





**EZRA REED**  
**AND**  
**ESTHER EDGERTON**  
  
**Their Life and Ancestry**

**BY**  
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**"As Seen From The Ranks,"**  
**and**  
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TO MY MOTHER  
THIS TRIBUTE TO  
THE MEMORY OF HER ANCESTORS  
IS DEDICATED

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## WHY.

The writer of this brief historical sketch is one of the forty-five grandchildren of Ezra Reed and Esther Edgerton, and beside the historical interest in the subject he has the added personal interest; a something that is of the blood. But no excuse is needed, however imperfectly the work be done, for the effort to save for future generations some knowledge of their ancestry which would otherwise be lost, or at least would not be easily accessible to them.

With this thought in mind, and with the hope that it will stimulate others to add to this nucleus of knowledge, I have here compiled information which has reached me during the lapse of years from various sources, mostly in fragmentary form, concerning the ancestors of this couple. To be intelligently understood it should be conned with the accompanying chart outspread before the reader.

It also occurs to me that as the children of this couple have long since passed away, and I, one of the younger of the grandchildren, have reached my three score and ten, it is time some little tribute should be written of them, and of the beautiful valley where they spent the years of their strength; something if possible which shall form for future generations of their descendants a picture of their life, and of the times in which they lived.

It is fitting, too, that I should leave this as a companion piece with the book already published, "Caleb Benton and Sarah Bishop: Their Ancestors and Their Descendants." Let them be my parting tribute to those whose blood I inherit, as well as my salute to the generations to come.

The view of the Reed homestead shown in the frontispiece is from a recent photograph, showing the house as it appears at the present time. I am indebted to so many for assistance in collecting material that I shall not attempt to name them here, but they all have my hearty thanks for their efficient encouragement.

The Author.







## PART I.

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### ANCESTRY OF EZRA REED.

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#### REED.

Beginning at the top of the chart and taking the names in the order in which they are there shown, the first is Reed. The immigrant Reed ancestor was Captain John Reed, who was born in England in 1633. In the English revolution he was for some time an officer in Cromwell's army. Born and raised in the tumult of that upheaval in behalf of representative government it is not surprising that he caught the full force of its spirit, and at the early age of sixteen he became a soldier, rendering important service to the cause.

A souvenir of this service which his descendants would hold priceless could they now recover it—the sword he wore—was preserved in the family for more than a century, but was finally lost sight of.

All traditions agree that he was eminent for the strong will and high-toned moral character for which Cromwell's officers were renowned. He was from Cornwall, England, and is supposed to have belonged to the large family of Reeds in Dorsetshire, one of whom, Col. John Reed, is mentioned in the parliamentary records as having held the Castle of Pool against the King's army.

It was well known that men who had been prominent in the Cromwell régime found England to be an unsafe place for such as they as soon as the throne was re-established in 1660, and this may have been what decided him to emigrate. Coming to this country in 1660 he settled first at Providence, Rhode Island, where he married Mrs. Ann Derby, a widow who had three children by her first husband, Francis Derby, and she became the mother of John Reed's five children.

He was doubtless a man of considerable means, and in 1684 he removed to Norwalk, Connecticut, having purchased a large tract of land there. In time the locality took its name from his family, and became known as "Reed's Farms." Establishing himself in the western part of the town he built his house on a favorable site a short distance easterly of the Five Mile River, a creek which forms the western boun-

dary of the town. It stood on the north side of the old post road, and nearly two miles from Long Island Sound. The site is nearly four miles west of what is now the city of South Norwalk.

This house was torn down in 1862. In 1899 I found in Darien, a few miles west of there, an aged couple, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Reed, (he a descendant,) who gave me an account of the house, and of its destruction. Its capacious chimney of stone, with its great fireplaces, was so strongly built, and its mortar so excellently compounded, that it was necessary to blast it apart with powder before it could be taken down.

It had evidently been a notable house of its day, but a cheap modern structure stood in its stead when I saw the place. When will people learn that it is cheaper and better to build additions to these old houses for what they need of increased room, and preserve the ancient structures in all their antique grandeur!

This Walter Reed was the last descendant of the name to occupy the Captain John Reed homestead, and when he sold it, which was in or about 1889, he reserved the plot containing the ancestral grave, which was in a field. He and his wife described to me their recollection of the place as it formerly appeared, the grave in former years being marked only by unwrought stones.

Newton (6) Reed, author of "Early History of Amenia," spent considerable time in investigating the history of this ancestor. Through his efforts there was in 1886 a suitable granite tablet erected at the grave, the cost of which was defrayed by some of Captain John Reed's descendants. The grave and monument are on what is now the Samuel Richards Weed place.

Of the life of this ancestor history is not as explicit in some respects as we might wish, but such records and family traditions as we have indicate that the greatness of the man was not a one-sided greatness, but that the unusual age to which he attained was but one indication of a strength which was shared alike by physical, mental and moral faculties. He had been an iconoclast in the English revolution, but now in peace he became a conservator of the social organism, deeming the victories of peace greater than those of war.

One act of his is worth noting in this connection. In this first house he arranged a large upper room, in which he invited the ministers of the neighboring parishes to alternate in holding services, and the tradition still remains that these were the first Christian services held in the neighborhood. Such a record of a time when sectarian narrowness was much more prevalent than it is at the present time indicates a broad and wholesome mind.

After the death of his wife, the date of which is not recorded, John (1)

Reed married again, this time also a widow, a Mrs. Scofield of Stamford, Connecticut. He died in 1730 at the age of ninety-seven, and was buried in his own field, as already related. His family was as follows:

JOHN, married ELIZABETH TUTTLE; Thomas, married Mary Olmstead; William; Mary, married David Tuttle; Abigail, married ——— Crozier.

Elias (3) Reed, (Thomas 2, John 1,) moved to Salisbury, Connecticut, in 1738, being one of the original proprietors of that town, which was organized that year, and the Reeds of Salisbury and Sharon, Connecticut are most of them descended from him.

John (2) Reed, eldest child of John (1), is supposed to have been born in Rhode Island. He married, March 28, 1687, Elizabeth Tuttle, who was born November 19, 1666. He continued to reside in Norwalk, where he appears as a voter in 1694, and he seems to have been a citizen of some importance, for after that his name frequently appears in the records of the courts in Norwalk and Stamford. He studied law, and was admitted to the Bar October 7, 1708, and the records state that he was Attorney for the Crown, and Deputy for Norwalk. The inventory of his estate was filed at Fairfield, Connecticut, November 12, 1724, page 1146. He probably died that year. The family of John (2) Reed was as follows:

Ann; John, married Hannah Hanford; Elizabeth, married Jacob Green. Eleazer, married Abigail Tuttle; DANIEL, married ELIZABETH KELLOGG and Susanna Weed; Experience, married Jacob St. John; Samuel, married Sarah Kellogg; William, married Rachel Kellogg; Mehitable, married Samuel Brinsmade; Moses.

Daniel (3) Reed, fifth of John (2) Reed's ten children, was born in Norwalk June 13, 1697, and died there in 1775. He was a man of considerable distinction in the community of Norwalk where he spent his whole life, and was mentioned in some writings as a tall man. Indeed, the Reeds have always been called a tall race.

About the year 1720 he built a substantial house on the farm conveyed to him by his father, about sixty rods northeast of the original house built by John (1) Reed, and a portion of it was standing as late at least as 1882, when it was visited by Newton (6) Reed. It was here that he found many of the records of the Reed family in the keeping of the descendants.

Daniel married, about the year 1719, Elizabeth Kellogg, who became the mother of his eleven children. She was born October 5, 1703, and died April 13, 1764. But he did not remain single long, for on December 13th of that year he was married to Susanna Weed. "Wife Susanna," of this old-age marriage, is mentioned in his will, which was made Feb-

ruary 8, 1774, and probated January 1, 1776. The family of Daniel (3) Reed was as follows:

Daniel, married Mary Bell; Abraham, married Hannah Bell; ELIAKIM, married SARAH RICHARDS; Elizabeth, married Joseph Ambler; Benjamin; Lydia, married ——— Davenport; James, married Joanna Castle; Benjamin, married Bethia Weed; Ezra, married Sarah Kellogg; Joanna, married Stephen Warren; Elijah, married Esther Bates.

“Captain” James Reed, son of Daniel (3), was the first of the Reeds to come to Amenia, New York. He passed through the town in the fall of 1759 as one of a company intended to aid in the capture of Quebec. On the way, however, they were met with the news that they were too late for that service, as the stronghold had been already captured while they were on the way. So they disbanded and strolled leisurely homeward.

On his way home he may have taken dinner at the tavern which stood where the old tavern house now is, in South Amenia, then kept by Daniel Castle, and been as much attracted by the landlord’s daughter as he was by the beautiful valley. Be that as it may, he returned the next spring and secured the girl, and also a farm near there, the farm now the residence of Mr. Walther, on the hill a little north of the Presbyterian Church.

Here they built a house, and raised a family of fourteen children who all grew up and married, and all but one of whom had descendants. James Reed was an officer in the revolution, with the rank of Major, and he was one of the most prominent citizens of the town in his time. There is a fine tribute to him in “Reed-Read Lineage,” a recent book by Mrs. Ella Reed Wright, of Waterbury, Connecticut, who is a most enthusiastic historian of the Reeds.

Eliakim (4) Reed, third of Daniel’s eleven children, (and brother of the James I have mentioned,) was born September 18, 1725, in Norwalk, Connecticut, and he died at Amenia, N. Y., October 28, 1810. He was married June 16, 1748, to Sarah Richards, daughter of Samuel Richards. She was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, June 24, 1727, and died in Amenia, New York, June 8, 1795.

While Eliakim was on a visit to his brother James in Amenia he bought of Isaac Delamater, for “*nine hundred and Thirteen pounds of good and Lawfull money of the Province of New York,*” a farm of two hundred acres. He then returned to Norwalk and sold his farm of forty acres which he owned there, and moved to the new field in 1773, where he soon afterward purchased about forty acres more.

In the settlement of his estate after Eliakim's death this farm was purchased by his son Ezra, the price being as follows: 160 acres at \$30. per acre, and seventy-five acres at \$22.50 per acre; \$6,487.50. After Ezra's death his son, Newton (6) Reed, purchased the farm for ten thousand dollars. After Newton's death his son, Henry Van Dyck (7) Reed, the present occupant, purchased the farm at nine thousand dollars, and on it have been born the ninth generation of Reeds in America.

The family of Eliakim and Sarah (Richards) Reed was as follows: Sarah, married Matthew Fitch; Eliakim, married Rebecca Fitch and Mrs. Breek; Simeon, married Abial Rice; Ruth, married Jeremiah Fuller; Silas, married Bethia Hurd; Samuel; Phineas, married Esther Reed; EZRA, married JEMIMA FITCH and ESTHER EDGERTON; Esther married Jacob Edgerton; Enoch.

Ezra (5) Reed, eighth of Eliakim's ten children, was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, August 3, 1765, and died in Amenia, N. Y., July 31, 1852. He was married, first, February 4, 1787, to Jemima Fitch, who was born February 8, 1763, and died March 7, 1789.

Ezra married, secondly, February 15, 1790, Esther Edgerton, daughter of Simeon and Abiah (Hough) Edgerton. She was born February 8, 1769, probably in Hebron, Connecticut, and died in Amenia, N. Y., September 6, 1852. He had one daughter by his first wife, and four sons and six daughters by his second wife.

## TUTTLE.

William Tuttle, born in 1609, came from Northampton, England, to Boston, Massachusetts, in 1635, in the ship *Planter*. In the passenger list he was booked as "Husbandman," but it appears that he was also classed in another entry as "Merchant." Both he and his wife are supposed to have sprung from the Welsh race. He was accompanied to this country by his wife Elizabeth and his son John.

The family remained in Boston until the spring of 1639, for it is recorded that one of his children was baptized there in April of that year, but he soon after that moved, joining the colony of New Haven at its founding, where his name appears on the Church Covenant, signed in June, 1639.

The town government was definitely organized October 25, 1639. It was at first called "Quinnipiac," the Indian name for the river which there flows into Long Island Sound, but on September 1, 1640, by a formal order of the General Court, the name *New Haven* was adopted.

There were several families of the name Tuttle who came early to New England, but this one seems to have adopted a spelling of the

name quite different from the others. William Tuttle was the great-great-grandson of William Totyl, High Sheriff of Devon, and Lord Mayor of Exeter, a town then second in importance only to London; son of Richard Tottyl and Jean Grafton, a lineal descendant of William the Conqueror and his wife Maude, (or Matilda,) grand-daughter of Robert, King of France, 1031.

In his new home William Tuttle had his homestead in the "Yorkshire Quarter," where Yale College afterward had its first college building. It was the only land owned by the college during the first thirty years in which it was located at New Haven. It is at the southeast corner of the college campus, at the corner of Chapel and College Streets. At this home he spent the remainder of his days. He died in June, 1673, and his wife, who was born in 1612, died there in December, 1684. Their dust lies underneath the sod of the "Old Green," but its exact location is not known.

In his New Haven home William Tuttle at once took first rank, socially and otherwise. This colony was founded on rank and wealth, and these distinctions extended even into their church relations. In assigning seats in church the committee which had that duty to perform was instructed to observe certain rules of precedence.

The first of these was "Dignity of Descent;" second, "Place of Public Trust;" third, "Pious Disposition;" fourth, "Estate;" fifth, "Peculiar serviceableness of any kind." The first seating recorded was in 1645, and "Mr." Tuttle (a title of honor indicating good family and estate) was given, with two others, the first cross-seat, near the pulpit and highest in dignity. The women sat by themselves.

In managing the affairs of the colony he took a leading part. In 1640 he was a commissioner to decide upon the value of lands, and in 1644 he was "fence viewer." In 1646 he was road commissioner, and was prominent in the settlement of boundary disputes, while his name often appears as one of the jurors, and the title of "Mr." is carefully preserved in all the records of these offices.

In 1651 he was one of the leaders in the "Delaware Expedition," which was an attempt to retain the right, against the Dutch, to an English settlement in New Jersey; but the expedition proved to be a failure. This however does not seem to have injured his prestige. "He was the equal socially of any of the colonists; a man of courage, enterprise, intelligence, probity and piety."

The family of William and Elizabeth Tuttle numbered twelve children, and they seem to have inherited from somewhere a weird vein of mingled saintliness, insanity, genius and criminal tendencies; erratic

temperaments; and one wonders that such diverse characters could have sprung from the same ancestry.

One son was found guilty of slaying his sister, and was convicted and executed, and a daughter was found guilty of killing her own son, but through the confusion existing at that time she escaped the penalty of the law.

Another daughter married Richard Edwards, a merchant and lawyer, who later obtained a divorce from her on the grounds of her insanity and immorality, for there were two of her children that he refused to recognize as his own. Yet this woman became the ancestor of the saintly Rev. Timothy Edwards, who, says the historian, had ten daughters, "every one of which has been said to be six feet tall, making sixty feet of daughters, all of them being strong in mind!"

She was also the ancestor of the renowned Rev. Jonathan Edwards, also Jonathan Edwards of Union College, Presidents Dwight and Woolsey of Yale College, and President Dwight, Jr., of Hamilton College, (and possibly a few more college presidents,) as well as of the profligate and licentious Pierpont Edwards and Aaron Burr. If any descendant imagines he is inspired or insane, or otherwise abnormal, he can have the satisfaction of having this family to blame it on.

It is a curious co-incidence that William Wilcoxson, one of the ancestors of William A. Benton, also came in the ship *Planter*, though the descendants of these two fellow-passengers lived in Connecticut two centuries before the lines joined in marriage.

John (2) Tuttle was the eldest child of William. He was born in England in 1631, and died in Connecticut November 12, 1683. His estate was inventoried at seventy-nine pounds, and administration was granted to his sons John and Samuel; other heirs to have their share as they came of age.

There is no record to hint that John had any of those peculiar tendencies which seemed to so haunt the rest of the family. Psychologists may ponder on the possible effects of the notorious American climate, and the fact that John was born "at home," in England. On November 8, 1653, he was married to Kattareen Lane, daughter of John and Kattareen Lane. Their daughter, Elizabeth Tuttle, who was born November 19, 1666, was married March 28, 1687, to John (2) Reed.

## LANE.

The first actual record I find of John Lane is that he came from Wethersfield to Milford, Connecticut, with his wife Kattareen, in 1639. Milford lies on Lond Island Sound, next east of the Housatonic River,



and the town was organized in that year, as will be shown later, by a branch of the New Haven colonists. Barber has the following to say regarding its settlement:

"The original settlers were mostly from the counties of Essex and York. [England.] A number of them came to New England with Messrs. Eaton and Davenport's Company, and remained with them at New Haven during the year 1638. Their pastor, Mr. Peter Prudden, (from Edgeton, Yorkshire,) preached with the people of Wethersfield, who at that time had no minister, while his congregation were making preparation to commence the settlement. [At Milford.] While he officiated there a number became so attached to him, that when he left they accompanied him, and incorporated with his church. These were before from Watertown, Massachusetts, and were a part of Sir Richard Saltonstall's Company."

Then follows a list of the forty-four first planters, which is recorded on the first page of the first book of the Milford records, John Lane being twenty-ninth on the list, which is headed as follows:

*November 20th, 1639.—Those persons whose names are hereunder written, are allowed to be Free Planters, having for Ye present, liberty to act in Ye choyce of public officers, for Ye carrying on of public affyres in this plantation.*

Following this there is another list of heads of families who were permitted to join them, but as they were not church members they could not be "Free Planters," and take part in the civil government. Our early colonists believed most earnestly in representative government, but at the same time were very particular to so adjust matters that "representative government" with them should represent church members only.

From these records we see that John Lane was a "Free Planter," and hence a member of the church, and that he and his wife came from Wethersfield and joined the Milford colony at its founding, and hence we infer—that favorite phrase with historians—"hence we infer" that he came with Sir Richard Saltinstall's company to Boston and Watertown in the first place, going from there to Wethersfield, and thence, as we have seen, to Milford.

His wife, Kattareen, must have died before 1662, for in that year he married Mary, widow of Edward Camp of New Haven, but no children are recorded of this marriage. His will was executed September 10, 1669, and he must have died immediately after making it, for the inventory of his estate was taken six days after the date of the will. The will mentions Samuel, Edward and Mary Camp, children of his



second wife by her first husband. His estate amounted to 441 pounds, 15 shillings, and one penny.

Kattareen, daughter of John and Kattareen Lane, was married, November 8, 1653, to John (2) Tuttle.

