

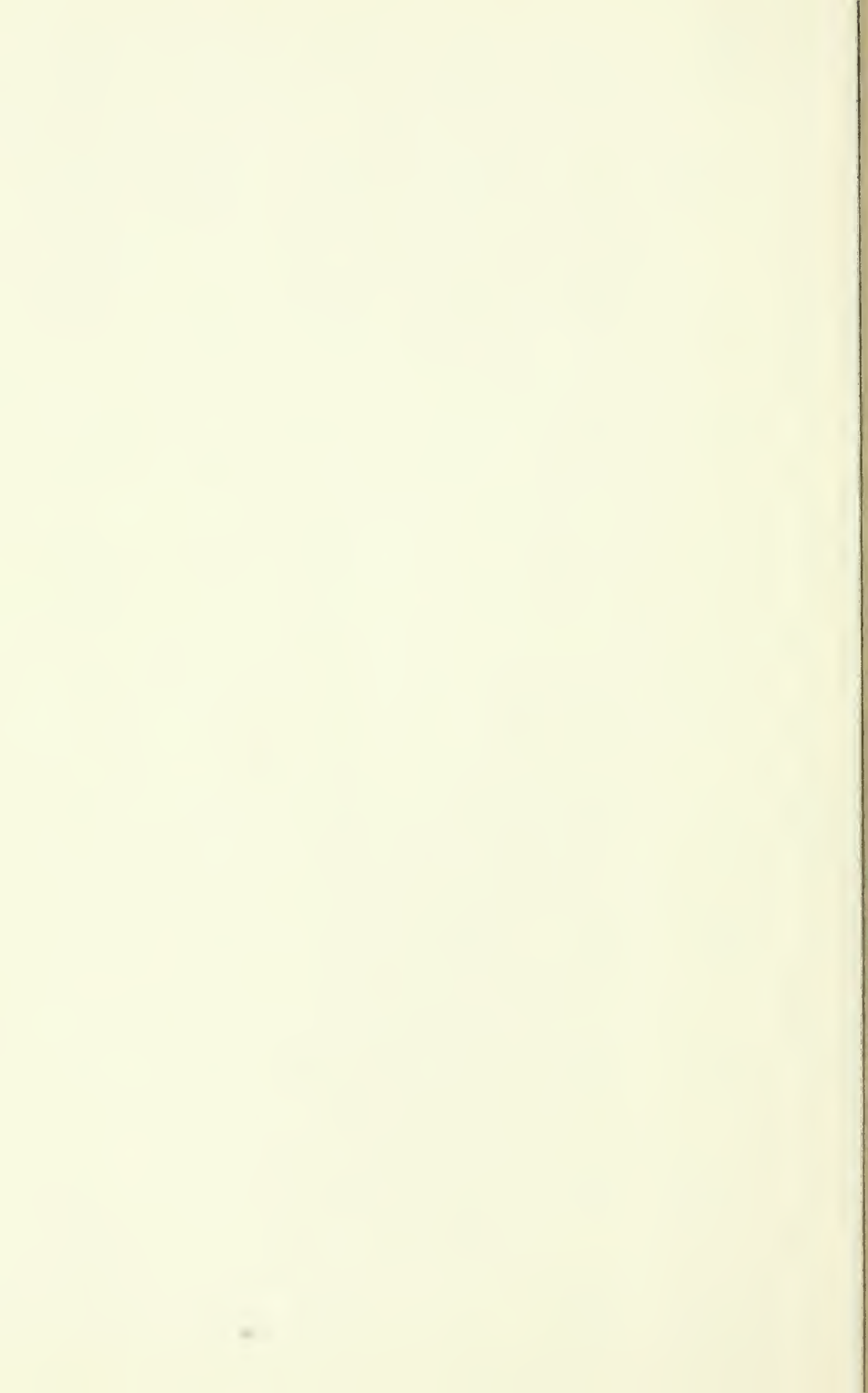
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**Bolton, Connecticut  
Bicentennial**

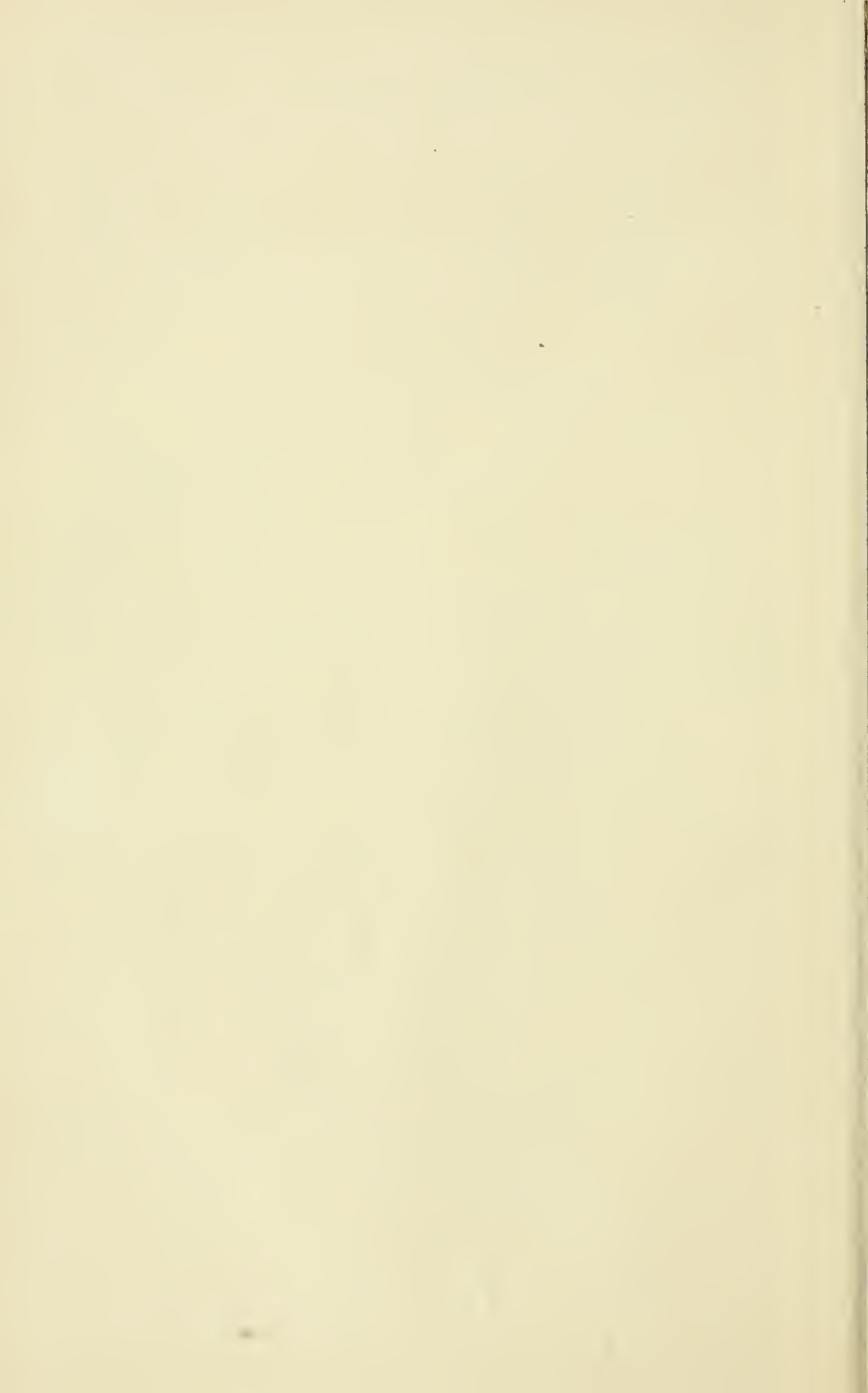
**1720-1920**



Compliments of the author.

Samuel Morgan Alwood.

Sept. 19-0





# A Historical Sketch

OF

## BOLTON CONNECTICUT

FOR THE

Bolton Bicentennial Celebration

September 4, 1920

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“I shall count it with a smile of Providence upon me if ever I should be settled among such a people as your society seems to be.”

(JONATHAN EDWARDS  
referring to the people of Bolton)

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BY  
SAMUEL MORGAN ALVORD

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## Historical Sketch

It is an interesting and noteworthy coincidence that the three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims falls on the same year as the two hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of Bolton. We concede superiority to Plymouth but it is worth while to note that the small towns of New England were an essential element in transmitting the life and principles of the Pilgrim and Puritan fathers. Small communities such as Bolton became the branches by which those ideals of which we are so justly proud were conveyed to more and more distant communities until at length they permeated the whole life of our nation and structure of our government.

