

# HOPE ATHERTON *and* HIS TIMES



*A PAPER READ BY*

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*“Go call thy sons; instruct them what a debt  
They owe their ancestors; and make them swear  
To pay it, by transmitting down entire  
Those sacred rights, to which themselves were born.”*



• FOREWORD •

*The period covered by this paper is confined within the limits of the seventeenth century. The whole subject of the daily lives and customs of the English settlers of that time in New England is one of great interest, and almost unlimited research can be made in sifting out the story. The small fund of information which has been gathered into this paper is only suggestive of vastly more not here touched upon.*

*The fact that my own family line traces back to the Athertons of Dorchester has added to the pleasure of presenting these pages to the Association.*

*A. H. T.*

MILTON, MASS., Feb. 23, 1926.



## *The Story*

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HOPE ATHERTON *and* HIS TIMES



# HOPE ATHERTON AND HIS TIMES

## ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE

THE story of Hope Atherton and his times, here given, contains nothing new, nothing that has not been told. From many sources, however, have been picked up the records of events intimately touching not only the life of this man, which, though short in years, extended through a period as stirring as any in the story of New England, but also the customs and daily life of the colonists in his day.

These miscellaneous gleanings from the labors of many others are here gathered together in an endeavor to picture the life of this one man who, among many others, stood bravely to the tasks which the conditions of the times imposed.

For a half century after the settlement of the Plymouth Colony, the English settlers lived in general on peaceful terms with the Indian tribes. This was due in large measure to the firm but friendly attitude of the men of the Plymouth Colony toward their neighbors the red men.

After the lapse of fifty years, the white population in New England had increased to perhaps 40,000 and the native tribes were of about an equal number.

The whites had spread themselves all along the coast line from Penobscot to Manhattan, had explored and settled along the navigable rivers, and had scattered settlements inland. All this territory

was fairly purchased from the Indians, insofar as they could understand the meaning of a transfer, or ownership, or a deed of conveyance. Of course the natives could not look forward a generation or two and foresee the effect produced on their hunting and fishing privileges by the cutting of the forests, the clearing of meadows and pastures, the building of towns, the damming of streams, and the increased population. But all these things necessarily changed very much the living conditions of the red men. They realized that they were an inferior race, that they were so regarded by the whites, and there came the time when there must be a decisive conflict. The two races could not live together successfully, the red man not being capable of bringing himself up to the white man's standard of industry and honesty. He was by nature a hunter, and this occupation inevitably unfitted him for any work at home, the women being obliged to do all the cultivation of their meagre crops, the work of dressing and cooking the animal food, the erection of wigwams, and the packing of their possessions when moving from place to place. Friction between the races was common, but a greater and a decisive conflict was inevitable. It simply had to be. It seems probable that the red men, unconsciously and in a vague way, realized this situation, perhaps even better than the incoming white men. It is possible that the Indian sachem Philip, in a crude way, had analyzed the situation. In any event his name has been given to the bitter conflict which culminated in more than a year of warfare, with terrible suffering on both sides, which

terminated soon after his own death. Philip himself was an Indian in whom it is difficult to find any good or admirable quality. His chief mission seems to have been that of inciting the fierce hatred of the red men against the white, and stirring his people all over southern New England to a war of extermination.

The period of this warfare of 1675 is one of the most interesting and eventful in our early colonial history.

The subject of this sketch, Hope Atherton, spent his boyhood in a home closely in touch with the troublous times, and the years of his manhood, short though they were, saw much of the very forefront of the struggle, in which he took an active part and which brought on his death at the early age of thirty-three. Let us look into the story of his life and see what part he played in those stirring times.

The town of Atherton is ten miles northwest of Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, in England. This county has always been distinguished for its ancient families, whose names were the same as their manorial estates. Some of the old families of New England were branches of them, as Standish of Standish, of which Duxbury was originally a part (represented by Myles Standish of Plymouth); Mawdesley of Mawdesley (represented by John and Henry Mawdesley of Dorchester), whose descendants in New England changed their name to Moseley; and Atherton of Atherton (represented by Humphrey Atherton of Dorchester and his brother James Atherton of Milton and Lancaster).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> N. E. Hist. Reg., Vol. 35, p. 67.

Robert de Atherton lived in the time of King John 1199-1216. From him we trace down through the centuries to Humphrey Atherton who was born in Lancashire, England, about 1609, and came with his wife (Mary Wales) and their three young children, in the ship, *James*, from Bristol, England, in 1635, to Dorchester in New England. Beginning with Consider (who was the first boy, born in New England, to this family) there were nine children born here, making twelve in all, of whom Hope, the subject of this sketch, was the tenth child. It is interesting to note that the entire family lived to mature life. At about the time when Humphrey Atherton arrived with his young family in Dorchester, the larger part of the Dorchester Church, with its pastor, removed to Windsor, Connecticut, and Humphrey Atherton, with his brother-in-law Nathaniel Wales, assisted Rev. Richard Mather (who came in the same ship with them) in nurturing the Dorchester Church back into thrifty life again. As the years went on, Humphrey Atherton became more and more a prominent figure in the town and the colony, and it will throw a little light on the boyhood environment of Hope if we enumerate briefly some of the activities in which his father was engaged.

In 1644 there were "wardens" appointed to take care of and manage the affairs of the first public school in Dorchester. Blake in his *Annals* says that "they were to see that both the master and the scholar performed their duty, and to judge of, and end, any difference that might arise, between master and scholar, or their Parents, according to sundry

rules and directions there set down." Humphrey Atherton was one of the first wardens, who were chosen for life. Thus was inaugurated the public school, which had no precedent in America.

In 1645, two hundred and fifty pounds was raised to build a new meeting house, to replace the earlier one (which was a rude building, thatched with straw, with a stairway on the outside), and Humphrey Atherton was one of those chosen to attend to this matter.<sup>1</sup>

He had a decided taste for military affairs, organized the first training band in Dorchester in 1664, was early a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, was its captain 1650 to 1658, commanded the Suffolk regiment with title of major general, was chief military officer in New England, many years Selectman and Town Treasurer, deputy to General Courts 1638-1641, in 1659 was Speaker, and had great experience and skill in treatment of the Indians.

Capt. Johnson in his "Wonder-working Providence" speaks of Humphrey Atherton as a "lively courageous man," and says: — "Altho he be slow of speech, yet he is down right for the business, one of cheerful spirit, and entire for the country."<sup>2</sup>

In 1645 the commissioners of the United Colonies appointed a council of war, placed Capt. Myles Standish at its head, with Humphrey Atherton as one of his colleagues. He is said to have been "a man of courage and presence of mind," for when he was

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Dor., p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Dor., p. 104.

sent with twenty men to Pessacus,<sup>1</sup> an Indian sachem, to demand the arrears to the colony of three hundred fathom of wampum, Pessacus put him off for some time with dilatory answers, not suffering him even to come into his presence.<sup>2</sup> Atherton finally led his men to the door of the wigwam, entered himself with pistol in hand, leaving his men without, and, seizing Pessacus by the hair of his head, drew him forth from the midst of a great number of his attendants, threatening, if any of them interfered, that he would despatch them.<sup>3</sup> Pessacus paid what was demanded, and the English returned in safety.

Gen. Humphrey Atherton had a grant of five hundred acres at Nonotucke, beyond Springfield, May 26, 1658 — given to him by the General Court in recognition of his public service, Nonotucke being the Indian name for the region about Hadley and Hatfield. This grant interfered with other grants previously made, and so, in Nov. 1659, the Court granted an additional two hundred acres (seven hundred in all) which were relocated at Waranoke, now Westfield.<sup>4</sup> The estate of Gen. Humphrey Atherton, after his death, included in the inventory a "Farme of seven hundred acres at Waronoco."<sup>5</sup>

The death of Major General Humphrey Atherton, by accident, in 1661, deprived the colony of one of its principal men.

<sup>1</sup> Pessacus was one of the Narragansett tribe and was at Turners Falls at the time of the fight there.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Collicot of Dorchester and Milton was with this expedition, which was in 1645.

<sup>3</sup> A. & H. Art. Co., Vol. 1, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> N. E. Hist. Reg., Vol. 10, p. 361.



"While returning home in the dark after reviewing his troops on Boston Common his horse was struck by a stray cow. In the collision he was thrown and killed. Sept. 16, 1661." <sup>1</sup>

The first recorded history regarding Hope Atherton is in the records of the old First Church of Dorchester, under the title of "Baptisms, Anno 1646," where we find this entry: —

"Hope Atherton 30—6 mo—46," by which we may understand that he was baptized on Aug. 30, 1646, and that he was then probably less than a week old.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of records, we can only assume that he lived the usual life of the boys of that period. He entered Harvard College, from which he was graduated in 1665, at the age of nineteen, and later became the only teacher in the only school in his native town. This was in 1668.

Turning now to the records of Hatfield, Massachusetts, we find on the records of the "West Siders" (as the people on the west bank of the Connecticut River were called before they became the town of Hatfield), under the date of Nov. 21, 1668, that "a committee of three men was chosen to go to the Bay and seek out a suitable minister for the town." This committee reported in May of 1669 that they had "already pitched upon a man who is recommended

<sup>1</sup> Mem. Hist. Boston, p. 428.

Epitaph on his tombstone at Dorchester:

"Here lyes our Captaine, & Major of Suffolk was withall;  
A Godly Magistrate was he, and Major Generall,  
Two troops of Hors with him heare came, such worth his love did crave;  
Ten companyes of Foot, also mourning, marcht to his grave.  
Let all that Read be sure to keep the Faith as he has don,  
With Christ he lives now Crowned, his name was Humpry Atherton."

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Chh. Records, p. 176.

to us by sundry reverend and godly persons, and hope we shall obtain his help. The man whom we have in our eye is one Mr. Atherton, a son of the late Worshipful Humphrey Atherton of Dorchester." On May 17, 1669, the people of Hatfield, by an unanimous vote, formally invited him to settle as minister.<sup>1</sup>

Now on the Dorchester records: —

"At a meeting of the Towne of Dorchester orderly called together on the 8 June, 1669. A motion being made by our Breatheren and freinds at or neer hadly, unto this Towne, for to dismiss Mr. Atherton from his engagement to the Schole in Dorchester, unto the publique worke of the minestry with them their, it is therefore put to the vote, whether the Towne will be willing to dismiss Mr. Atherton, from his Engagement, by the 29 Septem next, or sooner, if the towne by their Committee can provide a supply for ther schole.<sup>2</sup> Voted in the Affermative."

The Town of Hatfield was incorporated May 31, 1670. At the very first town meeting, held Aug. 8, 1670, the following vote was recorded: "The town of Hatfield hath granted to allow Mr. Hope Atherton sixty pounds per year, during his work in the ministry among us, provided they are free from providing him wood for his firing."<sup>3</sup>

On Nov. 25, 1670, the people of Hatfield passed another vote, by which it was decided to build for their new minister a suitable house, and to give him a salary of sixty pounds a year, "two thirds to be paid in good merchantable wheat, and one third in

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 57.

pork," and with the proviso, "if our crops fall so short that we cannot pay in kind, then we are to pay in the next best we have." The formation of the church, and ordination of the minister, occurred probably in April 1671.

