

HISTORY
OF
DANBURY, CONN.

1684-1896

FROM NOTES AND MANUSCRIPT

LEFT BY

JAMES MONTGOMERY BAILEY

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BY

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PREFACE.

THIS first written history of Danbury, begun several years since by James Montgomery Bailey, but left unfinished by his too early death, has been placed, by the Relief Society of Danbury, in my hands for completion.

The broken threads that fell from lifeless fingers have been reverently gathered up and woven into the web of this history, in the hope that the sons and daughters of Danbury, wherever they are scattered, may find some pleasing words of the old home, its early settlers, and its citizens of to-day. Besides the names of those mentioned in the various chapters to whom thanks are due, we are indebted for courtesies to Mr. Hoadley, State Librarian of Connecticut; Mr. Dean, Librarian of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Boston; Mr. Putnam, Librarian of the Boston Public Library; Hon. George White, of Wellesley, Mass.; Mr. Mills, of Fairfield; Mr. Seymour, of Bridgeport, and Mr. Hamilton, of Meriden.

Among the residents of Danbury thanks are especially due to Colonel Samuel Gregory, General James Ryder, J. W. Bacon, Harvey Osborn, Dr. D. C. Brown, James S. Taylor, Stebbins Baxter, **Luman Hubbell**, E. A. Houseman, George F. Ives, Messrs. Hopkins and Hodges, of the Probate Office; Mr. Ising, of the Record Office, and Mr. Turner, Selectman.

Rev. H. L. Slack and Deacon Andrew Benedict, of Bethel, have been most helpful, and to Messrs. Israel Wilson and George Fairchild we owe thanks.

only daughter Mary, now wife of Jonathan Pierson, of Derby; sons Elias, John, Henry. Brother Henry Bates, of Wallingford, and Lieutenant Ebenezer Hickock, of Danbury, executors."

The will of Stephen Curtiss, of Danbury, was drawn January 23d, 1740-41, and probated April 7th, 1741. Wife Abigail; "only son Stephen a double portion;" remainder divided between two daughters. "Brother Francis Knap and Joshua Knap executors."

Isaac Wildman, of Danbury. Will dated February 23d, 1742-43. Wife Elizabeth; "daughter Sarah, now ye wife of John Towner, of Oxford Parish. Daughter Olive under 18. Sons David, John, and Benjamin. Wife Elizabeth and my brother-in-law, Benj. Bouton, to be exr." Father Abraham Wildman, deceased, brother John Wildman, deceased, had legacies from estate. Will probated June 20th, 1743.

Nathaniel Stevens. Will drawn February 1st, 1742-43, probated July 5th, 1743. Wife Ruth; sons Nathaniel, Nathan, Abraham, Timothy; daughter Hannah Stevens. "Granddaughter Elizabeth Stevens £20 if she lives with us until 18." Youngest sons John and Ezra.

Ensign Nathaniel Stevens's estate was inventoried July 24th-26th, 1743.

Josiah Nickolls, of Danbury, died in 1743. Mehitable Nickolls swears to inventory, January, 1744-45.

February 12th, 1755, Seth Kellog, a minor of Danbury, chose Ezra Kellog, of same place, as guardian.

In 1760 Rev. William, Moses and Martha Gaylord witnessed the will of Joseph Atherton, of Danbury.

On October 15th, 1704, Benjamin Scrivener died at Danbury, but belonged to Norwalk. He left a widow, four sons, and a daughter. Scrivener was probably the original of Scribner of to-day.

Besides the names already mentioned in these abstracts of wills, we find, as administrators, guardians, and witnesses, the following belonging to Danbury: Platt, Raimond, Copp, **Hubbelt**, Jackson, Haris, Hayes, Bennit, and Waller.

EARLY WARS.

In Queen Anne's War, 1702, and in the call for more troops to attack Quebec in 1709, Connecticut promptly filled her quota,

he was discharged, but died soon after from the effect of wounds received in battle.

In 1756 "John Wood was captain and John Benedict, third, second lieutenant of the Eighth Company, Fourth Regiment," of the forces raised against Crown Point.

In 1758 Joseph Hoit was captain-lieutenant, Ezra Stephens second lieutenant, and Noble Benedict ensign of the First Company of the Fourth Regiment.

In May, 1758, the General Assembly appointed John Wood, Jr. (son of Captain John Wood), of Danbury, second surgeon's mate in the Fourth Regiment. The Misses Comstock, of this city, have in their possession a powder-horn which bears the following in pen and ink: A sketch of a full-rigged ship, coat of arms, with lion and unicorn, and the motto, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" It bears also this inscription: "The Privateer Snow Royal hester Doer John Wood Surgeons mate to the 4th Regiment, *Ætatis Sux* 23. Made at Lake George, August the 15th 1758.

