

# INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL AND INDEX

## FROM ORCUTT'S *HISTORY OF TORRINGTON,* *CONNECTICUT* (1878)

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HISTORY  
OF  
TORRINGTON,  
CONNECTICUT,

FROM  
ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT IN 1737,

WITH  
BIOGRAPHIES AND GENEALOGIES.

BY  
REV. SAMUEL ORCUTT,

*Author of the History of Wolcott, Ct.*

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ALBANY:  
J. MUNSELL, PRINTER.

1878.

TO THE  
MEMORY  
OF THE  
FIRST SETTLERS OF TORRINGTON

**This Work is Inscribed**

BY THE AUTHOR.

---

*"Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield;*

*Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;*

*How jocund did they drive their team a-field!*

*How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!*

*For them, no more the blazing hearth shall burn,*

*Or busy housewife ply her evening care;*

*Nor children run to lisp their sire's return,*

*Or climb his knee, the envied kiss to share."*

## PREFACE.

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In presenting this work to the public the author has no apology to make except the pleasure he takes in collecting and putting the material in form as a kind of memorial of those who have gone to the land from which none ever return.

History is but the record of the experiences of the past, and experience is a teacher to which it is wise to listen.

The person who is indifferent to the past would be indifferent to the well being of those who are gone, if they were living; for those who recognize no obligation to father nor mother, nor those gone before, are too selfish to properly respect the living, while those who recognize such obligation will always delight in the memory of the past, and will welcome that which revives such memory.

As to the completeness of the work it may be said, that, had there been a prospect of a small remuneration, six months more of time would have been given to it, by which the author could have satisfied himself, at least, more fully than is the case at present; although he is well assured that the amount of information here recorded is greater than that of most books of the kind published in this country.

The biographical part of the work was undertaken with a definite intention to set forth somewhat the work done by Torrington people in other parts of the world as well as in their native town, and also to avoid somewhat the complaint frequently urged against the dry details of history.



The biography of John Brown, after some progress had been made on it, was delivered to F. B. Sanborn Esq., of Concord, Massachusetts, who being familiar with the subject, and possessing favorable opportunities for the work, has done great honor to the old Hero, and to the town where he was born, and given to the world a just and faithful memorial of one whose fame will be celebrated as long as American history shall live. The biographies of Samuel J. Mills, and his son Samuel J. Mills Jr., are placed in abbreviated forms to what was intended, but as they are, they contain as full a tribute as was consistent, in view of the many of whom it was purposed to make some mention.

The crowded form of the genealogies made it necessary to drop out much of the descriptive matter which had been prepared; and they are not quite as full as was intended, for soon after the printing began it became evident that the material already collected was more than abundant, and though in some few items satisfaction had not been obtained yet it became necessary to drop at once all further efforts and close the record.

*The Author hereby tenders his most sincere gratitude to all the people, who without exception have seemed anxious to aid the work, and delighted in the prospect of its completion.*

It is but justice to say, that but for the prompt encouragement at a certain time, by substantial aid, by one of the citizens of the town, although some collections for the work had been previously made, the further prosecution would not have been attempted, and the book would not have been written by the present author. It is also true that but for the very generous price paid for one of the books by the Town, the amount of matter printed must have been far less or the price of the book considerably increased.

Thus has been done as much as could be in the brief time allotted and the work is sent on its intended mission of reviving the memory

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of those gone beyond the veil, and strengthening the heart for the future toils of the present life.

In thus closing all that the author expects to do in making the history of Torrington, either as a citizen or writer, the shadows gather, as at the close of day, and but for the hope of the future, the memory of the work done and the characters which have passed under review would leave a sadness, like the low plaintive sound of music from afar, or as if waiting the return of those who have long been absent, and whose coming, if permitted, would be a joy unspeakable.

THE AUTHOR.

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# HISTORY OF TORRINGTON.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE WINDSOR COMPANY.

 LARGE proportion of the early settlers in Torrington, came from Windsor, Connecticut, and were descended from one of the noblest companies of Puritan pilgrims that came to America. It had been formed mostly from the western counties of England—Devonshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire,<sup>1</sup> early in the spring of 1629, by the exertions of the Rev. John White, of Dorchester, whose zeal and labors fairly entitled him to the appellation of the “great patron of New England emigration.”

