

Our Yesteryears

Jones



*A Narrative History Of The Town Of
White Creek, Washington County, New York
With Illustrations*

Pen Sketches By J. Geoffrey Jones

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New Foreword

I started on researching White Creek history in 2015, and found my mother's copy of "Our Yesteryears" was extremely useful but getting rather dog eared and beginning to fall apart, plus finding things in it was difficult. Copies are also getting scarce and hard to find, and a number of people have expressed interest in obtaining one. After researching the copyright and finding it was in the public domain, I decided to run it through my OCR program, correct it manually, and publish it as an ebook. Of course, the photos won't be of as good value as I don't have the originals to scan in most cases.

In early 2016 I was appointed the official Town of White Creek historian, which gave me some added impetus to get going and finish it up.

As I have been going through it, and doing my own researches, I have found some things that need changing or adding to, but this edition will be an attempt to duplicate the original book as accurately as possible. I have corrected a few typos, but tried not to change too much. The format has been changed somewhat from the original, which was formatted like a newspaper by a newspaper, with sections jumping around others. I put the basic 12 chapters first, then other sections by themselves, and miscellaneous illustrations at the end. Later on I may use it to produce a derivative work using newer information not originally nor easily available to Paul Jones in the age before the Internet.

Ted Rice, 2016

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This book was written in 1959 and published a year or two

later without a copyright notice, so according to Cornell it immediately entered the public domain. Someone involved with the project mentioned to me that "no one ever even thought about copyright". The artist (son of the author) revised the book years later and published a few copies, but this is the original public domain version, not the revised one, so it is still public domain.

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OUR YESTERYEARS

A NARRATIVE HISTORY of WHITE CREEK, NEW YORK

By Paul Jones

ILLUSTRATED

FOREWORD

That the history of the Town of White Creek would one day be set down in permanent form has been the cherished wish of many of our townspeople. During preparations for the 1959 Year of History Observance, the idea crystallized and took shape, and the writer was approached by a committee from the Adult Fellowship Group of the Jermain Methodist Church, with the proposal that if he would compile and write such a history, they

would publish it.

To local people and those intimately connected with White Creek, this narrative will be read both subjectively and objectively-first, for its word-picture of a place and a people they hold dear; second for its appraisal of their community and its role in the nation's destiny.

To outsiders it presents an objective study of a small community in a larger scheme of things-and shows that no place, however quiet and unpretentious it may appear on the surface to be, is ever without its dramatic side when viewed critically.

Our Yesteryears

Jones



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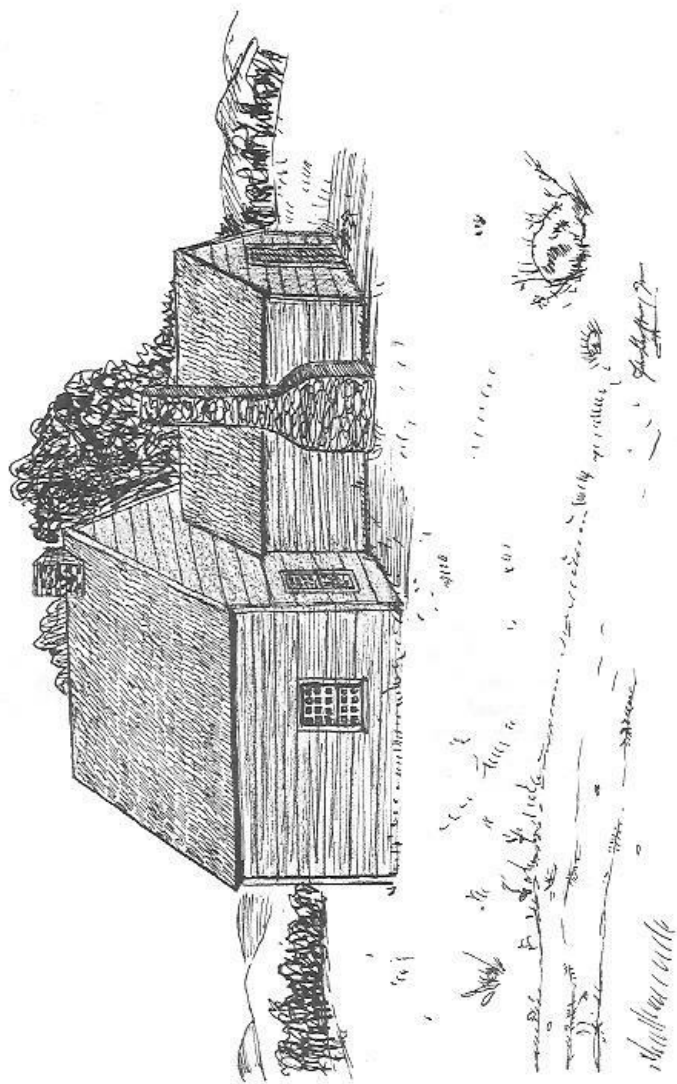
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VanCorlaer-Lake Trading Post as it looked in 1711 and as it is shown in replica on Bennington Battlefield Bronze Relief Map. (Sketch by Jones).