### KELLOGG.

Daniel Kellogg was a resident of Norwalk, Connecticut, at an earlier date than was Captain John Reed, though he is not recorded among the first settlers, nor yet among those who came to the town in 1651. Some portions of the present town were purchased of the Indians as early as 1640, the price being, as stated in the deed, "8 fathom wampum, 6 coats, 10 hatchets, 10 hoes, 10 knives, 10 scizers, 10 juseharps, 10 fathom tobacco, 3 kettles, 3 hands-about, and 10 looking-glasses." The items suggest that perhaps the trade was made with ten Indians.

The bounds of the tract thus purchased are described in the deed as follows:—*from Norwalk river to Sauhatuck river, from sea, Indian one day walk into the country.* That is to say, the northern boundary of the town was to be as far to the northward from the sea as an Indian could walk in one day, and this gave the town its name; Norwalk, from "*north walk.*"

It was not until 1649 that the town was formally settled, and then only by about twenty families, and not until 1653 did the General Court invest them with a legal standing as a town. Daniel Kellogg probably arrived soon after that, for he appears on record in 1655, in which year he was married to Bridget<sup>2</sup> Bouton. It is recorded that this was his second marriage, but I have no record of his first. His name appears in the list of Freemen, made in Norwalk October 13, 1669, the first list of which there is preserved a record.

What country he came from, the name of the ship in which he came, the place at which he first arrived, and the name of his first wife, these are matters of which I have not learned. If he was famous, or even an "eminent citizen," the historians have failed to record it.

Joseph (2) Kellogg, son of Daniel (1), was born in Norwalk, Connecticut in 1678, and died there in 1721. November 25, 1702, he was married to Sarah (4) Plumb of Milford, daughter of John (3) Plumb.

Elizabeth (3) Kellogg, daughter of Joseph (2), was born October 5, 1703, and when she was sixteen years old she became the wife of Daniel (3) Reed. She died April 13, 1764. Elizabeth Kellogg's sisters, Sarah and Rachel, married Daniel Reed's brothers, Samuel and William, as shown in the Reed record.

## BOUTON.

John (1) Bouton, born in 1615, father of Daniel Kellogg's wife, was, it is supposed, the son of Count Nicholas Bouton of France. John was a Huguenot who fled to England at the time of the great religious persecution in France. When England was offering to send emigrants to America on condition that they swear allegiance to the Crown, John Bouton embarked from Gravesend, England, on the Barque *Assurance*, in July, 1635, and landed in Boston in December of that year, aged twenty years. Whether he was married before his coming to this country is not known.

The brief record I have states that he married, first, Joan Turney. He lived for a time in Boston, and in Watertown (which is near Boston), but went early to Hartford. Whether he was living in Hartford in 1655, at the time of the marriage of his daughter, Bridget (2) Bouton, to Daniel Kellogg, does not appear by the records. This family gives the only strain of French blood yet found in the ancestry.

## PLUMB.

This name holds the remarkable distinction that it appears in the records with seventeen different spellings, which is to be accounted for by the fact that it is a very ancient name, and has passed through the transformations that have always come to old English names.

The family is of Norman origin, and the first record of it is found on the "Great Roll of Normandy," in 1180, during the reign of Henry II of England, and the next in 1195, during Richard's reign. It seems probable that they came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066, but this is conjecture.

In England the family was of the nobility. They lived in Castles and Halls, and had Coats of Arms. The immediate progenitors of the American branch of the Plumb family lived in Essex for many generations further back than these records begin.

The record of the English family begins with John (1) Plumbe, who was born about 1505, and was buried October 1, 1586. His wife's name was Elizabeth, and they had three sons and four daughters.

Robert (2) Plume, the eldest son of John (1), owned very large estates, and the records show that it was a family of large land-owners. He was born about the year 1550, and died May 18, 1633. He married Elizabeth Purcas, and they had nine children. When about sixty years of age he married, secondly, Etheldred Fuller, but no children are recorded of this marriage.

Their second child,—and eldest son,—Robert (3) Plume, supposed to have been born about 1558, was buried August 14, 1628. According to the English law of primogeniture he inherited his father's large landed estates. He married Grace Crackbone, of Spaynes Hall, Great Yeldham, (or "Yeldham Magna," as it was sometimes recorded,) and they had eight children. Grace, his wife, died in 1615.

Their second son (third child), John (4) Plume, is the *John (1) Plumb* of the American registry. He was born July 28, 1594, and when about twenty-two years old was married to Dorothy ———. They resided after marriage at Ridgewell Hall, where he was reported by the King's Heralds at the visitation of Essex in 1634.

His eldest brother, Robert, inherited the bulk of his father's large estate, John receiving only a small estate with Ridgewell Hall, in Essex, England. John (1) Plumb had nine children, and they were all born there, with the exception of the youngest, Dorcas, the record of their baptism appearing in the records of Ridgewell Parish.

In 1635 he came with his wife and family to America, settling first at Watertown, Massachusetts. But he soon migrated to Wethersfield, Connecticut, being one of the first permanent settlers in that state. He probably went there in the autumn of the year of his coming to this country, anticipating by half a year the Rev. Thomas Hooker's famous removal to Hartford, which is four miles up the river from Wethersfield, for he is found on record at the latter place January 7, 1636.

In his Connecticut home he immediately became an important member of the new colony. He was magistrate, and was Deputy to the General Court, February 9, 1637, to 1642. He must have had wide interests, for it is recorded that he had a warehouse burned at Saybrook, (at the mouth of the Connecticut River,) during the Pequot War of 1637. In that year he served as one of Captain Mason's company of seventy-seven men in the battle on Pequot Hill, in Groton, Connecticut, near New London, where they defeated and nearly exterminated the Pequot Indians, and for his important services in that war he received a grant of land from the state.

He seems to have had a surplus of energy and taken an active part in all sorts of public affairs, once even preferring charges against the minister. But this time he got the worst of it, for, failing to produce the necessary evidence, he was subjected to a fine.

He was candidate for the office of Assistant in 1643, but was defeated at election. July 2, 1644, he sold his lands at Wethersfield, there being thirteen parcels, from two acres to 204 acres in size, and with it two dwellings, and that year removed to Branford, Connecticut, which place was settled at that time, mostly by people from Wethersfield. This

town, of which a further account is given in Part II, was at first known by its Indian name, "Totokett," but afterward formally adopted the name Branford. It is on the coast, a few miles eastward from New Haven. Here he was appointed Town Clerk in 1645, and his death, which occurred in 1648, is the first death recorded in the town records.

Robert (2) Plumb, eldest child of John (1), born at Ridgewell Hall, England, December 30, 1617, accompanied his father to Watertown, Massachusetts, and to Wethersfield, Connecticut, but upon coming of age he struck out for himself, moving to Milford, Connecticut, in 1639, the year in which the town was settled, and joined himself with the fortunes of that new colony.

He was probably a companion of John Lane, already spoken of, but he was not a member of the church and hence could not be a Free Planter, as Lane was. But his name appears as the first one in a list following, of those who were planters but were not permitted to take part in governing the new colony. January 9, 1642, he was married to Mary (2) Baldwin, daughter of Sylvester and Sarah (Bryan) Baldwin. He died May 12, 1655.

Deacon John (3) Plumb, son of Robert (2), was born August 12, 1646, and died in March, 1728. He was born, baptised, died and was buried, at Milford, where he was the owner of much land and was an influential citizen. November 24, 1668, he was married to Elizabeth (2) Norton, daughter of John (1) and Dorothea Norton. Their daughter, Sarah (4) Plumb, baptised April 5, 1675, married, November 25, 1702, Joseph (2) Kellogg. She died August 17, 1712.

## BALDWIN.

This family was settled at Dundridge and vicinity, in the parish of Aston Clifton, Bucks County, England, for centuries. Sylvester (1) Baldwin, the emigrant, son of Sylvester and Jane (Willis) Baldwin, of Aston Clifton, married Sarah Bryan. It is supposed she was a sister or other near relative of Alexander Bryan, who was baptised at Aylesbury, September 29, 1602, and later emigrated to Connecticut.

With his wife and nine children Sylvester Baldwin embarked for this country in 1638 on the ship *Martin*, but died on shipboard July 21st. This ship carried a company for the settlement of New Haven, but it went first to Boston before proceeding, and his will was probated there.

They were part of the Eaton and Davenport company which made a beginning of the settlement of New Haven that year, and Mrs. Baldwin and her family took up their residence there, she becoming proprietor

of a lot in the "Herefordshire Quarter," one of the eight squares that surrounded the market place in the first plot of the town.

She was recorded in 1643 as "one of the wealthiest proprietors." But the Herefordshire emigrants seem to have been somewhat clannish, and during the very first winter at New Haven they planned to establish a new plantation of their own. This movement resulted in the planting of the new town of Milford, (already mentioned in the record of the Lane family,) a few miles to the westward, the new town thus being in one sense a child of New Haven.

Mrs. Sarah Baldwin joined the party which founded Milford, and her name, with those of several others of the ancestors described, is inscribed on the coping-stones of the beautiful Memorial Bridge built in that town as a memorial of its founders.

Four of her sons, Richard, Nathaniel, Joseph and John, perhaps all that were old enough to take part, are mentioned among the first settlers, so probably her whole family joined in the secession from the parent colony. They went about the enterprise in the thorough-going English method of doing things, organizing the whole thing before they started, so that upon their arrival at the new ground, where some of the houses had been erected in advance of their moving, the whole machinery of civic and religious organization was ready to set up in working order.

The town was at first called by its Indian name, "Wepowaug," but on November 24, 1640, "with common consent and general vote of the freemen," the plantation was christened *Milford*, in commemoration of the town of this name in their native England.

In 1640, the next year after taking up her residence in Milford, Mrs. Sarah (Bryan) Baldwin was married to Captain John Astwood, she being his second wife. No children are recorded of this marriage. Captain Astwood was a prominent citizen, sometimes serving as Representative, and sometimes as Assistant, and in 1653 as Commissioner of the United Colonies. As agent for the colonies he went to England in 1654 to transact business in their behalf, but did not live to return, as he died in London. She died at Milford in 1669.

Mary (2) Baldwin, daughter of Sylvester (1), was baptized in England, February 19, 1625-26, and died in Connecticut February 1, 1707-8. She was twice married; first January 9, 1642, to Robert (2) Plumb, and he was the father of her children. Her husband died in 1655, and twenty years later she was married to William East.

In her widowhood she seems to have become somewhat—well, what we may call "prudent," and previous to this second marriage she bound her fiancé with an iron-clad marriage contract, by which she would make

sure of his property, whether he married her or not, and then had it recorded in the town records of Milford, where it may still be read.

It is as follows:

*Know all men by these presents, That I, William East of Milford, in Ye County of new-haven, in the Colony of Connecticut in New England, Do upon Ye Contract of marriage with mary Plume of the same Town, Widdow, give, bind and make over my dwelling hous and homlott, and all my Land both arrable and meadow ground within Ye bounds of Milford; And I do Further Ingage that the Sd mary Plume and her heirs shall quietly and peaceably enjoy all and Singular the premises above Sd with the Barne and outhouses forever after my decease, or Two hundred pound which she pleaseth, without any lett or mollostacon from any person, persons, from, by, or under me Ye shall lay Claime thereunto: The above Sd premises I Do make over unto Ye Sd mary as a Dowrie or Jointure upon the Anot. aforesd, and this to stand in force to all intents and purposes immediately upon the Confumation of marriage, or if it please God to take me away by death before marriage, yet this to stand in full power, force and vertue: Further I, the Sd William East, doe hereby promise and Engage not to Claime any interrest in any of her Estate either reall or personall (by vertue of her interrest) But do leave Ye same fully, and whoely to herself to dispose when and as She Pleaseth. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale this 4th day of January 1675.*

*William East.*

*Signed and delivered in presence of us*

*Daniel Buckingham.*

*Samuel East.*

In behalf of this marriage contract it is to be said that his children by his first marriage had died, and he was without descendants; so why shouldn't he give his property to her if he wished to!

## NORTON.

I am indebted to "Fifty Puritan Ancestors," published in 1902 by Elizabeth Todd Nash, for the following account of the English ancestry of the Norton family. The English ancestral line of John Norton of Branford, and Thomas Norton of Guilford, Connecticut, is given in

"Descendants of Charles and Thomas Norton of Guilford, Connecticut," Part II, by Albert B. Norton, published in 1855, and is largely drawn from a chart of the Nortons of Sharpenhaw, Bedfordshire, England.

The authorship of the chart, which is dated 1632, is not certainly known, but it is believed to be authentic, and it is supposed that it was compiled by Rev. Jonathan Norton previous to his emigration to America. It is stated in the chart that much of the data was obtained from the public documents in the Office of "Arms," and the remainder from private and public records of those concerned.

Professor Andrew O. Norton of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who died in 1853, (a descendant of William Norton,) had this chart in his possession, and in 1841 Lewis M. Norton, of Goshen, Connecticut, copied a portion of it.

This chart represents "Norville" to have been derived from the French term, "nord ville," (north town,) and that the name by easy transitions became "Norton." According to this authority John (1) Norton, the emigrant to America, was John (14) of the English records. The English generations given are as follows:

No. 1. Le Sr. de Norville, came into England in September, 1066, from France with William the Conqueror. He married into the family of Valois.

No. 2. Sr. de Norville, married into the Barr family.

No. 3. Sr. de Norville, married Dalba-Monte.

No. 4. Sr. de Norville, married Auctina, daughter of Dewitt, of Rugby.

No. 5. Sr. de Norville, married Joricia, daughter of Daupre.

No. 6. Sr. de Norville, alias Norton, married the daughter of Sir John Hedoroke.

No. 7. Sr. de Norville, alias Norton, married the daughter of Mr. Bassington.

No. 8. Sir John Norton, alias Norville, married Anne, daughter of Lord Grey, of Ruthm.

No. 9. Jonathan Norton, of Sharpenhaw, Bedfordshire.

No. 10. Jonathan Norton, Jr., of Sharpenhaw, married, for second wife, Jane, daughter of Jonathan Cooper.

No. 11. Richard Norton, fifth child of Jonathan (10), married Margery Wingar, of Sharpenhaw.

No. 12. William Norton, married as first wife, Margaret, daughter of William Harnesne; married, secondly, Dencia Chemlsbey, daughter of Richard Chemlsbey.

No. 13. Richard Norton, second child of William by his second wife, married Ellen Rowley, of Sharpenhaw, and removed from that



place to London, where John, the third of his five children, was born. He became the John (1) Norton of the American line.

While still a youth he emigrated from London to Connecticut and settled in the town of Branford, probably at its founding, for his name appears several times on the first page of the town records, dated July 7, 1646.

He seems to have looked around among the colonies for an advantageous place in which to settle, and the records show that he owned lands in Branford, and that in 1659 he purchased land in Hartford, from Jasper Gunn. But in that same year he moved to Farmington, which is a few miles westward from Hartford, though he did not sell his land in the latter place until 1664. He joined the church at Farmington in October 1661, and resided there until his death, which occurred November 5, 1709. He was one of the eighty-four proprietors in the first division of lands in Farmington.

John (1) Norton was three times married, his first wife's name being Dorothea (or Dorothy). She was buried at Branford, January 24, 1652-53, leaving Elizabeth and two other young daughters, all born in Branford, and a son John, who died in 1657. His second wife was named Elizabeth. She died in Branford November 6, 1657, and she also left a son John. His third wife was Elizabeth Clark, and she died at Farmington November 8, 1702, leaving two sons, Samuel who died in infancy, and Thomas.

Elizabeth (2) Norton, eldest child of John (1) by his first wife, was born in 1645. On November 24, 1668, she was married to John (3) Plumb.

## RICHARDS.

Samuel Richards was born in England in 1685, and he died in Norwalk, Connecticut, in February, 1761. In his youth he enlisted in the English army, with the result that he was sent to this country with his troop during the Queen Ann War. He served to the completion of the time for which he had enlisted, and asked for his discharge while in New York, but being refused he ran away with two companions while being sent to Canada in the dead of winter.

His companions both perished in the wilderness, but he succeeded in reaching Newport, Rhode Island, whence he set sail for the West Indies. He soon returned however, and after some further wanderings finally settled in Norwalk, Connecticut, where he hired to a tailor, prospered, and in time became a partner in the business.



In 1725 he received a letter from his sister Sarah in England, who was lately married, acquainting him of the death of his mother about 1715, of his father about 1717, of his grandmother in 1718, and of his brother Moses in Ireland about 1719. It also speaks of the marriage of his brother James, and of the apprenticeship of his youngest brother at Walsall.

This letter, lately in possession of Miss Diana Richards, was dated August 8, 1725, at Litchfield, in the County of Stafford, 110 miles N. W. of London, and adjacent to Walsall, eight miles N. N. W. of Birmingham, England. The letter implies that her brother Samuel was familiar with the geography of Staffordshire, and that Litchfield had been his former home.

From this letter it may also be inferred that Samuel was the eldest of the family, and that he would have been the heir had an entailed estate, hitherto enjoyed by a collateral branch of the race, fallen to a descendant of his father. However this may have been it is certain that in 1760 Samuel Richards had gained such intelligence of a claim in England as determined him, at the age of seventy-five, in company with his son, to go to England and prosecute it. They made every preparation to embark at New York in April, 1761, and had engaged passage, but he suddenly died in the February preceding.

This event delayed the enterprise; one hindrance succeeded another, until the war of the revolution came on, producing despair which was followed by forgetfulness, with the final result that no steps were ever taken to recover this property to the family. English estates have sometimes been recovered after centuries of illegal possession, and possibly this claim is still valid and easy of investigation.

Tradition asserts that Samuel Richards was eminently Saxon in outward appearance, as well as in mental and moral traits. He seems to have enjoyed some material prosperity, and the records of the deeds show that he purchased at various times considerable land in the vicinity of the Captain John (1) Reed homestead.

Samuel (1) Richards was married March 4, 1714, to Elizabeth, daughter of John Latham, by whom he had five sons and five daughters, all of whom married. Late in life he committed matrimony again, marrying a widow, Mrs. Abigail Peck.

His will was presented for probate December 16, 1762, and it names his five sons as executors. In the uncertainty as to what a woman had a right to claim in those days he thoughtfully willed his wife "all the household furniture she brought with her when I married her," and wisely provided also that she should have house-room and comfort in her old age.

Sarah (2) Richards, born in Norwalk, Connecticut, June 24, 1727, died June 8, 1795, in Amenia, N. Y., sixth child of Samuel and Elizabeth (Latham) Richards, was married June 16, 1748, to Eliakim (4) Reed. He was born September 18, 1725, in Norwalk, Connecticut, and died in Amenia, New York, October 28, 1810.