“Great pains were taken,” says the historian,<sup>2</sup> “to construct this company of such material as should compose a well ordered settlement, containing all the elements of our independent community. Two devoted ministers, Messrs. Warham<sup>3</sup> and Maverick,<sup>4</sup> were selected, not only with a view to the spiritual welfare of the plantation, but especially that their efforts might bring the Indians to the knowledge of the gospel. Two members of the government, chosen by the freemen or the stockholders of the company in London, assistants or directors, Messrs. Rosseter and Ludlow, men of character and education, were joined to the association, that their counsel and judgment might aid in preserving order, and founding the social structure upon the surest basis. Several gentlemen, past middle life, with adult families and good estates, were added. Henry Welcott, Thomas Ford, George Dyer, William Gaylord, William Rockwell,

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<sup>1</sup> Trumbull.

<sup>2</sup> History of the Town of Dorchester, Mass. History of Windsor, Conn.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. John Warham had been an eminent minister in Exeter, England.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. John Maverick was a minister of the Established Church, and resided about forty miles from Exeter, England.

and William Phelps, were of this class. But a large portion of active, well-trained young men, either just married or without families, such as Israel Stoughton, Roger Clap, George Minor, George Hall, Richard Collicott, Nathaniel Dunham, and many others of their age, were the persons upon whom the more severe trials of a new settlement were expected to devolve. Three persons of some military experience, viz : Captain John Mason, Captain Richard Southcote, and Quarter-Master John Smith, were selected as a suitable appendage, as forcible resistance from the Indians might render the skill and discipline which these gentlemen had acquired under De Vere, in the campaign of the palatinate, on the continent, an element of safety essential to the enterprise."

"These godly people," says Roger Clap, one of their number,<sup>1</sup> "resolved to live together, and therefore as they had made choice of those two Rev. servants of God, Mr. John Warham, and Mr. John Maverick, to be their ministers, so they kept a solemn day of fasting in the New Hospital in Plymouth, in England; spending it in preaching and praying, where that worthy man of God, Mr. John White of Dorchester, in Dorsetshire, was present and preached unto us in the fore part of the day, and in the latter part of the day, as the people did solemnly make choice of, and call these godly ministers to be their officers, so also the Rev. Mr. Warham and Mr. Maverick did accept thereof and expressed the same."

This company of 140 persons sailed from Plymouth in England, on the 20th day of March 1630, in the ship *Mary and John* of 400 tons burden, Captain Squeb commanding. "So we came," says Mr. Clap, "by the hand of God, through the deeps comfortably; having preaching or expounding of the Word of God, every day for ten weeks together, by our ministers. On the Lord's day, May the 30, 1630, their good ship came to anchor, on the New England coast." The original destination was the Charles river, but an unfortunate misunderstanding which arose between the captain and his passengers, resulted in the latter being summarily put ashore at Nantasket, where they were obliged to seek comfort for themselves as best they could. After being so discourteously landed by the captain, they obtained a boat and proceeded up Charles river, to a place since called Watertown where they disembarked but soon after re-

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Clap's Memoirs. History of Windsor.

moved to Mattapan and began a settlement which they named Dorchester in honor of the Rev. Mr. White of Dorchester, England.

The fore-thought and provision for the sustenance of such a company in the new world had been very deficient, and hence much suffering followed. Roger Clap's picturing of it is very forcible.

"Oh, the hunger that many suffered and saw no hope in the eye of reason to be supplied, only by clams and muscles and fish. We did quietly build boats and some went fishing, but bread was, with many, a scarce thing, and flesh of all kinds scarce. And in those days in our straits, though I cannot say, God sent us a raven to feed us as he did the prophet Elijah, yet this I can say to the praise of God's glory, that he sent not only poor ravenous Indians which came with their baskets of corn on their backs to trade with us, which was a good supply unto many, but also ships from Holland and from Ireland with provisions, and Indian corn from Virginia, to supply the wants of his dear servants in the wilderness, both for food and raiment. And when the people's wants were great, not only in one town but in divers towns, such was the godly wisdom, care and prudence (not selfishness but self-denial), of our Governor Winthrop and his assistants, that when a ship came laden with provisions, they did order that the whole cargo should be bought for a general stock; and so accordingly it was, and distribution was made to every town, and to every person in each town as every man had need. Thus God was pleased to care for his people in times of straits, and to fill his servants with food and gladness. Then did all the servants of God bless His holy name, and love one another with pure hearts fervently."