The desire to know the first things is inherent in every human being. Almost from our infant days we have been curious to know about the beginnings of Mother Earth and in maturer years interest in things primeval has not diminished. The first battle of a great war, the first man to discover a new world, the first navigator to encircle the globe, the first aviator to cross the ocean by airship, all these have won for themselves the applause of the entire civilized world. It is right and proper that this should be so, for those who initiate things are the ones to whom the credit is due for every advance in the life of civilization. So it is that our thoughts today with unusual interest are centered on the first settlement of this ancient town of Bolton. We desire to know who trod these wonderful hills and valleys, what pursuits they followed and what their manner of life was.

### INDIANS

Previous to the coming of the white settlers, we must picture to ourselves a country heavily wooded with little underbrush or shrubbery and few clearings. After a somewhat exhaustive research it is my conviction that no

part of Bolton or even of Tolland County was ever the permanent residence of any considerable number of Indians. It is true that Indian arrow-heads have often been found within our borders, especially around Cedar Swamp Pond. This fact may be explained by noting that it was the custom for bands of Indians to journey many miles from their homes on hunting expeditions and make encampment near lakes or streams for months at a time. Cedar Swamp and Snipsic were places suitable for such encampments. To the west of us along the banks of the Connecticut River in East Windsor and East Hartford was the Podunk tribe; to the extreme north along the Massachusetts boundary we find the Nipmunks; to the south near East Haddam were the West Nehantics and to the east was the powerful tribe of Mohegans, having their abode near Norwich and New London. The Mohegans, with their chief Uncas and his son Attawanhood or Joshua, are the ones in whom we have by far the greatest interest for nearly all of Tolland County was claimed by them as a part of their hunting grounds.

### EARLIEST DEEDS

The oldest document on record relating to the transfer of land in Bolton is a grant by the General Court of Connecticut to Capt. Thomas Bull for services in the Indian Wars, bearing the date May 8, 1673, nearly fifty years before the incorporation of the town. A description of the grant is found in the Colonial Records of Deeds, Vol III, page 42, and is as follows:

“Capt. Thomas Bull had by grant of the Gen’l Court May the 8th 1673 two hundred acres of Land granted him which was layd out to him by James Steele and lyeth on the East side of the great river near Cedar Swamp & abuts on a great rock on the South East corner and on a marked tree at the end of a meadow taking in the meadow on the South West corner & on a great white oake at the south end of a pond on the north east corner & upon a

marked tree by the south end of Cedar Swamp on the north west corner of the sayd parcel of land. Recorded May 8, 1684."

The present residence of Henry Thompson was probably near the north end of this grant. Several later surveys of the Bull tract were made at the request of the heirs of Capt. Bull. In 1726 Samuel Grant exchanged his right in "Bull's Farm" so-called for five hundred acres of land at the extreme north end of the town which included Rockville and its excellent water power.

The following year, 1674, Joshua, son of Uncas, conveyed to Major John Talcott three hundred acres of land located "on east side of Connecticut Great River about Ten or Twelve miles from ye sd river east beyond Wethersfield or Hartford bounds east and lyeth in Two places about a mile Asunder having a Large Boggy meadow in each place being a hundred and fifty Acres in each piece of land sold—the firtherest piece which is Southward is called by the name Wochokieskeuas and the heither parcell northward is called by ye Indians Sagumpsketuck, ." Of these two pieces of land the southern one was in Hebron, the northern in Bolton, running north from the Jerijah Loomis or Eliza Daly place. Forty-five years later the title to this land was held by a granddaughter of Col. John Talcott, Dorothy Allyn, wife of Pelatiah Allyn of Windsor, who quit claim her rights to various persons then in possession of the grant through misunderstanding. The year following, 1675, the same Joshua conveyed to Henry Hayward (Howard) for two trucking cloathe coats and seven shillings in silver one hundred acres Southwest of the Talcott-Allyn tract.

Joshua died in 1676. His residence at that time was near eight mile Island in the town of Lyme where he was serving as chief of the Western Nehantics. Like his father, Uncas, he had been a steadfast friend of the English and by his will he distributed with lavish hand to his white friends the Mohegan hunting grounds of Tolland County and vicinity. To some he gave five thousand acres, to some four thousand, to some three thousand and to others two thousand. Bolton was included in these bequests and like its neighbor towns suffered for some

years after its incorporation from the conflicting claims of the settlers and the "Legatees of Joshua" whom they found could not be entirely ignored. Several of the early Bolton deeds recognize the rights of the "Legatees." There is no evidence that these vast tracts of land with their indefinite boundaries were ever divided among the legatees. The method of settlement of these conflicting claims was varied and perplexing. Some of the Legatees relinquished their claims, others received some slight remuneration.

