Ridgefield, Conn.

1708-1908

Bi-Centennial Celebration

1708 — Ridgefield, Connecticut — 1908

Bi-Centennial Celebration

July 6th and 7th, 1908

Report of the proceedings, together with the papers presented and the addresses made

PUBLISHED BY THE BI-CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

HARTFORD, CONN.
THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD COMPANY
1908

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

RIDGEFIELD BI-CENTENNIAL

Note.— The following article by Mrs. Mary Everest Rockwell, wife of Mr. Charles L. Rockwell, president of the First National Bank of Meriden, Conn., whose ancestors were among the original settlers of the town of Ridgefield, was published in *The Connecticut Magazine* in its first number of this year and by its kind permission is reproduced here introductory to the account of the bi-centennial exercises.

VIEW OF MAIN STREET, RIDGEFIELD

RIDGEFIELD BI-CENTENNIAL

1708-1908

ANNIVERSARY OF BEAUTIFUL CONNECTICUT COUNTRY-SEAT OVERLOOKING LONG ISLAND SOUND AND HIGHLANDS OF THE HUDSON. PURCHASED FROM RAMAPOO INDIANS TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO BY PIONEERS FROM NORWALK AND MILFORD FOR ONE HUNDRED POUNDS STERLING AND HOME-LOTS APPORTIONED BY LOTTERY. MEMORIAL

By

Mary Everest Rockwell

THERE is no fairer scene in fair Connecticut than Ridgefield's Main Street, a mile or more of fine houses and velvety lawns, shaded by giant elms and maples. Cool, restful shadows, songs of birds, glimpses of sunny fields, attract and charm the visitor, beguiling him into a fancy that this is some lovely old-world park rather than the thoroughfare of a New England village.

In the year 1708, Catoonah, sachem of the Ramapoo Indians, sold, for one hundred pounds sterling, a tract of land, bounded north and east by Danbury, south by Norwalk, and west by New York State, to twenty-nine men from Norwalk and three from Milford. That year, the General Assembly appointed Major Peter Burr of Fairfield, John Copp of Norwalk, and Josiah Starr of Danbury to survey and lay out a new settlement.

These surveyors, with a keen sense of beauty, selected, for the town site, the central of three high ridges commanding views of Long Island Sound on the south and the Highlands of the Hudson toward the west. A street, six rods wide, was planned from north to south. On either side were home lots of two and one-half acres; in the center a "Green" for the meeting, town and schoolhouses, and on the east and west ridges, five acres of pasture to each home lot. Then the place, appropriately named Ridgefield, was ready for the new inhabitants to move in and go to housekeeping. At the north end of the town is a great boulder, called "Settler's Rock," supposed to have been the camping place of the first comers to Ridgefield.

November, 1708, was the date of the lottery by means of which the land was apportioned and twenty-five home-sites were drawn as follows: the first lot on the southeast for a burying-ground and twelve lots northward, falling to Samuel St. John, Samuel Keeler, junior, Jonathan Rockwell, Thomas Canfield of

Milford, Proprietors' Reserve, Matthias St. John, Joseph Whitney, Samuel Smith of Milford, James Brown, John Belden, Richard Olmstead, and Thomas Smith of Milford. The opposite plots from south to north fell to Samuel Keeler, senior, Daniel Olmstead, Samuel Smith, Joseph Crampton, James Benedict, Matthew Seamore, Joseph Keeler, Matthew St. John, Benjamin Hickok, Benjamin Wilson, Thomas Hyatt, John Sturdevant and Jonathan Stevens. Ebenezer Smith of Milford, Joseph Benedict of Norwalk, Benjamin Burt, a blacksmith of Norwalk, Daniel Sherwood, a miller from Fairfield, and Reverend Thomas Hawley of Northampton, Massachusetts, were added to the list of early proprietors.

Many other families came to the new settlement, industries were established, markets found for their products and slowly — too slowly, however, to have satisfied the impatient ambition of the day — the village grew till it was one of the important hill towns of the state. In the year 1714, Benjamin Stebbins followed the Reverend Thomas Hawley from Northampton, and built, at the north end of Main Street, a shingled, two and one-half storied house, then the costliest mansion of Ridgefield. This house survived all the contemporaries and was the home of the Stebbins family till 1892, when it was removed to make room for the handsome modern residence of George M. Olcott.

Religion and politics walked hand-in-hand in colonial days, and upon the choice of a spiritual leader depended much of the temporal success of the new venture.

Ridgefield was fortunate, for its first pastor, Reverend Thomas Hawley, was a young man, frank, sociable, energetic, and, from his arrival in 1713, till his death, 1738, kept all the town records, writing them in handsome script, the admiration of this generation. Mr. Hawley was born in Northampton, graduated at Harvard College, and married a daughter of the distinguished Major Nathan Gold of Fairfield. When Reverend Mr. Hawley died, aged forty-nine, the church secured as its pastor Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll, a native of Milford, a graduate of Yale College and a young man of brilliant intellect. He was also public-spirited, interesting himself in everything pertaining to the welfare of town and state. In 1758, Mr. Ingersoll went to Lake Champlain as chaplain in the Colonial Army. His home was on Main Street, on the southern corner of the J. Howard King estate, and S. G. Goodrich describes it as "a brown, gable-roofed house with two venerable, but still green and flourishing buttonwood trees in front." In this house was made the first cup of tea in Ridgefield. The tradition is that the tea was placed in a copper kettle, brought over in the "Mayflower," water was added and the mixture boiled; then the water was thrown away and the tea-leaves eaten.

Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll died October 2, 1778, aged sixty-five years. He and his predecessor, Mr. Hawley, are buried in Titicus Cemetery, so called because of its location near the Titicus River in the northern part of the town. The burial-ground was selected by a vote of the proprietors in 1735, and, enlarged and beautified, has been the resting-place of Ridgefield's dead since that date.

During the Revolution, Ridgefield, intensely patriotic, raised two companies of soldiers, one under Captain Gamaliel Northrop of Ridgebury, a northeastern

ESTATE OF REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT

Homestead of Thomas Hawley, who fought for American Independence in Ridgefield, enlarged, rebuilt, and now summer home of granddaughter, Mrs. David S. Egleston.

MODERN RIDGEFIELD

Residence of A. Newbold Morris

MODERN RIDGEFIELD

Estate of Mrs. W. S. Hawk, one of the charming manor places in this community of country-seats — The hills of Ridgefield, Connecticut, are crowned with many beautiful country residences

REVOLUTIONARY HOMESTEAD

of Colonel Philip Burr Bradley at Ridgefield, a justice of the peace under George III, and first marshal of the District of Connecticut — Remodeled summer home of L. H. Biglow

parish; the other under Captain David Olmstead. The added excitement of a battle on Main Street incited many of the youth to enter the army. April 25, 1777, General Tryon made his celebrated Danbury Raid, burning the town. On the morning of the twenty-seventh, he marched toward Long Island Sound and about three miles north of Ridgefield was overtaken by General Wooster, with two hundred Americans. In an engagement the intrepid Wooster was killed. Five hundred patriots, under General Benedict Arnold, reached Ridgefield in the morning and built a hasty barricade of earth and rocks across the north end of the street. Here the British routed the Americans. During this skirmish, sixteen royalists and eight patriots were killed, and General Arnold narrowly escaped, as his horse was shot under him. The Stebbins homestead was used as a temporary hospital, and the dead were buried in an adjoining field. A tamarack tree marks the spot where Arnold's horse fell, and stands close to the masonry supporting the bank of earth fortifications, the site of George H. Newton's country home. Some years ago *The Ridgefield Press* announced the discovery, near this tree, of the skeleton of this famous horse, and offered it to the local Historical Society, adding that the horns and hoofs, found at the same time, had been re-interred.

The enemy marched through the village without further resistance, encamping for the night on a high hill, south of the town, and burning a house as a signal to their ships on the Sound. The Episcopal Church was used for storage of supplies, during the Revolution, and was fired by General Tryon in addition to six dwellings. Among these houses was the Keeler Tavern, kept by Timothy Keeler, a patriot. The English heard that cartridges were being made in the tavern and discharged several cannon-balls into the house (one is still visible), dislodging the inmates, who took refuge in the woods. Mr. Keeler's neighbor was a loyalist who, finding the sparks a menace to his own house,* received Tryon's permission to quench the flames. When Mr. Keeler returned from his hiding-place, the Tory met him, saying: "You may thank me that your house is safe." "No, sir," roared the sturdy patriot, "I will not thank a Tory for anything. I thank the Lord for the north wind."

The most prominent citizen of Ridgefield, in Revolutionary times, was Philip Burr Bradley, born in Fairfield, March 26, 1738, the son of Captain Daniel Bradley and Esther Burr, sister of Reverend Aaron Burr, first president of Princeton College. Captain Bradley moved with his family to Ridgefield in 1759, the year after his famous son, Philip Burr Bradley, graduated from Yale College. King George III appointed the younger Bradley justice of the peace in 1770 and January 1, 1777, he was commissioned colonel of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment by John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress. Colonel Bradley served to the end of the war, and then was appointed the first marshal of the District of Connecticut by George Washington. The colonel was a Federalist in politics and a tall, dark-haired, black-eyed man of great dignity and much influence throughout the state, although he seems to have lacked the brilliant social qualities of his first cousin, Vice-President Aaron Burr. President Washington was a personal friend of Colonel Bradley, and treasured with

* Residence of George H. Smillie, the artist.

the Colonel's commissions and sword, are a chair, a china bowl and pitcher used by the great statesman when visiting at the Bradley house, which is still standing on Main Street, the summer home of L. H. Bigiow of New York. Two of Colonel Bradley's descendants have particularly distinguished themselves: the late William Henry Bradley of Chicago, Illinois, was clerk of the United States Circuit Court of that district for many years and an able and influential lawyer. Judge Bradley's son, William Harrison Bradley, is United States Consul at Manchester, England, and has built a fine summer home, "Felsenberg," on West Mountain, Ridgefield.

A notable Revolutionary soldier, Jeremiah Keeler, enlisted in the regular army and served through the war, most of the time an orderly sergeant under Marquis de Lafayette. Keeler was often selected for services where quick wit and sound judgment were essential, and after one such occasion General Lafayette presented him with a sword in recognition of his bravery and fidelity. Sergeant Keeler was in the Battles of Monmouth and Jamestown, and at the Battle of Yorktown was among the first to scale the enemy's breastworks.

A niece relates that it was always the sergeant's regretful lament that he missed seeing his loved French commander when Marquis Lafayette made his second visit to America. Sergeant Keeler drove with his wife to South Norwalk when General Lafayette was to pass through that town, but unanticipated delays in the great man's arrival obliged the Ridgefield soldier to return disappointed. Jeremiah Keeler's house, on the New York state line, in South Salem, is the farm-house of the beautiful estate of Professor J. M. Crafts of Boston.

When, in 1783, the army was disbanded in Virginia, Sergeant Keeler received a gold medal for his long service, and using his sword as a cane, walked back to his Ridgefield home.

Lieutenant Thaddeus Keeler shared his brother Jeremiah's renown as a soldier. He first enlisted July 13, 1775, as sergeant in Captain Joseph Hait's Company, Colonel Parsons' Regiment; was commissioned second lieutenant in 1777, first lieutenant, 1778, quartermaster of the regiment, 1780, and served to the close of the war.

One of the treasured keepsakes of Lieutenant Keeler is his "Memorandum Book — Journal Wise." Among the entries are the following brief notes at the time his home and the village of Ridgefield were in imminent peril.

"April 16th, 1777, March from Danbury to Ridgebury in a Detachment commanded by Capt. Hait.

"18th. Marched to Crompond and put up.

"19th. Took our Quarters at Peekskill. Till the 26th nothing remarkable.

"27th. Heard the enemy were in possession of Danbury stores.

"28th. Marched down to Bedford.

"29th and 30th. Returned back to Peekskill by the way of Ridgefield."

A few miles away, in South Salem, Major André lodged, a prisoner under the guard of Lieutenant Joshua King of Colonel Sheldon's Light Dragoons. Lieutenant King wrote to a friend in 1817 about the capture of André, saying: "I was the first and only officer who had charge of him while at the headquarters

HOMESTEAD OF A SOLDIER IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Old Deacon Hawley house at Ridgefield where many of the patriots gathered in the first days of the nation — The host was a cabinet-maker, choir leader, church deacon and a warrior

HOMESTEAD OF A WORLD-FAMED AUTHOR IN EARLY PART OF LAST CENTURY

"Peter Parley" House in Ridgefield — Built in 1797 by Reverend Samuel Goodrich when his son "Peter Parley" was four years old — Home of John Alsop King

HISTORIC ESTATE OF MRS. J. HOWARD KING AT RIDGEFIELD
On site of the Homestead of General Joshua King, who accompanied Major André to his execution in the American Revolution

of the Second Regiment of Light Dragoons. He was under the name of John Anderson and looked somewhat like a reduced gentleman; his small-clothes were nankeen, with handsome white-top boots; in part his dress was military, his coat purple with gold lace, worn somewhat threadbare; he wore a small-brimmed tarnished beaver on his head; he wore his hair in a queue with a long black band."

Lieutenant Joshua King did not then know the name and rank of his captive, but judging him a gentleman by his conversation and manner, offered him the services of an attendant and a change of linen. When Major André's hair was brushed, the powder flew out, betraying him as a person of importance. The young American officer became much attached to his charge, whom he accompanied to the gallows. The armchair used by André while in South Salem is now in the possession of Lieutenant King's descendants.

At the close of the war, Lieutenant, or General King, as he was always called, in partnership with a fellow officer, Lieutenant Doyle, opened a store in Ridgefield in the building now used as a dwelling and called "Old Hundred." Young King married the pretty daughter of Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll and built a fine home next to that of his father-in-law, on Main Street. This house, destroyed by fire in 1889, has been reproduced by the general's grandson, the late J. Howard King of Albany.

General King, like Colonel Bradley, was a leading spirit in all public affairs, and in 1818, a member of the Convention at Hartford which framed the Constitution of Connecticut. It is related of General King that he was the best rider in town, and that when he was eighty years old, he sat upon his white-faced bay horse as straight as a boy. Colonel Bradley, on the contrary, rode in a chaise, the only one in Ridgefield in 1800.

Upon the organization of the Society of the Cincinnati, Lieutenant Joshua King, Lieutenant Doyle, Captain David Olmstead, Captain Thaddeus Keeler, Colonel Philip Burr Bradley, and Lieutenant Elijah James, all of Ridgefield, enrolled as members.

Just after the Revolution, the eminent Reverend Samual Goodrich of Durham came to Ridgefield as the third pastor of the Congregational Church, and on August 19, 1793, was born his illustrious son, Samuel Griswold Goodrich, familiarly known as "Peter Parley."

When this boy was four years old, his father built the "Peter Parley" house on High Ridge, the property of John Alsop King of New York. Here the famous writer passed his boyhood, attending school in the little old building on West Lane, and as he grew older, receiving instructions from "Master Stebbins" in the "Up Town School." Master Stebbins was town clerk as well, and the records of the village corroborate Mr. Goodrich's statement that his teacher excelled in penmanship. Chapman Lee, a schoolboy of that day, wrote to a relative that "Old Doctor Goodrich was our school examiner — a sharp old blade to keep the boys straight, and insistant that the boys write original compositions, instead of compilations of facts gleaned from almanacs, histories, etc."

In that fascinating autobiography, "Recollections of a Lifetime," "Peter

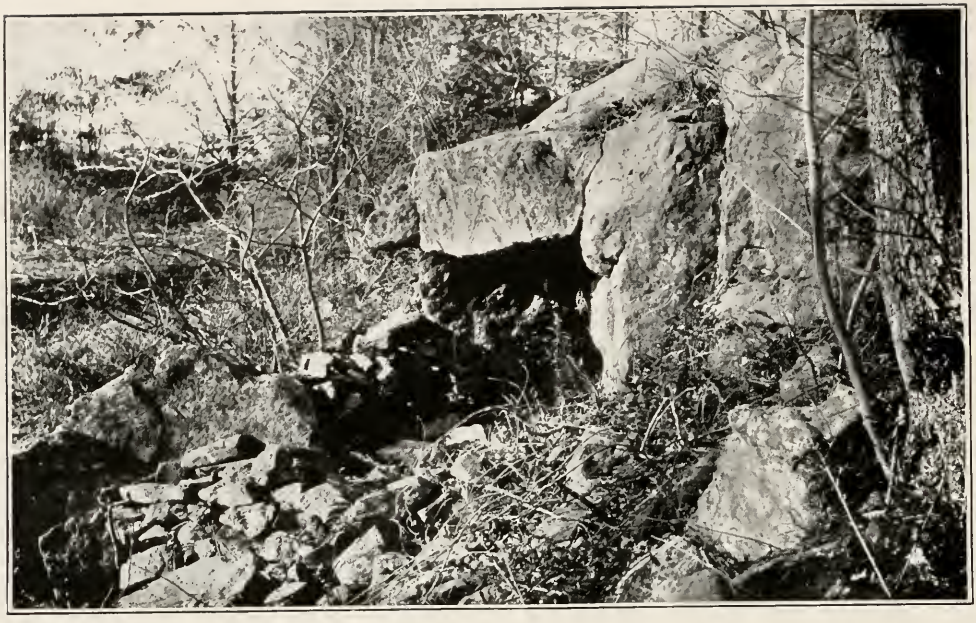
Parley" draws a vivid picture of the Ridgefield of his day. There was but one Irishman, one negro, one Indian, one "professional beggar" and one "settled pauper." The beggar, named "Jagger, had served in the armies of more than one of the Georges, and insisted upon crying: 'God save the King!' even on the fourth of July, and was openly threatened by the boys with a gratuitous ride on a rail. Nearly all the inhabitants of Ridgefield were farmers, with the few mechanics necessary to carry on society in a somewhat primeval state. Even the persons not professionally devoted to agriculture had each his farm. My father carried on his farm of forty acres, besides preaching two sermons a week and attending to other parochial duties — visiting the sick, attending funerals, solemnizing marriages, etc. There were, I think, four newspapers, all weekly, published in the state: one at Hartford, one at New London, one at New Haven and one at Litchfield. There were, however, not more than three subscribers to all these in our village. We had a public library of some two hundred volumes and what was of equal consequence — the town was on the road which was then the great thoroughfare, connecting Boston with New York, and hence, it had means of intelligence from travelers constantly passing through the place, which kept it up with the march of events."

Mr. Goodrich tells also that when he was eleven years of age a coach with four horses dashed up to Keeler Tavern and the hospitable landlord ushered into the keeping-room a tall, sallow young man and a beautiful girl — none others than Jerome Bonaparte journeying from New York to Boston, with his American bride, Elizabeth Patterson, of Baltimore. Their presence in Ridgefield caused a tremendous stir, and in the crowd which peered curiously through the tavern windows that summer night was young Goodrich. What interesting tales the old tavern walls could tell! Here lodged all the dignitaries of the state and many great men of the nation. Oliver Wolcott, Timothy Pickering and Lieutenant-Governor Treadwell are among the distinguished men mentioned by "Peter Parley" as sojourners at the cheery Keeler Tavern.

Tradition tells us this was one of the many resting places of George Washington and of Marquis Lafayette. There seems to be no authority for this belief, but when the army of de Rochambeau encamped at Ridgefield, in 1781, it is certain that Count de Rochambeau and Duc de Lauzun-Biron were entertained at the Ridgefield hostelry. The building is little changed and the partitions in the second story, which were hooked up to the ceiling to make a long ball-room, are today just as they were over a hundred years ago.

Many strangers necessitated the opening of another tavern in Ridgefield, and in 1797, Amos Smith built the inn which was sold by his descendants for a library site. That travelers were entertained at the Smith home before the large new house was built, is shown by an account-book dating back to 1719. The first Masonic Lodge of Ridgefield was organized in an upper room of Smith Tavern, an "Assembly Room," in which were held, as chance might be, courts of justice, balls, and church affairs.

Shortly after the Revolution there appeared in Ridgefield a half demented woman called Sarah Bishop. Her abode was a small cave on the mountain side,



ROMANCE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Sarah Bishop's Cave in Ridgefield where a mysterious woman lived and died shortly after the War—
Tradition claims that she was an American girl who fell in love with
a British army officer during conflict

AN OLD INN KEEPER OF STAGE-COACH AND TAVERN DAYS

Abijah Ressequie, the hospitable proprietor of old Keeler Tavern, known as the old Ressequie Inn
in its latter days — Many distinguished guests sat about his glowing hearth

RIDGEFIELD GOLF CLUB—RIDGEFIELD ARCHERY CLUB

RESIDENCE OF CHARLES LEE ROCKWELL IN RIDGEFIELD

overlooking Long Pond, and on what is now the Rippowam estate, owned by Jonathan Bulkley of Brooklyn. Whence she came was never fully known, but rumor said she had been jilted by a British officer, and her home on Long Island burned by the enemy. Half crazed, she wandered to this lonely cave, where on pleasant days, she could see the blue waters of the Sound and the dim outlines of the shore beyond. The kind-hearted Yankee house-wives were very generous to the poor creature and at the farmhouse of Captain David Smith "Sarah Bishop's loaf" was regularly baked and as regularly taken away. Her costume was of the period of the Revolution, and over one arm she carried a long white silk stocking, in which was her fine muslin wedding-gown. Sarah planted a few beans and cucumbers near her vine-clad hovel, and some rags and a pewter basin furnished the housekeeping equipment. In summer she lived on berries, vegetables and the gifts of the villagers, but during the winter, shut in by storms, she was obliged to depend on the stock of roots and nuts gathered in the autumn. She had a Bible, which she read and re-read many times. One winter day, in 1810, Sarah Bishop was found frozen near her spring, dying, as she had lived, alone on the mountain.

In 1800, Reverend Mr. Goodrich wrote a brief history of the town, speaking of several manufacturing interests. All these have disappeared. The cabinet shop of Thomas Hawley Rockwell has become a cottage, north of his house, built one hundred and eight years ago, and both are now known as "The Elm Shade Cottages." The store kept by Abner Gilbert at the north end of the street has been moved back and changed into the stable of George H. Newton. Five years ago, a couple of white-haired women made a pilgrimage to Ridgefield, visiting this old store, in which their father, David Lee, began his business life. Little did that ambitious Connecticut boy dream that his daughters would come back to his native place as Her Excellency Baroness von Waechter-Lautenbach, widow of a prominent Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Court of Württemberg, and Her Excellency Countess von Waldersee, wife of the famous Field Marshal who commanded the Allied Armies in China!

The saw-mills, grist-mills, hat and shoe factories have all gone; also the cabinet and carriage shops as well as the factory where candlesticks and bed-clothes clasps were made.

On Main Street is the home of Deacon Elisha Hawley, grandson of Reverend Thomas Hawley, a Revolutionary soldier, and, to quote "Peter Parley," "a cabinet-maker by trade, a chorister by choice, a deacon by the vote of the church, a Christian by the grace of God, and in each vocation finding his place as if designed for it by nature and Providence."

His grandson, the late Henry E. Hawley of New York, built "Ashton Croft," opposite the "Homestead" which is now the summer residence of another grandson, D. Edwin Hawley.

Thomas Hawley, brother of Elisha, was also a Revolutionary soldier, and his house, enlarged and rebuilt by his son William, is the summer abode of his granddaughter, Mrs. David S. Egleston.

About twenty years ago the Congregational Society replaced the carriage

factory with a fine stone church on the corner of Main Street, south of the old Green, which was divided by the straightening of the road. The clock and chimes in the tower are a memorial to the late J. Howard King, great-grandson of the second pastor, Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll. The removal of the old white church, and subsequent cutting up of the "Green" completely changed the character of Main Street, and the Episcopal Church, built in 1841, the third house of worship of that society, is the oldest in the village. Reverend Samuel Johnson of Stratford organized the Episcopal Church in Ridgefield in 1725, and in 1740 the first building was erected on land granted by the proprietors of the town. Two other donations of land have been made by Lieutenant Benjamin Smith, in 1785, and Isaac Jones in 1841. The second house of worship was consecrated by Right Reverend Bishop Brownell in 1831, by the name of St. Stephen's Church.

During the pastorate of Reverend Samuel Goodrich, many of the members of the Congregational Church were so impressed by the teachings of Lorenzo Dow, Francis Asbury and Jesse Lee, that they withdrew from the church and held meetings in the great kitchen of Doctor Amos Baker's house. Those early gatherings in "Baker's Kitchen" have grown into a prosperous organization called the "Jesse Lee Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church" with a commodious edifice built on the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets. It is related of an early Ridgefield Methodist, "Uncle" Mix Gilbert, that, one Sabbath, in a neighboring town, he entered church just as the pastor was announcing his text, "What think ye of Christ?" "Think well of Him, glory to God!" heartily responded the visitor, proceeding up the aisle to a seat.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Parish has, by rapid growth, amply repaid the devotion of its members and priests, and today there is no finer public building in the village than the large brick church occupying a commanding corner of Catoonah Street.

That the character of the population has changed since the construction of the railroad from Branchville, in 1870, is shown by the fact that the candlestick factory has been superseded by the "Bailey House" and the erection of the "Inn" at the southern end of Main Street.

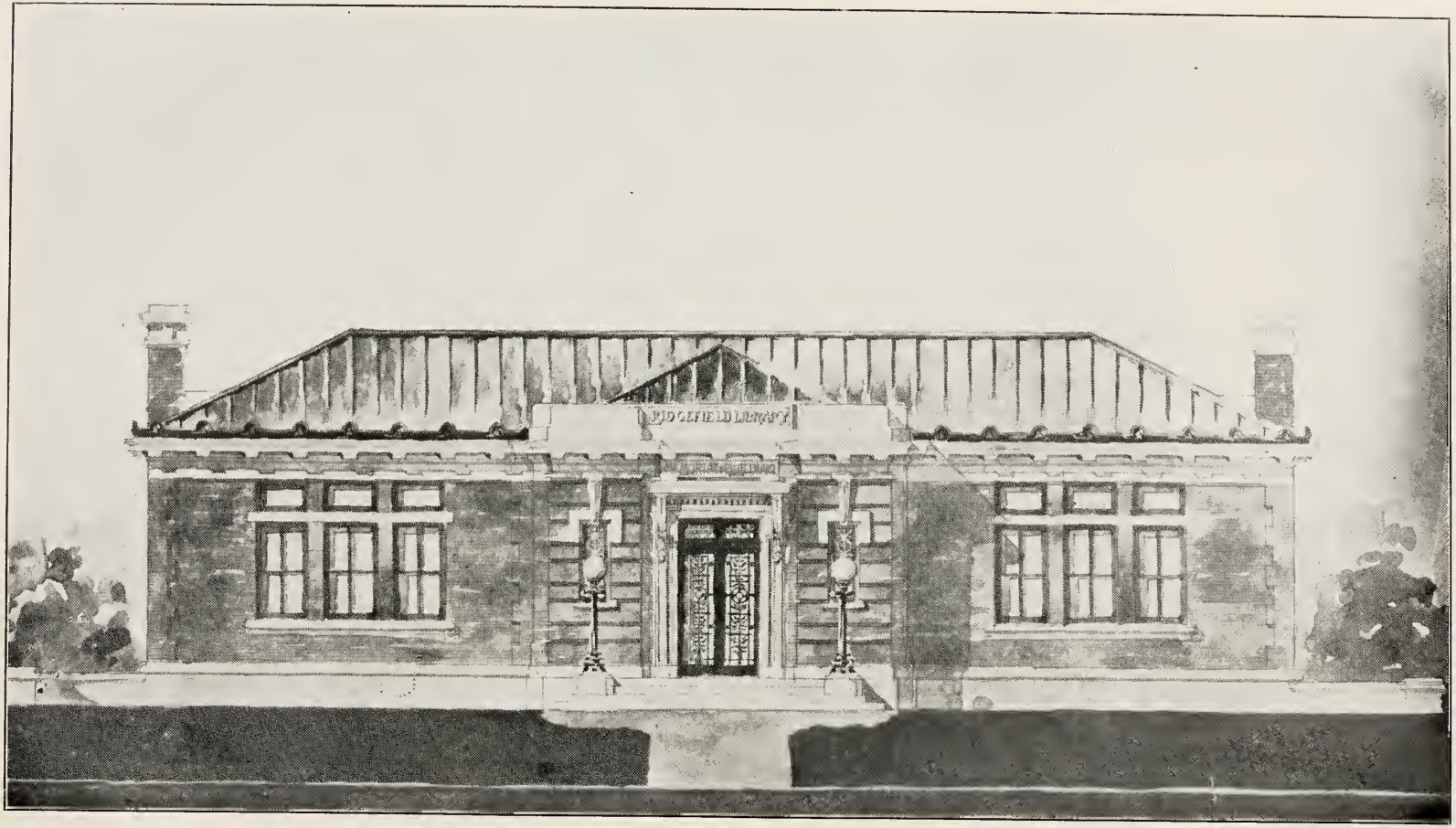
The dry, bracing air and picturesque surroundings of this town, eight hundred feet above sea level, have brought a large summer population, the influence of which is felt in the social, educational and religious life of the place.