This people remained at Dorchester five years, when, in the autumn of 1635, they determined to remove to Matianuck, afterwards Windsor, on the Connecticut river.

On the fifteenth day of October (1635), the main body of the emigration, about sixty men, women and children, set forth from Dorchester driving their cattle and swine before them on their long and toilsome journey to the valley of the Connecticut. Their household furniture, bedding, and winter provisions were sent around by water, and it is probable that some of the families also took this means of conveyance. "Never before had the forests of America witnessed such a scene as this." The compass their only guide through the bewildering mazes of the unbroken forests, commencing and ending each day's march with songs of praise, and heartfelt

utterances of prayer, which sounded strangely amid these solitudes, they pursued their hazardous undertaking. After a wearisome journey of two weeks, through swamps and thick forests, over mountains and hills, across rivers and many streams of water which were passed often with great difficulty and peril, they reached their place of destination, the Connecticut river; but before all the company and their cattle could be transported across the river, the winter closed upon them. Winter setting in unusually early, the river was closed on the fifteenth of November, and as yet the vessel containing their household goods and provisions had not arrived, nor were there any tidings of it. The rude shelter and accommodations, which had been provided for themselves and their cattle, proved to be quite insufficient to protect them against the extreme inclemency of the season. They were able to get only a part of their cattle across the river, the remainder were left to winter themselves as best they could, on the browse of the trees, acorns and roots of the forest.

At this time (Nov. 26) a party of thirteen, driven by hunger and distress, attempted to return to Massachusetts, through the woods. One of their number fell through the ice and was drowned and the remainder would have perished "but that by God's providence, they lighted on an Indian wigwam."<sup>1</sup> As it was, they were ten days in reaching the bay. By the first of December the condition of the infant colonies on the river was perilous in the extreme. Many were destitute of provisions, those who were not, were unable permanently to relieve their neighbors, and the only alternative was to reach their vessel, which was supposed to be fast in the ice below. A company of seventy, of all ages and both sex, now set out in search, intending doubtless to winter on board the vessel. Shelterless and scantily supplied with food, they toiled on, day after day, through snows and storms, hoping at every turn of the stream to discover the wished for relief. Who can picture the sufferings of that painful march, or their inexpressible disappointment as they approached the sea, in not finding the vessel for which they were so anxiously looking. But God, in whom they trusted, was not unmindful of His suffering ones. A small vessel, the Rebecca, of sixty tons, which had attempted to ascend the river, to trade, before the winter set in, had become entangled in the ice, twenty miles from the river's mouth. Fortunately, a storm of rain

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<sup>1</sup> Winthrop's Journal.

came, which, though it drenched the sufferers, released the vessel, which came to their relief, and in five days they reached Boston. The few who remained in Connecticut through this fearful winter, suffered much, as did their cattle also, from insufficiency of both food and shelter. They literally lived on acorns, malt, and grains, with what food they could gain by hunting, and such as was given them by the Indians. Their losses were very heavy, that of the Dorchester people being as much as £2000 in cattle alone.<sup>1</sup>

In the month of March, 1636, Connecticut was set apart as a colony, under a commission, granted by the general court of Massachusetts, "to several persons to govern the people of Connecticut for the space of a year next coming." The commissioners named were Roger Ludlow and William Phelps of Windsor; John Steel, William Westwood and Andrew Ward of Hartford; William Pyncheon of Springfield; and William Swain and Henry Smith of Wethersfield.

With the first dawn of spring, April 16, 1636, those brave hearts who had survived the toils and exposures of the previous winter, again turned undauntedly their footsteps towards Connecticut. They comprised the largest part of the Dorchester church, with, as some say, their surviving pastor, Mr. Warham.<sup>2</sup> Their settlement, at Matianuck, was named Dorchester, in honor of the plantation from which they had emigrated, which name they retained until 1650 when it was changed to Windsor.