" ' Subdue old Gallick haughty looks
Then beat your spears to pruning-hooks.' "

In March, 1759, the following were the officers of the Fifth Company, Third Regiment, **Samuel Hubbell, captain**; Noble Benedict, first lieutenant; Nathan Gregory, ensign.

In 1760 **Samuel Hubbell** was captain; Noble Benedict, first lieutenant; and Lemuel Benedict, second lieutenant, of the Seventh Company, Third Regiment.

In 1764 Joseph Hoit was captain and Noble Benedict first lieutenant of the Fourth Company, — Regiment, "in the forces now ordered to be raised against the Indian nations who have been guilty of perfidious and cruel massacres of the English."

The lists of soldiers in these old wars give the names but not places of residence, so that our certain information in regard to our fighting ancestors is meagre; but our faith in them leads us to believe that all who were needed went with promptness and courage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MAIN STREET IN 1815-20.

It is likely that seventy years ago the view of Danbury, with few exceptions, was the same as at the beginning of the century. Main Street was then as now the principal thoroughfare. Running from it on the east was North, White, and Liberty streets; on the west, Franklin, Elm, West, and Wooster streets; South Street at the foot. To this day we have not a single street crossing Main Street, although it runs the length of the village. The other streets were River and Town Hill. Deer Hill Avenue was then but a lane, chiefly used for the transfer of farm products.

MAIN STREET—EAST SIDE.

The first house, on coming into Main Street at the north, on the east side of the street, was occupied by Aaron Gunn. It was washed away by the Kohanza disaster in 1809. Mr. Gunn had two sons who were drafted in the War of 1812, and entered the army at New London.

The next house stood on the corner of North Street. It was occupied by Benjamin Barnum, and was a large, roomy building. Some years ago it was moved north on Main Street, and still stands there.

On the opposite corner lived **Noah Hubbell**. Between there and what is now Patch Street there was but one house. It was occupied by William Patch, Jr.

Next to him was a small tenement owned by Mary Daniels, then occupied by a family named Barnum.

John Gregory's house came next. None of his descendants are living here.

Where Wildman's lane or court now is were two houses, since gone. One of these was occupied by Benjamin Cozier, and the other by William Patch, Sen.;

Hartford, where, after years of failing health, he died on March 17th, 1895, and was buried in Wooster Cemetery, in Danbury, beside his wife, whose tombstone bears this touching inscription, "Good-bye till morning." For him the morning has dawned.

Ten months after the resignation of Mr. Stone, Rev. Samuel G. Coe became pastor, his installation taking place December 4th, 1850. During the pastorate of Mr. Coe the present church edifice was built. As our ancestors had outgrown their early log-houses, so the church had outgrown its old meeting-house. The cost of this building with the land was about \$22,000. It was dedicated on Wednesday, April 28th, 1858.

Mr. Coe was pastor during the greater part of the Civil War, and his sermons were helps to the loyal and patriotic. In June, 1864, feeling the need of rest from the care of a parish, Mr. Coe resigned his office as pastor of this church. During the years of his stay the membership increased from 216 to 356.

After leaving Danbury, Mr. Coe supplied the pulpit at Ridgefield for four years, and preached for six months in the Second Presbyterian church of Cleveland, O. He died in New Haven, December 7th, 1869. His memory is fragrant in the hearts of many to whom he ministered.

Rev. A. L. Frisbie, of Ansonia, became pastor in July, 1865. During his ministry improvements were made upon the parsonage, and largely through his efforts a new organ was secured at a cost of \$3500. Among the fruits of his ministry are some of the best Christian workers in the church. Mr. Frisbie resigned on September 11th, 1871, and removed to Des Moines, Ia., becoming pastor of the Congregational church in that city. At the time of his departure the membership of the church was 377.

After a vacancy of two years Rev. Joel J. Hough began his labors as pastor, October 12th, 1873. During his pastorate the main audience-room, Sunday-school, and social rooms were improved and refurnished at considerable expense, and the church was in a flourishing condition in all departments of its work. Mr. Hough was dismissed on December 19th, 1878.

Rev. James W. Hubbell was installed as pastor on May 20th, 1879. During his stay the church interior was renewed and a chapel built at an expense of \$17,000. Some of the largest accessions to the membership of the church were made during the pastorates of Mr. Frisbie and **Mr. Hubbell**.

for social gatherings, fairs, suppers, and any work or pleasure that may justly accord with the life of a vigorous Christian church. The entire building is heated by three furnaces, and lighted with gas and electricity.