There are two clubs: the Ridgefield Club, with its Casino where billiards, bowling, tennis, dancing and entertainments may be enjoyed, and the Country Club, with its charming club-house, extensive golf links, and tennis courts. South Lake is owned by the Ridgefield Club, and here are boats in plenty for the use of the members.

Education is well supported, there being both public and private schools.

The beautiful library, Ridgefield's pride, is a memorial to Mrs. Elizabeth Morris, erected by her husband, the late James N. Morris of New York, and is stocked with standard reference books as well as works of fiction.

In the modern Town Hall is located the First National Bank and the Ridge-



MEMORIAL LIBRARY AT RIDGEFIELD

Erected by James Morris in Memory of His Wife Elizabeth W. Morris — Engraving loaned by "The Ridgefield Press"

"WILD FARMS"

field Savings Bank. Stores, markets and livery stables are all well equipped for the demands of the townspeople and summer visitors.

It was a New England boy who replied to a stranger's sneering question, "What is raised in this place?" "We raise men, sir." This anecdote can be aptly applied to any town in the state of Connecticut, but especially to Ridgefield. Many men, influential in the world's progress, have gone from this quiet spot. The town is frequently called the home of governors, two Ridgefield boys having served their state as chief executives. The Honorable Phineas C. Lounsbury, governor of Connecticut from 1887 to 1889, is president of the Merchants' Exchange National Bank of New York, and occupies a stately colonial mansion. "Grove Lawn." Governor Lounsbury's brother, the Honorable George E. Lounsbury, was state senator from 1897 to 1899, governor from 1899 to 1901, president of the First National Bank and president of the Lounsbury-Mathewson Company of South Norwalk. He died August 16, 1904, at "The Hickories," his life-long home. This ancestral farm was one of the dearest belongings of the late governor, and he gave away all the produce not needed by his own household. Governor Lounsbury gave utterance to a guiding principle of his life in his Thanksgiving proclamation, November 11, 1899, when he wrote: "On that day let the hand of charity spread a feast in every home of poverty, for it is more blessed to give than to receive, and no sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving can be more acceptable to God than deeds of charity done for the poor and unfortunate." Many a poor family mourns the untimely death of a generous benefactor, and the town laments the passing of an honored and useful citizen.

The Honorable Melbert B. Cary, whose home is "Wildfarms," on West Lane, was the Democratic nominee for governor in 1902.

The Honorable Jonathan Ingersoll, son of Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll, was a judge of the Supreme Court and lieutenant-governor of the state. His son was the Honorable Ralph I. Ingersoll, member of Congress and United States Minister to Russia, and his grandsons were Governor Charles R. Ingersoll and the Honorable Colin M. Ingersoll, member of Congress.

Alphonso D. Rockwell, M.D., of New York, a son of David S. Rockwell, has won distinction in the medical world as one of the first physicians to discover the remedial uses of electricity.

Adna R. Chaffee, lieutenant-general of the United States Army, and Commander of the United States troops in China, married Anna, daughter of Colonel George Rockwell, a native of Ridgefield, an officer during the Civil War, and a leader in the ejection of Mormons from Illinois.

Reverend Thomas Burr Rockwell was a prominent clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church and a pioneer of that denomination in the Western states. His daughter Minerva was one of the early missionaries to India and married first, Reverend James R. Downey, who died the year following, and second, the Right Reverend James M. Thoburn, M. E. Bishop of India.

Reverend Charles Augustus Goodrich, son of Reverend Samuel Goodrich, and elder brother of "Peter Parley," was born in Ridgefield, 1790. He was

associated with S. G. Goodrich in writing juvenile educational books, and the first school history of the United States was from his pen.

Harvey Smith was a civil engineer and for some time connected with the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad. Later he located and constructed the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad, of which he was superintendent until his death, about 1865.

Doctor Nehemiah Perry, who has recently retired from many years of practice in Ridgefield, is the son of Doctor Nehemiah Perry, and grandson of David Perry, M.D., who was also the first settled rector of St. Stephen's Church.

Cyrus Northrop, LL.D., son of Cyrus and Polly B. Northrop, was born September 30, 1834; graduated from Yale College in 1857, and for twenty-one years was Professor of English literature at his *Alma Mater*. For the past twenty-four years he has been president of Minnesota University.

Austin Scott, LL.D., son of J. Austin Scott of Toledo, Ohio, and grandson of Deacon Jere Scott of Ridgefield, has. for the past eighteen years, been president of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Of the same family is Colonel Hiram K. Scott, one of the oldest Masons and the oldest Odd Fellow in the state; town clerk for forty-six years, judge of the Probate Court for thirty-six years; in short, the village "Squire," a type now, alas, almost extinct. Nearly half a century Colonel Scott has drawn the wills, solved the legal problems, and recorded the outgoings and incomings — sometimes the shortcomings — of the township. No other resident knows so thoroughly the "ancient landmarks," or is so often sought as a counsellor.

The Honorable William Oscar Seymour, a civil engineer, one of the railroad commissioners of the state, and vice-president of the First National Bank, is prominent in all affairs of church and town. He has ever been one whom his townspeople delighted to honor.

Lack of space forbids mention of the many others whose lives of usful influence have reflected credit upon their native town. The ancestral lines of many strong American families are traced from Ridgefield and its records are rich in genealogical and historical information. On this anniversary year the hills of the ancient village are crowned with beautiful estates and country-seats that have given it distinction far and wide as the "Lenox of Connecticut."

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid," and the splendid record of many of its distinguished sons and daughters has extended the fame of the old town far and wide over our own country and even beyond the sea.

RESIDENCE OF HON. WILLIAM O. SEYMOUR AT RIDGEFIELD

"ASHTON CROFT"

Estate of late Henry E. Hawley, grandson of Deacon Elisha Hawley,
the Revolutionary Patriot in Ridgefield

MODERN RIDGEFIELD

Estate of George G. Haven, junior

ANNIVERSARY EXERCISES

IN the early part of the year 1908 a committee was appointed to make arrangements for a modest, unpretentious observance of the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the town of Ridgefield and to prepare an order of exercises suitable for the occasion. The persons appointed on the various committees were as follows:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Active Members

Wm. O. Seymour, Chairman
Col. H. K. Scott, Vice-chairman
Geo. E. Benedict, Treasurer
Geo. L. Rockwell, Secretary
Geo. H. Whitlock, 1st Selectman of Ridgefield
A. H. Storer, Warden of the Borough of Ridgefield
Michael T. McGlynn, Chairman Town School Board

Samuel Keeler
Gilbert B. Burr
Wm. R. Keeler
Charles B. Northrop
Geo. G. Scott
Richard W. Osborn

Honorary and Advisory Committee

Ex-Gov. P. C. Lounsbury
Geo. M. Olcott
Geo. P. Ingersoll
Wm. Harrison Bradley
Hon. Melbert B. Cary
Wm. H. Beers
D. Edwin Hawley
Cyrus Northrop, LL.D.
Charles L. Rockwell
Dr. A. L. Northrop
Geo. G. Haven, Jr.
John W. Rockwell
Dr. Geo. G. Shelton
Jacob Legrand Danchy
Benjamin K. Northrop
Rev. S. McNeill Keeler

Austin Scott, Ex-President Rutgers College, N. Y.

Honorary Daughters of Ridgefield Families

Mrs. D. S. Egleston
Miss Mary A. King
Mrs. Geo. G. Haven, Jr.
Miss Anna M. Resseguie
Miss Sarah Northrop
Mrs. H. Elizabeth Danchy
Miss Marion Bradley
Mrs. D. L. Jones
Miss Margaret Hawley
Miss Phebe M. Grumman
Miss Sarah L. Hawley
Mrs. Grace King Ingersoll
Mrs. Geo. P. Ingersoll
Miss Sarah A. Keeler
Miss Mary Eveline Smith
Mrs. Mary Jennings Wheeler
Miss Mary Bradley
Mrs. H. D. Smith
Miss Jennie Smith
Mrs. Dr. A. L. Northrop

Committee of the Churches of the Town

First Congregational Church

Rev. A. W. Gerrie, Pastor
Howard P. Nash

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Rev. John H. Chapman, Rector
Rev. Foster Ely, Rector Emeritus
Wm. Andrew Benedict

Ridgebury Congregational Church

Rev. Louis F. Burgess, Pastor
Mr. Gilbert B. Burr

Jesse Lee Memorial M. E. Church

Rev. Harvey E. Burnes, D.D., Pastor
John W. Rockwell

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

Rev. Father R. E. Shortell
John Brophy

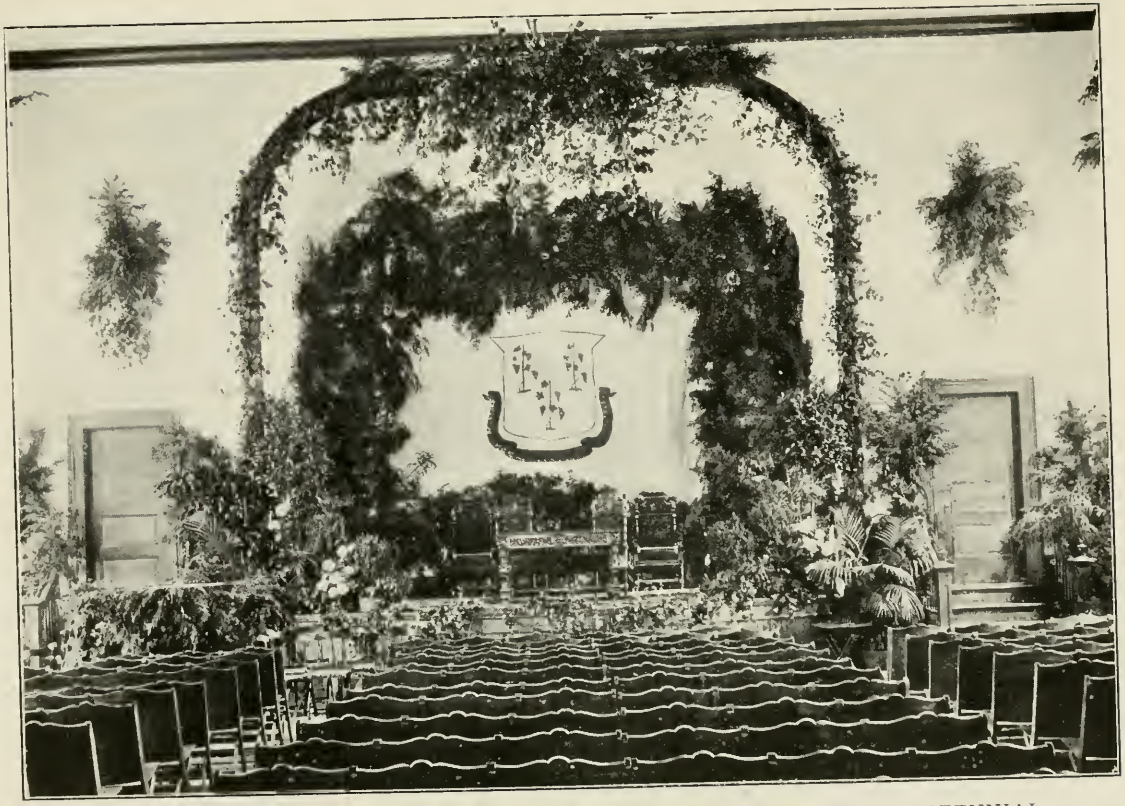
Committee of the Business Men's Association, and other local organizations of the town to arrange for a public parade

Richard W. Osborn

James F. Kennedy
Samuel S. Denton
James E. Ryan
George G. Knapp

The active members of the executive committee met from time to time and finally decided upon an order of exercises that should begin on the evening of July 6th with a union service of all the churches in the Town Hall, conducted by the pastors, giving a brief account of the organization and history of each church, and of those prominently identified therewith, and an estimate of the important influence exerted by all of them combined upon the life and character of the people of the town, interspersed with the singing by a trained chorus of thirty-five voices of the familiar tunes of "ye olden time." For the information of those not present the evening program is herewith presented, together with the addresses made by the pastors of the various churches.

COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF ALBERT H. WIGGIN — Winter Scene in the Ridgefield Hills, mantled with snow



INTERIOR DECORATIONS OF THE TOWN HALL IN WHICH THE BI-CENTENNIAL EXERCISES WERE HELD

1708 1908

Ridgefield, Conn.

✠

Bi-Centennial Exercises

Conducted by the

Pastors of the Churches

✠

Town Hall

July sixth, nineteen hundred and eight

Eight o'clock P. M.

Program

✠

Prayer

Hymn by chorus and audience

1. O God, beneath Thy guiding hand,
   Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
   And when they trod the wintry strand,
   With prayer and psalm they worshiped Thee.

2. Thou heard'st, well pleased, the song, the prayer;
   Thy blessing came; and still its power
   Shall onward, through all ages bear
   The memory of that holy hour.

3. Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
   Came with those exiles o'er the waves;
   And where their pilgrim feet have trod,
   The God they trusted guards their graves.

4. And here Thy name, O God of love
   Their children's children shall adore,
   Till these eternal hills remove,
   And spring adorns the earth no more.

1712 *First Congregational Church* 1908

REV. A. W. GERRIE

1725 *St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal Church* 1908

REV. JOHN H. CHAPMAN

Ancient Anthem by chorus

1769 — *Ridgebury Congregational Church* — 1908
Rev. Louis F. Burgess

1789 — *Jesse Lee Memorial M. E. Church* — 1908
Rev. Harvey E. Burnes

Hymn by chorus and audience

1. Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ our triumphant King,
We come thy name to sing;
Hither our children bring
Tributes of praise.

2. Ever be Thou our guide,
Our Shepherd and our pride,
Our staff and song:
Jesus, Thou Christ of God,
By Thy perennial word
Lead us where Thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

3. So now, and till we die,
Sound we Thy praises high,
And joyful sing.
Let all the holy throng
Who to Thy church belong,
Unite and swell the song
To Christ our King!

1882 — *St. Mary's Catholic Church* — 1908
Rev. R. E. Shortell

Closing Hymn by chorus and audience

Time like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

Benediction

AN EARLY MEETING-HOUSE IN FIRST YEARS OF AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Ancient "white" Congregational Church at Ridgefield where Reverend Samuel Goodrich, father of "Peter Parley" preached—First Pastor in Ridgefield was Thomas Hawley

MODERN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN RIDGEFIELD

Replacing old "white meeting-house"—Clock and chimes are memorial to late J. Howard King, great-grandson of its second pastor, Reverend Jonathan Ingersoll—
Near it stands the Ridgefield Club

RIDGEFIELD BI-CENTENNIAL

MONDAY EVENING, July 6, 1908.

MR. WM. O. SEYMOUR, *Chairman.*

Ladies and gentlemen: Before beginning the program I wish to make an announcement in reference to the exercises tomorrow. They will begin promptly at 10.30 o'clock, and continue until the program is completed. In the afternoon, from half past two to three o'clock, there will be an assembly of the children in this room, who will read some historical papers concerning the settlement of the Town of Ridgefield; and later, about half past three or four o'clock, there will be a procession under the auspices of the Business Men's Association, and all the other local organizations of the town. In the evening at eight o'clock the concluding address will be given by Hon. E. J. Hill.

This program which is in your hands is the order of exercises this evening, and I propose to have no announcements made from the chair, except those made on this program. That is to say, it seems to me to be unnecessary to introduce each of these speakers, who are known as well to you as I am. Hence the various persons who are to perform the parts assigned to them in this program will rise without any announcement except that in the program, and come forward promptly. The choir will do the same. The hymns that are to be sung by the congregation and choir are printed, and it is hoped the audience will rise and unite with the chorus in singing these hymns.

STORY OF THE FIRST CHURCH

REV. A. W. GERRIE, Pastor

Thomas Carlyle has said that the greatest thing about a man or a nation of men is their religion. Carlyle was no sentimentalist, but only a stern rugged old philosopher and it was his philosophy that taught him the truth we have just enunciated. This is not to be wondered at, seeing that Lord Bacon, long before Carlyle's day, discovered that a little philosophy bringeth a man to skepticism and unbelief, while a deeper philosophy bringeth him about again to faith and belief and religion.

In the face of this testimony it is fitting that in the Bi-Centennial celebration of this good old town of Ridgefield, the story of the religious and church life of the place should have the first and most important position on the program. It has been decided that you are to hear first of all from the Established Church of Ridgefield. The Non-Conformist and Dissenting bodies are to tell their story later on. I am not very familiar, Mr. Chairman, with ecclesiastical terminology, but "Separated Brethren" and "Sects" seems to be the correct

terms according to somewhat current usage. You are to hear therefore by and by, from the "Separated Brethren," from the "Sects;" but first of all you are to have a word concerning the beginning and continuance of the Old Established First Church of Ridgefield.

Two things have conspired to make it inevitable that I should be the first speaker on this occasion. The first is that Providence apparently decreed that the first church set up in Ridgefield should be Congregational, and the second is that my brother ministers insisted that I should tell the story of our church first. In this, these gentlemen not only felt that the oldest church should have the first place, but,— what was much more gratifying to me,— I could plainly see they were persuaded that of all institutions in Ridgefield, both religious and secular, the First Church was far and away the most important of them all. This attitude on their part recalls a story, a new story I am persuaded,— to the effect that a Presbyterian minister one Monday was enjoying a call from his Methodist neighbor. A rap was heard, and on the door being opened, there appeared a somewhat impecunious looking individual, who, toying with a basket upon his arm, inquired for the Elder. Being informed that he was face to face with the Dominie, he opened his basket and disclosed a beautiful black Newfoundland puppy dog which he offered for sale. He proceeded to dilate upon the good points of the animal and finally wound up by declaring that best of all, it was a Presbyterian puppy dog. The Methodist minister sitting in a near-by room, could not but hear the conversation, and thought he detected an old and familiar voice. Going out into the hall he faced the would-be vendor of puppy dogs and said:—

"Look here you rascal, you were in my place the other day and you tried to sell me that identical canine, only you said then it was a Methodist pup."

"You are right, boss," said the man, quite unabashed,—"I did say that, but your Riverence, the pup has had its eyes opened since then."

It is a good thing sometimes, for men as well as dogs to have their eyes opened.

If I were to seek, sir, some antecedent cause leading up to the establishment of a Congregational church as the first religious organization in Ridgefield, I might be tempted to go much farther back than would be possible in the time allotted to me tonight. I might very well go back to the first century of the Christian era, or even farther back than that for such facts. I might indeed go back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and point to those stalwart heroes, John Greenwood, Henry Barrow and John Penry lying in the dungeon or proceeding to the place of execution, there to be hanged upon the gibbet for daring to maintain the independence of the local church and the right of the individual to read and interpret the word of God for himself.

I would go back to the little vessel rocking in Cape Cod Bay, with its little company face to face with the fact that they were about to land upon territory for which they had no patent nor any warrant to make a settlement or establish a government. There in the cabin of the Mayflower, recognizing no higher authority than necessity and opportunity, they drew up a constitution and organized

a civil government by which to regulate their affairs. They were already organized as a church, otherwise they doubtless would have done the same thing with reference to matters religious and ecclesiastical. Thus it happened that more than 150 years before the Declaration of Independence was drawn up and signed at Philadelphia, there was constituted for the first time in human history, a government of the people, for the people and by the people, and that in the only place in all the earth where it could have happened,— in a company of Congregational people. It was this fact and the principle back of it,— the truest of all theories and types of Apostolic Succession,— that determined the first religious organization in Ridgefield should be Congregational.

I speak of the Mayflower and the Pilgrims in connection with Ridgefield because the first minister at Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1652, came direct from the Plymouth Colony; and the bulk of the pioneers who settled Ridgefield, came from Norwalk some fifty years later. I make this connection moreover, to recall the fact that the spirit and type of religious and moral life that came to Connecticut in its early beginnings, was very largely of the Pilgrim rather than of the Puritan order, and there were vital differences between the two. You know, it has been said that the good and pious emigrants who landed upon the rock-bound New England coast, first fell on their knees and then upon the Aborigines. This latter however was not true of the Pilgrims, nor was it the Pilgrim spirit which was the true Congregational spirit, and it was that spirit in large measure, that came to Connecticut and to Ridgefield. Hence it is that we find the pioneers of Ridgefield seeking out Catoonah and his associate Chiefs among the Red Men, and buying and paying for the land that was to become our beautiful town of today. I will not dare assert that they did not drive a hard bargain. I do not know as to that. If they did cut it close, it is no more than to say that they were Englishmen and Yankees at that. A company of Scotchmen, now, would have dealt on the square all along the line!

The date of the organization of the Congregational church in Ridgefield is given as 1712 upon the program, but it is almost certain that the first religious services were coincident with the settlement of the town. As already intimated the major portion of the first settlers in Ridgefield came from Norwalk where a Congregational church had existed for more than fifty years. The remainder came from Milford where there had been a Congregational church for upwards of sixty years. Moreover at the time of the settlement of the town there were Congregational churches at Stamford, Fairfield and Danbury, and it is inconceivable, knowing the usages of the times, that these people up in the wilderness should have been left without religious service for even a single year. At the time Ridgefield was settled the Rev. Stephen Buckingham, of whose family and lineage came the great War Governor of Connecticut, was pastor of the Norwalk church, and it is not at all improbable that he followed the migrating portion of his parish and occasionally at least ministered to their religious and spiritual necessities upon this hill top, prior to the actual organization of their church life.

Because records have been lost, we do not know in detail the exact time

of organzation, but we do know that in 1712 the General Assembly of the State granted the Ridgefield people the right to tax themselves in support of the gospel, and we also know that soon after that the Rev. Thomas Hawley was at work in the parish. During the period of practically 200 years then, the church has had fourteen pastors. Of these the first three covered the 1st Century, leaving the remaining eleven to divide the 2d Century among them. Allowing for interregnums, of which there was one of considerable duration between the second and third, the average length of the first three pastorates was something less than thirty years. The average working length of the eleven pastorates of the 2d Century has been about eight years. It will be eight years next month since the present pastor preached his first sermon in Ridgefield, so that by the grace of God and the patience and forbearance of a long-suffering people, he has attained to the average years of the fathers who have served the church during the past Century.

Thomas Hawley, the first pastor, was a graduate of Harvard and could not have been more than 20 years of age when he settled in Ridgefield. He was a man of large executive ability, and in addition to the very efficient discharge of his duties as pastor and teacher, served the town as clerk and in other capacities. Mr. Hawley brought to Ridgefield as his bride Abigail Gold of Fairfield. The names Gold and Gould were interchangeable, and Jay Gould the financier had his ancestry in Fairfield. If therefore any of you good folk here tonight can trace your lineage back to the Rev. Thomas Hawley and Abigail Gold, you may be interested to try to figure out what affinity exists between you and certain Counts and no-accounts whose domicile is beyond the sea.

Jonathan Ingersoll, the second pastor, continued in office for 38 years, and died in harness, as did his predecessor, Thomas Hawley. Mr. Ingersoll was a man of great strength and force of character, and with masterly statesmanship steered the church and town through the perilous times of the Revolutionary period. He was a graduate of Yale, as was also his successor, Samuel Goodrich, and both of them were held in high esteem in collegiate as well as ecclesiastical circles.

Samuel Goodrich was inducted into the pastorate in the 22d year of his age, and after 25 years' service resigned in the year 1811. A child of the Manse of those days, was Samuel Griswold Goodrich, better known as Peter Parley, author and historian, and who was one of a goodly array of youth who have gone forth during all these years, to do worthy work in wider fields, bringing luster to the old town and church from which they sprang. It is fair to say that there is not a man of us in town today, no matter what his race or creed, who does not owe unlimited gratitude to these three strong rugged men, for they laid broad and deep the foundations of all that is strongest and best in our religious, educational and civic life.

The membership of the First Church has never been large at any time, the present enrollment being about 175. The oldest list of members extant dates from 1822, so that practically we know the membership for only the 2d Century of the church's life. The total for the Century is in round numbers

about 1,000. We have no means of knowing the number enrolled during the first 100 years. In all probability it was much less. It is to be remembered however, that the members of the Ecclesiastical Society were not always of necessity, members of the church, so that the actual size of the parish was doubtless much larger than the church enrollment would indicate.

The church seems to have had only three church buildings during its entire history. The first two Meeting-houses stood upon the Village Green, the location of which, of course, is known to everybody. The second of these buildings, with its graceful spire and splendid Colonial outline, was the most conspicuous and beautiful structure in the town for over 100 years. It was removed less than 20 years ago. The present stone church was opened and dedicated to Divine worship 20 years ago this present month. The entire property is at present estimated to be worth $30,000, and there is no debt upon it, while there is an endowment of over $9,000 bearing interest for church uses. The total net income of the church last year from all sources was over thirty-eight hundred dollars.

One of the most interesting facts that has come to my notice in connection with the story of this church, is the relation it sustained to the schools in the early days. It may not be generally known that the schools of the town were under the direction and management of the First Church, or more properly speaking, the First Ecclesiastical Society, for many years. At the annual meetings of the society the town was divided into districts whose outlines were carefully placed on record; and a committee was appointed to have full charge during the twelve months. It was the duty of this committee to engage and dismiss masters, apportion the State grant of money to the several districts and the like. In this arrangement we have the beginning of the District School System. The management of the schools by the church seems a somewhat unusual proceeding, but at the beginning it was about the only plan that could be thought of, and as Congregationalists have always looked upon Education as the handmaid of religion,— upon the school as the ally and associate of the church, it is hardly to be conceived that the educational system of the town could have had its beginning in any other way than this. In the inevitable evolution of things, the management of the schools passed from the Ecclesiastical Society as such, first to the districts and then to the town as such, and this not because the town demanded that it should be so, but because the very genius of Congregationalism forced the matter, in the interests of the public as a whole; for it is a fundamental principle with us that eventually and inevitably the demos — the people —must govern and direct.

Now sir, I have mentioned this connection of the church with the schools in those early days, not only as a matter of history, but also that I may conclude what I have to say tonight,— if you will permit me,— with a reference to what seems to me to be the grandest and most splendid memorial with which the people of Ridgefield could mark this Bi-Centennial occasion. There is one platform upon which we can all stand, one interest upon which we can all unite. This interest is that of our public schools. Some towns have erected monu-

ments, some have set up arches, some have built bridges to commemorate such anniversaries as we are celebrating in Ridgefield tonight. Why cannot we erect a school building as a fitting memorial of our Bi-Centennial,— a building to be handed down to the coming generations as a suitable memorial of this occasion. Why may we not have a building to which the boys and girls of 50 or 100 years hence, if need be, can point with pride as the gift of the people who were on the ground when the town was 200 years old? Let it be a building adequate to the needs of the consolidated schools, when the time comes that the schools are consolidated as inevitably they must be. Let it be a building too, amply sufficient for the requirements of the High School which Ridgefield cannot long afford to do without, for it ought to be possible for every child born in Ridgefield, no matter what his place or position, no matter what his church or creed, no matter what the race from which he springs,— to get a High School education and that without having to go out of town to get it. Let this memorial building be the popular gift of all the people; not a building to be paid for by taxation, for that would be a scurvy gift to make to the generations following, if we left them to pay the bulk of its cost. Neither let it be the gift of one or two persons no matter how willing and able, but let it be the gift of all the people, rich and poor, high and low, of all creeds and of no creeds. Let the rich give their thousands if they will and those less rich their hundreds, and let the rest of us give our tens and our fifties and afford the children a chance to give their pennies and their dimes. Let every child have a chance if he will, to earn by the sweat of his own brow, a dollar that he may have a share in this Memorial Building. Then through all the coming years let Ridgefield be noted, not for her sightly location on this magnificent hill, not for her matchless avenue of bending maple and elm trees, not for her palatial residences, but most of all for her splendid public school and the incomparable work that is being done year after year within its walls.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Rev. John H. Chapman, Rector

If I may follow the parson's custom of using a text, permit me to call to your minds the remark of an early writer in Ridgefield, that, "here the utmost harmony pervades the different religious bodies and a spirit of strife and litigation has died out, no lawyers ever having resided in Ridgefield."