About the same time also, Mr. Pyncheon and others from Roxbury, Mass., settled at Agawam, now the city of Springfield. And in June following, came the venerable Hooker, with his companions from Cambridge, Mass., who settled at Suckiaug, now the beautiful city of Hartford, where a few settlers had "made a goodly beginning a little before." Wethersfield had been precariously settled in 1634, by a few who "managed to live" through the trying scenes of 1635-6.<sup>3</sup>

Such were the trials, exposures, hardships, and sufferings through which the first settlers of Windsor, the ancestors of many of the

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<sup>1</sup> Winthrop says that those cattle which could not be put over the river, fared well, all winter without hay.

<sup>2</sup> See note on page 25, Windsor History.

<sup>3</sup> H. R. Stiles's History of Windsor, Conn. Trumbull. History of Dorchester. Winthrop's Journal.



Torrington people, passed, before they found permanent homes in America. A like honor is attached to the descendants of nearly all the early settlers of New England.

A little more than one hundred years after the settlement of Windsor, like trials, privations, and hardships began to be endured in Torrington, by its first settlers.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE WINDSOR PATENT.

**T**HE general court of Connecticut made, in 1686, a grant of lands commonly called Western lands, to the towns of Hartford and Windsor. These lands were said to lie "on the north of Woodbury and Mattatock, and on the west of Farmington and Simsbury, to the Massachusetts line north, and to run west to Housatunock or Stratford river (provided it be not, or part of it, formerly granted to any particular persons), to make a plantation or village thereon."<sup>1</sup>

The title to those lands was in dispute until May, 1726,<sup>2</sup> when the territory was divided, and that part confirmed to Hartford and Windsor, embraced the towns of Colebrook, Hartland, Winchester, Barkhamsted, Torrington, New Hartford, and Harwinton, making an area of 291,806 acres. The territory reserved to the colony embraced the towns of Canaan, Norfolk, Cornwall, Goshen, Warren, and about two-thirds of Kent, making not far from 120,000 acres.

In February, 1732, the towns of Hartford and Windsor made a division of their lands by which the towns of Hartland, Winchester, New Hartford, and the eastern half of Harwinton were conceded to Hartford, and the towns of Colebrook, Barkhamsted, Torrington, and the western half of Harwinton, to Windsor.

An act of the general assembly in May, 1732, authorized the Windsor Company to divide their lands to the individual owners according to their tax list of that year, and this list was the basis for all divisions of land made in the town of Torrington.

#### THE NAME OF THE TOWN.

*Be it enacted by the Governor, Council, and Representatives, in General Court Assembled, and by the Authority of the same:*

"That the first parcel of land mentioned in said instrument of partition containing 20,924 acres, and bounded, south, partly on

<sup>1</sup> Colonial Records, vol. 3, 225.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial Records, VII, 44.

Litchfield and partly on land belonging to said patentees in Windsor, called the Half Township; east and north, by land belonging to the governor and company of the colony of Connecticut, is hereby named, and shall ever hereafter be called and named Torrington."<sup>1</sup>

The other three parcels were Barkhamsted, containing 20,531 acres, Colebrook 18,199 acres, and the west half of Harwinton 9,560 acres.

