elsa Hackebcil; 3 pupils No. Center, Miss Madge Carter. Budget \$4,366. Teachers' minimum \$750. Maude Smith came in Sept. to teach at So. Center. At that time there were only 4 pupils at each Center school but because Valley had 25-30 pupils the first double session was inaugurated with 5-8 grades going 8:30-12:15; and grades 1-4 going 12:45 to 3:30. Again the policy of one central school is urged to solve the problem of scattered schools and pupils. Alice Burns came to teach in No. Center.

1922 — No. Center school closed and S. Center down to 1 student is finally closed at the end of the June session. The children on the mountain are transported to Dalton. State law requires town to hire a nurse 1 day a month at \$50.

1923 — 33 pupils, 178 days, \$5,487. 2 teachers teach 8 grades in Valley school in 2 rooms. Miss Mary Mooney & Miss Maude Smith. "Two problems plague our school: improper lighting and improper toilet facilities. Suggest chemical closet. Also regrets that the teachers go out of town to home at night. Home and the teachers should be close to get to know each other better."

1927 — Double session ended in Sept. when Miss Martha Schulze is hired. New heaters in both rooms. Population 231.

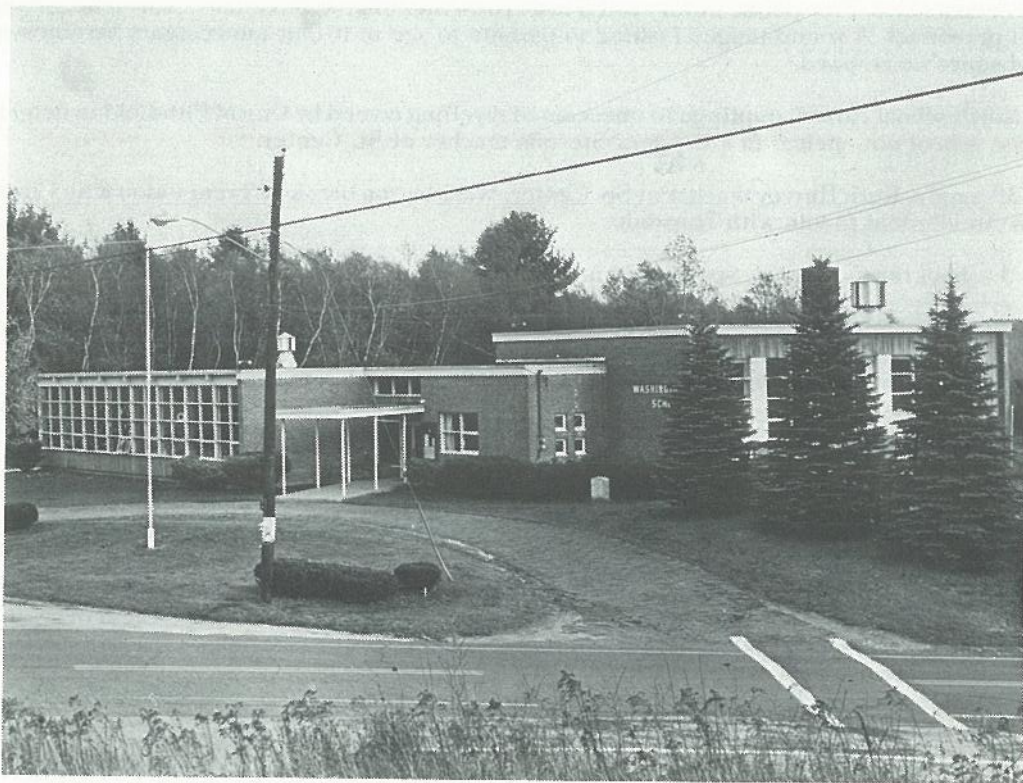
1928 — \$4,557 budget. Overcrowding in Miss Schulze's room caused gr. 1 to go A.M., gr. 2 in P.M. Maude Smith resigned in March. 42 pupils, 185 days.

1930 — Maude Smith May returned to teach. 47 pupils, \$5400. Efforts made to bring water to the building.

1936 — The school is badly in need of repair. Lighting is improper due to the arrangement of doors, stove and no lights. Children have to leave wraps on corridor floor or rooms. Building needs paint inside and out. Selectmen have contracted for lighting. Ordinarily there is a yearly minimum \$40 charge but the company has agreed to \$9 since those who would have to pay for it already pay a high rate in their homes. Still no running water.

1941 — Finally indoor toilets, wash sinks and fountains installed, new floor in one room and toilets, outside doors repaired and underpinnings on one side replaced for \$800.

1946 — 63 pupils, \$11,345. Talk again of a new school since valley needs paint, the pipes froze and the water supply is irregular.



1953 — New School

- 1949 — Land is given for a new school.
- 1951 — Plans underway for new school. Mrs. Maude Smith May resigns.
- 1952 — Construction begun on new school in July of 1952.
- 1953 — Eight grades moved to new elementary school. Mrs. Wilkie teaching 1-4, and Mrs. Kimball having 5-8.
- 1954 — Net cost of schools \$7,168.25 — 17 in high school (Dalton, Pittsfield & Pittsfield Vocational School), and 42 in elementary school.
- 1959 — Net cost \$15,828.54 — high school 16 and elementary 46. Mrs. Whitney taught the upper grades this year.
- 1960 — Net cost \$17,403.26 — high school 16 — elementary 43. Achievement tests given in May showed better than average scores. Mrs. Whiney introduced, in addition to regular courses, typing, sewing and cooking, and her classes gave a formal tea, and had the first science fair.
- 1961 — Net cost \$17,778.10 — total students 67 — Gary Collins took Mrs. Whitney's place.
- 1962 — Net cost \$19,271.69 — enrollment 68 — Mrs. Bybee took Mrs. Kimball's place. P.T.A. received a citation and award for their volunteer help on the school lunch program.
- 1963 — Mr. Powers took Mr. Collins' place. Mrs. LaRock was hired as helping teacher. Net cost \$23,712.82 — 66 students, 19 of them at Wahconah Regional.
- 1964 — Cooperative effort with Becket to conquer shortage of classroom space in both schools. First and second graders from both towns at Washington school (teachers Mrs. Bybee and Mrs. Melanson) and the other six grades at Becket school — one grade for one teacher throughout the 8 grades. Cost \$25,485.39 — 72 students, 16 in H.S.
- 1965 — Continued cooperative schooling. Mrs. Bybee and Mrs. Zaleski teachers. Region trying to coordinate classes and textbooks so pupils will enter high school equally prepared. Cost \$23,917.20. Volunteer lunch program ends, and Mrs. Rose Poillucci took over full time.
- 1966 — Total school enrollment 81 — cost \$24,851.42. Mrs. Bybee had 39 students in first grade; Mrs. Zaleski had 26 in second grade. "At a meeting of the school committee, members from the towns which feed pupils to the Wahconah Regional High School, it was considered desirable to have an article included in the several warrants for the town meeting to create a 'regional school district planning committee.' Each town committee would study its own space needs and consider further regional plans with the other towns." Mrs. Levernoch took over the lunch program because of Mrs. Poillucci's illness.
- 1967 — Net cost \$33,898.22 — Grades 1 through 6 — 52. Grades 7 and 8 sent to Dalton Junior High. 16 in Wahconah Regional. Both Becket and Washington returned to their own schools, making room by sending 7th and 8th grades to Dalton as tuition pupils. Mr. Robert Lawson was teacher of grades 5 and 6. Mrs. Loretta Ezell taught grades 3 and 4. The first two grades were instructed by Mrs. Farnham, substituting until the return of Mrs. Diane Martin.
- "Mr. Lawson has been very active in enlisting interested people in town to contribute time, talent, materials and equipment to the advantage of the school. Mr. R. Elliot has given considerable time with the physical education classes, in preparing the skating rink, and getting materials.
- "Mr. and Mrs. Julio Granda have helped with the art work in several projects. They have also given many books for the school library. Mrs. A. Jarvie and Mrs. J. DeAngelus have assisted with the music.

We wish to thank these people for contributing their time and talents for the benefit of the school children.

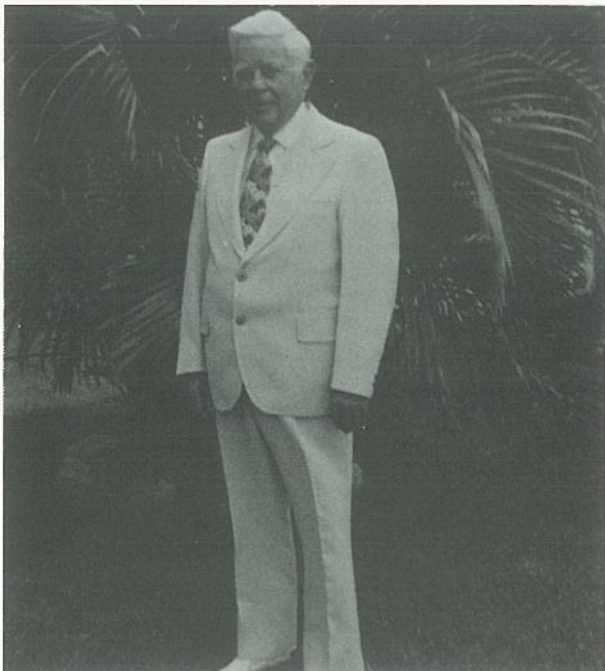
“Some of the people who have helped in a variety of ways include: Mr. and Mrs. J. Furlong, Mr. and Mrs. R. Adams, Mrs. J. DeAngelus, Mrs. R. Elliot, Mr. VanBlarcom, Mr. N. O'Brien, Mr. and Mrs. F. Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. E. Levernoch, Mr. and Mrs. S. Southard, and Mrs. Brown.

“The P.T.A. under the chairmanship of Mrs. R. Poillucci raised \$150 by a penny social. This money will be used for fencing the playground.”

1968 — Net cost \$45,047.69 — total enrollment 95 — 18 in Dalton Jr. High, 20 in Wahconah Regional, 1 Pittsfield Vocational. “School Union No. 20, consisting of the towns of Washington, Windsor, Peru and Hinsdale, was dissolved as of July 1, 1968. A new School Union No. 67, consisting of Washington, Windsor, Peru, Hinsdale, Becket and Cummington was formed. All of these towns send pupils to the Wahconah Regional High School. This was a step toward the formation of a single school district comprising these towns and Dalton, and covering all grades, kindergarten through Grade 12.” Same teachers.

1969 — Local school committee served until October 1969. Mr. Fred Hansen, Jr. and Mrs. Louise Elliot were appointed to the School Committee in 1958. Mr. Hansen, Jr. was elected as the town's sole representative on the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee and is still serving in that capacity. Mrs. Elliot served until the local school committee passed out of existence, at which time Mrs. Sarah Poland was also on the committee.

No account of our last twenty-five years of school history would be complete without reference to the Union Superintendent who guided us through the maze of new State regulations, the problems with the buildings, the problems with the teachers. Mr. Earl Suitor gave his time and concern through the years, occasionally helping with actual painting on the buildings when time and money were in short supply, attending town meetings, P.T.A. meetings and Sons and Daughters meetings to keep in touch with the town. The transition to a regional plan was long, frustrating and complicated, but he steered his Union through. He is now retired.



Mr. Earl Suitor

1976 — “Article 13 — To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$146,744.01 for operating expenses and capital costs of the Central Berkshire Regional School District.” This amount has to be raised, but is lowered somewhat by reimbursements from the State.

The Washington School is again bursting at the seams with kindergarten, first grade and second grade with pupils from Becket and Washington. Our third through fifth grades go to Becket, all the rest to Dalton. There is a class in each of the two class rooms and two classes fill the auditorium. The office is used for special classes, and the teachers’ room is fully occupied.

In recent years the school was the only place where local people met. Almost two dozen women were once involved in taking turns cooking for the lunch program, and we got to know each other and the pupils. There was a hard-working P.T.A. getting many extras that didn’t fit in the school budget. There was a free annual picnic to which the whole town was invited, where games were played before a good meal. We have lost all that and there is now no occasion for getting together except for the infrequent town meetings. Many new people are building homes in town — the population is growing, but there is no defined center, no regular way of meeting and feeling involved in the town’s life.

The Washington Historical Commission wants to keep the old South Center School looking as it did and representing all the little one room schoolhouses that used to be in town. It took much volunteer labor to reshingle the roof, repoint the chimney, replace a rotted sill, and paint it on the outside the red it never was when in use. Among the men working on the project were Lester Manuel from Pittsfield, Andrew Methe, Elmer Allen, Robert Elliot, Julio Granda, Roger Pelletier.

Materials were furnished by Mr. Lester and all the shingles were donated by the late Mr. John Kelly of Kelly Hardwood. Sally Poland, Carolyn Adames did the outside painting.



A P.T.A. award for saving South Center School (Sally Poland).

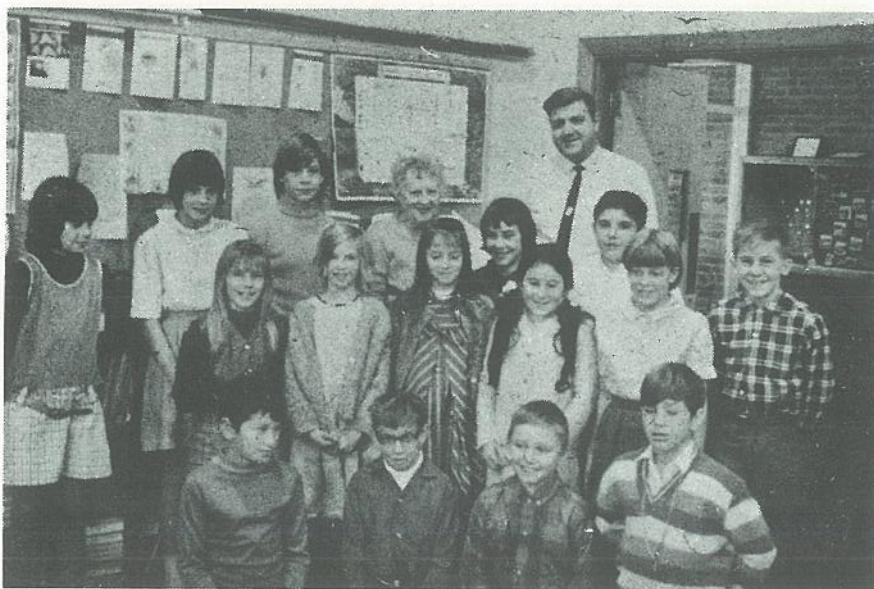
Photo courtesy of The Berkshire Eagle.

Our resolve to save the little building won our last award as a P.T.A. project. We had really thought that the building was older than it is since a school is shown on that site from the earliest maps. However, the Town Report for 1880 states that the old South Center School was demolished, the rubble sold, and a completely new building was put up during the summer, so it is a mere 97 years old.

Another item in connection with the schools is that in 1894 we had a teacher named Bessie Kelly at Mottor school. She moved to Springfield and taught in the Springfield schools. In 1975 she had a big 100th birthday party. She is still alive at 102.



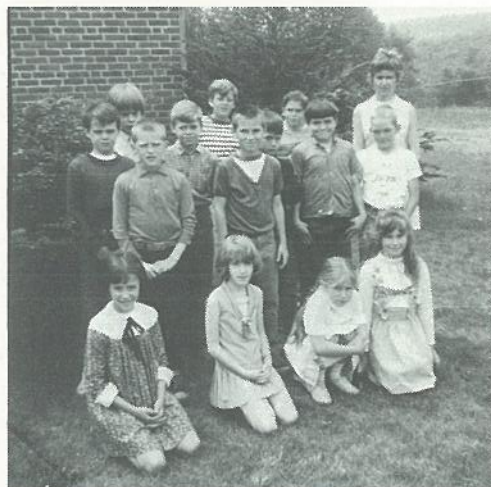
*Mrs. Bessie Kelley marked her 100th birthday
Saturday, April 13, 1974.*



The above pictures, taken at the Washington Elementary School, show the possible future poets of America. In the top photo, in the back row with the fifth and sixth graders, are Principal Robert D. Lawson and poetry instructor, Mrs. James S. Brown. Mrs. Brown, who volunteers her time, reports that the students have done some excellent work and that many have written poems scheduled for publication in the Los Angeles Poetry Magazine. The students in the bottom photo were judged as having written the best poems for the month. Christine Cameron, shown with her poetry pamphlet, took first place and runners-up are, from left to right: Patty Sears, Douglas McKillop, James Lampro, and Francis Lampro. Another runner-up, Keith Fox, was absent. (November 21, 1968)



Mrs. Maude Smith May and last class at South Center School.



Washington School, June, 1969.

Martha Gardner, a retired teacher in the Washington and Becket schools, and a Washington native, wrote these reminiscences about twenty-five years ago.

"I remember other days before there were school buses. The children walked to the nearest country school. When I was a child there were five of the original nine school buildings left in town. We attended South Center. We were the fortunate ones that lived close enough to run home for lunch except on the stormiest days. We had teachers that shared our love for the woods that extended for miles and miles behind the building.

"In the spring there were birds to identify, flowers to find and be the first to report to the teacher. Sometimes we were permitted to go up into the woods to a secret spring hole hidden by rocks and the collection of fallen leaves. We carefully cleaned the spring but hardly ever had time to wait for the water to clear so we could sample it because it was time for the bell to ring. One teacher went fishing with us during recess periods. She caught the biggest trout and was quite a hero in our eyes. This school was

painted white or gray, as I recall. Later when it was permanently closed, Mr. James Savery had it painted the traditional red. It was an old school. My father attended it when he moved to Washington with his parents in 1872. It was the kind of a school house aptly described by the poet, "Still sits the schoolhouse by the road, a ragged beggar sunning, and by it still the sumach grows and blackberry brier running."

One of the big attractions was the mountain brook that ran beside it and supplied us with water. In the middle of the brook was a large stone. This we young girls named "Friendship Rock." It was traditional for all of the girls to skip across the brook to this rock if they were in the mood for renewing a friendship that had been broken a day or two before by one of those quarrels that frequently occur between teen girls.

A rattling wood or plank bridge crossed the brook very near the school house. A clatter of hooves and rumbling of wheels warned us of all traffic approaching from the west. It could be our superintendent, the art teacher or the music teacher, or some localite on his way to the village to get grain or food or to do other shopping. If they approached from the opposite direction, we were without the warning that put us all on our good behavior.

I don't believe I have ever seen such yellow or large cowslips as used to blossom in a particular curve in that brook. Across the road and to the left of the brook stood an immense willow tree, so large that some of its branches hung over the water. This was the boys' favorite retreat. They loved to climb way out on the limb over the water and taunt the girls with all the silly chatter that boys have been using against girls for centuries. We girls were quite helpless to reach them except with use of our tongues.



South Center School about 1900.



SOME OF THE LADIES who provide their services free in the Washington Elementary School lunch program are, from left, front row: Mrs. Pasquale Poilucci, Mrs. Norman J. Radwich, Mrs. Robert G. Elliot, Mrs. Fred T. Hansen, Jr., and Mrs. Theodore E. Cameron. Back row: Mrs. Edward W. Beier, Mrs. Erwin Levernoch, and Mrs. Raymond W. Jones Jr.

Photo courtesy of The Berkshire Eagle.



Mrs. Irwin Levernoch and Mrs. Fred T. Hansen, Jr., May, 1968.



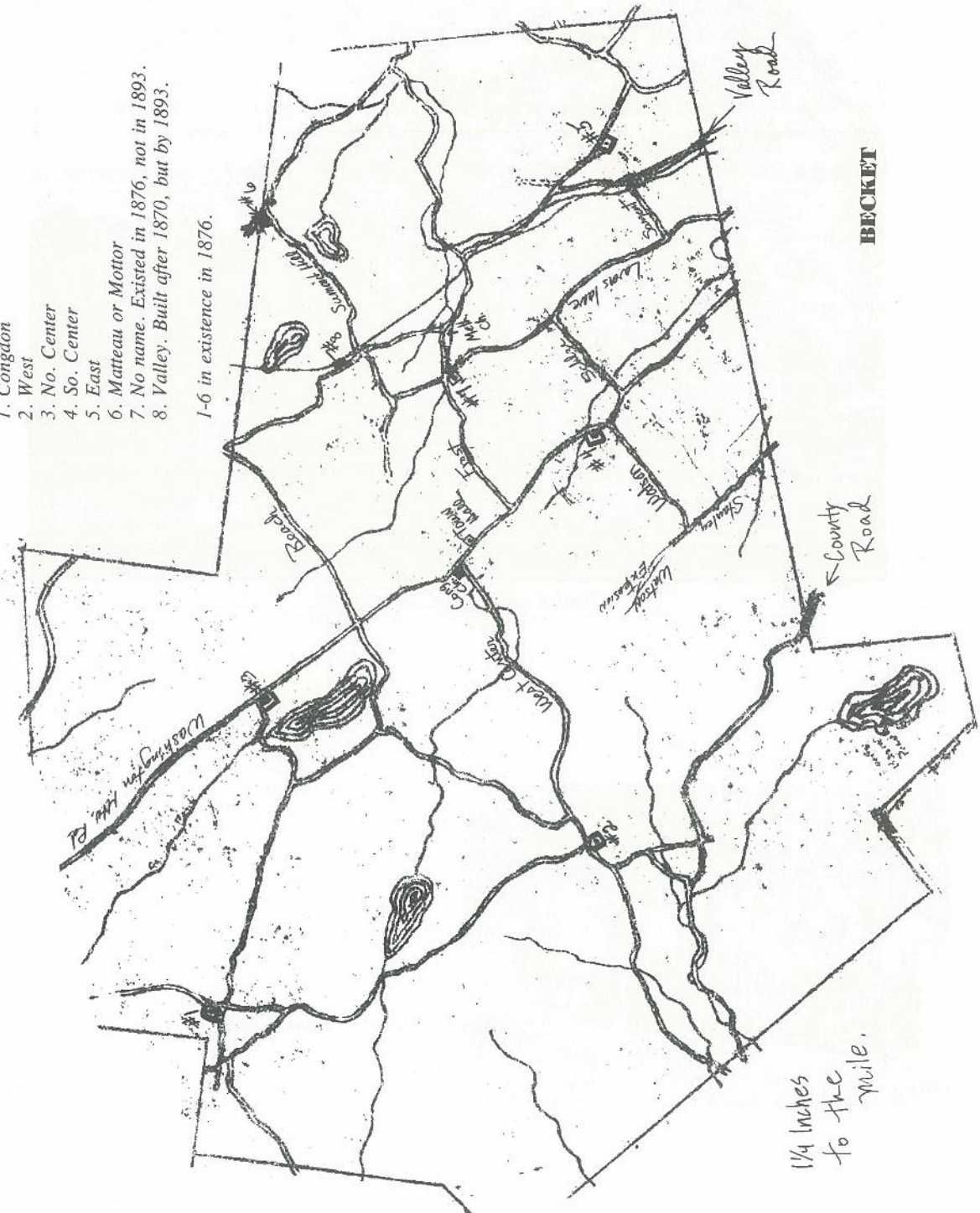
South Center School, early 1900's.



Washington School, May 1969.

- 1. Congdon
- 2. West
- 3. No. Center
- 4. So. Center
- 5. East
- 6. Matteau or Mottor
- 7. No name. Existed in 1876, not in 1893.
- 8. Valley. Built after 1870, but by 1893.

1-6 in existence in 1876.



BECKET

1/4 inches
to the
mile.

All went well until one day the weary willow heaved a big sigh under his load of swinging boys and let the branch drop down into the brook. There were bruises and wet seats that day, and we girls smiling and grinning to ourselves like Cheshire Cats.

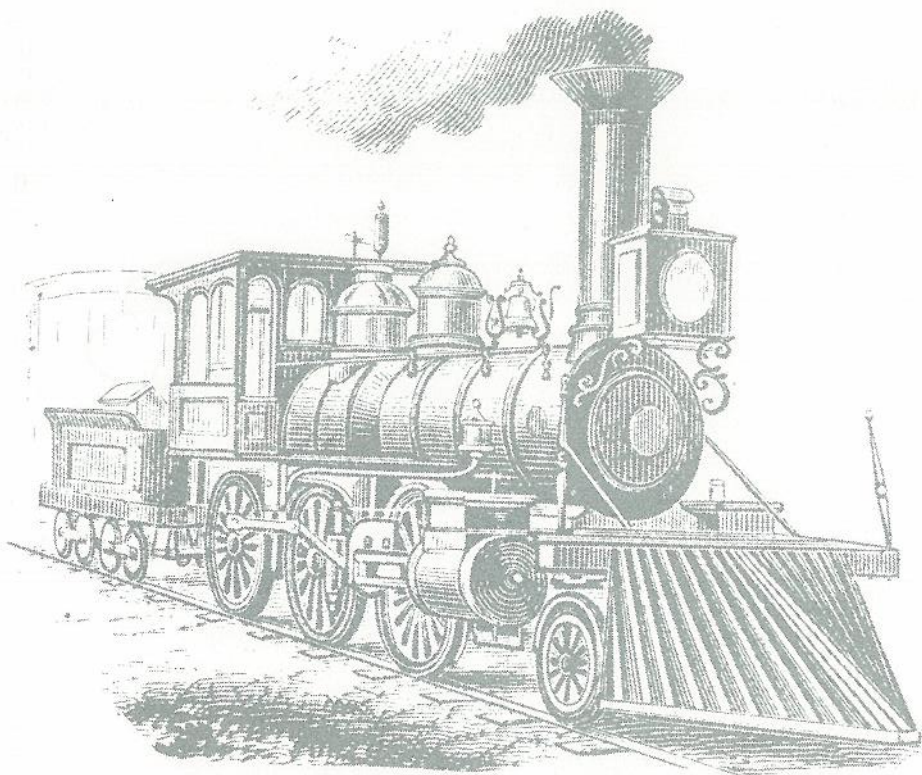
In the wintry months, long vacations kept us home when the weather was the worst. But when school was in session, the teacher was kept busy putting wood into the chunk stove that heated the room. One of the boys was sent out to chop the ice on the brook which provided us with water out of a common pail supplied with a dipper. There were no hot lunches. We huddled around the stove to eat our food, often packed in a "Just Right Cut Plug Tobacco" box.

One wintry day we looked out to see a wobbling female moose carefully and slowly making her way to our water hole. The winter had been an unusually stormy one with the snow often crusted over with ice. In spite of her emaciated state, she still was the biggest wild animal that we had seen in a long time. It was a red letter day. We girls were excited to the point of being frightened out of our wits and wondered if the animal would loom up out of the shadowy forest as we were going home from school that night.

I guess "Fox and Geese" was our favorite winter game. We girls did not have snow suits so popular today. Long underwear and long stockings was about all we had to cover our "limbs." So the boys had to make the track and the foxes' den before the girls would play. When a crust formed on the snow we could do a little sliding, using the front sled of a pair of rippers. We sewed, wove articles made of raffia or heavy cord or string. Every girl made a sewing bag, a doll pin cushion and similar articles, frequently doll clothing.



Railroads



RAILROADS

The quiet of a farming community hung over Washington in 1826. Dogs might bark, and answer one another from one end of town to another. Lovesick cows might bellow non-stop day and night. Roosters crowed and urged their wives to get up and at the day's work. Essentially, though, it was a natural quiet such as had endured for centuries. Little did anyone know here that no less person than Daniel Webster was saying that a rail system from Boston westward might be feasible. He had gone to Quincy in July 1826 to attend the funeral of John Adams. At that time the only railroad in the country was in Quincy where it transported granite from the quarries to the water, and when Webster saw the three mile track he said, "There are possibilities here."

Webster and Nathan Hale, nephew of the Nathan Hale hanged as a spy by the British, organized a group of men with similar ideas and ambitions. Men such as Lemuel Pomeroy of Pittsfield, Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge, and Josiah Quincy, Jr. of Boston petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for permission to build a railroad from Boston to the Hudson.

At about the same time, Dr. Abner Phelps, a native of Belchertown and a graduate of Williams College, had the idea of constructing a horse railroad such as was then in use in Wales. This had wooden rails with an iron strap on them.

The first surveys made in Massachusetts on the idea of building a railroad from Boston to Greenbush, New York, were in 1827 and 1828. Ten miles an hour was given as the maximum speed of the coaches, and "a change of horses" every sixteen miles would be necessary!

In June, 1831, a charter was granted for the Boston and Worcester Railroad. The stock sold promptly and in the spring of 1832 work began. On the 3rd of July, 1835, the first locomotive ran over the whole road to Worcester, and on the 6th of July the opening was celebrated with great festivity.

In May of 1833, the directors of the Boston & Worcester Company were incorporated as the Western Railroad Company. Nathan Hale was appointed president of the line, with the authority to construct a railway from Worcester to the Connecticut River.

It is doubtful if many people living in Washington in the 1830's were even aware of the plans afoot. They must have been principally aware of their own troubles. Not only was the whole country in the depths of a serious depression but they continued to lose friends and neighbors to supposedly better farming areas to the west. Farming is hard enough at best, but the weather here was just too severe.

There was much opposition to the idea of extending the railroad. Since the first forty-four miles of track had cost \$1,160,000 through relatively flat country, it was declared that it was certainly unfeasible to lay track through the "wilderness" of Western Massachusetts. The Boston Courier proclaimed that "a railroad to Albany is as useless as a railroad to the moon." A British novelist, Captain Marryatt, wrote "only crazy men would attempt to build a railroad across this savage wilderness." Another novelist, Capt. Basil Hall, who had traversed the hills thought the whole idea "madness."

The Western Railroad Company hired as its chief civil engineer Major George Washington Whistler of Lowell, a graduate of West Point, father of James McNeill Whistler, whose painting of his mother is so famous.

The building of the tracks inched along, and financing the work as it progressed was unremitting. When the tracks reached Springfield in 1839, ninety-eight miles west of Boston, the attitude toward the railroad changed. An article in the Charlestown "Watchman" of Nov. 29, 1839 said, "Bostonians will not be dependent on a little area of twelve miles for vegetables, fruits and fresh provisions, but the beautiful and rich valley of the Connecticut, the garden of New England, is now spread out before our doors, and we may receive articles as fresh and about as easily from there as from Concord or Lexington."

Springfield, already in a favored location on the Connecticut River amidst unsurpassed farming land, now started to be a railroad center as well, with resultant growth of industries dependent upon shipping facilities. One firm was that of William and Charles Dwight who began manufacturing locomotives and other steam engines.

The assault upon the hills of Western Massachusetts was now planned for such work, and no one thought for a moment that it would be easy. The first great obstacle was the Connecticut River because no bridges had yet been devised to carry trains across such a width of water. A Mr. William Howe, a Massachusetts farm boy, showed Major Whistler his new idea of a bridge with wooden truss frames

that would distribute the heavy vertical strains of a train to the whole of the bridge and abutments. The bridge was built from Springfield to West Springfield, with seven spans each 180 feet and a total of 1,264 feet. The flooring of the bridge was covered with tin to prevent fire. To resist decay from water a compound of black paint and black lead was used. This bridge was dedicated and put into use on July fourth, 1841.

As the bridge was being built, work was continued on the track toward Westfield and eventual points west.

As if the mountains to be crossed weren't enough of an obstacle, the railroad builders had to contend with the clergy who preached that the railroad was the work of the devil, and the engine was an invention of Hell itself. William Savage of the Western Railroad Company was called on to give the building of the railroad a religious significance. He also had printed a circular "directed to the ministers of the gospel" trying to convince them that they should instead be preaching on the morality of the railroads. In the struggle, the Western Railroad promised not to do any construction work on Sundays and that no passenger trains were to run on the Sabbath. It was not until 1872 that Sunday trains began running into Boston.

After crossing the Connecticut River the route became more and more difficult. The most level roadbed followed the twists and turns of the Westfield River toward the Berkshire Hills and the highest point to be crossed was at Washington where the elevation was 1,440 feet above the Connecticut River.

As the line pushed toward Middlefield there became the necessity of constructing high embankments, deep cuts, heavy grades and sharp curves. The rail head was 129 miles west of Boston when the course encountered a deep curved gorge. Major George Washington Whistler and his men built four 60-foot-long stone arched river bridges of the keystone arch design. They were the first, and for many years the only, stone railroad bridges in the United States except on Whistler's route.