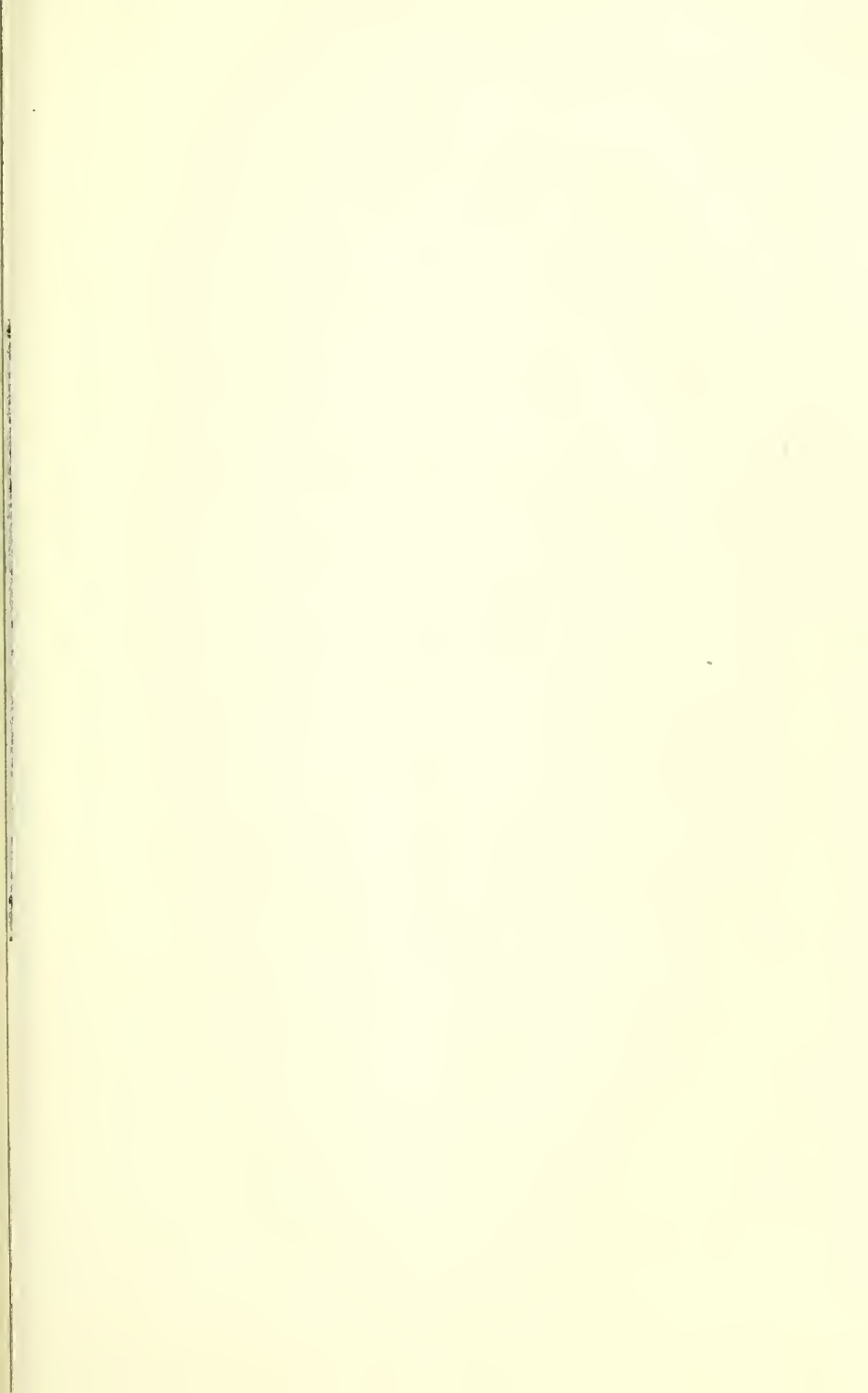
### EARLY SETTLEMENT

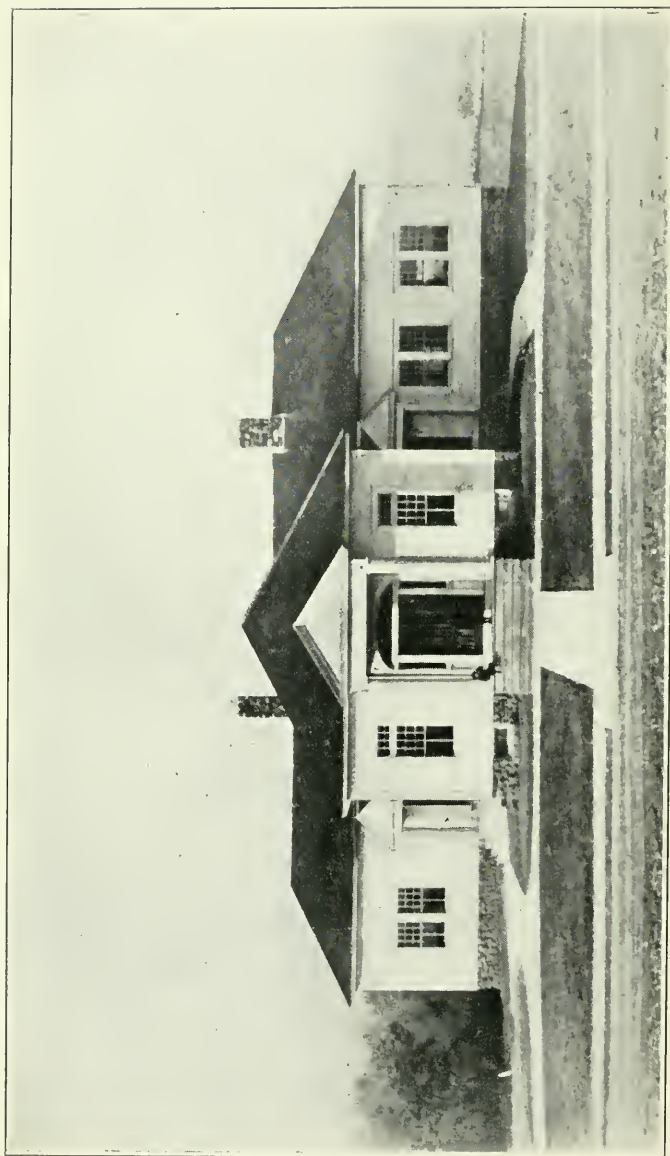
It would be interesting to know who was the first settler within the original bounds of BOLTON, but this has not been revealed to the searcher. Undoubtedly there were families located here at least ten years before the incorporation of the town. Jabez Loomis was settled here as early as March, 1718, as shown by the deed of his home lot, now the Charles F. Sumner place. From the same source it appears that Francis Smith had settled on the present Calvin Hutchinson place as early as May, 1718. A Capt. Stephen Bishop, a surveyor, of Guilford, was here about the same date. The records of the Court of Common Pleas state that Jonathan Hubbard of "Hanover or Hartford Mountains" was plaintiff against John Bissell of Coventry in a case that concerned the moving of grass from the plaintiff's land July 7, 1719.

At the May session of the General Court in 1718 the following resolution was passed relating to the settlement of Bolton.

[Session of May 1718.]

Whereas there is a tract of land lying westward of Coventry and Tolland, and eastward of the towns upon the river, which lands this Assembly hath in some degree suffered and allowed the legatees of Joshua, Indian sachem, deceased, to claim, yet always with such limitation that this Assembly did reserve the settlement thereof to themselves, pro-





BOLTON HALL AND LIBRARY



vided the said persons, legatees, did not settle the same to the mind of this Assembly, which they have not done: Be it therefore enacted, that the said land be and remain to be an entire town. And to the end that the same may be well settled with good inhabitants and all quarrels prevented, the said John Hamlin, James Wadsworth, John Hooker, John Hall, and Hez. Brainerd, be also appointed a committee for the settlement of said town, and to take care that there be suitable allotments laid out therein, for the reception of inhabitants who they shall admit into said town, with full power to ascertain and determine what the legatees shall have and be allowed to them for their rights to said land, by any that may be allowed by said committee to settle thereon. And whereas this Assembly is informed that there are several persons settled upon said lands without the approbation or consent of this Assembly, or the knowledge of said legatees, the said committee are directed and ordered to take effectual care of that matter. And provided the said committee shall think it best to remove said inhabitants from said lands they shall take care and order that the legatees or settlers next to be admitted pay back unto such persons so removed so much as the land is made better by their improvement; always provided, that such settler or settlers shall peaceably remove upon warning given to them by said committee. But if said committee shall judge it best to continue any of said settlers upon the land settled as aforesaid [126], the said committee are to take care that they have a suitable accommodation in land laid out to them, and also determine what sum or sums of money shall be by them paid unto said legatees for the same. All charges to be borne and paid out of said lands.

And this Assembly do further declare, that they will take further care from time to time for asserting their right unto all land belonging to the colony and not by this Assembly allowed to be settled upon, that thereby growing disputes respecting the title of the same, as well as litigious and doubtful lawsuits thereupon, may be prevented, and that the country may be peaceably and regularly settled. This committee or any three of them shall have full power to act in the affairs abovementioned.

An act relating to the same matter was passed by the General Court at the October session 1719 which reads as follows :

[Oct. Session 1719.]

Whereas in an act passed by this Assembly May 1718, for regulating and settling a plantation on the mountain east of Hartford, it is among other things resolved, that if the committee therein appointed should see cause to remove any of those settled on said mountain, they should take care that the legatees or settlers next to be admitted should pay back, to such persons so removed, so much as the land was made better [194] for their improvement: And whereas said committee did remove an inhabitant from an allotment on said mountain which was both originally and also by said committee designed for a minister's lot, whereby they were prevented from making him satisfaction in manner as in said act provided.

Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, Council and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That the forty-five owners of lots in said plantation, being such as are or shall be admitted to have lots there by said committee shall each of them, at or before the first day of December next, pay seven shillings and four pence per lot unto William Pitkin, Esq., to be by him delivered to the person so removed from the lot so reserved for a minister as aforesaid. And if any of the persons, so holding lots as aforesaid, shall refuse or neglect to make payment as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for said committee, or any one of them, to take out a warrant for distress, directed to the sheriff of Hartford county, who shall distrain the said sum or sums from the person or persons so refusing or neglecting as aforesaid, in like manner and form as by law provided for distraining country rates, and deliver the same to said William Pitkin, to be disposed of for the end aforesaid.

Col. Rec. of Conn. 1717-1725. p. 153.

These acts clearly related to Bolton which had not yet been named.

## NAMING AND INCORPORATING THE TOWN

During these pre-natal days our town was designated sometimes as "Hartford Mountains" and at other times as "Hanover." Of the two names I imagine that Hartford Mountains was the earlier. The October session of the General Court for 1720 was destined to be highly important and long to be remembered for the little community on the "Mountains in sight of Hartford." A petition was presented for the setting up of religious worship and incorporation of the town.

From manuscript at State Library.

### Prayer from Hannover, Octo. 1720.

To the Honorable the General Assembly sitting at New Haven october 13th A. D. 1720. The petition of us the subscribers boath inhabitants of Hannover or Hartford Mountains in ye County of Hartford Humbly showeth that the Gentlemen Comitty appointed by this Assembly for Laying out and settling of said plantation did in pursuance of said appointment lay out and order to be laid out 50 lotts in said town & ye same assigned to partickler persons by them admitted as inhabitants in said obliging them Actually to inhabitt in said town by the beginning of Aprill Last past on ye penalty of forfitting their said Lots. A considerable part of which Inhabitants so admitted have hitherto neglected to settle and inhabitt in said town according to ye Articles of sd committy yett we the present Inhabitants esteem ourselves to many to Live without the preaching of gods word the ordinary means of faith and Salvation;—wherefore we humbly pray this Honorable Assembly th\* a tax of forty-five shillings per Lott may be granted on said 50 Lots, laid out or ordered to be laid out in said town; and said tax of forty five shillings per Lot to continue for the space of six years commencing from this time: and th those of ye said 50 Lots th are not yett Laid out & assigned to partickular persons; may by said committy be laid out & Assigned as afore said th ye levying said tax may be made practicable and th we may by said Assembly be Directed & enabled to collect said tax of those who Live Remote & do not inhabitt with us, And th said tax may be extended to all those farms and grants of Land Lying within said town in such measure & proportion as said Assembly shall think

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\*th—in the foregoing is the abbreviation for that.