In 1732 the taxable inhabitants of Windsor were divided into seven companies, each owning a township, taking their company names after the towns they owned. The Torrington company are specified as "Matthew Allyn, Roger Wolcott and Samuel Mather, Esq's, and others, of the town of Windsor, patentees of Torrington." The number of these persons was one hundred and thirty-six, and their names and tax list were as follows:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Matthew Allen, Esq., . . . . .	74	06	0	Isaac Davice, . . . . .	30	00	0
Roger Wolcott, " . . . . .	123	00	6	Joseph Elmor, . . . . .	48	09	0
Capt. Thomas Stoughton, . . .	155	00	0	Joseph Elsworth, . . . . .	21	00	0
Alexander Allyn, . . . . .	47	19	6	Joseph Elgar, . . . . .	26	00	0
Benedict Alford, . . . . .	35	05	0	Thomas Egelston, Jr., . . .	18	00	0
Abiel Abot, . . . . .	41	00	0	Abigail Eno, . . . . .	25	07	0
Daniel Bissell, Jr., . . . . .	32	16	0	John Egelston, . . . . .	77	00	0
David Bissell, . . . . .	115	10	0	Mr. John Elliot, . . . . .	28	10	0
Nathaniel Barber, . . . . .	37	12	0	Benjamin Egelston, Jun., . .	37	16	0
Josiah Barber, . . . . .	124	06	0	Joseph Elsworth, . . . . .	24	15	6
Joseph Barber, . . . . .	82	08	0	James Egelston, . . . . .	07	00	0
Nicholas Buckland, . . . . .	61	07	0	Mr. John Fyler, . . . . .	77	07	6
Ephraim Bancroft, Jr., . . .	66	00	0	Samuel Fitch, . . . . .	18	00	0
Benjamin Barber, . . . . .	43	18	0	Thomas Fyler, . . . . .	67	02	6
Nathaniel Barber, . . . . .	21	00	0	Stephen Fyler, . . . . .	52	02	6
Benoni Bissel, . . . . .	37	12	0	Ebenez'r Fitch, . . . . .	41	06	0
Jeremiah Birge, . . . . .	47	11	0	Matthew Grant, . . . . .	180	10	0
Jonathan Bissel, . . . . .	41	00	0	Josiah Gaylord, . . . . .	52	14	0
John C. Cross, . . . . .	53	05	9	Jonathan Gillet, . . . . .	38	00	0
William Cook, . . . . .	34	00	0	Isaac Gillet, . . . . .	27	00	0
Nathaniel Cook, . . . . .	55	01	0	Francis Griswold, . . . . .	52	00	0
John Cook, Jr., . . . . .	59	19	0	Daniel Griswold, . . . . .	82	05	0
Mary Clark, . . . . .	32	00	0	John Grayham, . . . . .	47	10	0
Edward Chapman, . . . . .	06	00	0	Samuel Gibbs, . . . . .	30	00	0
Jacob Drake, Jr., . . . . .	03	00	0	Nathaniel Gaylord, . . . . .	53	00	0
Abraham Dibble, . . . . .	38	16	0	Henry Gibbs, . . . . .	23	00	0
Joseph Drake, . . . . .	81	10	0	Joseph Griswold, . . . . .	119	10	0

