



THE ROAD TO FOSTER'S HILL.

## OLD BROOKFIELD AND WEST BROOKFIELD.

*By D. H. Chamberlain.*

WHEN in May, 1660, forty years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and thirty years after the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Warner, John Ayres, William Prichard and perhaps a half dozen others, being "severall the inhabitants of Ipswich," were granted by "The Great and General Court of Election at Boston" "sixe miles square or so much land as shall be contejned in such a compasse in a place nere Quoboag Ponds," the first step was taken in a history which has not only stretched over two hundred and forty years, but covers events and men of whom too

little record has been preserved, and of which little, too little is known, much less familiar, even to those whose feet now daily tread in the footprints of those valorous and adventurous Ipswich men. Ipswich, a town which shall not be unremembered here, though settled only in 1633, was now looking westward, as if at least dimly conscious of the great destiny which was unrolling long before the good Bishop Berkeley, himself a victim of this destiny, wrote his memorable line. And in truth it was part of a vast movement, one of those well marked epochs which seem to me, alone considered, to lend quite as



THE OLD FOSTER HOME.

much color and reason to the time-honored theory of providential guidance and intervention as to the currently accepted theory of merely natural evolution—the great Franco-English duel of 1689–1759, fought out in its really historical significance more largely here than in Europe. Ipswich and Ipswich men bore their part well; and they certainly wrote their names deeply in the record of what was to them, in 1660, known only as “a place nere Quoboag Ponds,” but is known in Massachusetts and local history as Brookfield, and, it is pleasant to add, still as the Quaboag district.

It seems probable, though not certain, that a

few Ipswich men, grantees of 1660, visited Quaboag in that year; and tradition has it that the site of the first settlement of Brookfield was then chosen. The Indian name of Quoboag, Quaboag, Quabaug, or Quabaug held its own in common parlance, as well as in the public records, with singular stubbornness, and happily is widely in evi-



WHITEFIELD'S ROCK.

dence to-day in names of public institutions, societies and particular localities.

The original grantees, the Ipswich men of 1660, were not content to risk their titles on the grant of the General Court; and in November, 1665, a purchase from the Indians, residents of Quaboag, was consummated by a deed of the sachem Shattoockquis, who is described in the deed as "Shattoockquis alias Shadookis, the sole and proper owner of certayne lands at Quabaugé." The deed is in every way, in its quaint, ancient phraseology, as well as its description of the lands conveyed, an invaluable as well as unique document, testifying above all to the sense of justice towards aborigines, not too common among frontiersmen of our race, although far commoner in New England than some critics would lead people to believe. The following is the attesting clause:

"In witnes whereof the said Shattoockquis hath hereunto sett his hand this 10 day of November, 1665:

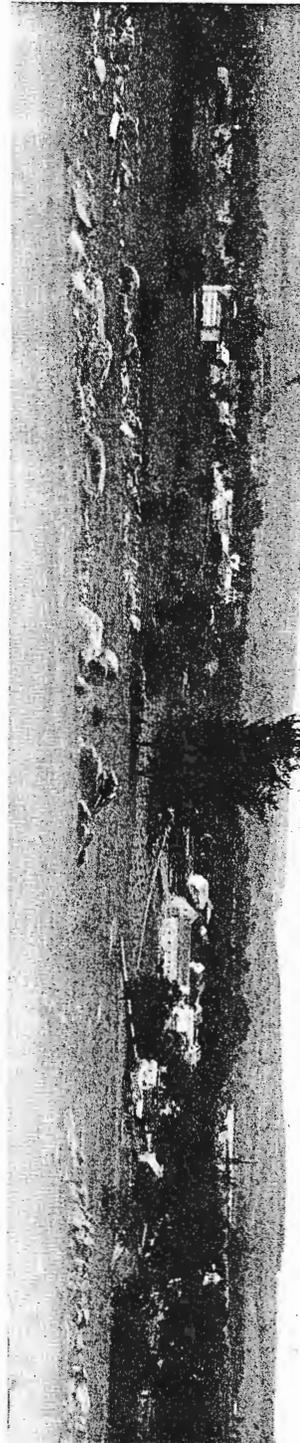
Subscribed & Delivered  
The mark of SHATTOOCKQUIS.



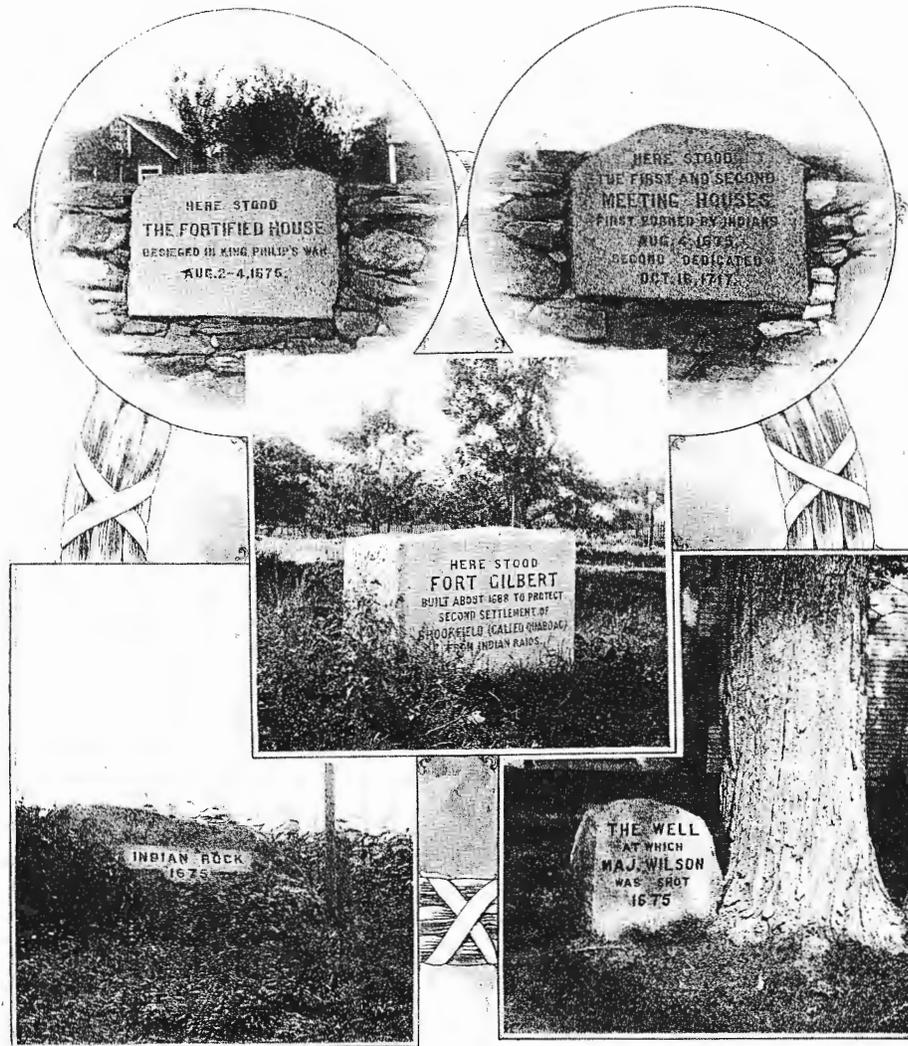
The mark of METTAWOMPPE,  
an Indian witness who  
challenging some interest in the land  
above sold received  
part of y<sup>e</sup> pay & consented to the sale of  
it all:



in y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>r</sup>esence of  
ELIZUR HOLYOKE  
SAMUELL CHAPIN:  
JAPHETT CHAPIN:"



WEST BROOKFIELD, FROM FOSTER'S HILL.



HISTORIC SPOTS IN WEST BROOKFIELD.

The price paid was three hundred fathoms of wampumpeage, or strung white seashells, worth in current English money of the day about £75.