Forty miles from Springfield the highest point on the line was encountered in Washington. Moving westward toward Washington, trains had to ascend 24 miles with gradients that ranged between 52 and 80 feet to the mile. Moving eastward from Washington, 27 miles fell within the same limits. An unanswered question was whether steam engines could cope with such a problem.

The town of Washington had been aroused earlier at the suggestion of a railroad passing through their lands. The farmers feared that the horse industry would be practically eliminated and that all agricultural pursuits would be injured. When the surveyors came to map out the proposed route, the hostility of the farmers became more pronounced. They were unwilling to sell the right of way through their farms and an official notice had to be served on the owner of one of the largest farms before the surveyors could proceed with their work.

It is related that Absalom Deming came out one day, pitchfork in hand, to a party of surveyors at work in his meadow. One of them asked rather sarcastically how far he owned. Mr. Deming replied with great dignity and force, "As high as heaven and as deep as hell." This became a saying through all the coming years.

Between Westfield and Pittsfield, the Western railroad followed substantially the old Indian trail, "Unkamit's Path." Early surveyors and government messengers made great use of it, and tradition asserts that one or more adventurers and spirited women traversed it. The faithful old guide from whom it took its name lived in Pittsfield at one time.

The road took three years to build, cutting down the highest mountain in the survey and filling up deep valleys and the "bottomless" Muddy Pond.

The story runs that before the contractors came upon the scene, in the summer following the survey, there might be seen a solitary Irishman with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow, breaking the ground on the hillside at Washington summit, where he worked alone and unaided for three weeks.

But in June 1838 the work was commenced and vigorously carried on. Daniel Carmichael & Co. had the contract for the rock cutting in Washington; and they had Sidney Dillon, afterwards one of the "railroad kings," as their foreman.

Life for the track crew laborer was dirty, hard and dangerous. This was years before the advent of steam drills or nitroglycerin. All they had was black powder, a primitive, dangerous substance. The rest of the work was done with 9 pound hammers, picks and shovels. Living quarters provided by the railroad were far from adequate. Most were infested with lice and bed bugs.

The drills used largely in those days were called 'churn drills' and were operated by horsepower. The work of blasting was attended by many dangers and some curious and fatal accidents occurred. To escape the showers of stone from the blasts, it was necessary for the men to run some distance. An Irishman was observed to take shelter under a shelving rock close by. The foreman warned him again and again of the dangerous refuge he had chosen, but he continued to take shelter there and his comrades half envied his seeming security. One day, however, after an unusually heavy blast, Jimmy was missing when work was resumed. Upon going to investigate, his fellow workmen found that a stone, as well fitted as by measure, had been driven up under the overhanging rocks and poor Jimmy was crushed and entombed.

Occasionally a large rock would be thrown quite a distance. The largest one which did any damage was thrown over a quarter of a mile, landing upon the floor of a house, then used as a store. A woman who was doing her week's washing on the second floor of the house had just left the washtub when the stone fell through the roof and crashed down through the tub and the floor into the cellar. The piece of rock weighed about half a ton.

The most formidable rock cutting upon the Western Railroad was made at the summit, being over half a mile in length and 55 feet in its greatest depth. Over 100,000 cubic yards were removed in its excavation. There is likewise a heavy embankment just before reaching the "cut." The grade of the road is 20 feet to the mile from Russell to Huntington, 30 feet from Huntington to Chester, 55 feet from Chester to Middlefield, 79 to 82 feet from Middlefield to Becket, and 79 feet from Becket to Washington. It is level from Washington to Hinsdale and is 73 from Hinsdale to Dalton. From Washington to Hinsdale, a distance of nearly five miles, the road passes over a high table land which divides the waters of the Connecticut from those flowing to the west into the Housatonic. The course is directly north.

In filling the embankment for the road bed through the Crane and Deming meadow, the steep hill which formerly divided two villages in Washington was excavated and the highway now runs through it. This gravel was carried to the embankment from the hill in dump cars which ran over a wooden track. The grade was so steep that no engines were required. The empty cars were drawn back by horses to the gravel bank where they were filled by the steam shovel which had then just come into use.

The Westfield River rises in Washington and flows under the railroad for the first time in this high embankment and continues, in culverts and bridges, to pass under the railroad twenty-seven times before reaching Westfield, a distance of twenty-eight miles.

The survey of the railroad through Muddy Pond revealed a depth of thirty-nine feet. The rock which was taken out of the summit ledge was used as a foundation for the railroad bed through the pond as well as for the embankment through the meadow below the summit. While engaged in this work, a train of gravel cars was left over night on this new road bed. Great was the amazement of the workmen to find on their return to work in the morning that the cars and even the track had disappeared during the night and that the place was covered with water. The task of recovering the cars was a hopeless one and they therefore filled over them and the cars remain in the muddy depths to this day.

One mile of this road between the 128th and 129th mile post cost \$219,929.67. The Washington summit, one half mile in length, cost \$134,000.

The running of the cars from Springfield to Chester Factories was begun on the 24th day of May, 1841, and from there to Washington summit on the 13th of September, 1841 following.

The road was first built for a single track. The double track was laid to Washington from Albany just before the Civil War in 1861. The railroad was unable to secure the proper help to complete the work until after the close of the war in the spring of 1866.

In the early days of the single track road, probably the first fatal accident to occur was the one in which the fireman, Augustus Granger, was killed. P. Bronson was engineer of the "Richmond" and Augustus Granger was fireman. They were helping up the afternoon express from Chester Factory to Washington. The regular freight train was on the side track at Becket. George Pomeroy was conductor and later became head conductor on all the freight trains going west. After helping the passenger train to Washington, they turned the engine about and started for Becket and met the regular freight train a short distance below Washington summit ledge. As the engines met head on, the shock was terrific. Augustus Granger was inside the old fashioned guard rail on front of the engine oiling up the cylinders. He was instantly killed. John Benson with the Sibley boys went to Washington depot and took a hand car from there to Hinsdale, as there was no telegraphing in those days. They found an engine waiting there. It was eleven o'clock at night before the track was clear. The railroad officials considered the



Railroad workers



Section gang at Washington Depot.

trainmen of the "Richmond" entirely to blame and they were discharged.

Another serious accident in those early days occurred at what is called "Stonehouse Crossing," west of Washington, on the way to Pittsfield. The broken axle of a passenger train caused one of the cars to be derailed in the accident and three persons were killed. Two of them were a young brother and sister who were taking their first ride on the cars.

The time spent in passing over the road from Boston to Albany was ten hours and three-quarters, including a stop in Springfield of three-quarters of an hour. Two trains went over the whole road daily, Sunday excepted. One started in the morning, another in the afternoon, the latter stopping at Springfield over night.

The following article quoted from the Springfield Union, dated 1907, shows the new life which the advent of the railroad brought into the town.

"Located at the highest point on the Boston and Albany, with the railroad sloping, like a house roof, in either direction, at the rate of something like 80 feet to the mile, Washington was of some consequence in those days, in the reckoning of the Boston and Albany. Almost every train had to be helped up the grade and that meant activity around the station. Back of the station was a large brick engine house, always with several engines on duty, ready to respond to hurried calls for help up the mountain. In front of it was a huge turntable, for all engines in those days of slow going Boston and Albany management, when starting out on a trip, went right end first, never backward. Scattered all around the station were the comfortable homes of the railroad men, scores of them, who found Washington the convenient point for living. Nearby was the village store and post office, quite a pretentious affair in those days, for the population was of considerable size and amply sustained the village store. There was scarcely a more lively railroad village anywhere on the line than Washington years ago."

Washington was the most noted "wooding up" station on the road. So steep is the grade from Chester to Washington that the engine making the trip used on the average a cord of wood. The amount of wood drawn to Washington station before the changing to coal burners has been estimated to have amounted to over 200,000 cords. Charles Crosier and Edward Cheeseman were the largest contractors in cord wood at Washington. In the first year of the railroad, the officials thought they could use only soft wood. Later they changed their opinion and desired to use only the hard woods.

Emerson Wight of Springfield had the contract for sawing all the wood at the various stations for many years. He employed several gangs of men with horsepower sawing machines. The amount of wood drawn to Washington station some years when there was a winter of deep snow was 5,000 cords. This was cut and transported to stations where the wood was scarcer, usually the stations towards Albany.

Railroad locomotives burned unbelievable amounts of wood. In the 1850's they used four or five million cords yearly. New York Central alone needed over two hundred ten thousand cords annually. It kept an army of men busy cutting, hauling and measuring and was a financial boon to thousands of small farmers and unskilled laborers. In Massachusetts alone some fifty-three hundred men were cutting and delivering wood.

Wood was the cheapest and most abundant fuel. It burned readily. It was so bulky that frequent refueling stops were necessary to keep the engines supplied. Under the forced draft of the engines, the smoke stacks belched a spectacular shower of sparks into neighboring fields, woodlands and buildings. The railroads were accused of burning more wood outside than inside the firebox. Lawsuits and claims grew in proportion. Passengers claimed of singed clothing and flesh, one even claiming that some ladies were almost denuded.

Just at this time coal grew cheaper as production increased, and transition over to coal became final. During wood burning days, the engineer was a respected technician about on par with today's airplane pilot. The engine itself was in bright colors with gilt decorations, but the film coal cast on everything necessitated that the engines be painted black — and the engineer had to change from suits and fancy vests to plain overalls.

Mr. Wilson Eddy in Springfield built most of the engines used on the line, making about one a month and employing 100 men of the highest skill. "The best of wood was used and covered by Russian iron on top. Brass bands were used a good deal and kept bright and shiny. The steam pressure would be from 120 to 130 pounds to the square inch. An engine would weigh from 20 to 30 tons and cost from \$8,000 to \$10,000."

In 1868, Otis Taylor, well-known in Washington, was engineer on a night freight. When passing over a bridge in Russell, he felt the bridge sinking under him. The shackle broke between his engine and the train, and ten cars went down with the bridge and were burned. Arthur Hills, a brakeman from Washington, was burned to death, while his cousin, Edwin Cheeseman, escaped although terribly burned.

"In those good old days of railroading, almost every train from the East stopped at Washington, for all trains had to be helped up the grade, and 'flying switches' were not allowed under the old conservative rules. Consequently it was safe to plan to come to Washington by even the fastest through express; and so to that station came privileges of traffic denied to many another of several times its size and industrial importance."

Washington was looking for greater prosperity because of its railroading advantages when unexpectedly there came an option to the train crews to elect whether they would remain here or remove to Chester. The advantages of Chester were so apparent that the crews decided to remove there. Then it was that Washington began to decline in a marked way. The large brick engine house was taken down and also the huge turntable in front of the engine house.

In the late 1860's, the first engines appeared which had been made over from wood burners to coal burners. The first of them were unsuccessful so it looked as if the wood market would continue after all. After repeated trials, the coal burners came to stay and the last of the wood-burning "mountain engines," run by Ashael Hart, was turned in in 1876. Then it was that "wooding up" went into history.

John Crane of Washington, who wrote most of the history about railroads, was hired as a conductor when he was only seventeen. In the 1840's, F. W. Manley was station agent in Washington, and wrote in his diary not infrequently, "Heavy snow storm, high winds, huge snow drifts, train has not been through today," or "train stalled all day in drifts above Crane's crossing." (Within recent years a story in the Berkshire Eagle was headlined "Washington Population Doubled Overnight" and told of a train stalled by heavy snow in the cut.)

Conductors were very important men on the passenger trains. George Pomeroy was one of these.



George Pomeroy, head conductor.

Washington furnished many railroad men, some of them after serving an apprenticeship on the mountain engines went West to engage in railroading. Among these were Edwin M. and Milo Eames, the latter being killed by train robbers while engineer on the Vandalia road in Illinois. Others were John M. Cheeseman, William Sibley, "Sol" Wing, and Frank Dibble. Others remained on the Western or nearby roads: John M. Benson and his brother Harry, Edmond Cheeseman, Emerson Dibble, Joseph and Henry Seagers, and Addison Pomeroy. Harvey Bill, Arthur Bill and John Corcoran were killed while actively engaged in work on the Western railroad.

The upkeep of the tracks was as much of a responsibility as laying them. Washington holds the unique position of being the "great divide," it being down grade in either direction. In the winter large gangs of men were often needed to clear the track through the summit ledge. In the early days, no trains were run on Sunday so that day was used to draw trainloads of snow from the cut.

During the Civil War, the roadbed needed special care and attention. There were train loads of war supplies. At the close of the war, entire train loads of soldiers would be on the side tracks along the border of Muddy Pond waiting for the regular trains to be cleared from the single track between Washington and Springfield. Among these were several Maine regiments, few in numbers, wearing worn and faded uniforms which they brought from the battlefields of the Southland.

The first station agent was David Sibley, through whose farm the railroad had made serious inroads. A small building was erected for a depot. A large part of the traveling public paid their fares to the conductor on the train instead of buying tickets at the station, and the public was not yet in the habit of sending and receiving their goods by freight, so Mr. Sibley was able to carry on with his farm activities. The local freight later on had a passenger car attached and was known as the "last freight." It accommodated passengers who had missed the regular train and served a useful purpose at that time. Mr. Sibley was station master for about two years when Frederic W. Manley took his place. He was appointed agent in 1843 and served in that capacity until his death in 1871. Many changes came to the railroad during these years. The telegraph was introduced into the service. The name "Western Railroad" went out and the "Boston & Albany" came in.

Mr. Manley probably measured over 125,000 cords of wood at the yard. The price first paid for wood was \$1.50 per cord. At the time the wood burning engines were discontinued, it was \$3 per cord. Mr. Manley's salary began at \$20 per month.

Following the death of his father, John A. Manley was appointed agent and he remained there ten years. Then he was promoted and assigned to the station at Warren. George C. Simmons, Mr. Manley's assistant, was appointed agent in 1881. Like his predecessors, he was born in Washington. When he took the office, there were two or three men on the depot force. Before the switches were connected by wires and a switch tower erected, one man was kept busy tending the switches, and another man was kept in the gravel bank region to look after the upper switches there. When a train entered the summit ledge east of the station, the engineer announced his wishes by a series of long and short whistles which were understood by all the depot crew, and the switches were opened and closed accordingly. This part of the work required experience. Fortunately, during all these years, no accidents from mistaking signals have taken place. The agent was obliged to learn telegraphy among his accomplishments, so he was station agent, ticket seller, baggage master, telegraph operator and switchman.

Mr. George Simmons was followed by Casseus A. R. Simmons (no relative) from New York State, and he saw the railroad's decline. He has many interesting and amusing accounts of the years he was with the railroad. One word picture he paints is of his trip to the station (a distance of a couple miles from his home) one day in pouring rain. He decided to go on horseback, carrying his lunch and protected by an umbrella. But a gust of wind blew the umbrella inside out, the horse panicked and ran away, and he had a furious ride until he gained control.

Mr. Simmons still lives in town in retirement after a long career as selectman, assessor, and civilian defense director. He has long been a deacon of the Federated Church of Becket, and been active with the Masons, ham radio work, Sons and Daughters of Washington, and many other causes.

Mrs. Simmons has also been an active worker for the town and church.

During the years when the trains were most frequent and before the advent of automobiles, the young men used to "hop" aboard freight trains from town to town and many lost their lives that way. Old newspaper clippings are full of the grim details, of which just a few are noted.

In 1895 — John Flynn who was killed by the cars on the B&A road Saturday night is a particularly sad one, as it leaves his aged mother and one son alone on a Washington Mountain farm.



Mr. & Mrs. Simmons

1908 — “Boy struck by train dies at House of Mercy.” Frederick Beigel, 13, walking on track and legs run over by freight train. (Sister Mrs. Carl Pier)

1910 — “Former Local Man Killed Under Own Train.” A conductor who slipped under wheels.

1909 — Edna May Ryan of Washington, a 14 year old school girl on her way to catch train in Becket for Chester High School, struck by the train she was hurrying to catch.

1911 — George N. Kelley stopped in front of passenger train near the depot (father of Charles, Elizabeth and Gladys).

1891 — “Jeremiah Collins’ Body Severed in Train” — hopped a freight and fell off.

1923 — “John J. O’Connor, 65, retired, was hero of Blizzard of 1888. During his 28 years service with the Boston & Albany Railroad, Mr. O’Connor never took a vacation. In the Blizzard of 1888, when a train was snowed in at ‘the ledge’ for several days, he carried provisions from the Corcoran home to the people on the train.”

“Genial Mike” Corcoran of B&A dead (Jan. 1921). Came to this country from Ireland with his parents when he was nine weeks old. Born in Washington, Mass., December 23, 1855, the son of John and Margaret Corcoran, Mr. Corcoran at the age of 13 years followed in the footsteps of his father and decided to become a railroad man. He entered the employ of the B&A as a water boy, working under his father. Worked his way to passenger conductor, retired. Left six sons and one daughter.

In another way, the railroad brought its changes. For one thing, the workers were apt to be strangers in the town, coming and going unpredictably. There probably had always been a class of wanderers but now they were apt to follow the railroad, either as migrant workers or later as tramps. Both caused problems. It later became a policy to just buy a ticket out of town for the tramps who overstayed their welcome.

One railroad worker brought fame of a sort to the town. John Whalen worked on the railroad, but was leaving for other parts. He said goodbye to his friends, drew his savings of several hundred dollars from

the bank, and went to the home of William Coy on Lovers Lane Road. They drank together, then had a violent argument, and Coy killed Whalen. So far it is an ordinary crime of passion. Then Coy panicked and cut the Whalen body into pieces, threw them out the back window and buried them. He might have gotten away with it — everyone thought that Whalen had traveled on with his railroad pass as he intended.

However, Mr. Alanson B. Pomeroy and his dog took a shortcut through Coy's property. His dog, roaming the woods around him, suddenly went into fits of barking and wouldn't be called off; so Mr. Pomeroy went out of curiosity to see what had the dog so excited. He found the dog digging at the new grave which Mr. Coy had dug and filled so hurriedly that the victim's suspender was sticking above ground. This is what the dog had found.

The newspapers far and wide made a field day of this murder and followed it avidly until the end, when Mr. Coy was found guilty. William Coy, the only white man ever put to death in Berkshire County for the crime of murder, was hanged on February 24, 1893 in the jail on Second Street. Black bordered invitations were issued for viewing the hanging; and it is all very reminiscent of the fact that not long before this, hangings had been public entertainments even here in Berkshire County, when whole families came from miles around with their picnic lunches and little children to watch. This hanging wasn't public, but the papers played up every word anyone said in the case and practically every breath Coy drew. This publicity didn't do the reputation of Washington any good. But it happened and was widely known and discussed for years.

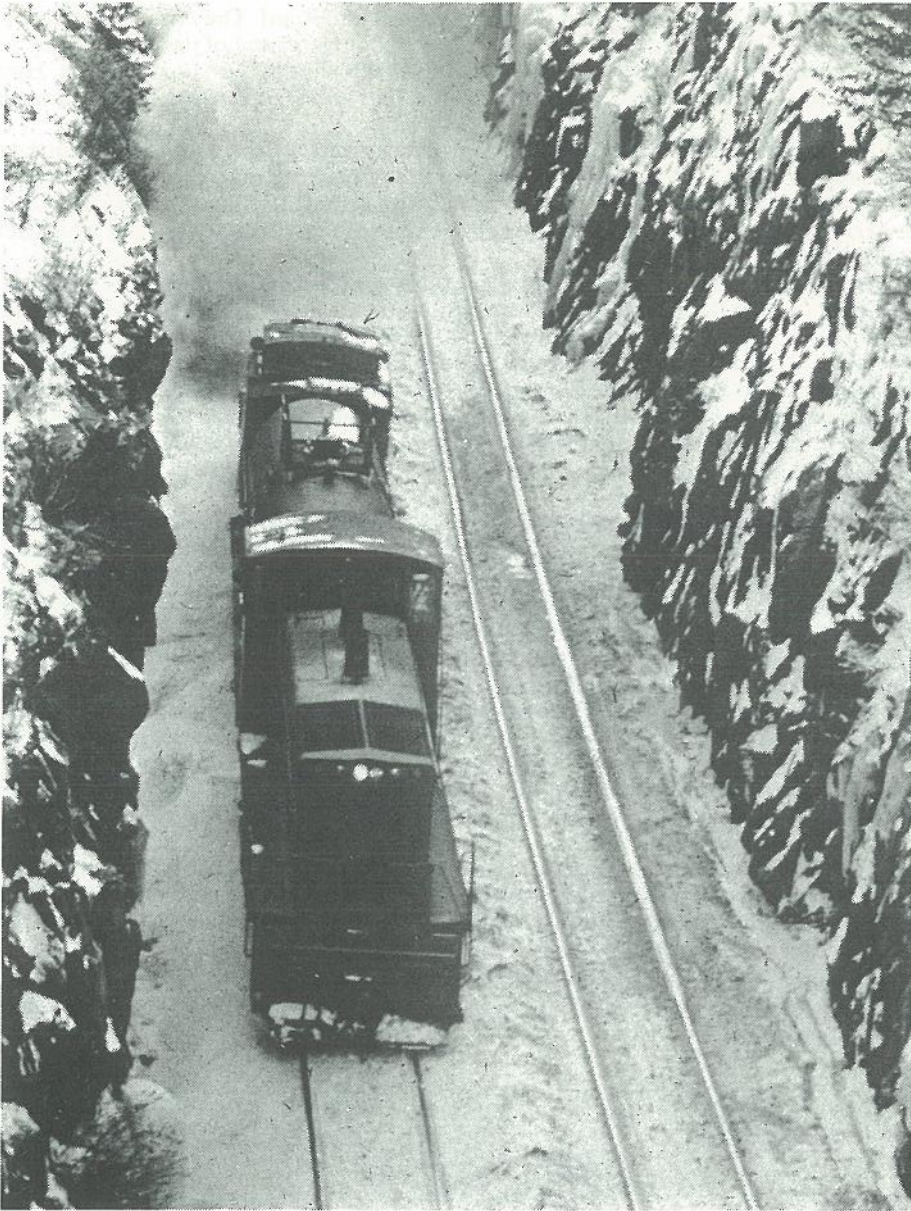
Not so widely known is the story of finding a skeleton without identification, but supposed to be a railroad worker. The skeleton was lying extended under an apple tree, ankles crossed and hands folded in back of head, and an empty jug by its side. After quiet inquiries of missing persons or possible clues to identity, the remains were buried without fanfare. It was generally believed he died happy.

One by one the little houses of railroad workers took on a deserted air and either passed into other hands or fell into disuse altogether. Fewer and fewer local men were employed, maintenance of the tracks was poor, and the heads of the railroads did everything possible to discourage the public from using their services, preferring to concentrate on the more profitable freight. Stations were torn down almost everywhere, including the big ornate station in Pittsfield and the tiny station in Washington. The line itself merged with the New York Central, and later with the Penn Central, became bankrupt and stopped paying taxes on their lines through the cities and towns. The bridges and overpasses were deeded to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for maintenance when they became a hazard to travelers.

Perhaps there is now a turnabout. Amtrak is running a few passenger trains and maintenance on the tracks is being stepped up. There is talk that at least the cities will have to rebuild some sort of stations, but the question is still whether the public can be lured back to trains and lessen the load on the taxpayers who are presently subsidizing Amtrak.

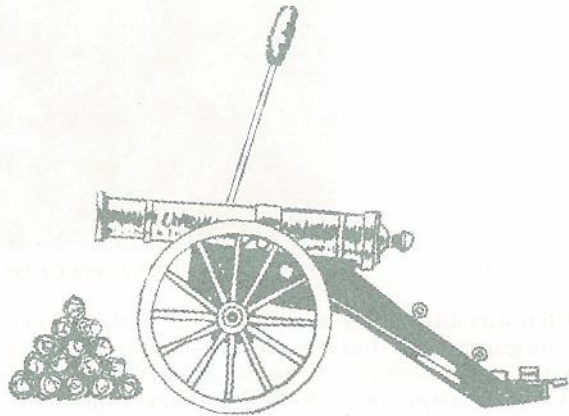
As late as January 22, 1977, the Berkshire Eagle had a picture of trouble in our railroad cut. A Conrail caboose with a forward mounted jet engine was being used for the first time to melt the snow and ice from the tracks.





Jet engine mounted on an old caboose was used by Conrail to melt the snow and ice from these rocky ledges beside the tracks in the town of Washington recently. Heat radiated from the noisy engine melts the snow and allows other Conrail trains to pass safely. It was believed to be the first time a jet engine was used for this purpose in the area. Men with picks and shovels or steam engines were used to remove the ice before.

Civil War



CIVIL WAR

Since the Mum Bett decision in 1781, many slaves slipped over the boarder into Massachusetts. Many of them came to Washington and at times had little colonies of shacks to live in while they planned for a more permanent life. They always lived in danger of being kidnapped and smuggled south for sale into slavery, even though they were free. They seem to have fostered a feeling of anti-slavery. Washington was never a main line on the underground railroad but there are persistent hints that there was organized help for slaves escaping toward freedom and safety.

This was particularly true after Rev. M.M. Longley moved to town not long before the Civil War. He was an enthusiastic and persuasive abolitionist. Not long before the outbreak of the Civil War, it is known that John Brown came from the eastern part of the State and met and interviewed the abolitionists in all the towns along the railroad route from Springfield. As we know, even express trains stopped in Washington for various services, so it is easy to believe what we cannot prove—that Rev. Longley met John Brown. It is also known that various religious groups were recruiting families to move to Kansas to try to swing that new area to the anti-slavery camp. Did this play some part in the fact that John Lewis Crane, born in Washington on Sept. 9, 1829, was in Kansas as a companion of John Brown during the troubles that earned Kansas the name of "Bloody Kansas"? He was called to his door and shot by Quantrell's Raiders in front of his wife and children.



John Lewis Crane

Although it was mislaid for some years, the Rebellion Record was found in time to be included here. There are no guarantees that it is correct—apparently it was compiled at a later date—and any official record that lists "Frenchman from Steam mill. Name and Reg. unknown," cannot be too accurate.

These 3 year men were in the 37th Regiment: John Bryant, Joseph Vetter, David Kelly, John Gilbert, Dwight Squires, Joseph Stemp and Joseph Quigley (listed as deserting).

These 3 year men were in the 27th Regiment: Westley T. Simmons, James M. Frost, Dennis Collins, Ensign Simmons, Ambrose Morgan (killed in battle), and Loren S. Holmes (died in Philadelphia, 1864).

These men were in the 31st Regiment: Jared F. Harrison, Lt. Patrick Dinen.

John McCarty (Mustered for Washington—see description roll at State House, Boston) 34th Regiment.

William Clapp and Daniel Reardan were in the 10th Regiment.

These men were nine months men in the 49th Regiment, as follows: John McCarty, Sylvester

Boroughs (died on passage home from New Orleans), Lewis Crosier, Samuel S. Kittle, Cheney J. Ingell, Ira Higgins, Frank Wilson, Ezra Brown, Charles G. Abbot, John Kelly, Edmund Felio, Ambrose Morgan (He was listed in the 57th), Ensign J. Simmons, Henry M. Seaghers, Zora Barnum.

These 3 year men were in the 27th Regiment: Marcelio Barret, Charles Bligh, G. Dedier, E. Gerard.

These 3 year men were in the 31st Regiment: Francis Peytan (musician), Edward Bill, aged 45 and Thomas Bill, aged 18, Simon Deval, L.W. Hopkins.

"Frenchman from steam mill. Name and Reg. unknown".

Martin Tewksbury, Henry Williams, Prince Butler and Owen Barnes are listed as substitutes bought by Selectmen.

Jerry Noble and Orestes Foster were 9 month \$100 men.

Henry A. Beach, A.B. Pomeroy and Erastus Smith are listed as \$325 1 yr. bounty men enlisting Sept. 12, 1865.

Commuted: Geo. Abbot, Eli Noble, Ira Burleigh, Sidney Jordan, Wm. Hathaway, Edwin Holmes, Emery Bauman, George Beach and L. Baker.

Emerson Kent and Henry Eames bought volunteer substitutes.

There is a book on the 37th Massachusetts Volunteers, three year men, mostly from Berkshire County and including some Washington men. Since my great grandfather from Lenox was in this regiment, I have done a little research on it. They went from Pittsfield and were in so many of the famous battles that their numbers declined steadily. Once when they were in Washington, D.C. getting rest and learning to operate big guns, they were included in a parade with newly arrived soldiers. Their uniforms were faded, their regimental flags were battle-scarred, under the polish their shoes were badly worn, but they were so proud of their record and stepped along so smartly that the watching crowd applauded them furiously.

They fought at Gettysburg on a day as hot and steamy as those we occasionally have, when it is an effort just to breathe. But they had to fight, wearing those hot woolen uniforms, while the dead on both sides piled up on the battlefield, along with the unnumbered dead horses who had dashed everywhere carrying ammunition and supplies. We found the individual monument of the 37th where they fought that terrible day. Their cannons were in the front ranks, almost muzzle to muzzle with the cannons of the Confederates, both sides firing across the little hillside up which General Pickett's men so bravely and hopelessly charged. Nearby, among rocky ledges that must have reminded our men of Washington's terrain, was the little gushing spring to which men of both sides went when their thirst was unbearable. It is so beautiful and peaceful today. It must have been such a taste of hell's worst that day.

Eventually the war was over and the regiment returned to Pittsfield and the usual heartfelt welcome and the usual parade through downtown. The people were shocked and saddened to see how few returned; and perhaps all of the men who did return were scarred for life by their experiences.

This meager account of those stirring days has no record of the great work done to aid the cause of the Union. Rev. Moses M. Longley was untiring in his efforts and it was largely through his influence that war meetings were held at the town hall and in both churches. Speakers from abroad were invited. The excitement ran high and the spirit pervading the community was similar to a revival meeting. Under the fervid appeals many a man came forward and signed his name to the enlistment papers amid the crowds of encouragement from his companions, while the wife or sweetheart sat by weeping silently. A solemn enthusiasm was felt, as the war spirit burned its way to every heart.

Washington was more deeply interested in the 49th Regiment than in any other for the largest number of Washington boys were enlisted in its ranks.

The 49th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, a nine months regiment, sprang from Berkshire. It had nine hundred and sixty-three men, of whom four hundred and seventy-three were farmers. The average height was five feet and eight inches. Major Charles T. Plunkett of Pittsfield was the tallest man and was six feet and six inches. The average age was twenty-five years, four months and eighteen days. The average bounty paid to each soldier was one hundred dollars. Her Sunday School Superintendent, Lewis Crosier, was among the number, and Ira Higgins, her famous school teacher, and champion checker player, although in middlelife, had joined the ranks.

The Washington boys were enlisted in Companies B and I. Under Captain Charles R. Garlick of Company B were Ensign J. Simmons and Edmund Fillio. Under Captain Zenas Crane Rennie of Company I were the remaining sixteen soldiers.

These men were well known and they comprised practically one fifth of an entire company and the movements of the gallant 49th were followed during its entire service with intense interest.

From the history of "Life with the 49th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers" the following extracts are taken:

Camp Briggs, Mass., October 8, 1862

The Ninth Company I came into camp on Wednesday, October 8, making it pretty nearly certain that the Forty-Ninth will not be consolidated with some other nucleus of a regiment, but will have an individual existence and a separate history. Its roll shows eighty-eight men.

Zenas Crane Rennie, of Pittsfield, is Captain. His age is twenty-six years. If he shows as much energy and perseverance in commanding, as he has in raising his company, he will be one of our very best officers.

Our homes were tents, called "A" or wedge tents. They slope from the ground to the ridge-pole, being five and a half feet high, six feet wide, and seven feet deep. Six form a family circle. Did you ever try sleeping with five full-grown men, with most of your clothes on, in a bed six feet wide? If so, you know that involves lying spoon fashion, and when one turns, all must turn, else some vigorous remarks will convince you that you are encroaching, not on the territory, but on the body of your neighbor.

On the thirteenth, Governor Andrew reviewed our regiment. He is a short puffy man, and looks as if he enjoyed being governor. His eye, light gray or blue, is really an eye eloquent, capable of expressing tenderness, scorn, anger, all the emotions. Though corpulent, he shows that he has an intense soul.