<sup>1</sup> Torrington was a hamlet on the hill called Cookbury Black, in the southern part of Devonshire, the southernmost county in England. It was also the name of a village on the Torridge river, a few miles north of Cookbury Black.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Eleazer Gaylord, .....	36	15	0	Samuel Osborn, Jun'r., .....	71	00	0
Thomas Grant's Heirs, .....	30	00	0	John Porter, .....	04	14	6
Thomas Grant, .....	19	04	0	William Phelps, .....	91	12	0
John Griswold, .....	52	05	0	Joseph Porter, .....	98	05	0
Nathan Gillet, Jun'r., .....	18	00	0	Samuel Pinney, .....	50	10	0
Benjamin Gibbs, .....	45	05	0	John Phelps, Sen'r., .....	11	00	0
Thomas Hoskins, .....	40	05	0	Nathanael Pinney, .....	107	10	0
Anthony Hoskins, .....	40	00	0	Hez. Porter, .....	91	00	0
Ebenezer Haydon, .....	63	15	0	David Phelps, .....	26	00	0
Mary Hoskins, .....	37	05	0	Joseph Phelps, .....	87	00	0
Elezer Hill, .....	11	00	0	Sergt. Isaac Pinney, .....	29	07	0
William Haydon, .....	16	10	0	Thomas Phelps, .....	45	15	0
Martha Holcomb, .....	30	05	0	Hannah Porter, .....	06	15	0
Daniel Haydon, .....	100	10	0	James Pasco, .....	24	00	0
Zebulon Hoskins, .....	26	00	0	Jonathan Pasco, .....	21	00	0
Ichabod Loomis, .....	39	15	0	Samuel Rockwell, .....	75	18	0
Zachariah Long, .....	41	05	0	Nathanael Stoughton, .....	02	00	0
Timothy Loomis, .....	51	00	0	Ebenezer Styles, .....	23	00	0
Stephen Loomis, .....	38	08	0	Jacob Strong, .....	79	15	0
Joshua Loomis, .....	46	00	0	Remembrance Sheldon, .....	51	13	0
Isaac Loomis, .....	29	00	0	Thomas Stoughton, Jun'r., ..	30	00	0
Moses Loomis, Jun'r., .....	26	00	0	Mary Stedman, .....	03	10	0
Job Loomis, .....	72	08	0	John Styles, .....	22	15	0
Abraham Loomis, .....	23	02	0	Isaac Skinner, .....	40	00	0
Rebekah Loomis, .....	72	04	0	Samuel Strong, .....	46	13	2
Jonathan Loomis, .....	31	00	0	Henry Styles, .....	71	12	6
Dea. Thomas Marshel, .....	100	07	6	Elizabeth Thrall, .....	16	00	0
Mr. Eliakim Marshel, .....	94	12	0	Ammi Trumble, .....	39	00	0
John Mansfield, .....	41	12	0	John Thrall, .....	125	15	0
John Morton, .....	24	04	0	Simon Wolcott, Jr., .....	21	00	0
Edward Moore, .....	55	02	0	Jed. Watson, .....	72	00	0
Josiah Moore, .....	54	17	0	Stephen Winchel, .....	04	00	0
David Marshel, .....	43	01	0	John Wolcott, .....	81	00	0
Mr. Will'm Mitchel, .....	74	00	0	John Winchel, .....	53	10	0
Nathanael Moore, .....	24	00	0	Robert Westland, .....	51	10	0
Hannah Newberry, .....	30	00	0	Samuel Wilson, .....	29	09	0
Benjamin Newberry, .....	25	05	0	John Wood, .....	36	00	0
Ruth Newberry, .....	07	00	0	John Williams, .....	36	14	0
Joseph Newberry, .....	71	05	0	Ebenezer Watson, .....	72	10	0
Jacob Osborn, .....	44	10	0	John Wilson, .....	56	00	0
Benjamin Osborn, .....	21	10	0				

"Recorded, March the 4th, Anno. Dom., 1733-4, by me,  
TIMOTHY LOOMIS<sup>1</sup> clerk for sd. Torrington proprietors.

The sum total of Torrington list is £6431, 9s, 5d."

<sup>1</sup> This Timothy Loomis was an elegant writer, as the Records show. It is a pleasure to peruse records 144 years old, that can be read as easily as the best printing.

## THE DIVISIONS.

The vote to lay out a proportionate amount of land to each proprietor, was passed on the 10th of September, 1732, and on the 18th of the same month, the committee, appointed for the purpose, proceeded to draw the lots for the proprietors, it being supposed that this method was the most equitable of any, and that each proprietor should be content with what fell to his lot, whether it should be rocks or soil.

An alphabetic list of the proprietor's names was made as given above. One hundred and thirty-six numbers written on slips of paper were placed in a hat;<sup>1</sup> then the first name on the list called and a number taken from the hat and placed to the name called, and thus on until the one hundred and thirty-six numbers were taken and assigned to the names of the list. This done, another list was made in harmony with the order of the number of each lot, one, two, three, four, and thus to the last number, and the survey was made according to this second list. The lots were laid half a mile in length, and therefore every rod in width made one acre of land. In the first and second divisions there was appropriated one acre to the pound of each owner's list; in the third, there was not quite that amount.

In the first division there was laid out five acres as a meeting house plot, and one hundred acres as a ministry lot, and these were said to be near the centre of the town.

The lots for the proprietors, when completed, were all laid in thirteen tiers, except those in the swamp; one on the south side of the town running east and west, the other twelve running north and south, and with the highways, covering the whole area of the town except the pine timber. The swamp was laid in three tiers of lots running north and south.