### LATHAM.

That Samuel Richards' wife Elizabeth was the daughter of John Latham, Esq., of Norwalk, Connecticut, is the only proven record I have of her ancestry. There was a John Latham who died in New London, Connecticut, about 1684. He is supposed to have been the third son of Cary Latham who is said to have had seven sons. This may have been the John Latham who was the father of Elizabeth, wife of Samuel Richards.

Cary Latham's wife was Elizabeth, daughter of John Masters, and widow of Edward Lockwood. Cary was a prominent resident of New London, where he was Selectman for sixteen years, and was six times Deputy to the General Court at Hartford. He was the owner of a large amount of land in and about New London. I have omitted his name from the chart, as his connection with our ancestry lacks proof.

## PART II.

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### ANCESTRY OF ESTHER EDGERTON.

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#### EDGERTON.

The first person of the name Edgerton who came to this country was John, spelling his name "Egerton." He arrived in Saybrook, Connecticut, at the mouth of the Connecticut River, in 1632, under twenty-one years of age. Turning to the English records we find that John *Egerton*, Earl of Bridgewater, had four sons at that time, the eldest of whom died soon after, the title and estate devolving on the second son, who was probably the above "John." Some plausibility is given to this theory by the fact that Saybrook was settled by scions of British aristocracy. Richard may have been a younger son of John, but this is guesswork.

Richard Edgerton is the oldest authoritative ancestor of the Edgerton family in this country, for, as far as has been learned, at his death he left no brother who had descendants. It was probably with him that the change in the spelling of the name began.

In 1659 thirty-five men, some from New London, but most of them inhabitants of Saybrook, Connecticut, purchased of the Indians nine miles square where the present town of Norwich is, and moved there and founded the town. Richard (I) Edgerton was one of these thirty-five first proprietors of Norwich.

The enterprise of organizing this town, at first called by its Indian name, "Mohegan," was sanctioned by the General Court in 1659, and the ground was surveyed and a deed obtained from the Indians that year, but the general removal to their new homes by the proprietors was not until 1660. It was destined to be the dwelling place of four generations of Edgertons, as well as of several others of the ancestors to whom I am introducing my readers.

Its situation is at the head of the Thames River, which is also the head of tidewater. At this point, to which place the water is navigable, the Yantic River flows in from the northwest, while the larger and more quiet-flowing Shetucket joins it from the northeast, and the tract pur-

chased from the Indians included the junction of these two rivers, which here form the head of the Thames River. It was the stronghold of the Mohegan tribe of Indians, and included many scenes of bloody conflicts between them and their Indian enemies. But Uncas, the Mohegan chief, retained friendly relations with the whites, and in their turn they protected him from his foes of his own race.

The name *Norwich* was given the place about the year 1662, and in some old deeds it is recorded as "New Norwich," the name having been bestowed in honor of Norwich, England, from which place it is supposed some of the first settlers came.

The original meaning of the term renders its application in this case peculiarly appropriate. In the ancient Saxon tongue it signified *North Castle*, and the formidable piles of rocks found here might easily suggest the idea of towers and battlements. It was also a pushing of the settlements to the northward, making this new town most literally a "north castle." Northward from here there was no settlement of white people between that and Canada.

Mrs. Sigourney, the celebrated writer, was a native of this place, and she picturesquely describes it as "like a citadel, guarded by parapets of rocks, and embosomed in an amphitheatre of hills, whose summits mark the horizon line with a waving line of forest green."

The organizers of Norwich followed the early custom of New England pioneers, a custom probably necessitated by frontier conditions, settling in a compact village. They also clung to the ancient English custom of setting off a "common ground," in which every one should have an equal right. Two of these open spaces were set apart in Norwich, one of which is still known as "The Green." The other public plot was at Bean Hill, (afterward called "Westville,") about a mile distant from the first. Both these plots still retain their original shapes and dimensions, for in 1729 the proprietors voted that they "shall be, and remain to be, and lye common for public use for the whole town forever, without alteration."

One of the first acts of the proprietors after setting off the village greens was to lay out a highway and allot to each family a "home lott." Most of these home lots touched the Yantic River, and some crossed it, including land on the other side. Subsequently other divisions of land were made; one in 1661 and another in 1663, and again from time to time; with the result that the second generation of farmers found themselves struggling with detached fragments of land scattered for miles in many directions. Even as late as November 13, 1732, there was still undivided land held in common by the "Proprietors of Norwich," now of the second and third generations.

Richard Edgerton, as one of the first proprietors, was granted a home lot which consisted of "Six acres more or less, abutting on land of Thomas Post on the southeast, abutting on the river on the southwest 10 rods & 10 feet, abutting on the highway 12 rods and 12 feet. Laid out November, 1659." More pieces were assigned to him in other divisions, the "Book of Grants" at Norwich containing records of nine of them.

It is not certain when or where Richard (1) Edgerton was born, but it was probably in England. He was married at Saybrook, April 7, 1653, to Mary Sylvester, the record of their marriage appearing at Saybrook, but more fully in the Norwich records, and this is the first actual record of him that we find.

On May 14, 1668, he and John Post were admitted as Freemen of the Colony of Connecticut, and in a roll made in the following year his name appears as one of the twenty-five Freeman who had been admitted in Norwich up to that time. Although not a particularly prominent citizen he seems to have been considered trustworthy and reliable, for he bore his part in public service, being Townsman (now called "Selectman") in 1678, and Constable in 1680.

He died at Norwich in March, 1692, and his will, with the inventory of his estate, was probated at a County Court holden at New London June 7, 1692. The Probate Court at Norwich was not erected until 1748. The will itself can not be found, and it is only by brief notices in the land deeds that occasionally a reference shows how some of the land was willed.

A memorandum on the town records tells us that "The Towne hath purchased a burying place of Thomas Post—in the home lott of said Post—towards the rear of his lot," etc. As this was next door to Richard Edgerton's there can be no doubt that he was interred in this burial place. Such old stones as were there have long ago disappeared, but a monument erected on the plot to the founders of Norwich marks the site of the oldest burial place in the town. On this monument are inscribed the names of the thirty-five settlers, and the name of Richard Edgerton appears among them.

Of his nine children, three daughters were born at Saybrook, and the other six at Norwich, where their births are recorded. The following is the record of his family:

Mary; Elizabeth; Hannah, (or Anna,) perhaps married Thomas Willey of Colchester; John, married Mary Reynolds; RICHARD, married ELIZABETH SCUDDER; Sarah, married Joseph Reynolds; Samuel, married Alice Ripley; Lydia, married Nathaniel Backus; Joseph married Experience Pratt.

Richard (2) Edgerton, second son and fifth child of Richard (1) and Mary (Sylvester) Edgerton, was born at Norwich, Connecticut, March 10, 1665, and died there June 29, 1729. On January 4, 1691, he was married to Elizabeth Scudder, who was born in 1667, and who died at the home of her son Jacob, in that part of Norwich which is now Bozrah, December 20, 1762, seventy years after her marriage. The church at that place recorded the death as that of "Old Mrs. Edgerton, age 95." Bozrah was sometimes spoken of as "New Concord." It was incorporated as a town in 1786.

Although not born until after the first settlement of the town Richard (2) was not thereby debarred from a share of the land, for at some time, probably about the time of his marriage, the proprietors granted him his "home lott two acres more or less abutting upon the street 9 rods, abutting on land of Samuel Griswold  $8\frac{1}{2}$  rods, being 38 rods in length." This home lot lay facing the open space at Bean Hill, a mile or so distant from "The Green." From that time his name appears often in the land records, not only by grant, but also by purchase and sale.

His son, Joseph (3), was married in December, 1722, and the next month his father began to assist him to acquire some real estate. One piece was purchased of Hugh Caulkins to be deeded to Joseph, and a few years later Richard (2) deeded him some of his own farm,—*for and in Ye consideration of Ye love goodwill & ffatherly affection That I have and do bare to my well beloved son JOSEPH EDGERTON*, etc.

Richard (2) Edgerton and his wife were members of the First Church of Norwich, where their children were baptized. The records of this church previous to 1700 have been lost, so that the baptisms of only their four youngest children are found there, but the list is completed in the town records.

He died June 29, 1729, and was buried in the old burying ground, not however in the oldest burial place where his father lay, but in a newer one, whose oldest stone now extant bears date of 1706. The gravestone, sunken but still legible, marks his grave near those of the other Edgertons.

In his will, dated March 29th, just three months before his death, he is mentioned as "Yoeman." The instrument names his son Joseph as sole Executor, and bequeaths him the home lot, subject however to certain specified rights of the widow, and also orders his sons Joseph and Jacob to care for their mother, "both in Sickness and Health during her Naturall Life."

This will was proved at New London August 1, 1729, and the inventory was exhibited and ordered recorded. The children of Richard (2) and Elizabeth (Scudder) Edgerton were as follows:

Hannah, married Thomas Bingham; JOSEPH, married ELIZABETH HASKINS; Lydia, died single; Richard, married Hannah Caulkins and Rebecca Wells; Elizabeth, probably married Joseph Peck; Jacob, probably died single; Ann, died single.

Joseph (3) Edgerton, oldest son and second child of Richard (2), was born at Norwich, Connecticut, January 17, 1696-7. He was married December 10, 1722, to Elizabeth Haskins, who was born in Taunton, Massachusetts, and died at Norwich, April 10, 1776.

They "owned the covenant" at the First Church of Norwich on June 6, 1725, and Elizabeth, the wife, was admitted to full communion with the church October 17, 1747. After Joseph's death she made her home with her husband's brother Jacob, in Bozrah, her death being recorded in the church records there, as that of "Old Mrs. Edgerton—widow to J. Edgerton."

Joseph (3) Edgerton was at first called "Joseph Edgerton, Junior," in distinction from his uncle, Joseph (2), and his name so appears in many of the deeds. As has already been noted, he was early assisted by his father to own land, and during his life he seems to have acquired many tracts, "Lands Belonging to JOSEPH EDGERTON, Junr, his heirs and Assigns," being recorded in the "Book of Grants" at Norwich.

Concerning the death of Joseph (3) Edgerton, no record has thus far been found of the date. It appears by the will of his brother Jacob, which was executed in March, 1773, that he had died before that date. From the History of Pawlet, Vermont, (to which place his son Simeon moved,) we learn that he was lost at sea, "just before the revolution." So we conclude he was a sailor as well as farmer, and that his death occurred a few years before the revolutionary war.

The marriage of Joseph Edgerton to Elizabeth Haskins, with the births of their children, is recorded on the Norwich Records. Their children were all baptized at the First Church in that place, and were as follows:

Hannah, perhaps married John Leffingwell; Benjamin, married Susanna Griswold; Elizabeth, probably died young; SIMEON, married ABIAH HOUGH; Luce, married Joshua Abell, Junr.; Joseph Kingsbury, married Lucy Lyon; Martha, no record of marriage; William, married Lucy Birchard.

Simeon (4) Edgerton, second son and fourth child of Joseph (3), was born at Norwich, Connecticut, March 9, 1732, and was baptized at the First Church there when he was three days old. He died at Pawlet, Vermont, August 27, 1809. On November 23, 1758, he was married at Norwich to Abiah Hough, who was born November 18, 1737. The following inscription is copied from her gravestone in Pawlet, Vermont:



## ABIAH HOUGH

Wife of Simeon Edgerton

Died Oct. 17, 1821

Aged 84 Years

She left 4 Sons, 7 Daughters,

102 Grandchildren, and

96 Great-Grandchildren.

Born in Norwich, Conn.

Their home was for a time at Bozrah, and his birth and marriage, as well as the births of the first five of his children, are recorded in the church there, and also in the town records. At some time between September 8, 1765, (the date of the birth of Hannah, his fifth child,) and May, 1774, Simeon moved to Hebron, Connecticut, ten or fifteen miles to the westward. Hebron was then included in Hartford County, but is now in Tolland County. On the latter date he is named in a deed as "Simeon Edgerton, of Hebron, County Hartford, Colony of Connecticut," and the same in subsequent deeds.

In 1781 he moved to Pawlet, a little town in the southern part of Vermont. As David, the youngest of his children, was born in 1785, and Philena, the next older than he, was born in 1780, and comparing these dates with the Norwich records, it seems probable that five of his children were born at Bozrah, the next eight in Hebron, and the youngest, David, at Pawlet. The early Hebron records were lost by fire, and the record of his family is drawn from family records.

Simeon Edgerton was a Captain in the Connecticut troops in the revolution, and was with his command at New London, Connecticut, at the time of the capture and destruction of that place, and Fort Griswold on the other side of the harbor, by the British. The records of Pawlet show that he purchased land there November 11, 1779, nearly two years before his removal to that place. The price named was 500 pounds, and as that was a large sum of money for those times it indicates that he was a man of means.

I have thought it probable that safety for his family may have prompted him to make this last removal, on account of his home near Norwich being in such dangerous proximity to the war-scourged coast, and the possibility that the enemy might carry their invasion to the inland towns, as they did when they burned and ravaged Danbury in the same state.

His plans were successfully carried out in 1781, when, after placing his family safely at Pawlet he returned to his duties in defense of his country. It was well that his plans were promptly executed, for on Septem-



ber 6, 1781, the very year he had settled his family in Vermont, the British fleet under command of Benedict Arnold descended on New London, destroying the town, capturing Fort Griswold on the other side of the harbor and massacring its defenders, and in general laying waste the country about there. The ruins of Fort Griswold may still be visited, and the battle is commemorated by a tall monument near at hand.

Esther, the seventh of Simeon's children, was twelve years old at the time of the removal to Vermont, and in connection with this exile there is a story which has come down the generations like a waft of perfume from the distant past. It seems that Abiah, Simeon Edgerton's wife, was exceedingly fond of flowers, and the gem of her garden was a damask rose of exquisite fragrance. The British might ravage the country and she be obliged to flee to the wilderness, but that particular rosebush, or a portion of it at least, must be saved.

So she dug up a root and carefully packed it in the saddlebag of the saddle on which she rode to Vermont, where she planted it by the log house which was her new home, and there it flourished so that in after years it covered quite an area in the dooryard. Many years later her great-granddaughter, Miss Mary H. Reed, found it still thriving there, and she brought a root to the Reed Homestead in Amenia, N. Y., where it still grows and blooms, exhaling its annual tribute of incense to the passerby, and perchance,—

"The traveller owns the grateful sense  
Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,  
And, pausing, takes with forehead bare  
The benediction of the air,"

little dreaming that it has been wafted down the generations from an old colonial garden.

In his Vermont home Simeon proved a valuable addition to that pioneer community, and he was, most literally, one of the "Town Fathers," for when he died at the age of 77 he had 95 descendants, and when his widow died at the age of nearly 84 their living descendants numbered 209.

He served his town as a member of the legislature and was intrusted with many responsible offices. The historian of Pawlet has left this brief but very desirable tribute to his character: "Captain Edgerton was a man of few words, but noted for his energy and uprightness of character." Simeon's two oldest sons, Jedidiah and Jacob, also served in the revolution, the former with the same rank as his father's, that of Captain.

Even of those strenuous days one may sometimes catch glimpses of a frolicsome spirit indicating that the young we have always with us. The following jingle has come down in the family annals, though it only accounts for twelve of the fourteen children. The first Sarah, and David, died young, which may account for the omission of their names.

"LEGEND OF THE FAMILY OF SIMEON EDGERTON."

"Daddy and Mammy, Jacob and Diah,  
Lydda and Betta, and Hannah and Biah;  
Esther and Polly, and Simmy and Johnny,  
The dog and the cat, and Sally and Lena."

The following is the family of Simeon and Abiah (Hough) Edgerton: Jedidiah, married Lucy Curtis and Mrs. Enos Clark; Jacob, married Esther Reed and Hannah Sheldon; Lydia, married Nathaniel Carver; Elizabeth, married Elijah Hyde; Hannah, married Joshua Cobb; Abiah, married Joseph Adams; ESTHER, married EZRA REED; Molly, married Calvin Dutton; Sarah, died young; Simeon, married Elizabeth Griswold; John, married Mary Averill; Sarah, married Joel Sheldon; Philena, married Seth Sheldon; David, died single.

Esther (5) Edgerton, seventh child of Simeon (4), was born February 8, 1769, probably at Hebron, Connecticut, and was married at Pawlet, Vermont, February 15, 1790, to Ezra (5) Reed. He was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, August 3, 1765, and died in Amenia, New York, July 31, 1852.

### SYLVESTER.

The name "Sylvester" is of French origin, and in that language signifies a tree, hence, appropriately, the family Coat of Arms shows an oak tree in a shield. The family is found settled in England soon after the Norman conquest, and it is not unlikely that some members of it came across the Channel with the conquering army.

Kingman, in his "History of North Bridgewater," Massachusetts, says those of the name in this country, which have become somewhat numerous, probably descended from Richard Sylvester, who was in Weymouth, Massachusetts, as early as 1640. From thence he removed to Scituate, Massachusetts, in 1642, and some members of his family removed to Duxbury, Massachusetts, among whom was Israel, who married Abigail, daughter of Josiah Snell, of West Bridgewater. I have not been able to find any connection between this Richard Sylvester and the Mary Sylvester who married Richard (1) Edgerton.

But there were other arrivals of Sylvesters in this country. Nathaniel Sylvester, with his brother Constant, came to Shelter Island (which is

inclosed between the two arms of Long Island, near its eastern end), and with a partner, Thomas Middleton, purchased the whole island, intending to hold it as an estate, as Lion Gardner did Gardner's Island.

There is no slight reason for believing that this Nathaniel was a son of the celebrated English poet, Joshua Sylvester, of whose fame, in the age of Elizabeth and James, the Puritans were anxious guardians.

At that time boats furnished practically the only means of transportation, and the people of that portion of Long Island were closely associated with those of Saybrook, in plain view across the narrowest part of Long Island Sound; perhaps more so than with any other settlement.

The Mary Sylvester who was married April 7, 1653, to Richard (1) Edgerton, may have been a sister or other near relative of Nathaniel of Shelter Island, and the dates correspond very well. Nathaniel had a daughter named Mary, who was born soon after the marriage of our Mary, and this family name seems to strengthen the supposition that they were of the same family.

### SCUDDER.

Our Edgerton grandmothers of the first two generations seem to be very elusive, and we can not fix with certainty on their parentage. Of the ancestry of Elizabeth Scudder we have failed to find certain proof. There was a John Scudder, born in 1619, who came to Charleston, Mass., in 1635. In 1640 he removed to Barnstable, Massachusetts, where he resided until his death. He had a daughter Elizabeth, who was born in 1646.