Captain Rennie was presented with a sword, sash and belt, by the family of the Hon. Z.M. Crane (whose name he bears) of Dalton. Hon. James B. Crane made the presentation speech, and added his token of respect, in the shape of a handsome Smith and Wesson revolver.

Camp Banks, Baton Rouge, La.

March 13, 1863, 9 A.M.

Here we are all ready to march on Fort Hudson at a moment's notice. We shall march about twenty-thousand strong. The Forty-ninth will send seven hundred and thirty-three men; one hundred and thirty-one men sick, of whom fifty-one are on light duty, will be left behind to aid in garrisoning the arsenal.

The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Traitors take more pains to instill treason into their little ones, than we do to imbue ours with loyalty.

Frequent mails keep us in pleasant communication with Berkshire. The Republican and Eagle are almost as welcome as letters. The latter, especially, posts us in local matters and in many little items our friends do not write about, forgetting every thing done or said of home has a charm for us now.

Alas! how changed are we from the men who marched in that celebrated "feint" on Port Hudson. Then we were worthy of any foe-man's steel. Now, we are but spectres. Our sick list stands seven officers, and two hundred and ninety-five "enlisted men". Remember, these are only they who are "excused from duty". We do full duty as long as possible. Many of the "well" properly belong to the sick list, and some in that list are shirkers.

Camp Banks, Baton Rouge, La.

May 19, 1863, 10 P.M.

The long expected "forward march" has come. We are directed to be in line, in light marching order tomorrow morning at five o'clock. We feel this is no false alarm, no feint. We are to go home a tried regiment. We shall soon show if we merit the proud appellation "Massachusetts Soldiers."

We will march about four hundred and fifty strong; all of the thousand who left Berkshire deemed fit for duty, and many of them not fit. The convalescents will stay to aid in defending this place.

Before Fort Hudson, La.

May 27, 9 A.M. 1863

Yesterday morning we were aroused to the solemnity of a soldier's life. Volunteers to constitute a "forlorn hope" were called for. As nearly as we could learn, a part was expected to run from the woods and bridge the ditch in front of the enemy's parapet or breastworks with fascines, and then return; the

other part to cross the bridge thus made, and assault the enemy at the point of the bayonet. How great the distance to run under fire none knew, nor anything of the nature of the ground, nor the width and depth of the ditch. Of the latter, rumor says it is fifteen feet wide and twelve feet deep. We judge by the ditch before our fortifications at Baton Rouge. The order calling for volunteers stated that their names would form a "roll of honor" to be filed at headquarters, from which to choose subjects for promotion. I think that had no influence with us. If more than the requisite number volunteered, five from the volunteers for each company would be drawn by lot. Quietly and rapidly did they come forward, as follows: Major C.T. Plunket, Lieutenant T. Siggins (D), Lieutenant R.T. Sherman, (E).

Company I—Z. Barnum, W. Wilson, D. Wichell, A. Smith, A. Farnum, A.S. Farnum, H. Vosburgh, R. Groat.

* * * * *

On the 31st ult., Colonel Paine, acting Brigadier, sent for Captain Rennie, who is reputed a good shot, and asked him if he could hit a man at a distance of twenty-five rods. The captain said, "Yes", and they climbed a tree, from which the colonel showed Rennie the work he had carved out for him and a squad of sixteen picked men. It was to silence two 64 pounders on either side of the roads, guns which so galled us on the 27th. Five of the men followed the captain to within ten rods of the parapet, and kept those guns silent the rest of that day.

Camp Banks, Baton Rouge, La.,
July 13, 1863

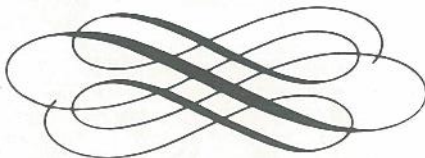
Glory! Hallelujah! Amen! Fort Hudson is ours and the Mississippi is open. The Confederacy is split in two; the backbone of the Rebellion is broken; Secessia generally is in a squeamish condition. Hunger, not assault, finished the work, after forty-six days' siege.

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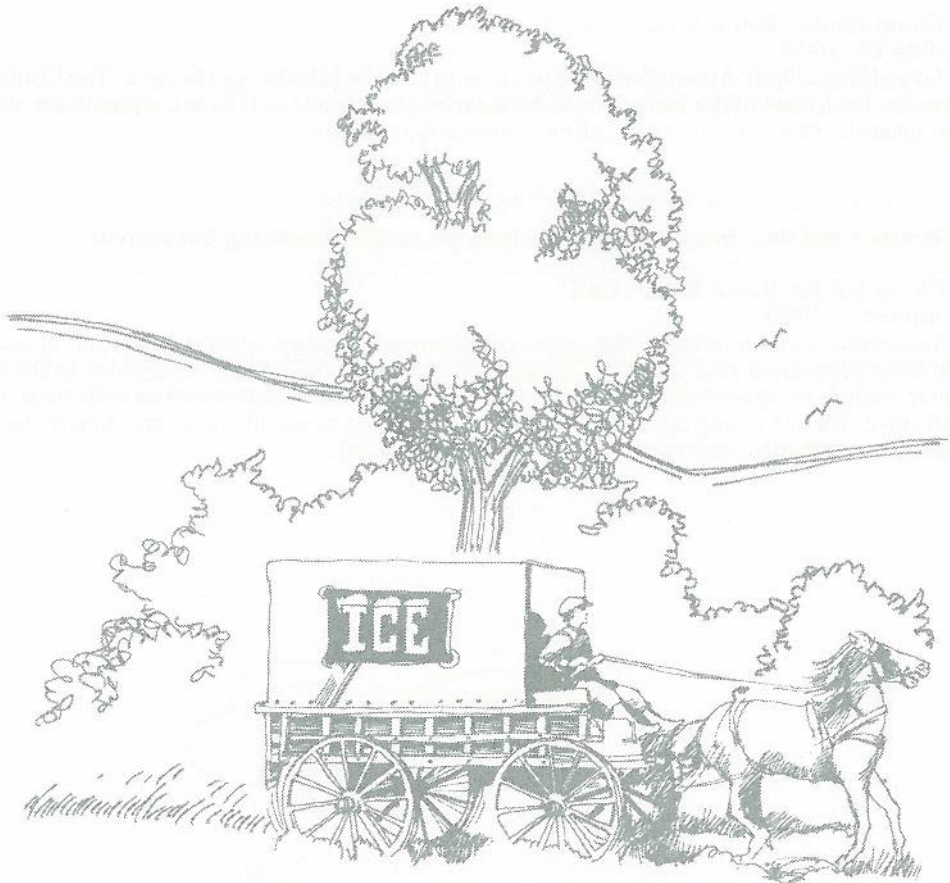
It was a sad day. Surprised and flanked, we could do nothing but retreat.

Camp Banks, Baton Route, La.,
August 2, 1863

Yesterday about sundown, the regiment returned to camp, after a campaign of seventy three days. We have seen more real war-work than some regiments who have been years in the service. Seventy-three such days try soul and body, and give us an experience and crowd us with such memories that we will never feel as young again as before. Living on the verge of the grave, becoming conversant with wounds and death,—years were packed in that period.



Late Nineteenth Century



After the Civil War the town's decline in population continued, but this does not mean that the life of individual families that remained wasn't busy and interesting to them. The Town Record Book gives the official highlights of what shaped our town for today.

At the end of the previous record book, the voters were voting and reconsidering the project of building a new town house. Neither the church records nor the town book give any indication that a new church and parsonage were built for the Congregationalists except a passing reference that during the stay of Rev. Norwood (1846-1850) he had helped with their construction. Since the town had stopped support of the Congregational Society, there may have been hard feelings.

April 2, 1849 "Voted to locate the Town house south of the burying ground gate".

June 9, 1849 the meeting was held "at the School House in the center of town". For whatever reason, this meeting was adjourned three times and the only business recorded is the acceptance of a road. The election of Nov. 12, 1849 was held at "the Town House", and the annual town meeting for the year 1850 was at "the Town Hall", which could only be our present little old town hall.

June 13, 1855 "In compliance with an act approved April 20, 1855" the town went into the liquor business, agreeing to pay \$25 a year to their appointee.

In due course of time (1856) the town was billed for: 43½ gal. whiskey at 40 per gal.-17.40 4 gal brandy 4.60-\$16.00. 23 gal. cog B 1.90-\$43.90.

Then they were billed for the necessary equipment in a liquor store. They threatened to sue the first agent for a shortage in his remaining supplies. In 1863 it is spelled out for the first time what was intended, when they appointed "Elihu Johnson Liquor Agent to purchase Intoxicating Liquor to be used for in the Arts or for Medicinal Chemical and Mechanical purposes only and to sell the same for such purposes and no other at his dwelling house in said town from the 15 day of November 1863 to the 15th day of April 1864 and he is to Receive for his compensation at the rate of twenty five dollars per year. Dec. 3, 1863."

Nov. 3, 1857 an article was in the warrant, "To see if the Town will take measures to look up the ancient records of said Town & copy them in a book," but it was passed over.

April 1860 "Voted to let the road and bridges out for \$800. Whoever takes them shall keep them in as good repair as they have been the past three years and clear the town from all damages." "Voted that each District shall break out their own roads in the winter without charge."

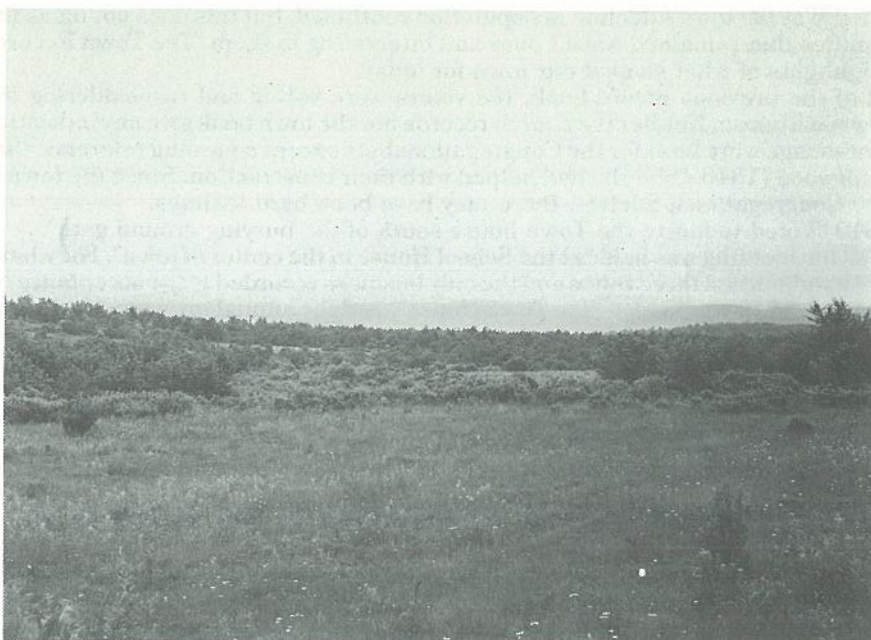
April 30, 1861. "Voted to invite the Delegation from Becket to address the meeting which was responded to by Mr. Bliss Meacum & the Rev. Mr. Morgan who made able & patriotic speeches.



The family's pride and joy



Woodpile for winter warmth



Farm land was open, not wooded, and vistas such as this were not uncommon. Cutting in the field was all done by hand then and farmers would "fight for the last swing of the scythe"

Nov. 5, 1861. Not a word about the war, but a lot of discussion about the possibility that a previous town officer had appropriated some town money, and this was to drag on for several years without definite conclusion.

The March 1862 annual meeting opened with a prayer by Rev. M.M. Longley, but that didn't move them from the usual path of bidding off the poor, choosing fence viewers, measurers of Wood & Bark, choosing a tax collector who bid least for the job.

The adjourned April 1862 meeting also opened with a prayer by Rev. M.M. Longley which I am sure must have at least mentioned the war. But the meeting got down to the serious business of appointing a man to repair the town pound, voting on the list of jurors, and then "Voted to dissolve the Meeting." A special heated meeting was about the charges of embezzlement against a former treasurer who treated the town "with outrage & injustice."

Then they started the continuing process of discontinuing roads or downgrading them to bridle paths. "Voted that the Selectmen be directed to deliver all volunteers whether three years or nine months to some Legal Agent or to take them into Camp themselves forthwith."

April 6, 1863 "Voted that the Selectmen be authorized to borrow \$2000 as is needed to pay the State Aid to families of volunteers. Voted to raise by tax a sufficient sum to pay the interest on the money borrowed to pay the Bounty to Volunteers.

Nov. 3, 1863 "Voted that the town will indemnify the Selectmen and parties connected with them for all expenses incurred by them in case that Nelson F. Tyler has commenced against them respecting his enlistment as one of the quota of the Town and that they be instructed to defend the suit." It would be interesting to know what this was all about. Mr. Tyler was at the next town meeting of March 14, 1864 and sworn as a highway surveyor, measurer of wood and bark, and surveyor of Lumber.

.April 11, 1864 "Voted to raise one hundred and twenty-five dollars for each volunteer provided the quota of the town can be filled. Voted that the Selectmen be instructed to go to Boston and if practical procure a sufficient number of men to fill the quota of the town."

Chose a committee of one (N. F. Tyler) to procure volunteers to fill the next call. And voted to secure information to make a record of men in service as required by law. (This is the "Rebellion Record" used to identify Civil War soldiers.)

April 5, 1875 "Voted that the town provide a place for keeping tramps." April 2, 1877 "Voted to set the Keeping of Tramps up to the lowest bidder. Keeping of tramps Bid off by A.B. Pomeroy for Thirty-five cts, each." April 1, 1878, still talking about tramps "Voted that the keeping of tramps be let out to the Lowest Bidder, tramps to have Lodging, one-half pound crackers and water. Keeping of Tramps Bid off by Edward B. Johnson for 18¢ each. Edwin McManus appointed in the west part to keep tramps for 18¢ each."

Odd items are sometimes proposed on the warrant, such as (1883) to see if the town will buy a hearse, which was passed over.

A picture given in excerpts from little privately printed book bought at auction in Granby, Conn. by Peter and Zell Pianarosa of Becket: "Carriage Driving in Western Massachusetts", by Clark V. Bryan.

July, 1890 "The carriage tourists through many of the Western Massachusetts towns will find three kinds of roads, good, bad, and the—profanely bad. Of the first, the way-back towns of Savoy in Berkshire, Plainfield in Hampshire and Ashfield in Franklin are prominent examples; for the latter, Peru takes the cake, speaking after the manner of modern men.

"It was in laurel time that carpet-bags, blankets, and field glass were stowed under the carriage seat, and rainy weather provided for by water-proofs and such; then ever faithful 'John' trotted over the North-end bridge and went up among the hills, through Westfield and Russell to Huntington, for dinner, and on to Becket for the first night's tarrying—a day's journey of thirty-five miles of 'up hill and down dale.'

"From Becket, with its pleasantly shaded streets, its freshly painted houses, its well-kept dooryards, its quiet and orderly ways of life and its Claflin House of well-earned fame as a hostelry, surrounded by many attractions, especially for summer guests, our second day's journey led up along the line of the Boston and Albany railroad, crossing it once at grade and once under track, to the Washington summit. Here we turned, as directed by one who was said to 'know all about the roads of the region'—but who in reality knew nothing at all about them—crossing the Boston and Albany track again on the bridge which spans the Summit ledge, and going northward to Peru, over a road that was found, before reaching Peru hill-top, to be almost impassable, from lack of seasonable care and attention.

* * * *

"From Mount Lebanon over the mountains, along which runs the line between New York and Massachusetts, through the smaller Hancock Shaker settlement, to Pittsfield and then to Dalton, for dinner, occupied the morning hours, the afternoon drive being from Hinsdale, Washington Depot and Washington 'City' to Becket for the night."

"Then on through Hinsdale, across a long stretch of beautiful meadow land, without a moment's tarrying, to Washington Depot, up to and over the bridge at Stone House crossing, with fine farming lands, bedecked with graceful maples and fragrant apple orchards, the latter just growing beautiful with bud and blossom,—all these filling out the well-lined records of the sixth day of travel. Nightfall found us at Landlord Schlesinger's Claflin Hotel at Becket, where everything needed for rest and comfort for weary travelers is to be found.

"At Becket, the morning of the seventh day was so superbly fair, that we stole the day for driving about the Becket Hills, on the assurance of Mr. Schlesinger that he would drive us to the totally deserted town, once, but no more, the thriving village of Washington—literally no more. Our host was as good as his word, and we found so much of interest on Washington Hill, of interest so sad as to be almost pathetic, that I will reserve the records of this day among the Becket Hills and Washington Mountain for another paper."

"Chapter X (July, 1892). A Day of Interested Lingerings and Loiterings among the Mountains, and an Almost Completely Obliterated Berkshire Hill Town."

"While making the return journey of a carriage drive among the Berkshires, and after spending a night at the Claflin House in Becket, a glorious May day morning tempted to a halt for a day, that a more thorough look might be had at the past and present glories of the Becket Hills, and we might thus be enabled to prophesy a little more correctly as to the future of the region of country lying along the ragged edges of Eastern Berkshire, than we could from facts gathered on a hasty carriage drive through the town. The sky was clear from horizon to zenith, the air pure and bracing, these conditions continuing throughout the day, which was a memorable one, indeed, if for nothing other than the fact that the second morning after found a six-inch shroud of snow lying along all the broad stretch of hill

and dale, over which we rode two days before with only light overcoats and wraps. With Landlord Schlesinger for charioteer and guide, we drove from the Claflin House as the sun came peering over the Blandford range of hills to the eastward, taking our way along the borders of one of the three branches of the Westfield River which join forces a short distance below the village center. Our objective point for the morning was the spot where the village of Washington once stood, on top of Washington Mountain, then a populous, wealthy hill-town village of much local possessions and of great fame abroad in the land, but now not even a mountain hamlet; decay and desolation abounding where once the landscape, both on the mountain top and down the hillside roadway for miles to the north and south, along the old stage road from Hartford to Albany, was dotted with well-tilled farms, linked one to another with heavy division walls, and with well-filled homes scattered thickly along the way; where denuded hill-tops, barren hillsides and unoccupied farms now abound, and where gaping cellar-holes stare at the passer-by with a gaze of silent solemnity at once pathetic and depressing.

"Circling one of the many hills which stand so proudly up in the vicinity of the eastern line of the Berkshire ranges, like transfixed ocean billows, we began to rise the somewhat steep ascent of roadway, once known as 'Washington Street', with what is left of its weather-beaten, falling and fallen buildings, now the only visible signs of worldly note in this region of decay and wreckage. 'That is what is left of Washington', said our guide, pointing to the northward, as we reached a prominent place of observation, having passed two or three still well-tilled farms and well-kept farmhouses. And after reaching the foot of the hill that stretched itself upward before us, fine and smooth, save for the presence of numerous 'water-breaks', the eyes of our party were fascinatingly drawn to the wood-colored and element-worn buildings at the top of the hill, except when attention was called to the stone-lined cellar-holes, where once over each a 'stately mansion stood' and where in all probability an old-fashioned family of a dozen children, more or less, grew to manhood and womanhood, and afterward 'went West' to grow up with the country'.

* * * * *

"One of the best preserved monuments of past days along the mountain road is a somewhat time-beaten marble slab embedded in a pile of native boulders, within reach of a whip in hand, as one passes, and upon which is told the story of a 'sad and fatal' accident which occurred there ever so many years ago. Here Anthony Eames was killed on the 24th of February, 1808, by the overturning of an overloaded sleigh, and the recorded circumstance is followed by a quotation that overlooks the inconsistency of attempting to cut down morning flowers in midwinter:

"Death, like an ever sweeping stream
Sweeps us away; our life's a dream,
An empty tale, a morning flower,
Cut down and withered in an hour."

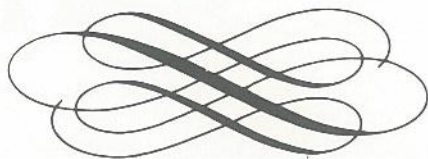
"This practice of keeping the memory green by chiseling in marble the record of such events was more common of practice in earlier days than now. A stone which stands by the wayside, not far from the gate-house above the falls of the Otis Reservoir, recounts the details of a somewhat similar accident, resulting in the death of an estimable citizen from being run over by a pair of oxen and an overloaded team on a steep hillside. But instead of being critical, we should, perhaps, commend the early-day practice, upon considering the fact that the newspaper of those days had not reached that point of perfection that it has acquired latterly in the chronicling of sad events, to say nothing of the brilliant achievements so often won in manufacturing such things out of whole cloth for the purpose of getting a 'scoop'.

"The drive onward was through and among farm lands and belongings that leave one really quite unprepared for such a scene of desolation as is to be found on the hill-top to which we were tending. Acres of greensward, here and there overgrown with underbrush, furnish the freshest and sweetest food for lowing kine and the sheep that grow 'free wool', the latter of which are, by the way, seen in rapidly increasing numbers of late, in all our Western New England towns. And the loveliness of landscape before and around us should seem to indicate that we were journeying toward, if not already in, a populous and prosperous worldly heritage. But here we are at the objective point of our morning's journey and wake from the meditations born of reading the records of an almost century-old accident, by the announcement that 'This is the only occupied house on the hill', and here a farmer with a charming outlook to the south and overlooking a marvelously rich and rare expanse of budding forest-tree, upland and low-down patches of blossom and greensward, is 'monarch of all he surveys'.

"A dilapidated, falling, crumbling edifice, bearing evidence of once being kept well painted and well cared for, crowning the hill, is the shattered remains of what was once the village church of Washington Center. One-half the double door, unhinged and fallen, leaves no obstruction to the entrance of man or beast to these sacred presincts. A portion of the roof has fallen inward; another portion has been carried by the mountain winds into an adjoining field. It was not possible to resist the desire to look inside, and in passing from the 'entry-way' to the main audience-room, one could not fail to halt and stand uncovered in the presence of such a scene of silent desolation, where the sad outcome of the mutations of time are so forcibly condensed and so impressively represented. The battered and broken walls, even, were voiceful, the choir gallery, although heavily loaded with the gathering debris of years, seemed resonant with a melody of old-time song, when 'Oh, for a closer walk with God' was rendered in echo, where echoes will never more be heard; when 'All hail the power of Jesus' name' filled the sanctuary with the presence of a rich and comforting religious fervor; when Coronation and Old Hundred were sweetly sung and shockingly quavered.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all these imaginations were resolved into thin air, before the realization that I was standing—for I had ascended the steps of the dismantled pulpit—where men of God had stood for many a day and generation to speak words of life to a dying world, reciting psalms of praise and bowing low in prayer and adoration.

"So utterly 'gone' is this church edifice and so completely wiped out is the society once worshipping within its walls, that a fund of \$5,000 left for the care and perpetuation of the church by the late Governor E.D. Morgan of New York, a native of Washington, finds no claimant, from the simple fact that the building is already wrecked beyond repair and the worshipping society has become utterly extinct. Just across the street, in the same condition of dilapidation and decay that we see in the church itself, stands the parsonage, through the swinging doors of which one can wander at will, 'upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber,' without let or hindrance—forsaken, forgotten and soon to be wholly unknown. Adjoining the church another residence, once both comely and pretentious, now fit companion in appearance and condition for its neighbor, is pointed out as being the birthplace of Gov. Morgan, who left the hill at the age of twenty years, going first to Hartford and then to New York City, nobly earning and modestly wearing, in after years, the proud distinction of being the active, efficient and humane war governor of the Empire state. On town meeting and election days the hardy yeomanry of the town of Washington still come up to the old Center to legislate and vote, and have a semi-annual handshake in and around the one-story town-house, where then may be heard hill-town argument and eloquence, only that the little official building may lapse into silence for the other days of the year as solemn and deep as that which reigns over the God's Acre in its rear, and where are recorded the names of Savery, Thorp, Chapel, Noble, Morgan, Bell, Ashley (from whom Pittsfield's Ashley Pond takes its name), Ballentine, Brooks, Burt, Sprague and others with less pretentious memory marks. Many of these are represented in the long lines of family sepulture, so laid away that the rising sun falls upon their resting places, making it as bright and cheerful as its shockingly neglected condition will permit. The morning hours were fast falling into noon-time as we drove downward, attempting to solve by the way this somewhat solemn problem of everyday observation: 'Why is this thus?' Why is it that Washington, once the peer of, if not outranking in potency and prestige Pittsfield, only five miles distant, is now extinct, while its more fortunate neighbor, much alive with business and beauty, is the only city in Berkshire and is its county seat? And again why is it that Lenox, only six miles away, with its many men and its many millions of money representations, and its many 'cottage' palaces and scores of acres of beautiful gardens, has gathered to itself much population and great wealth, with no more natural advantages, no more beauties of situation, no better soil or climate, flourishes hugely and enjoys a world-wide reputation for earthly values and worldly vanities, while Washington is literally wiped out? Can this problem be solved by another decision than that of the 'logic of events?' But logic is apt to be anything but logical, and events are often mighty uncertain things to count upon, either before or after the happening."



Summer Estates — October Mountain State Forest



The Whitney Estate

In 1895 a series of events led to great changes that still affect the whole town of Washington. Farms large and small were bought up over a period of years by former Senator Thomas Post of Lenox in his name, but as the purchases mounted into thousands of acres there was great speculation and curiosity about what was afoot. First an entire school district was eliminated and more and more farms became Post property as far west as Washington Center, comprising lands long known as "Washington West Woods" and including farms owned in the early days by Jasper Morgan, father of Edwin D. Morgan, the Civil War governor of New York.

"The Pittsfield Sun" kept readers posted on these mysterious purchases as follows:

"It is the 'lone lands' between Becket and Lenox that the 'mysterious millionaire' is making such extensive purchases thru lawyer Post, - a farm bought last week completing 6000 acres now acquired with more to follow. What all this land is bought for is as much a secret here as elsewhere, and as Mr. Post takes the title in his own name the person behind him is effectively hidden."

Lenox was still at its height as a social summer place for the extremely wealthy. Some of their most unbelievably expensive, large, "summer cottages" still exist but now used for boarding schools and other uses not originally intended. When people had money in great quantity, it was all theirs to spend as they wished with no income taxes, no minimum wage laws, no curbs on their extravagances. So they tried to surpass each other with beautiful estates at Newport, Lenox and New York, and there was a definite season to make the rounds of their estates which were usually under the supervision of caretakers for the rest of the year.

This digression is to explain what was really behind the purchase of the thousands of acres eventually accumulated in Becket, Lenox, Lee and principally Washington. The land cost was approximately five dollars an acre, and the 14,000 acres covered an area of about five by seven and a half miles, with about a third of Washington's total land absorbed.

Among the families prominent in social life of Lenox was that of General George Whitney, who at one time was in charge of the Springfield Armory. His son, William C. Whitney, became fascinated with the area and never lost interest in an idea of establishing a game preserve here. He eventually became prominent as Secretary of the Navy in the cabinet of President Cleveland and began the great work of rebuilding the United States Navy. The Whitneys had ten homes already, but the dream of the preserve remained. In due course, it was William C. Whitney who commissioned Thomas Post to buy the necessary land around October Mountain.

One part of Washington Mountain was in full view of Herman Melville's home at "Arrowhead", and as far as is known he named this "October Mountain" in 1850 when he wrote about its blaze of autumn glory, and the name became generally accepted.

In 1897 it was finally revealed that the enormous land area had been purchased by William Whitney for a game preserve and summer home. Forty-two farms had been purchased. Some were retained for the farm workers on the estate, but most inhabitants moved away and left their former homes to be razed. Mr. Whitney now owned thousands of acres of cleared farm lands, areas of virgin forests, tumbled areas of enormous glacial boulders, steep precipices, tangled underbrush, ponds and roaring brooks. Also abandoned were a brickyard, a saw mill and the old Morgan tavern. This latter building was moved from its previous location, renovated, and became part of the estate.

The valuation list of 1899 needs three pages to itemize Mr. Whitney's property. Unfortunately the long list of names of people who sold their land to him is hard to read, being hastily written with pen and ink. Some names familiar in the town records stand out, such as French, Porter, Chapel, Dunham, Fitch, Barnum, Clark, Messinger, Pease, O. Hutchinson, Partridge, Hubbard, Michael Delaney, Welsh, etc. It also lists "Handkerchief lot, 100 acres" and the "Shaker lot 200 acres". Under personal property the list is: 10 horses, 6 cows, 1 yearling, 59 sheep, 33 elk and 11 buffalo. There are many dwellings and barns listed, one the "dwelling for servants". The tower and water tank apparently were then complete. The newest item was "1 large log barn built in 1898, 125 x 50, 20 foot posts".

Mr. John Root of Lenox had been the contractor for construction of the hunting lodge in the center of the property. An air of urgency became apparent as Mr. Whitney ordered that building be completed in twenty days. A hundred laborers worked around the clock to meet this schedule. Calcium lamps were rushed up from New York to help turn night into day as the men cleared the building site and lawns, while carpenters and bricklayers worked on the building. Constant design changes and intricate interior work delayed completion until twenty days after the deadline.

Why all this hurry? Mr. Whitney's son, Harry Payne Whitney, was marrying Gertrude Vanderbilt in

Newport and coming by a special train to Washington and the newly constructed lodge was to be their honeymoon home. Instead they had to settle for a small house on the estate, later known until its demise as "The Honeymoon Cottage".

The main building, soon completed, was known as "The Antlers". It was a plain enough large building, as befitted a hunting lodge of the period, although the interior is said to have been luxurious. Old pictures show the house to have been large, gray with two enormous chimneys, and with covered verandas around two sides from which could be seen magnificent views of the surrounding hills and valleys.



Tower on Whitney Estate.

Further building continued with architecture similar to the main house. A few hundred yards to the north a three-sided stable was built to accommodate fifteen horses and all their considerable equipment. Some distance behind the stables a 150 foot combination water and observation tower was built at a cost of \$20,000. It was visible for miles around, and in turn afforded the climber with a spectacular view. Scattered in various places not far from the main house were four Adirondack camps for guests.

Round Mountain Pond was developed as a fishing headquarters with a boat house and pavilion built of ten inch spruce logs.

Mr. Whitney continued buying and building until he had twenty-four houses and thirty barns besides the Antlers house and stables. He employed fifty-five men, with a payroll of \$2500 a month. It is estimated that it cost Mr. Whitney \$45,000 a year for repairs and running the place. In one year \$55,000 was expended on new macadam roads. There were stone crushers, a steam roller, eight or ten horses and fifty men employed in the work. Many Washington men worked part time on the estate, doing their own chores even earlier than usual, riding with a team and work wagon to the scene of operations, putting in a full day's work there, returning home and then doing their evening chores. We have a picture of one of these groups.

Mr. Whitney also had more than twenty miles of bridle paths and bicycle paths winding through. He would ship up from New York twenty-five horses, mostly small Indian ponies, on which his guests could explore. It was at the time of the bicycles' greatest popularity, hence the provision of bicycle paths. He also had water and sewer lines built, and a private phone system connecting all parts of the estate.

Mr. Whitney did not lose sight of his main reason for acquiring all this wild land. His first step was to enclose one thousand acres of both cleared land and wilderness within a ten foot fence of steel wire



Men going to work in Whitney estate

with mesh openings 8 x 4 inches, with chestnut posts placed every twenty feet. (Even to 1975 lumbermen occasionally found traces of this fence in the big trees.) One side of this game preserve was right across the road from the main house. Once a week and after every storm, the fences were always inspected.

In 1897 Mr. Whitney imported from Wyoming a buffalo herd of eight cows and five bulls. They arrived at Lenox Station in two railroad cars and were transported up the steep, thousand foot rise to the preserve in huge crates drawn by four-horse teams. The king of the herd was the big bull "Apache", the largest buffalo bull in the world. "Apache" was afterwards sent to the Bronx Zoo where he met his death. The buffalo thrived well on the grass and blackberry bushes, and in winter were brought into an enclosure and fed with hay, well filled with brambles which they liked to chew. Each buffalo was estimated to be worth at least \$500.

Mr. Whitney began collecting elk until he had 180 head at one time, beautiful creatures but dangerous, especially in the breeding season of October and November. When even this large enclosure could not feed so many elk, some were captured and sent to his estate in the Adirondacks. The men had quite a struggle getting the animals into shipping crates.