Thus fortified in title, John Warner, John Ayres and their associates, comprising only six or seven families who had actually removed to Brookfield since 1660, applied to the General Court in 1667 for a re-grant of the Quaboag lands, the original limit of three years for the actual settlement by twenty families, and provision for

the present and future support of "an able minister," having expired. May 15, 1667, the General Court considered the petition and enacted that "because the inhabitants of Ipswich made the first motion for that plantation, & some of them have binn at charges about it," a committee, therein named, should "have power to admitt inhabitants, grant lands, & to order all the prudentiall affayres of the place in all respects, untill it shall appeare that the place shall be so farr

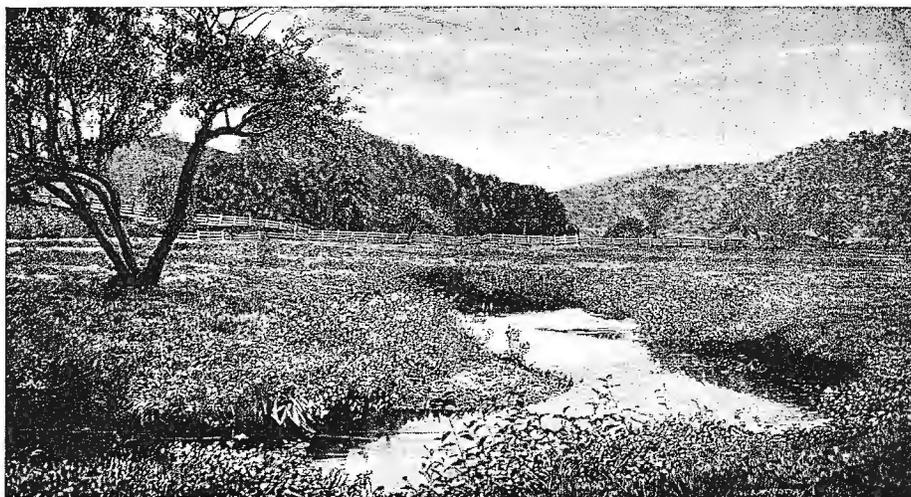
settled with able men as the Court may judge meete to give them the full liberty of a township according to lawe." Under these apparently humiliating conditions the General Court granted the Ipswich men "seven yeares freedom from all publick rates & taxes to the country, provided those inhabitants of Ipswich who intend to inhabit at Quabauge by midsummer come 12 month doe engage to give security to the above-said committee, within three months after the date hereof, that they will performe accordingly, that so others that would settle there may not be hindred." The Ipswich men were plainly not to be do-nothings, nor pensioners on the public bounty, nor absentee landlords or owners; actual settlement under the sharp spur of short shrift and rigid legislative supervision was the order of the day.

It appears that in the original selec-



THE OLD TAVERN.

tion of the site for the settlement, the hill known since about 1760 as Foster's Hill, the controlling consideration was the proximity of certain "wett meddow & meddowes," as they are styled in the Shattoockquis deed, where these lands are enumerated *ex industria*. The reason of this, if not apparent, is certain. The keeping of stock was a necessity of the settlers. Forage must be had, not only in summer, but in winter. No crops of any kind, no forage, could be relied upon the first season. The reliance for forage must be upon natural, indig-



THE SCENE OF CAPTAIN WHEELER'S SURPRISE, AUGUST 2, 1675.

enous growths. The tall wild grass of the wet meadows lying along the ponds and streams of the Quaboag district met the necessity; and thus Brookfield's initial site of settlement was fixed. Foster's Hill afforded not only near access to wet meadows, but the hill itself was of rich, heavy lands, well suited to maize and English grasses. Besides this, the level plain below and to the west was of light, sandy soil, suitable for all kinds of grains and vegetables. Accordingly, in the allotment of lands provided for in the legislative re-grant of 1667, the committee allotted to each family a



ISAIAH THOMAS.

committee for Brookfield, as well as its "Recorder"; but, sad to tell, his "First Book of Records of the Committee for Quaboag" was destroyed by fire in 1675, and only a few written traces of the first allotments and transfers are left. Enough remains to verify the above statements.



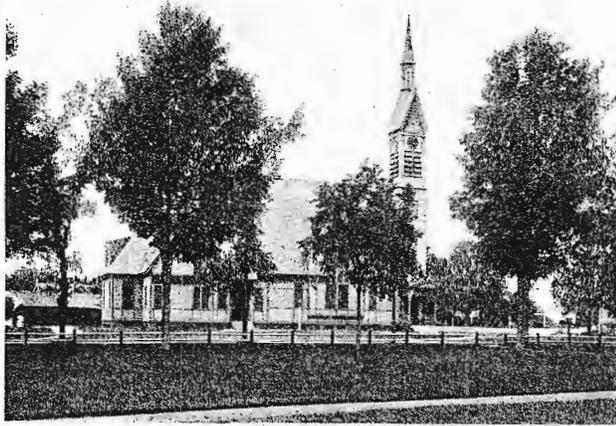
THE OLD BURYING GROUND AT WICK-ABOAG POND.

certain number of acres upon Foster's Hill as a "home-lot," a certain other number as "meadow-lot," and a third as "planting land." This was a prevailing custom in the Massachusetts first settlements. Captain John Pinchon (later Pynchon) was the first named of the Prudential Com-



RESTING PLACE OF THE SIX MEN KILLED BY THE INDIANS IN 1710.

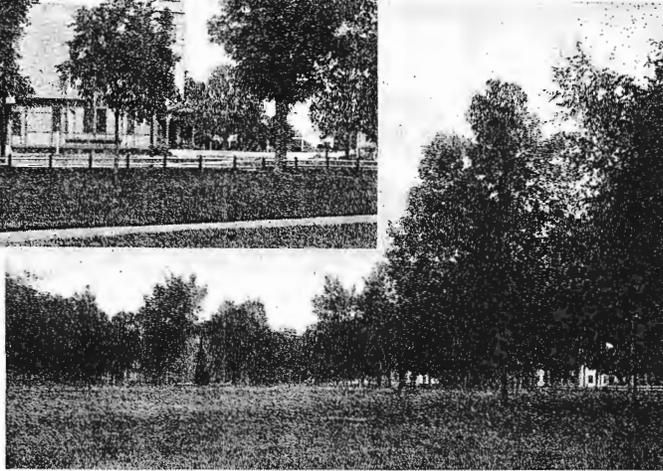
The Ipswich men, bold and steadfast as they were, submitted, so far as is known, with good grace to the centralizing and paternal policy of the



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

General Court in its re-grant. Complying with the conditions imposed, the settlers accepted their allotments and provided for the "able minister"; and though no minister was installed at once, a preacher was provided and paid. The lands allotted on Foster's Hill appear to have had an area of about five hundred acres, and each "home-lot" was about twenty acres, with the right to twenty acres of

"meadow" land, and eight or ten acres of land on "The Plain," where now stands the village of West Brookfield.



THE COMMON, WEST BROOKFIELD.