Hope Atherton married Sarah, daughter of Lieut. John Hollister of Weathersfield, Connecticut, in 1674. They had three children:—

Hope junior and Joseph — twins, born Jan. 7, 1675.<sup>1</sup>

Sarah — Born Oct. 26, 1676.<sup>2</sup>

The Hatfield records are missing for the four years 1673-1677. This was the active period of Hope Atherton's ministry, and we are unfortunately left in ignorance of what happened there during that entire time.<sup>3</sup>

## RECORDS

In many a New England town the old records have been lost, often by fire, or simply through lack of care. But, in those that are left to us, there are found many brief entries which are not only interesting but also very helpful in placing before us today a picture of the life of the community in the period which we are considering. Here are a number, taken much at random, which may be considered, not as

<sup>1</sup> Hope died young.

<sup>2</sup> Married John Parsons of Northampton.

<sup>3</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. 2, p. 452.

extreme cases, but as fair samples of common experience, at the time.

Dorchester, Feb. 13, 1638. "Ordered that Jo Maudsley and Nicholas Wood shall Keepe the Cowes for this yeere, in the ordinary Cow pasture, the said keepers to blow their horne at fyve of the clock in the morning, at Joseph Pharnsworth, and so along the town till he come to Mr. Meinots, and every one on the north side of the town to bring their Cowes befor the meeteing house, the Rest to bring their cowes beyound Mr. Stoughtons dore, or elce the keepers to drive away the heard, and not to stay for the rest."<sup>1</sup>

This and similar arrangements for the daily herding of the cattle were in force, for general convenience, in the various towns throughout the colonies for many years. Dorchester people were early risers in those days.

The records contain numerous items year after year relating to fencing, hogs, cattle, horses, sheep, goats, very minute regulations as to the times of completing fence repairs, allowing cattle to pasture, etc. Penalties were imposed for violations of town orders, and, as money was scarce, those in authority were obliged to seize such property as was available, to satisfy the payment of fines.

Dorchester, Jan. 3, 1648. "Selectmen gave order that Richard Baker have his warming pan taken upon destresse, for not mending the way by Mrs. Stoughtons house."<sup>2</sup>

Notice that this was in the month of January, when a warming pan was a desirable article to possess.

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Records, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 413.

Dorchester, June 13, 1670. "It was ordered that whereas Constable Thomas Davenport had taken a gun of Joseph Long, for a fine for his defective fence, at the great lots, that he should deliver him his gun again, upon his payment of six shillings, besides the Constable's fee." <sup>1</sup>

30 June, 1662. "Widdow Thomas fined five shillings for permitting fier, to be carried forth her howse, in an unlawful vessell, not covered, being breach of town order." <sup>2</sup>

20 Dec., 1662. "Wm. Cotton and Zachery Philip, each fined five shillings a pes for thear Chimnyes fyringe." <sup>3</sup>

30 Nov., 1663. "Ordered that if any chymney be one fier, soe as to flame out of the topp theare of, the partie in whose possession the chimney is, shall pay ten shillings for every defect." <sup>4</sup>

29 May, 1665. "John Glander fined ten shillings for opening shop without liberty, which fine he paid in a Chaier." <sup>5</sup>

By law of the colony, a dog that had bitten or killed a sheep was to be hanged. Usually the guilty dog was taken to the woods, a slender tree bent down, and a cord fastened to the top and to the dog's neck. The elastic sapling then sprang back, with the dog suspended in the air. Sometimes both cats and dogs were hanged at the short end of the well sweep.<sup>6</sup>

May 11, 1644. "It is ordered that all doggs for the space of three weeks after the publishing hereof,

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Boston Rec., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Boston Rec., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Boston Rec., p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Boston Rec., p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Hist. Whately, p. 43.

shall have one legg tyed up, and if such a dogg shall break loose, and be found doing any harm, the owner of the dogg shall pay damages; if a man refuse to tye up his dogg's legg, and hee be found scraping up fish in a cornfield, the owner thereof shall pay twelve pence damages, beside whatever damage the dogg doth." <sup>1</sup>

The Indians had used fish as a fertilizer in their corn fields, and had early taught the settlers at Plymouth to do so.

Massachusetts law of 1672:—

"A person found drunken, so as thereby to be bereaved or disabled, in the use of his understanding, appearing in his speech or gesture," had to pay ten shillings or be "set in the stocks one hour or more, in some open place, as the weather would permit, not exceeding three hours." <sup>2</sup>

Massachusetts towns were subject to fine if they did not provide the stocks and keep them in order.

"Tobacco might not, except under a penalty of half a crown, be taken, in any inn, except in a private room there, so as neither the master of the house, nor any guest there, should take offence thereat."

The Great and General Court, in view of "the evil practice of sundry persons, by exorbitancy of the tongue, in railing and scolding," ordered that "the offender in that kind, be set in a ducking stool, and be dipped over head and ears, three times, in some convenient place of fresh or salt water, as the court or magistrate should judge meet." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chase's History of Haverhill, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Palfrey N. E., III, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Palfrey N. E., III, p. 47.

Dorchester, June 11, 1667. "Joseph Birch called before the selectmen to answer for his being lately drunk — ordered to pay his fine or sitt in the stocks." <sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, July 10, 1692. "Widow Content Mason was cast out of the church, for her great wickedness, Running Away from her fathers house with peetter wood, which was Another womans husband; and for stealing of her fathers mony, and other goods, which shee caryed Away with her." <sup>2</sup>

Dorchester, 8 June, 1674. "Ordered the constable to demand, and receive, twenty shillings of John Plumb for entertaining his Sonne in law Chub, and his wife, contrary to town order, and also to give plumb notice that he despatch the said Chub, and his wife, away, and cler the town of them." <sup>3</sup>

We must bear in mind that living conditions were primitive in the extreme. Industry was essential on the part of every individual in order to produce the food, clothing and shelter which were necessary to life. The total production of the entire community was only sufficient for the total requirements of that community. A person who became unfitted for labor became a public charge at once, unless he was a member of a family large enough to care for him. There was no money, so that the average person could not save anything for the future. It was a hand-to-mouth existence. These conditions seem to

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 15.

explain the vigilance of Dorchester selectmen in demanding to know the business of persons who came to visit their near relatives, even for a week, and in warning people out of town, or placing them under heavy bonds. The records of other towns do not indicate equal activity along that line.

Dorchester, 14 Sept., 1674. "Constable was appointed to speak with William Chaplin and give him notice, that complaint is made of some abuse that is committed at or about his house, by playing at kittle-pins, and expending the time Idly, and that he do forewarn him, not to sell beare without licence, upon his perill." <sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, 9 Sept., 1678. "Ordered that the constable should give notice, to John Brown and John Hopen to depart the Towne, as being noe inhabitants. Also that Hopen be summoned to appear and give an account of his manner of living, at the house of Deacon Blake, the 18 instant, being wednesday, an hower before son sett." <sup>2</sup>

Cambridge, 8 June, 1646. "Thomas Brigham delinquent in the Breach of the order about hogs, viz. for his wives rescuing of two Hogs from the Impounder when He should a driven them to pound; for ten at one time, and two at another being unringed, and three being impounded; allsoe for two oxen of his."

"Fined — Thomas Brigham for the breach of the Hog order to pay for the two rescued away by his wife, and for the other, 7s 6d." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> Camb. Rec., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 301.



Dorchester, 13 Apr., 1667. "Mrs. Clarke was called before the church, but she, manifesting noe repentance for her sin of an ungoverned tongue, was cast out of the church." <sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, 20 Jan., 1683. "Consider Atherton was called before the church to make acknowledgement of his sins of drunknes, both formerly, and now againe of late, the which he did by writing." <sup>2</sup>

Dorchester, 17 Oct., 1686. "Mr. Nathaniel Glover did vollentarily acknowledg his sin of being at unawares overtaken in drink." <sup>3</sup>

Dorchester, 8 Jan., 1687. "Sister Hix called before the church, to make confession of her sine of drunkennes, being often taken in that sin, her confession was read in wrighting, and the vote was called for, and past by silence." <sup>4</sup>

Dorchester. Consider Atherton called in May, and in June, and in July, 1688 — Finally the church voted that in view of his "Horrible refractorynes, the said Consider Atherton be declared an obstinat ofender, & an incoridgable drunkard and accordingly to be delt withall." <sup>5</sup>

Dorchester, 1691. "Captain Robert Badcock was before the church to confesse his sin of drunkennes, of which there was plaine evidence, and the church was satisfied by a silent vote." <sup>6</sup>

Dorchester, 1665. "William Chaplin appeared before the selectmen for Entertaining Peter Chaplin, his brother, as an inmate into his house,

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> Dor. Chh. Rec., p. 102.

without the approbation of the selectmen, first had and obtained. Required to give bond for twenty pounds and fined five shillings.”<sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, 1666. “Paid by the town to Widdow Meade for the yeere 1666, for ringing the bell, three pounds.”<sup>2</sup>

Dorchester, Jan. 11, 1673. “Ordered that the meeting house bell, being broken, and it may be dangerous to be rung; it shall not be rung any more, but speedily taken downe and meanes used to Conveigh it to England, that another may be procured either ther or elce wher.”<sup>3</sup>

It may be noted that all our lands were bought from the Indians, and that every man’s deed therefore is really based on these original grants from the Indians. And we must admit that the reservations stated in the deeds still remain in force, that is, that the descendants of the savage have still a right to hunt, or fish, along our streams, and to plant their wigwams on our Commons.<sup>4</sup>

In 1684 the proprietors of Haverhill voted: —

“It being the interest and desire of the inhabitants, for the sake of back, belly and purse, to keep a stock of sheep, in which all endeavors hitherto have been invalid and of no effect; For further trial, the selectmen have power granted to them to call forth the inhabitants capable of labor with suitable tools, about Michaelmas, to clear some land at the town’s end, sides, or skirts, to make it fit for sheep to feed upon with the

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. 1, p. 385.

less hazzard; and he that is warned as above, and doth not accordingly come and attend the service, shall pay a fine of two shillings per day.”<sup>1</sup>

Wolves were common and destructive throughout New England for more than a century. They killed sheep, goats, calves, swine and deer, and a bounty was paid to the amount of twenty shillings per head in 1693, and in some years it required most of the tax, in Hampshire county, to pay for wolves. Wild turkeys were abundant throughout the colony. A path over Mt. Holyoke was called “Turkey Pass.” The birds remained plentiful for many years. As late as 1842 there was a flock on Mt. Tom, and some remained on Holyoke till 1845.<sup>2</sup>

In one week (and this was as late as Sept. 1725) no less than twenty bears were killed within two miles of Boston.<sup>3</sup>

Dorchester, July 5, 1665. At a meeting of the selectmen:—“Whereas there is lately a new gallery set up in the meeting house in Dorchester, without leave from the Towne, or the selectmen of the Towne, and the said gallery seems to prove prejudicial to the light, and offensive to many, we do declare that the erection of the sayd gallery is disorderly; and therefore do order that none of the parties that built it, nor any other, shall presume to sit in the sayd gallery.

signed — ROGER CLAPP,  
ANTHONY FISHER,  
WM. SUMNER.”

<sup>1</sup> Chase's Hist. Haverhill, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, pp. 352-8.

<sup>3</sup> Drake's Roxbury, p. 266.