We may have departed from that fair estate in the matter of the lawyers in residence, but the representatives of the different religious bodies of the community on this platform bear witness to the peace and good will in spiritual matters still prevailing.

If we each one boast now of our especial history, it may be pardoned in this instance because the people who are the occasion of our boasting have long since passed beyond the ill effects of vanity.

We yield to the Congregationalists the right to boast loudest because of their early coming, but as the second in order we shall try not to be backward

ST. STEPHEN'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

in speaking of ourselves. The first services of our church appear to have been held in 1725 by Dr. Samuel Johnson, a most worthy bearer of the name of the illustrious lexicographer. Aside from beginning our history, the most conspicuous thing he is known to have done is the founding of Columbia University, or as it was then known, King's College. Dr. Johnson was prominent throughout this colony and parts of New York as a great missionary, an able organizer and an eloquent speaker.

Many of our early records have been destroyed and probably an even greater number were never made, the early members of the community having many things which appealed to them as of more importance than satisfying the curiosity of their descendants.

In 1728 there were 12 families connected with our church, and in the stricter customs then obtaining, doubtless all the children followed their parents to the religious services.

While we are ignorant of the exact number of individuals who were identified with us we may estimate it from the data left by a later historian; he informs us that in his time there were 6 families in Ridgefield who together had 75 children, that is nearly 13 children in each family.

Being evidently patriotic people I presume these were all Episcopalians, so if the other 6 families we had in Ridgefield in 1728 did as well, we had at that time 150 children and 24 parents, a total of 174 souls. In order to be conservative I am willing to claim only 170, which even so would make us a considerable body for the time.

All of the clergy who ministered here prior to the war of the Revolution were missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (in England), and were supported in part by that society. There were 8 of these men between 1725 and 1776; men who in common with others of the time left comfortable homes in England to endure the hardships of what was then the frontier life.

Ridgefield does not class her attractions today under the head of hardships; but doubtless then some of the church buildings could not boast of the 28 degrees of heat a few of us enjoyed last winter, the roads were a vexation to the flesh, they may also have had trials with their politics and politicians, and the assessment lists were probably not satisfactory to all taxpayers. We trust we have benefited in many ways since then.

From the home society, each of the clergy received about 20 pounds a year, and from the community here through the state tax for religion, about 40 pounds more in prosperous times, so that the minister received about $300 a year.

The people worshiped at first in the home of the adherents, but in 1739 they became more prosperous and started a church building. This was finished soon after and seems to have satisfied the people until it was damaged by the two armies.

The last of the English clergy was the Rev. Epenetus Townsend. Being a loyal British subject he left his congregation at the beginning of the war and became chaplain to a British regiment. Later Mr. Townsend was drowned with

his wife and five children, while on his way to Nova Scotia. It is to be hoped that the superstitious in his parish did not regard this as the comment of Providence upon his loyalty to the British.

After Mr. Townsend's departure the soldiers of England, in passing through, burned part of the building and later the Americans used the rest as a storehouse. This suffering of the building at the hands of the British should have made the church popular among the American patriots, but the late rector's leaving had a depressing effect and the church here did not recover its accustomed strength until after the war.

The building was rendered unfit for use by its severe trials, so in 1785 a new building was begun. The people were taxed for this purpose and as they were in straitened circumstances after their hardships they paid their taxes in kind; whitewood boards valued at about $1.50 a hundred feet, 18-inch chestnut shingles at $6.00 a thousand, also in rye, corn, oats, buckwheat and flax.

This building was not finished until 1791; it faced north and south, was 44x32 feet, with a gallery in the south end and no steeple. In 1819 the church was altered and improved, among other improvements side galleries were put in and a steeple erected. Nine years later a bell was put in the steeple and in 1831 the building was consecrated by Bishop Brownell, who at the same time confirmed 52 persons.

By 1841 the congregation seems to have required a larger place of worship, so the present church was begun, and finished and consecrated in 1842, the Rev. Warner Hoyt being rector.

The present bell, weighing 1508 pounds, was placed in the steeple in 1851. The organ was built in 1857 and rebuilt in 1875.

There were no confirmations up to 1809, as the Church in England would not allow us bishops; since that time we have records of 706 persons confirmed; as we have no records for part of the time the actual number is larger.

Thirty-four clergy have officiated here as rector or missionary during our history, 8 of the Church of England and 26 of our own church.

In thinking over their religious expression in the past Connecticut people may well take pride in their wide toleration and ample charity. Your neighbor Massachusetts, deservedly admired in so many things and regarded highly for her notable contributions to religious questions, yet we remember her Puritan people as coming over here not only to worship God as they pleased but to make everybody else do the same. Macaulay said that they objected to bear baiting not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

No such stubborn bigotry ever marked Connecticut, yet her people have ever been profoundly interested in religious questions.

When a goodly part of the faculty of Yale College in its early days left the Congregational Church and went to England for ordination by Bishops of the Church of England, there was no ill feeling engendered. When our people in Ridgefield wanted the services of the Church of England, the authorities of the church established by the colony were willing that our state taxes should

be paid for the support of a clergyman of the Church of England instead of to the Congregational church.

We are proud in our country of our open religious spirit, we may also be proud in our village of such a spirit. We trust we stand not for religious toleration but for religious freedom.

We hope also to stand not for religious uniformity where every man shall be moulded alike, but for religious unity where every man may express the message God wishes him to live.

If the Church of Christ is divine we need never fear that it will be killed by leaving it as untrammeled as possible.

There is nothing in the past to beguile us from present action by supinely dreaming through the pleasing mazes of retrospection; whatsoever there is of nobleness shall reprove our despondency, whatsoever of mistake shall warn us from the agony of defeat.

Rev. Foster Ely, D.D., Rector Emeritus.

My Friends: The talented rector of St. Stephen's church in his admirable address has anticipated everything of interest that can be said regarding St. Stephen's parish, historically considered. Nevertheless, as one who served it for nearly two decades, I would say that it seems quite natural to face from this platform a Ridgefield audience. Ridgefield has an unfailing charm, not only for those who claim it as their ancestral or native soil, but for those who by long residence have made it their home. Nearly all of those who leave this town have a faint idea of returning before they die, while the majority of them cherish the sanguine hope of revisiting it. It is a fact that while these people are away from Ridgefield they regard themselves as pilgrims and sojourners, as those who have no earthly home. Not many years ago there were enrolled among the communicants at St. Stephen's church very many who stoutly refused to take a letter to any other rector, although they had not been living here for ten, twenty, thirty or forty years, solely because of their love for Ridgefield and their reluctance to sever the last tie, nominal though it be, with the town they loved so well.

I am aware, and reference has been made to it, that this Ridgefield of to-day is not the simple, natural, rural place that it once was, reposing in tranquil isolation among its green hills. Everywhere there are spacious villas and cottages, varied in architecture, with harmonious surroundings, and furnished with all that refined taste can suggest. The library, with its many volumes that bring us in touch with other days,— with the history of mediæval times and the generations from thence onward, invites all to enter and read. The kindergarten, founded and maintained for many years by a noble lady at her sole expense, is supplied with modern equipment. Whether for good or for worse, the spirit of the great metropolis seems to pervade this place, and we have the electric current,— the telegraph, the telephone, and the motor car. But Ridgefield still has much in common with its former self. There is the same wonder-

ful scenery, ever varying, and opening up new vistas at every turn, with the mountains dimly outlined against the far horizon. On a clear day may be seen the Sound,— and here are the roads to which allusion has been made tonight, with over forty different drives.

But these are all material things. We have a history, thank God, and it cannot be taken from us,— a history that links us indissolubly with the stirring events of the colonial period and later on with the Revolutionary war, when the sons of Ridgefield fought here and elsewhere for independence, encouraged so to do unfalteringly by their patriotic mothers, their wives and their daughters. Then, too, think of the men of ability, forceful character and untarnished honor that the town has given to the state and the country. In literary and educational circles I can recall the names of some who have by their contributions signally honored Ridgefield.

I cannot resist saying here tonight that, standing here, memory brings vividly before me the names of many families, descendants of the settlers of this town. Of these I can recall twenty at least who were communicants of St. Stephen's, and six or eight more who were parishioners that the rector visited. Were they living today the youngest would be eighty years of age, and the oldest would be one hundred and twelve. Col. Scott, and our friend Mr. Northrop, another octogenarian,— you would hardly associate them with any such age as that. I refer to this fact because these men were born in the early or middle part of the last century.

I must refer to a kinsman of mine, though three degrees removed, born in 1793, Samuel Griswold Goodrich, better known as "Peter Parley",— story teller, poet, senator and United States Consul at Paris, who adorned everything which he touched.

Another word. St. Stephen's Church has today among its many communicants those who are lineal descendants of the Rev. Dr. William Smith, one of the most eminent men in our church, who, about the time the constitution of the United States was adopted, contributed to our church that able institution office which I heard read the other day in New York, at the installation of the rector of Trinity Church.

Now referring again to my cousin, Samuel Goodrich,— just a word. It seems there was a humorous conflict going on in a certain church in this town about the introduction of a new stove in the church. Part of the congregation bitterly opposed its introduction, and part favored it. The part opposing it said it was an innovation; they also said that a foot stove would keep the women and children warm in severe weather, while the religious devotion should keep the men warm. The contest waxed so fiercely that the good old pastor — it must have been the Congregational church, for that is one of the oldest — was really perplexed to choose a text for his sermon. He tried to be neutral, fearing lest he might give offense to one party or the other, and above all fearing lest both factions, the stoveites and the anti-stoveites, might draw arguments from it. This story is preserved in the recollections of Goodrich.

If a book of recollections of this day should be published and preserved, it

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, RIDGEBURY

is possible that at the tri-centennial our friend Col. Scott may quote from it, because under no circumstances can we spare him now, and I doubt if the people living one hundred years from now will spare him.

(Singing of Ancient Anthem, by the Chorus.)

(Address by Rev. Louis F. Burgess, of Ridgebury Congregational Church.)

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF RIDGEBURY CHURCH

Rev. Louis F. Burgess, Pastor

In 1727 there was proposed an exchange of territory between the states of New York and Connecticut, whereby New York was to receive a strip of land along its north and south boundary line containing some sixty-two thousand acres, and known as "The Oblong," and Connecticut was to have Greenwich and a part of Stamford on the Sound, giving it a more extended shore line.

As this would cause to Ridgefield a considerable loss of territory, a petition was sent to the State Assembly in this year asking that to the town be assigned an unappropriated wedge of land lying on the north of Ridgefield and to the west of Danbury. On the 13th day of May, 1731, the General Assembly granted this petition, and on June 1st a patent for this land was issued by the governor; thus originated the name of "New Patent," by which the district of Ridgebury was for some years known.

It is supposed that a meeting-house was built, and worship begun at "New Patent" as early as 1738, though no record of the fact remains.

In May, 1761, on petition of Timothy Benedict, Samuel Gates, Jonah Foster, and others, asking to be made an Ecclesiastical Society, the General Assembly appointed a committee on the case, and in October, 1761, made a society of said "New Patent," and named it "Ridgebury"; the original records of this society are still in existence in the hands of the pastor of the church. These records attest that many efforts were made to settle a pastor in the place, and that preaching was maintained by occasional supplies with more or less constancy; the names of Joseph Moss Wright, Obadiah Warner, Stephen Hawley, Benjamin Wildman, and others appear on the records as being from time to time so considered.

On Nov. 23, 1768, it was voted to call Mr. Samuel Camp to settle among them as their minister, and to offer him the sum of 75 pounds salary, and 150 pounds settlement, the last to be paid in three annual installments. Mr. Camp had previously preached in Ridgebury, and under date of May 7, 1766, is found the record,—"voted, to improve Mr. Samuel Camp longer among us, upon a view of settlement among us in the work of the ministry."

Mr. Camp accepted this call, and a church was organized, and the new minister ordained and installed, Jan. 18, 1769.

The eighteen original members of the church are, Rev. Samuel Camp, Jabish Smith, Isaiah Birchard, James Northrop, John Rockwell, Daniel Coley,

David Rockwell, Timothy Benedict, Samuel Keeler, Lemuel Abbott, Samuel St. John, John Joyce, Jonathan Osborn, Samuel Gates, James Scott, John Barber, Thomas Frost, and Thomas Wilson, all males.

Mr. Camp was a native of Salisbury, and a graduate of Yale in 1764; he lived out his life in Ridgebury, and is buried, with his three wives, in the cemetery there; his pastorate extended over thirty-five years, but there is scarce any record of its results; he resigned in November, 1804, because of failing health, and died in October, 1813.

Liberality in religious matters is not a thing belonging only to our later days, for, during the brief service of a Mr. Perkins, who supplied the pulpit for nearly a year after the dismissal of Mr. Camp, it was, "voted (in October, 1804), that persons of other persuasions may come and hear Mr. Perkins preach."

In the year of Mr. Camp's death Mr. Nathan Burton, a member of the church, was chosen one of its deacons, and so served for eight years; in October, 1821, he was called to the pastorate of the church, being ordained and installed on Nov. 6, 1821, and serving the church with great usefulness until June, 1841, a period of twenty years; under date of June 5, 1823, Mr. Burton writes, "the people have been in a state of awful stupidity for years;" out of his distress at the situation grew a revival in which forty-three persons were hopefully converted, thirty-four joining the church on profession of faith. In 1828 Mr. Burton reported a Sunday school of about fifty scholars; on April 28, 1829, he reports, "church now numbers about seventy, and once was reduced to two male and five female members." During Mr. Burton's entire ministry one hundred and fourteen persons were added to the church, and over twenty children of believing parents were baptized. He died in 1859, aged seventy-nine.

During the long interval between the dismissal of Mr. Camp and the settlement of Mr. Burton services were regularly held in the church, and from 1813 to 1817 a season of special interest was enjoyed, thirty-four members being received.

Mr. Burton was succeeded by Rev. Zalmon B. Burr, of Westport, Conn., a licentiate of New London Association. He was ordained and installed in June, 1843, and remained with the church seven years, during which time the membership was increased by eight.

Martin Dudley preached about a year after Mr. Burr's resignation, from 1850 to 1851. The next settled pastor was Rev. Philo Canfield, of Buffalo city Presbytery; he was installed in September, 1852, and was pastor of the church until the spring of 1856; twenty additions to the church occurred during his pastorate.

Rev. Wm. W. Page followed Mr. Canfield, acting as a supply for one year.

From September, 1859, to September, 1861, Rev. E. S. Huntington of Danbury preached for the society. Mr. Huntington was succeeded by Rev. Frederick J. Jackson, who preached nearly a year.

Rev. John E. Elliott, of Barkhamsted, Ct., was called to the pastorate in December, 1862, and commenced his services in February, 1863, and was ordained and installed in the May following. He remained with the church about

two years, to May 16, 1865, and was succeeded by Rev. Augustus Alvord of Bolton, Ct., who served from the autumn of 1867 until August, 1871, as a stated supply.

Rev. Wm. M. Parsons of Brooklyn, N. Y., a Baptist, was invited to supply the pulpit in September, 1871. Mr. Parsons preached for thirteen years,— until June, 1884,— and again from April, 1889, to March, 1895, a term of six years, making a pastoral term of nineteen years in all, the third longest pastorate of the church. A large portrait of Mr. Parsons hangs in the church today, and he is well remembered by many.

Between the first and second terms of Mr. Parsons, Rev. Daniel D. Frost served from June 1884, to August, 1886, and Rev. Richard Storrs Billings from April, 1887, until his death October 24, 1888.

Rev. Edward S. Sanborn began his labors as pastor in June, 1895, and was ordained by Consociation July 23, 1895, resigning December 31, 1899.

Rev. Wm. E. Todd was called to the pastorate and began service April 1, 1900, resigning May 19, 1901.

The present pastor has served since October 1, 1902.

Thus it will be seen that the 139 years of the church's life has been divided into sixteen pastorates, one of 35 years, one of 20 years, one of 19 years and the others ranging from 7 years to less than one year.

The church has raised up three ministers,— Rev. Nathan Burton, Rev. Jacob St. John, and Rev. Oliver St. John.

It has had twenty deacons, the twentieth and only living one being Mr. Samuel A. Coe, who was chosen to the position September 5, 1895.

The original "New Patent" meeting-house was situated on the hill about a half mile south of the present church. In October, 1762, the society bought of John Whitlock the land on which the church now stands, the consideration being, as stated by Mr. Whitlock, "the love and respect I have and do bear unto said Discenting Society of Ridgebury."

On August 23, 1768, just before Mr. Camp's installation, it was voted to build a church on the newly acquired site, said church to be 46 feet by 36 feet in size, to "stand facing the east, and to be finished by the first day of July, 1769." The old building was no doubt removed at this time, as parts of it were used in the construction of the new one.

The house so built was without plastered walls and without stoves, save as the old ladies brought live coals in their "foot stoves," and, for the twenty-four years before the pews were built, the only seats were rough wooden benches.

In February, 1784, it was "voted, that we will do something toward making the meeting-house more comfortable and convenient;" and in 1793 a committee was appointed to "mark out the meeting-house into pews and sell them, and to lay out the money that shall arise therefrom on the house;" (see diagram.) Of these pews the two — known as No. 5 — on each side of the pulpit were reserved as "Honorary Pews," and the two — No. 11 — "under the stairs" as "spare pews." In 1816, and again in 1834 the society repaired the meeting-house built in 1768, and in 1838 thoroughly repaired and refurnished

it, replacing the old pews and high pulpit with modern "slips" and a modern pulpit. The doors on the north and east were closed, leaving only one entrance.

The old church, which had stood for more than eighty years, was finally demolished, and the present house — 46 feet by 30 feet — erected and dedicated in 1851.

In the spring of 1832 the society bought ten acres of land with the buildings thereon for a parsonage, but sold the same to David Hanford in February, 1838. In the year 1844 the present parsonage was erected on a plot of ground donated for the purpose by David Hanford and Gamaliel Benedict.

Legacies have been left to the society at various times, the income from which has been necessary to the keeping up in the neighborhood the preaching of the gospel; these translated servants of God have by this means continued the propagation of the gospel since their decease even as they did while living, and so shall they long continue.

It would be interesting to be able to report the aggregate membership of the church for the 139 years of its life, but incomplete records forbid this. As in many similar cases Ridgebury church has been drained of its spiritual life-blood to the advantage of other and distant places. Its present membership is eighteen; its property is in good condition, and unencumbered with debt; its vested funds yield to it an income of about $450.00 a year.

Through the transition period of the present it awaits the opening of the new day with hope and faith. What the Ridgebury church has done for God only God knows; at its best it has been a very incomplete service; what God has done for Ridgebury through His church is incalculable in set terms, because spiritual in nature.

On this Bi-centennial day Ridgebury church, through the lips if its pastor, salutes you, saying with Jacob of old,—"The God who led me all my life long, the angel who redeemed me from all evil," bless you all!

JESSE LEE MEMORIAL CHURCH

Rev. Harvey E. Burns, D.D., Pastor

I have on a pair of borrowed glasses,— you must not think because of that that everything behind the glasses is also borrowed. If everything was left at home with the glasses, it would not trouble me very much.

I have a feeling of sorrow tonight — I was not born in Ridgefield, and so far as I know, not a single relative of mine on the face of the earth was born within fifty miles of this place. To be sure, I am what might be termed a Yankee of the Yankees. I can trace the line straight back to within ten years of Plymouth Rock. I was born in Massachusetts, in the heart of the Berkshires, and the night of my birth was made luminous by the burning of the mill of the late Cyrus W. Field, in plain sight of the house, as though to give me a welcome. And yet all this and much more that I might add, if possible,

JESSE LEE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

seems as nothing to the fact that I was not born in Ridgefield. It would have been a good thing, possibly, if I could have been born anywhere in the two hundred years past, and have ceased, so long as I had had a birth in this most valuable place. And then I have been harassed from the very beginning of thinking about this matter, that I could not find an illustration. If I could only have found an old person of 150 years, though he had not had a tooth for the last fifty years, I might have been able to produce something, but there are none existing, so the absence of all specimens of humanity left me to be thankful alone that I stood as a representative of an unchanging body of ecclesiasticism that meant something in the world, and whose future should be grander than anything in the past.

I am not here to speak in defence of Methodism — that does not need defence. I am here to give you a few facts which are of the utmost moment, especially to those who know anything about them. I know very little about Methodism in this town — I will consent to that — I am the youngest minister on this platform. I have here a very short past and a very little present, and no certainty about the future, but certain facts will stand because they do not relate to me. On the 26th day of June, 1789, a plain man on horseback appeared in the main street of this town. He was late from New York; had stopped once in Norwalk; then in Redding; had preached in both places, and now for the third sermon in Connecticut reached Ridgefield. His name was Jesse Lee, a man from Virginia, a Virginian by birth, who already had reached a commanding place in the ministry as a preacher, and who afterward became a chaplain of the National House of Representatives; tied in the General Conference a vote for the episcopacy in the Methodist Church; produced the grandest results in New England from New York to Boston; and when he came down to die, as though he saw something ahead most luminous, cried out: "Glory, Hallelujah! Jesus reigns!" and went on.

Now with a birth like that there ought to be good blood in the body. He was a man in the prime of life when here first, and it makes a good deal of difference sometimes with a child whether the parent was young or old at a certain critical period. So this one, born well, with good red blood — it was no wonder that eight months afterward there was a class meeting organized over in Limestone, and Methodism began its career in the presence of the entrenched orthodoxy of New England, especially in Connecticut. I wonder if any of you know anything about a Methodist class meeting? You certainly do not unless you are a hundred years old. Stand up if you are here. That is good; a hundred years old, each of you; that is all right. Another one; the governor is always rallying us. That is a great thing. Then you knew about their poke bonnets, and the men who neither wore watches, silver nor gold, and who had the plainest attire; but beneath the poke bonnets were heads full of brains, and the men were forming the advance guard of the people who were to help hammer New England orthodoxy into the very best shape, that should be of use generations afterward in the awful conflict of the Civil war.

The first church building was erected in 1824. Judging from the looks of the second church that was built, that first one must have been quite a plain affair. We can only be sure, however, that they went at it with Methodist zeal, and dedicated it with a "Glory!" and a "Hallelujah!" We may also be certain that there was an altar rail there. That is not always found in modern Methodist churches,— what they used to term a "Methodist altar rail," where penitents left their marks in tears, and where bowed heads received the emblems of our Lord Christ, and arose and went to their seats happy in their sacred trust. In 1836 the society was made a station. Thirty-five ministers have been here since that time. It is a great list. Thomas Sparks, in whose ministry a great revival broke out, A. J. Francis, Nathaniel Mead, the two Abbotts,— Ira and Larman W., J. P. Merwin, George Lansing Taylor, the peerless preacher, if not always a first-class fisherman, J. A. Chapman, possibly the best of the list; and other names highly honored, some alive, some gone, have made this church one of the most honored in New England, and nothing surpassing it in the New York East Conference as to the size of its membership.

When I was a pastor in Brooklyn I had in my church a Rev. Dr. well-known all through this country. One day he visited a friend, and said: "I have just walked all the length of the street in Ridgefield. There was not a man, woman or child to be seen. I don't see any reason why Ridgefield should ever be anything. There is no factory there,— no place, or a desire for a factory, and it is doomed to sterility." I don't know what the Dr. is now doing — he has been dead several years — but I have an idea that if he doesn't know any more now than he did then, I am not called upon to further pay attention to him. I just want to say this: that if there are no factory steeples and no factory whistles, there are whistles of every other kind. It is the busiest place I know of for its size. I had two boys here last year to spend the Fourth of July; one came from Brooklyn, and the other one came from down close to New York, and they declared it was the noisiest place they ever got into, and I judged it so.

But let us pass over to the churches. Take our Methodism if you please, as a body. Our ministers used to be called graduates of brush college, and when we were charged with having little education we declared that our people were all well, they did not need the doctors, and so we got along with a shout and a glory, but it is not so now. Methodism with its colleges, universities and high grade schools stands at the very front of denominationalism in this country as a teaching force, and no one asks now whether the Methodist minister is qualified for a D.D.— in most cases they have a D.D. You find them everywhere you go. You can't miss a Methodist. There are lawyers, doctors, merchants and law makers, and very few law breakers. You can rise up until you reach the presidency — not now, but in the past — and you would find a Methodist. If you are not satisfied with taking the whole field, stop in Ridgefield,— that is what we are talking about just now,— stop right there. Look at the church — it is no longer fronting a cemetery — please keep that in mind.

I have heard it said since I have been here that religion was at a very low ebb in Ridgefield, that everything seemed doomed, but there are other birds than crows, and there are other things that jump than frogs, and a man who can't tell a ripe strawberry from its color is very poorly equipped to send into the field to pick strawberries for the market.

This church right opposite — why you can't do anything without coming here to the center. You can't have a Fourth of July celebration without coming here the day before and keeping it up for thirty-six hours. You can't have a bi-centennial celebration without coming right here on this corner, and right, fronting you, in the very heat and light of the fire of Ridgefield stands the Methodist church. Not only that, but our women do not wear bonnets like the old scoop bonnets, and thank God, they don't wear many of the merry widow ones. They not only have kept their sense, but they haven't had any nonsense, and our men, our merchants, make good lawmakers when you send them to the legislature. They rise right up through the scale of doctors, lawyers and everything else, until they reach even the governor. And as though that would not satisfy you, you have got to go and find a man who can lead you up hill and down hill, and get him for your orator tomorrow night. He is a loyal son of Methodism, whose father was a Methodist preacher, and through two or three generations has flowed the red blood of Methodism. That is what Methodism is in this town, and as the boy said, " Please don't forget it."

There is one thing I want to express my pleasure in at this time, namely, that four such ministers as we are can stand on the same platform at such a time as this. We make no surrenders; we yield nothing to sentimentalism; there isn't one of us but what if necessary would become a sturdy defender of the faith that is within him, yet somehow we get together on this platform, and there is no thought of what one might say. There is absolute trust between these men as the brethren of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That makes me feel that somewhere in the future,— I know not how far or near — that one branch of the vine will not be taken to lash another branch, and it will not make so much difference to either God or man, if the deepest things of God and the highest things of man come together. We have reached an age when small things will not hold, but things grand and glorious will control denominations and men, and men shall be allowed to stand in the presence of God, and everyone worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. I shan't live to see that day fully, but we are passing on to it.

(Singing hymn by chorus and audience: " Shepherd of tender youth," etc.)

ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. R. E. Shortell, Pastor

Hon. Chairman, Rev. Clergy and dear Friends:

With great pleasure and profit, we have listened to the reverend gentlemen as they told the story of the long and successful mission of their respective churches, of the trials, and the burdens, which came to them as they must come in the formative period of every enterprise, commercial, educational, and religious.

For you, Reverend Gentlemen, it was a work demanding patient research — careful and scholarly marshaling of those names and events that were buried in the archives of a past extending back nearly 200 years. For you, it was as though you would trace the intricate genealogy of ancestors whose names have long since passed out of the memory of the oldest citizens of our beautiful and historical old Ridgefield. For me to tell you tonight the story of St. Mary's church is, indeed, a comparatively easy task, for it is as though when you had spoken of old ancestors, I would take up the narrative and speak of the child of today, and, as is quite natural, give to that youngest born all the attention and affection which by full right seems to be the heritage of the one who comes in our maturing years to fill our homes with its evidences of young life — to help hold up our hands when the burdens of that maturing life seem only to increase with years, and who will attempt to put into words the pleasure — the happiness it gives to all in the community, irrespective of family tie, when they see the youngest born, waxing strong — full of life and vigor, and though young in years, having its loins girt about with truth, and its breast-plate of justice, and its feet shod with the Gospel of Peace. I wonder not, tonight, Reverend Gentlemen, and you members of your respective churches, if your hearts throb with pride for the great deeds accomplished by those old pioneers of your churches, with gratitude because you today are enjoying the heritage of their trials and their sacrifices, and I know you will pardon me, if in looking backward, the same emotions of pride and gratitude thrill in my heart, and the hearts of my devoted people, as we recall how the old pioneers of our faith gathered in humble homes — the public hall — weary, and foot-sore from all the neighboring hamlets, but buoyant of heart, and cheered beyond the power of expression with the message sent out that some tireless missionary of their faith was to come to them. It was to them a Bethlehem of old, and they came to the Crib to offer gifts, not of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but hearts devoted to God, loyal, and true. Sturdy, strong pioneers, though your names would pass from our memories, your faith, and your deeds, your trials, and your sacrifices in the cause of the worship of God are today remembered most tenderly; and more eloquently than human tongue can speak, your story is told in the happiness and success of the present. The mustard seed then planted by you and watered by the sweat of your brows, is today the strong, leafy tree, giving rest and shelter to us, a grateful generation.