Samuel Lathrop, son of Rev. John Lathrop, of Barnstable, in 1644 married Elizabeth Scudder, and removed to Norwich, Connecticut, in 1666. Pope's "Pioneers" has it that he died and she married John Scudder. That she should marry a Scudder and thus return to her maiden name is not impossible, and if there is no error in Pope's record she may have become, by this second marriage, the mother of our Elizabeth.

At least it is a reasonable conjecture that the Elizabeth Scudder who married Richard (2) Edgerton was related to the Barnstable Scudders, one branch of whom had removed to Norwich, and the recurrence of the family name, "Elizabeth," seems to strengthen that supposition.

### HASKINS.

This name appears in the early records of Plymouth, Massachusetts, as "Hodgekins," "Hodgekinson," "Hoskins," and "Hoskine," the various

grants and deeds showing that it was one and the same person who was so variously recorded. The name finally settled down to "Hoskins" during his life, but in the Taunton, Massachusetts, records his sons' names appear as "Hoskins" and "Haskins," the latter form finally prevailing.

William (1) Hoskins was a freeman in Plymouth before 1635, and from that time he appears frequently on record as proprietor, soldier, officer, grand juror, administrator, etc., until June 5, 1685, which is the last record found. He seems to have taken an active part in the life of the colony, but in his old age he was ruined, financially, by the King Philip War, and the town voted him assistance, "in regard of his low condition having lost all hee had in the late war and being grown old and unable to labor." He must have been over seventy at the time of his death. The date and place of his birth are unknown, but it was probably in England.

He was married November 2, 1636, to Sarah Cushman, who died not long afterward, leaving a daughter, Sarah, who was adopted by Thomas Whitney and his wife.

On December 21, 1638, he married, secondly, Ann Haynes, (or "Hynes,") and the births of only two of their children are recorded; the other names are gathered from various sources. They are as follows: Rebecca, married Richard Bridges; William; a son, name not given; Samuel; John; RICHARD; and there were probably other daughters.

The sons, being proprietors through the grant made for them to their father, upon reaching maturity removed to Taunton, then a part of the Plymouth colony, where their names appear frequently in the records, William serving as soldier in the King Philip War, and receiving for that service a grant of land.

Richard (2) Haskins, son of William and Ann (Haynes) *Hoskins*, went with his brothers to Taunton, Massachusetts, where he in time amassed large holdings of land, obtaining some of it by purchase, and some by grants. He took up his residence in the south portion of the town, a part then known as "Taunton South Purchase."

In 1708 he appears as one of the signers of a petition praying that they might be set off into a separate township. After some delay the petition was granted, and in May, 1712, the town of Dighton was incorporated, where he continued active in public matters, serving in many capacities.

He was married to Mary Tisdale, who was born about 1672, daughter of James (2) and Mary (Avery) Tisdale, of Taunton. As the early vital records of the town were burned the date of this marriage (and the births

of the children) is not found, but it was doubtless before 1695. They continued to reside in Taunton South Purchase until it became the Town of Dighton.

But about 1716 a western emigration set in, the Tisdals, Walkers and other families moving to Connecticut. March 1, 1717, Richard Haskins sold some of his real estate in Dighton for 900 pounds, closed up his business, and the next month he purchased of Thomas Stodder 199 acres in Norwich, Connecticut. It was in that portion which is now included in the town of Franklin, north of Bozrah.

Here he came with his family, but was scarcely settled in his new home when he was taken away by death, December 26, 1717. The inventory of his estate footed up to 1331 pounds, 16 shillings, and seven pence, and administration was granted to his widow and their son John.

Of the nine children of Richard and Mary, who were living in July, 1719, the names of the following seven have been indentified: John, married Anna ———; Mercy; Mary, married Moses Case; Daniel, married Mehitable Badger; ELIZABETH, married JOSEPH EDGERTON; Sarah, married John Hyde; Rebecca, married Edward Marcy. The marriages of the last four are on the records of what is now the Franklin Church, but was formerly the Second Church of Norwich.

Elizabeth (3) Haskins, daughter of Richard (2) and Mary (Tisdale) Haskins, born in Taunton, Massachusetts, died at Norwich, Connecticut, April 10, 1776. On December 10, 1722, she was married at Norwich, Connecticut, to Joseph (3) Edgerton, who was born at Norwich, January 17, 1696-97, and died before March, 1773.

## TISDALE.

John (1) Tisdale is first known at Duxbury, Massachusetts, where he appears on the records in 1636 as an owner of real estate. About the year 1650 he removed to Taunton, where he owned lands in what is now the town of Berkley, for Taunton at first covered what is now included in several towns.

Taunton River, or "Taunton Great River," as it was at first called, flows southward from Taunton, to which point it is tidewater and navigable. Dighton is on the west side of the river, while Berkley is opposite, on the east side.

John Tisdale was one of the shareholders in the "Ancient Iron Works," of Taunton in 1653 and 1654, and on December 28, 1659, in the list of inhabitants who were to have division of land he, having eight in his family, received ninety-six acres. He was also one of the proprietors of Taunton North Purchase, as well as of Assonet. His son

Joshua settled on his Assonet lands, and the ledge of rock near the present Assonet R. R. depot took its name, "Joshua's Mountain," from him.

John Tisdale was a town officer, and was Deputy to the General Court at Plymouth up to the year of his death. In June, 1675, that great calamity known as the King Philip War suddenly descended on the colonies of southeastern Massachusetts, and in a year's time a tenth of their number, the best and the strongest, were slain, and all the outlying houses and farmsteads were burned to the ground. A week after the opening of hostilities, June 27, 1675, John Tisdale's house was burned and he was slain by the Indians.

That war was a struggle for life with the colonies, and probably the probate courts did not do much unnecessary business until its close, and we find that his will was not probated until November 2, 1676, when administration was granted to his four sons.

John (1) Tisdale's wife was Sarah Walker, and she survived her husband but a year and a half, passing away in December, 1676, at the age of 58 years. Of their eight children, John, JAMES, Joshua and Elizabeth were born at Duxbury, and Sarah, Joseph, Mary and Abigail were born in Taunton.

James (2) Tisdale, second son of John (1) and Sarah (Walker), was born at Duxbury, Massachusetts, about 1644, and died at Taunton January 15, 1715, aged 71 years. November 5, 1666, he was married to Mary Avery, daughter of Dr. William and Margaret Avery, of Dedham, Massachusetts. She was baptized in Barkham, England, December 19, 1647, and died September 9, 1713, aged 66 years. At the time of her death they were living in that portion of Middleborough, Massachusetts, which is now included in the town of Lakeville.

James Tisdale removed from Duxbury to Taunton (probably with his father), where he was made a freeman May 29, 1670, and in 1675 was numbered among the "Heads of families in Taunton." November 12, 1677, Constant Southworth, as treasurer of the colony, conveyed the Assonet lands to James Tisdale, James Walker, and others.

He also had lands laid out to him in Taunton North Purchase, was one of the petitioners for the town of Dighton, and was an owner in the iron works at Freetown. He was constable, surveyor of highways, and militiaman.

The month after his wife's death he made his will, which was proved March 7, 1715. In it he confirms what he had previously given his daughter Mary by deed of gift, house and land "in Taunton at the ware," and gives to "my Granddaughter Mary Haskins (who hath nursed me) my silver porringer."

James and Mary (Avery) Tisdale had six children, as follows: James, who went to New Lebanon, Connecticut; MARY, married RICHARD HASKINS; Martha, married John Hodges, Junr.; Margaret, married Josiah Winslow; Sarah, married John Johnson, of Lebanon, Connecticut; Ebenezer, died young.

Mary (3) Tisdale, born about 1672, became the wife of Richard (2) Haskins.

### WALKER.

Sarah Walker, aged 17, and her brother, James Walker, aged 15, came to New England from London, England, in 1635, in the ship *Elizabeth*. They were in the care of a relative, probably an uncle, James Browne.

The Brownes, Tisdales, and Walkers, all settled in Taunton, where in time they were owners of large tracts of land and became influential citizens in town affairs. Brown's Brook was named for that family. It is on the west side of Taunton River, and became one of the well known landmarks mentioned in the early deeds of Taunton.

Sarah and James Walker are believed to have been children of the "Widow Walker," who a few years later came to New England and settled at Rehoboth, Massachusetts. But from what part of England the Walkers and their relatives came is not known.

Sarah Walker, who was born in England in 1618, became the wife of John (1) Tisdale. She died in December, 1676.

### AVERY.

Dr. William Avery was born in England, where he married his first wife, Margaret. They lived in the parish of Barkham, Berkshire County, and there three of their children were born. About 1650 he came to America with his family, being one of the early settlers of Dedham, Massachusetts, southwest from Boston, where he built his home under the branches of the "Avery Oak," as it is still called, the homestead being occupied till nearly the present time by his descendants.

He and his wife were admitted to the church in Dedham February 16, 1650. He had a blacksmith's shop there, where he worked at his trade, as noted in the town records. I conclude he must have been the original "Learned Blacksmith," for a little later he is mentioned as "Sergeant," then as "Deputy to the General Court," and in 1675 as "Doctor." Still later he appears in a military organization as "Lieutenant," and as if this did not add sufficiently to his activities he moved to Boston before 1680, where he opened a bookstore. He is also credited with having set up the first apothecary shop in New England.



Notwithstanding his humble beginning in the pioneer community at Dedham, he appears to have been well educated, a man of benevolence and especially a patron of learning. It is known that he gave liberally to several public institutions, and after his removal to Boston he gave sixty pounds to establish a Latin School at Dedham, his former home.

Twenty-eight years after they settled at Dedham, September 28, 1678, his wife Margaret died. Soon after her death Dr. Avery moved to Boston, where in time he married a second wife, Mrs. Mary (Woodmancy) Tapping, who survived him. No children are recorded of the second marriage.

Dr. William Avery died in Boston March 18, 1686-87, aged about 65 years. His tombstone stands in King's Chapel burial ground there, near and facing the railing on Tremont Street.

His will, dated October 15, 1683, in which he styles himself "practitioner in physick," is on file in Suffolk Registry of Wills. In it he gives "100 pounds in money or goods" to his daughter, Mary Tisdale. His first three children, MARY, William, and Robert, were born in England, and they had children born in Dedham, Massachusetts.

Two valued relics are in the possession of some of his descendants. One is a painting on canvas of the Avery Coat of Arms, the other a Malacca cane with a massive silver head, elaborately chased.

Mary (2) Avery, baptized December 19, 1647, in Barkham, England, became the wife of James (2) Tisdale. She died September 9, 1713, in what is now the town of Lakeville, Massachusetts.

## HOUGH.

William Hough, son of Edward Hough of Westchester, County Cheshire, England, came to Gloucester, Massachusetts, and married there, October 28, 1645, Sarah Caulkins, daughter of Hugh and Ann Caulkins, and supposed to have been their eldest child. He was probably a part of that "Welsh Company" of which his father-in-law was a member, and they most of them in time abandoned their first residence on that rock-bound coast. In 1651 he, with Hugh Caulkins and several others, removed to New London, Connecticut. In their new home William Hough and his wife appear on the rolls of Mr. Bradstreet's church, the first of which the records are preserved, at the time of the ordination of Mr. Bradstreet, October 5, 1670. They had ten children, four sons and six daughters.

"Captain" John (2) Hough, son of William (1), was born in New London October 17, 1655, and died there August 26, 1716. January 17, 1680, he was married to Sarah Post, daughter of John (2) and Esther (Hyde) Post.



He was a house builder, and was much employed in New London and Norwich. He is spoken of in the histories of those places as a notable man of his time. Large and powerful in frame and energetic in character, active in civil and military affairs, he was extensively known and highly esteemed. He had a farm in New Concord Society, (in the town of Norwich,) the land being an original grant from the town in payment for building a school house, and he resided there. His death was caused by a fall from the scaffolding of a house he was building in New London, and was a shock to the whole community.

His youngest son, Jabez (3) Hough, subsequently inherited this farm, but he died early in life, only a few days after his marriage to Anne Denison of New London, and then the farm passed to his brother, John (3).

John (3) Hough, son of John (2), was born October 1, 1697, and died February 7, 1785. He married, first, September 4, 1718, Hannah Denison, daughter of George (4) and Mary (Wetherell) (Harris) Denison. She was born March 28, 1699. They settled at New London at first, but later removed to Bozrah, where she died April 9, 1782.

But he remained single only half a year, being married again October 24, 1782, when he was eighty-five years old, to a widow, Mrs. Ann (Bingham) Baldwin. It is rather infrequent to find a record of a man having contracted two marriages with an interval of sixty-four years.

Abiah (4), daughter of John (3) Hough, born November 18, 1737, was married November 23, 1758, to Simeon (4) Edgerton. She died at Pawlet, Vermont, October 17, 1821.

## CAULKINS.

Hugh Caulkins (the name was formerly spelled "Calkin") was one of a body of emigrants called "The Welsh Company," that came to New England in 1640 from Chepstone, in Monmouthshire, on the border of Wales, with their minister, the Rev. Mr. Blinman. He was accompanied to this country by his wife and several children. With the larger part of the company they at first settled at Marshfield, Massachusetts, but soon transferred their residence to Gloucester, on the rough promontory of Cape Ann.

From thence, after an experience of several years, Hugh Caulkins, with most of the company remaining, removed to New London, Connecticut, in 1651. The lands in the vicinity of the latter place are more areable and productive, and probably another incentive to their moving was their strong attachment to their pastor, Mr. Blinman, who had received a call to come to New London. While residing at Gloucester

Mr. Caulkins was made a freeman, December 27, 1642. In 1650, and again in 1651, he was chosen as Representative to the General Court, but as he removed early in the latter year to New London, Gloucester filled the vacancy so caused by holding a special election.

In his New London home he was immediately in requisition for public service, and was twelve times chosen to be the town's Deputy to the Connecticut General Assembly, (the elections being semi-annual) and he was one of the Townsmen during the whole ten years that he resided in that town. From all of which it appears that in those early days and pioneer conditions, when executive and organizing ability were so necessary to the community, he was found to be one of the most useful of the citizens.

Hugh Caulkins was a type of the English colonists who did not, as a rule, wait for luck, but went out in search for it. Coming in one colony they would look around and perhaps finally cast in their fortunes with some other colony. When Hugh was past sixty he and his son John, and his son-in-law Jonathan Royce, became pioneers again, and were numbered among the thirty-five original proprietors of Norwich, Connecticut, to which place he moved in 1662.

In this, the town of his last residence, he was again quickly called into public service, being chosen to the Connecticut Legislature for ten successive terms, until he was past seventy. He was also one of the first to be chosen to the office of deacon in the organization of the Norwich church.

At each of the three towns in which he was an early settler and proprietor he was largely employed in public business, being usually appointed one of the committees for consultation, for fortifying and determining boundaries, etc. Service in these offices must have required a considerable range of information, as well as mental acumen and executive talent, yet he uniformly made a bold "H" for his signature.

But it does not of necessity follow that he was without a common education. The duties he had to perform required that he must be able to read communications and records, and it is more reasonable to suppose that some physical disability, possibly an injury to the arm or hand, had made the use of the pen difficult, than it is to suppose that such a talented man never learned its use.

In a deposition made in 1672 he stated that he was then seventy-two years old; the year 1600 may therefore be accepted as the year of his birth. He died and was buried in Norwich in 1690, at the advanced age of ninety years. Of his wife we only know that her name was Ann. Six children have been traced, four of whom were probably born in England.

Sarah (2), daughter of Hugh (1) Caulkins, and supposed to have been his eldest child, was born in England. She was married at Gloucester, Massachusetts, October 28, 1645, to William (1) Hough.

### POST.

Stephen (1) Post was in Newton, Massachusetts, as early as 1634, and removed from there to Hartford, Connecticut, in 1636, doubtless in Rev. Thomas Hooker's company of about one hundred persons, where he is on record as one of the 127 landowners in 1639, and as one of the original members of the First Church of Hartford. He subsequently removed to Saybrook in the same state, where he died August 16, 1659. Of his wife we only know that her name was Ellener. ("Helener," in the County Court records. Oh, those English!) She died November 13, 1670.

John (2) Post, probably the oldest child of Stephen (1), was born in England in 1627, and died at Norwich, Connecticut. His marriage with Hester (or Esther) Hyde, "in the last of March, '52," and the births of four children, are found on record at Saybrook. He and Hester, his wife-to-be, were children with their parents in Hartford, and it is a pleasant thought that there may have been a childhood's friendship in the Hartford community, which ripened in Saybrook until it culminated in marriage.

John (2) Post was one of the original proprietors of Norwich, and he moved from Saybrook to that new field in 1660, and four more children are found recorded there. They likewise had a daughter, Mary, not recorded at either place, probably born in 1662, comprising in all a family of two sons and seven daughters.

Mrs. Hester Post, probably born in England, died at Norwich November 13, 1703. John Post died at the same place, and the inscription on his gravestone, as follows, is still legible.

H E A R E  
LIES THE BO  
DY OF MR JO  
HN POST WHO  
DYED NOV<sup>r</sup>.  
27.1710 AGED  
84 YEARS.

Sarah, daughter of John (2) and Hester Post, was married January 27, 1680, to John (2) Hough.

## HYDE.

William (1) Hyde (the name was formerly spelled "Hide"), is not known of a certainty to have been related to any of the other families of the name which came to this country from England, of which there were several in the United States. It has not been ascertained what part of England he came from, who his parents were, when he came, nor where he first landed when he arrived. The name is an ancient and honorable one in the annals of England. By the marriage of Anne Hyde, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon, with the Duke of York, afterward James II, the stock was engrafted into the royal family.

It is supposed that William Hyde came over with Rev. Thomas Hooker in 1633, remained for a time in Newton (near Boston), and then joined Hooker—or rather remained with him—in that heroic migration of a hundred miles through the wilderness to found Hartford. It was a journey in which several of the ancestors related of in this book took part.

Mr. Hooker was doubtless a great man in his day, and it is told of him that he wrote for Connecticut the first state constitution known to history. He was also an author as well as preacher and statesman, and there lies before me a quaint volume of his with the following title:

## POOR DOUBTING

CHRISTIAN

Drawn To

CHRIST.

With "*Abstract*" of Author's *Life*.

In the "Abstract" of his life occurs this reference to the Hartford migration:

"Accordingly in *June*, 1636, He, with about a *hundred Persons* in the *first Company*, removed an *hundred Miles* to the *Westward*, to fettle on the Banks of CONNECTICUT-RIVER: Who not being able to walk above *ten Miles* a Day [thro' the Woods,] took up *near a Fortnight* in their Journey; having no Pillows to take their nightly Rest on, but such as their Father *Jacob* found in the way to *Padam-aram*. Here [viz. at Hartford] Mr. *Hooker* was the chief instrument of beginning ANOTHER COLONY: [viz. CONNECTICUT COLONY.]"