In 1901, he added to his preserve ten of the rare black tailed deer. He also bought several head of Virginia deer. Some antelope arrived but could not withstand the severe Berkshire winter. In 1902 two pair of two year old moose from Canada appeared. These were given an enclosure of their own in the valley and seemed to enjoy the dense woods and deep valley. When the estate was abandoned, the big game was shipped to New York or sent to Austin Corbin's New Hampshire preserve. The moose were so wild and hard to capture that they were allowed to remain, as were the deer. Eventually, years later, only "Old Bill" was still around.

Old Bill wandered at will through the whole area, sauntering down the main street of Lee, or appearing at intervals outside the original estate and calmly allowing people to stare at his vast bulk.

Then one deer season someone shot and killed him, and left him. The body was soon found. If you want to know what he looked like, go to the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield and you will find his mounted head watching over the animal exhibits, with a plaque as follows:

"Old Bill"

A Berkshire County Moose

"Old Bill", an offspring of the Whitney herd, developed a reputation as a prankster, and one day even invaded the sanctity of the broad main street of Lenox. The huge animal, easily recognized by a scar on the shoukder, became a favorite of Game Warden Wm. W. Sargood, and was named for him.



"Old Bill" — the moose shot on the Whitney Estate.

During the deer season of 1920 "Old Bill" was found dead near East Otis, having been illegally shot by some hunter.

Moose was rigidly protected by law in Mass.

Those desiring to learn more about "Old Bill" will enjoy a chapter in "On the Edge of the Wilderness", a book by Walter Prichard Eaton.

Presented by William W. Sargood

The "Pittsfield Sun" of October 12, 1899 printed an article by James Hoading, its editor, as follows:

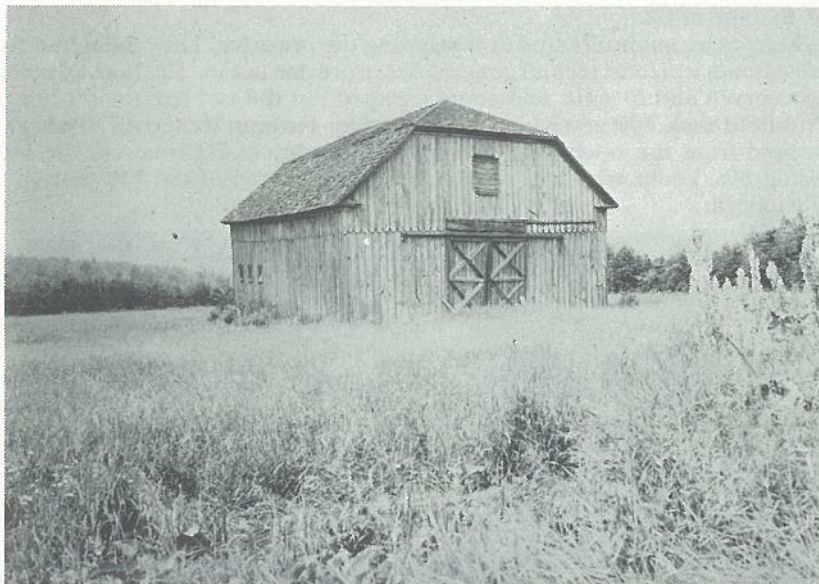
"It is a drive of about eight miles from Pittsfield to the Whitney place on October Mountain. We went by New Lenox, the mountain climb beginning at the Hutchinson sawmill, quite a pretentious building with dam and flume. The road is very good and not difficult. There are steep pitches, of course, but many restful 'thank-you-ma'ams', when your team may breathe while you glimpse of 'far countries' visible thru vistas as you climb up.

"Soon after crossing Roaring Brook evidence of extensive ownership begins. Signs on the roadside trees warn us against 'Gunning, fishing or trespassing under penalty of the law', and these placards bear the signature of W.C. Whitney and are not to be trifled with. Some say they would chance the good nature of Mr. Whitney for a few partridges or rabbits in their season; but one glimpse of the burly game-keeper, with a blunderbus at his beck, galloping along the ways and lanes that cross and border the estate, cures any disposition to poach. He looks fierce enough to take a man's life for the theft of a chipmunk even, and so partridges dust themselves in the highway and perch temptingly upon the branches, and no man unauthorized lifts gun or pulls trigger.

"You come to 'forks' in the road at last where the plateau begins. The road to the right leads to the headquarters of the big game where Mr. Frank Chapel and family have watch and ward. Down in the valley and on the knolls and on slopes are those strange figures on a Berkshire landscape, - American deer, elk and buffaloes. Twenty-three elks have been born on the estate the current year and there are now fifty-nine head. The head is increasing rapidly and the mountain will soon be populous with this fine game as the woods of the shooting section of Maine. Some of the bucks have splendid antlers and seem to be in fine health. All are in good condition, sleek and fat and almost as big as an ordinary horse.

"The buffaloes wander at will and seem fat and stupid. There are nine cows and four bulls. Two have been born here and seem to thrive. They do not appear to be as domestic as the elk. They stood in the

yard with heads down, sullen looking and sulky. It has been necessary to build shed shelter for them in the winter and to feed them grain and hay. It gives one rather a queer feeling to remember that in almost recent years these animals roamed the plains in countless thousands and now there are in the country only such fragmentary herds as these, the race practically exterminated. The elk are becoming acclimated and are breeding well, but there has been less prospect of success in breeding buffaloes.



Old Morgan Tavern — Barn on Whitney Estate.

“The Whitney residence stands in a sunny bit of field, perhaps we should call it a lawn. A little way removed are the frames of a dozen little cottages, canvas covered upon an occasion and used as an annex to the big house when the company is larger than the mansion’s capacity. The servants are here for Mr. Whitney has been making flying visits, and there is a report that Harry Payne Whitney, family and friends are soon to be here. There are horses in the stables, carriages from the little buggy to the great coach in the barns and all the equipment for mountain touring. From the front of the house, the view extends across the valley now autumnly gorgeous. Here and there are the little artificial lakes; beyond are the roofs of the cottages or other buildings essential to the oversight of such a vast estate of more than ten thousand acres, and the ownership extends far and across this vale and over and over its slope until the red summits meet the sky at the horizon.”

Since Mr. Whitney was the largest property owner in Massachusetts, newspaper articles on the estate were numerous. Even as late as June 7, 1975 the “Springfield Union” published a long article about the development of the estate and its subsequent reversion to wilderness.

All the emphasis so far has been on the big game animals. Mr. Whitney also took an interest in stocking the ponds and brooks with fish. He also bred pheasants, partridge and quail, and for them he scattered little fields of buckwheat all over the estate. He kept angora goats and 226 sheep, and even Belgium hares. He cut 100 tons of hay a year to be fed to the animals, and 50 tons additional for the horses and cows.

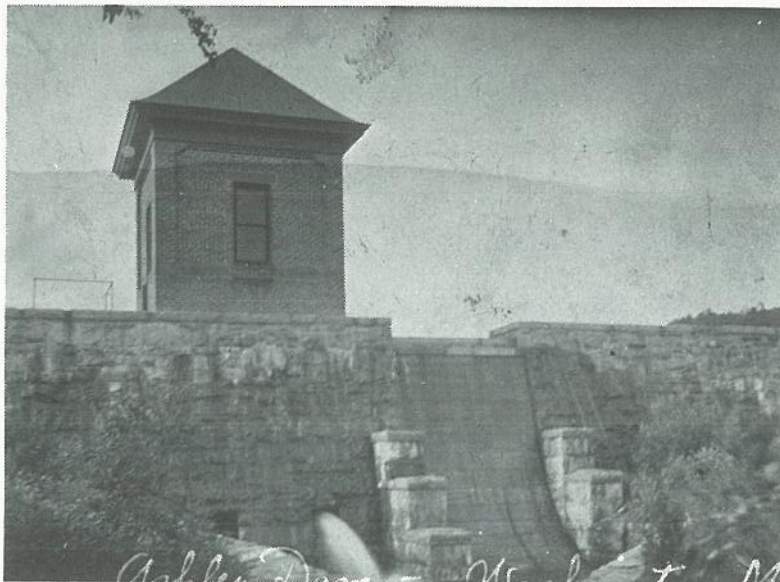
An amusing sidelight is that the selectmen of Washington were designing a town seal, and they requested Mr. Whitney’s permission to use his portrait thereon “as a token of the town’s appreciation of its most public spirited citizen as well as the largest land owner, not only of the town but also in the state.”

A bust of Mr. Whitney was made and the seal designed; but at the town meeting in April 1902, the ex-Secretary of the Navy, William C. Whitney, having decided against having his portrait on the seal, it was decided to use that of George Washington instead. After all, he had been Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, the first president of the United States, and the man for whom the town had been named in the first place.

No one knows where this enterprise might have led, but it came to an abrupt end when Mrs. Whitney was severely injured when she fell from her horse during a hunt in South Carolina in 1902. She lingered on until May 1903, but died in spite of the best treatment available. Mr. Whitney, greatly despondent, retired from business, society and his famous place in the Berkshires. Although yearly expenses continued to approach \$60,000 a year, Mr. Whitney spent only two weeks of that time in residence. In 1904 he died at the age of 62.

Mr. Whitney's heirs were not interested in continuing the preserve. They thought it too expensive. In 1906 maintenance funds were cut off and general deterioration set in. The hooved stock were shipped to other game preserves and to zoos, and some escaped but did not survive for long.

The City of Pittsfield took 700 acres as a watershed for Farnum Reservoir. They continued taking more and more land from the town until now they have almost 5000 acres, the last farmer to be dispossessed being Mr. Loehr who had a beautiful place on top of the hill just as the road starts descending to Pittsfield.



The Ashley Dam

In 1915 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts started negotiating to obtain the rest of the Whitney area for a state park. The Whitney family set a price of \$100,000 and the State offered the assessed valuation of \$75,000. These matters were stalled until donations for the additional \$25,000 were raised, including sizeable sums from Cortland Field Bishop of Lenox and Kelton B. Miller of Pittsfield. The area was then renamed October Mountain State Forest, the buildings were torn down as they fell victims of vandalism and neglect, the last to remain being the "Honeymoon Cottage" where a caretaker continued to live for some years. Today one can find scattered marble steps and the stone foundation posts on which the water tower once stood. There is an accelerating return of wilderness through most of the area. The dirt roads were once beautiful but gradually they were allowed to become rutted and so rocky that it is a hazard to take an automobile over them.

In 1930 the Civilian Conservation Corps built a camp in the area and went to work on the forest. They thinned where the trees grew too crowded, dug poles in the brooks for fire control. They temporarily restored some of the roads and trails, built picnic tables in a planned camping area, and planted thousands of spruce trees. In a few years most of their work was obliterated by the wilderness. The State occasionally sells standing timber on the bids from lumbermen, and loads of logs are seen emerging from the forest. Hunters swarmed in during deer hunting season; but of recent years there have been few deer to hunt probably because this whole area has been reverting to forest land with little browse to sustain them. Farmers in previous years had valid complaint of the damage deer did to their gardens and orchards, but there are no real farms in Washington now and few cleared areas.

On August 26, 1976 the "Berkshire Eagle" had a headline "House approves \$250,000 fund for Washington Mt. Brook lakes". If the State Senate also approved, the federal government will add an additional \$1,000,000 from the Soil Conservation Service.

"More than \$900,000 (\$600,000 of it from the federal government) has already been spent on the project, which is designed to reduce flood damage, increase the safe yield of Lee's municipal water supply by providing the town an auxiliary water source, and provide public recreational facilities.

"The watershed includes 4,670 acres in Washington, 870 acres in Lee and 200 acres in Becket.

"The three lakes in the project are on the western slope of October Mountain and will have a combined surface area of 325 acres.

Late in 1976 a petition was filed by environmentalists to stop the project until a suitable environmental impact study could be made. There the matter rests.

* * * *

Bucksteep Manor

The Whitney Estate was not the only summer home of wealthy New Yorkers built on the outskirts of Lenox. The one best remembered is the George Crane estate because the buildings still stand, belonging now to Judge Rudolph Sacco; but also because of the private chapel, St. Andrew's, which is now in controversy.

Mr. Crane modeled his house after an English estate he had visited, hired a mason to build beautiful stone walls and entrances to it, and plainly enjoyed the role of gentleman farmer while in residence. He had a beautiful pair of matched bay Morgan mares whose dashes up and down the road were well remembered, especially under their winter bells.

This property was part of the William Gay Ballantine farm and the Ballantine house was still standing. Rather than tear it down, it was put on rollers and taken to Frost Road where it stood until destroyed by fire.



The Reverend Ballantine's old home

Besides Christmas parties at the Chapel for all the local children, the Cranes also had barn dances for the neighborhood, usually with just an old-time fiddler and caller. When the Crane children grew up, the place was turned over to the Girls' Friendly Society and became well-known as a camp and conference center.

The Winslow Estate

Francis Dana Winslow of New York City built his summer home between Mr. Crane's estate and Frost Road on another part of the old Ballantine farm. The main house burned some years ago, and Mr. Sacco now owns the property as Camp Karu.



*Anne Middlebrook whitening
the wash at the Whitney estate*

Ann Middlebrook's notebook of clippings has many items on the Winslow's social life in New York City, and one clipping on a party given for the servants pictures an era long gone.

PLEASANT SOCIAL IN WASHINGTON

Mr. and Mrs. Francis D. Winslow of New York City gave an enjoyable entertainment to their household help last Friday evening at their mountain summer home at Washington, in the Berkshire hills. The commodious barn and carriage house were converted into a bower of beauty, by decorations of flags and gatherings from the forest arranged upon the walls. The outside decorations were also a feature, an evergreen arch over the driveway was hung with Japanese lanterns, as were many of the trees about the place. Two long and well-spread tables were the attraction in the carriage house, where lemonade, ice cream and several kinds of cake from Barn's of this city were daintily served by Mrs. Winslow, assisted by Miss Annie Morrissey and Mr. Peterson. There was a large attendance of friends and neighbors; even the babies were there, and kept their bright eyes open, watching the merry dancers till the "wee sma' hours". Excellent music was furnished by players from Pittsfield. The dancing began promptly at 9 and among those on the floor were Frank F. Corey of Pittsfield and Miss Annie Morrissey, Mr. Mogar of Becket and Miss Frances Lowry of New York City, Fred Kelley and sister Bessie, and the Misses Winslow and their brothers. The names of the household help thus honored are George S. Corey, superintendent of the farm, Chauncey his son, L.N. Peterson, Catherine Fox, Annie Morrissey and Fannie Lowry of New York, Rose Martin of Becket, Frances Gay, cook, of Boston, Bertha Gerhard, the French governess and music teacher. Among the guests present were the family of George Crane of New York City, also pastor of the little stone church on the hill, Rev. Mr. Holton and his wife.



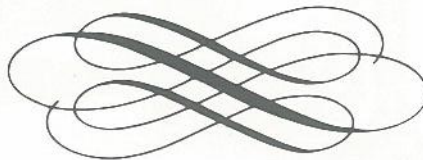
Clambake around 1900 at Winslow estate

The N.N. Fowler Estate

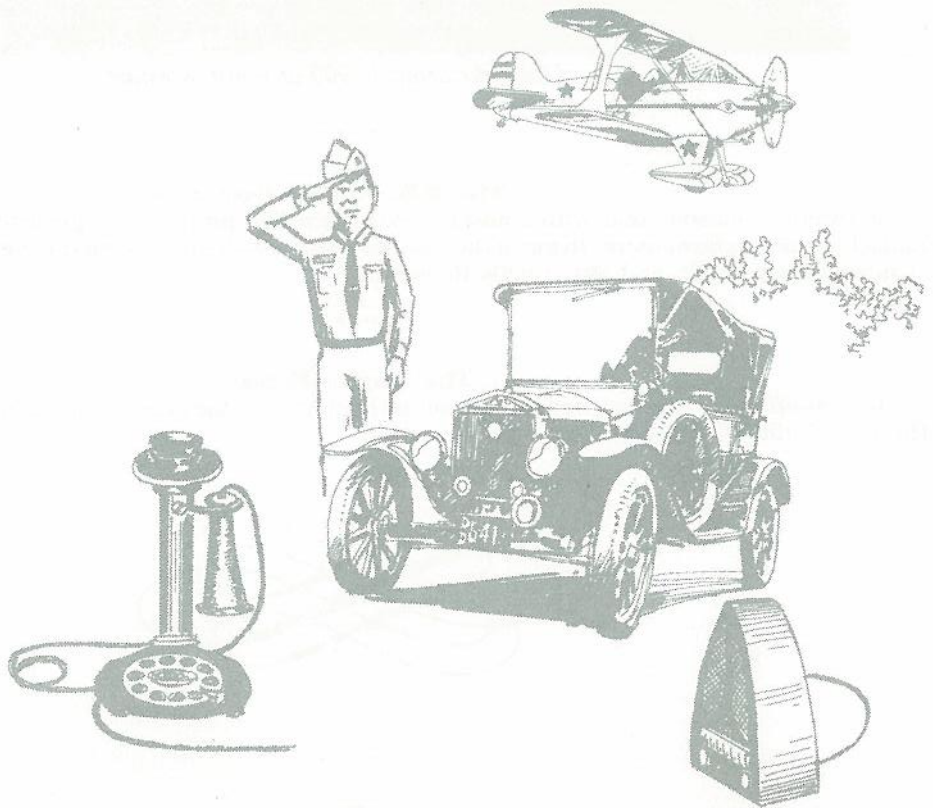
This was on Johnson Road, with a most gorgeous view. The property was given to Mr. Harry Olds who had a big chicken farm there, living in the smaller house and tearing down the big house to save taxes. It now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Roosevelt.

The Huyler Estate

This was off Johnson Road, and was the actual beginning of the present Gould Farm of Monterey, but the main building burned down.



Twentieth Century World War I, World War II



The Twentieth Century started on a flourishing note. The town had its few summer estates bringing favorable notice of the public to the Town of Washington.

The telephone made its way slowly into town. These were party lines. A prolonged ring meant that the operator wanted everyone to answer for some emergency. Private calls were complicated like three long rings and two short, or two short rings and three long. Whatever the number called, it was common practice for almost everyone on the line to eavesdrop. After all there was no radio or television for entertainment.

Farming had its ups and downs, but most of the men managed to pick up some outside income, and it was a friendly life.

The whole country just drifted into what had seemed unbelievable for so long, War. War was bad enough, but the world-wide flu epidemic killed more people than the war did, and the whole thing rocked our country in many ways. There was a great upsurge in employment, drawing more people to the cities. Thirteen men went into the service in World War I: Reuben Barker, Charles Beigle, Domenick Ciavattone, John Chasey, Stuart Henry Eames, Philip F. Eichelsor, Charles H. Gravel, John Meiers, Royden I. Peaslee, James Sanderson, Thomas E. Valorose, Carl Wagner, Raymond A. Wood.

After the war Washington was smaller than ever. The Whitney estate became the October Mountain State Forest, the other summer estates were unused. The people who had left did not come back, but new people bought the old farms either for summer homes or to try to make a living. Then came the great depression, starting in 1929 and working its way into an ocean of troubles that swept people away from their moorings. The people of Washington had long ago learned to be frugal and self-sufficient, and this put them to the test.

Prosperity did not return, but there were gradual changes, even here. Automobiles became more common and needed better roads, eventually meaning more and more hard surfaced roads. The Appalachian Trail crossed town on the way from Georgia to Maine. Airplanes literally "tried their wings" and a network of flashing lights crossed the country to guide these low-flying pioneers. There was a flashing red and white beacon light on top of Washington Mountain, and stretching east and west others were visible.

Many new-comers lost their farms in the depression and another wave of people bought them but with no idea of becoming farmers. The fields so painstakingly cleared, filled with goldenrod, then brush, then trees. The trees then blocked out the beautiful panoramic views. Real estate transfers usually involved whole farms with their buildings. Each old house was surrounded by barns and outbuildings, but gradually the old barns were taken down or fell down from neglect.

Electric power came through town, changing life considerably. More and more townspeople got jobs out of town but near enough to commute back and forth daily.

Then almost before anyone knew it, the world was at war again and eventually our country was involved. This time the people at home felt very near the fighting—they even thought it possible that the United States would be bombed or invaded. The Civilian Defense Corps was organized, with Mr. C.A. R. Simmons as local chairman. Air raid wardens were appointed, ration books for food and gasoline were issued, as were identification cards for Wardens, and during the winter there were classes for the wardens at the old Valley School. It was so cold that winter—the snow squeaked and squealed as we walked to and from the car, and in the schoolhouse we crowded around the coal-burning stove and got our instructions. The flashing beacons on the hilltops were darkened. There were a few air raid warnings for practice alerts, duly warned with fire sirens and on the radio. The wardens had to go out and walk down the road their specified distances to see if all the windows were completely darkened; and cars were supposed to stop and put out their headlights.

The old town hall on the mountain top was altered by the installation of a small watch tower on the top, with windows in all four directions, and men were assigned in shifts to watch for airplanes. It was a good-natured joke that Emil Schulze and Walter Beckwith were paired as watchmen—Emil had poor eyesight and Walter was hard of hearing, but together they could do all right.

The only war planes we saw were our own, luckily. A serious storm warning sent hundreds of planes flying in formation low over our mountain, painted dark gray or black, with the Air Force insignia, and vibrating the earth with the roar of their engines. They had been at Westover Air Base and were being rushed out of the path of the storm.

Twenty-four names are listed on the memorial by the old town hall, and several did not live to come back.



The old Town Hall was Civil Defense headquarters. Its' altitude of about 2000 feet made it ideal for plane spotting.

1941-1945

Washington Honor Roll, Dedicated to those who served in World War II

Clarence W. Brasie, William A. Burnham, Robert G. Elliot, Robert Keiper, Charles A. Lane, Leonard M. Levernoch, Harry W. Madigan, Jr., Andrew I. Methe, Carl W. Peer, Allen S. Pomeroy, Arnold A. Radwick, Elmer A. Radwick, Francis W. Rock, James H. Rock, Elizabeth H. Sanderson, Norman A. Sanderson, Robert J. Sanderson, Harry C. Shaw, Jr., Walter R. Shaw, Ralph T. Simmons, Lawrence Symonds, Dewey E. Walden, William D. Walden, Jr.

There are men now in town who served in the Korean War and in Viet Nam but there is no official record listing their names.

For many years there was comparatively no building of new homes; but as more and more people moved out into the country to live while working in town, a flurry of activity occurred. This time they didn't buy whole old farms but building lots of various sizes. At first there was no requirement as to the size. Then the town adopted a one acre minimum lots size, and then the two acres it is at present. Another trend has become noticeable lately, and not just in this town. Previously houses were built near the road. Now the tendency is to build them back in the new growth of woods so that all that is seen from the road is a driveway disappearing into the trees. This must cause a problem when we have one of our really heavy snows.

Although it is generally believed that the townspeople are all earning their living in other places, it is rather surprising to find how many have adjusted to circumstances and work right in town. For instance, Mapleview Nursing Home on Lovers Lane Road employs many people from here and Becket on various shifts and at various levels of skill.

Alex and Ruth-Marie Jarvie have a beautiful camp area at the end of Summit Hill Road, with their son Robert helping them during the busy season.

Woody's House of Washington employ some local people and is a continuation in a way of Mapleview Ballroom which was built by the Peer family in the 1920's as the largest dance floor in Berkshire County, attracting large crowds with their big name bands.

John and Sandy Newberry run the "Vagabond" to which they have added a large dance floor which can also be used as a dining room, and their new home is attached.

Richard Borgnis has a sawmill in back of his house as an addition to his lumber business in Lenox.

Joe Slater also has a sawmill near his home on the old Morrot Road.

Kenneth Wells on Frost Road built Washington Mt. Precision Machine Shop which employs mem-

bers of the Wells family and others.

John Gardner has one of the best truck gardens in the County, selling at a roadside stand.



John Gardner makes a sale.

The town roads need a crew the year around. The present superintendent is Edward Gallant, who employs local men when they are available.

Carolyn Adams, Joan Cadman, Sally Poland and Alice Levernoch are employed at the Washington School by the Central Berkshire School District. Bill Andrews is a busy custodian.

Another group, mostly women, drive schoolbuses for Karl Winter.

Francis Lane and his wife run a small grocery and package store near their home on Valley Road.

Robert Sanderson of Valley Road is our last railroad worker.

Lorraine and Alfred Deane have a market over the line in Becket.

Now in 1977 the town is having its bicentennial year, which occasioned this search through our past records to bring us up to the present. The town started its celebration with a float in the 1976 parades in Dalton, Chester, Becket Pittsfield and Great Barrington. The buildings are replicas of the town hall, school house and St. Andrew's Chapel, and were designed and built primarily by Wilfred and Joan Cadman with occasional help with painting by members of the Historical Commission.

Richard Borgnis loaned his long flat-bed for the parades, drawn by a new-looking antique truck with the most wonderful whistle that drew great applause along the routes. At various times these people were on the flat in costume; learning the hard way that if you'd like to see a parade, don't be in it. Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Fox and Kory and Kirk; Mrs. Brian Parker and Michael; Mrs. Andrew Methe and Georgianna and Paula; Joyann Andrews; Mrs. Ronald Adams and Ronald; Christine Cadman; Kathy Lampro, Todd and Ronald Poulton, Miss Frances Brown, Mrs. Robert Elliot, Mrs. Robert Hansen,

Louis and Deborah; Ruth and Margaret O'Brien (whose parents helped in every parade with transportation and boosting the children aboard the float and helping them down); Mary and Tina Rock; and William and Nancy Poland, whose mother made all the arrangements for the various parades and transported riders at the proper time to the proper place.

The bicentennial program is as follows:

April 12 — Incorporation — 1777

April 16, 1977

Bicentennial Ball — Doors Open 7:00 p.m.

Dancing Begins at 9:00 p.m.

House of Washington

Bicentennial Costume Optional

Appetizers — Door Prizes

Chairman: Mrs. James Poulton

May 22, 1977

Author's Tea — 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Old Town Hall

The "History of Washington" will be on sale to the public.

Mrs. Robert Elliot, Author

Chairman: Miss Frances Brown

June 25, 1977

"Family Day" for Washington Residents — 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Bucksteep Manor

Games & Fun — 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Lunch — 12:00 noon-1:30 p.m.

Family Ball Game — 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Pool, Tennis Courts and Movies available

Chairmen: Mrs. Rosabelle Poilucci, Robert Elliot, Leon Locke

E.M.T.'S — Mr. and Mrs. David Furlong

July 9, 1977

Parade, Concert, Buffet, Informal Dance

Parade Route — Mapleview Nursing Home,
Lower Frost Road, Route 8 to Town Park
2:00 p.m.

Concert — at Town Park

Buffet — House of Washington 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Dance — House of Washington 8:00 p.m.

Parade Chairman: Mrs. Henry MacLaren

August 20,21

Arts & Crafts Fair — Old Town Hall
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

An exhibit of arts and crafts by Washington craftsmen
(past and present)

Refreshments to be sold. Chairman: Mrs. Elmer Allen

September 11, 1977

Old Timers Day — Annual Sons & Daughters Reunion

Picnic Lunch and Reunion — 12:00 noon-2:00 p.m. Bring your
own lunch.
Beverage and dessert provided.

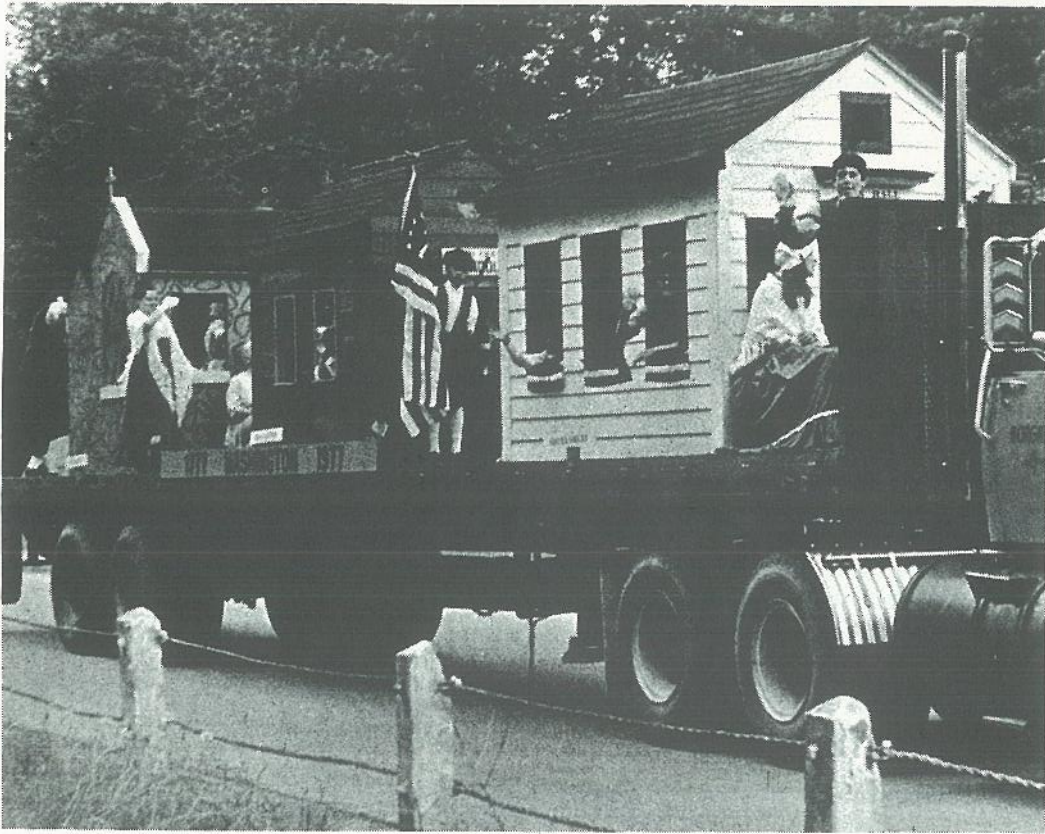
Meeting — Program — 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Vesper Service — 4:00 p.m.
Choir directed by Mrs. Alexander Jarvie

Chairmen: Mrs. Elmer Allen, Erwin Levernoch,
Sons & Daughters Officers

The Town Officers this year are:

Alfred Deane	Barbara Gonzales, Town Clerk
Daniel O. Phillips, Selectmen	Lorraine Deane, Treasurer
Henry MacLaren	Lorraine Deane, Tax Collector



A familiar sight in bicentennial parades was the attractive Town of Washington float.



Sons and Daughters



SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF WASHINGTON

The only continuing thread of sociability through the years since 1909 has been the annual meeting of the Sons and Daughters of Washington. The meetings for the past few years have been held on the first Sunday after Labor Day, after the busiest part of summer is over and before it gets too cold in the fall.

A few excerpts from the clerk's minute book are as follows:

Sons and Daughters of Washington

It was a happy thought that inspired our friend Mrs. Lena Messenger, Needham, to send the following circular letter to a number of the children of old Washington.

"It has occurred to some of the sons and daughters of Washington that it would be pleasant to hold a reunion and basket picnic at Washington Depot, Labor Day, Sept. 6th.

"Does such a project interest you? If so will you kindly pass the word along to any former resident in your vicinity (as this notice is sent only to a few representatives) and also notify on postal, on or before Aug. 25th. Mrs. D. B. Needham, Monson, Mass."

So great was the enjoyment of the day, that it was then and there determined by all to make this reunion an annual event. The longest day has an end, and with the setting of the sun the different trains carried the satisfied visitors to their various homes.

Secretary's Report 1909

The first meeting of the Sons and Daughters of Washington was held at Sibley's Grove, near Washington Station, on September 6th, 1909.

At noon a basket lunch was enjoyed, after which there were exercises. John W. Crane of Springfield acting as Chairman. Rev. H. A. Ferguson of the local Methodist Church gave a cordial and pleasing welcome which was followed by a recitation by Miss Sargent of Pittsfield. Frederic Bond of Pontiac, Michigan gave several selections which were greatly enjoyed by all.