For the first evidence of Catholicity in Ridgefield, we must go back to the

ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

year 1781, when the French Army, under Count de Rochambeau, passed through Ridgefield on its way from Providence, R. I., to Bedford, N. Y., camping in Ridgebury and Ridgefield, July 1st and 2d. Accompanying this army were the chaplains, Robin, Gluson, Lacy, and St. Pierre, and in De Courcy's history, we read that which we know to be a fact, "that the army chaplains were often surrounded by descendants of Irishmen and Acadians, who now saw a priest for the first time, and implored them to stay." From then, 1781 to 1848, history is silent, and we must be content to let the record of Catholicity between those dates be buried in an unknown past. On Thanksgiving Day of 1848, the family of James Brophy came to Ridgefield, followed shortly by other families, who established homes in this village and the neighboring hamlets, until it was estimated that from 50 to 75 people assembled, when it was announced that a priest was to visit Ridgefield. The first priest of whom mention is made was a father Ryan, who, while on his way from Norwalk to Danbury, stopped at the house of James Brophy, and finding two of his relatives near unto death, administered the last rites of Mother Church. Following him, came Father O'Farrell, who, finding a number of Catholics in the vicinity, made arrangements to celebrate mass once a month. He generally came on a Saturday evening, and having officiated Sunday morning about 8 o'clock, would then drive to Danbury, and officiate there. His was a laborious work, attending to the wants of all the Catholics scattered about in the different villages, and, so great was the strain, he lived only a short while. He was succeeded by a Father Smith, following whom came Fathers Kelley and Drea. From this time on, the Holy Sacrifice was offered up in the homes of different families until it was found necessary, because of increasing numbers, to hold services in the old town hall. At length, finding the time was opportune, an effort was made to procure land, and build a church. The number of Catholics were few, but their zeal and energy in the cause of their religion made light of sacrifices and obstacles. On Nov. 23, 1867, the small plot of ground at the foot of Catoonah Street, upon which is now standing their first church, was purchased by James Enright and James Walsh, acting in the name of the Catholic community, from Geo. R. Selleck, for the sum of $975. At the time of the purchase an old frame dwelling was on the plot, and served the purpose of a church until it was destroyed by fire, which took place in 1868, in the old factory that stood next to it. After the destruction of this building they returned once more to the homes and hall, and there remained for nearly 9 years, until, with renewed courage, they determined upon building a church. Under the leadership of a few brave souls, who contributed $50, $30, and $20, a considerable sum of money for those times, the whole number of Catholics almost to a man entered the spirit of the enterprise, and the result was a small church sufficiently large to hold the full number, and yet only one-half the size of the present small edifice at the foot of Catoonah Street. The work was undertaken under the supervision of the Rev. Father Lawlor, rector of St. Peter's Church, Danbury, who at first diffident of success, and yet having confidence in their zeal and good will, gave it his encouragement and support. Upon the

completion of the building, he had the great pleasure to receive word from Thomas McGlynn, the collector appointed by the committee, that all work was completed, and all bills were paid, with the exception of some $50 or $60, which Father Lawlor himself contributed. Up to this time they had no resident pastor, and depended upon Danbury for spiritual assistance. Some time afterward, Ridgefield was made a mission to Georgetown, at which place Rev. Thaddeus Walsh resided, having Redding also under his charge. In 1880, Redding having been attached to the parish of Bethel, Father Walsh moved to Ridgefield, keeping Georgetown as a mission. Those who remember Father Walsh speak of him as a kind, genial priest, with a heart full of zeal and charity, knowing no reluctance when it was a question of duty — no fatigue when his flock called upon him for religious assistance. While of robust appearance he was not at all a well man, and at the end of 6 years of genuine priestly life he was called to his reward. It was during his pastorate that St. Mary's cemetery was bought, and the church in Georgetown built. Rev. P. Byrne succeeded him, and for 6 years faithfully attended to the congregations of Ridgefield and Georgetown. During his residence here, he enlarged the church, and made other necessary improvements. Father Byrne is kindly remembered by the Catholic and non-Catholic residents of Ridgefield, who speak of him as a generous, whole-souled priest — faithful in the performance of his religious duties. In 1892 he resigned the parish, and was succeeded by Rev. Joseph O'Keefe, a scholarly priest, and of refined sensibilities, capable of immense influence and good work, had his health permitted. He was a man of mature years, and the hard winter work of attending to both parishes compelled him to resign within the year of his appointment. His resignation having been accepted, the present pastor, Rev. R. E. Shortell, was transferred by Rt. Rev. Bishop McMahon from Danbury, and took up his residence in Ridgefield, May 30, 1893. In September of this same year the ground upon which are located the new church and parochial residence was purchased from Jacob M. Lockwood, for the sum of $2,750, and the following May, 1894, ground was broken for the parish house. In May of 1896, the new church was commenced, and on July 4th of the same year, the cornerstone was laid, Rt. Rev. Bishop Tierney officiating. The following year, July 5, 1897, witnessed the completion and dedication of their new church, and on May 30, 1907, the new club house was opened.

It must indeed be a pleasure for us all here tonight to stop for a moment in the rapid trend of present progress and look backward — it will serve us when obstacles loom up, and we are called upon to make sacrifices in cause of God and humanity — to remember the deeds and sacrifices of those who have gone before us, for in so remembering we will find our hearts nerved with renewed energy; it will serve to remind us of the great lesson — that as the gloom and the sorrows of Calvary's sacrifice preceded the dawn and the life of the great Resurrection, so must we be content to bear sorrows, and to make sacrifices for the good of those who are coming after us.

Yes, it is indeed a pleasure to look backward, but fearfully would we fail

in grasping the full significance of this Bi-Centennial celebration, were we of today to be content with this backward glance. We are of the present with its duties and obligations, and manfully must they be met — the same God to worship as our ancestors in the past — the same grand old State of Connecticut; the same old town of Ridgefield to claim our allegiance and support; and so long as circumstances would have us claim Ridgefield as our home, let us be zealous in all things that work for her moral, material and intellectual good; let us add honor to her fair name, and though we may differ in religious tenets, we can and we ought to respect scrupulously each other's rights, privileges, and opinions, for in so doing we will stand united — an invincible power for the present and future progress of " Beautiful Old Ridgefield."

The following is a copy of the order of exercises, beginning in the Town Hall on Tuesday, July 7th, and concluding with an address on the evening of that day; with a report of the various papers and addresses presented. All those whose names appear on the program were present and responded, except Judge Robt. Jay Walsh and John E. Keeler, who were unexpectedly detained and sent letters of regret.

Ridgefield, Conn.

1708 ═══ 1908

Bi-Centennial Celebration

TOWN HALL

Tuesday, July 7th, 1908, 10.30 A. M.

PROGRAM

AULD LANG SYNE — Chorus and Audience

1. Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind;
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And songs of auld lang syne,
For auld lang syne we meet today,
For auld lang syne,
To sing the songs our fathers sang
In days of auld lang syne.

2. We've passed through many varied scenes,
Since youth's unclouded day,
And friends, and hopes, and happy dreams,
Time's hand hath swept away;
And voices that once joined with ours,
In days of auld lang syne,
Are silent now and blend no more,
In songs of auld lang syne.

3. Yet ever has the light of song
Illumed our darkest hours,
And cheered us on life's toilsome way,
And gemmed our path with flowers.
The sacred songs our fathers sang,
Dear songs of auld lang syne,
The hallowed songs our fathers sang,
In days of auld lang syne.

4. Here we have met, here we may part,
To meet on earth no more,
And we may never sing again,
The cherished songs of yore.
The sacred songs our fathers sang
In days of auld lang syne,
We may not meet to sing again
The songs of auld lang syne.

5. But when we've crossed the sea of life
And reached the heavenly shore,
We'll sing the songs our fathers sing,
Transcending those of yore.
We'll meet to sing diviner strains
Than those of auld lang syne,
Immortal songs of praise unknown
In days of auld lang syne.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE SETTLEMENT OF RIDGEFIELD
BY THE CHAIRMAN

EARLY RECORDS OF THE TOWN BY COL. HIRAM K. SCOTT

REMINISCENCES OF BOYHOOD DAYS BY CHARLES B. NORTHROP

HOME AGAIN — Chorus

ADDRESS by Ex-Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury

ADDRESS by Ex-Lieutenant-Governor E. O. Keeler

ADDRESS by Judge Howard B. Scott

CHORUS — THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE

ADDRESSES

by Judge Robert Jay Walsh
Judge James F. Walsh
John E. Keeler
Cyrus Northrop, LL.D.
President Minnesota University

SONG AND CHORUS — THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Tuesday Afternoon

Between 3 and 5 o'clock there will be a Public Demonstration by the local organizations of the town, in which the children will participate. Details given at the close of the morning exercises.

Tuesday Evening

at 8 O'clock, preceded with Music by the Ridgefield Band
CHORUS — "The Dearest Spot on Earth to Me is Home, Sweet Home"

ADDRESS by Congressman E. J. HILL
of Norwalk, Conn.

Closing with "AMERICA" by Chorus and Audience

1. My country! 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died;
Land of the Pilgrims' pride;
From every mountain side,
Let freedom ring.

2. My native country! thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love:
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills,
My heart with rapture thrills,
Like that above.

3. Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

4. Our fathers' God! to Thee,
Author of liberty!
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT

BY THE CHAIRMAN, WM. O. SEYMOUR

The ambitions and necessities of life ever keep our faces toward the future, pressing forward in the pursuit of our cherished plans and purposes, seldom turning to look back upon the path over which, we, and the generations which preceded us have come, to recall the struggles, failures or successes incident to the journey.

Upon arriving at the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the little town, which some of us are proud to call our birthplace and home, may we not be pardoned in stopping for a day to take such a retrospective view of the past?

A brief account of the condition of the Connecticut Colony destined to absorb all the other Connecticut settlements, just previous to the settlement of the town of Ridgefield, may not be amiss.

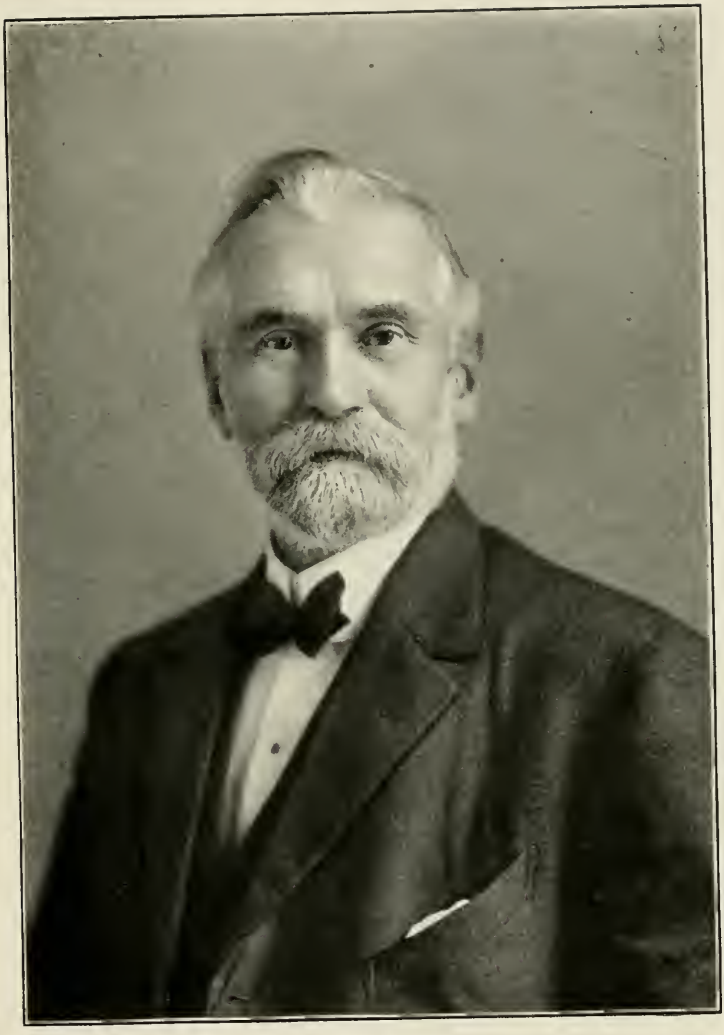
It was established by the settlement of the towns of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield by emigrants from the Massachusetts Colony in the fall of 1635, others following in the spring of 1636.

The leading spirits in this movement were men of rare ability and foresight. Thomas Hooker, John Haynes, Thomas Welles, Roger Ludlow, William Phelps, Captain John Mason, John Talcott, John Steele, and Edward Hopkins and their associates were no ordinary men. They realized that if the colony they were establishing was to be permanent and continue, some orderly system of government must be devised "to regulate order and dispose of the affairs of the people at all seasons, as occasion should require," hence on the 24th of January, 1639, they framed and adopted "The Fundamental Orders," so called, the first written constitution promulgated in America, under which the colonial government was administered until the granting of the charter of 1662 by Charles the Second, which confirmed and continued the rights and privileges of the "Fundamental Orders," and in spite of the efforts of Sir Edmond Andros to secure its surrender, continued to be the constitution of the colony, and afterwards of the state until 1818, when the present constitution was adopted; Gen. Joshua King and Abner Gilbert representing the town of Ridgefield in the convention at the time of its adoption.

In the year 1700 the Colony of Connecticut consisted of four counties, viz.: Hartford, New Haven, New London, and Fairfield, organized by the Colonial Assembly in 1666, and thirty towns, with a population of 15,000 persons, 3,800 of these being males over sixteen years of age; and had a grand list of 200,000 pounds sterling.

Most of the towns were then located on the shore of Long Island Sound and along the banks of rivers extending inland therefrom. Town privileges were granted by the General Assembly of the colonies, with the right of representation therein, upon payment of the taxes assessed for the support of the government, which assembled alternately at Hartford and New Haven.

The local affairs of the towns were administered by a tribunal elected by



Wm O. Seymour

the people consisting of not less than three nor more than seven persons, called "Principal men," or "townsmen" (now known as "Selectmen"), the first of whom was styled "Moderator" (now designated "first selectman") who had no vote in deciding matters, except to dissolve a tie.

Previous to the settlement of Ridgefield only six towns had been organized within the limits of what is now known as Fairfield County, viz.: Stratford, Greenwich, Stamford, Fairfield, Norwalk and Danbury, named in the order of their organization. These were the conditions which existed, when in 1708, thirty-two men, twenty-nine from the town of Norwalk and three from the town of Milford, purchased of the Indians, for the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, a tract of land consisting of about 20,000 acres, more or less, comprising a large part of what is now known as the town of Ridgefield.

Other purchases of outlying territory were made of the Indians from time to time, the last being in December, 1739.

The purchasers, in the deed which they received from the Indians, were described as "loyal subjects of Her Majesty Queen Anne, Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland, in the seventh year of her reign," which extended from 1702 to 1714.

The tract purchased was bounded on the north by Danbury, on the east by Fairfield (now Redding), south by Norwalk and west by New York. Permission to make the aforesaid purchase was given by the Colonial Assembly at Hartford, May 13, 1708, which was consummated by a deed from the Indians dated September 30, 1708, and ratified and approved by the Assembly at its session in New Haven, October 13, 1709, with the provision that the entire tract so purchased should be a township by itself to be known by the name of Ridgefield.

It had previously been called by the Indians Caudatowa, meaning high land, 800 feet above tide water.

On November 8, 1708, the original proprietors, having determined to locate the town site upon what now constitutes the main street of Ridgefield, proceeded to lay out the land bordering thereon into town lots containing two and one-half acres, which were distributed by lottery between the several proprietors on November 25, 1708.

The sound practical business sense of these early settlers is shown by the fact that they deemed it important to provide themselves with such mechanics as were needed in establishing a new settlement, one of whom was a blacksmith named Benjamin Burt, to make and keep in repair the tools necessary for reducing the forest and reclaiming the land for cultivation, whose shop was located near the site of the M. E. church; also a miller, named Daniel Sherwood, to convert the grain raised into flour and meal for their subsistence, whose mill was located at the outlet of Mamanasco Lake.

Their desire for religious, educational and social privileges is evidenced by the fact that although confronted with the arduous task of subduing the forest and providing homes for their families and shelter for their beasts, within four years from the date of settlement, a meeting house was erected on the green

in front of the residence of Mrs. D. S. Egleston, which was used for the triple purpose of a church, a school and a town house.

The name "Meeting house" by which it was designated signified more then than now, when the people were practically shut in their forest homes, deprived of intercourse with the outside world, before roads were constructed and vehicles brought into general use. It was the common meeting place for worship, social intercourse, educational purposes and for the municipal government of the town.

The privations, hardships and sufferings of the pioneer settlers were very great. The forest, which then abounded with bears, panthers, wolves, wildcats, rattlesnakes and treacherous Indians, was not easily subdued; the soil was rocky and with difficulty prepared for cultivation.

Money was scarce and difficult to obtain, with no surplus products and no outside market yet created therefor, and no roads yet constructed connecting with the adjoining settlements.

The settlements on the shore of Long Island Sound or on the navigable streams connecting therewith, with an abundance of sea food available were not so entirely dependent upon the products of the soil for their subsistence.

For some years after the organization of the town it was unable to pay the tax levied for the support of the Colonial government, in consequence of which it was deprived of representation therein. Taxation and representation went hand in hand. The neglect of the one involved the forfeiture of the other.

Even as late as 1740 the towns of Ridgefield and Litchfield were censured and fined by the Colonial Assembly for the non-payment of taxes. From the records it appears that the town was regularly represented thereafter.

When we consider these facts, we are prompted to exclaim, all honor to our sturdy pioneer ancestry, who at the cost of such privation and suffering laid the foundations of the splendid civilization which we, their children, now enjoy.

Rudely constructed log houses sheltered them until saw mills could be constructed upon the various streams to produce suitable building material for the construction of more comfortable homes.

They were obliged to subsist exclusively upon the productions of the soil, such as wheat, rye, corn, buckwheat, oats, beans, turnips, potatoes, beef, mutton, pork, etc.; and the minister, doctor, tailor, shoemaker and all other laborers were obliged to receive such articles in exchange for their services; and the early merchants largely received such products in exchange for their goods.

Clothing for winter was made by each family from wool produced from the sheep which were numerously raised; and for summer, from flax, which grew abundantly.

The land, except the homesteads, and that upon which crops were raised, was unenclosed, and pastured in common, until 1760, when it was distributed among the various owners and was soon after enclosed.

Each owner of cattle or sheep registered in the town records the par-

GENERAL BENEDICT ARNOLD

who led the Patriots against the British in the bloody conflict in the streets of Ridgefield in April, 1777 — Arnold narrowly escaped as his horse was shot under him — The enemy marched through Ridgefield, firing the Episcopal Church, Keeler's Tavern, and dwellings — An old print

ticular ear mark which designated the animals belonging to him, thus enabling him to distinguish them from those of his neighbors, an object now accomplished by branding the initials of the owner upon all animals roaming at large upon public lands.

Swine were also numerously raised in the early years of the settlement and were useful for food and for exterminating the poisonous serpents which were then numerous.

The records of the town show that from 1740 to 1761, those who represented it in the Colonial Assembly were named either Benedict, Smith, Olmstead, Keeler or Hawley. Of the thirty-three years between 1746 and 1779, Samuel Olmstead was one of the representatives of the town for twenty-nine years, and from 1769 to 1791 Col. Philip Burr Bradley was one of the representatives for nineteen years, it evidently being the practice to send the same representative long enough to enable him to become familiar with the duties of the position, and thus render the town better service than an inexperienced person.

It is to be regretted that the record of the events of the town immediately following its settlement is so meagre, for the beginning of things is always interesting. Remember it was twenty-four years before George Washington was born that the town was settled.

Not a printing press in the colony until a year after the town was settled, and not a newspaper until 1755. The bible and the catechism were about the only books to be found in the houses of the people. Books for the instruction and entertainment of children were rare. Even such light juvenile literature as the New England Primer was not published until between 1785 to 1790. The only relief from this situation for a long time was from the instruction and teaching of the minister as the families assembled in the meeting house from time to time.

The town was exceedingly fortunate in its early selection of ministers who established and endeavored to maintain a high standard of morals and citizenship, for the times in which they lived. The mere mention of their names confirms this statement: the Reverends Thomas Hawley, Jonathan Ingersoll and Samuel Goodrich, honored ancestors of three distinguished families, each of whom had much to do in forming the character of the community in which they lived, labored and died.

Thomas Hawley was a graduate of Harvard, Ingersoll and Goodrich of Yale, both of these institutions then in their infancy.

The Rev. Samuel Goodrich and his distinguished son, Samuel G. Goodrich, known as "Peter Parley," have made the most valuable contributions in existence to the history of the town, during their residence here. Some of the character sketches of various persons, made by the son "Peter Parley," are exceedingly clever productions, notably those of "Aunt Delight Benedict," his first school teacher, "Lieutenant Smith," the village philosopher, "Master Stebbins," the center school teacher, "Granther Baldwin," the miser, "Mat Olmstead," the village wit, "Bige Benedict," the expert horseman, "Sarah Bishop,"

the hermitess, "Grace Ingersoll," at the French Court, "Col. Philip Burr Bradley," the Federalist, "Gen. Joshua King," the democrat, and others, giving a description of the various characters living in the town in his school boy days.

Just here for the information of the younger portion of the community let me read a copy of a conveyance recorded in the public records in 1740.

"Know all men by these presents, that I, David Scott, of Ridgefield, in the county of Fairfield and Colony of Connecticut for the consideration of two hundred pounds, current money of said colony, to me in hand well and truly paid by Vivus Danchy of Ridgefield, aforesaid have bargained and sold and by these presents do fully and freely and absolutely bargain, sell, convey and confirm unto the said Vivus Danchy, his executors and administrators, a certain negro woman, named Dinah, and a negro boy, named Peter, to be servants or slaves during the term of their natural lives, together with all their wearing apparel. To have and to hold the said slaves as aforesaid to the said Danchy, his executors and administrators for the term of their lives.

And I, the said David Scott do hereby covenant to defend said slaves to said Danchy, his executors and administrators against the lawful claims of every person whatsoever.

In witness whereof I have hereunto signed, sealed and delivered this deed of sale, together with the said negro woman named, Dinah, and the negro boy, named Peter, this 13th day of February, A. D. 1740.

[Signed] David Scott,

Witness,

Ebenezer Smith,

Timothy Keeler.

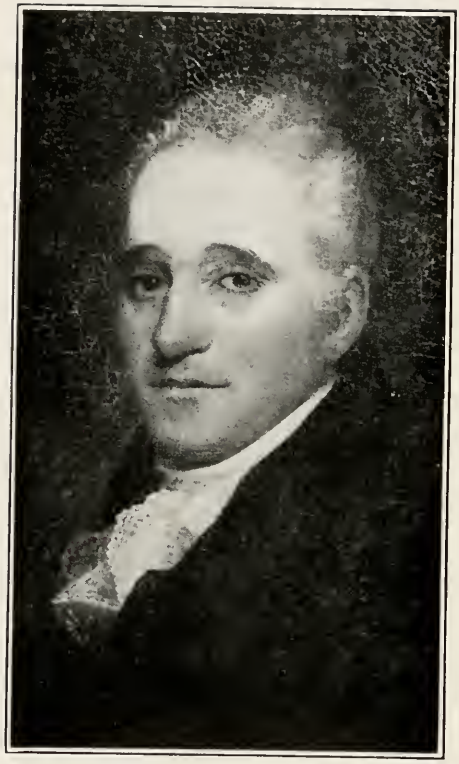
Recorded June 19, 1749."

This was by no means an uncommon transaction in those days, and was not considered discreditable to the parties concerned. In October, 1774, the Colonial Assembly passed a law forbidding the importation of slaves into the colony and prohibiting the traffic resulting therefrom, but it did not emancipate those already so held, as they were considered the lawful property of its citizens, which could not be confiscated under the constitution as then existing. In 1795 there were 2,779 slaves owned in the State, 17 of whom were still living in 1840.

Other interesting extracts from the public records could be produced indicative of the character and spirit of these early settlers, if time and space could permit.

The settlement slowly increased in numbers until in 1756, its population was 1,115 and in 1774, just previous to the Revolution, was 1,708.

The people of the town were slow to renounce allegiance to the government of Great Britain and on January 30, 1775, at a public meeting reaffirmed their loyalty to the parent government and declined to adopt the measures of the Continental Congress for securing and defending the rights and liberties of the



GENERAL JOSHUA KING

of Ridgefield, the guard who accompanied Major André to the gallows in the Revolution—Painting in estate of his grandson, the late J. Howard King, and loaned by his widow

GENERAL DAVID WOOSTER

Hero of the American Revolution — Killed by a musket ball fired by a Tory during an engagement two miles north of Ridgefield post office — He was born in Stratford, March 2, 1710 — Graduated at Yale in 1738 — Died May 2, 1777

From an old oil painting by permission

United American Colonies. They were not only loyally inclined but considered that resistance to such a powerful government would probably be unsuccessful and ultimately end in defeat, confiscation of property and severe punishment for the act of rebellion; and most cool, clear headed, disinterested observers would have thought likewise. But upon becoming better informed of the determined spirit which pervaded the country, on December 17th of the same year, they rescinded their action and joined heartily with their fellow colonists in the long struggle which finally ended in securing the freedom of the colonies from the unjust requirements of the "mother country."

Captains Gamaliel Northrop and David Olmstead each raised a company of soldiers to take part in the Revolution which followed and Col. Philip Burr Bradley was commissioned as colonel of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment in the regular army. Col. Bradley was a graduate of Yale, the ancestor of a prominent and distinguished family, of whom Peter Parley says, "He was the leading citizen of the place, in station, wealth, education and power of intellect." He was afterwards marshal of the District of Connecticut during Washington's administration, and a judge of the Superior Court of Fairfield County.

The story of Gov. Tryon's raid upon Danbury and his retreat through Ridgefield, with the battle which occurred at the north end of the main street of the town, evidences of which remain to the present day, has been told many times and will not now be repeated.

It may, however, be said here, that it is not creditable to the town, that the battle ground has not been before this suitably designated by a boulder and bronze tablet, containing a brief record of the sanguinary struggle, for the information of the coming generations.

After the close of the Revolutionary War the town prospered and the various surplus products were carted to tide water and shipped by sloops to the nearest market.

It was at this time that Gen. Joshua King came to Ridgefield, married the youngest daughter of the Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll and established a country store (on the site where is now a cottage called "Old Hundred"), under the firm name of King & Dole, which became a successful business concern, which firm afterwards became known as King & Hawley (Mr. William Hawley having married Katherine, the daughter of Gen. King), later as Hawley & Bailey and still later as Bailey & Gage, all of whom acquired what was then considered a handsome competence in the business.

Abner Gilbert conducted a similar store at the north end of the street and Squire Thaddeus Keeler and various parties were interested in a store opposite what was called "The Big Shop," until now known as the "Corner Store." The Danchys also conducted a store in the center of the village.

At one time carriages were manufactured, also cabinet work, shoes, hats, tin ware of various kinds, and a tannery was conducted in the district known as "Titicus," but the town was not favorably situated for either mercantile or manufacturing business, and through the change of industrial conditions these various small industries gravitated towards the business centers after about 1850, and

since that time our most enterprising sons have done likewise; and upon their invitation many of our daughters have followed suit.

Previous to 1852 the only means of communication with the world outside of Ridgefield was by the stage coach, but in that year the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad was opened for use, connecting at Norwalk with the New York & New Haven Railroad which was opened in 1849, and until 1870, when the Ridgefield branch began operation, the stage coach conveyed all passengers into and out of the town by the way of Branchville. The Danbury and Norwalk Railroad was located, constructed and for many years operated under the superintendence and direction of a well-known Ridgefield man, named Harvey Smith, who also constructed a portion of the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad, and who was one of the most prominent and capable men of his time.

It is now amusing to recall that when it was proposed to construct the New York & New Haven Railroad, parallel with the shore of Long Island Sound, in competition with Sound navigation, it was considered a very unpromising business undertaking, amounting almost to sacrilege in presuming to run opposition to what was called "God's Highway."

During the Civil War between 1861 and 1865 the town, in common with the other towns of the state, responded to the call of the general government and sent one hundred and sixty soldiers to the seat of war in defence of the Union.