Now if Mr. Hooker had only taken enough time from his labors—as Governor Bradford did from his to do a like work—to have left us a list of the men, women and children which founded Hartford, how much

more thankful we should be than we now are for this out-of-date, though quaint and interesting book.

There is no reasonable doubt however that William Hyde was one of Hooker's company. His name is on the monument erected in the "Old Center Burying Ground," as one of the first settlers, and he had lands assigned to him there, his name appearing in the list of landholders in 1639, the first list that is on record. His name also appears on the rolls as one of the original members of the First Church of Hartford.

He removed with his family to Saybrook, probably about the year 1640, where he remained until 1660, when he joined the band of men who entered into the work of organizing Norwich, where he was one of the first proprietors, moving there that year. He died in Norwich January 6, 1681-82, and was buried there.

The date of his birth is not known, but on the records in 1679 he is styled "old Goodman Hide." "Goodman" was a frequent title then for those of the commonalty, and indicated less rank than the title of "Mr." His will was proved in the County Court in June, 1682, and distribution ordered to the heirs of his son Samuel, and to his daughter Hester, wife of John Post.

On his removal to Norwich he sold some of his property in Saybrook to Robert Lay. In his Norwich home he was esteemed a trustworthy citizen, holding responsible positions in the community, and being frequently elected to town offices.

No information relating to the wife of William Hyde has been obtained, and the time and place of her birth, marriage, death and burial, and even her name, are unknown. She probably died before the removal to Norwich, or a record would be found there. Not unlikely she may have fallen a victim to the great mortality that assailed the early comers to New England. Much information of interest concerning this family is found in "Genealogy of The Hyde Family," by Reuben H. Walworth.

Hester (2), daughter of William (1) Hyde, perhaps born in England, was married in March, 1652, to John (2) Post. She died at Norwich November 13, 1703.

## DENISON.

The *Patronymica Britannica*, a dictionary of the family names of the United Kingdom, has, among many other things, this to say in reference to this family. "All peerage writers and genealogical antiquarians of Scotland are agreed that the ancient family of Denison ranks with the most eminent in the western districts of that Kingdom."

It was probably of Norman origin at first, and later was of Scottish antecedents, and the records clearly show that the royal line of Stuarts, the origin of the present reigning family of Great Britain, are descended from them. It is in reference to this that the proverb has been preserved in the family:— *Kings come of us, not we of Kings.*

The records of that branch of the family in which we are interested begins with John "Denyson," and Agnes his wife, of "Stortford," (Stratford), England. There are recorded six children of theirs who were baptized there between 1567 and 1582. John Denyson died of the plague, and was buried there December 4, 1582, and two years later his widow married John Gace. Of their six children, Edward moved to Ireland, where he died, leaving a son John Denyson, an army officer in the Cromwellian wars, and later Governor of Cork, Ireland.

William (1) Denison, the emigrant, was the second son of the above John and Agnes, and was baptized at Stratford February 3, 1571. He was married at Stratford November 2, 1603, to Margaret (Chandler) Monck, and they had seven children of record. He came to America in 1631 in the ship *Lion*, having with him his three sons, Daniel, Edward and George; and the Rev. John Eliot, who seems to have been a tutor in the family. Mrs. Denison did not come until the year following.

Mr. Eliot became pastor of the church at Roxbury, and also acquired fame by his missionary work among the Indians, with great labor and ability translating the Bible into the Indian tongue.

William Denison was a merchant, and from the fact that he employed a tutor in his family it is inferred that he must have been a man of liberal means. He built a house in Roxbury, and at last accounts it was still in a good state of preservation. He was made a deacon in Mr. Eliot's Roxbury church. According to all that is learned concerning him he was a man of liberal education, and his sons were also carefully educated. William (1) Denison died in Roxbury January 25, 1653, and his wife died there February 23, 1645.

George (2) Denison, the youngest of the seven children of William (1), was born at Stratford December 10, 1620, and came to this country with his father in 1631. In 1640 he was married to Bridget Thompson, "daughter of John Thompson, Gent. of Preston, Northamptonshire, England, whose widow, Alice, had come to America and was living in Roxbury."

There is preserved a courtship letter in verse, by means of which, tradition says, George laid siege to the heart of Bridget. Several copies of this poem have been found preserved among the descendants, and whatever we may judge of its literary merits it has the recommenda-

tion that it seems to have been "accepted," and accomplished the purpose for which it was composed. I will only make room for the concluding stanza, which will answer as a sample of the others.

"And I would wish that they much better were,  
Therefore, I pray, accept them as they are,  
So hoping my desire I shall obtain,  
Your own true love,  
GEORGE DENISON, by name."

George and Bridget had two children born in Roxbury, and she died there in 1643. He that same year returned to England, where he took a commission in the Army of the Commonwealth under Cromwell, in which he won distinction. His brother, General Daniel Denison, says in a letter that after the Battle of York, more commonly called "Marston Moor," which was fought July 2, 1644, George was taken prisoner, though he had rendered valiant service during the battle. But he managed somehow to escape from his captors. Daniel also mentions their cousin, John Denison, "who was a soulder and a major of a regiment in the time of the wars, and Governor of Corke."

The decisive battle of Naseby was fought June 14, 1645, in which the King's army was vanquished. In this battle Captain George Denison was wounded, and was carried to the house of Mr. John Borodell of Cork, Ireland, (but who was then residing in England,) a gentleman of high social position, and an earnest sympathizer with the cause of the new republic.

Here the wounded soldier was cared for by Ann Borodell, the daughter, with the result that he was wounded by an archer of vastly more experience than any in the King's service. The outcome was that when he had recovered they were married and came to America the same year, coming first to Roxbury, and going from thence to New London, but finally settling in the town of Stonington, in the southeastern corner of Connecticut.

The exact date of their marriage is not known, but, pending their courtship, an agreement was put in writing, and this agreement was afterward ratified and confirmed by the state authorities at Hartford, and was recorded May 3, 1662, in the first book of Connecticut State Records, page 274. It had reference to money paid him by her brother John, but is chiefly of interest as the only record extant in reference to their marriage.

George (2) Denison became a leading citizen in the state, both in civil and military activities, and the historian of New London calls him "The Miles Standish of Connecticut," and adds that "he was a greater



man than Miles Standish was." Indeed, as an Indian fighter and a leader of men, he seems to have had no equal in the New England colonies, unless it may be Major John Mason, who often campaigned with him.

With the thought of a military leader he built his house at Stonington on a hill, partially protected by ledges of rocks. There was an acre of ground, more or less, elevated twenty or thirty feet above the surrounding ravines, and as he had it well stockaded it was impregnable against the Indians.

In this secure retreat, like a baron in his castle, he held a commanding influence among his townsmen for forty years or more, was their trusted military leader in forays against the Indians, and their frequent representative at the General Court at Hartford. He had great executive ability, and managed well the trusts committed to him. Numerous tracts of land were given him by the authorities, chiefly for his military services, so that at the time of his death he was the owner of several thousand acres in Stonington, Norwich, and Windham, and in the state of Rhode Island.

He lived in the midst of the time when it was being decided whether the Indian or the Aryan should control New England, and while their methods of treating the aborigine were less unjust than later methods, yet judged by modern altruistic standards they seem brutally coarse and barbaric.

In one of these forays, in 1676, the celebrated chieftain Canochet was taken prisoner. His life was promised him if he would use his influence with the Indians to stop the war, but he indignantly refused, saying that as was now in their hands they could do with him as they pleased. When told that he must die he seemed not at all moved, but said that he liked it well, and that he should die before his heart had grown soft, or he had said anything unworthy of himself.

He was shot and his body was quartered and burned, but his head was sent, *as a token of love*, to the Council at Hartford.

Captain George Denison died in Hartford in 1694, he having gone there on some public business, and was buried in the Old Center Burying Ground, in the rear of the First Church in Hartford. Early writers speak of his gravestone as standing, but for a long term of years the cemetery received almost no care, and as the stone can not now be found the exact location of the grave is unknown. But a suitable monument to his memory has been erected in the cemetery near Mystic, Connecticut.



In his will, dated November 20, 1693, he mentioned rents due from his wife's estates in Cork, Ireland, which she inherited from her father John Borodell.

His widow survived him and died in 1712, at the advanced age of ninety-seven, having lived to see her grandchildren's grandchildren. She was buried in the old Denison Cemetery at Mystic, but her headstone now stands beside her husband's monument, to which place her remains have been moved. There is a picture of this monument and headstone in Lossing's War of 1812, page 896.

"They were both remarkable for magnificent personal appearance, and for force of mind and character. She was always called 'Lady Ann.' " This is the record of the historian, as the tribute which has come down to us from one who lived in touch with those times.

John (3) Denison, son of George (2), was born July 14, 1646, and died in 1698. On November 26, 1667, when he had just arrived at his majority, he married Phebe Lay, and the marriage contract, or deed of settlement between their parents, is recorded at Saybrook. This settlement conveyed to them a tract of land near the mouth of Mystic River, on which they took up their residence. He occupied so prominent a position in the community and in the public activities that the historian wonders so little has been said about him by more recent writers, for he was in many ways a man of mark and importance. As was the case with his father, he was commonly spoken of by the title of "Captain." He and his wife had nine children, George being the second.

George (4) Denison, son of John (3), was born in the town of Stonington, Connecticut, March 28, 1671. He showed an intellectual trend, graduating at Harvard College and then entering the study of law, and finally settling in New London for practice, where he was, first and last, Town Recorder, County Clerk, Clerk of Probate, etc.

In 1694 he married Mrs. Mary (Wetherell) Harris, who was born October 7, 1668. She was the widow of Thomas Harris, and the daughter of Daniel and Grace (Brewster) Wetherell. Her first husband, Thomas Harris, was the oldest son of Gabriel Harris, and he died in the Barbadoes June 9, 1691, leaving one child, Mary, who was born November 4, 1690. When a young lady Mary was considered the richest heiress in the settlement. She married Walter Butler.

George (4) Denison and his wife had two sons and six daughters. "The latter as they grew up were esteemed the flower of the young society of the place." This is the tribute of the historian of New London. George Denison's wife died at New London, August 22, 1711 and he died at the same place January 22, 1720.

Hannah (5) Denison, third of the eight children of George (4), was born at New London, March 28, 1699, and died at Bozrah, Connecticut, April 9, 1782. September 4, 1718, she was married to John (3) Hough.

The Denison-Borodell line has furnished us with the only, thus far discovered, strain of Irish blood.

### LAY.

Robert Lay was the first of a line of at least eight successive individuals of the name, in lineal descent. The surmise of Savage, that he was a brother of Edward of Hartford, Saybrook, and Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and of John, of Saybrook and Lyme, is confirmed by many family traditions. He was born about the year 1617, and died July 9, 1689, "aged 72," the gravestone being still extant in the Essex (Connecticut) Cemetery. His wife died May 25, 1676, "aged 59 years."

He was in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1638, and came to Saybrook, Connecticut, in 1649. He lived in the present town of Essex, which was formerly part of Saybrook. He was a Freeman May 21, 1657, a Deputy to the General Court from 1666 to 1678, and a large land owner, being one of the patentees of Saybrook, and owning land near Essex Point, and in what is now the town of Westbrook, but which was originally a part of Saybrook.

In December, 1647, he was married to Mrs. Sarah (Fenner) Tulley, daughter of Thomas Fenner of Branford, Connecticut, and widow of John Tulley, who died in England in 1644 or 1645. They had nine children, of whom Phebe was the eldest. She was born January 5, 1651, and died in 1699. She was married November 26, 1667 to John (3) Denison, son of George (2). The marriage contract, or "settlement," has already been referred to.

Some of the descendants of Robert Lay have changed the name to "Laigh," and "Lee."

### FENNER.

The first record I find of Thomas Fenner is that he was prominent among those who settled Branford, Connecticut, in 1644, and a word of explanation is needed as to the foundation of that town, which has before been mentioned as the dwelling place of John (1) Plumb and John (1) Norton.

The land included in the town, lying east of New Haven, was purchased by the New Haven colonists of the Indians a few days after their purchase of the New Haven site, in December, 1638, but its settlement was not effected until nearly six years later, the occasion then being

because of dissensions among the members of the Wethersfield colony.

It must be remembered by the reader that at that time in New England, Church and Colony were one,—and the Church was that one; always keeping its controlling hand on civil affairs. This is so different from our present method of government that the fact needs to be kept constantly in mind or the history of the people will not be understood.

The colonists who settled Wethersfield did not, as was customary then, bring with them the church organization, but had retained to some extent their connection with the church at Watertown, Massachusetts, and for seven years had no pastor of their own there at Wethersfield. As a result of this unaccustomed dependence upon themselves without the ministerial guiding hand, they “fell into unhappy contentions and animosities.”

Finally, in despair of agreeing among themselves, they called Mr. Davenport, and some of the leading members of his church at New Haven, to counsel with them. The advice of their New Haven friends, which they immediately followed, was that one of the parties to the dispute should move away and begin another settlement.

Thus it came about that the disaffected ones purchased of New Haven the land which is now Branford, with very nearly the present boundaries of the town. Early in the spring of 1644 the new proprietors took possession, probably coming down the Connecticut River and thence along the Sound, in boats, to their new home. They were joined by some from other places, and in all numbered forty men, beside the women and children.

Thomas Fenner is mentioned as a prominent member of this company of movers from Wethersfield, but whether he was accompanied by a wife and family the record does not state. We can hardly suppose that his daughter, Mrs. Sarah Tulley, who three years later married Robert Lay, was with him then, for her husband died in England about that time.

Thomas Fenner was a merchant, and was engaged in trade by means of vessels which plied between Hartford and his new home, and probably New Haven also. He died May 13, 1647, and the inventory of his estate, which was taken two days later, shows that he had stocks of merchandise in both Hartford and Branford. He died while on a trip to Hartford.

Sarah (Fenner) Tulley, probably born in England, was married in December, 1647, to Robert (1) Lay. She died May 25, 1676, at Essex, Connecticut.

## WETHERELL.

William (1) Wetherell was of the educated class in England, where he was born in the year 1600. His education was completed at Cambridge, where he graduated with the degree of A.B. in 1623, and three years later he took the degree A.M. at the same university. In 1625 he was married to Mary Fisher, who was born in England in 1602.

With his wife, three children and one servant, he emigrated to New England, coming in the ship *Hercules*, and in the ship's register he is recorded as "Schoolmaster," from Maidstone, England. He arrived in 1634 or sooner, and in 1635 he was employed in a grammar school at Charleston, Massachusetts, and in Cambridge during the two years following that.

In 1638 he removed to Duxbury, Massachusetts, where he purchased a house, but it has not been discovered what his occupation at that time was. In 1644 he moved to Scituate, Massachusetts, and on September 2, 1645, he was ordained as the first minister of the church organized there, and from that time the church records are in his handwriting until 1674. As his pastorate did not terminate at the latter date we conclude he was compelled by some infirmity to permit others to write the records after that. He died at Scituate April 9, 1684, aged 84 years.

He seems to have been a man of marked personality, and to have given the impress of his strong character on the community in a way that has left its legacy of legendary lore. One anecdote handed down by tradition will serve to illustrate alike the quality of the man and the customs of the day; customs so different from our own in church matters that it is difficult to fully realize it. One of his congregation had entered church after service had commenced, and at the close of his prayer Mr. Wetherell thus addressed him:

"Neighbor Bryant, it is to your reproach that you have disturbed the worship by entering late, living as you do within a mile of this place, and especially so, since here is Goody Barstow, who has milked seven cows, made a cheese, and walked five miles to the House of God in good season."

Dean's "History of Scituate, Massachusetts," gives some account of him, and credits the tradition that his mother was the daughter of John Rogers, the martyr of Smithfield. Beside attending to his school-teaching, and later to his ministerial duties, it would seem that he found time to court the muse, for it is recorded of him that he "was one of the best of the early colonial poets."

Besides the three children he brought with him from England he had six more who were born in this country; John; Theophilus; Elizabeth,

who married John Bryant; (could it have been his son-in-law whom he rebuked in church!) Hannah; and Mary, who married Thomas Oldham.

Daniel (2) Wetherell, son of William (1), was born November 29, 1630, at Free Schoolhouse, in Maidstone, Kent County, England, coming to New England with his father when he was but about four years old. When he had arrived at manhood, or possibly before that, he took up his residence in New London, Connecticut, where he showed himself to be possessed of superior executive abilities, combined with a trustworthy character, and that community proceeded to make use of him according.

He served in one office after another, and often in more than one capacity. He was Town Clerk, Moderator, Justice, Assistant Judge of Probate, and Judge at the County Courts. One is led to wonder what New London would have done without him! Miss Caulkins, the historian of that town, says, "No man in the country at that time stood higher in the point of talent and recognized integrity." He was married, August 4, 1659, to Grace, daughter of Jonathan (2) Brewster.

Mary (3) Wetherell, daughter of Daniel (2), was born October 7, 1668, and died at New London, August 22, 1711. She was married, first, to Thomas, son of Gabriel Harris; second, to George (4) Denison.

"Captain Wetherell dyed April Ye 14th, 1719, in Ye 89th year of his age."

## BREWSTER.

William Brewster was born in England about the year 1566. He died at Plymouth, Massachusetts, April 10, 1644. His wife's name was Mary, and it is thought by some writers that she was the daughter of Edward Love. They had a son named Edward, and another named Love, which family names seem to strengthen the supposition as to her parentage. She was born in England in 1569, and died at Plymouth, April 17, 1627.

William Brewster was a man of good family, and his English ancestry may be studied in the many books which treat of the religious movement of which he became a part. For a time he held some offices under the Crown, but early in the 17th century he became one of the leaders among the band of religious enthusiasts who called themselves "Independents," and were sometimes called "Separatists," because they planned to separate themselves from the established Church of England.

It should be borne in mind that the Pilgrims, or "Separatists," as they were then called, were entirely different from the *Puritans* who later settled Boston. The former practiced the utmost religious tolerance, and desired an entire separation of the Church from the State, while the

Puritans only desired to purify the Established Church, and were themselves ready at all times to persecute those who opposed them.

In the study of colonial history it is interesting to note that at first the Pilgrim idea was overwhelmed by the greater number of the Puritans who settled in New England, so that at first the Puritan theory of government was the one which prevailed. But it is seen in the development which followed that the germ of liberty in the Pilgrim ideal grew apace until it triumphed in the birth of our nation, which effected the first legal separation of Church and State known to history.