Dorchester, Sept. 11, 1665. "We whose names are underwritten doe acknowledge that it was our weaknes, that we were so inconsiderate as to make a small seat, in the meeting house, without more cleare and full approbation of the Towne, and the selectmen thereof;

INCREASE ATHERTON,  
SAMUEL PROCTOR,  
THOMAS BIRD." <sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, Sept. 12, 1670. "Ordered to procure some men to stop the holes of the meeting house by daubing of them." <sup>2</sup>

The first Dorchester Record Book is the oldest town record in Massachusetts, covering the period Jan. 1632 to 1720, and containing orders relating to land grants, fences, roads, etc. There is one important order, however, of special interest, being the first public provision for a free school in America—as follows:—<sup>3</sup>

Dorchester, 20 May, 1639. "Ordered that there shall be a rent of twenty pounds yerely, forever imposed upon Thomsons Island, to bee payd by every person that hath propertie in the said Iland, according to the proportion that any such person shall from tyme to tyme injoy, and posesse there, and this towards the mayntenance of a schole in Dorchester."

Dorchester, 19 May, 1651. "It was voted whether there should be a scoole in dorchester, the major part present then did vote that they would have a scoole and a scoolemaster forwith provided." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Mem. Hist. Boston, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 416.

Dorchester, 1682. "A rate of thirty two pounds for the use of the towne, and to pay for the scole master's dyet."

Dorchester, 1684. "An account of the Rates;— Payed to Mr. John Williams<sup>1</sup> Schoole master sixteen pounds"<sup>2</sup>

Dorchester, 14 Jan., 1670. "Notice was given to Henery Merrifield to discharge the town of his daughter Funnell, which hath been at his hous about a weeke."

Dorchester, 8 Jan., 1671. "The wife of Henery Merrifield appeared before the Selectmen, to answer for entertaining of their daughter Funnell, Contrary to towne order, whose answer was, that she was their daughter, and Could not turn her out of doars this winter time, but she would willingly returne to her husband, as soone as a passadg presents."<sup>3</sup>

Boston, 27 Oct., 1662. "Orders for the Bellman:— "You are to walke through and about the Towne, from twelve oclock at nighte, to five in the morning, and if you see any extreordinary light or fire in any house or vesselles, you are to repaire to the same. If you see any light in any Vessel att any of the dockes or Creekes, Command them Oute, And speak to all houses wheare you see any light, to have a care of them, except you know the occation of theare keping the said lighte."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He was in Dorchester at the time when Consider Atherton, and others, gave the church so much trouble on account of drunkenness. He later became the minister of Deerfield, and the "Redeemed Captive."

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> Boston Rec., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 238.

Dorchester, 9 Nov., 1673. "Paid to Ezra Moss for a woolf — 6s 2d." <sup>1</sup>

By a law of the Colony enacted in 1694, the "age of consent" to marriage was determined to be "the man 14 years and the woman 12." There were many early marriages.

Hadley, 1678. "Jane Jackson was convicted by the court of stealing from her master, and sentenced to be whipped twenty lashes, upon her naked back, which punishment was performed in court." (She would have been hanged in Old England for the same offence.) <sup>2</sup>

Cambridge, 20 Nov., 1648. "It is ordered that there shalbe an eight peny ordinary provided, for the Townsmen, every second Munday of the month, upon there meeting day, and that whoever of the Townsmen faile to be present, within half an houre of the ringing of the bell, he shall lose his dinner, and pay a pinte of sacke, and the like penalty shalbe payed by any that shall depart from the rest, without leave." <sup>3</sup>

Haverhill, 1655. The town required that every freeholder should be compelled to attend town meetings, when lawfully warned, "and having lawful warning he is to come within half an hour after the meeting is begun, and continue till sunset, if the meeting hold so long, under the penalty of halfe a bushel of Indian corn or the value of it." <sup>4</sup>

Cambridge, Jan. 13, 1677. "Granted to Jonathan

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Camb. Rec., p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Chase's Hist. Haverhill, p. 78.

Marrett, liberty to fall a tree, in the commons, for a cider press.”<sup>1</sup>

Taxes were then denominated “rates.” There was a country rate, county rate, town rate, minister’s rate, school rate, and minor rates such as the herdsman’s rate and the shepherd’s rate, etc., each assessed as needed, from time to time.

The minister’s rate, payable in grain, was given to the constable to collect. He went to the inhabitants, and without delay the grain was deposited in the chamber of the minister’s house. The minister sent some of the grain to Boston to pay for books and goods.

Town rates were levied to pay for building bridges, ringing the meeting house bell, and all other services done for the town.

Boston was a thriving town, with its windmills and batteries, its crowded meeting houses, its bustling dock and market place, its stately mansions, its gloomy prison, its queer old taverns, its curiously hanging signs, its crooked streets paved with cobble stones, its beacon and its whipping posts. All of these were familiar objects to Hope Atherton at the time of his young manhood. He saw neither street lamps nor sidewalks, but hitching posts were numerous, and nearly every large house had its horse block in front, for convenience in mounting and dismounting. The cows of many of the freeholders were pastured on the common. There were in the center of the town several large and handsome villas, notably that of Peter Sargeant, which in later years was known as the Province House.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Camb. Rec., p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Mem. Hist. Boston, Vol. 1, p. 556.

Five hundred persons came to New England in the nine years following 1620, but in the eleven years from then to 1640 there were 26,000 who crossed over and settled here. After 1640, political conditions in Old England became very much improved, and emigration to New England almost ceased for a long period.<sup>1</sup>

## MONEY

The medium of trade for a long time in the colonies consisted of farm products, peltry and other commodities, including also the Indian shell beads, called wampum. From 1640 to 1740 the farmers of Massachusetts generally made their purchases, and paid their debts and taxes, with the products of their farms, and not with any form of money.<sup>2</sup>

Common laborers, artificers, soldiers, representatives, schoolmasters, ministers and magistrates were commonly paid for their services in something that was not money.

Wampum, which was in the shape of beads, was made of sea shells, mainly by the Indians of Long Island. In 1650 the Massachusetts colony ordered that wampum should be legal tender for debts, and it so remained for more than ten years. Its use in trade was continued for many years longer by the settlers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. 6, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Hist. Whately, p. 10.



Voted in Northampton in 1666: — “Unanimously agreed by this church that each person shall contribute toward defraying the charge of the sacrament, three pecks and half of wheat for a year, this to be paid in to the Deacon, about the last of September, when he shall call for it.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the Connecticut Valley towns stated in a petition dated 1690: — “Not one person in ten had any income of money in any manner.”<sup>2</sup>

Wampum was often paid at ferries and inns. Silver coins were scarce and therefore the people found wampum very convenient — particularly on a journey. Wampum continued however to depreciate in value, and in 1675 a fathom of wampum was worth only 1s 3d. Bullets were used for money, and were legal tender for a farthing. Payments by undergraduates at Harvard 1650–1659 were very rarely paid in money — some entries show payments: —

“A sheep of 67 lbs.  
2 Bushle wheat  
25 lb. sugar  
8 bushel malt  
3 bu 2 pk apples  
a fat cow  
5 yds Kersey  
2000 nails”

Even Gov. Dudley paid, from year to year, a large part of his son’s college bills with Indian corn.<sup>3</sup>

About 1652 Massachusetts began to coin silver

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. I, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Wells’ Hatfield, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Palfrey N. E., Vol. II, p. 57 and p. 399.

money, but it was many years before it became generally used throughout the colony.

## MEETING HOUSE

The first meeting house at Hatfield, to which Hope Atherton came in 1671, and which was built in accordance with a vote of the town on Nov. 6, 1668, is described as being thirty feet square, with galleries, a turret added in 1675, and a bell hung there in 1682. Prior to that date Jedediah Strong was paid eighteen shillings a year for blowing a trumpet to call the people to meeting.

The building was placed in the middle of the broad street, the pulpit at the west end, with an aisle extending from the east door to the pulpit.<sup>1</sup>

Hatfield may have had thirty families at the time Atherton settled there. There were only forty-eight men of sixteen years and over, in 1678, after the Indian War.

In 1669 a rate was ordered to purchase glass for the windows, but it is doubtful if the glazing was done at that time. It was voted (in 1699) to build a new meeting house, but the old edifice survived that vote nearly fifty years.<sup>2</sup>

The Hingham meeting house built in 1681 is the only model that survives today of these buildings — of the second period in New England. In many

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. 1, p. 396.

churches the ruling elders had a seat immediately below the pulpit, and in a place lower down sat the deacons, both facing the congregation. In the body of the house, seats were permanently assigned with reference to the dignity of the occupants.

There was no instrumental music, and for eighty or ninety years not more than ten different tunes were used in public worship. Few congregations could sing more than the five tunes, now known by the names of York, Hackney, Windsor, St. Mary's and Martyn's.

The singing of psalms was a part of the regular service in the meeting house. As there were few books, the practice of "deaconing" the hymns originated very early, and they were sung one line at a time, the words being first read by the deacon, then sung by the congregation.<sup>1</sup>

It was early a question whether the Sabbath should be held to begin at sunset, or at midnight on Saturday. The former computation was favored in Connecticut. The latter was approved by Massachusetts Law.

In 1688 occurs the first reference to a curfew law in Hatfield. It was ordered that the church bell should be rung every evening at nine o'clock.<sup>2</sup>

Voted in Hadley, Dec. 21, 1676, "that the bell in the meeting house shall be rung at nine o'clock at night throughout the year winter & summer." The curfew bell was rung in Hartford in 1665, and in Boston in 1649.

Agreement at Dorchester, 1678, with David Jones

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 114.

“to clens the meeting hous, and to ring the bell, and to provide water for baptisme, for which he is to have three pounds a yeer out of the towne rate.”<sup>1</sup>

Dorchester, 17 Feb., 1678. “Appointed four men to look after the boys on the meeting house on the lord’s days, each to take the care of the boys orderly Caredg in the Publique meeting, each of them a quarter of a year.” And later the number was increased to “thirteen tithing men.”<sup>2</sup>

Hadley voted Jan. 11, 1672: “There shall be some sticks set up in the meeting house, in several places, with some fit persons placed by them, to use them as occasion shall require to keep the youth from disorder.”<sup>3</sup> The badge of the tithing man was a pole with a knob on one end and a tuft of feathers on the other. With the one he rapped the men’s heads, and with the other he brushed the women’s faces, when he caught them napping. It is said that a tithing man once got himself into trouble by rapping the head of a nodding man, whose face he did not see, under a belief that he was drowsing, when, in fact, he was only nodding assent to the preacher’s doctrine.<sup>4</sup>

Dorchester, 1647. “Ordered that whereas we find by sad experience, that great disturbance and distractions is often occasioned by the frequenting of doggs & c. into the meeting house from tyme to tyme, especially in the time of publique worship of god, it is therefore ordered, that noe doggs, mastifes, hounds, cures, of any sex of them, shall be suffered

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> Judd’s Hadley, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> History of Shrewsbury, by Andrew H. Ward.

to come to the meetinge house uppon any day that is for publique worship of god & c.

Fine 6d for first offence

12d for second offence.”<sup>1</sup>

James Corse was paid for drumming to call the people to services on the Sabbath. This occurred after the year 1700. He lived in a palisaded house in that part of Deerfield now Greenfield, near the site of the present Mansion House.<sup>2</sup>

The Records of the town of Haverhill read:—  
“Abraham Tyler shall blow his horn in the most convenient place every lord’s day about half an hour before the meeting begins, and also on lecture days, for which he is to have one peck of corn for every family for the year ensueing.” This vote was passed at a town meeting in September 1652. Previous to that Richarde Little had called the people together by drumming.<sup>3</sup>

The undemocratic custom of Old England of seating the worshippers by rank was rigidly adhered to by the Puritans, in spite of their totally different environment.