The Building Committee are **Luman L. Hubbell**, Cola S. Peck, Miles D. Washburn, Martin W. Foster, Joseph T. Bates, and the Rev. James Vincent, pastor.

On Sunday, September 10th, 1893, with Rev. J. Smith Dodge, D.D., as the preacher, this church was dedicated to the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of the human race, the genuine life of the Christlike religion, and a confident assurance of its ultimate and complete triumph in the bringing of all mankind to the love of righteousness, thus saving them from ignorance and loss, sin and sorrow, and making the life that now is and that which is to come a blessing to the whole world.

With the completion of the new church the opportunity offered itself and the necessary machinery was at hand for what may be called a new era for Universalism in Danbury.

That opportunity has not been left unused, and the machinery of the new structure has been made operative in developing the social, doctrinal, and devotional life and influence of a church thus dedicated to the worship of God and the welfare of man. As the foundation of its faith is the Fatherhood of God, so the method of its work is home and freedom, and its aim the cultivation of the thoughtful and reverent Christian mind.

Various departments are organized for special lines of effort, all to concentrate upon the task of making life sacred, helpful, and glad. Among these are the Society, the Church, the Sunday-school, the Ladies' Social, the Women's Mission Circle, the Young People's Christian Union, and the Thursday Night Conference.

One and a half years have passed since the beginning of this new era. There have been no spasms of religious feeling, no sensational methods, but steady, persistent work, the results of which appear in the fact that the Sunday-school has doubled its numbers, the ladies' membership multiplied by three, and the congregation quadrupled in average attendance. The other interests of the church have also increased in value and efficiency, and the outlook for the years to come is full of promise for Universalism and the Universalists of Danbury.

men, including officers, and No. 1, of sixteen men, including officers."

At a meeting of the warden and burgesses, held July 13th, 1829, the following were appointed officers of Fire Company No. 2: E. Moss White, Foreman; William Patch, Assistant Foreman; Eli T. Hoyt, Secretary.

The following were the firemen of said company: John Foot, Daniel Anderson, Samuel Barber, Rory Starr, Thomas M. Gregory, Alfred Benedict, John F. Baird, Starr Nichols, Edward Tweedy, Enoch Moore, Sands Perkins, Edward Holmes, Underhill Nelson, Stephen T. Gregory, David P. Abbott, Samuel J. Downing, Henry C. Lobdell.

The officers of Company No. 1 were: Elias S. Sanford, Foreman; John Fry, Assistant Foreman; Ephraim Gregory, Secretary.

The firemen of this company were: Samuel Stebbins, Moses Yale, Lucius H. Boughton, Thomas F. Whittlesey, Timothy B. Hickock, Alfred Gregory, Samuel C. Wildman, Darius Starr, Nathaniel Wood, Gilead G. Taylor, Hubbell Wildman, Frederick S. Wildman, Benjamin Smith.

August 22d, 1829, the following persons were added to No. 2: Samuel G. Boughton, Henry Benedict, Darius Dikeman, Zar Stone, Russell Dobbs.

August 27th Charles A. Jump was added to No. 1, and September 3d Emery Shadbolt to No. 2.

On June 17th, 1850, the warden and burgesses were directed to procure the necessary ladders, hooks, and running apparatus for a hook and ladder company, also to erect or procure a building for the same. The company to consist of not more than twelve persons of eighteen years of age or over.

The following officers were elected on July 9th, 1850: Samuel G. Raymond, Foreman; Orlando W. Jennings, Assistant Foreman; S. C. Wildman, Treasurer; D. B. Booth, Secretary.

Between 1850 and 1888 the following persons served as officers:

Foremen: W. H. Raymond, Laman L. Hubbell, W. A. Anson, J. T. Bartley, Howard P. Stevens, Robert J. Brown, William Rowley, W. F. Hoyt, John W. Newbury.

Assistant Foremen: D. B. Booth, N. L. White, Samuel C. Wildman, O. R. Jenkins, W. K. Patch, Edward K. Patch, F. P. Ferry, M. W. Scott, George Oakley, Jesse Day, J. F. Bartley,

Treasurer), A. W. Parmalee, George R. Morgan, C. S. Morgan, Lawrence W. Smith, F. D. Fry, John J. Brady, Ed. Acker, H. D. Lounsbury, A. Hurgeon, C. T. Ansno, Ed. Smith, Charles Harris, C. C. Hoyt, A. W. Parmalee.

Treasurers : A. N. Stebbins, Thomas F. Fay, Augustus Parsons, E. Schoen, Eli Bailey, Howard M. Ives, William Coleman, John Small, F. D. Fry, Morris Meyer, C. S. Andrews.