In England the Pilgrims suffered much persecution, even unto imprisonment and death, and in 1608 they fled in a body to Leyden, Holland, but in doing so many of them were arrested, among them being William Brewster, who suffered both fine and imprisonment. But once escaped to Holland he felt safe, for the government of that country was tolerant to all sects.

While there they completed the organization of the first Congregational Church in the world, with John Robinson as its pastor, and William Brewster as its Ruling Elder; a position he held to the close of his long life. While in Leyden he wrote and published books, some of which were denounced by the authorities in England, where they were found in secret circulation.

After remaining in Holland for several years the Pilgrims found they were in danger of dissolution in the process of time by being absorbed into the Dutch life, so that they would eventually become Dutch in both language and thought, thus losing by the friendship of the Hollanders that of which the English could not rob them by persecution; namely, their Religious Ideals. To avert such a calamity they decided to emigrate to the New World where they could safely establish a colony in which religious liberty could be enjoyed, and they at once set about making preparations for the change.

After many adventures they at last set sail in two ships, the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*, but the latter springing a leak at sea they both soon returned. But finally, September 16, 1620, the *Mayflower* started alone across the Atlantic, having on board one hundred Pilgrims, and after much hardship and adventure in searching for a place at which to establish themselves they at last, almost at the close of the year, landed at Plymouth, it being the first colony of the white race to successfully establish itself in what is now known as New England.

The tragedy of their first winter in the new land may be best understood by the simple statement that hardships and disease killed just half their number before spring. The story of the colony, and that of its prominent leaders, may be read in many histories.

As their pastor, John Robinson, never came to New England, Elder Brewster was the religious head of the colony during the remaining twenty-three years of his life, and he was an influential man in civil affairs also, being sometimes called "Chief of The Pilgrims." One could not choose a more desirable ancestor to be descended from in that devoted band; a band which planted more valuable liberty on this continent than was planted here by any other equal number of people.

Jonathan (2) Brewster, oldest child of Elder William's large family, was born in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England, August 12, 1593. It is highly probable, if not certain, that he was married at an early age in England, before the flight to Holland, and that a child of his died at Leyden, November 27, 1610, and that his wife died there May 10, 1619, though the names of neither are known. See an article by Rev. Morton Dexter in "The Mayflower Descendant," Vol. 6, 1904.

His second marriage was not until he was settled at Plymouth, and is recorded as follows in the "Brewster Book."

*Johnnathan married Lucretia Oldham  
of Darby, the 10th Aprill, 1624.*

Jonathan Brewster started with the Pilgrims in 1620, though he was obliged to go back with the leaking *Speedwell*. But he joined the colony the next year, coming in the ship *Fortune*, the first vessel to arrive after the coming of the *Mayflower*, and proved himself a valuable member of that pioneer community, occupying many responsible positions.

Beaver, then abundant in New England, was a very high-priced fur in England and Europe, and the Pilgrims found that they could make money faster, with which to pay off the indebtedness incurred in emigrating, by trading with the Indians for furs than they could by agriculture.

Jonathan lived for a time at Duxbury, (a few miles north from Plymouth,) and his daughter Grace was born there. But later we find him in charge of a trading station on the Connecticut River, and it was while there, engaged in trading with the Indians for furs, that he warned Governor Winthrop, in a letter, of the impending warlike designs of the Pequot Indians.

Nine or ten years before the settlement of Norwich, Connecticut, he established a trading station near the mouth of Poquetannock Creek, on the neck of land which is formed by the junction of the creek with the Thames River, and the locality is still known as "Brewster's Neck." It is between New London and Norwich.

A large tract of land was here given him by the Indian Chief, as a bonus to induce him to establish the trading-post, and it was later confirmed to him by the authorities of New London, within whose original



bounds it was included. He began operations here in 1650, but got censured for his promptitude by the General Court at Hartford, because he did not wait for their permission, though they finally legalized his action.

The life of Jonathan Brewster and his wife at Brewster's Neck could not have been entirely in ways of pleasantness nor in paths of peace. This is evident from the record that on one occasion an Indian in his employ was pursued by another Indian, "and flying to Mistress Brewster for succor; yet they violently took him from her and shot him by her side, to her great affrightment."

In his old age he met with business disaster, and finally, relinquishing the trading business to his son Benjamin, moved to Pequot Harbor, as New London was then called, and there in May, 1657, he was appointed "Assistant to the Town of Pequot," whatever that office may have been.

Jonathan (2) Brewster died in 1661, probably at New London. His wife was buried March 5, 1678. "He and his wife Lucretia are buried in the old Brewster Cemetery. [At Brewster's Neck.] The footstone of his grave is still in existence, and the letters on it can be distinctly seen."

Grace (3) Brewster, seventh of the eight children of Jonathan (2), was born at Duxbury, Massachusetts, November 1, 1639. August 4, 1659, she was married to Daniel (2) Wetherell. She died at New London, Connecticut, April 22, 1684.

The Brewster family is the only one yet found which has given a Mayflower line to the ancestry.



## PART III.

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### THEIR LIFE IN AMENIA, NEW YORK.

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In studying the foregoing brief history of some of the ancestors of Ezra Reed and Esther Edgerton it will assist the reader if he will keep at hand a map of Connecticut, as well as the chart to which reference has been made. With this before him let it be supposed that a rough triangle is drawn, having for its three angles the towns of Saybrook and Stonington on the coast, and the town of Norwich to the northward, though it must be borne in mind that those towns in their colonial days included much land that is now included in towns of other names.

The area thus roughly outlined, in the southeast corner of Connecticut, includes the birthplace of most of Esther Edgerton's American-born ancestors, and the dwelling place, first or last, of nearly all, and much information may be obtained about them, as well as concerning the conditions under which they lived, by consulting the histories of places within that area.

Now follow the coastline to the westward, noting the names of the towns, and it will be seen that a similar area in southwestern Connecticut includes the birthplace of Ezra Reed and most of his American-born ancestors. It is a Connecticut ancestry we have been tracing, and no state in the Union has produced better ancestors than Connecticut has.

In their outward aspect the coastal towns of Connecticut are peculiar, inasmuch as they are without the feature of mountains and intervening valleys which is characteristic of other parts of the state. Here the glacier-scraped tongues of granite ledge reach out into Long Island Sound, clasping estuaries of tidewater with their bordering lands. The plains and uplands, rich with decaying forests, the pioneers found to be exceedingly fertile, and there are traditions of wonderful yields of corn. But the agriculture of that day was not at all scientific, and doubtless the first few generations exhausted its store of primitive fertility.

Yet agriculture was not the controlling incentive that moved them in coming to this new land; they had higher motives. With hardly an exception these immigrant ancestors were driven from their native

land by religious or civic persecution. As Trumbull well says, "The settlement of New England, purely for the purposes of religion and the propagation of civil and religious liberty, is an event which has no parallel in the history of modern ages."

At that time liberty of conscience could not be enjoyed in the parent country, and many of the best people of England and other countries were so harassed and persecuted for their non-conformity that they determined, if possible, rather to make a settlement in a dreary wilderness inhabited by barbarians, at the distance of three thousand miles from their native land, than endure the persecutions and sufferings to which they were constantly exposed at the hands of those who ought to have cherished and defended them.

This gives especial value to the blood, as those who prefer to flee from their native land rather than give up their cherished convictions are always the best the land affords. It constitutes a martyrdom that tests the moral stamina of a people, and those who bore the test without flinching were those of the strongest moral fibre.

In 1773, at the time of his moving from Norwalk, Connecticut, to Amenia, New York, Eliakim (4) Reed was forty-seven years old, and all of his ten children were living. Sarah, the eldest, was already married and settled in Norwalk, and the others all lived to maturity, with the exception of Enoch, the youngest, who died in 1787 at the age of fifteen. He was buried at Amenia Union, where his gravestone still stands.

By leaving Norwalk just before the revolution Eliakim escaped some of the perils of the war, for which he was ever afterward thankful. He and his wife had been connected with the church at Middlesex, the church building standing in what is now the town of Darien, the town next east of Norwalk. July 22, 1781, during service on Sunday afternoon, the building was surrounded by British (or Tories) and the congregation made prisoners, only four or five escaping. I find the following verse of a descriptive poem by Peter St. John, who was one of the prisoners taken there:

"The men which hence they took away,  
Upon this awful, sacred day,  
Was forty-eight, besides two more  
They chanced to find upon the shore."

To faithfully depict the scenes of the moving, and of their life in the new home, would require somewhat of that "constructive imagination" which is said to be an important qualification for the historian, but its activity must be limited to filling in the picture which is outlined by the

records and the known conditions of the times, and it must conform to the authentic family traditions.

In the earliest colonial times travel was almost entirely by horseback or on foot, but moving had to be done by boats, for there were no roads. To this there was one notable exception, as we have already seen, when in 1636 the Rev. Thomas Hooker, with his religio-politico following of about one hundred men, women and children, which included several of the ancestors described in the foregoing pages, migrated one hundred miles through the wilderness from Boston to the present site of Hartford.

They had no wheeled vehicles, and Hooker's wife, who was an invalid, was carried the whole distance on a litter, the party driving their flocks and herds and camping each night in the forest. This was more than a century before Eliakim Reed moved, by which time there were country roads and country taverns. Yet in 1773 there were no four-wheeled vehicles in use among farmers, and horses were not used as draft animals, oxen being depended on for all farm work and carting.

Almost all land traveling was still done on horseback or on foot, and every member of thrifty families had each their own saddle as part of their personal belongings; the girls as well as the boys, and "the keep of a horse" was sometimes reckoned as part of the wages of even a farm hand. Yet one is often surprised at learning of the freedom and frequency with which friends visited then, even at considerable distances, though they must needs have gone by foot or horse.

In this moving of something like sixty miles across a hilly country it was necessary therefore to bring on ox-carts the household furniture and belongings, the farm utensils and some provisions and grain, and in fact everything except the live stock, which could travel on its own feet. There is no tradition of how long the journey lasted, nor of the date of their arrival at their new home.

Probably one of the first matters the movers attended to was the forming of new church connections. The only church organization in the vicinity was at Amenia Union, and was known as the "Oblong Society." It was ministered to by Rev. Ebenezer Knibloe, a Scotch divine, and the following is a part of his church records:

*Amenia, June 5, A. D. 1773, Mr. Eliakim Reed and Sarah his wife, being members of the Church of Christ in Middlesex, but now removed from thence, were recommended as persons in good standing in the communion and fellowship of visible christians, and having applied to the Church of Christ in this place were admitted.*

At their former home the records show they had been admitted to the church at Middlesex March 11, 1750.

The house in Amenia to which they came is the middle portion of the one which now stands there. The front portion of the present structure (a view of which, from the south, is shown in the frontispiece) was built by Eliakim, and its condition indicates that it was thoroughly built and must have belonged to the best class of the houses of that day. The date at which the older part was built is unknown, but it is thought that it is now the oldest house in town.

The village now known as South Amenia was then called "Cline's Corners," and the present village of Amenia Union was then known as "Hitchcock's Corners." The farm to which Eliakim Reed moved is on the main valley-road, about midway between these villages, and extending on the east to the Connecticut line.

Ezra, eighth of his ten children, was then about eight years old, and it is recorded of him that he remembered his grandfather, Daniel (3) Reed, coming there on a visit. It is interesting to note in this connection that Daniel remembered *his* grandfather, John (1) Reed, and thus we of the seventh generation who remember Ezra are but "three memories" removed from the immigrant, Captain John Reed.

The valley to which they had come was then known as the "Oblong Valley," taking its name from a strip of land one and three-quarters miles in width, then known as "The Oblong," or "Equivalent Land," which was ceded from Connecticut to New York in 1731, the farm purchased by Eliakim being in this tract.

The valley is traversed by a river which has its furthest source northward in a large spring which rises in the shadow of a mountain, on the top of which the borders of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York meet. The Indians called the valley and the river *Webutuck*, the synonym in their tongue for "Pleasant Hunting Grounds."

It seems that the first white explorers here left no records, but in 1694 the Reverend Benjamin Wadsworth of Boston, (afterward president of Harvard College,) accompanied the Massachusetts and Connecticut Indian Commissioners who went to Albany to make a treaty with the Five Nations. The party travelled by horseback and were accompanied by sixty mounted dragoons, and on their return trip in August they passed down this valley.

The young gentleman of culture and theology may have started out gayly on this tour as one who sought relief from study by a pleasant excursion in the woods which should be a sort of picnic experience. But if so he must have been sadly disappointed, for in the unique journal

which he had the pluck to keep, and which has most fortunately been preserved, he makes record of his discomforts and hardships. Climbing mountain ranges, floundering through brambles and swamps, saddle-sore by day and sometimes sleeping in the rain at night, what wonder if his heart was not responsive to Nature's grandeur!

His first mention of the valley is when he was passing the headwaters of this river. At this point the mountain of which I have spoken rises a sheer thousand feet above the road at its base, its granite crest dividing earth from sky with a horizon line as sharp as the stroke of a pen. But his journal dismisses the scene of grandeur with the pithy line,—“On our left a hideous high mountain!”

The party travelled the valley southward from there, and are supposed to have passed through the mountain gap now known as “Bog Hollow.” In this journal he mentions the river's name, the old-time Yankee name by which it was often mentioned half a century ago, the origin of which but for his journal must have forever been lost, as—“Ten Miles River, (so called from its distance from Wyantenuck—runs into Wyantenuck) by Ye side of which we rode,” etc.

A new name for each new comer! First the Indian, “Webutuck,” or something which sounded like that to the white man, then the Yankee's descriptive title of “Ten-Mile River,” and afterward the “Mink-in-Kill” of the Dutchmen, who came from the Hudson River way and one of whom set up the first millwheel that was turned by its waters. But at last by common consent there is a return to the sonorous Indian synonym and the name *Webutuck* is now applied to both the river and the valley.

“Wyantenuck,” it should be added, was the Indian name in Connecticut for the river then known in Massachusetts as the “Ousetonnuc,” but now known throughout its course as the Housatonic.

At the time of the Reeds coming to this valley it was still in its pioneer stage of development, and occasional small bands of Indians traversed it on their excursions, though they were never otherwise than peacefully disposed, and in their turn the whites always treated them with justice and kindness. In its outward aspect with its varied surface of meadow and rolling upland with scattered groves of great trees, framed in the foothills of the Green Mountain Range—themselves miniature mountains—it was much the same that it is at the present time, and tradition says it presented a similar appearance when the first white settlers came there a few decades before.

The Indians had followed the practice of annually burning it over when the herbage was dead in order to make the new grass grow sweet and abundant, for this attracted the deer, one of the principal sources of

their food supply. It was this yearly burning over which had kept the forest from spreading, and prevented the tangled undergrowth which has since sprung up on the mountain sides.

Scattered over its park-like surface are some mammoth oaks, and a few trees of other varieties. My father told me that he could detect no change in size in these trees in all the time he remembered them. He was born in 1788 and came to this valley in 1794, his father settling in that year four miles to the northward of the Reed homestead, and his memory in such matters was very clear, back into his boyhood. They probably did grow a little during that time, but it was so little that his memory did not note it.

Their great size, and the fact that they had practically attained maturity, indicate that they had hailed the advent of the white man from the crown of many centuries. Some of them still remain, and there are two fine specimens, oaks, growing on a steep bank a short distance back of the Reed house. It is said the first white settler on the farm spared these two trees as they were such fine, large specimens. They look as thrifty today as they probably did then, and bid fair, if undisturbed, to be present at the ushering in of more centuries.

Rarely has an axman the courage to attack one of these survivors of another age, and the community now cultivates a fine sentiment which promotes all steps looking to the preservation of these and all other ancient landmarks.

The settlement of this valley was not like that of the orderly settlement of towns in New England, which was carried forward by the thorough-going English civic organization, but it was a scene where met the tides of several migrating races in search of new homes. The Dutch, who had settled along the Hudson River, drifted to it across Dutchess County, but got no further eastward, for here they met the Puritan element. A Yankee colony settled the adjoining town of Sharon, Connecticut, about that time, and at once the English flowed over the border and mingled with the Dutch, the two as unlike in temperament and methods as two branches of the white race well could be.

Civic and religious organizing was not a specialty with the Dutch. They were tolerant to the last degree, and never felt the divine call to take charge of their neighbors' opinions and consciences—for the good of said neighbors' souls of course—that some peoples have claimed. Our Dutchman was an individualist, and preferred to let his neighbor enjoy the same liberty of individualism that he claimed for himself. Home-making was his first thought, and churches and government might follow, and not precede, the founding of homes.

So farms were occupied first, roads running along from one house to another, and at convenient crossings blacksmith's shops, churches and stores, sprung up in time. Its result is seen in that Dutchess County does not contain a village, in the New England sense of the term. Its "villages" are but crossroads where a few more houses are assembled than are to be found in the purely farming districts.

But the English Yankee was another creature. His first thought was for the social organism, seeming to understand instinctively that, like a bee in the swarm, the welfare of the individual is largely dependent on the welfare of the organization. He reckoned his own individuality as being, at all times and under all circumstances, part of a corporate individuality. He organized a town with its church and schools, and elected town officers, before he fenced his fields.

One can not ride through a New England village today without being confronted by evidence of the ancient Saxon thought which has come down from England, and through her from the far home of English institutions in the Saxon Northland. It is a thought which had a care for the community interests, laying out a common ground which should belong to the public, where every man should have an equal right with every other man. A New England village is a homogeneous community clustered about this "Common Ground," the Village Green.

It was a foregone conclusion that in the meeting and mingling of so many elements the ready-made organization would prevail, and the Dutchman woke up one fine morning and found himself transformed to a Yankee; language and all. Who shall say how much we are indebted to the modifying influence of each of these races for our present fine poise of environment, wherein we preserve to a degree a blending of individual liberty with a wholesome sense of public duty?

But there were other ingredients to be mingled. Some of those who settled in this valley were Palatines who had been driven from their homes in the Rhine Valley by the French army of Louis XIV, and had at first found refuge in England. Then good Queen Ann colonized many of them along the Hudson, and (doubtless with the thrifty thought of turning an honest dollar while doing a good deed) expected them to make some return by producing hemp, tar, pitch, and pine lumber, and working in the tanneries.

Here they again fell upon evil days, for they were so oppressed and abused by the taskmasters who were placed over them that they once more fled, this time to save themselves from starvation. A few of them came to this valley, where they at last found rest from tyranny. One, Uldrick Winegar, lived to a great age, passing away in 1754 at the age of



102 years. Tribulation did not seem to shorten his days. He was buried in the cemetery at Amenia Union, where his grave stone still remains.