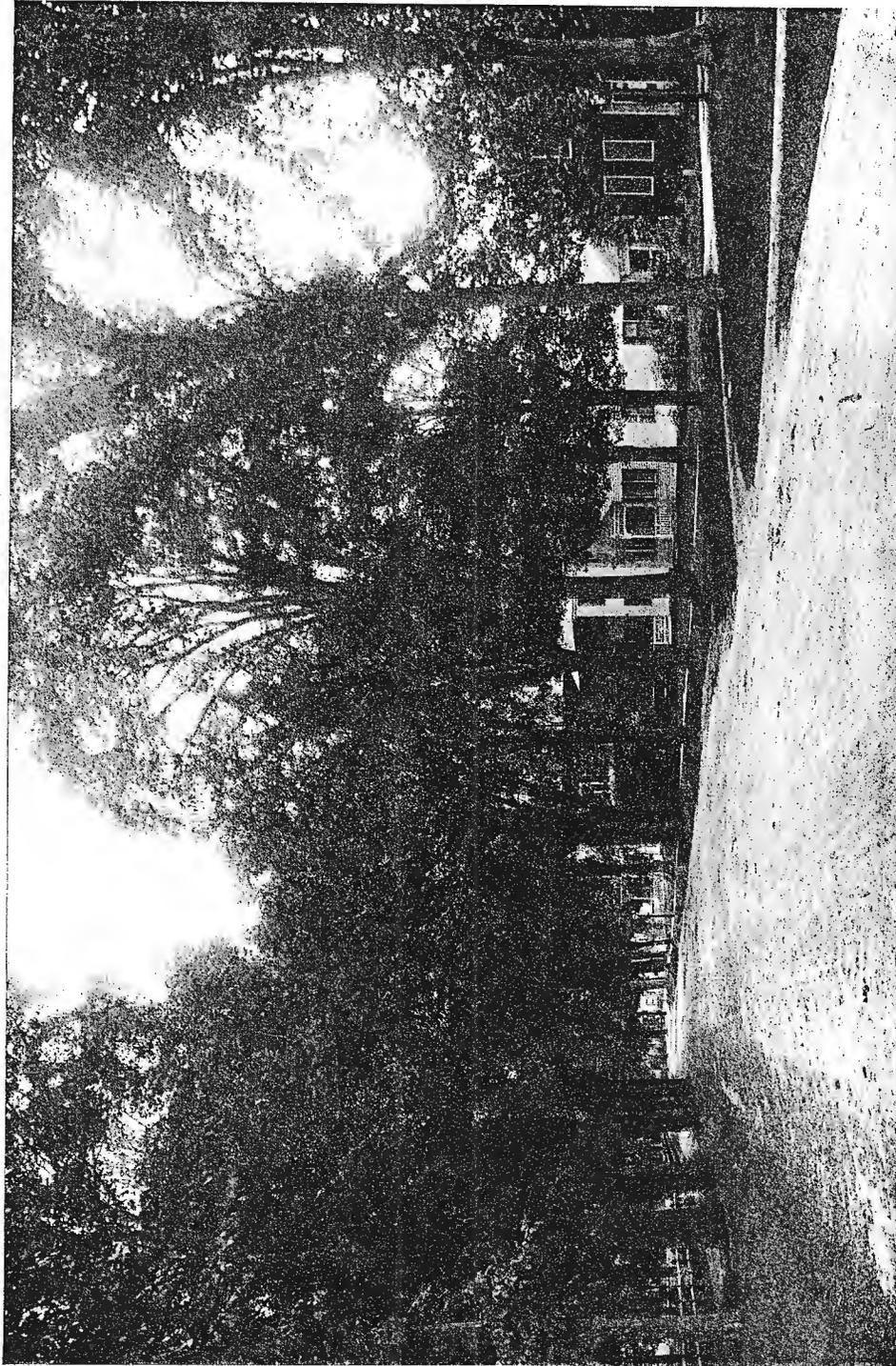
In 1670 Richard Coy and two others, all Ipswich men, petitioned the General Court to grant the settlers at Quaboag "the liberty of a township" and for an enlargement of their grant,—"for that we may go six miles every way from the center,"—a request which plainly was not granted,



AMASA WALKER.



HON. E. B. LYNDE.



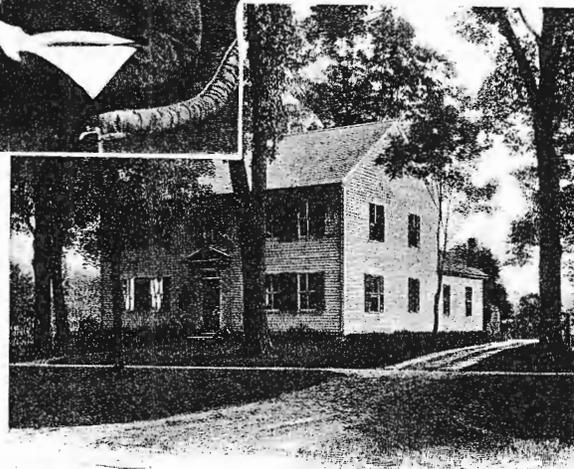
MAIN STREET, WEST BROOKFIELD.

though no record of the action of the General Court has been found. In October, 1673; a point of development was reached which must always interest the student of New England town history. the incorporation of the inhabitants of Quaboag as a town by act of the General Court. The petition for incorporation, long undiscovered, though eagerly sought after, has within recent years come to light, rescued, as has so often happened, from the contents of a literal junk shop. The petition, setting forth the disability of the town properly to carry on its public business, by reason of its subjection to the rule of the Prudential Committee and the distant residence of Major Pynchon, the Recorder (at Springfield, thirty miles west), prays for the "priviledge &



AUSTIN PHELPS.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF AUSTIN PHELPS.



libertyes of a tounship," and concludes thus:

"& yo<sup>r</sup> Petition<sup>s</sup> shall ever pray for yo<sup>r</sup> prosperity If Yo<sup>r</sup> Honno<sup>r</sup>s please let ye Name of ye Place be Brookfield."

Major Pynchon reinforced the petition by asking to be released from his office as "one of the Committee for Quabaug."

The original petition bears this indorsement:

"In ans<sup>r</sup> to ye peticon of the Inhabitants of Quabaug The Court Judgeth it meet to grant their request, i. e. the liberty and privilege of a Township and that the name thereof be Brookefeild, Provided they Divide not the whole land of the Township till they be fifty families, in the meane tyme that their Dividings one to another exceed not two hundred acres apeece to any present Inhabitant.  
originale, E. R. Se."

Here ends for Brookfield the term of tutelage; but the rigid, not to say hard, hand of the General Court was still upon her, as will be seen in the above legislative action. She had not yet reached real freedom, for her inhabitants and her authorities were still debarred the right of free allotment and transfer of lands. This servitude or restriction was plainly made to



ROBERT BATCHELLER.

President of the Quaboag Historical Society.



CHARLES MERRIAM LIBRARY AND TOWN HOUSE.

serve one supreme end, the actual settlement of the lands in small farms and the prevention of large aggregations of lands by single individuals. Actual ownership of lands by settlers, one and all, was aimed at, an object closely akin to that civil and social equality which the legislators of Massachusetts in 1673 sought in all ways to insure. This spirit and aim were kindred to, even part of, the conception formed by the men of that day of liberty itself, of democracy itself. These men are sometimes criti-



THE UPHAM MANSION, RESIDENCE OF THOMAS MOREY, ESQ.



JABEZ UPHAM.

cised, if not denounced, by historical writers of to-day, as theocrats. The charge need not be denied; but if they were theocrats, they were at the same time and equally democrats, in the highest sense of the word. They would tolerate no monopoly, no unlimited ownership, even of the vast, unappropriated domains on which they were then entering. All should be secured for all, or for all who wished to own land. In this there was no trace of socialism or communism; it was individualism, competition, pure and simple. Honored be their memories—thrice honored to-day, amidst the sentimental social-

istic schemes which would undo nearly all that was so nobly done in those "brave days of old!"

The town of Brookfield, in a corporate sense, dates from 1673, just two hundred and twenty-six years ago. I cannot pause, as I would, to discuss the significance of the word "town," in the New England sense. Thomas Jefferson saw it, Virginian as he was and staunch opponent of the New England party politics of his day; Samuel Adams saw it, and wielded its thunderbolts; Charles Francis Adams of our day has seen it, and in his latest and best contribution to historical thought and study he has put it in words as rich as the thought they embody. "What, then," he says, "are the contributions of Massachusetts towards the evolution of man? I hold them to be not certain settlements in the wilderness and a greater or less number of life and death struggles with savage aborigines, not conflicts on land and sea, not even the spirit of adventure and gain which Burke has immortalized in that well known passage which in literary splendor equals his vision of Bathurst; I pass over, too, the memorable agitation which culminated in that most dramatic episode, the Confederate Rebellion, our great Civil War; all these are mere episodes, the material out of which history is made tempting to the so-called general reader. The contributions of Massachusetts towards the evolution of mankind are, as I see it, of quite another character, and three in number,—or perhaps I might better say one



DWIGHT FOSTER.