An unusual honor was conferred upon the town in 1886, by the selection of one of its citizens, the Hon. Phineas C. Lounsbury, as the candidate of the Republican party, for the office of Governor of the State. He was elected by the legislature and his administration extended from January, 1887, to January, 1889.

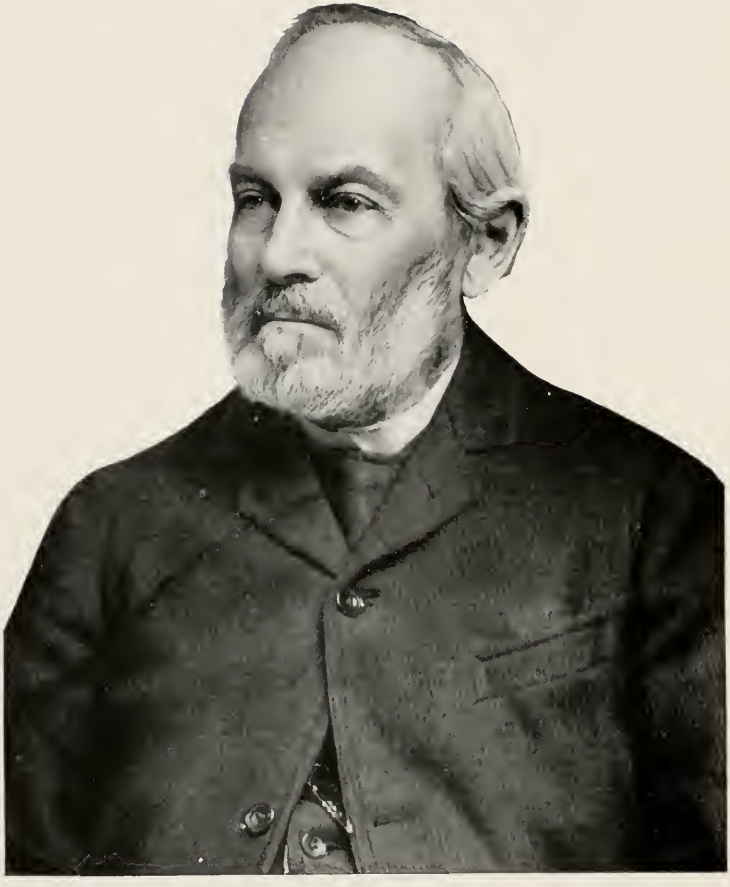
In 1898 this honor was repeated by the election of the Hon. George E. Lounsbury to the same office, in which he served from January 1899, to January, 1901. He died in 1904, lamented by the town and state.

Again in 1902, another citizen of the town, the Hon. Melbert B. Cary, was a candidate of the Democratic party for the office of governor, and though he failed of an election, that fact did not affect the high regard which the people of Ridgefield entertain for him personally.

For the last twenty-five years the character of the population of the town has greatly changed. The young, active, energetic portion of the native population has migrated to the larger business centers for employment and their places have been filled by people from New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Albany and other cities, who have been attracted hither by the elevation, healthfulness, beautiful scenery and quiet restfulness of the location, coupled with its proximity to the great metropolis of New York, being about fifty miles distant therefrom.

Thus for various reasons, the place has become to a large extent a summer residence of city people, the population remaining about the same as heretofore, viz.: 2,626.

It is fortunate for the place that a very choice class of people have been attracted hither, who have taken an active interest in all that pertains to the welfare of the community.



COL. HIRAM K. SCOTT

To one of these, now deceased, Mr. James Morris, we are indebted for the Ridgefield Library building, costing between $35,000 and $40,000 and to others for its furnishings and site and outside improvements, together with a library of 6,400 volumes, representing a total expenditure of about $65,000.

A borough organization was established in 1901 and public water has been introduced; a sewer system established and the streets and many of the dwellings and business places are lighted with electricity.

I must stop, although the half has not been told. What is the lesson to be learned from the experience of the past two hundred years? Imitate the example of your ancestors in at least three respects — maintain the churches, also a good system of education for the children and lastly insist upon having a good wholesome system of municipal government that will preserve law and order and protect the rights of persons and property.

Identify yourselves with and become an active part of each of these three essential requisites of an ideal community, for no sensible person will be willing to establish a home and purchase property in the midst of a godless, illiterate, and lawless people. Any town, state or government ignoring these three requisites is doomed to failure. History proves this beyond question.

These facts your ancestors realized when they settled this town two hundred years ago.

The voices out of the past summon the young men of today to advance to a higher plane of manhood and citizenship than that heretofore occupied and to look out upon a broader field of activity and usefulness than that which merely circumscribes the narrow limits of their own selfish interests. Many in the past have responded to this summons and gone out into the world and made for themselves a record of which we and they have reason to be proud. May such instances multiply and increase in the future, as the result of the superior advantages and greater opportunities of the present.

By Col. Hiram K. Scott, Town Clerk

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:— At this Bi-Centennial Celebration of the birth of this small but very interesting Town of Ridgefield, I would much rather be a listener in the audience, than a speaker on the platform; but as you, Mr. Chairman, urged that it was my duty to do what I could to make this Bi-Centennial worthy to be remembered by all who participated in it, and as a lineal descendant of the pioneers of the town, it was doubly my duty. And I think I can truly claim that honor, through two grandmothers both Olmsteads, and one grandfather a Keeler. My grandfather Scott was only three years behind the first settlers in 1708, having bought the share of one of the first purchasers, who did not live to take possession of his share of the new home. I think therefore I can without fear of contradiction say, that I am a genuine descendant of those pioneers in the wilderness of the township of Ridgefield in 1708.

And as you, Mr. Chairman, suggested that as I had been connected with

the civic affairs of the town longer than any other man, it would probably be of interest to many to hear something about the two most important offices of the town, viz.: "The Town Clerk," and the "Probate Court," with both of which I have been connected for many years.

And in compliance with his request, I will give you as briefly as possible a few facts concerning these two offices, whose importance to the welfare of towns in the State is not as well understood as it should be by a majority of the people, who are benefited by the work of the Town Clerk and the Judge of Probate.

Few people realize that the quiet possession of their real estate depends upon the records of these two offices.

It is very remarkable that our records have been so well preserved. For about 150 years the town records were kept in private houses (the residences of the Town Clerks), and not until 1853 was a safe or vault provided for their safe keeping, then a vault was built and used twenty years, then safes were bought and placed in the Town House which was built on this spot in 1876.

In 1895 the Town House was destroyed by fire, and the books came out safe and uninjured, except that the bindings of 40 volumes were so damaged that they had to be rebound.

They are now in a vault within this building where they are safe from fire.

The first volume of Land Records so-called was commenced in 1709 and the first entry therein was as follows:

At a town meeting convened in Ridgefield, December 11, 1709, the town by a major vote have choosen John Copp of the Town of Norwalk to accept ye office of register for us, to record what by law is required, for ye year ensuing and on February 3, 1709-'10 was sworn according to law.

Recorded, February 3, 1709-'10.

JOHN COPP, *Recorder.*

The next instrument recorded was the deed from the Ramapoo Tribe of Indians and their associates to the proprietors, viz.: John Belden, Samuel Keeler, Sen., Matthias Saint John, Benjamin Hickcock, John Beebee, Samuel Saint John, Mathew Seamor, James Brown, Benjamin Wilson, Joseph Birchard, John Whitne, Sen., John Bouton, Joseph Keeler, Samuel Smith, Junior, Jonathan Stevens, Daniel Olmstead, Richard Olmstead, John Sturtevant, Samuel Keeler, Junior, Joseph Bouton, Jonathan Rockwell, Edward Waring, Joseph Whitne, Daniel Olmstead, Thomas Hyatt, James Benedick, Joseph Crampton, Ebenezer Sension, Matthias Saint John, all of the Town of Norwalk in ye County of Fairfield in her Majesties Colony of Connecticut, in New England, and Thomas Smith, Thomas Canfield and Samuel Smith of ye Town of Milford in ye County of New Haven and Colony aforesaid, which was signed on ye 30th day of September in ye seventh year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady, Anne, Queen of England, and in the Year of our Lord God 1708.

John Copp served as recorder until 1712 when Rev. Thomas Hawley, the first minister of Ridgefield, was elected register.

He served until 1735, when Timothy Keeler was elected town clerk, who held office until 1748, Stephen Smith was elected, whose term of office expired in 1775, Benjamin Smith was elected, who held the office until 1797, Samuel Stebbins was elected and served until 1836, Nathan Smith was chosen to fill his place and served until 1852. Hiram K. Scott was elected in 1852 and performed its duties until 1861, Lewis H. Bailey succeeded him and served for one year, Henry Smith 2d was town clerk for one year until 1863 when Albert N. Thomas was chosen and served three years, Elijah L. Thomas was his successor serving for five years. In 1872, Hiram K. Scott was re-elected and has served continuously until the present time.

John Copp served as Town Clerk,	5 Years.
Rev. Thomas Hawley	21 Years.
Timothy Keeler	13 Years.
Stephen Smith	27 Years.
Benjamin Smith	22 Years.
Samuel Stebbins	39 Years.
Nathan Smith	16 Years.
Hiram K. Scott	45 Years.
L. H. Bailey	1 Year.
Henry Smith	1 Year.
Albert N. Thomas	3 Years.
Elijah L. Thomas	5 Years.
12 Town Clerks in all,	198 Years.

and I have the honor of having served six years longer than any other town clerk.

In 1852 there were only 19 volumes of Land Town Records, now there are 40. 29,000 deeds and other instruments have been recorded in the land records. Not until 1847 was there any law making compulsory the registration of births, marriages, and deaths. Since then the records are nearly perfect. Previous to that time the town clerk recorded only those that were brought to his knowledge and are of course imperfect.

Yet there are records on our vital statistics of 6,700 births, 1,648 marriages, 3,863 deaths; making 12,211 entries in the town records of vital statistics.

The duties of the town clerk, although looked upon by most people as very light and of little importance, are in fact very onerous and exacting. For the past 20 years, there has been a deluge of genealogical searchers trying to find out whether their ancestors had a coat of arms or not. The town clerk must wait upon them and render such assistance as they demand, and hardly a week passes, but his time is taken up for many hours, without any remuneration.

The real estate business for the past fifteen years has been very large, and title searchers from various places are here almost every day in the week, and they expect the town clerk to know every person who ever owned land in the town, and to remember how many children they had, and whether alive or dead, and also to know all about the settlement of their estates, and to give them the exact dates of the births and deaths of the heirs to the same.

And he is called upon daily to answer questions which, if answered to their

satisfaction, saves them the fee of an attorney. All these services are expected to be rendered free of charge. Yet the town votes to the town clerk the munificent sum of not over $250 per year.

The Town of Ridgefield belonged to the Probate District of Danbury until 1841, when it was made a Probate District by the Legislature.

Harvey Smith was its first judge and served one year, when William Sherwood was elected and served two years. He was succeeded by Harvey Smith who served one year, then Jacob T. Haviland for one year, and then Harvey Smith for one year, Ebenezer Hawley for four years, Edward Couch two years, Henry Smith 2d for one year, then, Hiram K. Scott who continued in office 15 years.

Then D. Smith Sholes for one year.

Elijah L. Thomas, two years.

Then Hiram K. Scott again, who served 20 years.

Then William O. Seymour who served nearly 10 years and last Harvey P. Bissell, who was elected in 1902 and is now the presiding judge.

In addition to his service as judge, Hiram K. Scott has served 18 years as clerk of the court.

There have been 11 judges in the past 67 years,— whose terms of office were as follows, viz:

Harvey Smith,	4 Years.
William Sherwood,	2 Years.
Jacob T. Haviland,	1 Year.
Ebenezer Hawley,	4 Years.
Edward Couch,	2 Years.
Henry Smith, 2d,	1 Year.
Hiram K. Scott,	35 Years as Judge and 18 years as Clerk.
Elijah L. Thomas,	2 Years.
William O. Seymour,	Nearly 10 years.
Harvey P. Bissell,	6 Years and now in office.

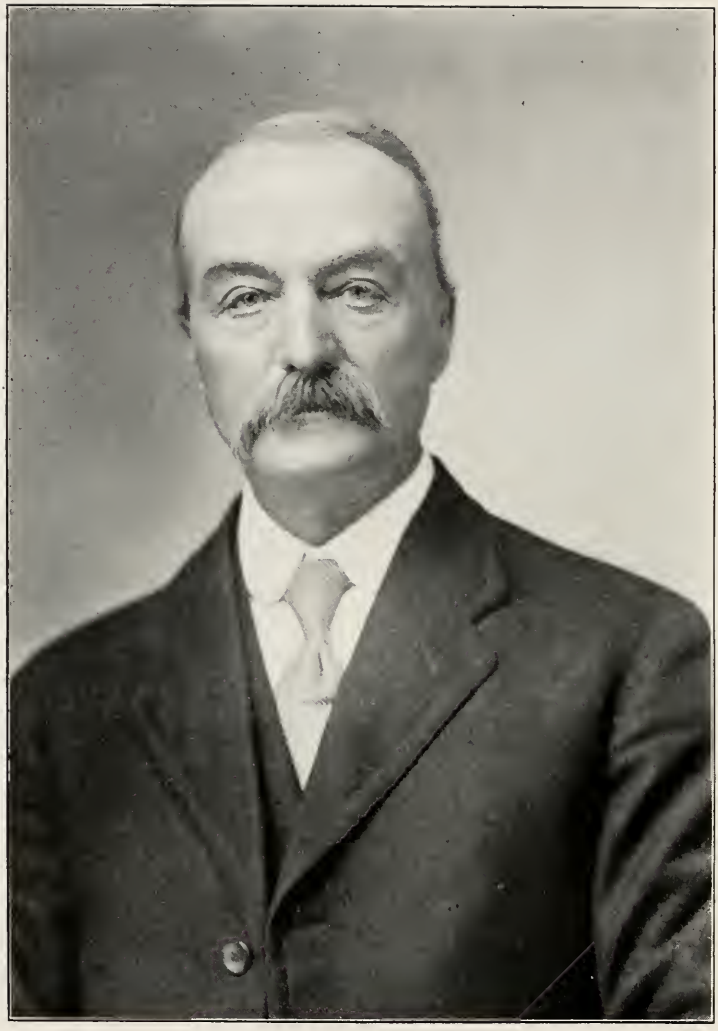
The records of the court up to 1854 were all contained in 1 volume; now there are 17 volumes averaging 600 pages each.

One thousand and eighty-two estates have been probated, and guardians appointed for 159 minors, besides many persons committed to the Insane Asylum and County Home.

Only one appeal from its decision has been carried to the Supreme Court and that was decided in favor of the Probate Court's decision.

By Charles B. Northrop

Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentlemen: It is true I am a son of Ridgefield, born here, and have lived here nearly all my life. I am sure of it, but I am not so sure I can say anything that will be of interest to you. I propose to tell you in an informal way of some of the recollections I have of old Ridgefield from a time about sixty-five years ago.



CHARLES B. NORTHROP

I was born in what is now known as Catoonah Street. There was no great convulsion of nature at my advent, neither was the sky lit up by flames, as we learn marked the advent of one of our distinguished speakers. I suppose he was there and knows all about it, but I can find no record of it in history. The old house occupied the site now owned by Charles B. Staples. It was one of those old-fashioned colonial houses which used to be so common in the country, two stories in front, nine windows, and a tower in the center,— the back roof sloping down to about seven or eight feet from the ground. I am not positive that it was colonial — it was the same type as the house known as the Stebbins place, now occupied by Mr. Olcott; also the house that stood on the place where I now live, which I know was a local hospital at the time of the revolution. Tradition says that at that time one of the nurses ran out with a red petticoat on a broomstick and warned the right wing of the British Army of the character of the house. So I judge from my remembrance of that house that it was standing at the time of the Revolutionary War. There is but one house in the town of that style standing as it did in the old days, and that is below the Ridgefield Inn, on the estate of John S. Keeler. That old house I believe stands precisely as it did sixty-five years ago, except the necessary repairs to keep it habitable. There is the same old high-paneled wainscoting, I think, in the interior, which has never been changed in the slightest degree.

At that time on Catoonah Street, between our house and the village, on the south side there was no building at all until down at the corner where the old house owned by Hiram K. Scott stood. The barn in the rear stood on a high bank. I remember very well the elevation, because Walter Treasher left his cart there, and it was a favorite trick for the boys to start it rolling down hill. He soon grew wise and put it in his barnyard. On the place where we now stand was one of those old houses of the style I spoke of, occupied for many years by Harriet Bradley, who lived here a quaint and curious life. Of course you all know the old Congregational Church, that typical feature of all New England villages, which stood there as long ago as I can remember, until the recent change. It was a matter of curiosity to me to climb up inside of that roof. How they were able to raise that by main strength was always a puzzle to me. The church during all that time had never been very much altered, although about the time that I was born, or before, quite material changes were made. The pews were taken out and slips replaced. I think in early times there were doors on the north, south and east, if I have not been wrongly informed.

Of course you all remember one of the principal officers of the church and also the guard, was the tithingman. It was the duty of the tithingman to prohibit anybody traveling on Sunday. It happened one day that a person was traveling to the north, and passing by the door was observed by the tithingman. He ran out and stopped him, and very shortly a severe thunderstorm broke over the country, and it was about to drench him, and the tithingman wanted him to go back. The traveler said "No, if it is wrong for me to travel at all, it is wrong for me to go back a step." I never learned whether the tithingman stood out and got drenched or not, or whether he let the man go on.

Another old feature I remember was what we termed the "big shop," where the Congregational Church now stands. It was famed in the country round for the very excellent work turned out,— carriages and coaches, mostly coaches, sold in the South in great measure. I have often wondered if the "one hoss shay," was not made at the old shop, for I have heard people outside, as far west as the western boundary of Westchester county boast of having a coach made in Ridgefield and tell how excellent it was.

Of my schoolboy days I have nothing particular to tell, but I will describe as best I can the first little schoolhouse where I ever attended school; it was a duplicate exactly of the schoolhouses of that day. It stood just west of the Methodist Church, half in the lot and half out in the street. It was built probably 16′ or 18′ by 20′ or 24′. The door opened to the east, and the benches for the scholars were on each side, facing the wall. The desk was a board, and I don't remember whether there was any shelf under it to hold the books or not. I remember the seats were made of slabs with auger holes bored through and pegs driven in, and to get to our seats we had to climb over. Our faces being to the wall, we could not with any comfort keep track of the teacher. That reminds me of the story of Warren Hoyt. He was not doing his work properly and his employer said to him: "Warren, I wish you would do better; it takes me all my time to watch you." Warren said: "Well, it takes all my time to watch you." So with us. We never could tell whether the teacher was looking at us or not.

I don't remember precisely who my first teacher was, but I remember one, not so much for what he taught me, but for his rather peculiar way of punishing us. In the summer time he had a cord hitched from the ceiling, and if we did anything contrary to the rules, we were tied by the big toe and had to stand there until we were sufficiently punished. In the winter time he would substitute sending a boy out to get an armful of wood and bring it in. Of course we had no wood house; the wood was piled outside and had to be brought in in sufficient quantities to last us during the day. He would send a boy out and tell him to come back with an armful of wood, and when he had got it said to him: "Now you stand and hold it." I remember more about him than I do any of the others. Most of my teachers I have lost track of, whether living or dead. Three of them are with us here today, and I am proud to say they have grown up to be quite respectable men. I say I am proud of it, for I feel that the exertion they had to make to get me started up the hill of knowledge must have been a great factor in developing them mentally and physically. Hiram K. Scott was one of the oldest. I remember Benjamin K. Northrop was one of my teachers.

The stores as I remember them seemed to be the club houses or gathering places for the community in the new centers. I can remember that every store, so far as I know, had its little club, which gathered nightly with great regularity to hear the news and take it home to their wives. Newspapers were very uncommon, and that seemed to be the only way to get the news then. Woe to the boy that had to go to one of those stores at night, for he was sure to be asked

P. C. Lounsbury

funny questions and be made all the fun of possible. I remember going into Hawley & Bailey's store, one night along in the fall of the year, when a farmer came in to get a bag of rock salt. He shouldered his bag and started towards the door, when someone asked him a civil question. He stopped to answer it, and after he got through with him another one took it up. So they kept the old fellow holding that bag of salt for quite a while. After a while the old chap caught on, showed that he had the power of expressing himself in very forcible if not elegant language, and made his exit.

The political history of Ridgefield I don't know much about. I never have been much of a politician, but it always seemed to me as if we had more fun years ago, before this law prohibiting any discussion within seventy-five feet of the polls went into operation. I remember as a schoolboy I used to delight in coming to town meeting or election and hear discussions between opponents of different parties. It was astonishing the amount of political wisdom that was developed. I have since thought it was no wonder that we were able to furnish the state with governors. We have furnished the state with any number of prominent men. Certainly the knowledge and training developed in those early days must have borne fruit. I am not a member of the Ananias club, and I do not want to be considered a candidate for it, but I am going to say something I can't account for. I remember — it is impressed upon my mind very distinctly — seeing a procession go by with a log cabin on a pole. That log cabin was used as a presidential emblem in 1841, at the time of Harrison's election. The emblem grew out of the regular sneering Richmond Journal saying that if you gave Harrison $500 and a barrel of cider, he would sit contented in a log cabin for his life. His friends took it up and he was elected. If that is the case, I must have been twelve years old, but it is so strongly impressed upon my mind that I don't know how to account for it. I don't know how I could have made a mistake. It reminds me of Mark Twain's celebrated interview with a reporter, who tried to reconcile his appearance with his age, and I conclude there must have been some mistake in dating my birth. I have probably been cheated out of three or four years of my life.

I remember very distinctly the Fremont campaign and the very bitter spirit that then existed between the two parties. (Some amusing instances of this were related by the speaker.)

The first newspaper published in the town was dated January 13, 1875, called Baxter's Monthly (a copy of which was exhibited), since becoming the very respectable village paper, now published weekly, as the Ridgefield Press.

(Other amusing reminiscences were given which have long since been forgotten and need not be repeated here.)

By Ex. Gov. Phineas C. Lounsbury

Mr. Chairman, Friends, Neighbors and Fellow Townsmen: I am sure we are all thankful that we are living today instead of two hundred years ago, and that we are the commemorators — not the commemorated; thankful that we

are living to join in this, Ridgefield's Bi-Centennial celebration, and to do honor to those sturdy, rugged, stalwart men and women who settled here two centuries ago and transmitted through their descendants from generation to generation those sterling qualities that have done so much to advance the civilization of the age — the Christian civilization — that we enjoy, and made of this town so beautiful for situation an Eden among the gardens of the world.

The forces of Nature that ages ago on this continent laid out for all coming time the avenues of business and travel may have forbidden that we should ever become one of the great centers of population and wealth, but these are not the first things to be considered in a free Republic — in a land like ours. Intelligence, patriotism, devotion, unselfishness; that culture of the heart and the soul and the life that comes of purity and freedom; blood that tells, blood that comes only through long unbroken generations of noble men and noble women; these are the things that cannot be reckoned in a census, but they do count largely in history.

In a land so widespread as ours the control of government must always remain largely with the rural towns. Many of the children born and reared in Ridgefield have removed from time to time to other places, but have carried with them there the home discipline which they received; the same love for those homely virtues that marked them here. New England men and their descendants, New England ideas, have, must and will dominate this land.

I am one of the few New Englanders who cannot trace their lineage to Plymouth Rock, but I yield to no one in my admiration of the grand character of the men who came over in the Mayflower. I know that in many quarters it is becoming fashionable to belittle the Pilgrims, to sneer at the Puritans, to parade their trifling faults, to ignore their solid virtues; but where can you find a race of men who have had a clearer conception of the dignity of human freedom, or who have stamped the love of it more strongly upon their descendants? Sneer at the Pilgrims! Sneer at the Puritans! Yes, we may when we can forget that it was their strong arms that wrought out for England and for us the blessings of Constitutional Liberty. These are the men, these are the women, that were the founders and builders of Ridgefield, and their sons and daughters have gone out through the land, and wherever they have gone, by their love of justice, liberty and humanity, they have laid deeper, broader and stronger the foundation of this Republic. By their thrift, by their integrity, by their industry, they have hewn their pathway through the forests, crossed the plains and over the mountains to the shore of the Pacific; on to the islands of the sea; on to the Orient; and wherever they have gone they have made the wilderness and the deserts to bud and blossom as the rose.

In speaking the praises of the Puritan Fathers I can stop far short of the limit of modesty, for you know better than I can tell you that you have no reason to apologize for their achievements — no reason to be ashamed that you are the descendants of so noble an ancestry. When you consider the part they took in the formation of this Republic, their sufferings in the cause of freedom, their devotion and self sacrifice, not alone in the formation but as well in the

"THE HICKORIES"

Ancestral estate of Honorable George Edward Lounsbury at Ridgefield, Governor of Connecticut 1899-1901. Here he died in 1904, beloved by the people of the commonwealth

"CASAGMO"

Estate of George M. Olcott, known as the Stebbins Place during American Revolution and occupied by historic house where Benedict Arnold sent his wounded soldiers after Battle of Ridgefield

"GROVE LAWN"

Colonial Mansion in Historic Ridgefield of Honorable Phineas Chapman Lounsbury, former Governor of Connecticut

preservation of this Union, a government which has proved to be the best ever formed by the hand of man, giving life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all within its borders, and an asylum for the oppressed and downtrodden the wide world over. They may not have possessed the courtly manners of the Cavaliers of Virginia, or the sweet, gentle, submissive spirit of the Friends of Pennsylvania; they may not have been loyal to the King, but in their appreciation of individual destiny they created a State in which they and every other citizen could be at once a subject and a king. They were loyal to Liberty itself, and to no one in a greater degree than to them is this country indebted for the teaching of those great principles of right which have been alike the source of her glory and the means of her progress. Again I say when you consider these and their other achievements, you have no reason to be ashamed, but rather to be proud, of your noble lineage. So honor them that your days and those of your sons and daughters may be long in this God given land which they have bequeathed you.

Love for one's country, love for one's home is inherent in the human breast, but love for the scenes of one's childhood, for the place of one's nativity, is not only inborn but it grows with advancing years until it takes possession of the whole being and there comes into the soul an almost uncontrollable desire to return to the place of life's sweetest memories, life's most hallowed recollections — the childhood home, the long ago home.

I read not long since in some paper or periodical an incident that seemed to illustrate this truth: A Missioner or Evangelist — it matters little which — who was holding a revival service in one of our large Western towns, after a most fervent exhortation, after a most earnest appeal, asked all those in the congregation that wanted to go to Heaven to manifest it by rising. All not rising he asked all those who wanted to go to Hades to signify it in the same manner. All not rising he then said: "Where in the universe would you like to go?" A man arose in the congregation and said: "As for me, from what I have read and heard about Heaven I feel as though I would be a stranger in a strange land, and from your description of what you call Hades I certainly do not want to go there, but there is a place on earth where Mother lived, where I was born, in old Ridgefield, Connecticut, and Mr. Minister, if I can have my choice I'll go there."

Doubtless all over this land today hundreds and thousands of people are turning their thoughts toward Ridgefield with a longing desire to be with us and join in this celebration; to join with us in our thanksgiving to Almighty God, not only for this beautiful world in which we live, not only for this, the most favored of all lands, not only for this State with its schools and colleges, the land of steady habits and the traditional nutmegs, but for this beautiful town, equalled by few — excelled by none.

I must hasten, for my time is limited. I know that I have digressed somewhat from that theme that was given me by our honored Chairman, i. e.:— a few words about my boyhood town, about my boyhood recollections; a few words about my experiences.

I was born, as some of you may know, in one of the rural districts of this town, but of the time and place I have no personal recollection, but I do remember, as the days went by, the love and tender care and the careful training of one of the best of New England mothers, and I do remember the judicious tannings that I received, when I needed them, from one of the best of Puritan Fathers. Thus I was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I went to church with my mother at an early date, as was the custom then, but about which I remember little. Later on, as the years went by I do remember, with my brother George,—(God bless him!) One of the best brothers that ever lived; one of God's noblemen, as many of you here know. We trudged over the three miles from the old homestead to the preaching service at half past ten in the Methodist church on yonder corner, Sunday school at noon, preaching service again at 1.30 in the afternoon, after which we walked back and spent the balance of the day with father in reading, meditation and prayer. "Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," was early impressed upon me by my father. I know this is not the teaching of the so-called Liberalists of the present day, but it is God's teaching and God's truth will never fail, and if there is any one thing that I have reason to be thankful for more than another it is that I received this old style New England training. Whatever success has come to me in life, whatever I have achieved or accomplished, I owe largely to the teachings of the home, the church and the schools of that day.