Beside these diverse elements in the settling of Amenia still further variety was added by a sprinkling of Huguenots, bringing their threefold family names, such as *de La Vergne*, *de La Mater*, and *de La Noyse*. On the English tongue and pen these quickly became single words, and to us they were known as "Delavergne," "Delamater," and "Delano." There was also now and then a Scotchman, and it would be strange indeed if a few Irish did not find their way thither. The seasoning of this mingled community would not have been complete without these elements.

There should be mentioned one other influence that had to do with the making of this composite civilization. About the time the first settlers came there also came some Moravian missionaries to the Indians. They were Germans, sent by the church of the Moravian faith at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and they established a mission station at a lake to the northward; a lake which is one of the several sources of the Webutuck, it lying partly in New York and partly in Connecticut. The first preaching to the congregation at Amenia Union, of which there is any record, was by one of these missionaries.

Alas, that the missionary to the weaker race is but the forerunner of its extermination! Though the benevolent enterprise was forwarded by the wealth and genius of Count Zinzendorf, a Count of ancient lineage and rank, and later by his daughter, the Countess Benigna, yet before two decades had elapsed the missionary station was broken up through political influence, and many of the Indian converts left that part of the country. Some of the missionaries themselves however remained to preach to the white congregations of established churches in the vicinity.

Until recently the lake, near which was established the missionary station, was called "Indian Pond." But owing to the efforts of Rev. Edward O. Dyer attention has been called to the sonorous name by which the Moravians, in their sublime faith, christened it: *Gnadensee*; "The Lake of Grace." What could be more fitting? Let us hope that the name, so appropriate for the beautiful lakelet about which so much of the pathos and romance of worthy and unworthy effort clusters, will find adoption in place of the prosaic "Indian Pond" of the colonists.

Two books, "Gnadensee; The Lake of Grace," and "The Camp on Poconnuck," from Mr. Dyer's pen, are worthy efforts to preserve the historic and romantic interest in this Borderland.



At the time when Eliakim Reed moved to Amenia both New York and Connecticut were slave states, and in regard to the institution of slavery and its influence on this community, I find myself somewhat at a loss from lack of first-hand information respecting it. The more I reflect on this the more do I wonder, for in my younger days I knew many who could have depicted it graphically. My father reached middle life before the institution came to its final end in New York, which was in 1827. But I do not recall that in my youth my aged relatives ever talked much about it, at least not in the fond, reminiscent mood in which they related other family lore.

Fine estates had been accumulated by some of the New England financiers who engaged in the slave trade, securing negroes in Africa, by purchase or otherwise, and bringing them to America where they found a ready market in the cotton-growing colonies. But slavery, as an industrial institution, was never a success in New England, and at the time of which I write it was far advanced in its decline, which led finally to its extinction in all the northern colonies and states.

The growing sentiment against it was already securing a firm foothold in Amenia, and many prominent owners were taking steps to liberate their slaves. Quite a number were owned in the town at the time the Reeds came there, some having been brought by the Dutch from New York City, as well as some by the New Englanders. Eliakim (4) Reed did not own slaves, but his brother Ezra (who also moved to Amenia) owned a few. It is recorded that in 1788 he emancipated three slaves, a man with his wife and son.

The Reeds and allied families were early in sympathy with the sentiment which was then growing so rapidly, which was opposed to slavery on the ground that it was unjust, and I have thought it quite possible that those people whom I knew—which of course was long after its abolishment in the North—may have felt a sense of reserve on the subject; a delicate disinclination to talk freely about a thing which their parents had been connected with, but which was now considered to have been something bad; as if it was in some sense a smirch on the family escutcheon.

Such an attitude toward the subject may seem curious to us, now that the institution is at an end in this nation, but it was a very vital subject then, and thoughtful people were already anticipating some sort of a crisis, though none could foresee what form it would take. So possibly it was not strange if they felt that it had to do with the repute of those whom they were taught to revere. However, at this date we are enabled to take a "historical point of view."

From all that I can learn I do not think slavery had much effect in shaping the social or industrial life of this community, for it was incidental rather than a controlling force. Possibly climate and a widely varied agriculture were not favorable to its spread, and quite possibly too the Moral Thought planted at Plymouth may have had a more lasting influence than it is usually credited with. Whatever the causes may have been it was not a civilization built upon slavery as its foundation.

All records and traditions show that the slaves were treated kindly as a class, and were looked upon rather as a weaker people who were not capable of caring for themselves, but were dependent on their owners for care and direction. The principle was recognized in legislation, for when New York set about the task of abolishing slavery (about the beginning of the nineteenth century) it forbade owners from emancipating slaves who were too old to care for themselves, holding that it was the duty of the owner to care for his slaves in their old age.

The negro race is an exotic in the northern states, at the best, and under present conditions seems to be in the process of becoming extinct. I do not think there are half as many in that vicinity as there were in my boyhood, and this notwithstanding the fact that immediately after the civil war many came there from the South.

In the revolutionary war, which broke on the country two years after Eliakim Reed moved to Amenia, the enemy never quite penetrated to this inland valley, (though once a body of prisoners, mostly Hessians, were taken southward through it,) yet the community felt its effects most actually in many ways. Besides the onerous taxes and military service made necessary, the war made occasion for many lawless acts and outrages by unprincipled men.

Our civil war nearly a century later showed parallel, though worse, acts in the innumerable scenes of robbery and murder in the border states by lawless bands of ruffians which were known at the time as "Guerrillas," and "Bushwhackers." The prevailing sentiment in this valley during the revolution was in sympathy with the "patriots," and some of the outrages may have been committed by Tories, of which there were many further to the westward, in the interior of Dutchess County.

Ezra Reed was too young to take an active part in war service, and his father was too old, but three of Ezra's brothers, Simeon, Silas and Samuel, are on record as having served as part of the Amenia quota. There are preserved the names of about seventy men who served as soldiers in the revolution from Amenia, and it is believed that with the

imperfect records of that time the names of many others who served have been lost to posterity.

With the close of the revolution the colonists faced a situation hardly less strenuous than that which had confronted them at its beginning, for it left them very poor in all save opportunity; opportunity and spirit. Freed from the authority of the King, a rampant and aggressive individualism in the now "free and independent," but not yet "United" colonies, asserted itself, and the statesmanship of Washington and Jefferson, with the impassioned eloquence of Hamilton and his co-workers, was tested to the utmost before the colonies could all be persuaded to relinquish so much of their new-found independence as was necessary in order to join themselves together for common welfare and defense under a national authority.

Nor were the hardships ended with the ending of the war. There was a pathetic aftermath of that heroic struggle; one that is seldom heard of now in the gatherings of the wealthy "Sons" and "Daughters" of the descendants of those who wrought and suffered in that drear time.

Many who served in the ranks were men who had at the beginning acquired a little foothold in life, and owned small farms. The colonies were straitened for means wherewith to carry on the war, and pay for the troops was uncertain and slow in arriving. Some served for years without being able to draw their small pay, and meantime their families at home were getting deeper and deeper in debt for their necessary subsistence. When the war was ended and they at last received their arrears of pay, it was in continental currency which at once became worthless.

By this means men who had done patient duty in the army for years returned home only to lose their farms and homesteads. Thus discouraged by their losses, and by the turbulent confusion in political and industrial affairs, many lost courage and hope, and drifted into vagrancy.

My mother was born in the year 1800, and she often recalled that during her early life there were many tramps of a certain type travelling the country roads. They were harmless, discouraged old men, who often asked for food or the privilege of sleeping in the barn. But whatever other wants they might have, there was one thing they never failed to ask for, and that was for "just a drink of cider, Ma'am." For this reason they were always spoken of as "Cider Tramps." Cider was then the common beverage in farm communities.

Rarely or never were their requests for food, drink or lodging denied, for it was well known and understood by everyone that they were old

revolutionary soldiers who had become impoverished by the war, and by reason of adverse circumstances had become the driftwood of the communities. As time elapsed and those who had served in the war passed away the "Cider Tramps" disappeared from the roads.

This is not a pleasant phase of national life upon which to dwell, but it is best to read history truthfully. It generally happens that those who strive the hardest and suffer the most in national convulsions are most often sunk in oblivion, and even their names lost to posterity.

The agricultural implements of that time were rude in the extreme; hardly improved at all on those of earlier generations. Plows had points of wrought-iron or steel, but the mouldboards were of wood, and the "smooth-gliding furrow" was then unknown, the plow, drawn by oxen of traditional slowness of motion, tending rather to "bunt" through the soil. Grain was cut with a sickle, threshed with a flail, and slowly separated from its chaff in a winnowing basket, which is an implement that very few now living have ever seen. Between these things and the present improved machinery there were two generations who used cradles for cutting grain, and fanning mills for cleaning it.

Grass was cut with the scythe, for the advent of the mowing-machine was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, and it is even within my own memory, forming one of the most treasured recollections of my youth, that in those broad intervale meadows a common midsummer scene was the group of a half-dozen or more sinewy mowers sweeping with keen blades adown the sea of billowy grass.

The late Myron B. Benton, (son of Betsey *Reed* Benton,) in "The Mowers," has immortalized this summer scene in a poem which is as much a classic in its way as is Whittier's "Snow Bound" of the winter scene. I can not refrain from quoting its concluding stanza:

"Still hiss the scythes!  
Shudder the grasses' defenseless blades—  
The lily-throng writhes;  
And, as a phalanx of wild-geese streams,  
Where the shore of April's cloudland gleams,  
On their dizzy way, in serried grades—  
Wing on wing, wing on wing—  
The mowers, each a step in advance  
Of his fellows, time their stroke with a glance  
Of swerveless force;  
And far through the meadow leads their course—  
*Swing, swing, swing!*"

Largely on account of lack of transportation facilities it was necessary to manufacture almost everything at home by hand labor. The farmer

saved his beef hides and took them to the tanner, where several months were required to convert them into leather, and the tanner took one-half of each hide as pay for his labor.

The shoemaker brought his kit of tools which he planted by the great fireplace in the living room, and was a member of the family until he had made them a year's supply of shoes from this home-grown leather. These shoes must be made to last the year through, and in the summer-time the regular fashion of footwear for children—as well as for some who were not children—was Nature's own.

Beef and mutton went to market on its own feet, and continued to during the first half of the nineteenth century. Aside from these the few articles that were marketed and brought actual money returns into the community had to be carted twenty-five miles to the Hudson River, and sent thence by boat to market. Home industry was then protected in a most efficient manner.

As the cold of winter drew on apace the pork crop, which had been slowly ripening and was now receiving its last finishing touches at the gathering of the corn, must be made ready for marketing. It could not carry itself to market as did the beef and mutton, on account of its condition of artificial obesity and fatty degeneration, to say nothing of the animals "*con-tra*-riness," as it was sometimes called; a sort of depravity which has inhabited the species since that remote time when the devils entered into it, and which has ever since made it impossible to drive them.

For these reasons the pork had to be carried to market, and the distance was so great that it was inexpedient to attempt it in the summer months, and in the winter the Hudson River, that first freight line, was ice-locked. So the time selected was usually in November or December, after the field crops were gathered, when the weather was cold but the river not yet closed by ice, for it does not freeze as quickly as smaller bodies of water.

Then came butchering time, the event of the year. Long, long before the tardy autumnal light appeared in the East a steaming hot breakfast had been served, and a great pitcher of cider set on the hearth in front of the roaring fire, this for the further refreshment of the strenuous workers from time to time. Out of doors a fire was burning under the great kettle where the scalding water was being heated, and the first rosy flush of dawn was saluted by the frenzied shrieks of murdered swine.

Butchering day began very early and ended very late; a long, hard and laborious day it was, very trying indeed to all except those children who were too young to be of any assistance. These latter are the optimists to whom all upheavals, be it butchering day, housecleaning,

movings or weddings, are a joy and a delight. Night saw the finish of the first day's work with long strings of dressed hogs hanging on stout poles, ("gallows,") stark, clean and white, scraped and washed;—shaven even.

On the following day they must be gotten to market, and if there was snow enough for sleighing it was most fortunate, and the teams could return from Poughkeepsie laden with groceries and a few other necessary supplies. There was also a vast amount of work to be done in preparing and preserving the considerable store of meat and lard reserved for family consumption.

The matter of fuel then required more thoughtful consideration than at present. In these times keeping warm in the country depends on buying coal at the railroad and drawing it home;—and paying for it. But stoves had not come into use then, and fire-places were depended on for both warmth and cooking, except that much of the baking was done in large brick ovens which were heated once a week with small wood. Yet while the fireplaces had their disadvantages in the way of lack of even temperature, they secured perfect ventilation, and the "fresh air system," now so much advocated, was then the normal life.

But open fireplaces consume wood, and to an extent past the belief of those who have had no experience with them, and hence an important part of the winter's work consisted in chopping, drawing and piling up an immense wood-pile that usually covered a large area in the back yard.

It was under these and similar conditions that Ezra Reed came to manhood's estate, and it was not alone in the field that results were accomplished by slow hand labor, but in the sphere of household economy as well. I have in my possession a pair of fine woolen stockings, the wool for which Ezra sheared from his own sheep. His wife Esther cleansed the wool, and herself carded it by hand into fine rolls. In turn their youngest daughter, Emeline, spun it on an old-fashioned spinning wheel, and knit it into these stockings, the quality of which it would be difficult to surpass at the present day.

This instance will answer as a type of the system of industry which prevailed in all the details of supplying the community with the necessities and comforts of life. Yet with all their handicaps, both political and industrial, all traditions assert that the community was cheerful and optimistic to the last degree. Our new nation was not launched, nor the wilderness subdued, by a race of pessimists.

In trying to account for this condition I am impressed by the records of those large families, from six to a dozen or more sons and daughters

growing up in each family, the whole community being literally *alive* with young people; and the further thought comes to me that this must have made *Youth* the great and preponderating influence in the community, and thence spreading outward into the life of the greater organism. Youth and Hope go hand in hand.

There is no doubt that country communities then gave fuller rein to their social bent than they do now. Happily there is a fund of wholesome joy indigenous to the race, and possibly they were less distracted then by outside interests, for we find their lives were in no sense narrow or cramped, but were filled with joy and abounding with enterprise. Their whole life was strenuous and vital to its finger tips, and fortunately it had its necessary counterpoise of the strenuous virtues.

In the autumn "oceans" of sweet cider must be boiled down to the consistency of molasses, with which to manufacture the barrel of "cider-applesauce" for the annual family supply of this delectable preserve, and the apples needed for its compounding were pared and cut at the sociable evening apple-bees. And hunting and fishing, the primitive occupation of the race, also in their seasons furnished wholesome sport for the men and boys.

Aside from the ostensibly social affairs, such as parties, socials and dances, to which each young man went on horseback, with his lady riding on a pillion which was fastened to the back part of the saddle, every industrial opportunity was made the most of. The raising of the frame of a small building was made a neighborhood social event where refreshments were provided for all. Corn was husked by evening husking-bees, generally followed by a hot supper and then a dance on the great barn-floor, and roads were also constructed by the co-operative system.

My father's life began in those times, and he took part in many of their revelries. He has told me that it was well understood by the older and wiser heads that, from a monetary point of view, it was not profitable. But the younger members had other profits in view, and long continued to bring the social element as much as possible into all their life, their work as well as their play.

Young people did not take singing lessons then, but occasionally a singing teacher was hired and a public singing school held weekly evening sessions through the winter, generally in the church, and that was an incomparably fine institution for social purposes.

There was among the early colonists a curious prejudice against the observance of Christmas, doubtless a heritage of their heroic protest against the tyranny of the Mother Church, for by association of ideas



this seems to have been included as something pertaining to that which they had revolted against.

But Thanksgiving was another matter, for it was a peculiarly New England institution, and its observance was continued by each successive generation. At my earliest recollection of these annual festivals Ezra and Esther were too far advanced in years to attempt them themselves, but they had four children, Betsey, Columbus, Newton and Emeline, who were married and living in the town, and later a fifth, Catharine. It became the custom for these to alternate in assembling the tribe for this feast, and as the descendants within driving distance had become quite numerous it was always a joyous assembling.

I recall a letter which reached us in camp somewhere down at the front during the civil war, which described one of the family gatherings. It mentioned that at one side of the long table empty chairs were placed for those who were absent, serving in the army. Alas that two of them were never filled again!

Let me anticipate a little and speak of the last of these family gatherings of the descendants of Ezra and Esther. It was held at the home of my mother at Leedsville during the latter part of her life. Father had died in 1865, and Brother Myron had succeeded to the homestead, then christened "Troutbeck." The great brick oven, one of the largest of its kind, was still standing, and Brother Myron fortunately succeeded in securing the services of a cook who was versed in the arts of other days, and loved a great brick oven better than she did a modern range.

The tribe had become greatly scattered through many states by that time, but there were still a goodly number of old and young who were within reach, so many indeed as was proved that the great dining room could not seat them all at once; the children must wait for the second table. Ah, what a succession of roast turkeys and chickens, roasts of beef and pork, chicken pies with all their "fixin's," and vegetables and pies galore, followed in succession from the iron throat of the great oven as each in turn came out deftly poised on the "oven-shovel" in the experienced hands of Mrs. Burdick! It was the last time that oven was ever used.

During the last few years of these Thanksgiving parties it was the custom that there was produced and read to the company the annual issue of the *Webutuck Miscellany*, which greatly added to the enjoyment of the occasion. The articles were contributed by various gifted ones among the descendants, and it is needless to say that the one copy of the periodical was in manuscript.



To return to the narrative of early times, whatever the advantages or disadvantages may have been in living then, Ezra must have taken a cheerful view of life, for he only waited to reach his majority when he returned to Norwalk and brought from thence, February 4, 1787, his bride, Jemima Fitch.

She was the daughter of Nathan and Mehitabel (Hoyt) Fitch. Nathan was brother to Matthew Fitch, Jr., who married Ezra's oldest sister, Sarah; and Rebecca Fitch who married his brother, Eliakim Reed, Jr. They were children of Matthew Fitch, Sr., who was the great-grandson of Thomas Fitch who settled in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1651.

Ezra and Jemima took up their residence in an old house a little south of his father's, but it was in the same yard. This house was removed more than sixty years ago. Their married happiness was all too brief, for Jemima died March 7, 1789, five weeks after giving birth to her daughter Harriet.

Ezra did not wait quite a year (which the conventionality of a later date decided was the proper time to wait) before he married again. There was a little babe which needed a mother's care, and in many ways the people of that day were subject to conditions which made the institution of the family, and the helpfulness of the sexes to each other, a necessity that we can hardly realize.

February 15, 1790, he was married to Esther Edgerton, of Pawlet, Vermont, seventh of the fourteen children of Simeon and Abiah (Hough) Edgerton, he being twenty-four, and she just turned twenty-one.