ALFRED DWIGHT FOSTER.



DWIGHT FOSTER, 2ND.



ALFRED DWIGHT FOSTER, 2ND.



ROGER FOSTER.



BURNSIDE FOSTER.

only great contribution, with two corollaries therefrom. The one great contribution is the establishment of the principle of the equality of man before the law; and the institutions corollary thereto and essential to it as the practical working machinery, the



GEORGE MERRIAM.



CHARLES MERRIAM.



HOMER MERRIAM.

town meeting and the common school—the Citizens' Parliament and the People's University. Herein, as I take it, is the distinctive and concentrated essence of the history of Massachusetts."

Brookfield, as laid out and incorporated in 1673, contained an area of six miles square; but as laid out in 1701, and resurveyed by Timothy Dwight, and confirmed by Act of the General Court in 1719, it embraced eight miles square, one mile in width being added on each of four sides. In 1741-42, the southwesterly part, about twelve square miles, was set off, to form part of the town of Western, now Warren.

In 1751 a smaller tract was set off to the town of New Braintree; and in 1823 a still smaller tract was annexed to the town of Ware. In 1812, about one-third of the existing territory of Brookfield was set off and incorporated as the town of North Brookfield. In 1848, out of the remainder was incorporated the distinct town of West Brookfield, leaving the easterly part of the old township, containing a little over twenty-five square miles, to bear still the name of Brookfield alone. Foster's Hill, the site of the first settlement, and the historic spots connected with the early settlement of Brookfield, which remain to be noticed, are all in the limits of the present town of West Brookfield.



THE OLD MERRIAM PRINTING OFFICE.

This narrative has already gone too far without mention of two names, noble enough to make sacred any soil—John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, and Massasoit, the great and good Indian sachem. Of Eliot it is truth to say no saintlier figure has adorned mankind since the star of Bethlehem “came and stood over where the young child was.” Not only did Eliot receive from the General Court, in 1664, a grant of a plantation of four hundred acres at Quaboag, but in 1655 he had made a special exploration of the Quaboag district, and in the same year he purchased of two Indian owners one thousand acres of land, lying “southward of, and contiguous to, the



THE BIRTHPLACE OF LUCY STONE.

Township of Brookfield, alias Quaboag, at a place called Poohookappog Ponds,” this land lying mostly in the present town of Sturbridge, but partly in the town of Brimfield. The title to this land was afterwards confirmed by the General Court to the heirs of Eliot. Eliot’s purpose was to establish in the Quaboag territory a “praying town,” as at Natick and elsewhere. Although Eliot lived till 1690, the war with King Philip arising, he never succeeded in his hopes of missionary work at Quaboag.

The name of Massasoit may well be as-



LUCY STONE.

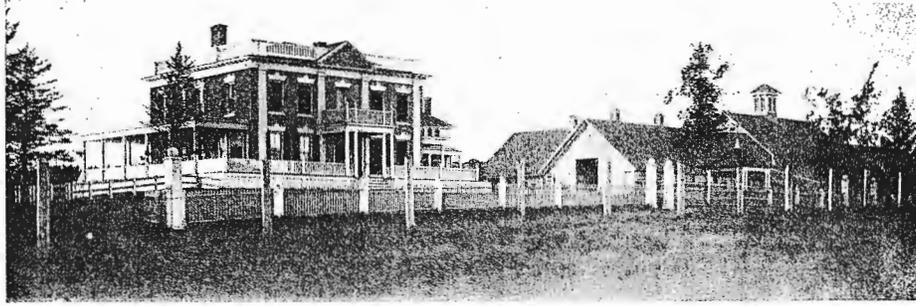
sociated with that of Eliot. Like Eliot, Massasoit was a man of peace. Dying in 1660, he left a record of absolute fidelity to his word and of patient, peaceful efforts for the welfare of his own race. With something apparently of forecast, he accepted the presence and progress of the white settlers with equanimity, if not pleasure. With real statesmanlike prudence, he maintained friendly relations with them for sixty years. His wisdom, his true and fruitful patriotism, have left a shining example, made more memorable by

the more Indian-like policy of his famous son, King Philip. Massasoit appears to have lived in the west central part of Worcester County in

1643-44. From then till 1657 he appears in records of land sales in Bristol, Plymouth and Worcester counties; but at that point he disappears, and is said to have retired in favor of his son Alexander (Wamsutta). At the hands of Brookfield, as of all right-minded men, he is entitled to a high meed of praise for noble qualities, not distinctively of the red Indian, but of high-minded men of all races.



REV. L. T. CHAMBERLAIN.



ELM KNOLL FARM, THE HOME OF EX-GOVERNOR CHAMBERLAIN.

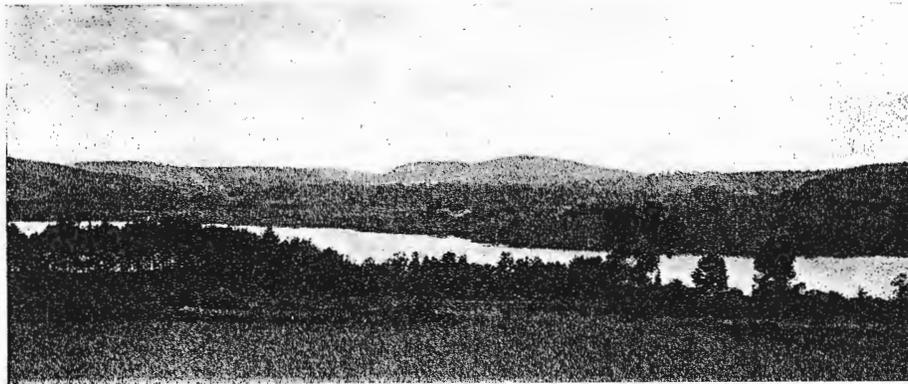
From the crest of Foster's Hill, on that July or August day, 1660, what sight met the eyes of the Ipswich men, John Warner, John Ayres, and William Prichard? We are apt to imagine a primeval forest. Such a scene would have been natural to the region "nere the Quaboag Ponds." But the fact was otherwise. For defence and for hunting, the hills which rose as ramparts about the streams, ponds and plains of Quaboag were denuded of all forest trees, and by annual burnings the Indians kept them bare: so that it is related that "cattle could be seen for a distance of three miles, and deer and wild tur-



HON. D. H. CHAMBERLAIN, 1875. ampton, settled in 1654, and Hadley, settled in 1659. It stood, too, on the line of two famous trails or "paths," known

keys a mile away." Primeval forests skirted only the Quaboag River and the streams and shores of the ponds.

The settlement begun at Brookfield in 1660 stood at a point nearly central between the town of Lancaster on the east, and the town of Springfield on the west. Springfield had been settled in 1636, and Lancaster in 1643, the former being thirty miles to the west, the latter forty miles to the east or northeast. The only other settlements in western Massachusetts in 1660 were North-



WICKABOAG POND FROM ELM KNOLL FARM.

respectively as the Nashaway (Indian for Lancaster) Path and the Bay Path. The Nashaway Path was "found out," as Governor Winthrop has it, in 1648. It diverged from the older and first "path," called the "Old Connecticut Path," in the town of Weston, and, passing through Princeton and Barre, in Worcester County, to Wickaboag Pond, in West Brookfield, thence ran to Springfield. The Bay Path was "laid out" in 1673. It

militia law, all between sixteen and sixty years of age were enrolled, and a town whose enrollment was less than sixty-four men was not entitled to a commissioned officer. The Brookfield militia, in 1675, fifteen years after the first settlement, were under the command of a sergeant, John Ayres, an original Ipswich grantee, as has been seen. The years 1674, 1675 do not seem to have brought new settlers in considerable



VILLAGE PARK, BROOKFIELD.

left the Old Connecticut Path at Wayland, then Framingham, passed through Worcester to Brookfield, and parted here into two branches, one leading to Springfield, the other to Hadley.