Deerfield voted in Town meeting, Oct. 31, 1696:—  
“That there shall be five men chosen as seaters to seat, that is to say, to determine where every person to be seated, shall sit in ye new meeting house.”

To assist them in this task of diplomacy, six rules were laid down by this same town meeting, of which two will be enough to give an impression of their value in assisting the work of the committee:—

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. 5, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Chase’s Hist. Haverhill, p. 78.

"That the Rules which the seaters shall seat all persons by, shall be: — age, estate, place, and qualifications. That the second seat in the front gallery shall be esteemed equal in dignity with the fifth seat in the body of the meetinghouse."

"That a pound ratable estate, as in the list, shall be accounted equal with a year's age." <sup>1</sup>

In the old towns of Hampshire County and elsewhere, it was quite customary to have the turret for the bell in the center of the four-sided roof, and the bell rope hung down in the broad aisle, where the ringer stood. It was so in the meeting house at Hadley.<sup>2</sup>

Up to about 1825 no apparatus for warming the New England meeting house had been used. In cold weather every family started out with a foot stove, and the minister stood up and preached in a heavy overcoat and thick gloves. Going back a century and a half, to the days of Hope Atherton, the conditions within the meeting house, at times, must have been colder and more disagreeable than in the open air.

There was strong opposition to fireplaces, or heat of any kind, in the meeting house. An incident is told of one town which was among the first to provide a stove in the meeting house, against the violent opposition of a large minority. On the sabbath a good lady, who sat next the stove, fainted. Some of the enemies of the stove arose in their wrath to take the hated stove out from the building, when to their amazement they found that there had been no fire in it.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sheldon's Hist. Deerfield, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. 3, p. 256.

Foot stoves do not appear in Massachusetts until about 1730. Heated stones, bricks or pieces of plank probably were used long before stoves. The people of former generations were hardy and inured to the cold. Sylvester Judd tells that he attended meeting in houses not warmed, until he was thirty-three years old, and says, furthermore, that the people were not seriously incommoded by the cold, except on a few sabbaths, when young men and boys in the gallery knocked their feet together and made some noise."<sup>1</sup> Roxbury meeting house was burned by a fire started from a foot stove.

We hear a good deal about the coldness of the meeting houses of that period. We must also remember that these buildings must have been very close and warm, for four or five months of the year, and that the tithing man may have considered himself fortunate, in that his duties gave him enough exercise to keep himself from going asleep, under these drowsy conditions, during the long sermons.

In severe weather the sleeping rooms in the dwelling houses were intensely cold, but every family had a warming pan, chiefly used by the aged and by the women and girls. But a boy who would have his bed warmed was an object of derision among his fellows.

It was common to walk from the farms, barefooted, on Sunday, and when approaching the meeting house, to put on shoes and stockings.<sup>2</sup> (Persons now living have told the writer of doing the same in their childhood, a few miles south of Boston.)

<sup>1</sup> Judd's *Hadley*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings P. V. M. A.*, Vol. 3, p. 270.

A petition to the general court describes the conditions incident on crossing the Connecticut River to attend services at Hadley, before the Hatfield church was built: —

“Many times we are exposed to danger, for we must come at the instant of time, be the season how it will. Sometimes we come in considerable numbers in rainy weather, and are forced to stay till we empty our canoes, that are half full of water, and before we get to the meeting house we are wet to the skin. At other times, in winter seasons, we are forced to cut and work them out of the ice, till our shirts be wet upon our backs. At other times, the winds are high, and waters rough, the current strong, and the waves ready to swallow us, our vessels tossed up and down so that our women and children do screech, and are so affrighted that they are made unfit for ordinances, and cannot hear so as to profit by them, by reason of their anguish of spirit, and when they return, some of them are more fit for their beds than for family duties and God’s services, which they ought to attend.”

This petition was dated May 3, 1667, by the “West Siders,” as those residing across the river from Hadley were called.<sup>1</sup>

A burying ground was laid out in Hatfield in Feb. 1669, “twenty rod long easterly and westerly, and eight rod wide southerly and northerly.” No permanent markers for the graves were used in the early days. The earliest date on a stone in the old burying ground is on the grave of Capt. John Allis in 1691.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. 1, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Wells’ Hatfield, p. 61.



The burial place of Hope Atherton is not known. There are many who died before 1690 whose resting places have long since been lost to memory of the living. It was not unusual to deposit the dead in single graves scattered on the farms.

## SCHOOLS

The school, both within and without, like everything else in the colony, was primitive in the extreme. The problem of ventilation was not one which required serious attention. Fresh air was one of the things of which they had an abundance. Facing on Town Meeting Square in the old part of Dorchester, and close by the first meeting house built by those who had come in the "Mary & John," stood the first school house, and across the street the house of Major General Humphrey Atherton, so that it was not far for Hope Atherton, the young school teacher, to go from his work to his "dyate." This school is of more than usual interest to this Association because of the fact that it was the scene not only of the early labors of Hope Atherton, who became the first minister in Hatfield, but also of John Williams, so long the minister of the Deerfield Church. Like everything else which they did in those days, this innovation, of a public school, was entered into as a serious business; and rules and regulations, long, elaborate and explicit, were laid down for the government of all concerned. We can only stop to give here

two abbreviated samples of what was expected of the young teachers: —

“Secondly — The schoolmaster shall dilligently attend his school from the beginning of the 1st month (March) until the end of the 7th (Sept.). He shall every day begin to teach at seven oclock in the morning, and dismiss his school at five in the afternoon.”<sup>1</sup>

This rule governed both Hope Atherton and, later on, John Williams, in their conduct of the school in Dorchester.

“Ninthly — And because the Rod of Correction is an ordinance of God, necessary sometimes to be dispenced unto children, it is ordered that the school master shall have full power to minister correction, to all, or any, of his scholars.” The record says that “Sir Atherton became the school teacher in 1669, and that the consideration was to be twenty five pounds, to be paid to him in such merchantable pay as the town usually pays Rates and Town charges in.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1675 the selectmen ordered that the school house be fitted up with seats, and a lock and key for the door. There may have been neither of these conveniences before that time.<sup>3</sup>

School books were limited, like everything else. The early primers came over from England, before the printing of the New England Primer in or after 1660. They also had the “Horn Book,” the “Bay Psalm Book” and the Testament. The horn book was a single sheet printed probably on one side only. It contained the alphabet and a few rudiments, and

<sup>1</sup> Dor. Town Rec., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Dor., p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> Hist. Dor., p. 445.

was covered with a piece of translucent horn, to protect it from wear and tear, and probably, too, from the dirt on the youngster's hands.<sup>1</sup>

The education of girls seems to have been regarded as unnecessary during the first century in our colonies. Even as late as the Revolution, comparatively few women could write their names. Boston did not allow girls to attend the public school until 1790, and in Northampton they were not admitted until 1802.<sup>2</sup>

This custom did not prevail in Hatfield, however, for we find that provision was made, in January of 1678, for schooling for both boys and girls, and that similar votes were passed year by year. There were in 1711 sixty scholars, eighteen of whom were girls.<sup>3</sup>

## ROADS

It was the regular custom of the Indians to burn over the woodlands, and these fires of the Indians had destroyed most of the underbrush. The woods were open, and forests were crossed without much difficulty. The Indians, who had never seen a horse until the English brought them to America, had paths between their villages and tribes, which were sometimes followed by the English. Johnson describes these paths as "only a foot wide" and Snow as "seldom wider than a cart's rut."

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Whately, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. II, p. 453.

In 1692 Hatfield chose a man to join with some of Northampton and Hadley, "to lay out a way to the Bay for horses and carts, if feasible." It was not feasible, and wheels and runners did not pass from Hadley to Boston for many years after 1692. The earliest way or path to Boston by the way of Hadley was called "Nashaway Path" and was probably laid out in 1662, going through Springfield. In 1664 roads on each side of the Connecticut River were laid out, extending southerly from Hatfield to Windsor, and used for transporting goods to and from Boston, by water from Windsor, transportation of wares and merchandise in large quantities from the Bay towns being only practicable by this water route.<sup>1</sup>

Horses were chiefly used under the saddle, and before 1750 there were no wheel vehicles for horses to draw. Even in the next fifty years, horses did not take the place of oxen for farm work. Oxen remained the principal animals in the labors of the farm, even to the close of the eighteenth century.

The sick and wounded, and sometimes the slain, were moved by cattle and cart. Even as late as June 9, 1743, Drs. Gardiner and Douglas of Boston performed a surgical operation on Jonathan Atherton, a grandson of Hope, in Hadley, and he remained there under doctor's care until Oct. 5, when he was taken to his home in East Hadley in Samuel Hawley's ox cart. There was no other way to move the feeble sufferer, the ox cart being the only vehicle with wheels, in this region, at the time of this incident.<sup>2</sup>

The County Court in 1674 ordered the town of

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 376.

Hadley "to build at least a foot bridge over the Fort River on the way to Brookfield." On the 12th Feb., 1675, the town voted to build a cart-bridge, and this was the first bridge on the Bay Road. These bridges were built by calling out the people to labor, every man according to his estate. Other public works were done in the same manner, and those who did no labor paid in grain, the price of labor being about two shillings per day. In 1672 John Smith of Hadley was directed by the Court "to fell a tree across Swift River, for a foot bridge, if any such be near at hand." Such foot bridges were not uncommon. A huge pine was felled across a stream in the town of Milton, before 1660, and so gave the name to "Pine Tree Brook."

The Bay Road through Quaboag (Brookfield) was only a horse path until after 1700, and the following account of Edward Taylor who travelled over this path from Boston to Springfield in 1671, to take up the pastorate there, is of interest. Leaving Boston 27th Nov. he writes:—"It was not without much apprehension of a tedious and hazardous journey, the snow being about mid-leg deep, the way unbeaten, or the track filled up again, over rocks and mountains, the journey being about 100 miles. A Mr. Cooke of Cambridge told us it was the desperate journey that ever Connecticut men undertook. The first night we lodged at Marlboro, from thence we went out the day following about half an hour before sunrising for Brookfield, but about eleven o'clock we lost our way in the snow and woods, which hindered us some three or four miles, but

finding it again by marked trees, on we went; but our talk was of lying in the woods that night, for we were then about thirty miles off from lodging, having neither house nor wigwam on the way. But about eight o'clock at night we came in, through mercy, in health, to our lodgings, from which the next day we set out for Springfield. And on the next day we ventured to lead our horses in great danger over Connecticut River, though against my will, upon ice which was about two days freezing, but mercy lingered with us, for the ice cracked every step, yet we came over safely and well, to the wonder of all who knew it. This being the first December we came to Westfield, the place of our desire." <sup>1</sup>

"For a hundred years or more after the settlement of Northampton," says the historian B. W. Dwight, "it was a week's journey for man and horse to go to Boston, and the path was only distinguishable by marks cut upon the trees, through the long stretch of forest that lay between the two places."

Oxen were much more numerous than horses, and were also used under the saddle. There is preserved in very good condition, in the old Fairbanks house at Dedham, an old ox saddle, made of wood.

There was a ferry at Hadley, on the Connecticut River, in 1661. Joseph Kellogg, his son and his grandson kept this ferry for a century.<sup>2</sup>

The Dutch at New York had sleighs before 1700, a few appear in Boston some years after 1700, but they were uncommon as late as 1720 and 1730. In

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings P. V. M. A., Vol. 6, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 46.