The first division was completed in November, 1734, Roger Newberry, Joshua Loomis and Nathaniel Pinney being the committee. The second, voted to be made in March, 1736, was not completed until October, 1742, John Cook, 2d, Joshua Loomis, Roger Newberry and Daniel Bissell, Jr., being the committee.

The third division was voted in October, 1742, and was completed in December, 1750. In this division two hundred and twenty acres were appropriated for the use of schools in the town. Samuel

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<sup>1</sup> In the third division the word "hat" is used.

Messenger, surveyor, Thomas Marshall and Aaron Loomis were the committee, and Rev. Nathaniel Roberts drew the numbers for the lots.

#### THE PINE TIMBER DIVISION.

The first name, given in the records to this part of Torrington was spruce swamp. Afterwards it was called the pine timber ; then the pine timber division, and in 1747 the mast swamp.

The pine timber was of much value and the proprietors found great difficulty in preserving it from the hands of those who had no ownership in it. They appointed various committees to "sue and prosecute to final judgment" those who should trespass in cutting it. The trees had grown tall and straight and were very desirable for masts to sailing vessels, and were cut and floated down the river for that purpose.

There was other timber which the proprietors found important to be looked after. They directed "that all the pine, whitewood and white ash timber, above fourteen inches in diameter at the stub, standing and growing or fallen down, on those places set out for highways in the third division, be reserved for the use of the proprietors," and the committee appointed was to sell such timber for the advantage of the proprietors.

The expenses of the several surveys were collected by a tax levied from the list of the proprietors.

In the proprietor's meeting of March 6, 1751, it was voted to "lease out the mill place with the convenience thereunto, for nine hundred and ninety-nine years." Ebenezer Lyman, Jr., Jacob Strong and Elijah Gaylord were the committee to lay out the fourth division, and Jacob Strong and Aaron Loomis were to draw the lots.

They voted to lay a highway through the swamp from north to south twenty feet wide, now main street and one from the mill place east until it should meet the other road.

In laying the lots in the swamp they were to begin at the south end of the tier on the west side of the road and run north to the end of the tier. Then begin at the south end, east of the road running to the north, but the lots extending only to the east branch. The third tier was laid east of the east branch, from the south end running north.

### CHAPTER III.

#### FIRST SETTLERS.

##### OLD DEEDS.

**T**HE oldest deed recorded of Torrington lands was dated at Windsor, June 14, 1728, given by Daniel Griswold, to his "dutiful and obedient son" Nathan Griswold, for a right in undivided western lands. From this time to the spring of 1735, sixty deeds of rights were recorded in the Windsor Company's book. Soon after the survey was made and the lots located, the sales became more numerous, and were mostly to persons residing in Windsor but in a few cases to persons residing in other parts of the state. These sixty deeds include nearly, if not all, the land sales by the Torrington company previous to the rendering of the report of the committee on the first division, in November, 1734.

The first land cleared and cultivated in the town was located according to the following description:—"At a meeting of the proprietors of Torrington held in Windsor, Feb. 10, 1734, voted Lieut. Roger Newberry be a committee, and he is hereby fully empowered in the name of the proprietors to rent out to Josiah Grant of Litchfield, about four or five acres of land lying in said Torrington which is already broken up, as it lieth bounded south on Litchfield, and east on Waterbury river, until such time as said proprietors, by their vote shall see cause to call it in."

One deed, given by Joseph Ellsworth of Litchfield, dated March 1, 1734, says lot 77 was a home lot, which meant that it had a dwelling house on it, and had been the home of somebody. This lot joined Goshen on the west and was about one mile north of Litchfield line. Whether Mr. Ellsworth, who was the original owner, had lived there, or some one else, before the first division was made, is not known. This, so far as is known, was the first house put up in the town. In 1738 there was a dwelling on lot 82, half a mile north of lot 77, and hence there may have been two or three families living in that part of the town as early as 1734, who removed into Litchfield or elsewhere before 1737.