Officers of the Kohanza Hose Company, No. 2, in 1862 : Charles Lamb, Foreman ; G. M. Southmayd, Assistant Foreman ; F. S. Wildman, Secretary ; John Tweedy, Treasurer.

Since then the following have served as officers :

Foremen : Frederick S. Wildman, C. H. Crofut, Charles H. Hoyt, John A. Green, Harris L. Crofut, J. Amsbury, Edward Lobdell, G. E. Lobdell, J. H. Elwood.

Assistant Foremen : C. H. Crofut, Harris L. Crofut, Charles H. Lamb, Stephen L. Bedient, Samuel C. Holley, C. H. Hoyt, Matthew Murdock, M. L. Dean, J. W. English, B. L. Taylor.

Secretaries : H. L. Crofut, A. N. Wildman, J. Amsbury, George W. Barnum, M. F. Kelly, Augustus Ising, P. S. Norman.

Treasurers : J. Amsbury, George W. Barnum, H. L. Crofut, Lester Comes, C. L. Taylor, O. Meade.

Chief Engineers since 1852 : E. R. Whittlesey, W. F. Hoyt, David D. Wildman, John A. Green, Alson J. Smith, Jesse D. Stevens, W. W. Raymond, Dwight E. Rogers, W. W. Bedient, Thomas A. Lounsbury, Luman L. Hubbell, M. W. Scott, Curtis C. Hoyt, P. J. Fisher, Howard P. Stevens, John W. Newbury, John H. Elwood, Morris Meyers.

First Assistant Engineers : D. B. Booth, Henry T. Dann, N. L. White, Samuel C. Wildman, Charles W. Lamb, Stephen S. Bedient, Morris T. Jennings, Samuel C. Holley, Abner Graham, Amos N. Stebbins, Dwight E. Rogers, Charles Crofut, Harris L. Crofut, John A. Green, George C. Comes, Edward K. Patch, F. P. Ferry, M. W. Scott, George Oakley, Jesse Day, Howard P. Stevens, R. H. Brady, P. H. Simmons, Richard Fitzsimmons, John R. Spain, Thomas A. Lounsbury.

Second Assistant Engineers since 1887 : John E. Tivenin, T. F. Fay, D. E. Loewe, Jesse Day, William Hart, Frank P. Ferry, Robert Brady, P. H. Simmons, F. C. Olmstead, F. E. Gallagher, George Stott.

The Independent Hose Company, located at the north end of

Also Silas Hickok and his sons, Andrew and George ; our president of to-day, Ethel T. Farnam ; George and John Clapp, Hiram Weed, Harry Preston, and Benjamin Durant.

“ In Grassy Plain lived Ebenezer Taylor, called ‘ Uncle Neze,’ father of Joseph, Lewis, Eleazer, Czar, and several daughters, one of whom married my old friend, Almon Price. In the same neighborhood lived Amos Wheeler with his mother and sisters, Jerusha and Mary ; also Zadock Starr, Jabez and Eliakim Trowbridge, Hugh, Matthew, and George Starr, and Levi Benedict. My uncle, Deacon Peter Barnum, resided near by, also David P. Nichols with his mother and sister. In Old Lane, between Grassy Plain and Bethel, lived Deacon Daniel Hickok, a very old deaf man, who for several years before his death sat in the pulpit in order to hear the services. **Noah Hubbell** lived in Old Lane, and Jabez and Samuel Trowbridge lived at the south end of Grassy Plain Street.

“ In Plumtrees I remember Uncle Thad. Williams, the father of Jenks, Thad., Isaac, Ira, John, Whipple, Welcome, and some daughters. North of Mr. Thad. Williams lived Pliny Barnum, who with his family removed to Ohio in 1818. Their travelling two-horse wagon, covered with a brown linen top, drove into Bethel village, where all their neighbors and friends met them to say good-by. Men and women cried like children at the thought that this family was to make a journey of from four to six weeks, exposed to the perils of the great Western wilderness. Near Pliny Barnum lived Asel and Ira Barnum, and my grandfather, Ephraim Barnum, who was a captain in the Revolutionary War. My uncles, Noah S. Barnum, Samuel and Abel Barnum, Jonathan Couch, John Benedict, Benjamin Hoyt, with son of same name, Gilead Ambler, Joseph Hitchcock, Benajah Benedict, Thaddeus Starr, the father of Hannah and Rebecca. The latter married Timothy Hollister. John Dibble and my cousin, Ephraim Barnum, lived in the same locality.

“ The calling over of these names, though scores of former friends are omitted, reminds me of the good woman who was piously reading from the New Testament to her dying husband, to comfort him in his last moments. The clergyman entered the sick-room and heard her devoutly reading from the first chapter of Matthew, ‘ Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas,’ etc. I hope the genealogy of our Bethelites,