1737 loaded sleighs came from Sheffield to Westfield and the event was published in the newspapers, as being something remarkable. The universal method of travel, for a short or long distance, by men, women and children, was on horseback, and it was so for more than a century after Hope Atherton's time. Later wheeled vehicles came into use, and made a great change in travelling.<sup>1</sup>

As the climate of Old England was much less severe than that of New England, the first settlers knew nothing about sleds or sleighs, nor was their usefulness discovered and accepted by them until many years after the settlement of Massachusetts. Heavy sleds were used long before sleighs. Wood was sometimes sledded before 1670, but in general it was carted long after that date. There were no sleigh rides in Hampshire county until more than half a century later.<sup>2</sup>

## DRINKS

When our fathers came from England, the people were addicted to malt liquors, the old country was full of licensed ale houses, and an alewife was a woman, and not a fish. Inns, taverns and ordinaries were plenty. The English were excessive drinkers. "Drinking is the plague of our English gentry," says Peacham in 1622.

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 102.

The first planters of New England were some of the best portion of this liquor-consuming nation. They abhorred drunkenness, and intended to be temperate drinkers. They licensed men to sell intoxicating drinks, and such places were called "ordinaries." The beer which ordinaries were required to keep was not so strong as much of the beer used in England. It was forbidden to sell, or give to any Indian, "rum, strong water, wine, strong beer, brandy, cider, perry or any other strong liquors, under penalty of 40s for every pint."<sup>1</sup>

The drinks in New England in the seventeenth century were wine, of several sorts including that called "sack", beer, including ale, and strong water, which was of two kinds, viz., brandy distilled from wine, and a liquor made from malt or grain. Wine and beer were the principal drinks, until rum was brought from the West Indies. This rum was called in 1654 by the General Court of Connecticut: — Barbadoes liquor, or more commonly "rum — kill-devil."

Beer was made regularly every week in the home, and cider began to be made and sold as early as 1648, the orchards then yielding sufficient fruit. The price of cider was 30s per bbl. in 1653. New England rum, distilled from molasses, was not made during the seventeenth century. Flip, made of beer, sugar and spirits, appears near the close of the century, and punch not long after. Barbadoes rum, from the West Indies, came into use here as early as 1650.

Joshua Fisher of Dedham was licensed in 1658 to "sell strong water to relieve the inhabitants, being

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 71.



remote from Boston, for one year." He was tavern keeper, is described as a "maker of artistic maps," and was one of the committee who came to Deerfield (in 1667) to lay out the 8000 acres, comprising the first grant.<sup>1</sup>

The early settlers of Massachusetts had many small stills in their houses, which appear in their inventories. Several ministers had these little stills. Spirits were distilled in Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut, apparently from grain, before 1662.

Drunkenness was rare in Massachusetts in 1642. Intemperance increased after the means of intoxication were more easily procured. Intemperance was more common in Boston and on the seaboard than in the agricultural towns. John Pyncheon of Springfield retailed brandy at the rate of 12s per gallon in 1653, and rum at 6s in 1673. Whenever he had rum for sale there was no lack of purchasers. Rev. Pelatiah Glover, the minister of Springfield, bought of him each year for his own use about two gallons of rum and six quarts of wine.

The settlers along the Connecticut River planted apple trees; and cider and boiled cider appear there on the records as early as 1648, and also in the Bay towns. When they first began to make cider, the apples were crushed by hand with pounders in a trough, and cider mills are not mentioned in the valley towns before 1700.

It was estimated in Boston, in 1728, that a family in ordinary circumstances, consisting of nine persons (which was then a medium sized household) "of

<sup>1</sup> A. & H. Art. Co., Vol. 1, p. 102.

middle figure," consumed in a year 12 barrels of beer, 4 barrels of cider and 6 gallons of wine.<sup>1</sup>

Our ancestors brought from England a large conception of the necessity of beer for daily use, and a very small opinion of water as a beneficial beverage — Roger Clapp says in 1630, writing at a time of many privations: — "It was not accounted a strange thing, in those days, to drink water." And he had in mind the opinion generally held, viz: — that it would have been thought a very strange thing, except under the desperate conditions then prevailing, to even think of such a thing as drinking water as a beverage.<sup>2</sup>

A committee appointed in Deerfield in 1745 to determine the exact requirements which could be properly considered necessary for the annual maintenance of the minister's family, consisting of man, wife and four children, (oldest eleven) and a maid, included: — 12 barrels cider, and other things, all very carefully enumerated.<sup>3</sup>

Between cutting up and carrying into the house 100 cords of wood (average two cords per week) and drinking 12 barrels cider (one barrel per month) it would seem to the thoughtful observer of this late day, that it would keep the family fairly busy, at these two tasks.

We find in Peter Thacher's diary these entries: — May 20, 1661. "This day the ordination beer was brewed."

June 1, 1661. "I was ordained pastor of the Church in Milton."

The ten days' interval between the brewing and the

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> Sheldon's Hist. Deerfield, p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Clapp's Memoirs, p. 42.

serving of the beer was undoubtedly considered the proper time to produce the best results, for such occasions.

Regarding the convivial habits of the early ministers, who frequently met at councils, and other meetings which required remaining over night, it was their regular habit to have their flip every morning, and to drink it before washing for breakfast. On such occasions if one of their number overslept, he was condemned to lose his flip, unless he made up on the spot a verse of original poetry. On one such occasion a victim is said to have perpetrated the following: —<sup>1</sup>

“They say our forefathers, like goats,  
First washed their eyes and then their throats;  
But we, their sons, grown much more wise,  
First wash our throats, and then our eyes.”

He probably received his flip.

It is said of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield in the funeral sermon at his death June 9, 1729, after he had been minister forty-four years (this sermon having forty numbered heads) that he was to be commended for his temperance in eating and drinking — by the following language: — “He would sometimes deny himself the lawful liberty of refreshing himself after preaching, that he might not give the least countenance to the love of strong drink.”<sup>2</sup>

## WOOD

New England was far from being an unbroken wilderness when first settled by the English. Wood

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. 1, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Sheldon's Hist. Deerfield, p. 461.

describes the country in 1634:— "In many places, divers acres are clear, so that one might ride a hunting in most places of the land. There is no underwood save in swamps and low grounds; for it is the custom of the Indians to burn the wood in November, or when the grass is withered and the leaves dried, it consumes all the underwood and rubbish." After selling large areas to the new settlers, the Indians discontinued their annual burning, and a few years brought forth a vigorous growth of bushes and underbrush. The inhabitants along the Connecticut River were greatly annoyed by these bushes that sprung up so plentifully in their home lots and highways, and they obliged every man to work one day in the year clearing such bushes from the highways. The town of Hadley enforced a similar order in 1693.

These conditions also caused the whites in some of the towns to adopt and continue the custom of the annual burnings by the Indians. This destroyed small trees and hindered the growth of large ones. Valuable timber was not so plentiful as some have imagined. The town of Northampton, in 1669, "considering the great difficulty we are in to get firewood," made restrictions about cutting trees. Hatfield voted in 1671 that no man should sell outside the town, any clapboards, shingles or fencing material. Dorchester, Hingham, Cambridge and many other towns took similar precaution to save the woodlands. From the supplies of wood given to clergymen, some idea may be gained of the great quantities of wood consumed in the spacious fireplaces. We have no record of the wood supplied to Hope Atherton, the first

minister of Hatfield, but to his successor, Mr. Chauncey, were delivered 50 cords annually, and later 60 cords annually. Rev. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton had 75 to 80 loads of wood in a year.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Doolittle (Northfield) had 62 loads of wood — presumably a cord to a load. Wood furnished to the minister of Amherst (this was in 1742 to 1751) ranged from 60 loads to 100 “good loads,” and later to 120 “ordinary loads.”<sup>2</sup>

Some persons who had no study to warm consumed as much wood as the ministers, or about fifty cords. When Hadley had only one hundred families, the consumption of wood in that one town was not much less than 3000 cords annually.

The labor of providing this quantity of firewood was a large item, and, throughout the year, the daily routine must have been one of long and constant labor, in order to accomplish the necessary tasks. There seems to have been more or less of a community spirit of helpfulness between neighbors, which circumstances made really necessary.

## HATFIELD

Can we picture the settlement of Hatfield as it appeared when Hope Atherton came first to see it in 1668-9? It was a place of much natural charm — the great calm river — the broad rich meadows be-

<sup>1</sup> Judd's *Hadley*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Conn. Val.*, Vol. 1, p. 334.

side it — the level plateaus — the rounded hill sides — the tops of Tom and Toby and Holyoke beyond — peaceful and beautiful in spring and summer and autumn — bleak and white under winter's snow — but withal richly endowed in every season with the beauties of nature.

As for the works of man, in the less than ten years since he had been a settler there, a long broad "street" had been laid out a mile or two in length, and forty rods in breadth, the "home lots" being measured off on either side, and some twenty rude pioneer cabins scattered along these lots, the number of which had increased to fifty by 1677.

A solid fence eight feet high, formed of vertical logs set tightly together, with two feet of their length imbedded in the ground, and the tops secured together to prevent displacement, this fence extended parallel with the street, at the backs of the houses, for nearly a mile on either side, with the ends fenced across in the same manner, and heavy gates of tight plank, to allow passage in and out. This huge structure called the "palisado" enclosed a rectangular area, and was built only by a large expenditure of material and labor, and solely as a protection from Indian attack. This palisado was far from being a thing of beauty. It was not only ugly in itself, but was a constant reminder of the danger imminent from without.

The houses of the settlers were necessarily crude, half of them were log cabins, the others of hewn timber, covered with boards either sawn by hand in the saw pits, or with "clove boards" split out of straight grained pine. The axe and the saw were the

principal, if not the only, tools used in the construction of the house, and could not produce more than a crude building.

The barns and outbuildings were even less finished, and it is doubtful if any trees, large or small, were left standing within or immediately outside the palisado. A tree was an enemy, because it might conceal or shield an enemy. Even the bushes were not permitted to grow. We see, therefore, only the natural contour of the surface, with the rocks, as they had laid for centuries, and the stumps of trees recently cut by the settlers.

All sorts of domestic animals were allowed to roam at will within the palisado—cows, horses, goats, oxen, swine, sheep, and dogs of all sizes made themselves altogether at home, and must have consumed all in sight that remained green. So long as the animals were “yoked” or “branded” and the swine “ringed,” to restrain in some measure their natural destructiveness, they were within the law, and could not be impounded.

Probably there were no “kitchen gardens” as we know them today. Sweet corn and potatoes were unknown. The more staple articles of food, as peas, beans, wheat and Indian corn, were raised in large quantities, in the broad and rich acres outside the palisado.

The natural and irrepressible love of the beautiful in flowers could not, however, be restrained even under these unpromising conditions, and there must have been some spots of loveliness, well fenced from foragers, where woman’s heart found joy in tending

the flowers of her garden. But her duties were so numerous and pressing, as was true of all other members of the family, that it must have been until after the passing of the first generation of pioneers before much attention could have been given to improvement of general conditions in the village street, and about the houses.

The meeting house, itself as crude as the houses of the settlers, was set in the middle of the broad street. Grouped about the barns were heavy ox carts, and crude farm implements all made by hand, and almost wholly of wood.