At four years of age I was sent to the district school and sat for several years at the feet of the Gamaliels of the town, two of whom are here today, one our honored, distinguished fellow townsman, Col. Hiram K. Scott, who has just addressed us, more mellow today than he was then, as many a boy could testify were he present upon this occasion. He doubtless believed in the proverb of the Wise Man of the East that to spare the rod was to spoil the child, and few there were under his tuition or instruction that did not early learn to dance the two-step to the tune of the tingling birch. Later on I went to school at the brick schoolhouse in the Florida district and had for my instructor there our honored, esteemed friend and neighbor, Benjamin K. Northrop. Whether I had profited by my early experience or whether I had become more discreet in later years I do not pretend to say, but I did escape his correcting rod and was only sent over now and then across the schoolhouse to sit with the girls, which he thought was a punishment, but which you can readily believe was a pleasure and a delight. At twelve years of age I began a four years' course of study at a private school then kept by the Rev. David H. Short, an Episcopal clergyman, Dean of Trinity College, a most competent instructor and a strict disciplinarian. Few graduated from that school without being prepared to enter any college in the land, or fitted, as far as schools can prepare the scholar, for life's work. It was a blessing to the boys and girls of Ridgefield and the surrounding towns in more ways than one. A strict disciplinarian he was, but I doubt whether he was aware of all the little attentions going on outside, which I will not mention today as I see many of the young ladies here

George E. Lounsbury

Portraiture of the second Lounsbury of Ridgefield to become Governor of Connecticut — From late photograph taken by Randall of Hartford — Painting by Charles Noel Flagg, from this photograph, has since been placed in the collection of paintings in the State Library at Hartford

who attended school with me there. Finishing my course and graduating at the age of sixteen I left for the first time my parental roof and the only girl that I thought worth knowing and went to New York to make my fortune, which I had fixed at $10,000, then I was to come back and take this girl as my wife and settle down in Ridgefield to a life of usefulness and ease. But the boy's dream of sixteen years, like the dream of the night, is soon over, seldom realized and generally forgotten. I was not permitted to return home, because of my business engagements and business matters, more than once or twice in a year. Year after year I came back to the old homestead during the time of my vacations only to return to the solution of greater business problems and ever increasing responsibilities. During all this time I was cheered and inspired by the letters from home that came as regularly as the week came round; letters that told me the boy was not forgotten; letters of love and inspiration; letters of solicitude and encouragement; letters that as I read them gripped the throat many and many a time.

I will not further detain you in words of my own of the loving gratitude and tender affection that ever filled my heart for those that gave me life and taught me its mission, as I have in my possession some verses written about a boy from another New England town, a business associate of mine for the past twenty-five years, that are more expressive than any words at my command.

WITH LOVE — FROM MOTHER

There's a letter on the bottom of the pile,
  Its envelope a faded, sallow brown;
It has traveled to the city many a mile,
  And the postmark names a 'way up country town.
But the hurried man of business pushes all the others by,
And on the scrawly characters he turns a glistening eye;
He forgets the cares of commerce and his well laid plans for gain,
The while he reads what Mother writes from up in Maine.

There are quirks and scratchy quavers of the pen,
  Where it struggled in the fingers old and bent;
There are places where he has to read again,
  And think a bit to find what Mother meant.
There are letters on his table that enclose some bouncing checks;
There are letters giving promise of profits on his "specs";
But he tosses all the litter by, forgets the golden rain,
Until he reads what Mother writes from up in Maine.

At last he finds "With love — we all are well."
  And softly lays the homely letter down;
Then dashes at his business tasks pell mell,
  Once more the busy business man of town.
But whenever in his duties, as the rushing moments fly,
That faded little envelope smiles up to meet his eye,
He turns again to labor with a stronger, truer brain,
From thinking of what Mother wrote from up in Maine.

And then at dusk when all are gone,
He drops his worldly mask,
And takes his pen and lovingly performs
A welcome task;
For never shall the clicking type
Or shorthand scrawl profane
The message to the dear old home,
Up there in Maine.

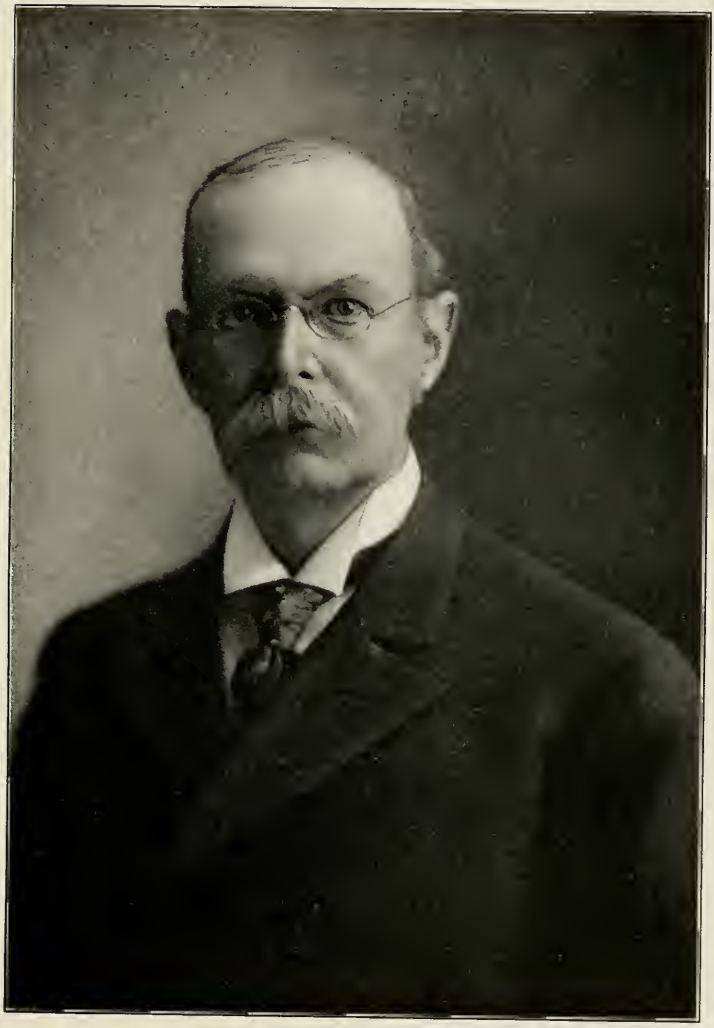
The penmanship is rounded, schoolboy style,
For Mother's eyes are getting dim, she wrote;
And as he sits and writes there, all the while
A bit of homesick feeling grips his throat.
For all the business friendships here with John and Joe and Jim,
And all the ties of later years grow very, very dim,
While boyhood's loves in manhood's heart rise deep and pure and plain,
Called forth by Mother's homely words from Maine.

By Ex-Lieut.-Gov. E. O. Keeler

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: To follow the eloquent address that has been made by Governor Lounsbury places me in a very hard position. I remember well the day that he left Ridgefield to go to New York. I was attending the same school at that time that he was. I was so elated to think that I had got a place in a store that I could hardly wait for the day to come to go away. Then I remember very well crying two nights all night, for I was so awfully homesick to go back again. I came here today on a steam railroad. I very well remember when a boy of almost everyone saying that Ridgefield was one of the places in the country where they never could build a railroad to it, as it was all up hill. I wish that the people who lived in those days could be here today, and not only see the steam railroad, but the horseless carriages rushing through the streets, and the flying machines going through the air. They would soon come to the conclusion that nothing was impossible in this world, and that great changes have taken place in the last fifty years, even in the good old staid and conservative town of Ridgefield. I must be very careful what I say, as I see by referring to your program I am to be followed by three judges. Now, any person that has one judge after them is badly enough off, but to have three judges coming after you would seem to be almost the limit. Therefore you can see what an embarrassing position I am placed in.

I do want to say that all honor should be given to the founders of the good old town of Ridgefield, for they most certainly laid the foundation deep and strong, and we behold today the grand and beautiful town of Ridgefield that has been built on this foundation. While this town may not be as large as some other towns in the state, I am sure that what it lacks in quantity it most certainly has made up in quality. Like the man out West who owned a railroad just two miles long, who told the president of an eastern road which was over 6,000 miles in length: "Well, your road may be a little longer than mine, but I

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR E. O. KEELER



JUDGE HOWARD B. SCOTT

want you to understand that mine is just as wide as yours." Where will you find another town in this state, or any other for that matter, that has furnished two governors out of one family and two judges out of another, and I don't know how many lieutenant-governors? I have not looked that up. Right here I desire to pay my respects and honor to the memory of one of the governors of the state, Hon. George E. Lounsbury. I was very intimately associated with him during his political life, and I had not a truer or better friend in the whole State of Connecticut than he was, and in his death I know Ridgefield suffered a great loss. A woman was met a few days ago by a book agent, who wanted to sell her a book that would tell her how to take care of a good husband. She informed him that she didn't need any such book at all, but if he had a book to tell her how she could get a good husband, she would buy one. Now it seems to me that Ridgefield has not only had a book that told them how to get a good town, but they most certainly had a book that has told them how to take care of it, for there is no more beautiful place than this town of Ridgefield.

In closing, I would say that if I was going to propose a toast today it would be this: "Here's to the good old town of Ridgefield, as it has been for two hundred years,— and it certainly has had God's blessing with it in the past; here's to the town of Ridgefield as it is today,— and I am sure that God's blessing is with it now; here's to the town of Ridgefield that will be in the future, and may it have God's blessing with it as long as time shall last. May you all live as long as you want to, and have health, wealth and happiness."

By Judge H. B. Scott

Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentlemen: As I seem to be about the only one situated to drink the toast of the preceding speaker, I will drink it for you all. I don't like to have much to do with men that are afraid of changes. As a general thing you will find that the men who are afraid of changes, are the men that you had better be afraid of. However, I drink to the lieutenant-governor. In the good old times when all of the children used to come back to the family homestead upon anniversary occasions, there was a place also for all the grandchildren. I am not making any claim of having been born in the town of Ridgefield, but as my father had his birth-place here and my ancestors for many generations, I may at least claim Ridgefield as my grandmother. And as almost all of my boyhood days were spent here, I may claim her as my nurse; and as all the education which I received in schools, except at college, was received here, I claim Ridgefield as my teacher. So I come back to it upon this anniversary occasion to pay my respects to the good old town of Ridgefield in the three-fold capacity of my grandmother, my nurse and my teacher, three of the dearest relationships that exist in life.

Speaking of ancestors, I think that the chairman of this committee had better stop talking about my ancestors. I was quite shocked when I heard him read so glibly from what he claimed to be a record, on account of some Scott

having been a slaveholder. Now I am out of politics at the present time; so of course it doesn't harm me as it might otherwise, but out of respect for my ancestors I deny the allegation. We don't know what to do always when an allegation is made all of a sudden and we haven't had time to look it up. The chairman is a pretty accurate sort of a man generally and I hate to dispute him, but having no other way of meeting it at the present time, I have concluded to deny the allegation and to appoint a time for a hearing, which if the lieutenant-governor will allow me I will set at the next centennial, when proof may be produced of the truth or falsity of the charge. At present I deny it. The handwriting isn't first-rate anyway in some of these old books, and Scott and Seymour begin with the same letter; so I am not at all sure it would not be found that man was Seymour instead of Scott, and he is trying to put it off on us.

It is more than forty years ago since I ceased to live in Ridgefield and went over the northern borders to find a new home. It makes me feel pretty old when I think of the forty years that have passed since then. That is not the only thing connected with Ridgefield that makes me feel old either, because I have always taken the Ridgefield Press, with a desire to find out what is happening to those I once knew; and as I read my paper from week to week I every once in a while find an item which refers to somebody as our venerable fellow citizen, but of whom I think as some one that I knew in the very bloom of youth and the strength of manhood. I suppose, however, that we must all expect to grow old, the only notable exceptions that I know being those who are at the head of this program, and the gentleman who is advertised to close the exercises. They seem to be ever young. As my mind goes back through the decades since I left here, I remember very well the day when I said farewell to my boyhood friends, and started for the town of Danbury. I remember well that I formed certain firm and strong resolutions, very much of the same character that Governor Lounsbury did, although he has been able to carry them out in some respects better than I. They were very firm and strong, but fortunately for me they were not advertised,— I kept them to myself. Still they were strong, and as I went over the hills, I remember thinking to myself that I would accumulate a large fortune,— a process by the way which seems very much easier and more expeditious to the youth than it afterwards turns out to be in the accomplishment; that I would come back to Ridgefield and marry a Ridgefield girl — and I had the very girl picked out in my mind at the time, although she did not know anything about it, fortunately; and that I would come back here and buy one of the finest residences to be found in Ridgefield, and make this my home. But alas! for the dreams of youth, notwithstanding the many flattering examples which are set out so enticingly in juvenile literature, I must confess that I have been unable to make good in any of the respects that I have mentioned. The fortune still eludes me; the girl escaped, and she never even knew the danger that she escaped; and as for coming back to live in the town of Ridgefield, a short time after my departure, though not, I trust, entirely on account of my departure, the price of real estate began to soar so high in the town of Ridgefield that it has always since then been quite beyond my reach,— so I have given up all of those dreams of my youth.

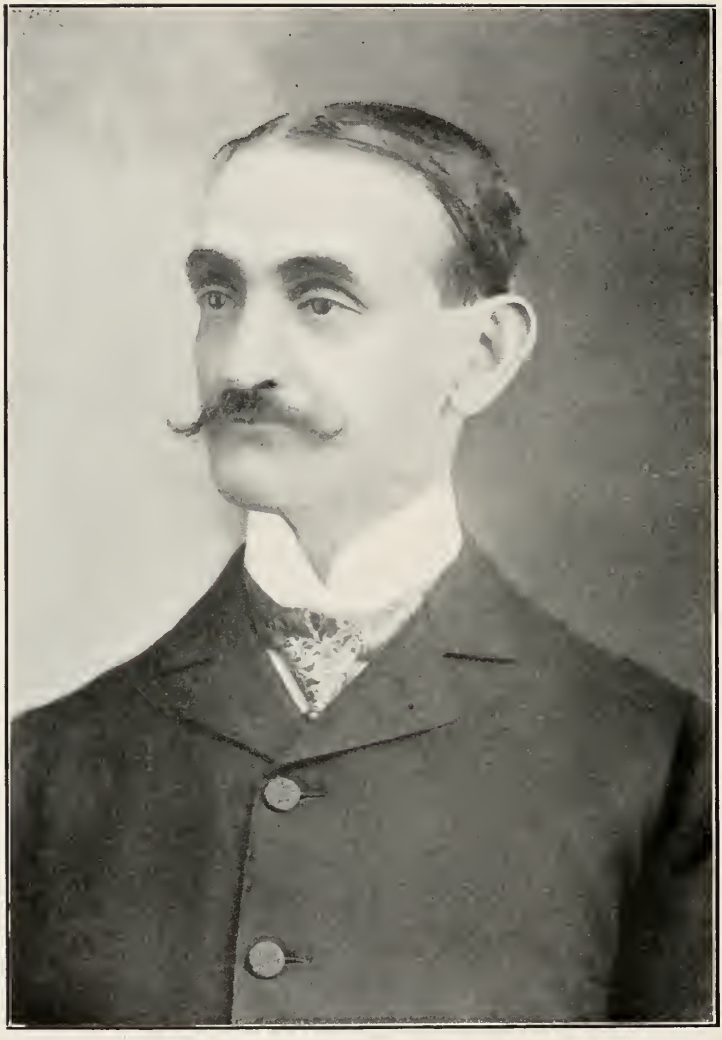
When your enterprising chairman here corralled the gentlemen who sit around me upon the stage, he told us that we were expected to make a speech of only ten minutes; that the people of Ridgefield wanted to see our faces and hear our voices once more, and here we are. I am willing to concede to these gentlemen who are sitting around me all the beauty which they or their wives may claim. For myself alone, so far as looking at us is concerned, I should consider any one quite accurate who should go away and say that he thought he had seen better.

So far as reminiscences of boyhood are concerned, I don't think I could give you any which would be of interest to you. There are some things that I remember in connection with the boys and girls who were my friends at that time, which I remember with interest, but they would not be of interest to you. My years in Ridgefield were all school boy days, and my recollections cluster almost entirely about the school at High Ridge, which was then the leading institution of this town. Although the chairman has seen fit to cast an aspersion upon my family, upon by ancestors, nevertheless I cannot forbear saying that I have had considerable experience since that time in educational matters, and I am fully satisfied that there were very few schools at that time, and that there are very few schools at the present time, which afforded better education to the youth than the school at High Ridge under the guidance of Mr. Seymour and Dr. Todd, who was one of our most esteemed teachers. And in any commemoration of the achievements at Ridgefield during the last two hundred years, I think high prominence should be given to that school at High Ridge, from which so many boys have gone out to success. As far as my own experience goes, I owe it a very great debt of gratitude, because although I left school before I was fourteen years old, and then spent several years in forgetting as far as I could what I had learned while I was trying to sell dry goods, when I at last made up my mind to enter college, so thorough was the instruction given me here, that with the aid of another teacher after a few months I was able to enter college with only one condition,— which speaks well for the thoroughness of the teaching of that school.

I congratulate the citizens of Ridgefield today upon the termination of the second centennial in the life of this town, and also upon the spirit of patriotism which induced you not to allow so important an occasion in the history of the town to pass unnoticed. During these present years there are many bi-centennials of our New England towns being held, and I think it is very commendable and proper that notice should be taken of these years, which are stepping-stones in the lives of the communities which are represented. It is proper that flags should be unfurled, that bands should play and processions march, and all the other indications of gala days should be shown upon a day like this; but after all the real importance of this day does not lie in any of these things. They are soon to pass away, but the importance of the day really lies in the fact that it is a very excellent time for us to stop and think. For the most part we drift along through life doing with more or less efficiency what our hands find to do for the time, but thinking little of the past over which we have come, or the future

towards which we shall go. When some day like this comes, which by its importance leads us to throw our memories back upon the past, the most important celebration which we can have is the exercise of that power of reminiscence; and the few serious words that I say to you today are an admonition that after the noise and excitement of the day have passed away, that each of us spend a few hours in considering what it was in the characters of our ancestors which enabled them to perform the miracle of building the towns and cities which are now scattered all over this state. The achievements of our ancestors are told in history and song and story, and I need not, if I would, repeat them to you now, neither do I need to catalogue or enlarge upon the qualities of our ancestors which enabled them to accomplish this great task. Times have changed as the centuries have rolled on, and there may be some characteristics of our ancestors that it would not be well for us to follow. Shall I say their bigotry in relation to the conscientious opinions of those who opposed them, while it may have had its justification in the times in which they lived, it may be that, having left their homes and all the culture and pleasures of life, and settling in a wilderness, having done this for the very purpose of finding a place where those who believed alike could live together,— it may be they had the justification of saying to those who came there that did not think as they did: "If you do not think as we do, go off and make a settlement." I don't say they were justified. If they were, that is not the spirit of the present day. But there were certain traits in them which are known to you all, which enabled them to make this country what it is today, and without the development of those traits this country cannot progress, in my judgment, satisfactorily; we cannot leave to the generations that follow us that which we have received from those who preceded us. A conscientious action, a belief in something, a willingness to sacrifice something for principle,— those were traits which in those days were predominant, and which in these days I fear are becoming less and less prominent.

If all of the citizens and all in all of the country towns as these bi-centennials come along, looking back at the traits in their ancestors and selecting that which was good from them, could in the future imitate what they had done; if candidates proposed for office were examined to see whether they were proper persons to fill offices of trust; if measures were proposed which seem to them wrong and oppressive would not wait to see how their people felt about it, but would immediately themselves take a stand against it; if we believe and act upon something besides that which seems to be for our own ease and interest, then I think that the safety of the state will be continued. But if we do not follow in the thoughts and ways of our ancestors in that respect, then I think there is danger ahead for this country. Let us not only sing the songs our fathers sang, but let us do the deeds our fathers did in the days of "Auld Lang Syne."



JUDGE JAMES F. WALSH

JUDGE JAMES F. WALSH, OF GREENWICH

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your president has well said that I am a former Ridgefield boy, but I feel a good deal like the Irishman who was delivering an oration on St. Patrick's Day, when in a burst of enthusiasm he said to the boys: "Boys, it is your duty to stand up for your native country even if you wasn't born there." It is about the way I feel, because I wasn't born in Ridgefield, but I came here at a very early day, being, I believe, four weeks old, so that my entire boyhood days were spent in Ridgefield, and for years after leaving here, and up to this very day, I always speak of going to Ridgefield as going home. The fact that Ridgefield was my home has never gotten out of my mind. I hate to say it after so many have said it,— after Governor Lounsbury and Judge Scott have said that it was their ambition to accumulate money and return to Ridgefield and live the remainder of their days, but such was my ambition. I certainly had looked forward to that time when I might, just as Governor Lounsbury said, accumulate enough to return to Ridgefield and live. But times have changed, and what was sufficient to live on years ago, we do not think now is sufficient. As we grow older our needs become greater; we want more, we look for more, and I presume we are entitled to more. What used to be an ordinary competency is now considered substantially nothing. What we used to consider was good, fair wages when I was a boy, now is considered nothing, and you couldn't hire anybody to work for the same price that you could when I was a boy. It reminds me of the story of the man who had in his employ a young man who was about to be married. The young man went to his employer and said: "Mr. Brown, I am going to get married; consequently I will need a larger income. I can't possibly think of getting married and supporting a wife and family on ten dollars a week, which I now receive, and I think I ought to be raised." Mr. Brown looked at the young man and said: "I don't see why you should have a raise simply because you are going to get married; I don't know why you can't live on ten dollars a week. When I was a boy and clerk in a store, I worked for eight dollars a week, and I got married and raised a family of four." "But," the boy said, "that was before the day of the cash register."

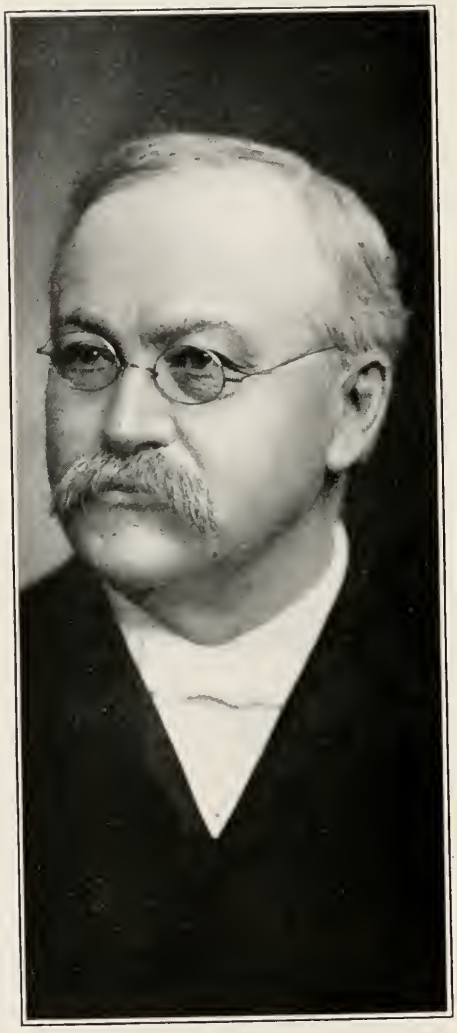
I was informed by the letter from your president that I was to spend ten minutes in relating my boyhood reminiscences. It was all very well for the gentlemen who preceded me to relate their boyhood reminiscences — they are all much older than I am. They each and every one of them knew that the statute of limitations had run against anything which they had done when they were boys. I am fearful if I should relate some of mine, that somebody would say they were not outlawed and I might get into trouble. I know you will believe me when I say to you with Governor Lounsbury, Lieut.-Governor Keeler, Judge Scott and everybody who has spoken before me, each and every one of them knew where the peach orchard was, where the watermelon patch was, and I don't see why they didn't tell you all about it,— as long as they knew it was outlawed they couldn't be prosecuted.

It would seem to me that the early settlers of Ridgefield had built far better than they knew when they located this town, with its magnificent streets, right at the foot of those mountains, where you get that breeze; but I don't think that the inhabitants of Ridgefield built any better than they knew,— for I think they built exactly as they knew when they selected this committee to get up this entertainment at this bi-centennial. Mr. Seymour, the chairman of this committee,— I can remember looking up to him as I did to others like the Lounsburys, E. H. Smith, Dr. Todd and several others, and now as I look back I can very plainly see why Ridgefield is known throughout the country as it is. These men were all men of character. Mr. Seymour, quiet, unassuming, unpretentious, yet known as he is from one end of this state to the other as an honest, just, upright man, who knows when to say no, and who knows when to say yes.

I was very much impressed when I heard Col. Scott speaking of the early records of Ridgefield. When I asked him his age and he told me he was eighty-six, I could not help thinking that England had her Gladstone, the United States her Washington, Lincoln, Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt; that Connecticut had her Trumbulls, Marshalls and McLeans; that Ridgefield had her grand young man, Col. H. K. Scott.

I presume that I could spend more than my allotted ten minutes in telling some of my boyhood experiences in Ridgefield. They were pleasant ones, looking back on them now. I always thought, as I said before, that I should like to return and spend my old age here, but that I have long since given up, because new associations, new ties, make our lives different from what we had planned. I was amused when the president said in his opening address that one Samuel Olmstead represented the town of Ridgefield in the legislature for twenty-nine years. I turned to my friend, Judge Scott, and said: "I don't believe any place on the face of the earth would stand for that except Ridgefield. Down my way they would say he was a post long before twenty-nine years." Judge Scott replied that possibly that was so, but it was the proper thing when a man represented a town faithfully, to keep him there, because then he was of some use to the community he represented. That fact brought to my mind very clearly an illustration in this congressional district. When I saw upon the platform Congressman Hill, who is to deliver an address tonight, and when I realized what a big man he has become at Washington, I can see that Judge Scott was right when he said it was proper to keep a good man in a position, because then he was of some use to the community. When I speak of Congressman Hill, because he is your congressman the same as mine, I can see that by keeping him at Washington, as the people of the fourth congressional district have done term after term, they have placed a man there who is of use, not only to himself, not only to the fourth congressional district, but to the United States, because Congressman Hill has certainly become one of the big men of Washington.

Ridgefield has a lot to be proud of. Tell me where on the face of the earth there is any town the size of Ridgefield that has furnished two governors to the state? Think of it! The small town of Ridgefield supplies two governors to the State of Connecticut, the highest office to which any man in the state can



RIDGEFIELD AND AMERICAN EDUCATION

Dr. Cyrus Northrop, born in Ridgefield in 1834 — Twenty-one years professor of English Literature at Yale — Twenty-two years President of University of Minnesota — From a recent photograph

be elected, out of the same family. I never can forget one of those governors. It was Mr. George Lounsbury whom I knew much better than I did his brother, who said to me while coming out of the train some eight years ago: "Walsh, why don't you go to the senate next year?" I said to him: "Why, Governor, I would love to go to the senate." I had just previously served one term in the house. I said: "I would like to go to the senate. How can I get there? It is promised to somebody else." He said: "You can go if you want to; Ridgefield is for you, and so is Wilton." "Well," I said, "I think Greenwich is;" and so on that tip I went in and got the nomination for the senate, and it was put in my head by one of the best men that ever drew the breath of life, and that was Governor George E. Lounsbury.

My brother said to me when I was coming up here, "Please remember that Mr. Seymour said you was allowed ten minutes." I said, "I will." He said, "If you do, it will be the first time in your life." So, bearing in mind what my brother said to me, I say to you one and all, I thank you, and I hope some day to return to Ridgefield and stay longer than just for the day.

Mr. Seymour, Chairman: I think I am not mistaken this time, when I introduce to you the next and last speaker, as to the fact that he was born in Ridgefield. Some of these who have spoken have not been born here, although we claim them, having spent most of their boyhood days here.

I have now great pleasure in introducing to you President Cyrus Northrop of Minnesota University, who presides over an institution where about 4,400 young students are being educated for usefulness in life, and has presided over that institution with great honor and credit to himself for twenty-three years, if I am not mistaken.

By Cyrus Northrop, LL.D., President Minnesota University.

Mr. President, I am exceedingly glad that Judge Walsh has saved me the necessity of paying to you personally the tribute which it would have afforded me great pleasure to give you. I am glad because it gives me time to say other things which are perhaps as necessary as to repeat a tribute to you, who by this time must be quite aware of the honor in which you are held by the residents of Ridgefield, as well as by those who have gone away from the town.