Thus placed and thus dowered by nature, Brookfield's first settlement was made. At the date of its incorporation, in 1673, it is not known how many the settlers numbered, but evidently, from the terms of the act of incorporation, much less than "forty or fifty families." Under the

numbers to Brookfield. The current of affairs ran smoothly, but not strongly.

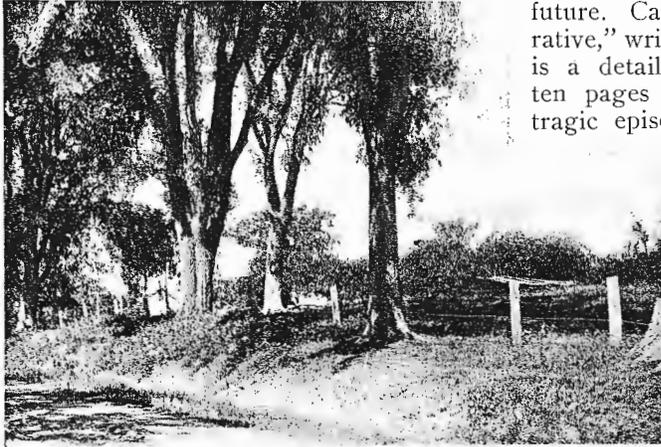
Now came, in 1675, an event famous in New England annals, but of the last dire import to Brookfield settlers,—King Philip's war. The causes of the war cannot be touched on here. Inspired by whatever motives, Philip opened the fray, June 24, 1675, at Swanzey, Rhode Island. Meantime, attentive to the signs of coming conflict, the Massachusetts authorities at Boston had, June 13,

1675, sent an embassy to Quaboag to learn the leanings of the Indians there. Again, June 25, Ephraim Curtis, an experienced scout and guide, was sent on a like errand. His report, entitled "Return and Relation,"

wait the proposed time, but sent for Captain Thomas Wheeler, of Concord, and "20 of his troop," who were forthwith commissioned, with Captain Edward Hutchinson and Ephraim Curtis, to demand explanations of the

Indians and pledges for the future. Captain Wheeler's "Narrative," written in the fall of 1675, is a detailed account, covering ten pages of fine print, of the tragic episode which closed the

first settlement of Brookfield. Told in briefest terms, the story relates Wheeler's arrival with his force at Brookfield, August 1; the despatch of four men to meet the Indians about ten miles from the Brookfield settle-

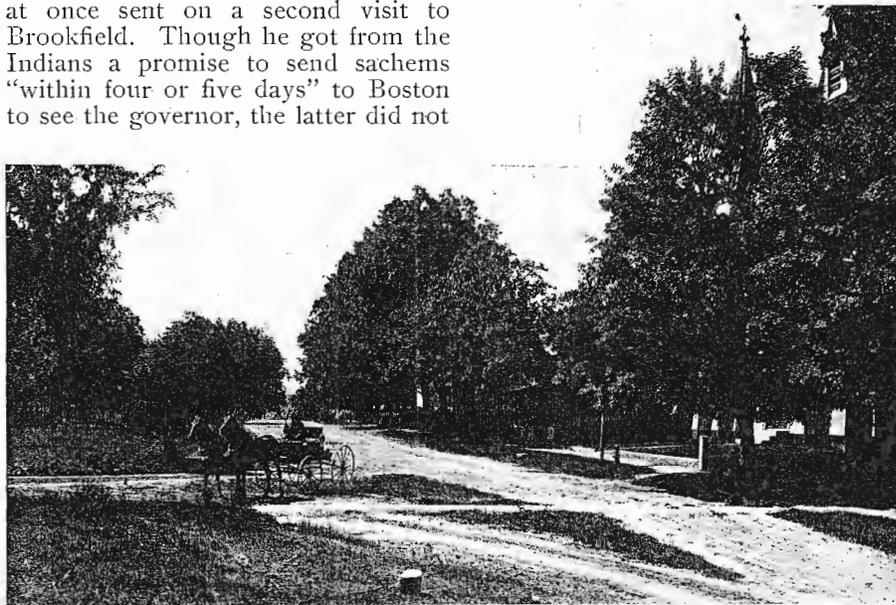


SITE OF THE WOOLCOTT HOME.

ment; the Indians' promise to meet them next day, in the morning, "upon a plain within three miles of Brookfield;" the going with the English

is our most vivid and accurate picture of the day and the situation. Curtis's report is dated July 16, 1675. It reported widespread disaffection and danger; and Curtis was at once sent on a second visit to Brookfield. Though he got from the Indians a promise to send sachems "within four or five days" to Boston to see the governor, the latter did not

ment; the Indians' promise to meet them next day, in the morning, "upon a plain within three miles of Brookfield;" the going with the English



IN OLD BROOKFIELD.

forces to the place of rendezvous, and the failure of the Indians to meet them; Captain Hutchinson's decision to march forward to seek the Indians; the march in single file through a narrow pass "between a very rocky hill on the right hand, and a thick swamp on the left," where they were assailed by the bullets of about two hundred Indians, hiding in the swamp and on the hill;\* the killing outright of eight men, including Sergeant Ayres, Sergeant Prichard, and Corporal Coy, three of the original Ipswich men, and the dangerous wounding of five others; the flight of the survivors to the settlement on Foster's Hill, reaching there late August 2; and the terrible siege of the one fortified house there, lasting day and night from the evening of the second to "an hour after dark," on the fourth of August, when Major Willard of Groton, with forty-six men, arrived and raised the siege. The incidents of the siege are hardly surpassed in terror and ferocity by any page of Indian warfare.

The effect of these disasters was the practical abandonment of the settlement. Philip, emboldened by the surprise and rout of Wheeler, hastened to Quaboag on August 5; but learning of Major Willard's arrival at Foster's Hill, he, with some forty men, joined the Nipmucks "in a swamp ten or twelve miles north of Brookfield, on the sixth of August." Most, if not all, of the discouraged and terrified Brookfield settlers left with Major Willard for Boston and vicinity, or fled to Springfield and Hadley.

The story of the war, from this point to August, 1676, is a touching and mournful tale of suffering, danger, burnings and death, throughout

\*The historical student will feel small surprise at learning that the scene of Wheeler's surprise and disaster is disputed. The point is stoutly mooted by intelligent persons familiar with the topography of the country in question and with the literature of the subject. The writer will only indicate here his decided present opinion, after very full personal investigation at first hand, that the spot is near the New Braintree and West Brookfield line, at the Pepper homestead.

central and western Massachusetts towns. August 12, 1676, Philip met his death near Pokanoket; and here ended the bloodiest passage in Brookfield's annals, as well as one of the most serious dangers of Anglo-Saxon progress in New England, if not in America; for we must never lose sight of the vast conflict, of which all our early wars, down to the Revolution, were mere features.

Eighty-three persons were crowded into that one fortified house on Foster's Hill, from August 2 to August 4. These comprised, according to Wheeler's Narrative, fifteen families. After the departure of Major Willard's force, about August 14, the town of Brookfield had no white settlers for ten years. Only one of the original families of settlers—Sergeant John Ayres's—ever returned to Brookfield; and it is stated that this family did not return to their former home on Foster's Hill. By an Act passed by the General Court, in June, 1679, the deserted towns of Massachusetts were formally disincorporated, and placed in charge of a Prudential Committee,—a condition which lasted thirty years. In 1686 the beginnings of a resettlement appear at Brookfield, the newcomers being largely from Marlborough on the east, and Suffield, Springfield and Hadley on the west. From 1686 to 1718, the period of resettlement, the wars of England and France entailed on New England a constant struggle with the Indians, instigated and armed by the French. Only two Brookfield incidents can be given here.