As for the minister's house, it is described as being much superior to any other in the settlement. By a vote of the town, his house was directed to be built "forty foot long and twenty foot wide, double story, and a porch seven feet square below, to be fitted proportionately above the first story, and to lay two floors of joists, throughout the house and in the porch, and to close the house with clapboards, and to board the roof of both, and to cover them with good shingles and to build fire chimneys, and to underpin the house well with stone, and also to lath and fix up the walls of the house, and to set up at each gable end, priamidy and flue boards." <sup>1</sup>

Atherton's home lot was at the south end of Hatfield Street, on its east side, and both he and his successor, Mr. Chauncey, lived here, on what has since been known as the Goodwin lot.

Usually there was no interior finish within the houses, the rough timbering and boards being exposed

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 61.



to view. The windows were closed with shutters. Probably oiled paper or some similar material was used instead of glass, which did not come into general use until after 1700.

Outside the palisado there was the road to the mill, one to the river, and one leading south toward Northampton; and on these outlying roads, some of the settlers' homes were located. There were also broad cultivated fields, and miles of rail fences to keep the cattle within bounds, and occasional open spaces where wood had been cut off. All else was in its natural state.

In this small community, numbering perhaps a hundred souls at the time of Atherton's coming among them, the new minister would soon come to know each individual intimately.

George Sheldon, the historian of Deerfield, has given us a vivid description of conditions in a community like this: — "When the settlers found themselves within the stockade at night with their families unbroken, they put up thanks to the great Ruler for their safety, but they could feel no assurance for the future. The enemy might come tomorrow, next week, next month, and unceasing vigilance was the price of life and liberty. There was no period when the direct and wearing strain was taken off; at no time could they feel that the campaign had ended and the enemy gone into winter quarters. Summer or winter, at morning, noon, or night, year in and year out, the dread shadow was always over them; the cloud never passed by; the sunshine of security never fell upon any man, woman or child outside the fortifications.

Every furrow turned, every swing of the axe, every piece of linen laid out on the grass to bleach, every bucket of water brought from the spring, every errand of mercy to the sick, unless within the protection of the palisades, was felt to be, and in reality was, at the imminent risk of life.”<sup>1</sup>

Homes which were built near the Bay, in the period of the Philips war, had their second floors project a foot or two, that their occupants might, if molested, through openings for the purpose, fire upon, or pour hot water onto, their assailants. The houses of Col. Joseph Williams and of John Pierpont, of Roxbury, were of this construction.

Very few houses were painted, even at the close of the eighteenth century, paint being unknown until about 1750. The roof may have been of boards or shingles, thatch having been prohibited because of frequent conflagrations.<sup>2</sup>

We find the following in the records of Roxbury, 7 Oct., 1673: “About nine oclock at night the house of Robert Seaver was fired, through the carelessness of the maid, that went up into the chamber to order the cheeses, her light fired the thatch and the house was burnt down, but much of the goods preserved, and also the barn.”<sup>3</sup>

She of course had a torch of pitch pine (candle wood), and the dry thatch of the roof was hanging loosely down from the poles, on which it was laid. It would only take an instant of time for the whole under side of the roof to flash into flame. She did well to escape with her life.

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings P.V.M.A., Vol. 2, p. 405.

<sup>3</sup> Rox. Rec., p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Drake's Roxbury, p. 58.

Lime was made only from oyster shells until about 1700 and was necessarily very costly. The first limestone discovered in the colony was in Newbury in 1697. Therefore few houses had any interior plastering. Chimneys were at first of logs, the joints being well filled with clay. Stone was occasionally used for chimneys, being more safe from fire.<sup>1</sup>

Buildings everywhere in the various towns were generally of one story until sawmills were built, in the 1650's and 60's. Nails large and small were made by hand on a blacksmith's anvil. Windows were at first square holes in the walls protected by a board shutter, succeeded later by small leaden sash, with little diamond panes of greenish glass, brought from England.

Modern crockery was unknown before 1750. "Trenchers" had been used for plates before that time. Knives and forks were not in use in the colonies in Hope Atherton's time.<sup>2</sup> Trenchers are described as "square pieces of board which served as plates."<sup>3</sup>

In the absence of knives, forks and spoons for table use, many napkins were required, and we find on the inventories of many deceased colonists that there were large numbers of them.

The English bible was the one book familiar to all, read and studied by every household, till its language became the language of the street, the market, and the place of public assembly, as well as the house of worship, the model of written expression in letters, petitions, and legislative utterances, as well as the basis for sermons. Few books were owned by the settlers, but the bible was found in every family.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nourse-Lancaster, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. 1, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> Ewell's Story of Byfield, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 143.

The records show curious examples of the religious belief of the times: —

Roxbury, 1666. "It pleased God to arm the caterpillers against us, which did much damage in our orchards . . . and to exercise the Bay with a severe drought."

"The churches in the Bay sought the Lord by Fasting and Prayer, our church of Roxbury began the 19th June. The Lord gave us rain the next day."

Later: — "It pleased God that our wheat was mildewed and blasted this year also."<sup>1</sup>

Letter dated 1707 by Henry Dering to the selectmen of Boston: — "Humbly offereth to your Serious Consideration — That wheras the Lord in his Merciful Providence, hath Provided this Towne with three Fire Engines," etc.

William Hubbard, of Salem, writes: — "The 29th June, 1676, was set apart as a day of solemn and public thanksgiving, and was ushered in by several special mercies. The saving of the people of Marlborough from being cut off, was very observable, when Mr. Graves, by occasionally going from the sermon with the extremity of the toothache, discovered the Indians ready to assault the town, and the people might have been cut off, had not that accident happened."

It is remarkable that our early pioneers, placed in wholly new country, with no laws, no established authority, even without the traditions of a government in any form worthy of being copied, should have been able to work out a democracy which could so successfully stand the test. Instead of criticizing

<sup>1</sup> Rox. Rec., p. 204.

what is sometimes called their narrowness, and their errors, we should give them highest commendation. From them we inherit civil and religious foundations, incomparably the wisest and best that ancestors ever bequeathed to their posterity. Their management of public and private affairs was far in advance of anything before accomplished.

Hatfield was without a minister from the death of Hope Atherton in 1677, until the call to Rev. Nathaniel Chauncey was accepted in 1683. The poverty brought by the war was shown by the fact that a settlement in full for his ministerial service was not given Rev. Hope Atherton's widow until 1679, when Sarah Atherton, in consideration of the sum of forty pounds, declared the obligations discharged. This was three years after Hope Atherton's death. She then moved to Deerfield, and married again in 1681.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. John Russell, Jr., was the first minister in Hadley from 1660 until his death in 1692. He was faithful, hopeful and brave. His chivalrous protection, through long and trying years, of the fugitive judges, Goffe and Whalley, has immortalized his name, and made the old home-lot where he lived, and the town itself, famous in history.<sup>2</sup> He must have been well and intimately known by Hope Atherton, his colleague across the river.

Samuel Mather was a son of Hope Atherton's sister, and was minister of the church at Deerfield, 1673-5, while Atherton was with the church at Hatfield, twelve miles to the south. A tablet in the old brick church in Deerfield bears the following inscription:—

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Conn. Val., Vol. I, p. 334.

IN MEMORY OF  
REV. SAMUEL MATHER, M. A.  
PIONEER MINISTER OF DEERFIELD 1673-75.  
BORN IN DORCHESTER 1650. GRADUATED HARVARD  
COLLEGE 1671—  
MARRIED HANNAH — DAUGHTER OF GOV. ROBERT  
TREAT OF CONNECTICUT 1676.  
SON OF TIMOTHY AND GRANDSON OF REV. RICHARD  
MATHER, MINISTER OF TOXTETH, ENG. AND DOR-  
CHESTER, MASS.  
FOUNDER OF THE NOTED MATHER FAMILY OF AMERICA.  
GRANDSON OF GENERAL H. ATHERTON OF THE COLONIAL  
ARMY & FRENCH AND INDIAN WARS.  
COUSIN OF EUNICE MATHER WILLIAMS, MARTYR OF  
1704 — “THE VIRTUOUS AND DESIREABLE CONSORT OF  
REV. JOHN WILLIAMS” THE “REDEEMED CAPTIVE”.  
AFTER BLOODY BROOK MASSACRE IN 1675 THE TOWN  
WAS DESTROYED BY INDIANS AND THE CHURCH SCAT-  
TERED. AT THE REQUEST OF THE SURVIVORS HE  
WAITED FOUR YEARS, WHEN, THERE BEING NO PROS-  
PECT OF THE RESETTLEMENT HE ACCEPTED A CALL TO  
ANOTHER CHURCH.  
MINISTER AT WINDSOR, CONN, FROM 1682 TILL HIS  
DEATH IN 1728.  
CHOSEN BY THE GENERAL CONSENT OF THE CLERGY OF  
CONNECTICUT IN 1700, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS AND  
FIRST TRUSTEES OF YALE COLLEGE.  
“KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE CHURCHES OF THE COL-  
ONY, WHEREOF HE HATH BEEN FOR MANY YEARS A  
FAITHFUL PASTOR, FOR HIS PIETY, GRAVITY & USE-  
FULNESS”. — (COTTON MATHER)  
THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED ON THE 240 ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE GATHERING OF THE CHURCH.

It was said of Hope Atherton that he "was a courageous and willing to expose himself for the public good." Someone has well said:—"It is not necessary to be a descendant of Deerfield to be inspired by the life, death, and principles of its founders." And this is true of many of our old New England towns.

## CUSTOMS

Our fathers were essentially a martial people, and the warlike virtues were to them a necessity. Military titles were in high repute among them and they were preferred to civil or ecclesiastical honors. A sergeant had attained distinction, and his title was never omitted. A captain was necessarily a man of great influence.

The title "Mrs." was given to both married and to unmarried women. Men of wealth or education were called "Mr.," but that title was never given to the more common, who might be referred to as "Goodman" and their wives as "Goodwife" or "Goody."

During the last half of the seventeenth century, "stealing the bride" was done in some places in New England. There are many traditions regarding it in the Connecticut Valley. The last bride stolen in Hadley is said to have been Elizabeth, daughter of Oliver Smith, who was married to Dr. Job Marsh, in 1783. The custom must have prevailed for a century before. The practice ceased in Northampton several years earlier. Some young men who had not

been invited to the wedding would seize the bride, in the street or house, and lead her off, and keep her until they were invited to join the party. A Hadley tradition says that they sometimes took her to a public house, and retained her until the groom ordered an entertainment for them. She was treated gently and kindly. These affairs seemed to have produced no quarrels, but to have been intended as an addition to the wedding frolic.<sup>1</sup>

Early marriages were frequent, some brides being fifteen or sixteen years old. Men and women sat apart in the meeting house, and the difficulties of secret communications between young men and maids were so great that sometimes courting sticks were in use, the whole family being gathered around the fire.

The practice of partaking of wine, spirits and cake at funerals was brought from England to the American colonies, also the custom of expending large sums for gloves, rings and scarfs. The funeral expenses were often surprisingly large, and must have greatly diminished many estates. In some cases gloves were lavishly given — 700 pairs at one funeral, and above 3000 pairs, and 200 rings at the funeral of A. Faneuil in Boston in 1738. The General Court finally interfered by enacting laws prohibiting such extravagances.