Just and the said tax of Forty-five shillings per Annum to be continued on those Lots th\* be not actually settled According to the Regulation of said Committy After ye said six years is expired till they be so settled. Said tax to be Disposed of by ye said town or a committy appointed by them for the settling and maintaining of the ministry & worship of god among us & other incident charges arising thereupon. We pray that we may be Incorporated with all the privileges and immunities of other towns in this Collony and may in December next convene and make choice of such necessary town officers as we shall Judge convenient and necessary for our well being, and th we may thereby be enabled to defend our property & common Lands from ye dayly Incursions of our naibours on our Ceader timber, stone, &c; & we Desire th our town may be called by the present name viz Hannover & a brand assigned for our horses. And we pray th the common Land Lying in our town may by our selves & ye rest of ye proprietiers of said town be divided among ourselves According to our just Rights: And we do hearby make choice of John Bissell of our said town to profer this our said petition to said Assembly & receive their anser thereupon. As witness our hands in hannover this 9th day of october A. Domini, 1720.

John Clark	Cullett Olcott
Charles Loomis	John Bissell
Samuel Bump	Stephen Bishop
Daniel Dartt	Abel Shailer
John Church	Timothy Olcott
Thomas Marshall	Joseph Pumory
Samuel Raimond	Nathaniel Allis
	Edward Rose

[This is Bolton]

Towns and Lands, Vol. III. p. 193.

[October Session 1720]

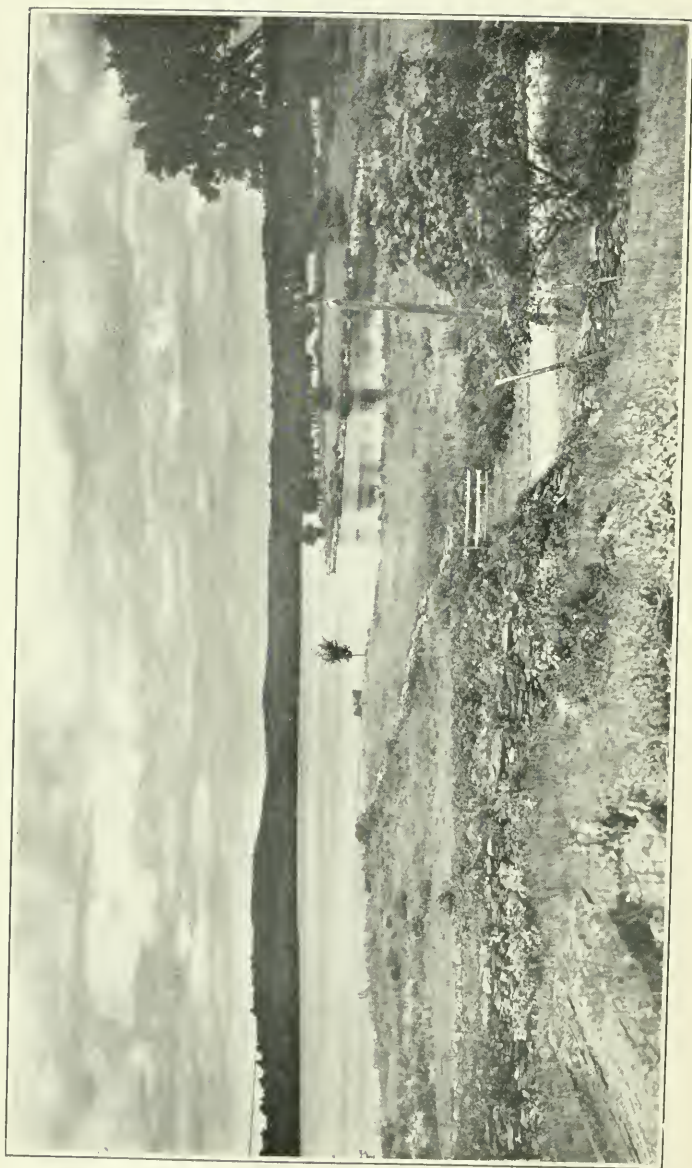
**AN ACT FOR THE NAME AND FURTHER SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN OF BOLTON.**

Whereas there is a certain tract of land within this Colony, bounded west upon Hartford and Windsor, north upon a line drawn due west from the south bounds of Meshenupps Pond to Windsor bounds, east upon Tolland and Coventry, south upon Hebron, which by order of this Assembly hath been settled into fifty allotments, saving only about one hundred and fifty acres formerly granted

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\*th—in the foregoing is the abbreviation for that.





CEDAR SWAMP—BOLTON LAKE

to John Talcott, Esq., deceas'd, and the quantity of two hundred acres granted to Mr. Thomas Bull, deceased: And whereas the greater part of the proprie [237] tors of said lands have moved to this Assembly to give unto them the power and privilege of a town, and to levy a tax on said land for the setting up and maintaining the worship of God there:

**Be it enacted by the Governour, Council and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same,** That the said tract of land be held and accounted to be a town, and known by the name of Bolton; and the inhabitants and proprietors of said town shall have full power and privilege as the other towns in this Colony, to choose their town officers, to make by-laws or orders, and to raise taxes for the defraying the common charge of said town; and all other privileges common to the towns in this Colony is hereby granted to them; only it is to be understood they have no power to dispose of any land within said township.

And for the setting up and maintaining the worship of God there, it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid. That a tax or rate of forty-five shillings allotment for forty-nine lots in the whole, being all the lots in said town but that laid out for the minister, shall be paid by the owner or owners thereof, to be paid annually in currant money, or provision as it shall be stated by the Assembly in publick payments, for the space of four years next coming, the first payment to be made on or before the last Tuesday of September next, and so in each year till four payments be made; and that the owners of farms or lands granted to Messrs. Talcott and Bull as aforesaid, shall pay in manner aforesaid annually pro rata forty shillings for one hundred and fifty acres. And this Assembly do appoint William Pitkin and Joseph Talcott, Esqrs, Mr. John Bissell and Timothy Olcott, or any three of them, a committee to receive said money and see that it be prudently laid out for the uses aforesaid, keeping fair accounts of their doings herein. And if any proprietor or proprietors shall refuse or neglect to pay the sum or sums whereat he is assessed as aforesaid, the aforesaid committee, or any two of them, shall have power, by a warrant under some assistant or justice of peace his hand, to distrain for

the same, with other just and necessary charge, in such manner as is by law appointed for the collecting town rates; and if the owner of such allotments cannot be found in this Colony, nor his goods, to answer such distress, the said committee are impowered to sell so much of such allotments as will procure the sums set as aforesaid and the necessary charge arising through his neglect. And this Assembly do order and impower William Pitkin, Esq., John Bissell and Francis Smith, or any two of them, to lay out the undivided lands in said town, or so much of it as shall be thought suitable, to the fifty allotments; the division so made to be settled severally upon the particular proprietors by lot, or otherwise as they shall agree; all to be done at the charge of the proprietors. And the brand for horses for said town shall be this figure 7

Col. Rec. of Conn. 1717-1725, pp. 216-7.

Past in the Uppr House Test Hez. Ulyllys, Secretry.

Past in the Lower House Test Hez. Brainerd, Clerk.

Reconsidered and past with the addition of Tim: Olcott to the committee and any three of them to act. Hez Brainerd, clerk.

This petition was granted and this event we are celebrating today. The indications are that the choosing of a name for the town was not easily settled for the original document shows that the name was a later insertion. It is difficult to state why the name Bolton was chosen. A suggestion has been made to the effect that the Loomis family, which was from the beginning very numerous and influential in the town, had had some connection with Bolton, England, about four generations before coming to America, and desiring to transmit the name used their influence in its favor. However improbable this particular theory may seem, it must be accepted as a fact that the name of Bolton was chosen from the Bolton in England and in so doing the early settlers followed a very common practice as we may observe from the names of many of our neighboring towns, such as Coventry, Andover, Mansfield, Stafford, Enfield, and Hartford.



## EARLY DAYS AND BOUNDARIES

Soon after its incorporation the first town meeting in Bolton was held, December 1, 1720. Francis Smith was chosen clerk. Abiel Shaylor, John Bissell and Timothy Olcott were elected Selectmen.