One of the incidents of rare interest of the day was made possible through the kindness of Mr. Tracy of Pittsfield, who carried our venerable friend, Charles Crosier, in his automobile, from his home near the station to the Grove. He was warmly greeted by all for he was the only person present who could say to everyone, "I knew your father and mother well." In him the past and present seemed united in the most pleasing way.

William Bill, 83 years old, a native and lifelong resident of Washington was also present.

An organization which will be called "The Sons and Daughters of Washington" was formed and the following officers chosen: President, John W. Crane, Springfield; Secretary, (Mrs.) Lena M. Needham, Monson; Treasurer, Gilbert E. Manley, Springfield.

These officers were to arrange for another meeting on Labor Day, Sept. 1910 if in their judgment that day seemed most favorable.

A collection amounting to \$9.36 was taken, to be used toward the expense of printing a folder which should contain the names of those who registered at this meeting together with such reports of the gathering as would be necessary to keep.

1910 — 250 attendance — held at school because of poor weather.

1911 — 200 present at Grove.

1912 — 125 present in bad weather. A stranger, J. W. Jockusch of Galveston, Texas who was on an auto trip through the States and was stopping for a rest, spoke of the cordiality and hospitality of New Englanders and of Washington people in particular and how much he had enjoyed his stay in the place.

1913 — Every train stopping at the station brought additions to the number till over 250 had arrived at the beautiful little grove, bearing the names of our oldest and most honored families of Washington.

Dr. David F. Murray of Pittsfield was born 71 years ago in a log cabin in the vicinity of the "Shaker Mill" and was proud to boast of having been rocked to sleep in a sap trough cradle.

1914 — Over 200. Committee appointed to erect a building to be used by the organization and to revert to the town for such purposes as the town sees fit, when such organization ceases to exist. The town was asked to pay half of building costs.

1915 — Over 300. Flag raised near the schoolhouse, gift of Myron L. Crane of Chicago. The out of town people departed for their homes on the afternoon trains after spending a very pleasant day.

1920 — A large number. Dancing was enjoyed in the school house. A collection for the local Methodist Church was taken amounting to \$26.00.

1924 — Maple View Hall. Speaker of the day was Congressman Allen Treadway of Stockbridge. He asked that we bear in mind that we lived in the best country in the world, in the best state in the union, and the best county in the state.

1930 — Town Hall. In conjunction with the Washington Tercentenary Committee, and a very successful celebration and home gathering was held. The celebration could not be carried out as planned on account of the inclemency of the weather. Sports which were to be held in the morning were mostly given up. A basket lunch was enjoyed at noon as usual.

1931 — It was a cool day and dinner was served in the Town Hall. In the evening we had dancing to the music of a four piece orchestra.

1932 — Town Hall. Then we called upon County Sheriff James R. Savery . . . then former School Supt. David Malcolm.

1934 — Four were present who had been at the original meeting 25 years ago.

1936 — The 28th annual reunion of the Sons and Daughters of Washington was celebrated Labor Day with great enthusiasm, large crowds and a fine program, under the direction of the president and vice-president of the organization, Mr. & Mrs. Harry B. Shaw.

A thrilling feature of the day was its auspicious opening, under fair skies, with a covered wagon parade which started at the Myron Messenger farm and proceeded to the Town Green under escort of mounted guards, one of whom was Harry Shaw, Jr. A camp fire was lighted on the green and the occupants of the covered wagons who had been singing as they approached the green, alighted, formed a circle and sang with the guests, many old time songs for which the accompaniments were played by the 49'ers. There was a long program of musical numbers, skits, recitations, and community singing.

1937 — Dedication of a monument in honor of the men who went to the World War from the town of Washington was held.

1938 — The hall was attractively decorated with evergreens and green and white streamers and flowers. Drawings by school children adorned the walls.

1939 — Weather was perfect and about eighty ate their lunch at tables beside the town hall.

1941 — Rained in morning but hall well filled by 2 o'clock for program. Mr. Shaw then introduced a native of Washington, Mrs. Emma Manly Bailey, who read an article on Governor Edward Morgan, born 130 years ago in the house across the road, and presented a portrait of him to the town.

1947 — Mayor James Fallon of Pittsfield gave a splendid talk telling us he had helped Mr. James Savory organize this meeting — that we should not allow the organization to die out.

James McDermott, 1935. "Old parlor games, played when 40-50 young people would be present. Kissing games, as:

On this green carpet do we stand.
Take your true love by the hand.
Kiss the one that you profess
To be the one that you love best."



Harry B. Shaw receiving Rep. James E. Hannon and wife. Sons & Daughters Reunion, 1946.

"Used to exchange our products — used to send them away in carloads, meat, milk, products. Milk trusts and meat trusts now. The West has raised Old Harry with this part of the country."

John Sargent, 23rd reunion. "Had good fortune to be at every one of the reunions. Not born here. Father moved from Boston in 1861, April 19 — and I was 4½ years old. Sargent's Crossing, farm. All run down. Couldn't keep 15 head cattle and 150 sheep the year round. We cultivated, knew what work was. 6 small children. After 12 years had 45 head horned cattle, 3 horses, 200 sheep. Today that old farm won't keep 10 head. Why? Because they won't work 'em! B & A fireman and engineer 44 years. All better off if they'd stayed on the farms."

Told by Edward Morgan, 80, who remembers when Abraham Lincoln was elected president, 1860. Son of Justin, descendent of horse racing family — Morgan colts. His father came here from Pittsfield 1858. "In 1861, 500 to 60 people here; lively times; 60 to 65 men served in infantry, navy, heavy artillery. Fifteen men in 49th Regiment. All came back but one. In New Orleans — so hot, such poor water, more of them died with fever than fighting. Just 3 men and one woman living in Washington today that was here in 1860." (Messengers, Myron and Carrie, Morgan himself.)

"If they caught you sleighing on Sunday, they'd lick ye."

"I actually played ball on Sunday and got a good lickin."

"They could run the whole town business, 8 schools, 60 miles roads, for about \$5000 a year. It costs \$20,000 now, and nobody here. Ashley Lake was free. More sickness in Pittsfield now than when there

were 7 boats on it. Were healthier than they are now. Could go fishin' in the brooks here any day — trout 3 to 12 inches. Now fine a man \$100 for catching trout under 6 inches. Can't shoot game or set a trap to catch a skunk. Set a fire, \$100 fine. Used to be floaters and loafers. Discount our taxes — road taxes worked out; hire a man, furnish material. One day's work free of charge to town. Now 5 families left out of a hundred!"

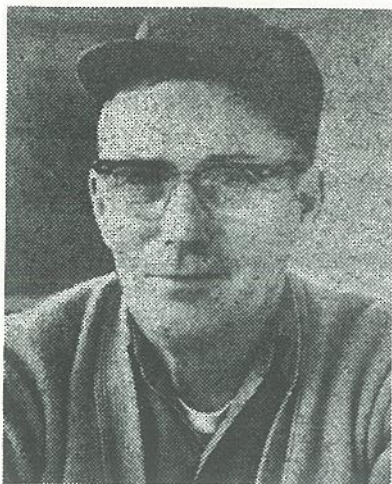
In 1965 there were two articles in the warrant for the annual town meeting. One was to spend a substantial sum of money to renovate the old town hall, now no longer used for town meetings since the new school house was so much more comfortable. The other was to bulldoze it down and burn it, then landscape the site. There was a lot of arguing, but in the end both articles were defeated, leaving the fate of the building in limbo.

Miss Marguerite Schulze, who was an officer in the Sons and Daughters and also long-time tax collector, started a publicity campaign to save the poor old building. Contributions came in and volunteers said they would give their time and help. Some group had to take responsibility for the work, so it was given to the Sons and Daughters.



Picture as it looked before work started.

Since the roof leaked badly and the moisture had already ruined some books and documents in the attic, that had to be repaired first. The little tower of the civilian defense days was taken off and new shingles put on. Mr. John Kelly of Kelly Hardwood in Pittsfield was most generous with free materials during the restoration of the town hall and the little school house. He had been a boy here, married Mary Dunn, whose family had moved to town from Newark, N.J., and raised six children in the town during the depression years. When he bought his first sawmill he was on his way to success and eventual diversification in the city of Pittsfield.



John J. Kelly

We have pictures showing the work on the roof, with Joseph and Louis Blotz, Emil Schulze, Charles Cleveland, Andrew Methe, Carl Simmons, and many others whose pictures are too indistinct. George Burnham and his son Lawrence did the first carpentry work and outside painting. Manual Lester of Pittsfield did interior plastering. Wilfred Cadman repaired and repainted the office at a later time.

It was a proud day when the Sons and Daughters had their annual meeting and open house September 19, 1968, and the pictures show that day.

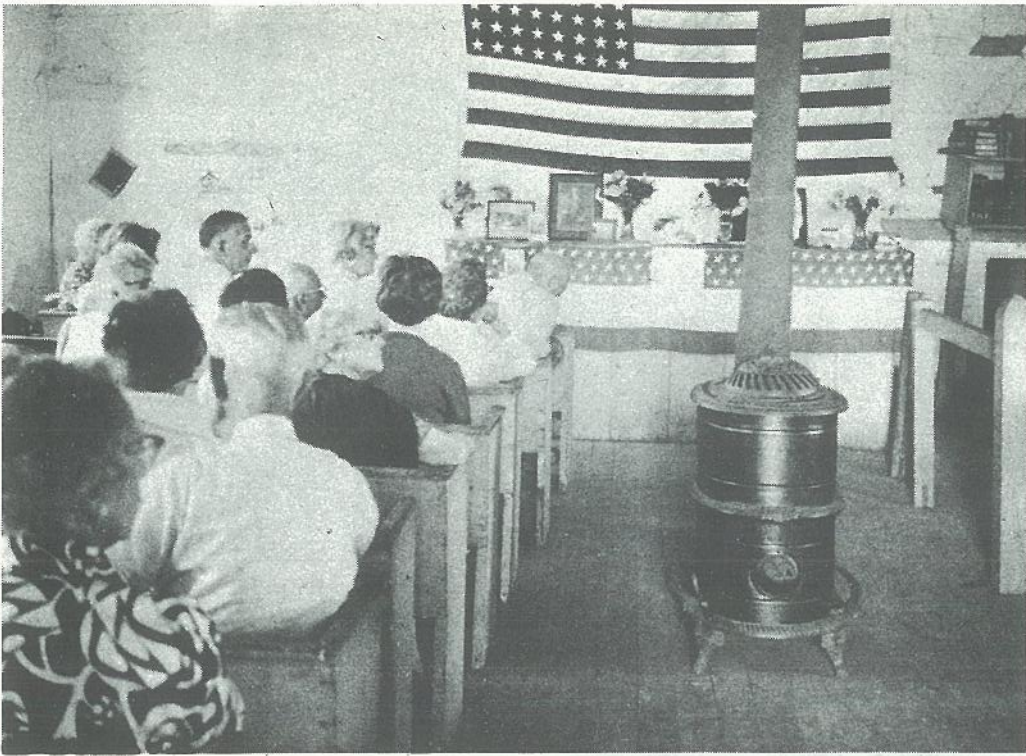
Prime movers in the preservation of the building, Mrs. Robert G. Elliot and Mrs. Fred Hutchinson.



The little school house had first been saved from ruin by Mr. James Savery when he gave enough money to have a new roof put on and an exterior coat of paint. The Sons and Daughters sponsored a new roof, also from Mr. Kelly, new sill in front, new paint, and hope to finish the interior soon. In any event both buildings have been saved for future generations who must take up the work from here.

In 1917 it was considered better for the town to appoint an Historical Commission to have control of these two buildings, and money for the restoration was transferred from the Sons and Daughters to this Historical Commission, together with money appropriated by the town. The Historical Commission also is serving as the Bicentennial Commission for the duration of the bicentennial year, with money appropriated by the town.

We hope that the Sons and Daughters of Washington will continue. Most people moving to town don't realize that then and there they become automatically a son or daughter of the town and their presence at the annual meetings is urgently needed for the continuation of this organization.



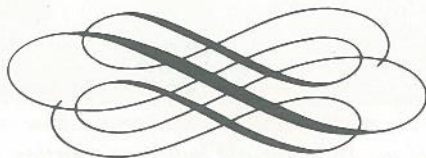
General scenes at the open house in the town of Washington show (top) the interior of the old meeting hall and the outside of the 163-year-old building, sporting its new decor.



REUNION OF THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS . . . of the Town of Washington brought these folks together. In the front row, from left, are Mrs. Helen Shean, Andrew Culver, Mrs. Madeline Gillette and Joseph Gillette. In the second row, same order, are Mrs. Christine Jordan McChesney, Mrs. Wallace Jordan, Wallace Jordan, Mrs. William Briggs, Louis Shean, Wallace Briggs and Sidney Pomeroy — 1971.



Newly-elected officers of Sons & Daughters — 1968 — Andrew Methe, Mrs. Fred Hutchinson, Miss Marguerite Schultz and Mrs. Robert G. Elliot.



Prominent Families



THE ASHLEY FAMILY

I Robert. He first appears in the records as a resident of Springfield, January 13, 1639, for a minister tax, he being rated at 40 pounds, the 5th in rank. Land was allotted him January 5, 1641. He served as Juryman several times; was selectman in 1653 and several times afterwards. He removed to West Springfield where he was allotted land and where he died, November 29, 1682.

II Moses, third son, born in Westfield, October 9, 1703. Settled in Washington March 31, 1772, where he died April 29, 1782. He married Sarah Taylor January 19, 1744. She was born in Springfield August 5, 1721—died in Washington June 4, 1795. They had 12 children.

III Moses, Jr. Born in Westfield June 16, 1749. Graduated at Yale in 1767. He settled in Washington with his father in 1772, was a "minute man" and marched to Boston on the alarm from Lexington in April 1775. He there enlisted in the Continental Army in May 1775 and served until 1782. Moses was drowned in South Lee while repairing his mill dam, August 25, 1791.

AZARIAH ASHLEY

Azariah Ashley was a son of Moses Ashley, Sr., and a brother of General Moses Ashley. He was born in Westfield, February 2, 1754, and came with his father to Washington in the spring of 1772. He married on October 5, 1789, Olivia Moseley, a native of Westfield, who was born in that town May 26, 1765.

Mr. Ashley enlisted as a private in Captain Asa Stower's company, and served twenty-six days. He re-enlisted as Sergeant and served eight days in the Battle of Bennington. After the battle he enlisted in Colonel Brown's Regiment and went with it to Ticonderoga. In October 1780 he was in Lieutenant McKnight's Company three days, at the time of the false alarm.

He spent the remaining years of his life in Washington, and served as Town Clerk from 1782 to 1788, and as representative to the General Court in 1790.

Towards the close of his life he became involved financially and was in reduced circumstances. The law at that time allowed the body to be seized for debt, and for this reason it is supposed his wife concealed him in his house until his death, and his body was buried secretly at night, no public announcement being made of the event. No stone marks his grave.

BALLANTINE FAMILY

Through the mists of over two hundred years, we can still learn much about William Gay Ballantine, Washington's first settled minister, who came here when the town was new and primitive, became a prosperous farmer, and left a family that was part of the town for almost a hundred years.

Mr. Crane gives his genealogy as follows:

William Ballantine of Ayreshire, Scotland, was the first known Ballantine in America. He was a cooper.

John Capt. born in Boston in 1653. Was a member of Ancient and Honorable Artillery Co., Captain of it in 1703.

John Capt. born in Boston in 1674. Graduated at Harvard 1694. Married Mary Winthrop—great granddaughter of Gov. John Winthrop. Colonel of militia. Clerk of Court Common pleas and General Sessions. Representative of Boston in General Court, died 1735.

John, born in 1716. Graduate at Harvard in 1735, married Mary Gay. Was Pastor at Westfield thirty-five years. Died February 12, 1776. They had a son, Ebenezer, who graduated at Harvard in 1777. He was a surgeon in the Revolutionary War and was the grandfather of Rev. W. G. Ballantine of Springfield. (Rev. John Ballantine of Westfield came to Becket on church matters several times, and is even recorded as purchasing building lots there in 1751, so it is likely that he knew the newly organized church in Washington was looking for its first settled minister by 1771 or 1772).

William Gay, oldest son of Rev. John B. Ballantine, born July 22, 1751, died November 30, 1820. He graduated at Harvard about 1773 and was settled in Washington in 1774 and preached there until his death. He married Anna King March 29, 1775.

They had two children. The daughter was listed as Anne in "Vital Records", born March 25, 1776. The record of marriages says her father officiated at her marriage to Rev. Isaiah Waters of Chesterfield on March 6, 1799, but her name is given as Nancy.

William Gay Jr., was born June 13, 1785, died January 28, 1854. Married April 19, 1815 to Wealthy Webb. They had four children.

William Gay 3rd, born August 29, 1822, died December 4, 1903. Married 1st Harriet E. Chapel, June 9, 1857. Married 2nd Victorine Brooks August 30, 1897.

Ebenezer, son of William Gay Ballantine Jr. Born November 14, 1824. Married Sarah Diana Chapel June 26, 1850.

"Towards the close of his ministry he experienced many trials. Divisions were excited among the people, and some were led away by noise and passion. Numbers, dear to him, removed to the new settlements, and the church was diminished. Still, while strength remained, he continued to labour in the vineyard. He preached until about five weeks before his death, which occurred on the 30th of November 1820 in the 70th year of his age." In the Church Record is the notation, "September 10th, 1820. The last Sabbath on which that Dear and good man the Rev. William Gay Ballantine was able to attend the services at the Sanctuary he baptised my son Lorenzo Jarvis. Attest Absalom Deming, Scribe to the Church" (page 19)

In October 1780 it was voted "to raise or assess 90 pounds in this new states money, or old Continental money at 40 to one, for two years' salary to Rev. Mr. Ballantine."

Rev. Ballantine had an agreement with the town that he should be furnished forty cords of wood each year, and there are several entries suggesting work parties from different parts of town to get this wood. Finally in 1809 a committee was raised to meet with him to see if they could agree on a compensation in lieu of the wood.

Toward the end of his service, the Rev. Ballantine was receiving \$200 a year, which sounds small today but was, in fact, one of the larger items in each year's budget, usually exceeding the annual appropriation for schooling. At first it was voted as a town expense; but in 1807 it was voted that this salary be raised and assessed on the Society that attended meetings at the meeting house and that the dissenters not be taxed for the ministry. This was really a severe burden on the members at a time when many people were leaving the town and the membership was at a low ebb. They must have protested because in 1808 it was reaffirmed that "Minister's tax shall be assessed on the polls and estates of such persons only as belong to the Congregation that meet at the Meeting House for worship and that dissenters be left out of said list." Actually the membership of the Congregational Society had always been a surprisingly small proportion to the numbers of inhabitants at any given time.

His son, also William Gay Ballantine, was listed as a poll when he became 21 and from then on is listed as a voter and tax payer. For instance, in 1829, after inheriting his father's estate, he is taxed on:

90 acres improved land	540	8 cows	120
310 acres unimproved land	470	4 three year olds	48
Buildings	400	8 yearlings	24
2 stags	50	75 sheep	100
6 oxen	200	100 lbs. swine	3

This William Gay Ballantine also was elected to various town offices, beginning in 1807 when he was elected one of the Surveyors of Highways. In 1818 he made almost a clean sweep through the town offices by being elected selectman and assessor, town treasurer, surveyor of highways, inspector of schools, and fence viewer. Probably no one before or since has equalled this record.

He was still here in 1845 and had a son, also William Gay Ballantine, who was listed as a poll. The inventory of his taxable possessions then were:

Lands & Buildings 355 acres	225 lbs. swine	1 pair horses
2 pair oxen	2 two year olds	1 pair horses
7 cows	4 yearlings	1 pair colts
5 three year olds	146 sheep	1 share W.R.R.
		600 dollars at interest

The third William Gay Ballantine came into possession, and some time later sold the property and moved to Suffield, Connecticut.

The Ballantine house stood about where St. Andres's Chapel now stands. It was a beautiful old house, and it was put on rollers and moved to a new location on Frost Road, where unfortunately it burned.

The people who lived in the house when Mr. Crane and Mr. Winslow bought the property for their summer homes were named Jordan. The baby William Jordan was the first baby baptised in the chapel. Another little item is that Mr. Winslow got Mr. Jordan a job on Long Island working for William Cullen Bryant.

PETER THE SLAVE

From the diary of Deacon Alvah Eames

When I was a boy, I remember an old blind Negro, who lived in a family within a hundred rods of my father's house. He was supposed to be over a hundred years old. No one knew his age,—he didn't himself. He was the grandson of an African chief. When out one day with other boys at play on the sea shore he was seized by a band of kidnappers, carried on board their ship, brought to Hartford, Connecticut and sold as a slave. Mr. David Ashley, who bought Peter, was a farmer and had a son named Moses, who was a little older than Peter. He lived with Mr. Ashley many years. He was treated with kindness, taught to read, to observe the Sabbath and to attend public worship. Here he first heard of a Savior, believed in him and became a Christian.

Mr. Ashley died, but Peter, having become so attached to the family refused to leave them, preferring to follow the fortunes of the Ashley family, than to accept proffered liberty. Mr. Ashley's son Moses, having married and disposed of his property in Hartford, removed to Westfield, taking Peter with him; and here he raised a family of six daughters and two sons, all of whom Peter dandled on his knee and to whom he was greatly attached. Here he attended on the Sabbath the ministry of the Rev. John Ballantine.

About 1770 Mr. Ashley sold his farm in Westfield and bought a tract of land on Washington Mountain, land being cheap then. This land was around and near the pond which was later named after him, Lake Ashley. Mr. Ashley after looking the land over in and around Pittsfield had chosen Washington, the former place was low and marshy and subject to fever and ague. Previous to moving his family to his new home Mr. Ashley sent Peter on ahead to girdle the trees, a practice much in vogue in the early settlement of the town.

After Mr. Ashley had moved to Washington, his health failed him and the care of the farm fell upon Peter and the younger son, the older son, Moses Jr., being in college having entered at the age of fourteen. He graduated from Yale in 1767 and settled with his father in Washington in the spring of 1772. He was an ardent patriot; was in Capt. Porter's company of minute men and marched with it to Cambridge April 23, 1775. He stayed and enlisted in the Continental army in May 1775 and was in the battle of Bunker Hill. The 17th of June was a day of anxiety to his friends at home for on the morning of that memorable day they distinctly heard the report of the cannon in the vicinity of Boston. What did it mean? Oh! There was a battle and they invoked the God of battles to protect their son and brother. Work they could not; but spent the day in going from house to house talking about and fearing the result of that day's battle. Moses was protected through Bunker Hill's bloody fight, and he continued in the service until the close of the war, and was promoted to the rank of General.

During the war Peter helped take care of the farm and of the family. He was faithful and industrious, a humble servant of God, always in his pew on the Sabbath, called "Negro pew". He was beloved by all who knew him especially by the Ashley family. At length his second master died and Peter went to live with General Ashley in Stockbridge. There he became blind. Soon after, General Ashley died suddenly, being drowned while repairing his mill dam. His widow, not having that regard for him that her husband had, refused to take care of him and so he was brought back to Washington and lived a few weeks at our house, my mother being one of the daughters he had helped take care of when a child.

I remember an old military hat that he brought with him, given him by Gen. Ashley. He thought so much of this hat that he would have it placed within his reach and often he could be seen feeling of it, to see if the button was where it should be.

I remember of leading him about the house and yard and of his saying "O, there is no trap door here", for it was the custom in those days to have a trap door in the kitchen floor in order to get into the cellar by means of a short ladder. Peter being blind was afraid of trap doors.

After his removal from our house to the family mentioned in this article, I saw him often and have a vivid recollection of his appearance. Seated in a big arm chair in the corner with his hat on, when his meals were given him, he would take the plate, lay it in his lap, take off his hat, raise his sightless eyes towards heaven and implore God's blessing on his food. This was his invariable practice; and here in this family Peter closed his earthly pilgrimage in April 1806 and received a Christian burial, Rev. Wm. G. Ballantine officiating at the funeral.

Page 225, Town Clerk's book, March Meeting 1799

"Voted that Peter Negro a pauper be Set up to the Lowest bidder to be Supported by the Town for one year Ensewing Provided he Should Live a year, if not at the Same rate so long as he shall Live. Set up and Struck off to William Bill at One Dollar and 16 cents per Week.

“Voted to allow Wm. Bill 1 Dollar per Week for Supporting Peter Negro the Ensewing year, or During Peter’s Life if not a year.

“Voted and Allowed Doctor S. Childs 50 cents for attending to Peter the towns poor.”

March Meeting 1801

“Voted to give Wm. Bill Seven Shillings per Week for Support of Peter Negro the Year Ensewing.”

March Meeting 1802

“Voted to Sell Peter Negro to the Lowest bidder to Support for one year with victuals Clothing and Lodging Put up at auction and Struck to Appollos Frost at 1 Dollar and 17 Cents per week he being the lowest bidder.”

THE CRANE FAMILY

Two brothers, Henry and Benjamin were in Wethersfield, Conn. as early as 1655 and may have been there a few years earlier. From the latter of these, Benjamin, the Cranes of Washington are descended.

Elijah, Was one of the first ten settlers of Washington, going there in 1760, or soon after, when only 14 years of age. He married Sarah Hill of Woburn, Mass. They had 10 children, all born in Washington.



Elijah Crane was an original settler and this was on his estate

Amos, Son of Elijah, born December 17, 1774, died July 25, 1863, aged 89 years—at that time being the oldest inhabitant of the town. He lived all but two years of his life in Washington.

John M., Son of Amos, born March 20, 1813. Married 1st Sarah M. Joy, 2nd Mary C. Wright of Middlefield, May 20, 1846.

John W., Son of John M., born May 23, 1847. Married Harriet Church of Middlefield. They had three children.

This is the John W. Crane who moved to Springfield. He was one of the founders of Sons and Daughters of Washington in 1908, and served as president for a number of years.

In 1975 a neighbor from Middlefield came unexpectedly with a carton of books, pictures, etc. from the Crane estate. In 1976 when Eagle Printing & Binding Company in Pittsfield was cleaning out their old printing room, they discovered a “History of Washington” that Mr. John W. Crane had written in

1918 and left there for reasons forgotten. It was never printed, but has been constantly referred to in this history. Eagle Printing & Binding Company gave the copy of the Crane history to Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Allen, and they were kind enough to let it be so used. Mr. Crane's title page gave credit to Benjamin F. Thompson of Springfield for searching the original Proprietors Records and the Town and Church Records, and verifying the list of Revolutionary Soldiers as given in the History of Berkshire County, and also preparing genealogies of town families.

REV. JOHN NICHOLS

Born in Rhode Island about 1739, died in Manlius, N. Y. July 1828. M. about 1761, Susanna Clark, d. of Caleb and Dinah Clark of Rhode Island.

In 1786 he became the settled pastor of the Baptist church in West Washington, preaching at the same time in Becket, Stockbridge and other towns. In this year he also bought in Washington lots No. 5 & 6, which he sold in 1789.

He was selectman of Washington in the years 1781 and 1782, and represented it in the Legislature in 1782, 1783 and 1785.

In 1795 he ended his pastorate in Washington but seems to have preached there at intervals as late as 1802.

He bought land in Great Barrington, and with 51 others incorporated the First Baptist Church in that town and preached there from 1802 until 1811.

EAMES FAMILY

Anthony, Capt., Head of the family in America. Settled in Hingham, Mass. There was conflict over him as Captain in 1641.

Mark, Lieut., Settled in Marshfield. Is named in the records of Plymouth County.

Anthony, oldest son of Mark. The Marshfield records say of him that he was admitted as a voter with title of Mister.

Anthony, Settled in Voluntown, Conn. He had six sons and two daughters who can be traced.

Mark, Settled in Washington. Married Anna Ashley, sister of Gen. Moses Ashley. She died February 1854, aged 93.

Alvah, Deacon 3rd son of Mark, born August 22, 1792. Died December 17, 1877. Settled in Becket. Married Betsey West.

Anthony, oldest son of the Voluntown Anthony was killed in Washington in 1808 by a load of shingles overturning on him. He married Lydia Mattoon. They had four sons, two daughters.

Philip Eames inherited the farm when his father Anthony died. He built a beautiful house of stone blasted from the railroad cut, and shaped and fitted by experienced masons. A complete heavy plank house is inside the stone outer walls.

EDWIN DENNISON MORGAN

Edwin Dennison Morgan was born in Washington on February 8, 1811. He died in New York city February 14, 1883.

For several years his father ran the tavern near the meeting house. He left to make his fortune when he was seventeen years old, going to Hartford to be clerk in his uncle's grocery store. When he was only twenty-one he was elected a member of the Hartford City Council.

In 1836 he moved to New York and entered the wholesale grocery business, and in 1854 banking and brokerage were added to his business. He became president of the New York City Board of Aldermen and gained great public regard by services during a cholera epidemic which swept the city that year. Then he served two terms in the State Senate. He introduced and carried through the bill establishing Central Park in New York City. He was vice president of the conference which made plans for the first Republican National convention in 1856 and was chairman of the Republican National Committee from the Fremont campaign until 1864.

In 1858 he was elected Governor of New York and reelected in 1860 by the largest majority which had ever been given to a gubernatorial candidate in the State. Placed in command by Lincoln of the Military Department of New York, commissioned as a major-general of volunteers, he enrolled and equipped two hundred twenty-three thousand troops. He refused compensation for this work, and declined renomination as Governor in 1862, but the legislature placed him in charge of the work of putting New York Harbor in a state of defense. He expended six thousand dollars of the million appropriated for the purpose and returned the rest to the State treasury. In 1863 he was chosen United



Edwin Dennison Morgan

States Senator. He declined the appointment as Secretary of the Treasury under both Lincoln and Chester A. Arthur.

When he died his fortune was in the millions. During his lifetime he gave to educational and charitable organizations over a million dollars. Williams College, Union Theological Seminary and many hospitals were benefited by his generous gifts. Morgan Hall used as a dormitory at Williams and the Morgan Library at the Union Theological Seminary are his gifts.

He also helped the church in Washington in response to a request from Rev. Longley. In his will he left \$5000 to the Congregational Church here, but by that time the church had dissolved, so the money was returned to his estate.

Ambrose E. Morgan

Ambrose E. Morgan, son of Justin Morgan of Washington, enlisted in the nine months 49th Regiment, as a private in Company I. He returned with his regiment and was mustered out in Pittsfield. A few months later he re-enlisted in Company D, 57th Regiment and was killed in the battle of Spotsylvania Court House in May, 1864. The following account was published in the Berkshire Country Eagle soon after:

"B. F. Pease, a private, as he lay sorely wounded at the Spotsylvania Hospital, May 13, 1864, saw three dead soldiers brought in, and from the nearest his cot, a little pocket testament was taken. The next day was the Sabbath, and while suffering great pain, he asked the nurse for the little book which he had seen placed in a crevice near him the day before. The testament had been struck by a ball near one corner and had passed half way through it and then glancing down through his body had caused his death. The book was moistened with his blood.

"On the fly leaf was written his address as given by his pastor, Rev. M.M. Longley. Mr. Pease called the attention of the chaplain to the incident. He took the book and sent it to his father together with the above story of his son's death and burial."

The book came into the possession of his youngest brother, Edwin E. Morgan of Washington.

(Mr. Crane)

FREDERIC WHITE MANLEY

Frederic White Manley, son of Daniel and Matilda White Manley, was born in Washington, Mass. September 8, 1810.

Mr. Manley in his paternal line had five ancestors who came over in the Mayflower in 1620, William Bradford, for 34 years governor of Plymouth Colony; John Howlands; John Tilly, his wife Bridget Van de Valde Tilly, and daughter Elizabeth Tilly.

Two of his forebears were in the war of the Revolution, Asa Manley and Timothy Dimock. Major John Mason, Commander General of the Connecticut troops who so successfully ended the Pequot Indian wars and to whom the state of Connecticut erected a monument in Mystic, Conn., was also an ancestor. We may therefore assume Mr. Manley inherited unbounded patriotism and love of country.

In his early years, Mr. Manley attended the district school and worked upon the farm. Later he attended the Pittsfield High School and the Lenox Academy. While in Pittsfield he worked for his board

at Dr. Wright's, where after school hours he was employed in making pills.