There was no hearse in Hadley until 1826. In that town, as in others, the dead were carried on a shoulder bier, sometimes for miles. The funeral procession, marshalled by persons bearing staffs, halberts and other badges of authority, clothed in mourning, walked, at the tolling of the bell, to the grave, friends

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 245.



carrying the body on a bier. If the corpse was that of a female the women went first, if a male, the men went first. Returning to the house, entertainment was provided, sometimes quite expensively. Wine, cider and rum were furnished. Even at a pauper's funeral, the customary wine and gloves were provided and paid for by the town. All these customs prevailed for many years.<sup>1</sup> The following notation is made on the back of an old will: — <sup>2</sup>

"Wheras it hath pleased Almighty God in the Way of his holy providence, to Take away our honored father by death, William Sumner, the aged, of Dorchester, this ninth day of Desember in the yeare 1688. The charges of his desente buriall is as followeth —

	£	s.	d.
In primise gloves . . . . .	01	19	09
It. in wine . . . . .	01	11	02
It. for the cofein . . . . .	00	08	00
It. for recording his death . . .	00	04	00
It. for ringing the bell . . . . .	00	01	00
	4	6	11"

A writer of that period says: — "At funerals nothing is read, nor any funeral sermon made, but all the neighborhood come together at the tolling of the bell, and carry the dead solemnly to his grave, and there stand by while he is buried." <sup>3</sup>

There were negro slaves in Hatfield in 1694, and this was true of many other towns throughout the colonies. Mr. Williams (the minister in Hatfield) had

<sup>1</sup> Dorchester Day, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Palfrey N. E., Vol. II, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> N. E. Hist. Reg., Vol. 9, p. 302.

several. Rev. Peter Thacher, the minister at Milton, writes regarding one of his slaves, in his diary, May 7, 1679: — "I bought an Indian of Mr. Checkley, and was to pay five pounds a month after I received her."

Aug. 18, 1679. "Came home from Cambridge, and found my Indian girl had liked to have knocked my Theodora on head, by letting her fall, whereupon I took a good walnut stick, and beat the Indian to purpose."<sup>1</sup>

The following incident is told of the Minot house, Dorchester, which was built about 1640, burned 1874, and was occupied at the time of the Philips war by John Minot and his family: "One Sunday in July of 1675, the maid servant and two young children were left in the house without protection. An Indian straggler from one of the Philips bands suddenly appeared and sought to gain entrance. He was promptly discovered by the maid, who hastily put the children under two big brass kettles, and ran upstairs for a musket. The Indian fired his gun, but without effect. The courageous young woman returned the fire with more success, wounding the Indian in the shoulder; and when with a desperate indiscretion he tried to enter through a window, she quickly seized a shovel of hot coals from the open fireplace and threw them in his face. The assailant then beat a retreat, and was afterwards found dead in the woods about five miles away."<sup>2</sup>

English settlers for a century and a half, almost universally, made their morning and evening meal on boiled Indian meal and milk, or on porridge of broth, made of peas or beans, and flavored by being

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Milton.

<sup>2</sup> Mem. Hist. Boston, Vol. 1, p. 433.

boiled with salted beef or pork. Beer, however, which was brewed every week in the family, was accounted a necessity of life.<sup>1</sup>

“In many houses plates were not to be found at breakfast, and forks were not in general use before 1700, though pewter and wooden spoons were common. People dipped their hands into the platter containing the food, and however unrefined it may appear, there is abundant reason to believe that our forefathers were in the habit of eating with their fingers.”<sup>2</sup>

Milk was formerly a much more important part of the food of families, in the early days. In a discussion in the Boston newspapers in 1728 respecting the expense of housekeeping in Boston — “of families of middling figure” (i.e. an average income) including ministers — three writers gave all the persons in these families only bread and milk for both breakfast and supper. When milk was scarce, which frequently happened in the winter, cider was substituted, many children being fond of bread and cider. The cider was not very sour, and it was diluted with water, sweetened with molasses, and warmed in a basin, and the bread was toasted.<sup>3</sup>

## INDUSTRY

The seventeenth century was the age of home industry. Hatfield had a corn mill, saw mill, and black-

<sup>1</sup> Palfrey N. E., Vol. II, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> History of Northampton, Vol. I, p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 377.

smith shop. All other work was done at home. There were no stores in town, and sugar and salt were the only groceries to be obtained. The Indians taught the settlers to make maple sugar. The spinning wheel, the loom, and the dye pot were in every home. Linsey-woolsey, a mixture of linen and wool, was the commonest fabric. Rope for the harnesses was made at home, as well as the wooden collars for horses and oxen, and the axles of ox carts were also of wood, made by hand, on the farm.<sup>1</sup>

People in general must needs have worn very plain clothing. Every article of dress was home made in every sense of the word. The material was manufactured, and the garments cut and made, by the inmates of the farm house.<sup>2</sup>

Candlewood was so named because it was a substitute for candles. It was first used in this country for light by the Indians. Gov. Winthrop in 1662 said that the pine knots and resinous wood were "split into shivers," and burnt instead of candles, giving a good light, and much used in New England, Virginia, and among the Dutch at Manhattan. To avoid the smoke the candlewood was usually burnt in the corner, except sometimes a stick was taken in the hand to go about the house. This torchwood was used by farmers and others in many towns in Massachusetts for 100 to 140 years after Winthrop's description. It was customary for the farmers to provide a cart load of candlewood every year.<sup>3</sup>

Wood says: — "Our pine trees, that are the most

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> History of Northampton, Vol. 1, p. 292.

plentiful of all wood, doth allow us plenty of candles, which are very useful in a house; and they are such candles as the Indians use, having no other; and they are nothing else but the wood of the pine tree cloven in two little slices, something thin, which are so full of moisture of turpentine and pitch that they burn as clear as a torch.”<sup>1</sup>

John Pynchon of Springfield sent winter fattened cattle to Boston before 1670, and for many years after. The records of Hatfield show that stall fed cattle were sent to market in 1696, and that it was not then a new business. The business flourished later for a century or more and is most interestingly described by George Sheldon in his “The Passing of the Stall-fed Ox and the Farm Boy.” Colonel Moses Porter of Hadley went to Boston with fat cattle every year for fifty-one years.

When the English established themselves on the banks of the Connecticut, the river contained, in proper seasons, a great abundance of shad, salmon, bass and other fish. The shad, which were very numerous, were despised by a large portion of the English, for nearly a century, in the old towns up and down the river. It was discreditable, for those who had a competency, to eat shad, and it was equally disreputable to be destitute of salt pork, and the eating of shad implied a deficiency of pork.

A story is told of a Hadley family who were about to dine on shad. Hearing a knock at the door, the platter of shad was immediately hid under a bed. Shad never ascended Bellows Falls nor could they

<sup>1</sup> Young's Chron. of Mass., p. 254.

ascend the falls at Chicopee River, but salmon passed up both of these rapids.<sup>1</sup>

Boards had always been sawed by hand in England and never by saw mills, up to the time New England was settled. In the colonies wages of sawyers were regulated by law. In New Haven and elsewhere the "top man," who was on top of the log and guided the work, had a little higher wages than the "pit man" who was in the saw pit below. Two men were expected to saw about one hundred feet of boards in a day, when the logs were squared and brought to the pit. The early settlers of the colonies built houses, and some commodious ones, before they had the aid of a saw mill. Thomas Meekins had a saw mill on the Mill River in Hatfield about 1669. The first saw mill erected in New England was on a branch of the Piscataqua about 1663. The saw mill on the Neponset between Milton and Dorchester began to operate in 1764.<sup>2</sup>

Farmers removed boulders by building great fires upon them, and then dropping heavy balls of iron on the rocks. The stone for building King's Chapel in Boston were obtained by this method.<sup>3</sup>

Fences came next, after houses and roads, in the necessities of the settlers. There was a large expenditure of labor, in maintaining miles of fences, year by year, to keep the cattle from wandering off the common lands. Each proprietor was required to fence according to the acreage which he held in the common field. The location of his portion of fence, like that of his land, was determined by lot. Gates were

<sup>1</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Proceedings P.V.M.A., Vol. 3, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Dor., p. 619.

placed where a road crossed the common field, and any person who left the gate open after passing through was fined. Gates remained in use on these river roads until after the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Almost all the lands in the towns upon Connecticut River were laid out without the aid of a surveyor's compass. The calculations were sufficiently accurate though not exact. The north star was sometimes regarded in establishing important lines. The first regular surveyor with a compass, that resided in any town on the Connecticut, was Caleb Stanley, Jr., of Hartford, who bought a surveyor's compass a few years before 1700. The surveyor's compass was, however, used at Pocumtuck in 1665 by Joshua Fisher of Dedham.<sup>2</sup>

A mill for linseed oil was built at New Haven in 1718, probably the first in New England, and in 1735 one was erected in Hatfield, perhaps the first in Massachusetts. The oil was used in the making of paint, but there was little demand for it. Probably there was not a building in Northampton or Hadley or surrounding towns which in 1750 had ever been painted.<sup>3</sup> "Very few houses were painted outside as late as 1800."<sup>4</sup>

The early settlers of New England brought over from old England hour glasses and sun dials. It is not known that there was a watch or clock in Hadley in the seventeenth century. The first one of which there is any record was in 1731. Timothy Tucker had a silver watch, given him on his 21st birthday in 1741, which is still in good condition, and must have been

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Whately, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> Judd's Hadley, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Chase's History of Haverhill, p. 95.

a novelty at that time, when he was living in Milton. Most houses had a "noon mark" on the bottom casing of a south window, which showed, by the shadow of sunlight, when the noon hour had arrived.

The gathering of tar and turpentine, from the pine trees in towns along the valley of Connecticut River, was begun in the seventeenth century. The turpentine was sent to Boston to be distilled. In 1696 Hatfield forbade the taking of resin from trees on account of the damage done to them, but the practice was not stopped.<sup>1</sup>

Tobacco was raised by the settlers in Deerfield in 1696. It had long been used by the Indians and also the English settlers. Mrs. Rowlandson, wife of the minister of Lancaster, was invited by sachem Philip to smoke at the time of her captivity, and says "it is a usual compliment now-a-days among saints and sinners." She adds — "though I formerly used tobacco, yet I have left it, since I was first taken captive. I remember with shame, how formerly, when I had taken two or three pipes, I was presently ready for another, such a bewitching thing it is." <sup>2</sup>

## THE FALLS FIGHT

It is not within the scope of this paper to include any account of the violent events of that Indian War of 1675 and '76, as many historians have given full record to those events in faithful detail. We are only

<sup>1</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Whately, p. 176.



interested in the part which Hope Atherton took in the expedition which went out from Hatfield in the evening of the 18th May, 1676.

Captain William Turner, the heroic patriot, whose unselfish devotion to duty never received the recognition which it so well deserved, was long a resident of Dorchester and had served with Humphrey Atherton in various town duties, and so must have been well known to Hope Atherton. The latter must also have known Lieut. Preserved Clapp, another Dorchester man, and probably others whose homes had been at or near the Bay, who took part in this expedition.

Leaving Hatfield after sundown on Thursday, May 18, 1676, the company of one hundred and fifty or more men, mostly mounted, and consisting in part of the settlers of Hatfield and nearby towns, the others being men from the Bay towns detailed for military duty, passed along the narrow trail which led northward, toward the "Great Fall" about twenty miles distant. The company was under command of Capt. William Turner, with Capt. Samuel Holyoke of Springfield next in command. Rev. Hope Atherton accompanied the troops as chaplain, and the guides were Benjamin Waite and Experience Hinsdale — both of Hatfield. In the darkness of night, they pushed on by the scenes of the Swamp Fight,<sup>1</sup> the Bloody Brook Massacre,<sup>2</sup> and the burned and abandoned settlement of Deerfield.<sup>3</sup>

A heavy thunderstorm came on in the night, which wet them through, and in the darkness they missed

<sup>1</sup> Aug. 23, 1675.