I am here simply for the purpose of enjoying this celebration and of participating in it as a former son of Ridgefield. I haven't come here for the purpose of making an extended address, or of being a part of the celebration. I have been to a great many celebrations in a great many places, some larger than this, and I have enjoyed them in some measure, but I want to congratulate you all upon the success of this celebration. It is modest, it is sincere, it is unique, and it meets the requirements of the occasion; and I have very heartily enjoyed everything that has happened since the exercises began last evening. The music was delightful, and I felt as we listened to the music last night, what an atmosphere of religious purity breathes over this celebration with these songs by the people who live here! And it was a delightful thing to find on the plat-

form last night men representing the most extreme differences of religious belief,— the extreme Puritan, if you please, and the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Methodist. There were times when I was a boy when nothing like that would have been possible in Ridgefield, and when even among the Protestant denominations there were violent contentions. I was delighted, Sir, to see the representatives of all these religious faiths unite here upon the platform, recognizing for the time at least that there is only one God for them all, only one Redeemer for them all, only one Heaven for them all, and that it is well for them that they should live in concord here on earth, emphasizing the things in which they agree, trying to unite on doing the things that are good, that they may enjoy some things of God when they meet in the beyond.

I have lived long enough to know that the great thing in this world after all is not fighting and contention, but it is love. Now abide these three, faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love. The power that is going to make this nation what it ought to be is not contention and fighting, though we may have to fight for principles that we love, but it is love that shall bind us all together in a common impulse to make our country what it ought to be, and to maintain the things that are good and right.

It is more than fifty years since I went away from Ridgefield, and I have been here often enough to keep in touch with the town and know what was going on, but I haven't been here often enough to keep up my acquaintance with the people as a whole. How many people there are in Ridgefield that know me or ever saw me, I haven't any idea. Some old friends I meet and am glad to meet. In this fifty years the town has been transformed. It was always beautiful — God made it beautiful — no man could make it anything but beautiful. The great wide street, with its noble trees and its green lawn and its comfortable houses — no man could degrade that street and make it anything but beautiful. It is more beautiful today than it ever was — with the old white church crowning the spot where it stood, the most beautiful spot in the whole town. What a street it was! I was born in West Lane, and I knew the West Lane district. There were thirty-nine families in that district when I was a boy, and to my knowledge there are only five families of the thirty-nine that have any representatives now living in that district. I knew the southern part of the Main street better than I did the upper. I can name the people in the order in which they lived up to the Episcopal church. Beginning at the lower end of the street there was Burr Keeler, and then Captain Ben Keeler, Abraham Holmes, Chauncey Olmstead, Platt Brush, Harvey Smith, Thaddeus Keeler, Isaac Lewis, Abijah Resseguie, Smith Keeler, George Keeler, Eli Foot, Czar Jones, William Hawley, Elijah Hawley, Nathan Smith, Deacon Elisha Hawley, Samuel Hawley, Joshua King, David Hurlburt, Rufus Pickett and Dr. Nehemiah Perry.

Now a singular thing about it is that these men stand before me today with an individuality that has not been dimmed one particle in the course of years. Every man has an individuality about him. There were no men in that whole crowd that were alike in any respect whatever. There were few men that had the same occupation. Go into a great city today — I live in a city of 300,000

people, where sixty years ago there were no people at all. Go there or into any great city, especially Chicago or New York, and see the great crowds of people that pour into the city in the morning and go out of the city at night. I stand and look at them — they don't look like men having individuality. They are simply cogs in the multitude of wheels of industry that are driven by a force somewhere out of themselves titanic and unseen. Some power keeps the electricity or the water working, and these men are simply cogs in the wheels that roll around until their work is done. These men here in Ridgefield, every man of them, was a power within himself, working at something, one a blacksmith, one a harness maker, one a carriage maker. There was Deacon Harvey Smith, one of the strongest intellects that ever existed in the town of Ridgefield, a noble man, a man whom I remember in the prayer meeting. When Deacon Smith rose to pray I tell you the Almighty was going to give attention. He bowed his head and shook it as if he would shake out of it all the worldliness that ever existed. He began: "O, Thou, eternal, omniscient, ever-living God," and I tell you that prayer meant something. We all knew there was going to be a prayer when Deacon Smith got up. None of your weak, simpering, lackadaisical, hope-for-nothing sort of prayers that you sometines hear. I tell you he was a great man; he ought to have had a mission a great deal wider and larger than that old corner store. There was Joshua King, an aristocratic man of noble bearing. He was a representative man of wealth of that day, the John D. Rockefeller of the day. To be as rich as Joshua King meant untold wealth. I don't think he was a tremendously wealthy man, as things are today. I think every man in Ridgefield thoroughly respected Joshua King as a gentleman who was affable, courteous and kind. There was old Dr. Perry, who had a mixture of medical knowledge and a polite affability that supplied whatever lack of medical knowledge he may have had, I do not mean that he lacked knowledge, and the two went together in such a charming way that people would send for him thirty or forty miles away to cure them of diseases that no ordinary doctor could cure. He was a delightful old doctor. So I might speak of other men. The point I make is, there was a wonderful individuality about them all, and they stand up today as conspicuous as the statues in the Capitol at Washington. Look at your two representatives from Connecticut, noble specimens of men. As I look round upon my Connecticut brethren of today, I feel they are but imperfectly maintaining the standard of such men as Jonathan Trumbull and other noble specimens of men that Connecticut had in the olden time.

These are some of the men, and the characteristic was the delightful individuality that they had. Every one of them thought for himself, every one of them stood for a certain kind of character, and every man in town knew what the character of every other man was. The delightful thing about a country place is that every man knows his neighbor, and every man stands as an example to his neighbor, and so things are kept as they ought to be. The great city with thousands and thousands hidden away at night, God knows where, and coming out like rats in the morning to earn a living, working all day in a mechanical, unindividual way, and then going back again — what is such a life

as that compared with the beauty, the sweetness, the joy, the peace of a life in a country town like this!

I went to that famous school on High Ridge, in the Peter Parley house. It was rather a remarkable group of boys up there. I remember William Smith, son of Deacon Smith, and Walter Jones. They were older than I. There was James H. Olmstead who afterwards was prominent as a lawyer in Stamford. There was Timothy K. Wilcox who took the valedictory at Yale, and died a few years later. There was William Henry Northrop, brother of your Dr. A. L. Northrop. He died when a school boy. He was remarkably bright and I have often wondered what his career would have been if he had lived. There was Rufus S. Pickett, who later studied law and became a judge in New Haven. There was Ira S. Keeler whom most of you knew for years as an active citizen of Ridgefield and who died in Florida. There was Frank Hawley, son of Eben Hawley, a very dear friend of mine. He died when he was a Junior in Amherst College. He and I used to study the newspapers to learn all we could about the Mexican war and especially what was happening to his cousin, a young lieutenant, just out of West Point, Darius N. Couch. A few years ago I met in Minneapolis that same Darius N. Couch, no longer lieutenant, but major-general of the United States Army. The only men in the whole group living today are the Rev. S. McNeill Keeler of Danbury and myself. The rest are all gone. Now I am not here to say a word about myself or my life. I have been twenty-four years in Minneapolis; I have seen great changes, great growth in every respect; I have had a delightful time there; it is a delightful place; I love it and love to live there, but I am always glad to see my native town; I am always glad to feel that it is as clean and delightful and as noble in character as it ever was; I am glad to feel that what God made so beautiful, these rocks, such as you can ride from Minneapolis to Branchville without seeing, and as you start from Branchville to Ridgefield you get the first vision of the hard black rocks partially covered with vines and leaves; these rocks that God made so beautiful and are so beautiful all over the town, the same things that landscape architects like to put into their landscapes in an artificial way to make things beautiful; these are all here even when wealth and art have not touched them.

But there has come into this town great wealth; there have come people from outside, in New York; they have with exquisite taste and great liberality built residences and made the town more beautiful than it was; and with your new roads, new lighting apparatus, new water works, new dwelling houses, with the glorious places that are spread out in beauty on almost every hill, united with all the beauty that nature originally gave you and that nothing can rob you of, Ridgefield is in my estimation today as beautiful a place as there is anywhere on the face of the earth. A little hill town — what does it amount to? What is it worth in the country as compared with the great city? Oh, the little hill towns are the places from which have come the men who have given glory to the country, and have assured prosperity to our institutions. Whence came Abraham Lincoln? From the great city? Whence came Ulysses S. Grant —

from the great city? Whence came the founder of our faith, the great teacher — from the great city? They all came from the little places, the places in which men have time to think, to meditate, to think of themselves, to think of their future, to think of their life; places where life is not one almighty Niagara roar of avarice in the accumulation of wealth, that a man can pile up and drop when he dies. Sir, if there is anything ignoble, it is a passion for wealth for wealth's sake. Men that accumulate wealth, but use it as a blessing for their fellowmen, are God's agents in doing good, and I believe that great blessing has come to Ridgefield from the distribution of wealth. But if there are any young men here in Ridgefield who are thinking for themselves that their object in life shall be to go out and accumulate wealth, and then come back here to live,— I tell you, don't do it, don't do it. It is a mighty sight more important what you are, than what you get. It is a mighty sight more important what kind of a man you are going to be, than how much wealth you are going to have; and if you are going to be a power in this country for good, you have got to be a man who thinks, who thinks correctly, who stands for the things that are right, knowing what is right. You can do a multitude of things that will tell for the country's honor and glory, even though you never acquire wealth enough to come back to live in Ridgefield.

Mr. President, I suppose I have more than fulfilled any obligation that you inadvertently placed me under. I knew perfectly well that these people did not know me, that it did not make very much difference to them whether I came or not, or whether I spoke, but I knew you did know me. There was a time when you knew me and you never have forgotten the day; you have loved me and I would come for your sake,— and I am here today. I don't know as many of you as I should know if I were facing a Minneapolis audience, where twenty-four years have made me known to the people — and it is always delightful to speak to friends — but I am perfectly sure that I am speaking now to an audience as friendly as any I could gather in the city where I do my work, and if you haven't anything else to make you rejoice in seeing me, you must certainly rejoice to see me because I am the last speaker of the morning.

I said in the beginning that I had been pleased with everything that has occurred. I have been. I thank the gentlemen and the singers, and the clergymen last evening for the words that they have spoken. I thank the committee for the delightful preparations they have made and carried out. I thank the citizens of Ridgefield for giving me an assurance that there is in this town the same high-toned character that has always existed here, and I congratulate you that the second hundredth anniversary closes under circumstances that inspire the fullest confidence and hope that this beautiful, beautiful place, which God has so abundantly blessed by spreading out all His colors as an artist and making it a place for men to grow strong, and women to grow beautiful in, and children to grow up pure and strong,— will in the centuries to come maintain the high character of the past, maintain its historical excellence for right principles and noble men, and that the generations that shall be raised here will be a credit to the great ancestors who brought from England a love of freedom and in Ply-

mouth established a system of government that was honorable and just to mankind. Let me say in conclusion that whatever may be said by anybody of the Puritan, the Pilgrim never persecuted and was never unjust. Let us love one another, let us remember the things in which we agree and join hands for making them powerful and permanent, and let us make as little of the things in which we disagree as possible, that there may be union and harmony among us, and that the great work of life may move forward successfully at our hands. I thank you for having given me the opportunity once more of meeting you all. There are men and women in this audience whose hands I want to shake, and who must not leave this house until they have come to me and shaken hands. Some of them know me very well; some of them I know very well, and if there are any that do not know me and that I do not know, let them not go away in haste, leaving me in solitude after these exercises are closed.

Mr. Seymour: We will now close by singing two verses of Julia Ward Howe's Hymn of the Republic, and the audience is invited to join in the chorus.

I wish to say before closing that this afternoon at three o'clock it is expected that the children of the various schools of the town will assemble in this place and read papers which they have prepared, concerning the history of Ridgefield, to be conducted under the auspices of the town board of education. And at four o'clock this afternoon the business men of the town expect to have a parade on the main street. Thank you all very much for being here on this occasion, and sitting so quietly on such an uncomfortable day. I know you have been interested in the remarks of the speakers who have addressed you.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of July 7th the school children of the town assembled in the town hall, under the auspices of the town school board, and after listening to some patriotic music furnished by the Ridgefield band, read the following historical papers concerning the early settlement of the town, which had been prepared by them for the occasion. They are published in order to give a complete record of the proceedings of the day.

THE HISTORY OF RIDGEFIELD

By Margaret Kennedy

In the year, 1708, Catoonah, sachem of the Ramapoo Indians, sold for one hundred pounds sterling a tract of land bounded north and east by Danbury, south by Norwalk and west by New York State, to twenty-nine men from Norwalk and three from Milford. That year the General Assembly appointed Major Peter Burr of Fairfield, John Copp of Norwalk, and Josiah Starr of Danbury, to survey and lay out the new settlement. A street six rods wide was planned from north to south. On either side were home lots of two and one-half acres; in the center a "Green" for the meeting, town and school houses, and on the east and west ridges, five acres of pasture to each home lot. Then the place,

appropriately named Ridgefield, was ready for the new inhabitants to move in and go to housekeeping. At the north end of the town is a great boulder called "Settlers' Rock," supposed to have been the camping place of the first comers to Ridgefield. November, 1708, was the date of the lottery by means of which the land was apportioned and twenty-five home-sites were drawn. It will not be necessary here to relate doings of the early settlers. Not until the year of 1775 does the history of Ridgefield take a prominent part. In 1775 a number of patriots had gathered at Ridgefield Inn to discuss the chief topics that were agitating the minds of the colonists. Many of the colonists felt that the time for resisting the unjust measures was close at hand and circumstances were fast approaching a crisis. On March 10, 1775, Governor Tryon issued the following proclamation:

Know ye all men by these presents! That I, William Tryon, a servant and governor of his most gracious majesty, our worthy sovereign, do hereby decree that those misguided persons, who perhaps tempted and harnessed by scheming and rebellious friends being led away from their several duties by misrepresentation, if, upon returning to the allegiance to their king, immediately, with sworn declaration that they will not again become estranged from the path of duty, do hereby grant them pardon and all rights that they have formerly possessed. But those who fail to renew their allegiance, to his most gracious majesty, King George Third, are to be known as rebels and traitors, and upon such they will be imprisoned and their property confiscated.

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM TRYON,
Governor of New York.

Major General of Troops.

In the spring of 1777 the following message was brought to General Benedict Arnold and Colonel Oswald:—"Governor Tryon, with Brigadier-General Agnew and Sir William Erskine have just landed at Campo Hill, near the mouth of the Saugatuck River, with 2,000 men, and think their object is to destroy stores at Danbury some twenty or thirty miles away. Gather every available man to march in pursuit, to intercept or give battle." When Lord Howe proceeded against Peekskill to destroy the stores that were known to have been accumulated there, by some good fortune the patriots learned of his intention in advance, giving them sufficient time to remove them to Danbury, Connecticut, a distance of twenty or thirty miles eastward. Learning of this some time later, he secretly determined to make that point the seat of his future operations at some opportune time when the place was poorly guarded and most of the militia were engaged elsewhere. It was therefore at one of these times early in the spring of 1777 when it was determined upon to attack this point. Colonel Joseph P. Cook, with a small number to guard these stores, was in constant communication with many points to gain reinforcements at short notice, if occasion required it. Expresses were constantly sent out to keep him informed of all that was going on within the surrounding country. Lieutenant Lockwood was

instructed to mount and ride to Wooster or Silliman at Fairfield. He was to tell them of the forces at Danbury, and if possible to give their assistance. The enemy came upon Lockwood and tried to capture him, but he evaded them and delivered his message. They advanced steadily and reached Danbury. After taking possession of the town, destroying the stores and setting fire to the houses, there began a scene of the wildest excess, cruelty and devastation that could characterize an unprincipled and exasperated enemy. Liquors were stored in quantities and the British soldiers fell on these until their beastly natures were satisfied. Most of the stores of pork and flour were stored in the Episcopal church, and that edifice was the only church spared, with the exception of the homes of the Tories. Provisions were rolled out into the streets and set on fire. After the conflagration pork fat was deep in the streets. Leaving Danbury after their night of cruelty and debauchery, General Tryon brought his men through the Sugar Hollow Road. They had but left this road a few miles in the rear before they were surprised by the Americans. Tryon knew his men were in no condition to resist an attack by the Americans and urged one of his officers to do his best to put the men in a position to return the attack. General Wooster was the leader of the Yankees, as the British called the Americans. Wooster urged his men forward and attacked the rear guard of the enemy and to harass them in flank and rear so as to retard their progress until he should be strengthened by Arnold and Silliman. In regard to numbers, the Americans were but a handful compared to the British. After an onslaught on the British in which a large number were killed and wounded, the British general brought three field pieces into position and charged on the Americans from cannon. This brought great confusion in the colonists' lines, which were about to retreat in disorder when General Wooster rode up and encouraged his men to make another charge. Just at this moment a stray ball hit the general and he fell from his horse mortally wounded. He was taken to Danbury and only lived a few days. The British now steadily advanced, discharging their artillery to dislodge the Americans, who had greatly increased in number and who were harassing the enemy unmercifully. The American officers Arnold, Oswold, Johnson, and Taunt strengthened the American army to a surprising degree, more so than the British believed. After the first attack the British were startled and overwhelmed by the superior forces with which they had to deal. Soon rallying and retaining their position they advanced up the hill an invisible foe, from behind trees, rocks and buildings, until they worked around to the rear of the patriots' right flank. The cause of this drawback on the American's side was that they did not have enough field pieces to cope with the British. The engagement lasted about an hour and our men behaved with great spirit and courage. At last they were forced to give way because the enemy had raised a breastwork across the road directly in front of where Arnold was entrenched. Arnold ordered a retreat and was bringing off his rear guard when his horse was shot from under him. At last Arnold had to command his men to retreat to save themselves, that the British were upon them. General Tryon and his men did not seek shelter in the village because he knew how he was hated by

the village people, so he encamped about a mile south of the main street overlooking the sound. Early the next morning just at dawn Tryon burned one of the houses near at hand as a signal to the ships in the sound. During the whole march to the sound they were harassed by the colonists. They reached their ships by making a longer journey to evade the Americans.

By Marion Northrop

Ridgefield, a small town in the western part of Connecticut, had at first only a few settlers. It consisted of hills on the west and woods sloped down to Long Island Sound. The people that settled in Ridgefield came from Norwalk and Milford. They consisted mostly of Northrops, Keelers, Nashes and Hawleys. This town was settled by a sturdy race of men. Nearly all the people were farmers, and there was a butcher who went from house to house killing the people's hogs and cattle, but he had no market. There was a tanner who tanned skins for people. There was a clothier who made clothes for the people but went to the house to make them and did not have a tailor shop as we have now.

Sap was gathered from the maple trees in March, boiled down in the woods and made into sugar or syrup.

The men of those times wore knee breeches, long tailed coats, and hats with low crowns and wide brims. The stockings of the parson were silk in summer and worsted in winter. The women had bonnets of silk or straw, gowns of gingham, silk or muslin, short waisted and close. The dress of the people in those days was very different from what it is now.

The people had farms of their own and neat cottages with large fireplaces and a backlog from fifteen to twenty inches in diameter and about five feet long, imbedded in ashes.

Marriages took place in the evening and all the people came without any invitation. At funerals there were long processions and when the procession got to the cemetery the parson gave a talk suited to the occasion.

Dances were given at different houses quite often.

The West Lane school is probably the oldest in Ridgefield. It is built on the triangle where four roads meet, as was then common, because it was handier for the pupils from all directions. It was rough and unpainted and consisted of two apartments, the entry and the schoolroom. The benches were made around three sides of the room and the scholars sat at low desks. There was a huge fireplace at one side of the room and the chimney was so straight that the snow and rain came down on the hearth. This was the only means of heating the room. In winter when the wood was too green to burn and the thermometer ten or twenty degrees below zero, the teacher would let the scholars go home, for which they were very glad. In summer the teacher was a woman and the scholars were the younger ones, and in winter the teacher was a man and the boys and girls from the youngest up to sixteen or twenty at-

tended, and in a small schoolroom there would be perhaps forty children under one teacher. The scholars were called up to the teacher's desk and here they recited instead of reciting in a class as we do now. In those days they studied reading, arithmetic and grammar and some other studies that we study now but not in the same way.

The meeting house or church was covered with shingles and clapboards but it had no stoves and no carpet on the floor. For heating they had little foot-stoves in which they put live coals. The pulpit was like a little balcony up above the people at one end of the church. The seats were square and the people sat on three sides.

By Katherine Whelan

The citizens of every village are more or less proud of their village and its history. The citizens of Ridgefield are privileged to be proud of the history of their town. It is one of the oldest of New England's towns. While in possession of the Indians Ridgefield was known by the Indian name of Cudatowa, meaning "high land"; and indeed the name was well given, for beautiful High Ridge rises to an altitude of eight hundred feet above sea level and the beautiful homes that adorn it command a view that has become famous.

The first settlement was started by a small number of enterprising inhabitants of the town of Norwalk in 1708. Those early pioneers had indeed set themselves to a severe task to come with their families to this place, which was then a wilderness, and to build homes and clear and cultivate the land.

It is said that the first white men who set foot in this town passed their first night on the large rock about opposite the schoolhouse at Titicus. Among the early settlers there were no wealthy men, they were all of moderate means. As money was not very plentiful in those days the settlers traded among themselves, and the minister was paid for his services in rye, wheat and Indian corn.

When the Revolutionary War broke out a company of sixty-four men was formed in the village and commanded by Captain Northrop. Colonel Philip Bradley and General Joshua King were also conspicuous in the war. The list of Ridgefield's noted sons does not end here, for men of literary note are added to it. Among them is S. G. Goodrich, whose works were published under the nom de plume of "Peter Parley." The house on the Ridge now the residence of Mr. John A. King, was once the home of Peter Parley.

Another was Ezekiel Sanford, who edited the Eclectic Magazine and wrote a pre-Revolutionary History of the United States. At the present time Ridgefield's sons may be found in the various walks of life as doctors, lawyers etc. And one of them, Professor Cyrus Northrup, is president of one of our Western universities.

At one time Ridgefield had hat and shoe factories and tanneries. Iron and sulphur have also been found in the town. But at the present time it is more particularly noted as a town of summer homes of many of the wealthy families from New York and other large cities. Few towns can boast so many

beautiful drives, and the views and scenery are unsurpassed. There is an excellent public library, and the Village Improvement Society has done much to beautify the town. Few, if any, villages in New England have so beautiful a main street. It is over a mile in length and about a hundred feet wide and is lined on either side with an unbroken row of noble trees. The beautiful homes with their broad lawns and beautiful trees are extremely attractive.

By Lettie Ritch

In 1708, Catoonah, sachem of the Ramapoo Indians, sold for one hundred pounds sterling, a tract of land bounded north and east by Danbury, south by Norwalk, and west by New York State, to twenty-nine men from Norwalk and three from Milford.

This tract of land included Ridgefield — one of the most historic and beautiful country seats in Connecticut, a battle ground of the American Revolution, and the home of patriots.

During the Revolution, Ridgefield, intensely patriotic, raised two companies of soldiers, one under Captain Northrop, one under Captain Olmstead.

Five hundred patriots under General Benedict Arnold reached Ridgefield, April 27, 1777, in the morning and built a hasty barricade of earth and rocks, across the north end of the street.

Here the British routed the Americans during this skirmish, and sixteen royalists and eight patriots were killed. General Arnold narrowly escaped, for his horse was shot under him. Stebbins homestead was used as a temporary hospital and the dead were buried in the adjoining field.

In South Salem, Maj. André lodged a prisoner under the guard of Lieut. Joshua King. King became attached to André (his charge) whom he accompanied to the gallows. The arm chair used by André while in South Salem is now in possession of Lieut. King's descendants.

During the Revolution the Episcopal church was used to store away supplies. This building and six others were fired by Gen. Tryon — among these buildings was the Keeler Tavern, kept by Timothy Keeler, a patriot. The English heard that cartridges were being made in the tavern and they (the English) discharged several cannon balls into the house (one is still visible). The inmates of the tavern took refuge in the woods.

Mr. Keeler's neighbor was a Tory who finding the sparks were a menace to his own house received Tryon's permission to quench the flames.

When Mr. Keeler returned from his hiding place, the Tory met him saying, "You may thank me that your house is safe." "No sir," roared the patriot, "I will not thank a Tory for anything. I thank the Lord for the north wind."

In journeying from New York to Boston, many leading Revolutionists and others stopped at Keeler Tavern. Among these was Rochambeau. Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, and his American bride, Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore, also stopped here while on their wedding trip.

About this time there were but four newspapers, all weekly, published in the state. Hartford published one, New London one, New Haven one, and Litchfield one.

There were but three subscribers to all these in our village.

Ridgefield, however, being on the road between New York and Boston, kept in touch with the world.

Shortly after the Revolution, there appeared in Ridgefield a half-demented woman, Sarah Bishop. Her abode was a small cave on the mountain side, overlooking Long Pond and on what is now the Rippowam estate.

The rumor was that she was in love with a British officer and that her home on Long Island had been burned by the British. On pleasant days the blue waters of the sound can be seen from the cave now called Sarah Bishop's cave. In 1810 Sarah Bishop was found frozen near her spring. Her cave still remains.

Many men influential in the world's progress have gone from this quiet spot. It is the home of two governors, Hon. Phineas C. Lounsbury, who was governor from 1887 to 1889 and Hon. Geo. E. Lounsbury, who was governor from 1899 to 1901. Many people had cause to bless Hon. Geo. E. Lounsbury as he was very charitable and he did much for his village. He died in 1904 at "The Hickories," his lifelong home.

By Martha Wilkins

In the month of May, 1708, a number of the inhabitants of the town of Norwalk petitioned General Assembly, then in session at Hartford, to grant them liberty to purchase of the Indians a certain tract of land bounded on the south by Norwalk, northeast by Danbury, and west by New York.

Such liberty was granted and the purchase was made Sept. 30, 1708. After purchasing the town tract, the next thing was to settle it. This the petitioners proceeded at once to do. The Indians had called this tract Caudatowa, or highland, a name suggested probably by a north and south ridge situated nearly in the center of the town. This ridge rises to the height of eight hundred feet above the level of the sea,— the same ridge which gave the town its name.

The proprietors decided upon the ridge as the most desirable point of settlement. A street six rods wide was surveyed to run north and south, and on either side home lots of two and one-half acres were laid out. After the original twenty-nine families had actually located in the town, other families began at once to come in and purchase lands, erect dwellings, shops, and stores. The settlement grew rapidly and soon they could boast of a church and town house. The land was not in a condition to yield much, nor could a convenient market be found for what was produced. Hence, the inhabitants practiced the strictest economy and traded among themselves, their minister being paid in wheat, rye and Indian corn.

About sixty-seven years had passed when the great Revolutionary strug-

gle faced the country. This town, with many others, was slow to take the one step which should decide its future destiny, but having once reached this decision it stood firm and unyielding through all the days of darkness which preceded the birth of liberty in America.

General Howe, being informed that the Americans had military stores in Danbury and its neighborhood, sent Governor Tryon of New York to destroy them. A detachment of two thousand men were placed under Tryon's command. They embarked at New York, passed over the waters of Long Island Sound, and cast anchor in Saugatuck harbor. Upon reaching the shore they began their march, destroying everything in sight. After burning Danbury, Tryon led his troops toward Ridgefield. In the meantime the news of Tryon's arrival flew along the whole coast. General Sillman with about five hundred militia pursued the enemy. He was joined later by the venerable Wooster and Arnold. It was late when they reached Bethel and decided to attack the enemy on their return. General Sillman and Arnold with five hundred men were to attack the enemy in front while General Wooster with two hundred half-armed militia was to attack them in the rear.

The following morning Wooster overtook Tryon's army about three miles above Ridgefield. Taking advantage of the uneven condition of the ground Wooster fell upon the whole regiment with such force as to throw them into confusion and break their ranks. A few miles from Ridgefield he again charged furiously upon them and during the encounter fell, pierced by a Tory musket ball. His faithful friends stripped his sash from his person and bore him upon it from the field. The British followed Sillman and Arnold to Ridgefield and having the better position compelled the Americans to retreat. General Tryon set fire to the Congregational church, but to his sorrow the work was a failure. He was more fortunate with four dwelling-houses which he soon had the satisfaction to see wrapped in flames. He now resumed his march, followed by the Americans. They followed him to the coast where he and his army set sail.