Bolton was bounded on the North by Windsor, East by Tolland and Coventry, South by Hebron, West by Glastonbury, Hartford and Windsor and at the time of its incorporation included what is now Vernon except the strip of territory running along the West side of that town which includes Talcottville. At that time this portion of Vernon was a part of Windsor. The town was rectangular in form being nine miles long, three miles wide at the South end and less than two miles wide at the North end. It appears that the proprietors of Bolton from the very beginning were not well pleased with their exceedingly long and narrow strip of land and brought charges before the General Court as early as 1723 that Coventry was encroaching upon their East bounds and asked for redress. It seems that John Hooker and Nathaniel Burnham originally surveyed the Bolton-Coventry line and shortly after this survey, Coventry having some boundary dispute with Tolland asked for a resurvey of her bounds which was granted and the resurvey was made by James Wadsworth and John Hall by which Bolton lost sixty or seventy rods in width on her east side. Bolton made the accusation that the last surveyors used a chain that was a foot and a quarter too long and brought witnesses to support their claim. Coventry strenuously pressed her claim and the matter was brought before the General Court for several successive sessions until it must have become utterly weary of the controversy. Finally it was decided to take one surveyor from each side and order them to make a third survey. To whichever of the disputed lines the new survey was nearer, this should be adopted as the established boundary line. The result was that of the sixty rods in dispute the new line was three

rods nearer the line claimed by Coventry than that claimed by Bolton. Hence Bolton lost her case and she was a poor loser, never becoming reconciled to the decision.

During these earlier years of its existence as a town surveying of "homelots" was in constant progress. Each "homelot" was normally one hundred acres, being laid out sixty rods frontage and two hundred and eighty rods deep. The patent was granted at the May session of the General Court, 1731. The proprietors numbered\* forty-two and came chiefly from Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. A few came from Haddam, Middletown, Plainfield, New London and Northampton. Of all the proprietors it is probable that John Bissell was the most gifted and most frequently called upon to represent the town in important matters. His homelot began on the north side of the Boston Road near Henry Thompson's residence and ran east to Coventry line. Roger Wolcott was a non-resident proprietor. The Pitkinse and Talcotts were families of great distinction in the colony. The Loomises, Strongs and Olcotts were of excellent stock from Windsor. There were five of the Loomis name among the proprietors, all brothers or cousins. Most of them settled in the southeast part of the town. The Whites came from Windsor or Hatfield and were very prominent in the early history of the town. Joel White was a prosperous merchant and large property holder. Of these forty-two original proprietors only two have transmitted their names in Bolton uninterruptedly during these two hundred years until the present time. Deacon Charles N. Loomis, under whose shade trees we are gathered, and his brother William H. Loomis are descendants of the proprietor Thomas Loomis. Frank H. Strong, our first selectman, is a descendant of

\*The following is a complete list of the proprietors: Joseph Talcott, Thomas Pitkin, Roger Wolcott, Rev. Thomas White, John Bissell, heirs of William Pitkin, Nathaniel Talcott, Nathaniel Allis, Samuel Bump, Cornelius Birge, John Church, John Clark, Joseph Colyer, heirs of John Craw, Daniel Dart, Ebenezer Dart, Daniel Dart, jr., Matthew DeWolf, Stephen Johns, Hezekiah King, heirs of Ensign Nathaniel Loomis, James Loomis, Charles Loomis, Jabez Loomis, Thomas Loomis, heirs of John Marshall, Edward Rose, Abel Shaylor Francis Smith, Jonathan Strong, Benjamin Talcott, Timothy Olcott, Joel White, Samuel Brown, heirs of Caleb Stanley, Samuel Bartlett, Lt. Thomas Olcott, Joseph Olmsted, Ephram Tucker, Obadiah Dickenson, John Bishop, John Goodwin, heirs of Jonathan Hubbard.

the proprietor David Strong. This statement applies to the present bounds of Bolton. In the Vernon section there are Dart and Talcott families who can make the same claim.

Scarcely had the one hundred acre homelots been laid when committees were appointed to make additional assignments of land from unassigned tracts. A second division of fifty acres was granted to each proprietor, a third division of twenty-five acres and so continuing with divisions of diminishing size until the twelfth division was reached. Accessions were being continually made to the population during these years. Dr. Ichabod Warner came from Windham, Saul Alvord from Northampton, the Hammonds from Coventry, the Lymans from Northampton, the Skinners from Colchester, the Maines from Stonington, the Carpenters from Coventry and later the Summers from Hebron.

A census of the town taken in 1750 showed a population of 751 whites, 11 blacks and one Indian. In 1761, five years later, there were 846 whites and 11 blacks. This population was so distributed that the first Society or Bolton proper, outnumbered the north Vernon section almost two to one. The excellent water power of the north section led to the establishment of the Iron Works on the Hockanum near Snipsic Lake by the Skinner family. Other mills and industries followed and Rockville soon became a thriving community.

In May, 1788, a petition was made to the General Assembly by the residents of the East part of East Windsor, who had previously been annexed to the North Ecclesiastical Society of Bolton, that they might also be joined to the town of Bolton, since it would be more convenient for them to attend the town and public meetings in Bolton than in East Windsor. The petition was granted at the May session of the Assembly in 1789. Thus the North boundary line of the town was widened about a mile and a half taking in what is now Talcottville and the section lying north of that village. But Bolton was destined to enjoy the satisfaction of her enlarged boundaries

for a brief period. Twenty years later in 1808 the North Society, having felt for some years the inconvenience of attending public meetings at Bolton Center, was set off as a separate town under the name of Vernon. So Bolton lost that portion of its domain that possessed the greatest natural advantages and the part that was destined to increase most rapidly in population. Such was the beginning and early history of the settlement of Bolton. An intimate view of the family life of those early times may be secured from an interview of Sylvester Judd of Northampton with Mrs. Jonathan Birge, a daughter of Dr. Ichabod Warner. Mrs. Birge was born in Bolton in 1775. Mr. Judd's notes on the interview are as follows:

Mrs. Birge's father was in good circumstances had much practice but family all brought up to work all spun and had great bunches of yarn two woolers some worsted, some cotton. The carding and hetchelling was mostly hired and wool hired combed. No carding machines thought of. Cloth whitened in lye in a tube at night and spread out in day time and watered with water.

**"Carriages"** In Bolton she thinks only one chaise when she was young—owned by the minister Rev. Geo. Colton. It opened so as to make a wing out each side. Another before she was married—some horse carts—no waggons. She says roads were not fit for chaises.

**"Living at Her Fathers"** Commonly meat of some kind and tea for breakfast. Sometimes coffee but children had bread and milk. At dinner boiled meat and vegetables with Indian Pudding—sometimes roast meat. Hot supper in general—all had bread and milk—no tea at night, unless they had company.

**"Bean Broth"** Meat was boiled and some beans with it. Beans were boiled after meat was taken out and became soft and was good. She thinks it was not thickened with any flour or meal but she says the broth in which fowls had been boiled was sometimes thickened and was good. They had shad and other fish.

**"The Sabbath"** The vegetables if any were all prepared on Saturday. No beds were made until after sun down Sunday—only spread up in the morning.

"Balls" were common in her younger days. Horse blocks were common and side saddles. Girls had side saddles and pillow as part of marriage portion. She had them—Her saddle cost \$20. She has seen horse canter when carrying double.

"Umbrellas" There was but one in Bolton when she lived there. She and others used to watch it at the meeting house on a drizzly or lowery day and see it open and shut—thought it was curious. Camble and Cloaks and Ridding Hoods sheds rain very well. Many men and women wore camblet. The riding hood came down low like a cloak and had a large head or hood that would cover any bonnet. Some females wore beaver hats with feathers.

"Schools" They had in Bolton in her younger years—master in winter and female in summer three to four months. Each school 6, 7 and 8 months in year. They had Dilworth and afterwards Webster's Spelling book. Psalter or testament and afterwards Third part. Teachers boarded round. Catichism was taught in school and when the minister visited the school he asked all the questions in the Catichism as well as heard them read and spell, etc. In her later scholl years her father bought Guthrie's Great Geography and she studied it at school and two or three others did. A few studied grammar. Choosing sides for spelling was done. One at the head of each side chose alternately, selecting the best spellers first but took all in certain classes. Those who were last chosen were the poorest spellers and looked cheap. Catichism was not said in the meeting house. Dialogues were learned and performed when she went to school in Bolton. When she was a dozen years old they had an exhibition in the meeting house, the tops of the pews were covered with boards and blankets and blankets hung under the galleries or a part of them. She had a part to perform.

Rev. George Colton was her minister. He preached against the exhibition in the meeting house after it was over. Used to preach against balls and other frolics of young people, yet they danced and did much as they pleased.

A Pitch Pipe was first introduced when she was young. It grievously offended some people. Singers sat in the four seats in the gallery ever since her recollection. Males sat on one side, Females the other side of the gallery. Below males and females or men and wives sat together.

## ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES

Our New England ancestors could always be depended upon to make their religion paramount to all other things. In their petition for incorporation they did not fail to make known that they desired to establish religious worship and asked that measures should be taken to secure that end.