<sup>2</sup> Sept. 18, 1675.

<sup>3</sup> Sept. 1675.

the ford at Cheapside, and crossed the Pocumtuck at a point somewhat farther up that stream. This was fortunate as there was an Indian guard at Cheapside ford. Fording next the Green River they passed on, and reached the Indian camp on the bank of the Connecticut before break of day. The camp was unguarded and quiet, there was no sound but the roar of the cataract.<sup>1</sup>

A very early description of these falls is found in Peter's History of Connecticut, as follows:— "In Connecticut River, about 200 miles from Long Island Sound, is a narrow, of five yards only, formed by two shelving mountains of solid rock. Through this chasm are compelled to pass all the waters which in the time of floods, bury the northern country. It is frightful passage of about 400 yards in length. No boat, no living creature, was ever known to pass through this narrow, except an Indian woman. This woman had undertaken to cross the river just above, having in the canoe a jug of rum, which she intended to convey to the opposite shore. But the canoe was drawn into the swift current, and carried down the frightful gulf. While the squaw was thus hurrying to certain destruction, as she had every reason to believe, she seized upon her jug of rum, and did not take it from her mouth until the last drop was quaffed. She was marvellously preserved from death, and was actually picked up, several miles below, still floating in the canoe, and quite drunk. When it was known what she had done, and being asked how she dared to drink so much rum, with the prospect of certain

<sup>1</sup> N. E. Hist. Reg., Vol. 41, p. 207.

death before her, she answered that she knew it was too much for one time, but she was unwilling that any of it should be lost."

The story of the attack of the settlers on the sleeping Indian camp is familiar, but the following brief account, written by Rev. William Hubbard of Salem, within a year after the event, is of interest:—

"When they came within the Indian rendezvouze, they allighted off their horses, and tyed them to some strong young trees, at a quarter of a mile distance. So marching up they fired Amain into their very wigwams, killing many upon the Place, and frightening others with the sudden Alarm of their Guns, and made them run into the River, where the Swiftness of the Stream carrying them down a steep Fall, they perished in the waters, some getting into their small Boats made of the bark of the birchen Trees, which, being sunk, or overset, by the Shooting of our men, delivered them into the like Danger of the Waters, giving them therby a Passport into the Other World; others of them creeping for Shelter under the Banks of the Great River, were espyed by our men, and killed by their swords, Capt. Holioke killing five, young and old with his own hands, from under a bank."

The Pocumtuck tribe suffered the loss of many of their best men in this day's fighting. Their power was broken forever, and this event virtually marks the end of this ancient and powerful tribe, whose name is perpetuated in this beautiful valley, and by this Association.

The day had, however, a disastrous ending which is also familiar to you. There were Indians on the

opposite side of the river and on an island below the falls. They crossed and unexpectedly attacked the troops, as they were about to mount for their return home.

The English became much scattered in the retreat, many not knowing the way, and becoming lost in the woods. Captain Turner was killed at Green River, and thirty-eight English slain, all but one being killed on the retreat.

Captain Holyoke took command when Turner fell. He was only twenty-eight years old, but, like Hope Atherton, the stress of that campaign broke his health and he died before the next winter. Neither he nor Atherton was wounded. A few of the men wandered about for two or three days. Jonathan Wells of Hadley was wounded, and after much suffering reached Hatfield on Sunday. Rev. Hope Atherton, after roving here and there without food, returned at noon on Monday.

There is a disagreement in the records as to whether Hope Atherton came into Hadley or Hatfield. A letter signed by Aaron Cook and others, to the authorities at Hartford, states clearly that he came into Hadley at about noon on Monday.<sup>1</sup> This statement seems improbable. If he did do so he must have crossed the Connecticut River, which was both unnecessary and difficult. The next Sunday, May 28, he said in his sermon:—"In the hurry and confusion of the retreat I was separated from the army. The night following, I wandered up and down, but none discovered me. The next day I tendered myself

<sup>1</sup> Judd's *Hadley*, p. 173.

to the enemy as a prisoner, but, notwithstanding I offered myself to them, they accepted not my offer. When I spoke they answered not; when I moved toward them they fled. Finding that they would not accept me as prisoner, I determined to take the course of the river, and if possible find my way home; and after several days of hunger, fatigue and danger, I reached Hatfield."

After his sermon, on the same day, he read a written statement, giving more completely his experiences before reaching his home, as follows:—

"Hope Atherton desires this congregation and all people that shall hear of the Lord's dealings with him to praise and give thanks to God for a series of remarkable deliverances wrought for him. The passages of divine providence (being considered together) make up a complete temporal salvation. I have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and both the rod and staff of God delivered me. A particular relation of extreme sufferings that I have undergone, & signal escapes that the Lord hath made way for, I make openly, that glory may be given to him for his works that have been wonderful in themselves and marvelous in mine eyes, & will be so in the eyes of all whose hearts are prepared to believe what I shall relate. On the morning (May 19, 1676) that followed the night in which I went out against the enemy with others, I was in eminent danger through an instrument of death: a gun was discharged against me at a small distance, the Lord diverted the bullet so that no harm was done me. When I was separated from the army, none pursued

after me, as if God had given the heathen a charge, saying, let him alone he shall have his life for a prey. The night following I wandered up and down among the dwelling places of our enemies; but none of them espied me. Sleep fell upon their eyes, and slumbering upon their eyelids. Their dogs moved not their tongues. The next day I was encompassed with enemies, unto whom I tendered myself a captive. The Providence of God seemed to require me so to do. No way appeared to escape, and I had been a long time without food. They accepted not the tender which I made, when I spake, they answered not, when I moved toward them they moved away from me. I expected they would have laid hands upon me, but they did not. Understanding that this seems strange and incredible unto some, I have considered whether I was not deceived; and after consideration of all things, I cannot find sufficient grounds to alter my thoughts. If any have reason to judge otherwise than myself, who am less than the least in the Kingdom of God, I desire them to intimate what their reason is. When I have mused, that which hath cast my thoughts according to the report I first made, is that it tends to the Glory of God, in no small measure; if it were so as I believe it was, that I was encompassed with cruel and unmerciful enemies; & they were restrained by the hand of God from doing the least injury to me. This evidenceth that the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men, & doeth whatever pleaseth him amongst them. Enemies cannot do what they will, but are subservient to over-ruling providence of God. God always can and sometimes

doth set bounds unto the wrath of man. On the same day, which was the last day of the week not long before the sun did set, I declared with submission that I would go to the Indian habitations. I spoke such language as I thought they understood. Accordingly I endeavored; but God, whose thoughts were higher than my thoughts, prevented me, by his good providence I was carried beside the path I intended to walk in, & brought to the sides of the great river, which was a good guide unto me. The most observable passage of providence was on the Sabbath day morning. Having entered upon a plain, I saw two or three spies, who I (at first) thought they had a glance upon me. Wherefore I turned aside and lay down. They climbed up into a tree to spie. Then my soul secretly begged of God, that he would put it into their hearts to go away. I waited patiently and it was not long ere they went away. Then I took that course which I thought best according to the wisdom that God had given me.

Two things I must not pass over that are matter of thanksgiving unto God; the first is that when my strength was far spent, I passed through deep waters & they overflowed me not, according to those gracious words of Isa. 43, 2; the second is that I subsisted the space of three days & part of the fourth without ordinary food. I thought upon those words "Man liveth not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." I think not too much to say, that should you & I be silent & not set forth the praises of God thro' Jesus Christ, that the stones and beams of our houses would sing

hallelujah. I am not conscious to myself that I have exceeded in speech. If I have spoken beyond what is convenient, I know it not. I leave these lines as an orphan, and shall rejoice to hear that it finds foster Fathers & Mothers. However it fare amongst men, yet if it find acceptance with God thro' Christ Jesus, I shall have cause to be abundantly satisfied. God's providence hath been so wonderful towards me, not because I have more wisdom than others (Danl. 2, 30) nor because I am more righteous than others; but because it so pleased God.

H. A.

Hatfield, May 24th, 1676." <sup>1</sup>

The truth of his account is confirmed by the statement of Jonathan Wells, that the Indians told him that after the Falls fight, a man with a black coat, and without a hat, came toward them, but they were afraid and ran away, thinking it was the Englishman's God.<sup>2</sup>

A few days later, on Tuesday, May 30, the Indians sought to take revenge for their losses, by making violent attack with seven hundred warriors on the settlement of Hatfield. Twelve houses and a barn were burned, and most of the sheep driven away. To Hope Atherton, after the terrible physical and nervous ordeal of the previous week, this attack, with all its frightful details, must have been a severe shock. Though he lived for more than a year, he never recovered, gradually the end came on, and he died June 8, 1677.

A deed, signed Aug. 13, 1687, by five Indian chiefs,

<sup>1</sup> Sheldon's Hist. Deerfield, pp. 166-8.

<sup>2</sup> Wells' Hatfield, p. 86.



each with a long and unpronounceable name, conveyed lands in the vicinity of Northfield, and was witnessed by Joseph Atherton (only living son of Hope) and Lt. Preserved Clapp, who was of the old Dorchester family. Joseph Atherton was then thirteen years old.<sup>1</sup>

We find that Joseph Atherton became a permanent settler in Deerfield, and was part owner, in 1713, of lot No. 39 on the old street; was selectman in 1715; and that both he and his wife were still members of the Deerfield church in 1733.<sup>2</sup> He died in 1753, and we find his heirs in 1760 are allotted one hundred and sixty-seven acres of certain Deerfield lands, which were then being divided among the proprietors of old Deerfield.

Sixty years after the Falls fight, in 1743, a grant was made by the General Court of a township of land, as near as might be to the scene of the fight, to all that were engaged therein. The list of survivors and descendants, who were then entitled to receive apportionment of this tract of more than six miles square, includes the name of "Joseph Atherton of Deerfield, only son of Hope Atherton." This township, first known as Fall town, later became part of Bernardston, and a writer in 1891 tells us that the name of Atherton was then a familiar one in that region."<sup>3</sup>

Shubal Atherton, grandson of Hope, was living in 1774 on his farm situated on the Green River, about half a mile south of the spot where Eunice Williams

<sup>1</sup> Proceedings P.V.M.A., Vol. 3, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> Deerfield Church Records.

<sup>3</sup> N. E. Hist. Reg., Vol. 41, p. 211.

was killed. He and his two neighbors had their houses enclosed by palisados. But these were not sufficient to save them, and on Aug. 23, 1756, the last band of marauding Indians to attack in Hampshire County came down upon them, and all three of these men gave their lives in defense of their homes.

And so ends this story of Hope Atherton and his times; meagre enough as to details of his own experiences, because of the loss of the records of Hatfield covering almost the entire period of his ministry. But we can feel assured, though life was cut short in the time of his early manhood, that he had stood faithful to life's tasks as they came to him year by year.

And if the story, which it has been attempted here to tell, of the privations which the early settlers were obliged to face, the fortitude and courage which they so often proved, the sufferings they bore, and the measure of success to which they attained, in the planting of a new commonwealth, shall lead us to a higher appreciation of their virtues, and a larger determination to stand true in the performance of duty, in our own day, then the attempt will not have been in vain.