About noon of July 27, 1693, an Indian tragedy, known as the Woolcott Massacre, occurred at a well identified place on the present old road from Brookfield to East Brookfield. A band of some forty marauding Indians from the north lay in ambush for several days near the home of the Woolcott family and, suddenly surprising them, killed the wife and two children of Joseph Woolcott and several others and car-

ried away as captives the wife and children of Joseph Mason. The pursuit and recovery of the captives by Captain Thomas Colton and his band of troopers form one of the most thrilling narratives of Indian warfare.

On the morning of July 22, 1710, six men, Ebenezer Hayward, John White, Stephen Jennings, Benjamin Jennings, John Grosvenor and Joseph Kellogg, while mowing grass on the meadows opposite the present village of Brookfield, were surprised by the Indians and killed on the spot. All but one, John White, were young men without families, though belonging to Brookfield families. In the evening of the same day the settlers recovered the bodies, placed them in a boat, which they rowed down Quaboag River, full five miles, into Wickaboag Pond, in West Brookfield, where, on a height overlooking this beautiful pond, they buried the six bodies, at the southeastern angle of what was thereafter, till about 1820, the cemetery of West Brookfield. Here to-day rest, in unmarked but traceable graves, these victims of the Grand Alliance and the ambitions of Marlborough and Lewis of France.

"They laid them by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave."

It has been noted that none of the original first settlers returned to Brookfield after 1676, except the family of Sergeant Ayres, who located elsewhere than on Foster's Hill. The trend of population during and after the resettlement in 1686 was towards what was then known, and is still known, as "The Plain," west and at the foot of Foster's Hill and extending to the southern and eastern end of Wickaboag Pond. For ecclesiastical purposes the town, by 1755, was divided into three distinct parishes; and in that year each parish had a separate meeting-house, the First, or West Parish, at West Brookfield, building its house in 1755, the third in succession after the two which had stood on Foster's Hill. The site of

the present church building of the First Parish of West Brookfield is on the same spot, near the northwest corner of the Common.

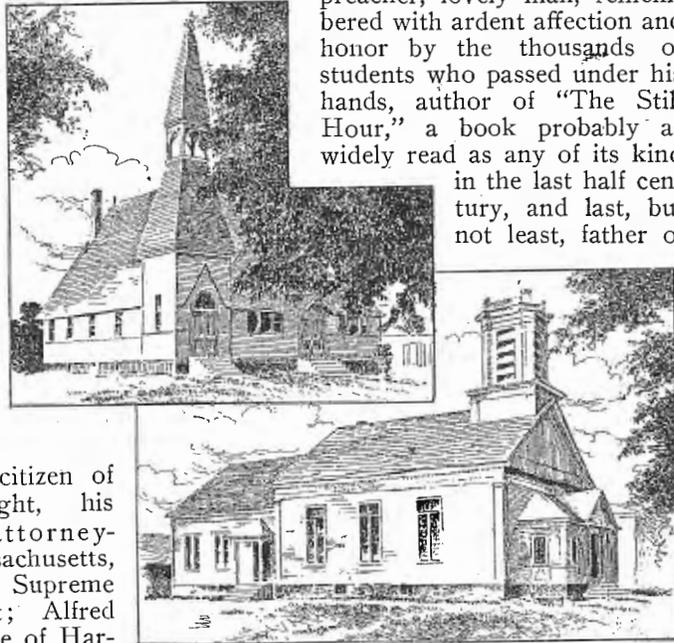
The separate history of West Brookfield may take its date as well from the building of its meeting-house, in 1755, as from any other point of time. It has already been said that the town of West Brookfield was incorporated in 1848. Since that date her history has been uneventful; but her share of the early history of Old Brookfield has been seen to be almost the whole; while it remains to notice briefly her honorable, if uneventful, history in other respects, and as a distinct town.

In 1733, Colonel Joseph Dwight, a conspicuous figure in the Louisburg expedition in 1745, as commander of the Ninth Massachusetts Regiment, graduate of Harvard, merchant at Springfield, later a lawyer, settled at West Brookfield, and soon after built his home on Foster's Hill, a house still standing and unchanged, save as time changes all things. He was thereafter eleven times a member of the Colonial Council, between 1733 and 1751, and its Speaker in 1748-49, judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Worcester County, brigadier general and second in command in the assault on Louisburg in 1745. His daughter was the wife of Jedediah Foster, a graduate of Harvard in 1744, who, born in Andover, Massachusetts, settled in West Brookfield in 1747, on the estate of his father-in-law, Colonel Dwight. Himself an eminent lawyer and delegate to the Provincial Congress of 1774, as well as a justice of the Common Pleas Court, his great service is believed to have been as a member of the Convention that framed the Constitution of Massachusetts in 1779. Here it is said his service was second to that of no other member or person, though John Adams asserted a claim to the almost sole authorship of the Constitution of 1779. As several of its provisions were adopted by the Federal

Constitutional Convention of 1787, it is claimed with perhaps pardonable hyperbole, and possibly with some historical accuracy, that important parts of the Massachusetts and the Federal constitutions were drawn in the little office, still standing, of Jedediah Foster on Foster's Hill. But his chief title to fame and honor is, after all, as the founder and progenitor of the Foster family, a family of remarkable ability through five successive generations:—Jedediah; Dwight, his son, member of Congress, chief justice of the Massachusetts Common Pleas Court, and United States senator, as well as member, upon his father's death, of the Constitutional Convention of 1779; Alfred Dwight, his grandson, an eminent and honored lawyer and citizen of Worcester; Dwight, his great-grandson, attorney-general of Massachusetts, and justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; Alfred Dwight, a graduate of Harvard, member of the Boston bar, and vice-president of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company; Roger, a graduate of Yale, member of the New York City bar, author of Commentaries on the United States Constitution, of a treatise on Federal Practice, and lecturer on Federal jurisprudence at the Law School of Yale University; Burnside, a physician of Minneapolis, professor of dermatology and lecturer on the history of medicine at the University of Minnesota; and Reginald, a member of the Boston bar, his great-great-grandson.

West Brookfield's honorable claims

to notice rest upon other substantial grounds. Here in the long line of "able ministers," from Rev. John Younglove, in 1660, to the present day, was settled as pastor, from 1816 to 1826, Rev. Eliakim Phelps, D. D., eminent as pastor and preacher; and here, January 7, 1820, was born his more famous son, Austin Phelps, D. D., LL. D., professor in Andover Theological Seminary from 1848 to 1879, profound theologian, noble preacher, lovely man, remembered with ardent affection and honor by the thousands of students who passed under his hands, author of "The Still Hour," a book probably as widely read as any of its kind in the last half century, and last, but not least, father of



CATHOLIC AND METHODIST CHURCHES,  
WEST BROOKFIELD.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward.

Here, too, from 1820 to 1823, in the old brick store, standing till 1859, on the site of the present town house, Amasa Walker began his mercantile career, which closed in 1840, giving him an ample competence for a future life of scholarly and scientific study and production. His life after 1840 covered a professorship of political economy in Oberlin College, from 1844 to 1867; a lectureship on the same topic at Amherst College, from 1854 to 1872; and the publication of his best work, "The Science of

Wealth," a book which, though like "The Wealth of Nations," a pioneer book of its class in the United States, is still hardly less valuable to the general reader, if not to the student and teacher, than when it first appeared. But his best praise is that almost alone, of all the business men of his time and environment, he withstood the seductions of great wealth which lay within his easy reach and retired instantly and finally, on securing a competence, to the harder work and the largely unpaid labor of an economist and publicist of high rank. Not to the Brookfields alone ought he to be a shining example, but to this entire generation of money-getting, money-craving Americans. Mr. Walker was a native of North Brookfield, where his entire youth was passed, and where he constantly resided from 1846 to his death, in 1875. He was the father of General Francis Amasa Walker, soldier and civilian of high fame, whose death at the early age of fifty-seven removed one of the most brilliant and useful men of his generation.