At the May session in 1725 the General Court granted the petition of the inhabitants of Bolton for the organization of a church in the following terms:

[May Session, 1725]

Upon the petition of the inhabitants of the town of Bolton: This Assembly grants them liberty to imbody into church estate and to call and settle an orthodox minister among them, with the approbation of the neighboring churches.

Upon the petition of Bolton: It is enacted and resolved, that the tax be further continued on the lands in said Bolton for the space of three years coming, in manner following, viz: for every lot laid out in said town, viz: forty-nine lots, the owners of said lots shall pay annually thirty shillings per lot; the first payment to be paid by the first day of September next, and so annually on the first of September in each year till the three years be expired. And it is further ordered and enacted, that all the owners of such farms and grants of land as lye in said township shall pay annually as aforesaid for their said farms in the same manner and proportion with said lots as was by this Assembly ordered in the grant of the former taxes on said farms in October A. D., 1720; and that the former committee, viz: Timothy Olcott and John Bissell, be hereby appointed to collect and receive said tax in the same manner in which they were directed respecting the former taxes Oct. 1720, and that they, said committee, keep fair accounts of their doings therein, disposing said taxes for the settling and maintaining the worship of God in said town.

Col. Rec. of Conn. 1717-1725, pp. 529,530.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH





At a town meeting held in Bolton December 14, 1730, it was voted that the "Meeting House be seated and that the seats be dignified as followith, viz: the fore pew the highest and the pew in the North West corner of the Meeting the next—3rdly, the fore seat; 4th the middle pew; 5th the second seat; and sixthly the pew by the door and then the third seat and so successively the rest of ye Seats. Voted that the Seaters shall have in consideration the following rules in seating the inhabitants, viz: Every man to be seated shall be considered at thirty years of age—and every year after to be called one pound—only to be considered paid at every five years end from said thirty—voted that every commission from the Governor shall be reckoned at five pounds. Voted that the last List reckoning but one head in the List shall be a rule to seat by—Voted that John Bissell, Esq., Mr. Thomas Pitkin and Sergt. Jonathan Strong be seators to seat the Meeting House by the Rules above said. Voted that John Bissell, Esq., be seated in the fore pew."

Religious services were certainly held here as early as 1722 or 1723 for at a town meeting in Bolton November 17, 1721, definite plans were made for the building of a church as indicated by the following vote: "Voted that the Meeting House shall stand a little north of the pound and said Meeting House shall be of the following dimensions, viz: Forty foott long and thirty five foott Wide and twenty foot between Joynts. Voated at said meeting yt John Bissell, Timothy Olcot and Francis Smith be a committy to carry on said Affair of Building said Meeting house." This building stood nearly in the center of the Green and was in use for about forty years. May 27, 1723, it was voted to call Rev. Jonathan Edwards, then twenty years old and recently graduated from Yale College, to become the first pastor in Bolton. Mr. Edwards accepted the call November 11, 1723, and his signature stands on our town records. He was to receive two hundred and twenty pounds for his settlement and salary for the first two years and the same rights in real estate and divisions of land in the town as the other proprietors. His salary was to be increased yearly and paid one half in money and

the other half in Indian Corn and wheat. Every male inhabitant over sixteen years old was to work for the minister two days every year for three years, fencing and clearing his land as well as cutting and carting his wood. Soon after this call Mr. Edwards was appointed tutor at Yale and was released from his engagement at Bolton. In his diary he speaks of a remarkable religious experience while walking in the fields of Bolton. It is universally acknowledged that Jonathan Edwards possessed the keenest intellect and most logical mind of any man that ever graduated at Yale College.

The church then called Rev. Thomas White a classmate at Yale of Jonathan Edwards and he was settled as first pastor of the Bolton Church October 27, 1725, which was the probable date of its organization. It began with seventeen members, all bringing letters from other churches. Four came from Coventry, four from New London, three from Northampton, two from Lyme and one each from Lebanon, Mansfield, East Griswold and Haddam. His successor left this record of him: "Mr. White was in height above the ordinary stature. He was of a full habit, with a very portly appearance, with a loud and sweet sounding voice. He was a very companionable man, and possessed the faculty of rendering all in his company happy. He was a sound orthodox preacher, a friend of peace and order." Mr. White held the pastorate until his death, February 22, 1763. His residence was the "Minister's farm," lately owned by Frank C. Sumner.

In 1762 a year before Mr. White's death the Second or North Church Society was organized at Vernon, taking from the mother church thirty-five members. Rev. Ebenezer Kellogg was the first pastor.

In September, following Mr. White's death, the church invited Rev. George Colton to become its pastor and he was installed November 9, 1763. Mr. Colton graduated at Yale College in 1756 and continued his pastorate at Bolton for forty-nine years. He was deeply interested in missions and bequeathed nearly all his property to the Connecticut Missionary Society. On account of his

height, six feet, seven inches, Mr. Colton was called the "High Priest" of Bolton. Many stories are told of the wit and eccentricity of Mr. Colton. About to enter upon a second marriage he announced from the pulpit, "I, myself, George Colton, and widow Martha Strong, both of Bolton, intend marriage." At a meeting in Hartford Dr. Strong invited Mr. Colton who had just entered the room to offer prayer in the following words:

"Brother Colton  
of Bolton,  
Will you come this way  
and Pray?"

Mr. Colton's ready response was:

"Why, Brother Strong  
I think you do wrong  
In making rhyme  
At this solemn time.  
Let us pray."

After the death of Mr. Colton the church had some difficulty in securing a pastor. After a period of three years Rev. Philander Parmelee was settled as pastor. The church prospered under his ministry. Sixty persons were admitted to membership in 1819. Mr. Parmelee died at the age of thirty-nine when he had gained the affections of his people to a wonderful degree.

Rev. Lavius Hyde was the next pastor, whom everyone loved and who loved everyone. Mrs. Hyde was a very talented woman and a writer of church hymns. Mr. Hyde remained as pastor for seven years until 1830. In 1849 he returned and entered upon a second pastorate of eleven years.

Rev. James Ely, who had been a missionary to the Sandwich Islands, was pastor from 1830 to 1846. After Mr. Hyde's pastorate the following served the church as pastors: Rev. W. E. B. Moore, Rev. Luther H. Barber, Rev. Willis M. Cleveland, Rev. Henry Robertson, Rev. Francis Pile, Rev. Cyrus M. Perry, Rev. James Roberts, Rev. Charles Burt, Rev. William C. Bessellievre, Rev.

Raymond Fowles and Rev. Frank H. Abbott the present pastor.

The first church edifice was taken down in 1767 and a new one built on the same site, which remained until 1848 when the present building was erected. There have been at last fourteen ministers raised up here under the tutelage of this old church. Rev. Joseph Lathrop, Rev. Jonathan Strong, Rev. Salmon Cone, Rev. Marshfield Steele, Rev. Hart Talcott, Rev. Jared Andrus, Rev. Chester Birge, Rev. John L. Howard, Rev. Lyman Warner, Rev. Frederick Alvord, Rev. Augustus Alvord, Rev. Carlos C. Carpenter, Rev. Henry C. Alvord, and Rev. Washington Forbes.

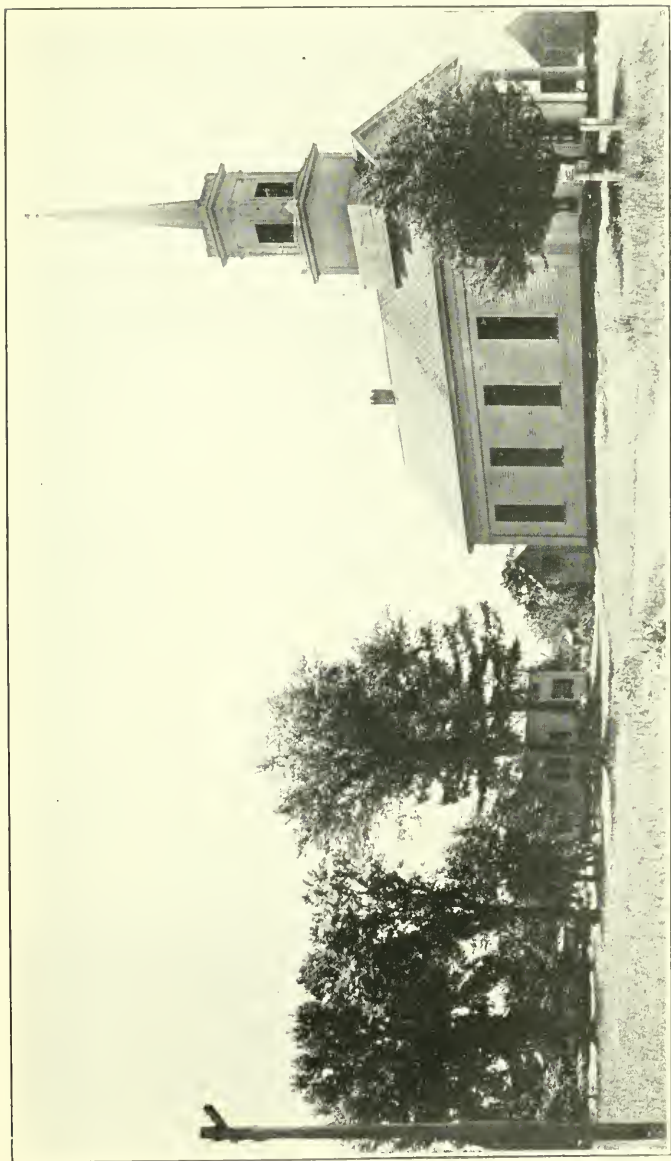
A Universalist Society was organized about 1830. Their church building stood near the Southwest corner of Cedar Swamp Pond on the Boston Road.