For fifteen years in his early manhood he followed the vocation of a school master in winter and of farming in summer. He taught in Valatia, State Line and Canaan, N.Y., Lenox and Pittsfield, Mass., and in Bergen, New Jersey. He was a man of great dignity and precision of speech, and a diary in the possession of his family shows he was a student and thinker, while his letters, still extant, dated 1862-65, breath deep devotion to his family and his country.

In 1844 Mr. Manley was appointed Agent for the Western R.R., which position he held for 27 years until his death. He was also postmaster for 18 years, filling both positions with fidelity.

He filled various town offices and for many years served on the school committee. In fact, the schools and education were to him matters of vital importance. Through a busy life he found time for reading and was a thorough student of the Bible and family prayers were a daily institution.

On November 5, 1844 Mr. Manley married Mary Louise, daughter of Eli and Lucy Crittenden Hale, of Tyringham, Mass. Seven children were born to them, all but one living to mature years. Mrs. Manley, a faithful and devoted mother, died February 8, 1864. Mr. Manley married the second time to Janette Bigwood of Winooski, Vt.

Mr. Manley passed away February 4, 1871, leaving besides his immediate family his aged mother for whom he had cared since the death of his father in 1854 and to whom he had been a loyal and devoted son. Mr. Manley is buried in Washington, Mass.

Mr. Manley's diary, covering the period 1834-1846, is the usual farmer's brief memorandum of work done on the farm, business transactions, important local events, family matters, and his work as station agent. Taken as a whole, it gives a detailed and illuminating picture of life in Washington in his day. Take, for instance, his record of farming activities in May, 1834:

- May 1. Pleasant & warm. Plowed the flax ground & made onion bed.
" 5. Sowed one bushel of oats in Dazy lot & dragged them in.
" 7. Drew off apple tree brush into the street & took care of lambs. Nine new ones today.
" 13. Cut potatoes to plant.
" 15. The day very cold & blustering with snow, this having fell some depth last night.
" 22. Planted the Allen lot to corn with the help of A. Barnes & Cross.
" 25. Help dig out a young fox in the evening in Widow Eames lot.
" 27. Destroyed some young crows, etc.
" 28. Washed sheep with Wright Barnes & Nelson Cross to Reuben Smith's.
" 30. Planted last of the potatoes. Went to raising of Methodist meetinghouse & drawed stone, etc. from lane to barn.

During the thirties the raising of sheep for wool was one of the important features of farming in Western Massachusetts. All available pasturage was profitably used or rented for this purpose. A few more items on this point during the same year of 1834:

- June 9. The day very pleasant and warm. Almon, Nelson Cross, Joel Taylor, young Jennings sheared. I & Father did them up.
" 16. Marked the old sheep & brought up two out of the pasture chilled.
" 21. Finished working on the road. Conversation with a Peruvian about keeping sheep, Allen Haskell.
July 12. Washed the sheep in tobacco juice.
" 30. Father carried away the wool to Mr. Tracy's, 292 lb. at 30 cts. a pound.
Aug. 25. Went to Capt. Deming's with Fa. got 72 lambs at \$1.25 per head. Put them in the lower mowing. Put our own with them, 37 in no.

As a country school teacher, Mr. Manley "boarded round", and his experiences were varied.

"I went to board at Deacon Merryfields this week. Their Sunday repast consisted of woodchuck which I did not relish, but knowing it was the best they had to offer, I ate it with a thankful heart."

Perhaps the most uncomfortable experience of his career was at South Lee in 1839, a few notes of which will suffice for many of the same tenor.

- Dec. 18. This day let out school for want of wood.
Dec. 20. Some wood was brought about half past nine of which I made a fire. I took a severe cold by staying in the school house waiting for the fire to burn, & if ever I get well, no thanks to the people whose duty it was furnish it.
Dec. 31. Out of wood again but enough brought to last half a day at a time for 2½ days & usually brought about 9 o'clock, green, covered with snow.
Feb. 13. I attended the Lyceum. It was very full; the subject was debated with much spirit on both

- sides by Messrs. Woolson and Brown on the Affirmative and by Dr. Mc M. Owen on the negative. The negative gained the question: That it was not right to Emancipate the slaves without preparation.
- " 28. I returned home.
- Returning to Washington, Mr. Manley became immediately engrossed in town politics and public business.
- Mar. 16. Day pleasant and warm. I attended Town meeting. Phineas Atwood chosen moderator & Stephen W. Newton, Clerk. Newton & Ballantine held up as Selectmen, tried 4 times & no choice. Newton said he voted for himself last time & once before slipped one in sllily. The moderator rejected it. Much clashing on both sides. The meeting not legally warned.
- " 30. I saw the valuation of the town for the first time. My real put down at 275 acres, 53 too much.
- May 27. We went to the installation of Mr. William Atkinson. The exercises were appropriate & highly interesting.
- June 28. Mr. Hulburt lectured on abolition.
- Oct. 31. Cloudy. We threshed oats & cleaned 18 bushels this morning. Complaint made because fresh meat, boiled potatoes, wheat bread & butter & fried cakes, applesauce "want" good enough.
- Nov. 2. Went to convention at Lenox.
- June 4,
1841 Visited Miss Emily Jones School and Miss Bushnells. The first, 14; the latter, 18. Both doing well. We examined Miss H. Bills. I think her education limited for the privileges she has had.
- Nov. 11,
1843 I commenced working at the Summit.
- " 14. I worked getting in wood at the Summit. The oxen worked there drawing stone.
- Dec. 21. I have experienced much fatigue & suffering the passed winter. My work very laborious & some of it unpleasant. From friends I have received reproach and abuse and one in particular has not failed to take advantage and illtreat me. The Supt. James Barnes has not paid me as he agreed for Dec. Many nights I have had to sit up through the night besides having to shovel snow. In the old office I have been assailed by chilly winds & piercing frosts. None know all I have suffered. The great day will reveal it.
- June 12. A hard frost so that things are cut down on the low lands. I raised my house. Father, James and team worked today.
- July 17. I finished shingling my house.
- Oct. 20. I directed the T. Clerk to publish me and Miss M.L. Hale.
- " 5. Cloudy in the morn. Pleasant at noon. Rainy between 2 & 3. Pleasant after 4 o'clock. Mr. Bond united Miss Hale and myself in marriage. We then went to Albany. Stayed to the Mansion House. Went into the museum. Saw and heard much that was interesting.
- " 6. Cool. Arose early. Visited the State House, City Hall, the Basin Steamer Rochester. Took the cars after purchasing some things & came home. Took tea to Levi's. (Levi Fairbanks).
- Nov. 9. We moved down & began keeping house at the Summit.
- Jan. 17,
1845 Fine mist fell all day & froze forming a thick crust. Train from W. three hours behind.
- Feb. 4. Snowed all day very fast. Blowed hard all day and night. I sat up all night for train.
- " 5. Snowed moderately all day. The train passed to the E. by three engines with much difficulty. No freight.
- " 6. Blustering & cold. The western train came here about 8 A.M. The eastern train met it about 1 o'clock. C. Hollis, L.H. Roby, C. Rowalski & Chapin the conductor took dinner with me and paid nothing for it.
- " 7. I am so lame with a swelled foot as not to go to the Depot. (Note: Chilblains.)
- Apr. 11. We went up to mud pond & on to floating bridge. Very dangerous.
- May 12. We went to Pittsfield in the evening in a hand car & heard and saw the performance of Mr. Robert M. Gridley, etc. Got home at 3 o'clock. Had a fine time.
- June 18. 17 cars loaded with passengers & 2 engines to draw them passed with Odd Fellows.
- " 19. The Wesleyan meeting-house raised.
- Nov. 7. Freight train ran over an ox near Westfield & threw off 10 cars. I sat up all night. Pass. train ran over 30 or 40 sheep.
- Feb. 27,
1846 Severely cold. Passenger trains met here this morning. 4 Gents & 2 ladies took breakfast this

- morning. Sprague D.D. & Jenkins the Pension Agent took dinner.
- Feb. 28. Adison Gilmore, Esq., President of the directors, Mr. G. Bliss & Mr. Barnes stayed here 3 hours last night.
- Mar. 12. A stranger left two small trunks at my house.
- " 14. I return 1002 cords of wood measured at this station.
- Apr. 25. We in much mercy. Had a daughter born. (Harriet Lucy)
- July 4. I carried Mr. Piers and wife to the celebration. Messrs. Norwood & Hyde addressed the people in the meeting-house after which the people marched out in good order to the tables of refreshments & partook a sumptuous dinner. Some good sentiments expressed at the table. Let universal love & good will characterize the conduct of all present towards God & all mankind.
- Dec. 26. Blustering & very cold. The pass. train stayed here 2¾ hours on account of a freight being stuck in the snow by the stone house.
- Mar. 1,
1847 Very blustering & cold. Cincinnati broke down 3 miles north, backed the train down where they stayed till 1 o'clock; about 30 took something to eat.
- Nov. 21. The night engine & hands switched a loaded platform off the track at the lower switch & left it there. The road repair hands helped me unload & get it on & then load it up again.
- Jan. 22,
1848 Mary had a daughter born 9½ A.M. (Francis Louisa)
- July 19. The balance of the Mass. Regiment from Mexico passed here for Boston. 450 in 6 long cars. Looked young & like a hard set of young men.
- Nov. 7. I attended the election; a Whig majority for President.
- Apr. 29. The whole family of us attended meeting in the old church for the last time. Mr. N. showed that great changes had taken place since the old church was built in 1795.

Eagle, April 30, 1915 **Patrick Carty Expires During Night,
Victim of Heart Failure**

Patrick Carty was born in Galway, Ireland, and came to America at the age of 18 years. In 1854 he went to New York and sailed for California and the gold fields by way of Cape Horn. He remained in the mines for five years and accumulated quite a quantity of gold.

With his gold he soon bought a farm in Washington and was called as a term of endearment by his neighbors "California" Carty, a name which all who knew him were privileged to call him and did so to the day of his death.

He was the last of a set of sturdy pioneers from Ireland, who settled in Washington on what is now known as the October Mountain State Forest. Others who lived on the mountain and were neighbors of Mr. Carty were Patrick Huban, Michael and Patrick Navin, Thomas and Patrick Deely, Thomas Branley, James Welch, Robert and Michael Delaney, George Gousett, Spencer Pease and Allen French. Mr. Carty lived on his mountain farm for 30 years and was the first of the above named owners to sell his estate to the late William C. Whitney.

Record of the Descendants of
SIMON HENRY (1766-1854)

and

RHODA PARSONS (1774-1847) His Wife

Simon Henry, was born 27 November, 1766, in Lebanon, Connecticut. He married Rhoda Parsons, born in Enfield, 13 March, 1774, moved to Washington 1795, where eight children were born to them, five sons and three daughters.

Here, they remained for about twenty-five years, cultivating the lands which they had purchased. Simon Henry, was repeatedly chosen moderator of their annual town meeting, and chairman of the board of selectmen (twelve times chosen selectman between 1804 and 1817), besides discharging many other public functions.

New Connecticut, as the Western Reserve was then called, offered many attractions, especially to a farmer with a large family of sons. Fully a quarter of the people of Washington emigrated to the west between 1815 and 1820, and Simon Henry, anxious to give each of his sons a farm, sold his lands in Massachusetts and bought a large tract in Bainbridge from Simon Perkins, of Warren. To Ohio, therefore, with wife and eight children (two older ones Orrin and John having gone ahead the year

before) he removed in 1817. The diary of his journey, still preserved by N. C. Henry, is terse and almost void of incident; but there is a pathetic interest in the brief chronicle which begins: "We started from home Sept. 18, on Thursday in the afternoon"; and on November 1, after 44 days of weary travel, the last entry is, "Saturday night, home."

The route the Henrys traveled perhaps was followed by many of our people. They went via New Lebanon, Albany, Union, Middlefield, Cooperstown, Sherburne, Smyrna, Tully, Skaneateles, Geneva, Canandaigua, Bloomfield, Avon, Batavia, Buffalo, Fredenia, Northeast, Erie, Conneaut, Saybrook, Madison, Painesville, Mento, Chester.

BEACH

The Beach family, for whom Beach Road is named, came prior to 1828 and has stayed in town longer than any other family.

Ransford Beach is listed in the 1825 valuation list, but it is probable that he came here sooner because he seems so well settled with: 1 cow, 1 yoke bulls, 1 yearling, and 200 lb. swine.

He had bought the John Case farm with 45 acres improved land, and 28 acres unimproved land, one house and two barns.

By 1840 his son William Beach is listed with 113 acres and buildings and 1 horse, 2 cows, 1 two year old, 6 yearlings, 5 sheep and 200 wt. swine. He also had six boys and 5 girls.

In 1845 both Ransford Beach and his son William are listed. One farm is that on which Arlo Guthrie lives, and the other where Charlotte Radwich Brown lives. William Beach had 222 acres by now, 2 cows, 1 two year old, 1 yearling, 100 wt. swine, 2 horses, 1 yearling colt and 60 sheep.

In 1899 Addison Beach had the "Old Beach Farm" and the Mather lot for a total of 265 acres. He had three children, Sophia May Beach, Raymond and Jessie. His brother Royal had more than one hundred acres next door. In 1876 they built a new house on the present Arlo Guthrie farm. In 1907 the Beaches were still farming the same farms.

The present descendant of this family is Mrs. James Sanderson, now 85 she admits. She was on the Washington school committee for twenty-five years some time ago. Her late husband came from Northern Ireland of Scotch descent, (and his father was in the honor guard of Queen Victoria, not pertinent to our history but showing the tangled web of involvement each family has to the rest of the world.) James Sanderson was badly wounded in World War I, and without a doubt his life was shortened by his wounds which refused to heal.

James and May Sanderson (she had dropped the Sophia) had six children and they were all involved in World War II, even the oldest son, James, who didn't pass the physical was in an equally dangerous spot working in a munitions factory. After the war, James earned a Ph. D. and works for DuPont.

Mrs. Sanderson doesn't claim Washington climate had anything to do with it, but both grandmothers lived to be 95 and an uncle just recently died in Texas at 105.

THE POMEROY FAMILY

The native home of the Pomeroy family, as far back as it can be traced, was in Cotentin, in the Department of LaMarche in Normandy. Radolphus Pomeroy was with William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings. He was born about 1030. For his assistance in that battle he received 58 Lordships in County Devon, three in Somerset, and two in Cornwall, besides 16 entered upon. He built a castle near the river Dart, which was the chief seat of the family for 500 years. Eighteen generations have been traced in Normandy and England, and twelve in America. The name has endured for upwards of 900 years. It comes from the French Pomeraiie, meaning orchard.

The ancestor of the American branch of the family was ELTWOOD, son of Richard, baptized July 4, 1585 at Beaminster, County Dorset, England. He emigrated to this country in 1630 in a company of 140, sailing from Plymouth, England. They were all Puritans. They landed at Matapan and laid out the town of Dorchester. A few years later he became one of the first settlers of Windsor, Conn. He had eleven children: CALEB, 8th child, was one of the original settlers of Northampton; was made freeman in 1663; gave three pounds of flax to the Harvard College fund.

JOSEPH POMEROY, born December 30, 1786 and settled in Washington and had 9 children.

ALANSON SEARLE, born June 15, 1811, died December 21, 1891. Married 1st Mamre E. Charter of Lee, January 1, 1833-2 children. 2nd Mary Wilber, March 27, 1838. 3rd Anna Brown June 6, 1839-4 children. 4th Olive Coil. Mr. Pomeroy raised sheep on his farm, and hauled the wool to the mills in Middlefield. After selling his wool crop one year, he returned to Washington with one of the largest checks ever brought into the town at that time, \$1200.

He was representatiave in the legislature in 1882, the last representative from Washington. WILLIAM ADDISON, born September 20, 1833, married February 20, 1856 to Lena L. Cross of Washington. Three children.

ALANSON BROWN, born February 8, 1842 in Washington. Married September 22, 1866 to May Elizabeth Lyman. He was in the 61st Mass. Inf. in the Civil War. Died March 2, 1905.

IRVING WILBUR, born July 30, 1873 in Washington. Son of Alanson Brown Pomeroy. Married August 6, 1898 to Mary Emeline Jones. Children-Wilbur Van Ness born August 16, 1899 and Ruth Martha (now Mrs. Charles Messenger of Dalton) born April 7, 1901.

ALANSON B. POMEROY

Alanson B. Pomeroy was born in Washington February 8, 1842, and his entire life was spent in his native town. He was a man of more than average business ability. He doubtless handled more real estate than any other man in his time. He was also an extensive dealer in lumber and wood. In his early life he taught school for a time. He united with the Congregational Church during the pastorate of the Rev. M.M. Longley, in the early 60's, and was very prominent in the religious life of the town. When the Methodist Church disbanded, Mr. Pomeroy bought the communion table and large pulpit Bible.



Alanson B. Pomeroy

He enlisted in the 61st Mass. Regiment in the Civil War. He was in the Legislature the year Gov. Gaston was in office. His death occurred in 1905.

He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thaddeus Lynch, of Hinsdale. She died in 1903. There were six children.

In the 1899 valuation list we find that he owned:3 horses, 5 cows, 1 farrow cow, 1 three year old, 2 two year old, 12 yearlings.

For real estate he had that particular year two dwellings, three barns and one thousand two hundred eighty two acres. He knew the town very well, would buy farms when the owners wanted to sell, usually would lumber off the trees, and then sell the place to someone else.

NELSON FRANKLIN TYLER

Nelson Franklin Tyler was born in West Stockbridge in 1830. In early life he went to New York City where he studied Architecture for a profession. Later he removed to La Grange, Georgia, where he remained in business until a few years before the war when his strong Union sentiments led him to return to the North.

Mr. Tyler settled in Washington, formed a partnership with Edward Chessemann and engaged in the lumber business for a number of years. He then went to Westfield where he again engaged in the lumber business and also in the manufacture of whips and whip machinery. His family consisted of his wife and two daughters, Georgia and Hattie Estelle.

MRS. GEORGIA TYLER KENT

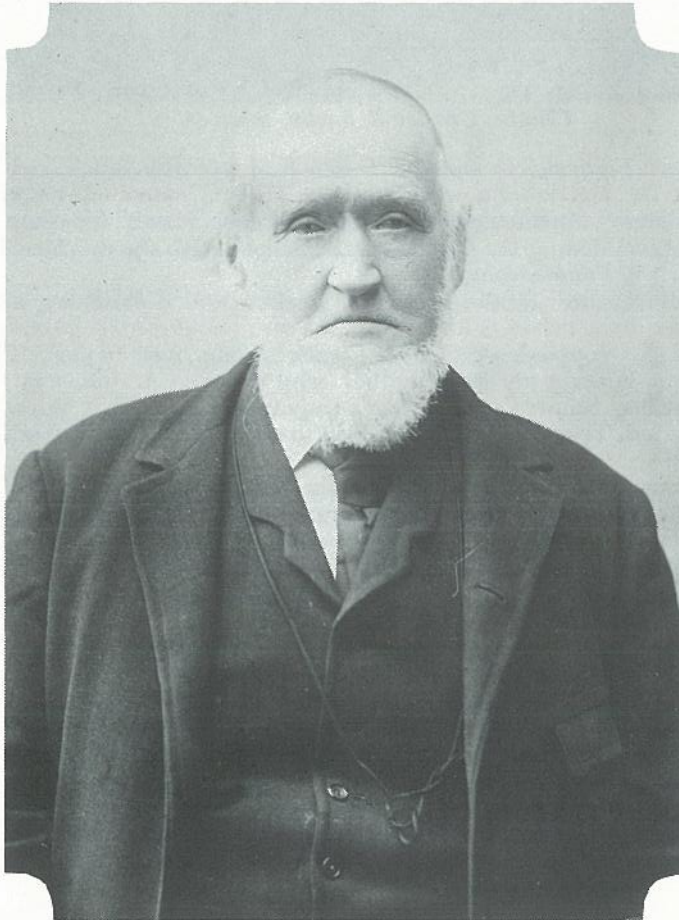
Mrs. Georgia Tyler Kent was a daughter of the late Nelson F. Tyler. She was born in Georgia and in 1855 her father removed to Washington when she was two years of age. She lived here 18 years. She was a woman of unusual intellectual ability, adopting the stage for a profession, and became a prominent actress. She was associated with Madam Modjeska, Thomas F. Keene, John McCullough, John Drew and Lawrence Barrett, and other stage celebrities.

CHARLES CROSIER

(From The Pittsfield Journal, dated February 27, 1912)

24 Birthdays in 96 years
Six children to greet Charles Crosier
STORY OF HIS LIFE

Charles Crosier of Washington Mountain who is to celebrate his 96th birthday on Thursday, February 29, has invited his six children to be with him on that day. He is slightly deaf and his eyesight is failing. Although Mr. Crosier is 96 years of age, it is an interesting fact that this will really be his 24th birthday.



Charles Crosier

The six children who are to attend the birthday observance on Thursday are Mrs. Mary Kelley of Hinsdale, Mrs. William H. Snow of Becket, Emory and William Crosier of Mittineague, Miss Frances Crosier who lives with her father, and Mrs. Ada Messenger of Springfield. These children are all by his first wife. He also had 15 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Charles Crosier & family, taken in 1912.

The grandchildren are: Frederick O. and Miss Bessie Kelley of Hinsdale, Charles Snow and Mrs. Ora Molineaux of Becket, Dr. Herbert Snow of Hartford, Harry Crosier of Mittineague, Misses Elsie, Florence and Amy Crosier of Mittineague, Mrs. Martina Pease, Hazel Messenger, George Messenger of Chicopee, the latter a student at the Lowell Textile School. Also she was formerly Eva May Crosier, now married and living in Pennsylvania.

The great grandchildren are: Mildred Snow of Becket, and a daughter of Eva May Crosier of Pennsylvania.

A letter written in 1952 from a descendant in Chester, Penn., says in part, "I remember so clearly when I was a little girl hearing my grandmother, who was Eva A. Johnson, tell how she and my grandfather, who was Chas. Emery Crosier, lived on adjoining farms. They played together as children and grew up and married. They lived a life devoted to each other and died one day apart and were buried together."

Mr. Crosier was the second oldest in a family of six sons and one daughter of Joseph Crosier, who lived for years on a farm in Peru. Charles Crosier's grandfather, Lieutenant John Crosier, was a soldier in the Revolution and obtained his title for courage and bravery on the field of battle. He enlisted from Dedham, where the family had settled early in the 18th century and after the Revolution hitched up his yoke of cattle and drove a team containing all his household goods across the state to Peru where he settled and lived the rest of his days.

In Peru Charles Crosier, who is the last of his family, was born and lived on the old homestead until he was 21. Then he started out for himself and built stone walls at 75 cents a rod. There are miles of stone wall in the town of Washington still standing that were built by Mr. Crosier when a young man.

On April 1st, Mr. Crosier was married to Miss Betsy Geer of Washington and after the wedding they started with oxen and sled and all belongings for their new home on the Atwood farm in the north part of the town of Washington.

One of their first purchases after starting on the farm was a heifer which Mr. Crosier bought in Lenox about eight miles distant. Having no horse Mr. Crosier started on the trip to and from Lenox afoot.

The heifer soon tired on the return and Mr. Crosier was forced to lift the animal to his shoulder and carry it the rest of the distance home.

On the Washington Mountain farm, which at that time contained about 700 acres, Mr. Crosier built a sawmill and furnished much of the timber for ties for the Western Railroad. From his forests for 20 years or more he furnished wood and fuel for engines on the road.

For 17 years Mr. Crosier was tax collector in the Washington. On account of advancing years he resigned the position in March 1906 when he was 90 years of age. At the time of his retirement he was the oldest tax collector in the State. He always had all the taxes collected at the close of each year and turned over to the town a clean sheet at the time of town meeting. It was quite a job to collect taxes in Washington for the farms are so scattered. He often used to come to this city and would go to Westfield

and Springfield for the taxes of persons living in those places who owned property in Washington. In order that he might make a clean report to the town at the close of each year he would sometimes carry on his own responsibility the taxes of delinquent persons and run the risk of losing them.

During his public service for the town of Washington, Mr. Crosier also was selectman, assessor, overseer of the poor, and school committeeman. In 1875 Mr. Crosier married for his second wife Miss Anna Wright of Lockport, N.Y. who is now about 80 years of age.

When Mr. Crosier was born February 29, 1816, the town of Washington probably had a larger population than it has now.

Mr. Crosier died at the age of 99 in 1915.

It is interesting to note that Miss Bessie Kelley, our former school teacher who is now 102, is a granddaughter of Mr. Crosier.

THE FARM THAT CAME BACK TO LIFE (The Mottor Farm)

Our car bumped and groaned up the last steep incline, carrying in its train a drag-chute of dust which caught up with and enveloped us as we slowed and stopped precisely at the top of the hill.

The silence from the back seats of the wagon was almost as tangible as the sand that rimmed our teeth and drifted across the car seats.

"Well, kids, here we are—Nana's Farm, finally. What do you think of it?"



Old Mottor house — "the farm that came back to life."

More silence—unless you count the gritting of dusty teeth and the hot-day whirr of the grasshoppers. "Dad. . .?" Finally, a reaction. "Yes?" "You and mom said this was a farm, but all it looks like is the woods we have been going by all the way up here for the past two and a half hours. . . ."

"We didn't tell you it IS a farm, Marzipen—we said it WAS one, years ago when Nana was a kid about your age. Her grandmother and grandfather lived here with their big family, but no one in the family wanted to stay on, so when the two old people died, the farm died with them. But somewhere, under all that wild growth, there are some signs that this once was a working farm. Let's try to find them."

The kids refused to be intrigued. They looked morose as they climbed out of the car, slapping mosquitoes and rubbing road dust from their eyes. Somehow, they all had hoped there would be a storybook barnyard cast still on hand at Nana's Farm, even though the humans had left 60 years before. Instead of cows, though, there were whippy bushes with thorns on them every place one tried to walk. In the place where Nana had told them to look for the great farm pond, they found only an oozing, buggy marsh.

Thus, in silent procession, we began to trek The Farm That Wasn't a Farm.

When Periwinkle spotted that huge old apple tree, the tide started to turn. He ran to the tree and gripped its massive limbs, climbing at the same time he was screaming back to the other kids, "Hey! C'mere! This must be where the orchard was!" The others flocked over and stomped through a sea of rotted fruit that had fallen in silence the year before, and for who knows how many years before that.

"Mom! There are some violets growing over here! Can they grow without PEOPLE?"

As we rushed to this new discovery, someone found wild rhubarb. The rhubarb investigation turned up a tiny stream that looked as though it might lead us to the spring which family lore said was bubbling out of the hillside up near a huge flat rock. That search, while fruitless, led to a fascinating junk pile: not beer cans or potato chip bags, but steel rims from wagon wheels, a smashed crockery jug that must have done noble service for a thirsty ancestor, small "patent medicine" jars that might not have been so beneficial.

An Indian-file trip down to the brambles of the flat lands brought us to a forest of berry bushes. Blueberries rampant: the birds would eat well on the humanless farm this summer.

At the high end of the 180 acres, we discovered a flat piece of land that presided over a neck-stretching view of the Berkshire hills in the distance and the Westfield River valley in the near foreground.

Later, we met a man who owns property adjacent to the lower end of the old farm, and he told us about its most exciting dimension:

"Now, I can't tell you exactly where the eastern boundary is, but I do know that the waterfall and mill are on your mother's property." As he spoke, we began to hear a sound we hadn't noticed before—the roar of water, a sound so constant that it had to be brought to our attention. Then, scrambling and teetering along the pulpy hillside, we descended to find "Nana's Waterfall" crashing down a spiral stairway of stone, rushing through a double S turn and finally flattening out to hiss by the foundation of a mill made of great stones piled ten feet high and so thickly encrusted with moss that they seemed more like big green hassocks piled one atop the other.

We picnicked by the mill, and as I listened to the power tumbling from the waterfall, I wondered what had happened to the waterwheel that once was boss of this channel. Did someone dismember the mill and take the wheel to work another job, or did the white water get its revenge for years of involuntary servitude and tear that wheel from its housing and smash it down on the stones below?

The final flourish came just before we gathered our gear to leave: we stumbled upon the foundations of the old farm house and just a few hundred feet away, the L-shaped barn. Although located right next to the roadway, both were hidden in the highest growth of bush, and would have escaped our notice if it were not for the most prosaic of reasons: Nature's call for a passenger who faced a long car ride home.

Although the porcupines had left little of the buildings but the stone foundations they sat upon, one poignant human note remained: the roof-less, wheel-less, engine-less body of an early American automobile—with a seven-inch thick birch tree growing up through the middle of it. A planter on a grand scale, it somehow asked the question, "What happened here on the last day people were in charge?"

Finally, we got everyone together and pushed off for home. The day's adventure was over, but one could tell from the kids' conversations and the lingering looks back that this was not the last time we would see Nana's Farm, because in the hours we had been there, that farm had come back to life.

As a matter of fact, in my last glimpse through the rearview mirror, I swear I saw a cow, a pig, a chicken, a horse, a dog and a cat—all lined up and looking after us.

Smiling.

Copied by permission of Mr. McNamara
and

Owen J. McNamara
"The Sourpuss"

"The Citizen's Group Newspapers of Brookline, Mass.

JOHN B. WATSON

John B. Watson was born in Scotland where he grew up to young manhood. His occupation was that of miller and farmer. He was the inventor of a "Barley Mill Improvement." When his landlord raised the rent of his mill and farm to \$1575 he concluded that to be too exorbitant and so determined to come to America to try his fortune here. He left Scotland March 27, 1888, and went first to New Jersey where he turned his attention to farming. He lived on a rented farm for seven years but his health and that of his family was badly affected by the malaria. His attention was directed to New England by the advertisements of the 'Abandoned Farms' in the papers. In his searchings he was directed to Washington, where he finally concluded to buy the farm, formerly occupied by Patrick Dinan for 36 years, a quiet secluded farm well up in the hills in the western part of the town.

Here he enlarged his house and added many out buildings to his barn. His first intention was to engage in the raising of sheep, but the low prices led him gradually to go into the raising of Registered Jersey Cattle, Chester White Hogs, Shetland Ponies and Brahma fowls. He has had three sales of thoroughbred stock, bring in all a total of over \$10,000, which he considers pretty good for an abandoned farm in Washington.

He took possession of his farm in 1895, having rented it for the two years previous. He soon became prominent in town affairs. He was elected to the board of selectmen, assessors and overseers of the poor. In 1910 he was elected town clerk and treasurer, which office he held through 1918. He was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1912.

He was largely instrumental in bringing the telephone and the rural free delivery into town, he having got up the petition for both and pushed them to a successful conclusion. He always advocated good roads, going so far as to purchase a stone crusher for his own use. He was the first farmer to bring an automobile into the town, though ridiculed by his neighbors.

After the World War I he worked hard to put Washington over the top in the third Liberty Loan drive, the town doubling its quota through the aid of the W.C. Whitney family.

His daughter, Agnes Johnson, lived out her life in town. She belonged to St. Andrew's Church, and for many years was correspondent for "The Eagle".



Watson house after rebuilding.



Watson home after he sold it to W. C. Whitney.

MESSENGER FAMILY

The Messenger family lived on the eastern end of Washington Mountain for over a hundred years, until the last member died.

Many of the pictures used in this history were sent from New York City by Mrs. Winslow to Anne Middlebrook, the last of the local Messengers.

Many of the newspaper clippings were copied from the two large notebooks that Mr. and Mrs.

Charles Messenger of Dalton made of the clippings that Anne kept over the years, and the Historical Commission has the notebooks and a postcard album that belonged to Anne, and also two albums of pictures and tintypes.

The Messengers were still farming in the old fashioned ways long after modernization had changed other farms. One item that they sold seemed unique with them—barrels of cranberries over the years before brush and high weeds crowded them out. Toward the end Anne said she couldn't find a single cranberry where there had been so many.

Harry Messenger was the last boy raised there, and his little diaries show that a young man could get around and have a good time then when there wasn't much money and life was so much simpler. In later years Harry Messenger played and called for many square dances throughout the whole area.

My old big sled was made Feb. 1898.

Lyman Jordan gave me a violin March 2, 1898.

I tapped the big Maple March 14, 1899—sap run good.

George Sanders gave me a violin March 22, 1898.