## FIRST FAMILIES.

EBENEZER LYMAN, JR., was the first permanent resident of the town. In January 1735, his father Ebenezer Lyman, Esquire, of Durham, bought of Job Loomis, lot 108, containing seventy-two acres. This lot constituted a part of the farm known ever since, as the Lyman place, and upon it was built the fort, in the western part of the town. In June of the same year Ebenezer, Jr., bought the half of three acres, lot 109 on the corner, and joining lot 108, on the north, and erected a dwelling, undoubtedly a log house. In this house was born June 16, 1738, so far as known, the first child born in the town, it being a daughter and was named Lydia.

On the fourth day of June, 1737, his father in deeding to him the seventy-two acres, says, this son had lately "moved from Durham into Torrington." Hence it is evident that he came in the month of May, and Mrs. Sarah Lyman was queen of the realm, without a rival except in her little daughter Ruth, about a year and a half old. In this house, assembled with this family, from one to a half dozen young men, on the Sabbath, if not more frequently, during the summer of 1737, while they pursued during the week their toilsome work of clearing the land to make for themselves homes in the wilderness.

On the 24th day of June, 1740, Ebenezer Lyman Esq., bought lot 95, west of his son's lot, containing ninety-one acres, giving for it and lot nineteen in the second division and the whole right of Hezekiah Porter, two hundred pounds, and settled on the farm with his son in 1740, or early in 1741.

JONATHAN COE of Durham, married Elizabeth Elmer of Windsor, September 23, 1737, and brought his bride to Torrington, the second woman in the town. Mr. Coe had worked in the town two summers. He bought on the 18th of March, 1737, lot 107, which he still owned, upon which he had probably erected a dwelling during the summer of 1737. This house must have been a log house,\* and stood about eighty rods south of Ebenezer Lyman, junior's, their farms joining. Here were two dwellings in the wilderness—wilderness in every direction, and almost without end in every direction. The nearest place that looked like civilization was Litchfield, about

\* The lumber, for making framed houses in 1740, must have been brought, through the forests, from Litchfield or New Hartford.



six miles distant and but few houses had been erected in that town before this time, and some of these were at considerable distance from the center of the town; one or two being near the southern boundary of Torrington. At this time there were no families residing in Goshen; a few were in Harwinton; a few in New Hartford; none in Winchester.

ABEL BEACH of Durham bought land in company with Jonathan Coe, lot 123, containing thirty-one acres, in 1735, where the second church was built, at Torrington green. He purchased Mr. Coe's half, September 6, 1737, and owned by this purchase, a thirty-one pound right to all other divisions that might be made. In December, 1737, he bought of Daniel Bissell, the right of Robert Westland with the lot 82, fifty-one acres, a little south of Dea. F. P. Hill's present dwelling, it then being a home lot or having a dwelling house on it. He married Margaret Pickett of Durham, April 5, 1738, and settled in this town. He may have made his home for a year in the house on lot 82, as he sold this lot in June, 1739, or he may have built him a house on lot 123, in the summer of 1737, and settled on it. The place being known unto this day as the Abel Beach place.

In June, 1739, Daniel Stoughton bought of Abel Beach, lot 82, with a dwelling house on it, and made his home in the town, probably in that house. Joel Thrall became a settler during the summer of 1739, probably on lot 91, the old Thrall place on Goshen turnpike, most of which he had purchased of the heirs of John Thrall, and the east half he sold the same year to Ebenezer Coe, then of Middletown.

Thus did the work begin, and go forward, so that in October, 1739, in their petition for religious privileges the petitioners say there "are nine families in the town." It is impossible to say who all these families were. The petition signed by twenty-five names, says, these names represent "inhabitants and proprietors." Some of these proprietors were in Windsor, some in Durham, nine families were here. These families lived here and grew healthy and strong, if they did not grow in the refinements of literature and cultivated society. How they arranged the items of the important business of living, will appear somewhat in the following pages, and although it cannot be described fully, yet it will be seen that they did it successfully. Joseph Allyn, who came a little later, worked during the week, rode on horseback to Windsor, Saturday, and returned on Monday morning, and all people may be assured that he did not start on such a journey after

the sun was three hours high in the morning. It is very probable that most of the supplies came from Windsor, and if not by a weekly express (which word they did not know in the sense now used), yet so frequently that with what they obtained in the wilderness, they lived as comfortably, and enjoyed their fare as well as most people of the present day.



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