The Methodist Church began its work at an early date in Bolton with the first camp meeting ever held in a New England town. The noted itinerant preacher Lorenzo Dow was the leader and great crowds were attracted to his meetings which were held May 30 to June 3, 1805, near the Andover town line directly east of the South District School house. Rev. Mr. Colton was deeply offended at this encroachment upon his rights. Camp meetings were held later near camp meeting spring on the South Manchester road.

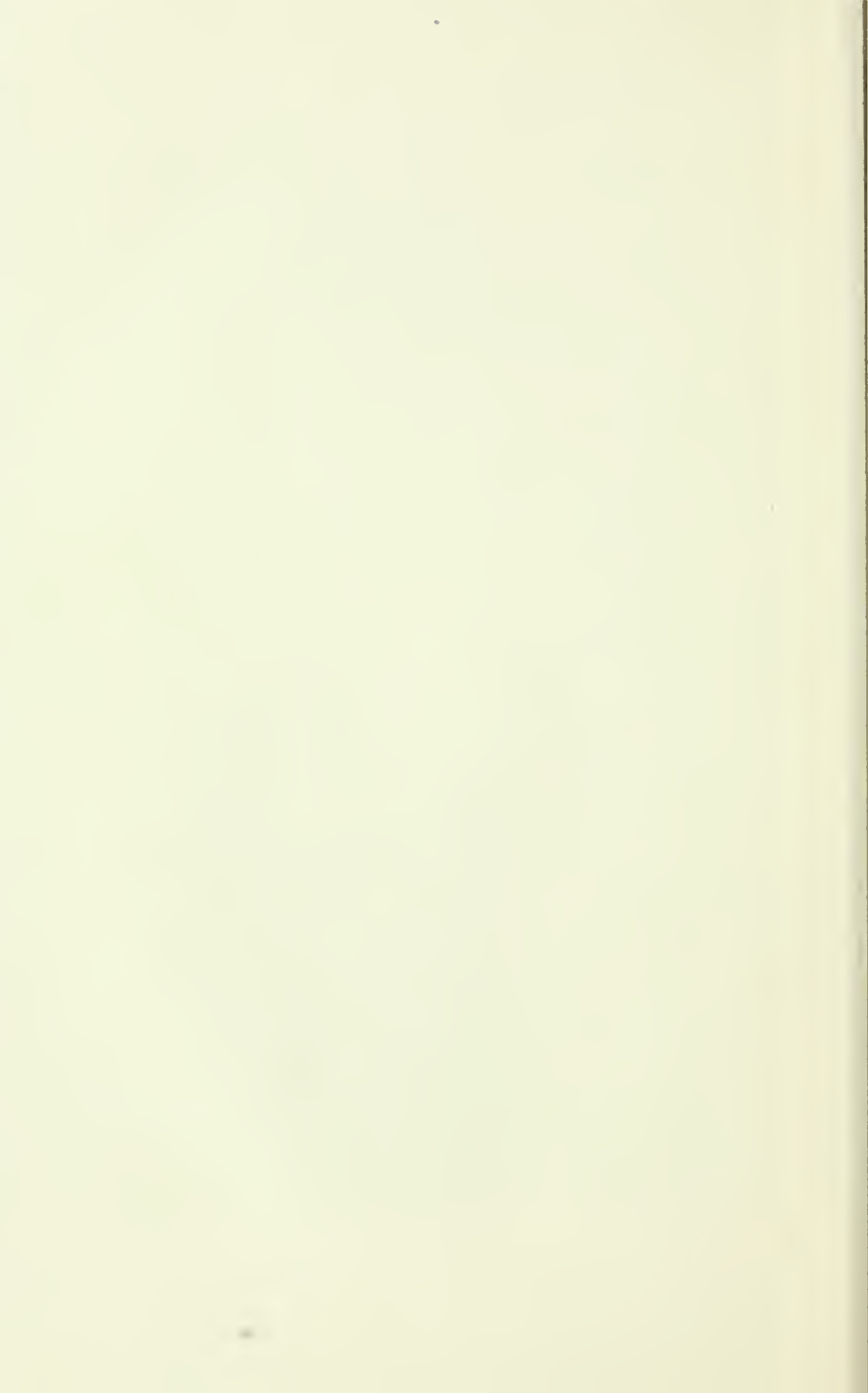
The first Methodist Church was built at Quarryville in 1834 near the present edifice. This building was sold to the Universalists in 1851 and moved some distance west and a new church was built the following year. Joseph Ireson was the first pastor in 1823.

## SCHOOLS

There is no record of the date when the first schools were established in Bolton, but it appears that Daniel White taught school in the Middle and Lower end ten weeks in 1738 for £10, 11s, 8d. John Hutchins, Benjamin Talcott, Jonathan King, Jonathan Strong and Hannah Hills taught at the upper end.



QUARRYVILLE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## INDUSTRIES

The abundant water power of the hills of Bolton led to the establishment of numerous mills at a very early date. Francis Smith was probably the first one to erect a grist mill on one of the brooks in the east section of the town. John Bissell built a saw mill on the Reservoir brook. Daniel Griswold ran a corn mill in the "Hollow." Bishop's mills consisted of a saw mill and grist mill in the southeast corner of the town later known as Chappel's Mills. Asabel Skinner ran a saw mill and grist mill on the Reservoir brook and later built a clothiers shop and fulling mill for his son Sylvester Skinner. There were two hat shops, one at the center and one in the south part of the town. Distilleries and cider brandy stills were also operated by members of very respectable families. The Bolton Quarries near the Vernon line were well known and in operation for about seventy-five years. Flagging stones from these quarries were shipped to all parts of the country east of the Mississippi and were considered of fine quality. Grindstones were quarried by Jabez Loomis, now Charles F. Sumner place.

## TAVERNS

Deacon Saul Alvord and his son Capt. Saul Alvord kept a tavern at Bolton Center before and after the Revolutionary War. Thomas White kept tavern about one half mile east of the center church about the same period. Abner Loomis kept tavern in the south part of the town on the Finley place. Fitch's Tavern was the late New England House. Olcot's tavern was located in the Quarryville section. With the advent of the railroad the stage disappeared and the tavern died a natural death.

## ROADS

Before the Revolutionary War the roads were intended only for horseback riding and were naturally very crude affairs. There were three main highways crossing the town from east to west. In the north section the

Tolland-Windsor road, through Bolton Notch the Boston Road and through Bolton Center the Hartford-Lebanon road. All these were of very early origin. Toll-gates were set up on the main highways.

### MILITIA

In the colonial days every able bodied man belonged to the militia. This gave a fine opportunity for many to secure military titles. The following is a partial list of the captains: Benjamin Talcott, Joel White, Mathew Loomis, Moses Thrall, Thomas Pitkin, jr., Stephen Johns, Peter Olcott, Ezekiel Olcott, Hezekiah King, Jonathan Birdge and Saul Alvord. Training days were gala days for everyone in town. Everybody turned out on these occasions. At one of the trainings on Bolton Green about the year 1835 a frightful accident occurred. It was late in the afternoon. Cider brandy had been passed around a little too freely and some of the young men stuffed the cannon with stones and turfs. When fired the cannon exploded causing the death of one man.

### BOLTON IN THE WARS

Several soldiers from Bolton died in the French and Indian War. Levi Strong at Fort Edward, July 25, 1757; Charles King at Lake George, Sept. 6, 1758; Thomas Wells on his return from the army from Crown Point, November 30, 1759; Stephen Boardman, jr., at Oswego after the conquest of Montreal; Jonathan Wright, jr., at Oswego; Hosea Bronson at Havana, October 2, 1762.