Aggie Watson took a picture of the school April 28, 1898.

Mart Regan gave me a dollar for a violin bow May 22, 1898.

Dave Watson and I went fishing June 11. He caught 26 fish and I caught 48.

October 18 was Grandpa's birthday. He was born in 1815.

Victor Tier burnt sap spouts for fun Feb. 21, 1899.

We all went over to Mr. Jordans April 5 and had a fine time.

Largest hailstorm I remember was June 24, 1899. Half as big as hens eggs.

Had a fine time over to Mr. Watsons July 4, 1899.

Church was started at Cranes house August 6, 1899.

The first dance I ever danced at was at Mr. Jordans on Aug. 18, 1899.

The corner stone of St. Andrew's Church was laid on Sept. 4, 1899. The Cranes gave every one some tea and something to eat.

Uncle Myron bought me a set of fiddle strings Oct. 11, 1899.

Uncle Myron brought me home a bicycle Nov. 4, 1899.

The first eclipse I ever saw was Dec. 16, 1899.

We put up the drilling machine Jan. 20, 1900.

There was a dance the 21st of Feb. 1900 at Fred Schultze. All had a nice time.

We all went over to Mr. Watsons Feb. 24, 1900. Danced.

Mr. Watson had a party May 9, 1900.

The first service held in St. Andrew's Church was June 3, 1900.

Rev. Mr. Charles Lewis was the minister.

The first party Cranes had up here was July 21, 1900.

St. Andrew's Church was dedicated June 15, 1900. There were about 200 people there.

Uncle Myron had a heifer killed by lightning June 28, 1900.

Went over to Mr. Winslow's to see the fireworks July 4, 1900. It was nice.

A picture was taken of the choir at the Church July 8, 1900.

Went to a party at Mr. Crane's July 21, 1900. About 100 people there.

The first bee tree I ever saw was on Aug. 13, 1900. Took out about 40 lbs.

In March about 2 feet of snow came and in April 1 foot.

I went to a show in Becket June 18, 1908.

I went to a dance at Mr. G.F. Cranes on July 1, 1908. I danced 14 sets.

I went over to Mr. Culvers in the afternoon Thanksgiving Day Nov. 24, 1910. And was there to supper.

The first deer hunting around here was from Nov. 21 til Nov. 26, 1910.

Quite a few people shot deer around here during the week.

I got a good many presents Christmas 1910. 17 or 18. The loveliest was a watch fob with a locket and pictures.

January 1911 was a nice month for chopping wood as there was no snow. Uncle George and I cut 30 cords of wood in 6 days or 42 hours for Mr. J. Watson.

I had quincy sore throat the 11, 12, 13, and 14 of January 1911. For three days I couldn't eat.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Pittsfield March 11, 1911 and stayed at her sisters over night. We were going to go to a show but there was nothing but standing room left so we didn't go. We went to the

moving picture place instead.

March 12 was Sunday and we went to Church at the Methodist in the morning and to the Baptist Church at night. It was the first time we ever were in the Baptist Church in Pittsfield. It was fine. There were 30 men sang in the choir at the start, then 4 men sang and then the regular choir about 20 or 24.

The Methodist Church at Washington put up its new Bell and first one March 15, 1911. It weighs 800 besides the frame work.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to The Empire theater March 22, 1911 and had a nice time.

The winter of 1910 and 1911 I caught 17 rabbits, 3 white ones and 14 gray ones also 2 skunks and one muskrat.

We made 70 gallons of syrup in 7 days in April 1911.

We had about a foot of snow fall April 8, 1911. About 2 inches April 19, 1911.

Sam Tier and I went over where Pittsfield is building a Farnam dam April 19, 1911 and saw all they were doing. They had lots of machinery there and boilers. There was 5 boilers on the job and 2 more to come also a steam sawmill and air compressor.

Miss Mildred Culver and I drove to Peru to look at a farm May 7, 1911. We had a fine ride. And a lovely time when we got home.

She and I went to the Baptist Church April 30, 1911 in the evening. It was the first time I ever saw people baptised by immersion. 7 or 8 were baptised then. We came home on the 10 o'clock train.

Miss Mildred C. and I went to Pittsfield May 14, 1911 on Sunday and went to a moving picture show for the Benefit of an Italian Church. It was nice to. I went to work for Mr. Frank Chapel on the Whitney place May 11, 1911.

Got a new knife May 13, 1911 with tobacco tags.

I commenced to go to school when I was 5 years old and finished when I was most 15. Could play on a harmonica when I was about 7 years old. Had a violin given to me on March 2, 1898, another March 22, 1898. Got a mandolin Dec. 24, 1902, a Harmophone July 15, 1903. Got an accordion Sept. 10, 1903. The Ocrina March 18, 1903. The Little Joe May 28, 1904.

The first theater show I went to was March 17, 1903 in Dalton. The first I rode on the steam cars was Mar. 17, 1903. I bought an American harp Aug. 3, 1906. Had a banjo given to me Feb. 11, 1907 Another violin given to me in 1909 by Annie.

Went to Boston Aug. 10, 1904 on an excursion with Uncle George. The first circus I ever went to was Barnum and Baileys in Pittsfield on June 25, 1903 with my mother. Went next to Walter Mains show on July 3, 1903 Pittsfield with cousin Jennie. The next time was on May 12, 1904 to the Adam 4 Paw Circus. Went to Church in the French church with Victor sometime in Oct. 1904. Went to Church in Hinsdale on April 30th, 1905. Catholic. The St. Andrew's Church in Washington was built in the year 1899. The corner stone was laid Sept. 4, 1899. Services were held the next spring 1900.

Went to evening service at the Valley Church on April 20, 1906.

And a very sad evening was March 31, 1907. There was a graphophone entertainment at the Valley Church that bad night April 6, 1907.

I was registered and had my name on the voters list on March 30, 1907 and voted April 8, 1907 for the first time.

Had the mumps in 1906 from April 8 until the 15th.

1907 was a rather queer year to begin with Jan. was cold and also Feb. but March was warm. The last part of March it was 70° in the shade some days. The first of April was some colder but pleasant. On the 9 and 10 there was about 18 inches of snow come and about as cold as in January.

Went to Springfield from Pittsfield in an engine on an express with Victor Tier Aug. 16, 1907. And Aug. 11 we went to Mt. Tom Holyoke and to the Summit House. Miss Mildred Culver went with me to a dance at Mr. Crane's on Time.

Went to North Adams to a Fair on Sept. 20, 1907.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went up to the top of Mt. Greylock on June 14, 1908. We walked up from Cheshire Harbor to the top in two hours, a distance of 5 miles and came down in one hour and 45 minutes. We had a nice time and a lovely trolley ride from Hinsdale to Pittsfield and Cheshire.

Miss Mildred Culver went with me to a dance in Hinsdale at a Mr. Leonards on May 22, 1908. I furnished the music.

Also to Mr. Plants Nov. 13, 1908 and to Mrs. Fassels Oct. 23, 1908 and to Mr. Billadeuis Oct. 29 and to Mr. Grainors Nov. 27 and again Jan. 1, 1909. A load from Washington took a sleighride to West Pittsfield on Dec. 31, 1908 to a dance at a Mr. Brants. We were out all night or rather did not go to bed

any time until Jan. 2, 1909. There were 8 of us from here and we had a lovely time.

I went to Springfield with Victor Tier Dec. 16, 1908 and to Hartford Also. Came back on Dec. 17, 1908. Had a fine time.

The first black suit I ever had I bought Jan. 16, 1909.

There was a sleighride from Washington to Hinsdale on February 3, 1909 and there were 16 of us. We went from Hinsdale to Pittsfield by trolley and then we went and saw moving pictures in the place called the World in Motion.

Mildred was sick on the trolleys or didn't feel very good also Fanny and Eva Simmons.

I went to a social at Mr. Irvin Pomeroy's on Jan. 19, we all went down to Mr. Kutzes on Feb. 9th and had a fine time.

The first Poverty social I ever went to was at Mr. Carl Peers on Feb. 12, 1909. Played for a dance at Mr. Plants on Feb. 19, 1909. Mildred couldn't go. It was an awful wet night.

Feb. 29, 1909 I played for a dance at Mr. Addison Beach's and all had a good time. There were about 65 there. They danced in three rooms and about 18 or 20 set.

Charles Engwer took a load of people up there. Nine besides himself. The ride was nice.

The first box social I ever went to was at Mr. Frank Coys on March 2, 1909

I went down to Mr. Lymans sawmill March 8, and saw different machinery work.

Mr. Victor Tier started to raise a mustache in March 1909.

The second box social I went to was at Mr. John Nelsons on March 23, 1909.

I played for a dance at Mr. Nathan Jenks on March 16, 1909. Ben Sanders played on the organ also Mr. W. Beals with me.

The first balloon I ever saw was in 1906 some time in the fall. Since then I have seen quite a number. I saw 4 in 1908. In 1909 I saw 5 up till May 21.

In 1908 I caught 758 fish. Trout, perch, bullheads, pickerel and pumpkinseeds.

In 1908 we had 45 loads of hay on our place. We had 7 loads of oats, 2 loads of wheat, 1 of barley, 36 bushel of apples, 93 of potatoes, 90 bushel of turnips, 135 of corn.

I saw another balloon on May 25, 1909.

May 29 I went with Mr. Culver from his place in Windsor. I led two cows for him. We left at half past six and got to Jordanville at eleven. Then we went from there to Windsor and stayed over night. The next day we came home through West Cummington and back to Hinsdale and home. It was a fine trip and I saw a lot of the world.

June fourth Miss Mildred Culver and I went up to Ashley Lake fishing. We had a lovely time. Andrew and his wife and Fanny were there also.

I played for a dance at Mr. Deweys on May 31.

Miss Mildred Culver and Fanny and I went to Pittsfield to see the Cole Brothers Circus on June 11, 1909.

We all saw a balloon on June 15, 1909.

We shingled our barn on the West side June 14-15-21-23-25. It took 10 thousand shingles. I helped Mr. Culver shingle one side of his woodshed June 24, 1909. It was an awful hot day.

July 5, 1909 Miss Mildred Culver and I went up to the top of Mt. Greylock and back.

We walked up in about two hours. We rested a while about half way up. When we came down it only took about 1 hour and 40 minutes. We had a fine day of pleasure. On our way home on the train we saw a hot air balloon go up from Dalton. One went up also from Washington at night.

July 20 Uncle George and I helped Mr. John Watson. He had a sale of Jersey cattle. About 80 head in all. One bull brought \$200 dollars and a cow brought 220 dollars. A little calf brought \$50 dollars. There were quite a large number of men there from places far off. One man bought eight head and paid \$700 for them.

I saw a balloon on July 20, 1909 from Mr. Watsons.

July 23rd, 1909 I went over to Andrew and Grace Culvers to a dance. Miss Mildred Culver went with me and we had a lovely time. I danced twelve sets and two-stepped some. There were about 24 or 26 there. We danced until half past two.

July 24 Uncle George, Annie, Jennie and I went up to Ashley Lake fishing. We only caught 20 fish.

July 28, 1909 a party of seven of us went up to the top of Mt. Greylock.

They were Mr. Fred and Charles Westphal and sister Emma, Mr. Charles Engwer, Miss Fanny Culver, Miss Mildred Culver and myself. We were taken to Hinsdale by team and then went by trolley from there. It took us 2 hours and 30 minutes to climb the Mt. and 1 hour and 40 minutes to come down.

We all went to the top of the tower also.

We came back and stopped at Pontoosuc Lake and rode on the steamer. We had a fine time.

July 30 we all went to a grown-up Childrens party at Berth's. There were about 25 there and all dressed like young children.

August 3, 1909 there was a lawn party at the parsonage. There were over 50 people there. It was a very good time.

August 23, 1909 Uncle Myron and George and I drove a flock of sheep down to New Lenox. We were 2 hours and a quarter. I never had been there before. I went from there to Pittsfield. A man gave me a ride from there up to the Post Office. He was agent for real estate.

August 25, 1909 was my birthday. I worked all day. Mamma gave me four pairs of stockings and a pair of garters. In the evening I went over to Mr. Culvers. Mildred gave me a neck tie and a tie clasp.

I got five birthday postals. They had cake and ice cream in honor of the day for me.

I commenced to work on the State road near the R.R. August 30, 1909 and broke stone 10 days as my job.

Sept. 5 I saw a balloon real close by the closest ever yet.

Miss Mildred Culver and I took a trolley ride from Pittsfield to Bennington on Sunday Sept. 19, 1909. It was a lovely trip. We were in the bottom of the Monument but did not go up it. We came back and stopped at Berkshire Park a while. It was a lovely day all day.

I saw a balloon Sept. 29, 1909. We were cutting corn. It came from Pittsfield.

Sept. 30, 1909 Miss M. Culver and I went to Great Barrington Fair. We had a nice time and a long ride. She had never been that way before.

It was 27 miles from Pittsfield. It took over 2 hours each way.

On Oct. 8, 1909 Annie and I picked up and sacked 12 bushels of potatoes for Ed Morgan in 23 minutes.

November 6, 1909 I and Mildred went to Springfield and spent the day. We went down on the nine thirty train and back on the seven.

We went over across the old toll bridge and back. I walked through the Court house. We went into quite a few different stores and had a fine time all day.

Uncle Myron and George and I commenced to build a wagon shed Nov. 3, 1909 and put it up boarded and shingled it in about two weeks. It is 33 feet by 19 feet.

Nov. 24 I had three teeth pulled in Pittsfield by the King Dental Company. By their painless process. It didn't hurt hardly at all not enough to mention.

The New England Telephphone Company put up their line from Endies to C. Sanderses on Nov. 27, 1909 until Dec. 2 and they put in the phones on Dec. 8, 1909.

I started to read the Bible through on Jan. 6, 1909 and finished both the Old and New Testaments on Dec. 13, 1909. I read as near as possible to 23 chapters a week.

I bought 9 pieces of furniture on Dec. 13 for \$5.50.

We had 47 loads of hay, 200 bushels of potatoes, 3 load of oats, 75 bushels of apples, 5 load of squash and pumpkins and (? 48 or 9) loads of brakes. Also 4 loads of hay from Beaches.

I caught 253 fish in the year 1909.

We had a blizzard here on Christmas 1909. It started to snow on Christmas day Dec. 25 and kept snowing until night of the 26. Then it blowed the snow into drifts so that the roads weren't opened until the 27. There was about two feet of snow came. I was over to Mr. Culvers to Christmas and it was so stormy I couldn't get home until Monday the 27th. It was the biggest snow storm I ever saw.

The first cornet I ever saw on Jan. 23, 1910. I was over to Mr. Culvers it was on Sunday.

February 6-7 were about the coldest days that have been known for a long time. It was 24-20-18 and 23 degrees below zero in places here in town. I was out for a walk at from 8 till 8:45 Feb. 6, 1910 but didn't freeze.

Spring came awful early in 1910. The frost was nearly all out by April 1. Lots of people have plowed in March in town.

Uncle Myron and I went to Mr. McNernys auction on April 16, 1910. I had quite a lot of fun. It was the second one I ever was at. There were over 100 people there. They sold some furniture and dishes. I didn't buy anything.

Mrs. Culver, Fanny, Mildred and I went over to the auction at Monroe Watkins on April 27, 1910. It was the biggest one I ever went to. There was lots of furniture and dishes. I bought a few things there. Mr. F. Creamer was auctioneer and did fine. The sale started at 10:30 and it lasted till most dark. We left at half past four and they were selling out yet.

May 1, 1910 there was two Russians killed in the ledge and a Polelander badly hurt. I went down on the track and saw pieces of them along the rails. They were about two rods above the ledge lobby towards the depot. They were killed by a freight of 24 cars. Their hats were on the engine clear to Springfield.

Miss Mildred Culver, Fanny, Mr. Culver and I went to Becket to a drama "The Clouds of War" May 5, 1910. It was quite nice. We had to have separate seats as the Hall was crowded. They took in \$84 dollars. It was for the Baptist Church.

I got up at 2:39 May 17, 1910 to see Halleys comet. I saw it quite plain but couldn't see any star to it.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Pittsfield to a show in the Empire May 14, 1910. It was fine. We drove to Hinsdale and left the horse there and took the trolleys out and back. The play was Mrs. Eva Fay and was good too.

We got home at two in the morning had a dandy ride on our way home.

There were two dances in the Hall one May 6 and one May 20, 1910 both were poor times and most of the few that went were drunk.

Uncle Myron, George and I put up most 100 rods of woven wire May 21, 1910.

We all saw Halleys comet plain May 28, 1910. We saw it the 26 and 27 also, Mamma saw it first of any of us in the West. It showed at about 8 o'clock at night and until about 11.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Bennington May 30, 1910. We went to Pittsfield the night before so as to start early from there. It took about 2 hours and a half to go there from Pittsfield by trolley. I went up as far as people are allowed to go in the Monument. I was up about 200 feet, I guess. We had a fine time and a fine ride. We saw a grand parade in North Adams too on our way up.

June 7, 1910 I went to Pittsfield to see a circus but Victor Tier asked me to go to Albany with him. I rode out in the Baggage car and came back on the Firemans seat. Vic ran the train. We left at 3:15 and got to Albany at 5. Then we walked over across the toll bridge and up to the capitol and through it then we rode back across the Hudson River on the trolleys.

Then we started from the yard for the depot at 7:15 left the Albany station at 8:15 and were in Pittsfield at about 10. I saw lots of the country and places.

I found a crow's nest June 9, 1910 with 5 crows in it.

I went to work on Summit Bridge June 28, 1910 at \$2.40 a day.

They took the old bridge out July 9, 1910.

Bert Kent's team run away July 8, and one had to be killed. Its back was broken.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Pittsfield July 4th, 1910 for the day. We had a fine time. We saw the parade and it was fine. Then we went to Berkshire Park and saw the sights. Then we came back and saw moving pictures. We went to see an ascension but the balloon got a hole torn in it and so it didn't go at all.

Victor gave me a bicycle July 4, 1910.

The Summit bridge concrete was started on July 11, 1910 and 3 P.M. I dumped the first wheelbarrowful and some of it struck two men below. It cut one's hand some bad. It was an accident and the bosses fault as well as mine.

Mr. A. smith gave me a pass July 16, 1910.

July 17, 1910 Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Albany on the train. I had a pass so I had no fare to pay. We went to Albany and looked around some, had dinner and walked through the Capitol. Then we went and called on her Uncle and Aunt in Rennesselaer. We staid there an hour I guess then we walked over across the river again to Albany and had our pictures taken. Then we came home on the 8 o'clock train. We had a fine day and saw lots of the country.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Pittsfield July 24, 1910 and on the 10:35 express to Springfield. Then we went to Mt. Tom by trolley and looked around then we came back and walked across the river twice.

We came back to Pittsfield on train 23 express and then back home. We got home at 10:15 and had a nice days pleasure.

July 31, 1910 we went to Stockbridge and had dinner than we went to Great Barrington and back to Pittsfield. Then we went up to Pontoosuc Lake and then back home. We rode on the steamer on the lake.

Sept. 5 I went down to the old home day at the grove near the school house. There were nearly 200 people there. It was a nice time with speaking and singing. Mamma, Uncle George and I were all that went from here.

Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Middlefield Fair Sept. 8, 1910 and had a nice time.

I bought a magnifying glass Sept. 8, 1910.

I went to Pittsfield Sept. 16, 1910. Victor Tier gave me an overall suit, jacket and overalls.

I caught a muskrat in a trap Oct. 5, 1910. The first one I ever caught.

Mamma gave me 10 ten cent pieces for my birthday present Aug. 25, 1910. My 25 birthday.

Oct. 30 Miss Mildred Culver and I went to Woronoco and called on Mr. and Mrs. Drumm. We went down on the noon train and back on the 5 o'clock. we had a lovely time all the day and loveliest when we got home.

Two newspaper clippings finish the story as far as "Miss Mildred Culver" is concerned:

The marriage of Miss G. Mildred Culver and Harry G. Messenger, both of this town, took place at 8:15 o'clock last Wednesday evening; June 21 (1911) at the home of the bride, the house being prettily decorated with roses and peonies.

First Death from "Flu" in this section

Mrs. Harry Messenger died following a few days' illness. . . . leaves, besides husband, one son Curtis, six years old.



Back Row: George Messenger, Harry (Dick) Messenger, Myron Messenger. Front Row: Jennie Middlebrook (holding Charles Messenger), Hattie Middlebrook (holding cat), Caroline Messenger (holding Marion Messenger), Georgianna ("Annie") Middlebrook, Mrs. Herbert Messenger ("Millie"), Louise I. Messenger, Mrs. Harriett Middlebrook.

THE SCHULZE FAMILY

Among the oldest families with descendants now in town is the Schulze family.

Frederick August Schulze was born in Obern Kirchen, Germany, Nov. 8, 1825. He emigrated to the United States with his wife, Ernestine Fricke and three sons. The oldest, August, was a glass blower at the Lenox Glass Works while it existed. Frederick came to Washington and bought the farm on which the Polands now live in 1874, and his son Fred married Mary Becker and raised a family of five children there. Martha Garnder, a retired teacher, was their youngest child. A son, Emil, lived in Washington working on the road and holding town offices for many years.

Frederick's son Ernest Carl, known as Charles Schulze, bought the Bille Messenger farm in 1884, married Amelia Becker (sister of Mary Becker), and raised son Ernest and daughter Marguerite there. It was one of the few good farms in town and they had up to 25 head of cattle at one time. Both father and son held town office at various times. Marguerite is the only one there now. For a good many years she was tax collector and an authority on town history. Perhaps because she was tax collector, her home was broken into by several men and she was severely beaten in a fruitless search for money.



Mrs. Emilie Schulze, Charles Schulze and Gussie Schulze at the Charles Schulze home.



Grandfather August Schulze

THE COREY FAMILY

In the 1930's Rev. Milton Corey bought the farm that once belonged to the Millikan family, and that became a well known summer boarding house when owned by C.M. Capen. Mr. and Mrs. Corey had four grown children—Milton, Wendell, Julia and Dorothy. A granddaughter Mrs. James Hollister, four great grandchildren live there now.

Wendell went on the stage in 1937. He met his wife, the former Alice Wiley, in 1938 when they were both members of the Springfield Federal Theater Company. They were married in 1939 and in 1940 went to New York City, where Wendell began his career on the Broadway stage. In six years he appeared in 13 plays, and in 1945 he appeared in Elmer Rice's "Dream Girl" opposite Betty Field. The play was a smash hit.



The old Corey house



Wendell Corey

In 1946 he went to Hollywood, where he subsequently appeared in some 30 pictures, some of which are still shown on television. He took leave from time to time to work on the legitimate stage. Among the productions in which he performed was the London production of "The Voice of the Turtle" opposite Margaret Sullivan.

He starred in many television shows, and also starred in four T.V. series.

He was a member of the Board of Governors of the Screen Actors' Guild for 16 years; and was a member of the Board of Governors of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for 10 years and for 2 years was the president. He was active in several political campaigns, and master of ceremonies at Eisenhower's Inaugural Ball.

Wendell Corey died on Nov. 8, 1968 in California. He is buried in the family burial plot in Becket, together with his father and mother.

* * * *

There are still a few descendants of old town families, such as John Newberry whose grandparents lived alongside the road on top of the mountain. Harold Potts, who has a summer home on top of the mountain, is also a descendant, as is Mrs. Patricia Stone of Pittsfield.



Former old Newberry place from 1830

The Savery family lived here from almost earliest times, when Hiram Savery came and became involved in town affairs. Harvey Savery was born in town and also active in its affairs. He married Eva Messenger from another old-time family, had two daughters and four sons. Mrs. Lloyd Sitzer of Dalton still comes to the meetings of the Sons and Daughters.

"His life surely was an active one. On his farm of 100 acres he kept about 30 head of cattle, 50 sheep and four horses. He often raised from 500 to 600 bushels of potatoes in a year's crop, and up to 300 bushels of corn. In addition to his farm work, he worked for four years on the Whitney reservation when the place was first established. In order to complete his daily quota of work, Mr. Savery often arose at 2 o'clock in the morning and husked corn until it was light enough to start his routine chores."

Mrs. Louise Elliot represents the Stone and Bartels families who bought neighboring farms in the late 1800's. Lawrence Stone, her grandfather, was town official for many years, and it is always a pleasure for her to find his name on old records. As a child she visited here many times, coming here to live and raise her children about forty years ago. She spent many years on the school committee and board of assessors. Her husband Robert was willing to commute from Fitchburg State College where he was professor of physical education for twenty-five years until retirement.

Mr. Carl Peer came to town about 1893. He married Ida Biegel and they raised their family in town. They ran a thriving business catering to summer boarders when it was fashionable to spend vacations in one place in the country. They kept enlarging their home on Frost Road, and around 1921 built the Maple View Ballroom, which had the best dance floor in the Berkshires and featured big name bands. When summer boarders became few, their daughter, who was a nurse (Mrs. Julia Schlernitzauer) changed it over to Maplevue Nursing Home and it became a big business in the town, being sold later to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Furlong.

The youngest daughter, Edith Peer Wagner, still lives in Washington, as does her daughter Mrs. Kay Peltier with her husband Roger, and their two children.



Peer's Mapleview house

Joseph Blotz was in town before the turn of the century, and his two sons, Louis and Joseph are still in town, although they, too, have given up the farming they once did.

* * * *

There have been four generations of the Campbell family in town. John Sr. lived here at the turn of the century. John Campbell Jr. was the father of Lorraine Deane, who is town treasurer and tax collector, and of Joan Cadman. Both Lorraine and Joan have children growing up in town.

* * * *

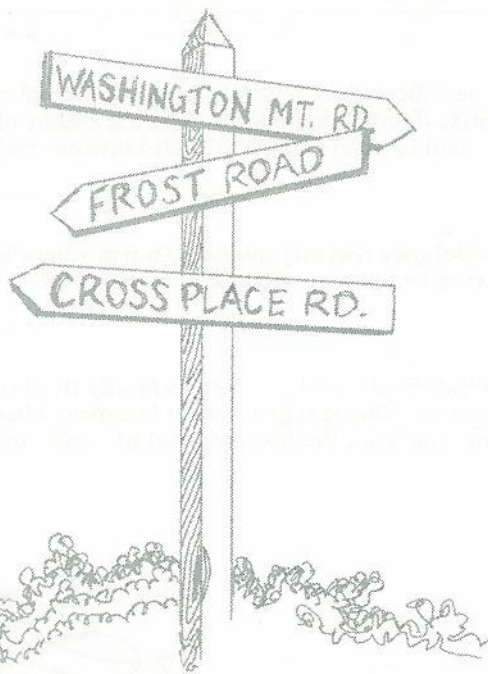
James Delaney recently moved to town, where his father and grandfather previously lived, both of them having been town officials years ago before selling their property to William Whitney.

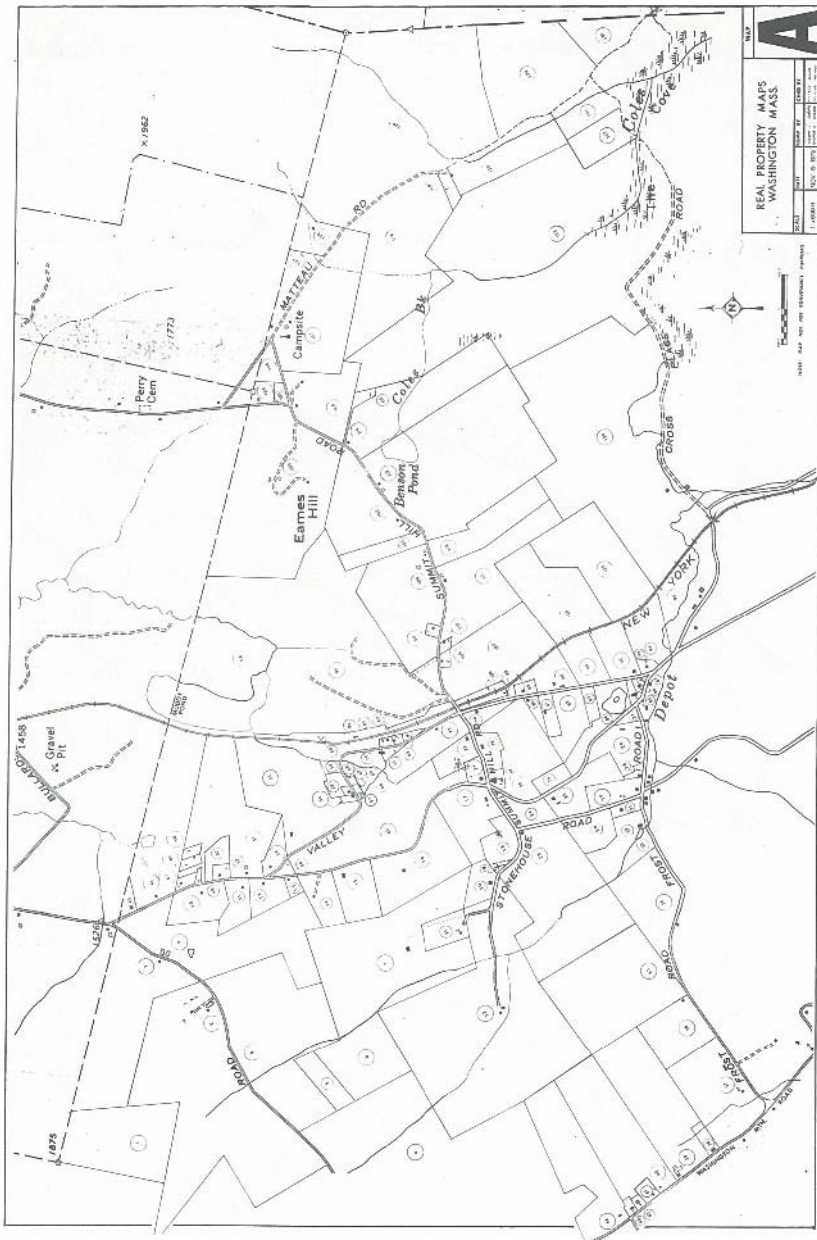
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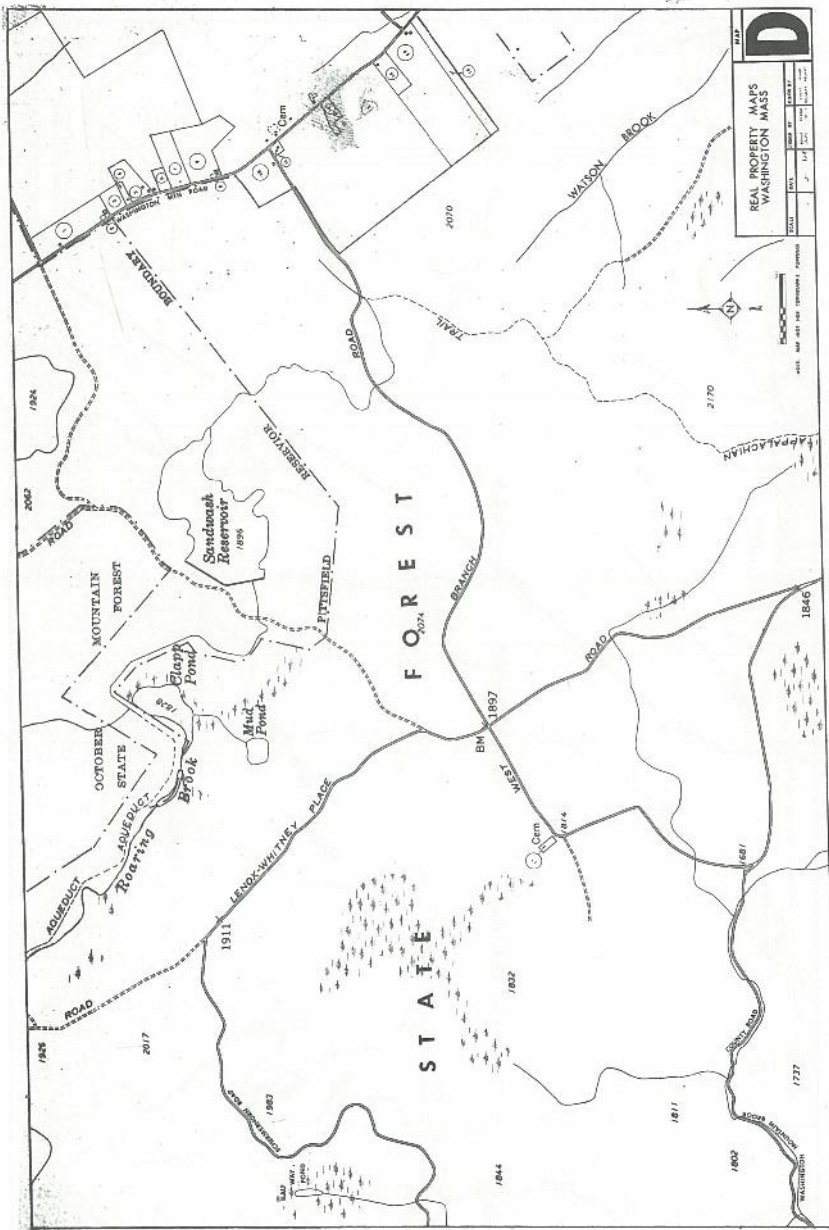
The Keiper family and the Meiers family lived in Washington. Their children married and lived in Becket, but now the next generatinn has moved back to town and built new homes. They are Kenneth Keiper and his wife, Paul Keiper and his wife, and Robert Meiers and his wife.