The fame of General Rufus Putnam, justly called the Father of Ohio, because of his service as head of the Ohio Company which, in 1787-88, began, under the protection of the great Ordinance of 1787, the settlement of Ohio and gradually of our great West, belongs especially to the town of Rutland, lying sixteen miles northeast of West Brookfield; but Brookfield has a valid right to count him among her jewels, for in 1754, when Putnam was sixteen years of age, he was bound an apprentice in the millwright trade, to his brother-in-law, Daniel Matthews, who was then operating a fulling mill and corn mill on Great, or Sucker, Brook, above Wait's Corner, towards New Brain-tree. Here he remained for three years. In 1757 he was one of the company of a hundred men who marched from Brookfield and took part in the campaign of 1758 in the Mohawk Valley.

To West Brookfield came from Worcester, in 1798, the brothers, Dan and Ebenezer Merriam, printers, who maintained here, from 1798 to 1823, a partnership in a printing and publishing house, a business continued by Ebenezer after the death of his brother, till 1858. In this printing office were trained hundreds of compositors and were published hundreds of thousands of volumes of standard works. Better than all else, here were born to Dan Merriam a family of children rarely equalled in excellence of character, public spirit and business capacity,—George, Charles and Homer, publishers, as G. and C. Merriam of Springfield, of Webster's Dictionaries, and Lewis, an eminent printer and citizen of Greenfield, Massachusetts. Of the sister, Miss Mary Merriam, it is pleasant to the writer to speak from a boy's recollection as an accomplished teacher and a cultivated and lovely woman; and of the third generation, George Spring Merriam, of Springfield, a fine scholar, a courageous and wise citizen, a charming and able writer, whose pen is always at the service of good causes and against bad.

Isaiah Thomas, a name as justly dear to Worcester County as Benjamin Franklin's to America, was the predecessor here of the Merriam Brothers. Here he published the *Massachusetts Spy*, so well known everywhere and still published at Worcester. He was first president of the American Antiquarian Society, of Worcester, and—among his best titles to remembrance—grandfather of Honorable Benjamin F. Thomas, the brilliant orator and lawyer of Worcester and Boston, the noble citizen and ornament of both cities.

In the town of Brookfield was born, in 1741, Joshua Upham, whose varied career of eminence reads like romance. A graduate of Harvard in 1763, he followed the profession of law, with high success, first in New York, later in Boston. He next became engaged in textile manufactur-

ing, and is said to have built and operated for a time the first woollen mill in this country. The mill built by him in 1768 stood on Mason's Brook, an affluent of Quaboag River, within the limits of the present town of Brookfield. Afterwards he was a pioneer in the manufacture of salt, and introduced its manufacture from salt water in several of the Atlantic cities. He later removed to the province of New Brunswick, where he was, in 1796, made a judge of the Supreme Court, and died in London in 1808, while engaged there in matters of public concern for all the provinces of British North America.

Here, too, in the village of West Brookfield, was born and lived from 1764 to 1811, Jabez Upham, lawyer and jurist, who represented the Worcester district in Congress from 1798 to 1804. The fine old colonial mansion built by him in 1790 is still standing, in perfect preservation, on the main street of the village, the property now of Thomas Morey, Esq., and is an almost unequalled specimen of the generous, substantial and beautiful architecture of a hundred years ago. Jabez Upham has the distinction also of being the maternal grandfather of Mr. Justice Horace Gray, formerly a judge of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, later its chief justice, and now a justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The name of Pynchon has already appeared in the narrative of Brookfield's progress to the rank of an incorporated town. It is a name of genuine and high note in Massachusetts and Connecticut history, and especially in all that relates to the first settlement of western Massachusetts from Springfield to the Vermont line. Hardly a family among all the founders of New England is, on all accounts, entitled to a higher place than belongs to the Pynchon family, both in its elder and later generations. West Brookfield's share in this fame comes thus: William Pynchon,

founder of the American family, born in Springfield, Essex, England, came to New England with Governor Winthrop in 1630. He had already been made by Charles I one of the patentees under the charter of the colony of Massachusetts Bay. He was at first one of the founders of Dedham, Massachusetts, but fearing a congestion of population in that colony, the General Court in 1634 gave leave to such as might desire it "to remove their habitations to some convenient place." In 1636, under this authority, William Pynchon, with his family and a few attendants, settled at Agawam, on the Connecticut River. The settlement was then thought to be within the limits of the Connecticut colony, and William Pynchon acted as a member of the Legislature at Hartford till it appeared that Agawam was covered by the Massachusetts charter. The name, Agawam, was soon changed to Springfield, the English birthplace of Mr. Pynchon. Thenceforward Mr. Pynchon was, unfortunately for him as for New England, involved in the barren but furious quarrels which so greatly disfigure the early annals of New England Calvinism; though to his honor let it be remembered, he invariably took the liberal or progressive side. In consequence he returned to England in 1652, leaving his children here. With an ample fortune and in the full peace and communion of the English church, he lived for ten years, near Windsor on the Thames, dying there in 1662. Having left England thirty years before in quest of civil and religious freedom, he found the latter, after a trial of New England, only in Old England,—a bit of the irony of history which we do well to recall. His son, John, has already been mentioned as the chairman and "recorder" of the Prudential Committee for Brookfield. Colonel Joseph Dwight, already named, married the daughter of John Pynchon in 1728, and was the father of the wife of Jedediah Foster, already named.

Thus West Brookfield came to share in the Pynchon fame, and thus the blood of the Foster family was enriched by its fusion with the rare patrician strain of the Pynchons.

On the northern declivity of Coy's Hill, on the highway formerly the principal thoroughfare from West Brookfield to Warren and Ware, stands the house in which was born, August 13, 1818, Lucy Stone, known throughout this country and throughout the civilized world as upon the whole perhaps the ablest public speaker of her day among women, and the foremost advocate of the cause of woman suffrage. Her descent was from strong and fearless stock, her great-grandfather, Francis Stone, Sr., being killed while serving under General Wolfe, the hero of Quebec; her grandfather, Francis Stone, Jr., being a leading citizen for fifty years of New Braintree, captain of a Brookfield company in the Fourth Worcester Regiment, serving in the War of the Revolution in 1776, and also captain of a New Braintree company in 1778. He was also an active participant in Shays's Rebellion, one historian remarking that "it was well understood that Captain Francis Stone really furnished the brains of the movement." Shays was himself for a time a resident of Brookfield, where in 1772 he married Abigail Gilbert, a native and resident of the town; and Captain Stone had personal acquaintance with him. Francis Stone, father of Lucy Stone, lived upon his farm on Coy's Hill, where he reared a large family,—Rev. William Bowman Stone, pastor for some years of the church at Gardner, Massachusetts, and later residing for many years on the Stone homestead, an eminent and honored citizen of the town, being one of the sons. Almost unaided, Lucy made her way through Oberlin College, where she was graduated in 1847. She at once entered upon her life work by delivering her first woman suffrage lecture in her brother's church at Gardner. Thence-

forth her great talents were given to that cause chiefly; and it has been recorded of her by one most competent to judge, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton: "Lucy Stone first really stirred the nation's heart on the subject of woman's wrongs." It is a pleasure to add that the Stone homestead, improved and enlarged, is now owned and occupied by the niece of Lucy Stone, Mrs. Phebe Stone Beeman, wife of Rev. L. L. Beeman, late presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Vermont.