The town was wide awake during the Revolutionary War and as early as 1774 passed votes in town meeting declaring its allegiance to King George, expressing sympathy for Boston in its distress and giving assurance of its readiness to join in defending American Liberty. A committee of correspondence was appointed consisting of Thomas Pitkin, Esq., Dr. Ichabod Warner, Isaac Fellows, Samuel Carver, jr., and Benjamin Talcott, jr., to promote and forward contributions for the relief of Boston. At a town meeting Feb. 6, 1777, it was voted that Capt. Joel White,



Ensign Benjamin Trumbull, Dr. Ichabod Warner, Seth King, David Allis, Lieut. Isaac Fellows and Saul Alvord be appointed a committee of inspection for the town of Bolton. At the "Lexington Alarm" April, 1775, sixty-three men volunteered from Bolton. Capt. Jonathan Birge was mortally wounded at White Plains and died at Stamford November 10, 1776, at the age of forty-two. Capt. Edward Paine entered the service as an ensign, was at White Plains, N. Y., and later was Brigadier General in the New York State Militia. He died in Lake County, Ohio. A division of the French Army marching from Newport to join General Washington on the Hudson passed through Bolton Center. One Loomis living on the old Bailey place had scruples about using his team to assist in hauling the artillery up the hills on Sunday morning. The officer in command ignored Loomis and pressed his team into service. Rev. Mr. Colton entertained the French officer at his home and desired to adopt a small boy who was with his mother in the company, offering several "Louis D'Ors," but the mother would not consent. An incomplete list of Revolutionary soldiers from Bolton may be found in "Connecticut Men in the Revolution" and in the article on Bolton by Dr. C. F. Sumner in Tolland County History.

In the Civil War Bolton responded generously furnishing fifty men. In the Spanish War and the late "World War" she did her full share.

The Post Office was established in Bolton Sept. 30, 1812, with Saul Alvord as the first Postmaster. By a strange coincidence, the post office has recently returned to its first location.

The first representatives in the State legislature from Bolton were Stephen Cone and Joel White, elected in 1750. Benjamin Talcott was representative twenty-nine times, Samuel Carver twenty-seven, Joel White twenty-six, Oliver King eighteen times, and Saul Alvord sixteen times.

Bolton was fortunate in its early physicians. Dr. John Hutchins was here as early as 1747. Dr. Ichabod Warner settled here in 1761, very prominent in his profession and

active in public affairs. Dr. Samuel Cooley and Dr. Eleazer McCray followed Dr. Warner. Dr. Jabez L. White was a distinguished physician. He served also as state senator and treasurer of the State. Dr. Orrin Hunt and Dr. Charles F. Sumner were the last resident physicians in Bolton. No historical sketch on Bolton could be complete without special mention of Dr. Sumner. He was pre-eminently Bolton's historian and from mere love for the work he delved deeply into the ancient records and interviewed the older inhabitants concerning their recollections of the past. Many facts recorded in this sketch are the result of his careful research.

Bolton has never had many resident lawyers. Perhaps its people were too law abiding to need them.

Saul Alvord graduated from Yale College in 1800 and practiced law here until his death in 1842.

We can merely touch upon a few of the most prominent men who have gone from Bolton. Hon. Benjamin Ruggles who passed his early life in this town became a prominent lawyer and Judge in the State of Ohio and was three times elected U. S. Senator from that State.

Hon. Julius L. Strong was born in Bolton in 1828, practiced law in Hartford and was elected to Congress in 1869 and was re-elected in 1872.

Hon. William Williams was born in Bolton in 1815, removed to Buffalo and became a banker and president and director of railroads. He was elected to Congress in 1871.

Joel W. White, born in Bolton in 1795, removed to Norwich where he was Cashier of the Merchants' Bank and President of the Norwich & Worcester Railroad. He was appointed consul at Liverpool, England, and Lyons, France.

While Bolton cannot claim to be the birthplace of Hon. George G. Sumner, she has always felt that he belonged to her on account of his long residence with us and intimate association in all the affairs of the town. Mr. Sumner practiced law in Hartford, was Mayor of the city

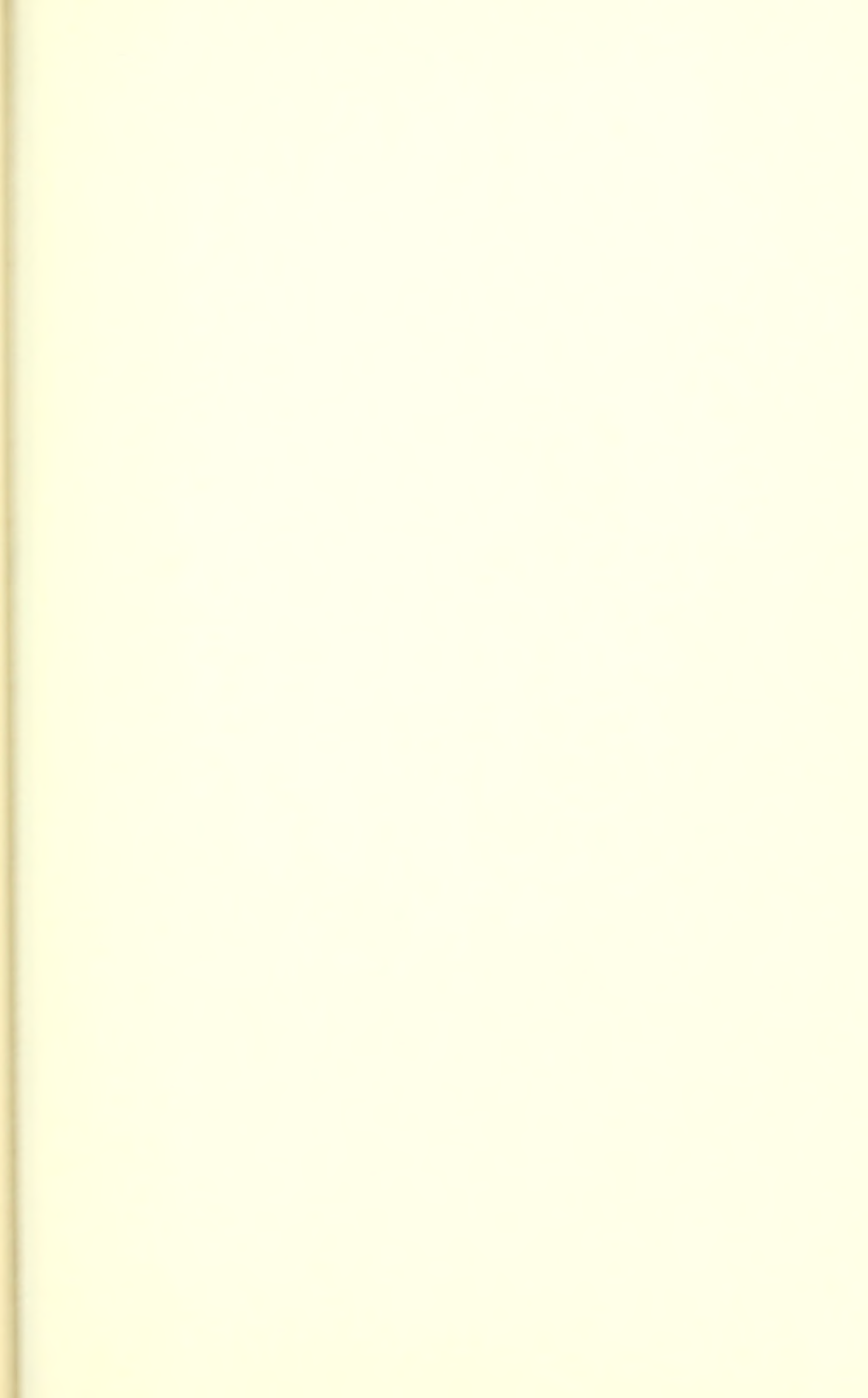
and Lieutenant Governor of the State. His kind acts and genial manners will long be cherished by our people.

Daniel Russell Brown, born in 1848 on Birch Mountain in Bolton, engaged in business in Rockville and Providence and was Governor of Rhode Island 1893-1895.

Many others deserve more than a passing notice, but limited time and space make it impossible to extend this brief sketch. The writer has found his greatest difficulty in deciding what could best be left out.

My conclusion is that we have a right to feel that we have a goodly heritage. The men who first settled here, clearing these lands, building these stone walls, bringing order out of chaos were men of a rugged nature and high ideals. They are entitled to our deepest respect.









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