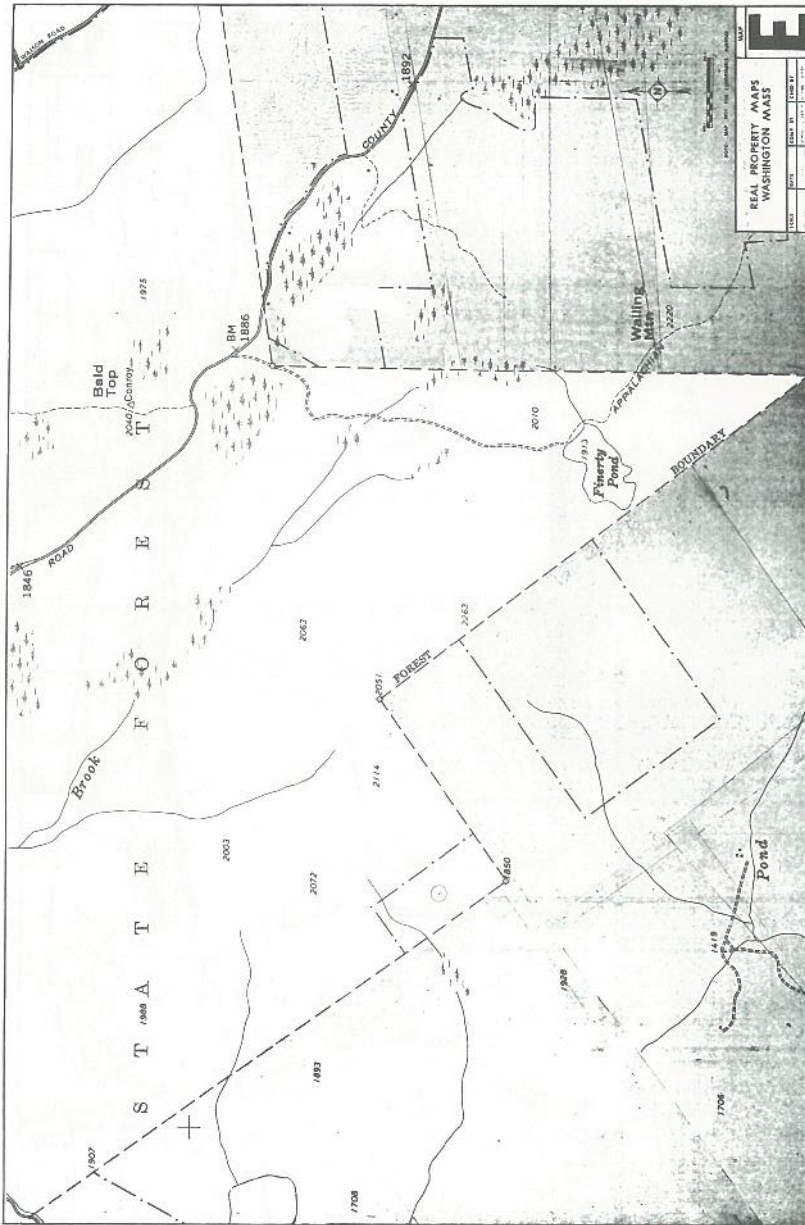


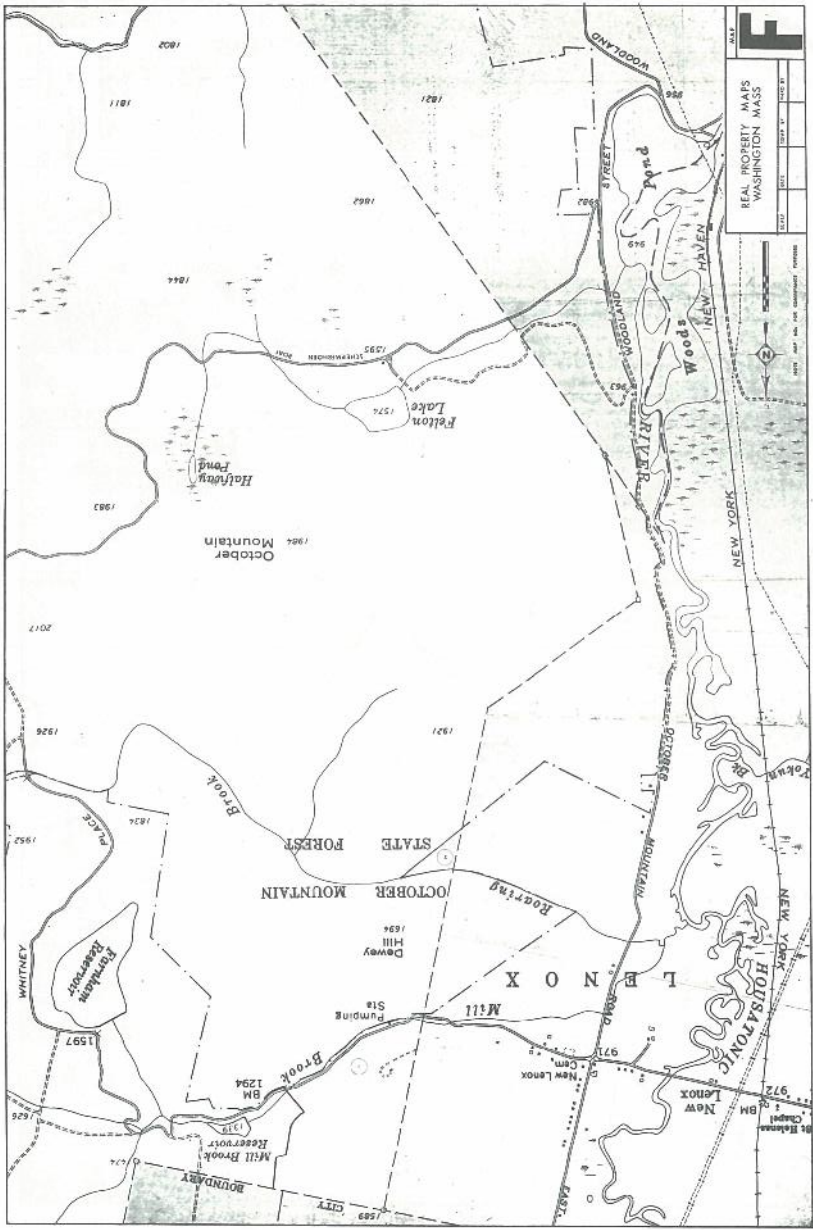
Assessors Maps & Street Listings











Town of Washington Street Listing

Beach Road

Guthrie, Arlo, Jackie, Abraham, Cathyaliza, and Baby
Laye, George
Williams, Charlotte I.
Morgan, Rocelia I., Darlene

Blotz Road

Blotz, Louis H., Joseph N.

Cross Place Road

Cosgrave, Curtis B.

Farnum Dam Road

Myers, Frederick M. Jr., Elizabeth L., Frederick M. III, Christopher R.

Frost Road

Beurskens, Pierre L., Irma J., Maria Louisa, Irene Marie, Maureen Leonie, Ingrid Dolores, Carolyn Ann
Bond, Edward E., Ellen L.
Borgnis, Richard J., Anita L., Gail, Peter F., Rose A.
Burke, Edward F., Patricia A., Jay E., Daniel P., Erin M.
Cadman, Wilfred L. Jr., Joan M., Wilfred J., Christine M.
Cadman, Mabel L.
Fischer, Kurt, Martha
Sack, William J., Edith J., William P., Josephine
Wells, Kenneth J., Thelma P.
Wells, Lawrence B., Gloria, Larry, Stacy
Wells, Robert R., JoAnn J., Robert R. Jr., Lori A., Shana L.
Wiley, Sidney C., Beverly J.

Johnson Road

Grey, Catherine P.P.
Homstead, Louise
Lawrence, Matthew John, Leila, Isaih James, Eliza
Talabach, Theodore
Velonis, Christina, Hanah, Aura

Lover's Lane Road

Burnham, George N., Dorothy M.
Diehl, John F., Ethel L.
Florence, Stanley, Marjorie, Andrew, Annette
Furlong, Joseph H., Elizabeth E., Elizabeth O.
Gonzales, David J., Barbara Ann, David J. Jr., Ann V.
Morissette, Jules, Lorraine
Schulze, Marguerite E.
Swearingen, John M., Mary F.
Witt, Deane, Jane, Cameron, Derek, Jeffrey

Middlefield Road

Pilla, John
Rock, Louis W., Faith E., William H., Deborah E., Matthew L., Tina L., Mary V., Theron Walter
Rock, Henry E., Venice J.

Newberry Lane

Fagan, Brian, Kathleen, Laura, Christine, Michael

Old Middlefield Road

Jarvie, Alexander G., Ruth-Marie C., Alexander G. Jr.
Jarvie, Robert G., Mary J., Elizabeth A., Robert G. Jr.
Slater, Joseph R.

Plunkett Reservoir Road

Callahan, Thomas, Linda, Erin, Matthew, Meghan
Carnavale, Bruce, Irene M., Bruce J., Amy B.
Eastland, James P., Mary M., James R., Elizabeth M., Christina A.
Hyde, Donald, Ursula, Timothy, Richard, David

Route 8

Adams, Ronald L., Carolyn S., Ronald L. Jr.
Sears, George, Beverly J., Patricia
Andrews, William, Joyce, Joyann, Maryellen
Bar-Zeev, Karin
Barzowskas, Edward, Irene
Culverwell, Raymond E., Tresa M., Donna L.
Daly, Alan J., Mary L., Alan J. Jr., Thomas C.
Delaney, James A., Marilyn R., William S., Deborah A., Dorothy C., James P., Thomas M.
Giansiracusa, Sebastiano, Marguerite
Goodell, Claude A., Helen
Hausser, Donald, Nancy, Greta
Hershey, Charles E., Helen K., David W.
Higgins, Alton L., Sandra M., Steven W., Karen L., James A.
Hurley, Richard J., Eunice F.
Konarski, Casmir
Lampro, Francis H., Patricia A., Francis H. Jr., James S., Jody M., Kathy E.
LaPier, Howard F., Mary E., Denise M., Michele R., James H.
Larson, Albert E., Antoinette M.
Locke, Leon, Valida, Richard, Maureen
MacLaren, Henry, Gail E., Susan E., Bruce H.
Meader, John J., Betty E., Diane F.
Miner, Richard A., Karen A., Jennifer, Annette
Morrow, John R., Avis H., Janet A., John S., Pamela A., Patricia J., Jeffrey R.
Oliver, Frederick, Robin
Parker, Brian A., Anna R., Michael E.
Perrea, Michael J., Jean E., Eric M.
Peltier, Roger J., Kay A., Roger J. Jr., Anna Marie
Poillucci, Robert C., Virginia L.
Poillucci, Rosabelle E.
Poulton, James H., Donna L., James T., Ronald G.
Renaud, Walter P., Lillian M., Richard A.
Shamlian, John M., Betty L.
McKillop, Dudley G.
Gallant, Kimberly A.
Stanfield, Kirtley P., Frances L., Sarah Effie
Stankiewicz, Walter A., Cindy L., Christina L.
Stentiford, Henry III, Susan, Brian, Todd
Trombley, George T., Patricia S.
Winter, Karl, Babetta
Wood, Dorothy, Jeff
Young, David A., Diane J., Jason A., Deanna G., Clinton Ashley
Wedel, Faroll

Ryan Road

Levenson, Emanuel, Fay

Sargent Road

Jameson, Charles

Keiper, Paul G., Nancy A., Eric Christopher

Methe, Andrew I., Mary Jane, Andrew E., Veronica J., Thomas G., Lucy R., Paula F. M., Stephanie J.,
Georgianna R.

Wibby, Robert H. J., Stella V., Joseph P., Michael D.

Schultz Road

Blanchard, Wayne

Stonchouse Road

Buteau, Rene J., Claire F., Kaylene D., Karlene R.

Deane, Alfred, Lorraine, Carol, Rosemarie, Yvonne, Mary

Gallant, Edward J., Arlene F.

Simmons, C.A.R., Florence

Summit Hill Road

Arndt, Richard, Helen, Richard, Dawn

Brown, Frances

Brown, Ruth M.

Daigle, Loretta, Nadnina, Jamie

Garry, James P., Anne B.

Hyde, Juanita, Reuben

Hansen, Fred T. Jr., Doris E., Terry L.

Hansen, Fred T. Sr., Retta M.

Jaeschke, Henry J.

Hansen, Robert B., Wilma A., Fred T. III, Deborah K., Laura L.

Hauser, William E., Barbara J., William E., Tracey Lee

Jenks, Rosalie

Lampron, Ernest R. Jr., Marilyn J., Ernest R. III

Lane, Frances A., Charles A. Jr.

Lane, Rosemary J.

Troy, Heidi A.

Williams, Sarah G., Cynthia L., Edward R.

Valley Road

Chandler, Harry, Monya

Hogan, Patrick

Clark, Wilbur O.

Edelman, Edgar F., Carolyn L., Moses H.

Furlong, David F., Wendy S., David F. Jr.

Keiper, Kenneth R., Mary Jo

Klein, Harold F., Mary A., Karen M.

Lane, Francis W., Millie A., Wendy S.

Laye, George L.

Levernoch, Erwin, Mary A., Linda M., Mark A.

Levernoch, Carrie R.

Meiers, Robert B., Maureen A., Robert B. Jr., Jeremy D.

Moore, Harry C., Donna E., Harry C. III, Todd A.

O'Brien, Norman T., Bernice M., Norman F., Melody K., Gregory D., Michael C., Ruth E., Margaret L.

Sanderson, May, Robert

Schneider, Elinore S.

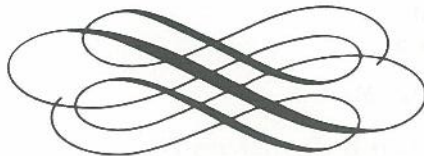
Southard, Stephen B., Joan L., Ricky W., Stephen B. Jr., Kimberley A., Randall S., Lori J.

Vogel, William E., Lillian E.

Wagner, Edith S.
Wood, Raymond A.
Zaleski, Margaret V.

Washington Mountain Road

Allen, Elmer H., Margaret L.
Belanger, Edward, Maria
Cameron, Winifred M., Maureen A., Christine A., Shawn J., Eileen A.
Elliot, Robert G., Louise E.
Fish, Harvey, Eulalia, Christine, David
Fish, Harvey Jr., Marilyn A., Cheri, Linda, John
Fox, Maurice, Lillian, Kevin, Kent, Kory, Kirk
Gardner, John G., Martha S.
Garrity, Robert L.
Granda, Julio
Hollister, James P., Robin C., Corey James-Ariel Hollister and Dominique S., Adam D., and Heather
DeShane
Neumuth, Edwin J.
Newberry, John, Sandra, Dale
Nocher, Mary A., Ronald A., Rodney A., Paul
Palmer, Lester A.
Phillips, Daniel O., Jeannette A., Catherine M., Jody L., Tricia L.
Poland, Douglas G., Sarah J., William S., Nancy R.
Rodgers, Andrew J.
Rodgers, William, Sally, Frederick
Schuman, Eleanor F.
Tufts, Marjorie C.
Willis, Terry H., Virginia M., Craig H., Patrick J.



Old Houses of Washington

(Pictures taken by Christy Butler)





D. Poland



Emanuel Levenson



Alexander G. Jarvie



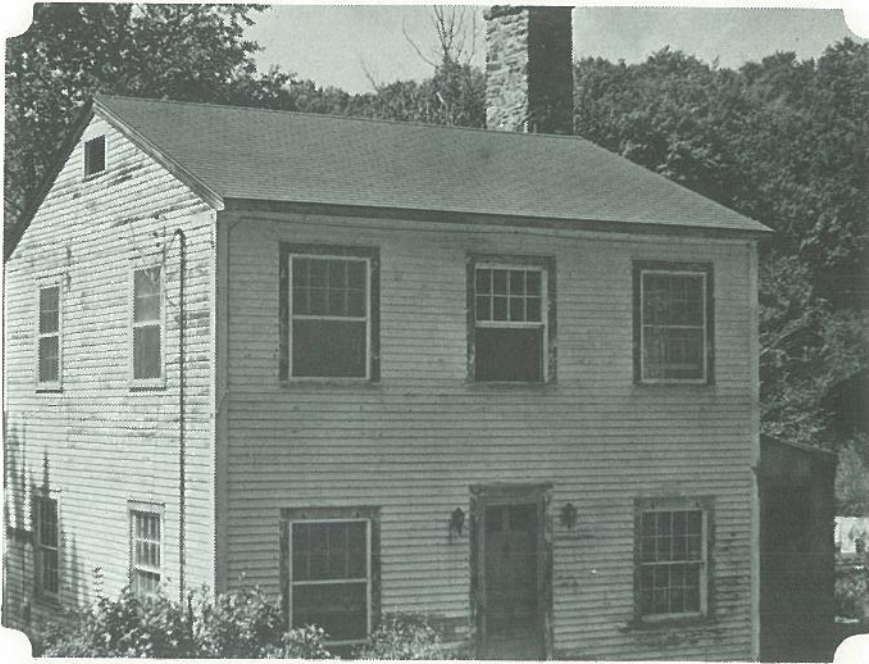
M. Geraghty



Henry Rock



Henning Estate



Anthony Velonis



Andrew Methe



Stephen Southard



Norman O'Brien



R. Jenks



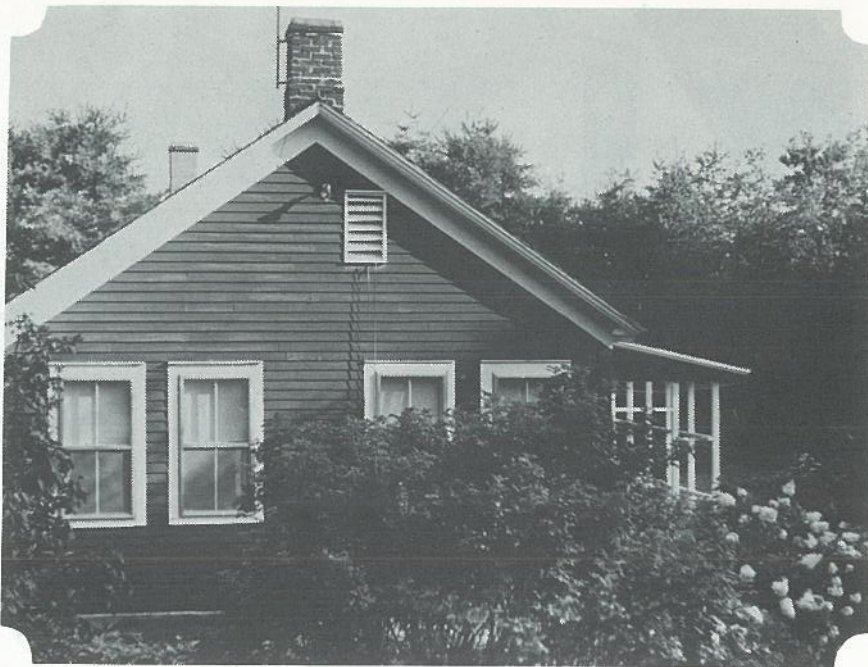
F. T. Hansen, Jr.



R. Hansen



C. Levernoch



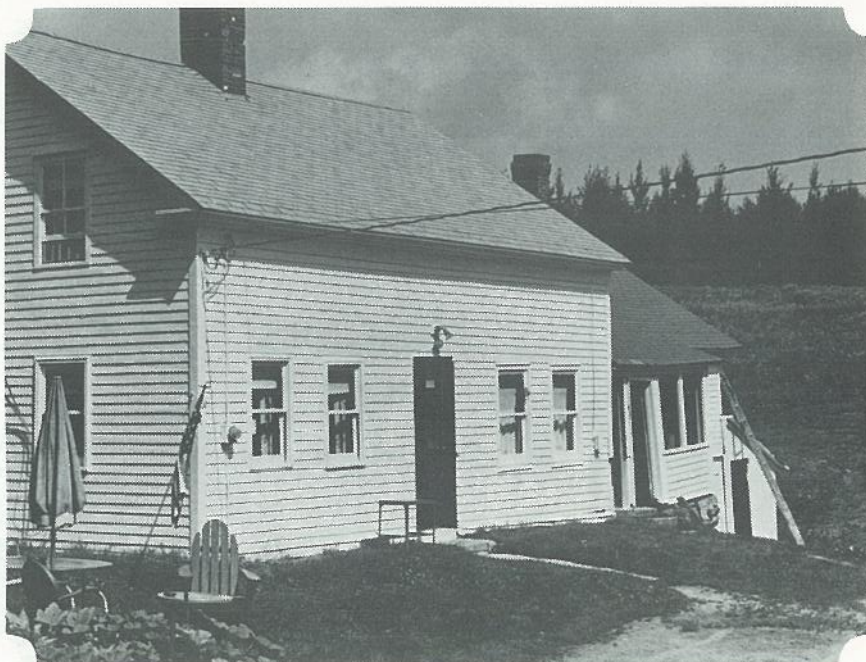
David Furlong



May Sanderson



M. Zaleski



L. & J. Blotz



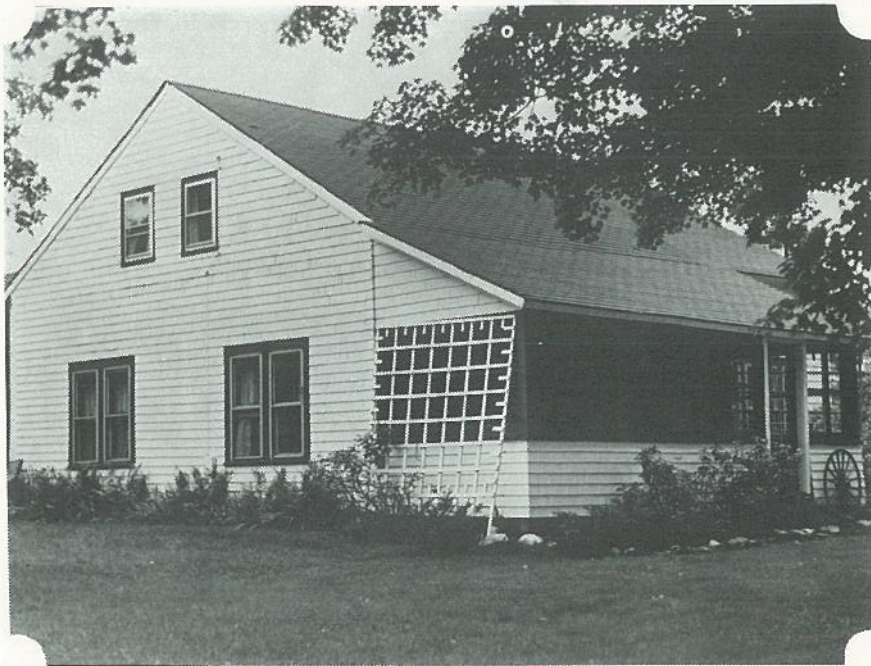
Bond



A. Borgnis



R. Morgan



General Sand & Stone Corp.



K. Fischer



P. Beurskens



J. Poulton



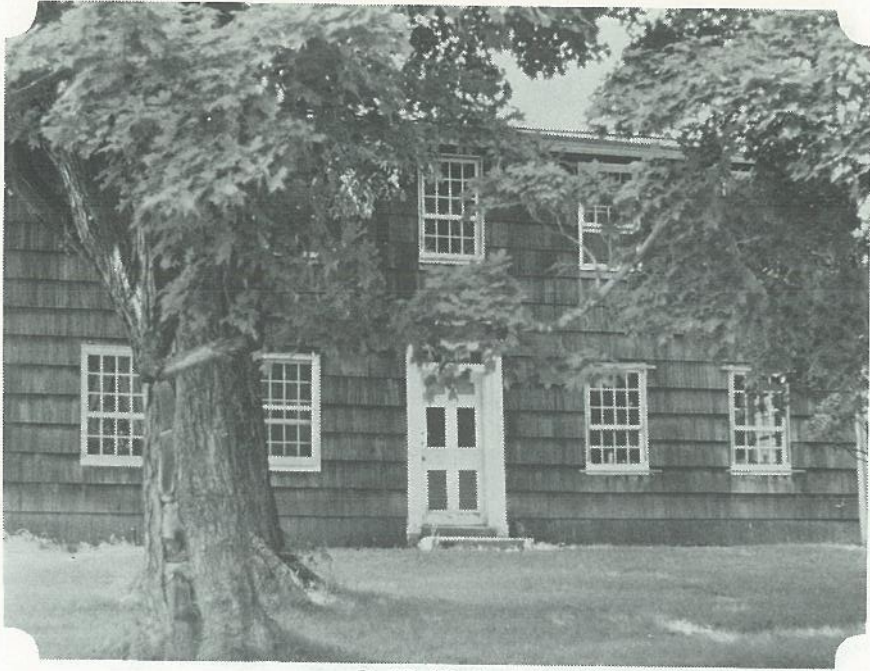
R. E. Deubel



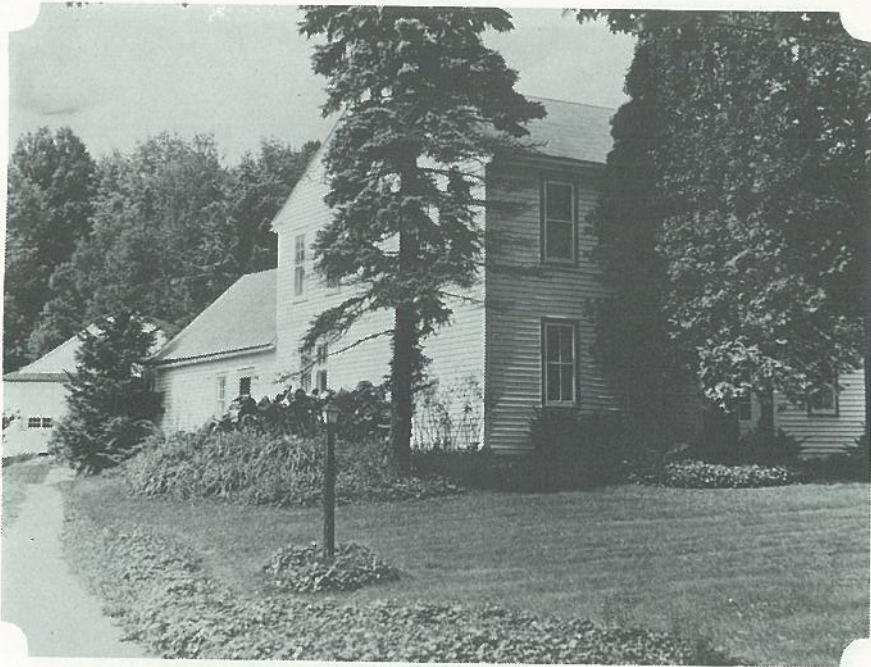
C. Simmons



E. L. Diehl



J. Hollister



E. Schuman



W. Cameron



R. Elliot



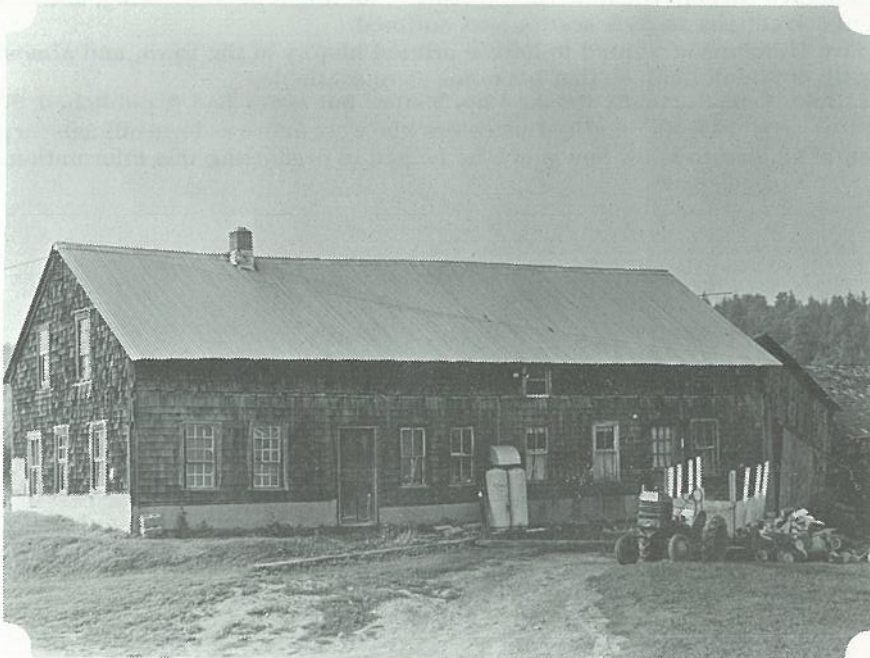
J. Granda



M. Fox



E. Newmuth



H. Fish

Acknowledgments

So many people have helped with this history it will be hard to list them all. Please forgive me if some name or names are overlooked. It has been so much more of a project than anticipated.

Mr. DiSantis of the Quality Printing Company has been very helpful and patient leading a novice through last minute difficulties.

Miss Marguerite Schulze has been a source of much information and help because she has known the town so well for so many years.

Mrs. Barbara Gonzales, Town Clerk, has let me study the old Town records in the safe, and we found a great many old records at the Town Hall when we cleaned it.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Messenger of Dalton did a fantastic job of organizing Anne Middlebrook's notebooks of clippings in good order.

Mr. Arthur Capen, now of Florida, spent a lot of time and energy hunting up old maps and Revolutionary War diaries.

The Sons and Daughters of Washington, collectively and individually, have given pictures and information that would never have been found otherwise. Remember, there are no families in town who go back one hundred years, let alone back to the original settlers, and almost every old house has sheltered a whole series of new owners.

Mrs. Martha Gardner had pictures and information no one else seemed to have. Mrs. Ruth Brown gave pictures and old town reports for the Historical Commission. Mrs. Mary Delaney McCaffrey of Pittsfield loaned old town reports and notebooks that had been Mr. Robert Delaney's when he was selectman before William Whitney bought his farm.

Mr. Christy Butler took all the new pictures of houses over one hundred years old, and the beautiful views looking toward Greylock.

Mr. Evan Hill, from the University of Connecticut, who did a free lance article on the town of Washington for the Boston Globe this past summer, gave the Historical Commission for unrestricted use all the pictures he took researching his article. As a matter of fact, it is his picture of the old town hall that is on the cover.

Robert Elliot helped sort out the items and pictures that might be interesting, and read and made suggestions and corrections as each section was outlined.

Mrs. Genevieve Hutchinson wanted to have a printed history of the town, and almost got it with Philip Mac Smith of Middlefield, so that his notes were available.

The late Mr. John Crane actually finished his history but never had it published. Since he was descended from an original settler and had ancestors who were active as town officials for generations, I'm sure he would be glad to know how much he helped in organizing this information.