Situated in the northern part of the town and separated from the village of Ridgefield by a gorge, and a range of hills, is the parish of Ridgebury. After the burning of Danbury many of the people fled to a hill about a mile from the present Congregational church. In September, 1780, General Washington while on his way from the Hudson River to Hartford, Conn., spent the night in Ridgebury, at the hotel of Ensign Samuel Keeler. A year later the French army under Rochambeau was encamped on the ridge near the Ridgebury schoolhouse. At this point the army was about equally distant from Long Island Sound and the Hudson River. In July, 1781, they joined General Washington at Dobb's Ferry.

The Congregational church was the first Christian organization of the town, being formed in 1712. The foundation of the Episcopal church was laid by the Rev. Samuel Johnson of Stratford in 1725. A short time prior to 1731 the Protestant Episcopal church of Ridgebury was organized and situated about a mile south of the present Congregational church which was established in 1769. In 1784 was formed the Methodist Episcopal church of Ridgefield.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic church was erected in 1869, but previous to that time services were held in the homes of the various parishioners.

The church and the schoolhouse have always stood side by side. Scarcely had the emigrant settled, before the log schoolhouse indicated the purpose and plan of the settler. The first reference made to the schools of the town was in the year 1721, when the town voted that eight pounds shall be raised for the support of a school. The first school was nearly opposite Mr. Abner Gilbert's residence and later school was taught in the town house. The wages given to the masters was from fifteen to eighteen dollars a month, according to the number of scholars and the ability of the teachers. Reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and a little manners were the subjects taught. In 1761, schools were opened at West Lane, Titicus, Limestone and Florida. Since then other districts were formed, making fourteen in all.

The progress of the town between 1800 and 1860 compares favorably with other towns of the same size.

When the roar of the first gun fired on Fort Sumter seemed to awaken echoes in every village and hamlet, Ridgefield was among the first towns in the State to take decisive action in the matter. It was voted that an appropriation be made from the treasury of the Town of Ridgefield for the support of the families of the residents of the town who volunteered their services to the call of the President of the United States.

The two hundred years of its history have wrought many changes in Ridgefield. Its growth has been gradual, being built mostly by the dollars earned by its own people and in most part by the dollars obtained from its own soil.

Ridgefield Street is situated in the same spot where the first settlers located. Embowered in trees of a century's growth, with walks and lawns well kept, it is one of the prettiest streets in Connecticut.

The best "water view" to be had in town, aside from that of Long Island Sound, is from the western side of West Mountain, three beautiful lakes lying almost at your feet.

Ridgebury, in the northern part of the town, has changed but little for many years. A cluster of neat farmhouses surround a church equally neat. It is pleasantly located and is healthful and retired.

The elevated position of the town, the beauty of its scenery, the purity and healthfulness of climate, the easy access by rail to New York, have attracted many wealthy people whose homes add greatly to the beauty of Ridgefield whose attractions few towns can surpass.

By Alexander Maven

Today we are celebrating the bi-centennial of one of the most beautiful little towns in Connecticut, namely, Ridgefield.

Two hundred years ago Ridgefield was a wilderness, today we can well boast of its beautiful streets and magnificent houses.

To begin with, take our Main street, over a mile long, with its fine houses and beautiful shade trees of elms and maples.

In the year 1708 Ridgefield was bought from the Ramapoo Indians for two hundred pounds sterling by 29 men from Norwalk and Milford. It was bounded on the north and east by Danbury, on the south by Norwalk and on the west by New York State.

These men selected for a town site the center of three ridges overlooking Long Island Sound on the south and the highlands of the Hudson on the west. A street was planned six rods wide from north and south. On either sides were lots of 2½ acres and in the center a green for the meeting house and schoolhouse. Then the town of Ridgefield was ready for the new settlers to move in. Among the first to settle Ridgefield were Samuel St. John, Samuel Keeler, Jonathan Rockwell, Daniel Olmstead, Matthew Seamore and Joseph Benedict.

Many other families came to the new settlement, industries were established, markets found for their products and so the little village grew until it was one of the most important towns of the State.

During the Revolutionary War Ridgefield raised two companies of soldiers, one under Captain Northrop of Ridgebury and the other under Captain Olmstead.

On April 25, 1777, General Tryon after burning Danbury marched south toward Long Island. About three miles north of Ridgefield he was met by General Wooster with two hundred Americans. In the engagement which followed Wooster was killed and a small stone near Mr. Hunt's house marks the place where he fell.

Later Benedict Arnold reached Ridgefield with 500 patriots and built a hasty barricade of earth near the north end of the street. Here the British routed the Americans and General Arnold narrowly escaped death as his horse was shot from under him. The wounded and dying soldiers were carried into the Stebbins home, now in the possession of George M. Olcott.

The Episcopal church which was used for storing supplies during the war was fired by General Tryon on his march through the town.

The English hearing that cartridges were being made in the Keeler tavern which is still standing fired several cannon balls into the house, one of which is still visible.

Ridgefield can recall with pride the name of Philip Burr Bradley whom King George III appointed justice of peace in 1770 and 1777 was appointed colonel of the 5th Connecticut regiment by John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress.

President Washington was a personal friend of Colonel Bradley's and among the colonel's keepsakes are a chair, a china bowl and a pitcher used by Washington, when visiting at the Bradley house which is still standing on Main street, now the home of L. H. Biglow.

Another of Ridgefield's prominent citizens who should not be forgotten is Jeremiah Keeler, who while serving under Lafayette took part in the battles

of Monmouth, Jamestown and Yorktown and was presented with a sword by Lafayette.

Another incident in the history of Ridgefield was the imprisonment of Major André, the British spy, at South Salem under the guard of Lieutenant Joshua King. The arm chair used by Major André while a prisoner in South Salem is now in possession of the King descendants.

After the Revolutionary War Rev. Goodrich came to Ridgefield as the pastor of the Congregational church. His son was familiarly known as Peter Parley.

In 1797 there were two taverns in Ridgefield; the Keeler tavern was one owned by Amos Smith, which was later sold for the present site of our library. In these taverns were held courts of justice, balls and church fairs.

At one time Ridgefield had several factories, among which were the saw mills, grist mills, hat and shoe factories and a candlestick factory, all of which have disappeared.

It will be well to mention here a few of Ridgefield's men who have made a mark in the world. Two Ridgefield boys have served their state as governors, the Hon. Phineas E. Lounsbury and his brother, George E. Lounsbury. Among others of note may be mentioned Melbert B. Carey, who was nominee for governor in 1902, Hon. Jonathan Ingersoll, judge of the Supreme Court and Lieutenant-governor, and William O. Seymour, one of the railroad commissioners of the state. These are only a few out of many whose influence and intellect has made Ridgefield what it is today. It is useless for me to try and describe to you the modern Ridgefield, with its churches, beautiful residences and clubs. I can only repeat what some one else has said "that it has won distinction far and wide as the 'Lenox of Connecticut!'"

By Ruth Wilson

This is the bi-centennial of one of the most historic and beautiful country seats in Connecticut, Ridgefield, a battle ground of the American Revolution and the home of patriots. Two hundred years ago Ridgefield arose from a wilderness, threw off the aeons' shackles and entered the work of civilization, until on this anniversary of its natal day its hills are crowned with a magnificent estate, a manor town with many strong American families, in whose ancestral line flows the blood of the founders and the saviors of this great nation. There is no fairer scene in fair Connecticut than Ridgefield Main street, a mile or more of fine houses and velvety lawns, shaded by giant elms and maples. Cool, restful shadows, songs of birds, and glimpses of sunny field attract and charm the visitor, beguiling him into a fancy that this is some lovely old-world park rather than the thoroughfare of a New England village.

In the year 1708 the Catoonah, sachem of the Ramapoo Indians, sold for one hundred pounds sterling a tract of land bounded on the east and north by Danbury, south by Norwalk and on the west by New York State, to twenty-nine men from Norwalk and three from Milford. That year the General As-

sembly appointed Major Peter Burr of Fairfield, John Copp of Norwalk, and Josiah Starr of Danbury to survey and lay out a new settlement. These surveyors, with a keen sense of beauty, selected for a town site the central of three high ridges commanding views of Long Island on the south and the highlands of the Hudson toward the west. A street six rods wide was planned from north to south. On either side were home lots of two and one-half acres, in the center a green for a meeting house which at that time was where the cemetery is now, and a schoolhouse which stood where the fire house is being built. On the east and west ridges were five acres of pasture to each home lot. Then the place appropriately named Ridgefield was ready for the new inhabitants to move in and to go to housekeeping. At the northern end of the town is a great boulder called Settler's Rock supposed to have been the camping place of the first comer to Ridgefield. During the Revolution Ridgefield, intensely patriotic, raised two companies of soldiers, one under Captain Gamaliel Northrop of Ridgebury, a northeastern parish, the other under Captain David Olmstead. This added to the excitement of the battle on Main street and invited many of the youth to enter the army.

April 25, 1778, General Tryon made his celebrated trip to Danbury, burning the town. On the morning of the 25th he marched toward Long Island, and about three miles north of Ridgefield was overtaken by General Wooster with two hundred Americans. In an engagement the intrepid Wooster was killed. Five hundred patriots under General Benedict Arnold reached Ridgefield in the morning and built a hasty barricade of earth, that looked across the north end of the street. Here the British routed the Americans. During this skirmish sixteen royalists and eight patriots were killed, and General Arnold narrowly escaped, as his horse was shot under him. The Stebbins homestead was used as a temporary hospital and the dead were buried in an adjoining field. A tamarack tree marks the spot where Arnold's horse fell and stands close to the masonry supporting the bank of earth fortification, the site of George H. Newton's country home. Some years ago the Ridgefield Press announced the discovery near this tree of the skeleton of this famous horse and offered it to the local Historical Society, adding that the bones and hoofs found at the same time have been re-interred. The enemy marched through the village without further resistance, encamping for the night on a high hill south of the town and burning a house as a signal to the ships on the sound. The Episcopal church was used for storage of supplies during the Revolution and was fired by General Tryon in addition to six dwellings, among these houses the Keeler tavern, kept by Timothy Keeler, a patriot. The English heard that cartridges were being made in the tavern and discharged several cannon balls into the house (one is still visible), dislodging the enemy, who took refuge in the woods. Mr. Keeler's neighbor was a royalist, who, finding the sparks a menace to his own house, received Tryon's permission to quench the flames. When Mr. Keeler returned from his hiding place the Tory met him, saying, "You may thank me that your house is safe." "No, sir," roared the sturdy patriot," I will not thank a Tory for anything. I thank the Lord for the north wind."

Ridgefield for the past quarter of a century has become one of the modern New England towns with its lodges, club, automobiles, electric lights, water and fire apparatus and all the modern improvements in the homesteads, and amusements of different kinds. This is the Ridgefield of today.

At the conclusion of the meeting of the school children, about 4 o'clock p. m. they were taken in carryalls, forming part of a parade organized by the Business Men's Association and other organizations of the town, preceded by the Ridgefield band, constituting quite an imposing procession and passing through the principal streets of the town.

At 8 p. m. on July 7th, an audience assembled in the Town Hall taxing its seating capacity to listen to a concluding address by the Hon. E. J. Hill, congressman, as indicated on the foregoing program.

Hon. E. J. Hill

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: As a son of the neighboring town of Redding and a resident for fifty years of your parent town of Norwalk, I greet you tonight and congratulate Norwalk's oldest child not only on its splendid youth but also on the vigorous way in which it is now stepping out into the third century of its career.

As one looks over the Colonial records of Connecticut and sees the names of the men who founded Norwalk in 1651 and fifty-seven years later the names of those who bought the territory bounded by Norwalk, Danbury and New York, now constituting the town of Ridgefield, he is forced to conclude that in its making, though Ridgefield did not take from Norwalk land, as Westport and Wilton subsequently did, she did take men, the sons of heroic fathers and mothers who for a half a century or more had been fighting savages, subduing the soil and building on these bleak New England shores a commonwealth which has stamped its impress on this nation and on the progress of civilization throughout the world as no other of equal size has ever done.

For the men who founded Ridgefield were the descendants of those who, landing in Boston Bay, had marched through the wilderness of Massachusetts and making for themselves homes on the banks of the Long River, had given to the world the first written constitution ever made by which men should govern themselves, and yield to no mandate but "to fear God and keep his commandments."

Even the compact made in the cabin of the Mayflower on the 11th day of November, 1620, proclaimed as it has ever since been, as the foundation of Democracy in this land, began as follows,— "We whose names are under written, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, defender of the faith, etc.," and proceeded to declare that the voyage had been undertaken not only for

E. J. Hale.

By permission "Men of Mark."

the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith, but for the honor of their King and country.

But the men of Connecticut nineteen years later immortalized *themselves* by giving to the world a plan of government in which no king or prince or potentate is mentioned, but which looked to Almighty God for guidance and control, and to *themselves* to make the laws.

In *that* Constitution they declared that the word of God required, that to maintain the peace and union of the people, there should be an orderly and decent Government established according to God, to order and dispose of the affairs of the people as occasion should require.

They therefore associated and joined themselves together as a Public State or Commonwealth, and for themselves and their successors entered into confederation to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and the discipline of the church: And in civil affairs to be guided and governed by laws, rules, orders and decrees, the mode of enacting which was therein provided.

They then proceeded to combine the principles of pure democracy, as exemplified in the town meeting, with the practical work of a representative government in the form of the General Assembly, substantially as we have it today in our present State Government.

Indeed the fundamental principles of that Constitution were embodied in the Charter given by Charles 2d in 1662, and it is reasonably certain that this document was prepared and written by the colonists themselves and submitted ready-made for the King's approval, which it subsequently received.

So that the system of government originating in 1639 was in full force and effect straight on down for 179 years until the adoption of the present Constitution in 1818.

It was said by the enemies of the Colony that not a single law of the English parliament was ever put in force in the Colony of Connecticut until it had first received the approval of its own General Assembly.

It was literally a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Parties, committees, bosses, and conventions were unknown. The direct primary of modern times was in full force and effect, for all nominations of candidates were made at open elections where each elector voted for whom he pleased, and the number of persons required to fill the respective offices, receiving the plurality of votes, with such others as the General Court saw fit to add, were entitled to be candidates at the General election which followed, some months later, after full consideration had been given to all their qualifications, by the whole people.

It is a curious fact that among the founders of Ridgefield, not a single family name corresponds with that of any of the signers of the Mayflower compact, but that eighteen out of the twenty-one who left Norwalk to become original proprietors here, bore the family names of planters of the Colonies of Connecticut and New Haven prior to their union in 1665.

It was from such stock that the settlers of Ridgefield came, and what is

true of Ridgefield is equally true of all Connecticut towns organized before the 18th Century began, and those which came later could not escape its influence.

The men of Connecticut were trained in a school of hard experience. Its hillside farms and gravelly soil were not the nurseries of sluggards and idlers.

A rigid economy was essential to bare subsistence.

Every man had an occupation and worked at it.

The mothers kept the homes and made the family clothing.

The boys, when not at school, were doing chores or learning trades, the girls were teaching others and not ashamed to support themselves.

The modern factory was then unknown and domestic service was honorably done.

It was no disgrace to work, but idleness was almost a crime.

I have in my library an abridgement of the laws in force and used in the plantations of New England or the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1704, during the reign of Queen Anne when Ridgefield was settled.

A brief statement of some of them will give you an insight into the social conditions of the time. No person worth less than £200 could wear gold or silver lace or buttons, or bone lace costing more than 2 s. per yard, or silk hoods or scarfs, under penalty of 10 s. for each offence.

Burglary and highway robbery were punished by branding on the forehead with the letter B for the first offence, branding and whipping for the second, and death for the third.

If done on the Lord's day an ear was cut off, besides each of the first two punishments.

Cursing God or his holy religion and worship, or any other form of blasphemy was punishable by death.

Parents were required to cause their children to read perfectly the English tongue, to teach them a knowledge of the capital laws, and to catechise them once a week in the grounds and principles of religion.

The selectmen could examine the children in the families and if they found them rude and ignorant could take them away from their parents and put them in charge of other persons.

Any child above sixteen years of age of sound understanding who should smite with his hand or curse with his mouth his father or mother was liable to be put to death, unless it was shown that the parents had been unchristianly negligent in their education.

Any stubborn or rebellious son over sixteen years of age, upon accusation of his parents, should suffer death.

Every person was required to pay taxes to support the church and the state, except ministers regularly ordained, and these were exempt both in person and property.

All cattle had to be branded. In 1714 the General Assembly of Connecticut passed an act as follows:—"This Assembly grants liberty unto the inhabitants of the town of Ridgefield to imbody into church estate and settle an or-

thodox minister amongst them. And also the brand for the town of Ridgefield to brand their horses be this figure —

I do not quite understand the connection between the two parts of the law.

The pure food laws of today are feeble imitations of those at that time when all packages and their contents had to be inspected both as to quality and quantity and branded by the gauger or packer, or else forfeited one-half to the informer and the other half to the state.

No attorney in an inferior court could sit as a deputy in the General Court, nor could any other man who was unsound in judgment concerning the main points of the Christian Religion or scandalous in his conversation, and any freeman who knowingly voted for such a one should forfeit £5.

What would be the effect of such a law upon the elections and legislative bodies of today?

Playing shuffle board or bowls or other games of sport for money, or dancing, in any public house, or celebrating feasts or festivals such as Christmas, or Easter, either by merry-making or forbearing labor, or playing at cards or dice, were forbidden under penalty of 5 s. for each offence, or whipping, in the discretion of the court.

Bringing cards or dice into the country or keeping them in one's custody was subject to a penalty of £5 or whipping.

Bridge whist was not popular in those days.

Heresy, which meant a disbelief in any of the tenets of the church, was punishable by banishment, and denial by a professing Christian of the infallibility of any of the scriptures, by a fine of £50, for the first offence, and banishment or death for the second.

All women and children not otherwise employed were required to spin, and it was the duty of the selectmen to apportion to each family the work to be done and to impose fines for shortages.

Lying and swearing were punished by fines and the stocks.

Idolatry and witchcraft were punishable by death.

These are but a few of the great mass of laws which touched every side of the lives of the men and women of that day.

Nothing in this world or the next escaped the scrutiny and control of the state.

The conscience of the individual was harnessed and driven, by statute, and personal convictions shaped and fashioned by grievous penalties.

The soul and body, the food and clothing, the work and play, the family relations and public duties were all considered and cared for as a public instead of a personal responsibility.

It was a slavery of the law.

And yet, while undoubtedly it made some hypocrites and time-servers, out of it came a strong and self-reliant race of men and women who have not only achieved success at home, but have sent out sons and daughters all over this broad land to shape and mold the destinies of other states.

I have often wondered why this should have been, for the mental and so-

cial and spiritual tyranny of that day would not be tolerated now, but I invariably come back to the conclusion that the New England town meeting and pulpit, the open Bible and the little red schoolhouse have been the mightiest factors in the development of American civilization, and that the persuading example of a Christian home is irresistible, transplant it where you will.

By the last census, among the forty-six states in the Union, although Connecticut stands forty-fourth in area, she is thirtieth in population, 15th in wealth, 7th in capital employed in manufacturing, 1st among the New England States and 7th in the whole Union in the education of her children — and 1st of all in the inventive genius of her people and the variety and diversification of her industries.

And so tonight as a son of Connecticut with 273 years of honorable ancestry buried beneath her soil, I join with young Ridgefield in celebrating her 200th anniversary and am proud not only of what Connecticut has been but of what she is today, in this splendid galaxy of states which constitute this great Republic.

Upon the incorporation of Ridgefield, the Colony of Connecticut then consisted of forty-five settled towns. The state now has 168.

Its population then was about seventeen thousand, now probably over one million.

The grand list of the Colony was then £281,083.

In 1906 the state grand list was $791,769,979 and its indebtedness less than one million, all of which will be due and paid in two years.

I congratulate your native sons and daughters upon the wonderful changes which have come to their much loved town within their lifetime, upon the delightful homes and splendid mansions which have brought prosperity and added beauty to the old time surroundings, and I commend the wisdom, judgment, and good taste of those who by their coming have made life here even more enjoyable than it was before.

We may not all share in the gladness of this celebration so far as local associations and memories are concerned, but as Americans all, we can rejoice alike in the marvelous growth and prosperity of our beloved country and be united in a common purpose to work for its highest good.

The life of a nation is not measured by years but by its achievements.

Three years ago when in Japan I was told that the present dynasty had been continuously in power for twenty-six hundred years, and yet Japan only began to live when an American sailor knocked at its door fifty years ago and told her people that they were an integral part of a larger world, and that they must accept the responsibility of their being so, whether they would or not.

When that door opened, it was creation's dawn for them, and it made a new field of work for those who are truly living in other lands.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" means something more than sending missionaries to the heathen, for we cannot all go, and yet the call is to all of us.

It also means so living at home that our example as a nation shall be an in-

spiration and an encouragement to the down-trodden and oppressed, to the hopeless and helpless everywhere.

It means continual struggle and work among our own people for a higher and still higher civilization, that all men may profit by it and that humanity everywhere may be blessed.

John F. Stevens, the chief engineer on the Panama Canal, said—"I take off my hat to Colonel Gorgas who made it possible to dig the Panama Canal." But great as is that work and helpful as it will be to the material advancement of the world, it is not to be compared to the blessings which will come to the inhabitants of the tropics from the complete demonstration which Colonel Gorgas is giving that yellow fever and bubonic plague and malaria can be driven from the Isthmus of Panama.

It is a common expression at celebrations of this kind, that this town, this state and this nation will be just what you and I make it.

In one sense it is true, in another not, for it ignores a higher power. In either case we cannot avoid our individual responsibility and the duty that rests upon us, to give to the community in which we live a little more than we take from it.

A few months ago I visited a dead city, Ephesus in Asia Minor. It is being excavated now by the Austrian Government.

It *was* a magnificent, great city, filled with all that could make life luxurious.

It was captured by the Romans and rebuilt, adorned and beautified still more.

It must have been a city of marble palaces, marble streets, and splendid structures.

Its Main street paved with marble, a broad mosaic sidewalk on each side, with a double row of marble columns on each walk, stretched from the inland gate for three miles to the port.

Its theatre, seating 25,000 people, is superb in its beauty, even in its ruin.

Its splendid public library, with marble mosaic, alabaster and gold, its immense gymnasium and baths, its churches and temples, all tell of a great and beautiful city, wealthy and powerful.

And yet as I stood in the theatre where the "Uproar" occurred nineteen centuries ago and looked across to the rocky height where the Apostle Paul's prison still stands, as I saw the swamp hole where the temple of Diana once stood, one of the wonders of the world, I could not but think of the words of St. John the Divine in the Revelation, when he said, "I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Today the greatest interest that attaches to Ephesus is, that it *was once* the scene of Paul's labor and work. They lived unto themselves and received their reward.

The little bands of men who came to Jamestown, New Amsterdam and Boston Bay were inspired by different motives, some by hope of gain, some by love of adventure, and some seeking for freedom to worship God. But God twisted their purposes, welded their energies, and shaped a common destiny for them all, so that today a mighty nation of eighty-seven million souls is spanning a

continent, and reaching out to the islands of two oceans, halfway around the world.

Today, the little red schoolhouse on Ridgefield hill is reproduced in the Philippine Islands, and half a million brown boys and girls daily salute the American flag, and sing the "Star Spangled Banner" in our own tongue.

They are the forerunners, the advance guard of the United States of Asia, which, perhaps sooner than we think, may give to the Orient the blessings of liberty and the free institutions which our fathers gave to us.

As in the Pacific, so in the Atlantic seas, our duty to our Insular neighbors is clear and plain, and all the world admits it.

Shall we do that duty when it is near by and gives promise of quick return, and *shirk* it when far away and at greater cost?

We are too rich, too strong, too great to falter now, and may not if we would, for we cannot escape our destiny.

As I have reviewed the history of this nation since the close of the Spanish War and have thought of the burdens assumed by us because of it, burdens assumed unwittingly and unsought at its beginning, the putting down of insurrection in the Philippines, the sanitation of the Islands, and the establishment of civil government, the maintenance of peace in Cuba and the control of yellow fever there, the relief of distress from hurricanes and destruction of crops in Porto Rico, and in them *all,* the education of the children, and the elimination of graft in public service, the abolition of class distinctions by which the masses of the people were robbed and plundered for the benefit of the titled few, and all the cleaning up of the moral, political, and social filth which had been the result of three hundred years of Spanish despotism, I have wondered whether we have not already received our reward, in the reflex effect of this work abroad, by an awakening of the public conscience at home and a keener perception of the responsibility of the government to the people and of the people to each other.

One thing I know that for some reason there has arisen during the past four years from all over this land a demand for higher social, political and business standards, and that this demand will not be satisfied till many radical changes are made in existing conditions.

The difficulty is that *much* of the work belongs to the states themselves, and the general government has never been vested with power to do these things which the people want except within the territories and the District of Columbia.

For example, on what theory of our government can congress legislate for the regulation of child labor in Connecticut or the sale of intoxicating liquor, or the local transportation of freight and passengers, or the construction and maintenance of highways, or the preparation and distribution of food products, or even the conservation of natural resources, all within the limits and under the jurisdiction of Connecticut.

That is your work and mine as citizens of this state.

It is needless for me to say that much of this avalanche of demand for reform legislation by congress along these and kindred lines, has been started not

only because the changes sought possessed great merit in themselves, but because the entering of the general government *on* the work, would thereby transfer the expense from local or state taxation and throw it upon the Federal treasury.

But this is by no means true in all cases, and it is a serious question whether the time is not rapidly approaching, when either the powers of the general government must be greatly enlarged, or the citizens of the municipalities and states come to a higher appreciation of their individual responsibility.

I think all of us must admit that since the Civil War at least, with rare exceptions, the general drift and tendency of American life has not measured up to the ethical standard of the men who laid the foundations of this Republic, but that the hope of immediate gain and the possibility of speedy wealth which the marvelous resources of this country afford, have caused us to do many things and leave many things undone for which our children and our children's children will needlessly suffer and justly condemn us.

God has been wonderfully good to us as a nation and a people, for we are the heirs of the struggles and devotion and sacrifices of three centuries, and are in full possession of their fruits today.

Not once in a century only, therefore, but every day of our lives, should be an anniversary on which we should pledge ourselves anew to so act while we are the recipients of this bounty that this nation, this state, this town, and each of our individual homes, will be a blessing and a help to those who shall come after us.

I know of no better way to do this than to follow the scriptural injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens" and so fulfill the law of Christ.

And what a country it is for which to strive! For it, to make it a refuge for the oppressed of every people, the men of 1620 labored and toiled.

For it, to give it independence, the men of 1776 pledged life and fortune and sacred honor.

For it, to save the Union and take from its statute books the dark blot of human slavery, the men of 1861 laid down their lives, or are waiting still to receive their crown.

What less can you and I do for it now, than to strive as best we may to ennoble its citizenship and glorify its mission?

And now as we close the 200th anniversary of the founding of Ridgefield I know that I but voice the thought that is in the heart of each one of you, as I say of our beloved country in the words of an old song,—

I love every inch of her prairie land,
  Each stone on her mountain's side;
I love every drop of the water clear
  That flows in her rivers wide.
I love ev'ry tree, ev'ry blade of grass,
  Within Columbia's gates!
The queen of the earth is the land of my birth,
  My own United States.

At the conclusion of Mr. Hill's address the Chairman, Mr. Seymour, said: "The Bi-Centennial observances being over, we turn from rehearsing the history of the past to the making of the history of the future. I desire to extend the thanks of the community to all who in any way have contributed to the success of this occasion — to the committees who assisted in planning and carrying out the scheme in all its details, to Mrs. Wm. S. Hawk, who, without solicitation, volunteered to furnish and arrange in such a neat and attractive manner the interior decorations of the hall; to the clergymen of the various churches for preparing and presenting the very interesting program of the introductory exercises on Monday evening; to the various speakers, both local and from out of town, for the able and instructive addresses and papers presented; to the children for the interesting historical papers which they presented, showing an unexpected familiarity with the early history of the town; to all the local organizations of the town for the very creditable and imposing demonstration which they made in the parade of the afternoon, under peculiarly trying temperature conditions; to the chorus and the Ridgefield band for their inspiring music; to Mr. Geo. B. Clark for the gratuitous use of the piano on this occasion; to Mr. D. F. Bedient for the gratuitous use of the camp stools; to the ushers for their services and to the Ridgefield Press for the use of its columns in bringing the occasion to the attention of the public. The chorus and audience will now unite in singing "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."