One more little glimpse may be had of the conditions then by an incident of her life. It was related to me by my mother, who was her daughter. At a suitable time after the birth of her first child, Esther—following a good old custom—returned to her parents' home in Vermont with her babe, for a rest and visit. She travelled the whole distance on horseback, carrying her babe; but it was so fatiguing that when she took her departure for home she told her parents she should never visit them again until there had been invented some easier method of travel.

The thought of an "easier method of travel" was realized many years afterward when she and her husband were able to take their annual vacation, "after planting," by going in a wagon for a filial visit at Pawlet.

Ezra and Esther continued to make their home on his father's place, and as Eliakim grew infirm with years Ezra took the farm to work, either on shares or to rent, which he continued until his father's death.

Sarah, Eliakim's wife, died June 8th, 1795, aged sixty-eight years, and hers were the first remains to be placed in the present South Amenia Cemetery, which had then just been laid out. Eliakim died October 28,

1810, at the goodly age of eighty-five, and his remains rest beside those of his wife. In his will he bequeathed lands in Pawlet, Vermont, and in Spencer's, Columbia County, N. Y., indicating that his landed interests were not limited to the home farm.

In the settlement of the estate, after the death of his father, Ezra bought the farm as already related, and moved into the homestead house where he and Esther spent the remainder of their days. Ten children were born to them, all of whom grew to maturity, and all but one of whom married and had children.

Soon after the birth of their last child the nation again fell into war, that of 1812, but I judge that it did not greatly disturb this community. No active opposition was manifested, but the people were for the most part not enthusiastic over the war. Ezra was himself past the military age, and his eldest son, Fitch, had not reached it, so probably the family life hardly felt its stir and impulse. It accomplished much for the nation, but it did not so strongly appeal to the moral sanctions as did the civil war of half a century later.

As Ezra grew old he in turn relinquished the care of the farm, his son Newton taking charge of it.

I now reach a point in my narrative which comes in touch with my own memory of Ezra Reed, and there is summoned at beck the vision of a dignified figure of an aged man who walked lamely, for he had received an injury to one of his legs and never fully recovered from it. It had been crushed by a falling tree when he was forty-five years old, and the injury was a very serious one.

For many weeks it confined him to a bed of pain, where he was still further oppressed with forebodings regarding the future support of his large family, for he had not yet paid all the debt incurred in the purchase of the farm from the other heirs to his father's estate. Fortunately he was restored beyond his highest hopes, though for the remainder of his life, more than forty years, he suffered more or less pain, and the wound had to be dressed daily.

Every year, on the last day of haying, which was a notable event in those bucolic times, Ezra went down to the meadow and presented each of the men with a silver dollar; not for the value of the coin, but as a token of his continuing interest in the work and the workers; and even the children about the farm were not forgotten, each receiving a small coin.

It was then his frequent custom, perhaps on account of his lameness, to frequently drive to the homes of some of his children, several of whom lived within driving distance. Three days before the eighty-

seventh anniversary of his birth he drove four miles, to my father's in Leedsville. Leaving some one to hitch the horses he came into the family sitting-room and took a seat. A few moments later, while engaged in pleasant conversation, his head suddenly dropped to his breast, and his life had ended without a struggle. He was buried on his eighty-seventh birthday.

But the messenger must have sent some timely warning of his near approach, though he did not mention it to his nearest friends. For that once, departing from his usual custom, he had distributed his silver tokens without waiting for the haying's completion.

Esther was too weak with infirmities and vanished memory to realize his going, yet in the mystery of Life's alchemy it would seem as if they, in their more than half a century of married life, must have come to share some common store of vital energy, for a few weeks afterward, September 6, 1852, she, too, passed away, though probably in ignorance that he had gone before. Their remains rest in the South Amenia Cemetery.

They had lived to witness great advances in the methods and comforts of life, but there are higher measures of values than these, such as the ideal American home, where the family life is not dissipated and scattered in a multitude of outside interests, but comprehended a strong, organic life of its own, which bred strong men and women and strong citizenship. Beside this there was a homogeneity in the community then; a spirit of mutual helpfulness which created a distinct Community Life, the ghost of which we are trying at this late day to re-incarnate. In the realization of these ideals, and in an era of improving outward conditions, their lives covered the very heyday of American agriculture.

They had been fairly thrifty in the world of industry, and better still they had lived worthy and upright lives; lives that were helpful to all the forces that make for a better community and a better civilization. In raising a family of eleven sons and daughters, all of them becoming men and women of a high type of character, they bestowed a dower of vastly greater value to the social organism than libraries or parks, or any gifts possible to great wealth, could ever be.

In his personality Ezra Reed was a blond of the large type, both physically and mentally; strong framed and athletic, standing fully six feet and being endowed with an excellent mental equipment. His son Newton has recorded of him that at the age of seventy he was early afield with his plow, and was nearly equal in labor with the most active of the men. On his eighty-third birthday he assisted in unloading the oats, twenty-five loads, most of which had to go over the great beam in the barn.

He was undemonstrative, quiet and reserved in manner, rarely showing excitement, a man of deep feeling though few words, conservative and cautious and not of an extreme or radical type of mind. For him the tried and proven was always to be preferred to the untried and experimental. A certain strength of his character lay in his persistence, that quality or faculty which phrenologists name as "continuity," and it sometimes amounted almost to "setness." But he was conscientious to the last degree, kind and sympathetic, and very methodical in his habits.

His lack of hasty and impulsive speaking sometimes led strangers to underestimate the great reserve of good will beneath, which found fitting expression in acts rather than in words, but in the community where he lived his stability of character was appreciated at its intrinsic value.

His was not a disposition that longed for public life, and he never accepted anything more than a few minor town offices. He was so averse to contention and litigation that he never sued a man but once in his life, and then it was not for personal gain, but to teach an unprincipled neighbor a lesson.

He may not have been of a pre-eminently social temperament, for I do not recall hearing that he was a frequenter of public places. But with aged parents and a wife and eleven children at home, beside numerous hired men, the farm could hardly have been solitude itself. Farms were more populous at that time. Since then the considerable villages of Amenia and Wassaic have sprung up, yet their growth has been offset by the depletion of the farm population, for the population of the town is practically the same now that it was then.

The only portrait extant of Ezra Reed is a daguerreotype which was taken a few years before his death. It shows him seated, holding in his hand a volume; a history of the French Revolution, an era of history which he was much interested in.

As a fitting compliment to his serene and unruffled disposition Esther was of another type. Hers was a high-strung, nervous temperament, which sometimes felt the fretting and galling of petty annoyances, and yet calmly rose, undaunted, to the greater duties of life. The general "vim" of her character was so well understood that the phrase, "Edgerton Energy," had, at least to some of her descendants, a definite meaning. I will leave to the student of psychology the task of studying the blending, or sometimes dominance of one or the other, of these divergent temperaments in the descendants of this couple.

But as her mind faded in extreme age Esther's troubles went with it, and I recall her only as a bent form sitting close to the fireplace in the family living room. She spoke little then, but at the request of grand-

children would sometimes relate stories of her girlhood, though later impressions on the tablet of her memory seemed to have faded away.

The stories most in demand with that discriminating audience were "Grandma's wolf stories." One that I recall was of a moonlight night in their Vermont home, when she looked out of the window of the loft where the children slept and saw a wolf chasing the sheep. She crept softly down and wakened her father, who got up quickly and, grasping the flint-lock musket, sallied out and shot the wolf, which had caught a sheep and was tearing it.

At another time when in the winter the stock was enclosed for safety at night in the barnyard, which had a high wall about it, she saw wolves creep up and peer over into the yard, looking ravenously at the sheep and pigs. But they did not quite dare to enter the small enclosure, being afraid of the oxen and cows. Farmers took advantage of their fear of horned cattle, herding the other stock with them at night for safety, especially in the winter, at which time the wolves were often fierce with hunger.

The family of Ezra and Esther showed a delightful intellectual tendency and a love of good literature, and some of them had decided literary talents of their own. They also cherished a high moral standard and were of a very religious trend, not only in training and habit, but by inheritance and disposition as well. It is interesting to note that at this date all the Elders of the South Amenia Presbyterian Church are their descendants.

But Ezra himself, though a regular supporter and attendant of that church, did not formally join it until in his old age. I have never learned the reason for this, and have rather wondered, for he was notably of a religious character. It may have had to do with religious beliefs, for it was at a time when doctrines were considered to be a very serious matter, and dreary enough would some of them seem to the young people of the present day.

An eye witness, one who was a member of that family circle, has told me that in her childhood she had seen old men sitting around the fireplace and seriously discussing the question of whether the wail of a new-born infant, uttered with its first breath, was an evidence of "Total Depravity."

But we have no cause to be ashamed of our ancestors, nor should we feel called on to apologize for their beliefs. The one important thing about it is that their beliefs were honestly held, and were lived up to in sincerity. "Any kind of an ancestor will do, at a pinch,—except a liar!"

In the civil war four of their grandsons were in Company A, of the "Dutchess County Regiment," (150th New York Volunteer Infantry,)

and a great-grandson was in a Pennsylvania regiment. Of these, First Lieutenant Henry Gridley was killed in battle, Albert B. Reed died of camp fever in Virginia, and the others, Charles E. Benton, Nathan W. Reed, and Leonard Hollister, (the latter a great-grandson,) are living at the present time.

It will not be inappropriate for me to give some account here of the family of Ezra Reed, though the descendants, numbering several hundreds, are fully recorded in "REED-READ LINEAGE," written and published by Ella Reed Wright of Waterbury, Connecticut, and the reader is referred to that book for a more complete account. It gives the descendants of John (1) Reed through his sons John and Thomas, and includes the records of nearly ten thousand descendants.

Harriet, born January 30, 1789, Ezra's daughter by his first wife, married at the age of fifteen Matthew Fitch Middlebrook. They had no children, and after his death she married Dr. Josiah Pulling, by whom she had five children, though only one of them lived to marry and have descendants. She lived with her second husband, a practicing physician, in Galway, New York. She died January 29, 1860.

Almira, Esther's first child, born April 10, 1791, was married at the age of sixteen—Oh, but they married early in those days!—to Rev. Allan Hollister. At that time the State of New York offered a grant of land to ministers who would go into new settlements and organize churches. He accepted this offer and organized the first Congregational Church at Riga, New York. But he only lived to prosecute his missionary labors a few years, and Almira returned to her parents with her two children, the youngest but a few months younger than her own youngest sister. She died May 22, 1823, and was buried at South Amenia.

Cythera, Esther's second child, born January 16, 1793, married William A. Benton, whose home was four miles to the northward in the valley, near the village of Leedsville. I have a silhouette portrait of the couple which may have been made about that time. She is said to have been a handsome woman, and this portrait indicates it, for it shows an intellectual face, with the head carried in fine poise. Cythera's married life was all too short. She had seven children, but died August 11, 1825, at the age of thirty-two, the victim of a fever which devastated the household. At the date of this writing, 1911, her second child and oldest daughter, Harriet Middlebrook Benton, is living in her ninety-eighth year.

Fitch, the third child and eldest son, born March 28, 1795, began early in life to study for the medical profession, but his religious nature became

awakened and presently he felt that he had a call to preach the gospel, and hearkening to the higher duty gave up his medical ambitions, to study for the ministry. He became a Minister in the M. E. Church, and preached for more than half a century, during which time he became widely known and greatly respected. He was a man of unusual intellectual ability.

Not long since I came upon a poem in manuscript which he wrote early in life. It shows a fine literary quality, yet I fear the talent was a talent hid, for I never heard of his cultivating it. Doubtless he considered his other work, to which he had consecrated his life, of more importance. He died October 10, 1871, at Ithaca, New York, where he and his wife, Almeda (Dana) spent their declining years. They left two daughters, one of whom married and left descendants.

Horace, fourth child, born August 3, 1797, married Julia Calkin, of Sharon, Connecticut. They lived for a time in Sharon, where he owned the farm which lies next west of the present golf course of the Sharon Country Club. In 1844 he moved to Michigan, then considered the frontier, but died in the following year, July 20, 1845. His descendants reside in Michigan and other parts of the west.

Betsey, fifth child, was born February 5, 1800. Like most of her brothers and sisters she was tall, and her fine complexion was made more striking by her hair, which was jet black and very heavy and long. At the time of her death in her seventy-seventh year only a few silver threads were noticeable in it. Her memory is treasured by those who knew her as one who, though outwardly placid and undemonstrative, was a woman of strong feeling and depth of character; one whose ideals were of the highest and who never failed to respond to the call of duty. Despite her wide hospitality and the care of her large family she kept up in her knowledge and in her reading with current events, nor did she lose her taste for the literature of the best old authors.

She married William A. Benton, whose first wife was her older Sister, Cythera. After marriage she joined the Disciples of Christ, (a denomination often spoken of as "Campbellites,") a church of which her husband and his father were members, and her life to its close was a devout Christian life.

This denomination, in which Mr. Benton was an Elder, was very young at that time, its first church having been organized at Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1809. It has now grown large and popular, especially in the West, and has furnished a president to the United States.

Betsey had eight children, of whom the writer is the youngest. Some account of the Benton ancestry and descendants, and of the Benton-Reed descendants, is to be found in "Caleb Benton and Sarah Bishop;



Their Ancestry and their Descendants," which I published in 1906. Betsey died November 12, 1876.

Polly, sixth child, born May 25th, 1803, never married, nor did she ever seem disposed to marry; and she even carried the sentiment to such an extreme that she never wished her brothers and sisters to marry. She preferred, instead, to remain at home, and she wished everyone else to do the same! But aside from that idiosyncrasy (which was the occasion for more or less merry-making in the family circle) she was a most delightful woman, just running over with goodwill, and I recall her face of strongly marked features illumined with welcome as she met me at the door.

She cared faithfully for her parents in their old age, and in her own declining years made her home with her brother Newton, whose kindness to her never abated. She died April 8, 1882, at the home of her birth, aged nearly seventy-nine years.

Newton, seventh child, was born February 26, 1805. He succeeded to the farm according to his father's wish, and spent his life there, though he at first planned to study for the ministry. He married Ann Van Dyck, and they had eight children, all of whom grew to maturity. He lost one son, Albert B., in the civil war, and there is a brief sketch of Albert's life and character in the regimental history, "The Dutchess County Regiment," etc. At the age of twenty Newton was made an Elder in the South Amenia Presbyterian Church, and as Elder and Deacon he honorably served that church for seventy-one years; a most unusual record of service.

He was much interested in genealogical and antiquarian researches, and it is largely due to his untiring efforts that so many of the family records have been preserved, though others have continued the work, building on the foundation he had laid. Throughout his life he was a frequent contributor to periodical publications, and it is doubtless true that he was the best informed of anyone on subjects pertaining to the early settlement of this valley, and he it was who should have written this sketch. In his later years he wrote and published "Early History of Amenia," and a great part of the early history of the town would have been irrecoverably lost to us except for this little book, which has now become a standard for reference.

He lived in a part of his father's house while Polly kept house for their parents in the other rooms. After the death of his parents Newton moved into the main part, remodeling it somewhat, having, as already stated, purchased the farm of the estate. He died March 19, 1896, aged ninety-one years and twenty-one days.



After Newton's death the Reed Homestead was purchased of his estate by his eldest son, Henry Van Dyck Reed, who is the present owner.

Columbus, eighth child, was born February 21, 1807. He was twice married, first to Sarah Matilda Smith, and secondly to Mrs. Sarah A. (Flint) Bokee, and had children by both marriages. He was for some years a merchant in Wassaic (in the town of Amenia). Then he farmed it a few years, but finally established and carried on for a short time previous to his death the manufacture of woolen yarn at Amenia Union. He held some public offices and was favorably known throughout the county for his public spirit and integrity. He died January 1, 1856, at the age of forty-eight.

Catharine, ninth child, born December 17, 1809, married Rev. William J. MacCord, a Presbyterian clergyman, she being his third wife. Her own child was not living when it was born, but she was a faithful mother to his other children, by whom she was greatly beloved to the close of her long life; as indeed she was by everyone who knew her. In their old age they lived in Wassaic, and her husband died there. Later she made it her home with her nephew, Henry Van Dyck Reed, at the house where she was born, and where she died February 23, 1901, aged ninety-one years, two months and six days. Her's was the longest life in that family, she being the only member of it who lived into the twentieth century.

Emeline, Esther's tenth child, was born October 23, 1811. She married Noah Gridley, the youngest member of the firm which began the manufacture of iron at Wassaic, and in time he became the owner of the business, which under his wise management became very prosperous and he accumulated a handsome property. They had two sons, Henry and Edward, both of whom were active assistants in the business.

Henry graduated from Amherst (Massachusetts) College in 1862, the president of his class. The civil war was in progress then, and he immediately accepted a commission as First Lieutenant in Company A, of the 150th New York Volunteer Infantry, a regiment which he had an active part in organizing. He was killed in battle at a place known as "Kolb's Farm," near Marietta, Georgia, being shot through the heart while at the head of his Company. A sketch of his life and service is to be found in the regimental history before referred to.

After the war Edward joined his father in the business, under the firm name of "N. Gridley & Son." He married Emma S. Reed (a descendant of Daniel, 3,) but had no children. After his death his widow married Elias B. Reed (a descendant of Thomas, 2,) and now resides in Los Angeles, California.

Emeline's husband and her son Edward died eleven years before she did. She had always mourned for her dead soldier-boy, and now in her old age she was left without husband or descendants, and there fell to her lot in her last days much of sickness, of suffering and nervous unrest. Throughout her life her character had been one of great strength and marked personality, with deep christian devotion, and these qualities sustained her in the last sad years. In their home during a long term of years there had been exercised a wider and more constant hospitality than is often known, and in innumerable ways her life was a life of doing for others.

She died February 3, 1898, aged eighty-six years. After the civil war was ended Henry's remains were brought home, and her family circle is now complete in the cemetery plot at South Amenia.

Of the descendants of Ezra Reed some are still living in the valley, but very many more are scattered far, from the East to the West; but the valley remains. The name "Oblong Valley," is now more particularly applied to that portion of it which extends from Leedsville southward to the vicinity of South Amenia. Throughout this area it is bounded eastward by the mountains and hills of Connecticut, and westward by Oblong Mountain, which rises abruptly from the intervalle meadows at its base to a height of some seven or eight hundred feet.

Only a small portion of this beautiful valley is visible from the car windows, and the depths and windings of its tranquil river are still as pure from the chemicals as is its air from the smoke of factories. Lying as it does within two hours' ride of the largest city in the western hemisphere, soon without doubt to be the largest and wealthiest city in the world, what is its future?

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