Peregrine White, as is well known, was the first white child born in New England. Born on board the *Mayflower*, while she rode at anchor in the Cape Cod harbor, November 20, 1620, he died at Marshfield, Mass., July 22, 1704, leaving a son, Daniel, whose son, John, known in the local record both as sergeant and captain, was one of the victims of the Indian massacre at Brookfield in 1710, which has already been recounted. His brother Cornelius, born in Concord, Massachusetts, February 11, 1711, returned to Brookfield, settling and living till his death on a farm in the western part of West Brookfield, on the Ware road and near the Warren line. Here to-day on the same farm live Peregrine's direct descendants, the present head of the family being Alfred Cornelius White, of the seventh generation from Peregrine, who died just 195 years ago.

Prominent by ability, public service and general culture, among the present residents of the town, is Honorable Ebenezer Bissell Lynde, a native of the town, born August 31, 1823, son of Lieutenant Nathaniel Lynde, who, as an officer of the Brookfield Light Infantry Company, marched to Boston in September, 1814, under the orders of Colonel Salem Towne of Charlton, and in answer to the call of Governor Caleb Strong. Mr. Lynde has led the life of a successful, progressive farmer and large landowner; has represented the district including his town in the

state Senate; and has never failed to cultivate habits of research and study of public questions. The tariff and taxation have especially interested him, and on these topics he is a high authority. In local historical lore he is easily first of all residents of the Brookfields, and in well earned and dignified retirement finds his chief delight in holding his historical stores at the service of all. Added to what may be termed local-historical, Mr. Lynde has a fund of personal recollections and information covering the last century of the town's annals and residents which is truly remarkable.

West Brookfield is thickly studded with historic spots. In addition to those already named, there is the site of Gilbert's Fort, at the north end of the village, built in 1688, at, and even before, the breaking out of King William's war, as a protection against the Indians of Wigwam Hill. North of this site stands Warding Rock, surmounted from 1688 to 1748 by a tower for outlook against the Indians. Whitefield's Rock, from the top of which George Whitefield in 1741 preached to an audience which no church could hold and said to number five thousand, stands on Foster's Hill, near the public highway, in an open field. The sites of the first and second meeting-house and of the fortified house, besieged, as has been told, in 1675, of the well at which Wilson was shot during the siege, as well as a massive boulder, known as Indian Rock, from behind which the Indians fired during the siege, are all identified and well known on Foster's Hill, on and near the present highway.

Quite recently, at a point in a cattle pasture, about one hundred rods north of the site of the two first meeting-houses, but in full view of it, some faint traces of what was probably the first burial place of the settlement have been discovered by the fine observation or instinct of antiquarian research. The spot is now crossed by a stone wall, built apparently in some part of the gravestones, but it

bears features which seem to fix it, as has been said, as the first cemetery of Brookfield's pioneer dead.

Near the centre of the village, directly on the main street, stands an old-fashioned tavern, which is well entitled to notice as a landmark. Built in 1760 by David Hitchcock, the donor to the First Parish of the Common, it was occupied by him as a hostelry till 1811, and since then has continuously been used as such, and is now the only inn in the town. Here, October 23, 1789, President Washington, with his staff and escort, was dined, when passing from New York to Boston in the first year of his presidency; here, too, in 1799, President John Adams was lodged one night, on his way to his home in Quincy, in the second year of his presidency; and in it Lafayette was entertained in 1825.

Four of the sites above mentioned—the site of the first and second meeting-houses, of the fortified house besieged in 1675, of the well where Wilson was shot, and of Fort Gilbert—have been recently marked, under the auspices and with the funds of the Quaboag Historical Society, of which Robert Batcheller, Esq., of North Brookfield, is president, with substantial polished and lettered granite monuments, and Whitefield's Rock and Indian Rock have been lettered,—a work which the society proposes to carry on till all really historical spots in the Quaboag district are carefully identified and durably marked.

The town, and especially the village, of West Brookfield is justly famed for its quiet, natural beauty, its fine location, the excellence of its highways, as well as the scrupulous neatness of its village lawns and residences. It lies in Worcester County, the central and largest county of Massachusetts, sixty-nine miles west from Boston, near to the centre of an east and west line of the state, and of a north and south line. The Boston and Albany Railroad passes through

it, the elevation of the railway station in West Brookfield being about four hundred feet above sea level. Coy's Hill, on the west, rises to the height of about seven hundred feet, and Foster's Hill, on the east, about six hundred feet. The river, which joins the principal of the "Quoboag Ponds"—Quaboag and Wickaboag—called Quaboag River, has a fall in six miles of only three feet, a fact which readily explains the "wett meddowes" which first determined the site of the Brookfield settlement. To the west of the village lies Wickaboag Pond, stretching to the northwest nearly a mile, its shores covered with forest growths and cultivated lands, its waters abounding in fine varieties of fish. Round about the village as a centre, like ramparts, sweep successive hills, which give its horizon an unusual amplitude,—Coy's Hill on the west, a noble pasturage, bare of forests as when the Ipswich men first saw it; Mark's Mountain, in Warren, at the southwest, covered to its summit by rocky woodlands; Long Hill at the south and southwest, dotted with farms and forests; Foster's Hill on the east, crowned by the rich acres of the Foster farm; and Wigwam Hill on the north and northeast, a beautiful stretch of native and irrepressible woodland. All these fill out a scene which may well have stirred the hearts of the Ipswich prospectors of 1660, as it ought surely to stir the hearts of those who have entered into the fruits of their perilous and abounding labors.

"The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and  
go.

"But in my spirit will I dwell  
And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
For thro' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing, Farewell."

NOTE—This valuable article lacks something of completeness. The writer has naturally omitted mention of himself and his family. Unless this is in some way supplied, the article will seem inadequate to all who know the town. In the early part of this century, Eli Chamberlain, a lieutenant in the army of the War of 1812, with his wife, Achsah (Forbes) Chamberlain, moved to West Brookfield from Westborough, Mass. They settled on a small farm a short mile northwest of the village, on the southerly slope of a hill overlooking the great pond. There they lived an honorable, toilsome, frugal life, and reared a family of nine strong children, all of whom became men and women notable for high character and intellectual vigor. Three of the sons, by independent exertions, obtained a liberal education. Joshua M. was graduated at Dartmouth in 1855, became a Congregational clergyman, and was for many years connected with Iowa College, as trustee, treasurer, and librarian. Daniel Henry was graduated at Yale in 1862, with high rank in classical and general scholarship, and the highest in composition and oratory, winning the DeForest medal; and his subsequent career, especially his service in South Carolina after the war, is known to the country. Leander Trowbridge, the youngest of the family, was graduated at Yale in 1863, being both valedictorian and DeForest medal man of his class. He became a clergyman, first of the Congregational and then of the Presbyterian church, had important pastorates in Chicago, Norwich and Brooklyn, and is now living in New York, devoted to administrative work in connection with various religious, philanthropic, and scientific organizations.

The farm has remained in the family, an older son carrying it on until three years ago, when the writer of the article on West Brookfield purchased it, being obliged, on account of impaired health caused primarily by over-strenuous labors while in public life, to give up his very successful law business in New York City and court restoration by out-of-door life and work. He reconstructed the stone farmhouse, making it a beautiful modern mansion, erected new barns, and entered with intelligence and zest upon the business of scientific farming, with the aim to make a farm of forty-five acres support forty-five cows, as many swine, and all the other stock necessary for carrying on its work.

The coming of Governor Chamberlain into this community, in all the affairs of which he takes an active interest, being neighbor and citizen in the fullest meaning of these high words, has been a great accession to the town and to the whole region thereabout. His superior culture, his abundant knowledge, his large experience of men and affairs, his eminent skill in the management of land and cattle, are by example and counsel an uplifting influence of which all who will may avail themselves. He is not merely an honorary member, but an earnest working member of nearly every local organization which has beneficent aims, and he dispenses an elegant and generous hospitality. As his home and farm are chief ornaments of their kind in all that region, so he is himself a chief personage in ability, usefulness, and gracious accomplishments, an exemplar of the highest type of rural New England citizenship.—Walter Allen.