CHAPTER I

THE INDIANS OF WHITE CREEK

The history of the Indian people, our antecedents here and the original occupants of the land where we have our homes today, makes for enchanting reading and fascinating study. And for some of us, at least, they were not antecedents merely but ancestors as well. Will Rogers was proud of his Cherokee blood, and the author and historian of the Hoosick Valley, Grace (Greylock) Niles, boasted her Abenakis inheritance.

The growing popularity of both old and new books on Indian lore goes to show that these picturesque people have at last won the respect and even the affection of mankind.

White Creek is not without its romantic associations of the Indian period. Our native Indians were the Hoosacs, sometimes called the Horicons, a sub-tribe of the Mahicans immortalized in the writings of James Fenimore Cooper. The Hoosacs and Horicons are known by various other names as; the Sequens, Coosacs, Soquonsacs, and Hoosoquons. The name "Horicon" is doubtless a corruption of the latter.

Dr. Cadwallader Colden, Colonial Governor of New York and an Indian authority, refers to the Mahicans as the "River Indians" whom he says the French called the "Mouregans". The Hoosacs or Horicons they called the "Houregans".

It would be presumptuous to say that the Hoosac Indians were the first human inhabitants of White Creek or the Hoosick Valley. Other and unrelated tribes and nations doubtless preceded them here in prehistoric times, and in the still more dim and distant past the Esquimaux dwelt in this locality as recent archaeological discoveries have revealed. The record of the Hoosacs and Mahicans does, however, provide a starting point for our history, they being the first human beings of whom we have any substantial body of information and fact of which to write.

That the Indian comes from one of the older races of mankind is not disputed, but his origin remains shrouded in mystery. Theories along this line have one after another been discarded including the notion that he was descended from the so-called "lost tribes of Israel".

The Indians are "ganowanians" or "bow and arrow men". As some men gravitated to agriculture, others to maritime pursuits and trade and the building of towns and cities, the Redman found only the life of the huntsman rewarding. Without the chase he withered and died. His hunting ground with its deep forests so familiar to his fleet feet, the rippling streams and placid pools made for his chief delight and gave him his concept of a life everlasting.

"From exile to my kingdom I return
To winds and waters; counsellors of mine;
My palace — yonder lake where sunsets burn,
My palace roof — the blue against yon pine".

--anon

The Mahicansacs and Hoosacs, tribe and sub-tribe, were one of the most conspicuous groups of the great Algonquin family which occupied the most of Canada and nearly all that portion of the present United States east of the Mississippi and north of the thirty-seventh parallel of latitude; A principal village of the Mahicans was in Rensselaer County opposite the present city of Albany, and the chief village of the Hoosacs was within the present town of White Creek along the Hoosick River on the meadow-land above the Owl Kill. Here was located the castle of the chief, Soqon, the wise, the "Owl" and Orator of his tribe.

In the center of that great expanse of territory occupied by the Algonquins, and cut off from contact with other nations were the fierce Iroquois. The French called them the Five Nations, and they held the territory now the State of New York along the Finger Lakes, between these lakes and Lake Ontario and east to within a few miles of the Hudson.

The English called them the Confederates, the Dutch, the Maquaas, and they called themselves the "Agansschioni", which

meant "United People". The Five Nations were composed of the Mohawks, on the east; next west, the Oneidas; then the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas.

The Mohawks and the Mahican-Hoosacs were hereditary enemies. When Atotarho XII was king of the Five Nations about fifty years before Columbus' voyage to America, the Mohawks were at war with our Mohican-Hoosacs.

The Indians are said to have had a passion for war and took to their warpaths with a sense of satisfaction excelled only by their love of their hunting ground. Their wars were not for conquest so much as for vengeance. To forgive an injury was counted womanly and weak; to seek revenge a manly and noble virtue. Their military strategy turned on the elements of surprise and swift attack.

Warfare in this manner between the Mohawks and Mohican-Hoosacs was carried on continually. It was maintained by small expeditions of first one foe and then the other, employing the sudden, covert attack to inflict swift injury to the enemy and then as suddenly to retreat. The attacks were made at such irregular intervals that their freedom from hostilities was often of lengthy duration.

The Indian race was identified by certain strong traits of character. These were a sense of personal independence, willfulness of action, freedom from restraint. The idea of a civil authority over his own personal passions, will and purposes was intolerable. The chief's authority extended no further than to be first in battle, foremost in danger, and most cunning. In the high councils only matters of expediency were resolved, and the high

sachem never undertook to impose his will on a dissenting minority.

In peacetime the Indian's nature shone to better advantage, but even in his best estate he was an unsocial, solitary spirit. He sat apart, a man of the woods, communing with himself and the genius of solitude. The forest was better than his wigwam, It was a way of life that tended to degrade womankind and imposed upon them a life of drudgery to offset that reckless freedom of the men.

The Hoosac's abode was a wigwam, a dozen or more poles set up in a circle brought together and secured at the top and covered with skins of animals. Coarsely woven mats covered the floor. Sometimes a rude hut substituted for the wigwam and these were made of hickory saplings formed into arches and secured with withes, then covered with large squares of bark. Their utensils were surprisingly well made considering their want of appropriate tools. Arrow making has become a lost art. Their earthen pots, carrying the impress of the mats used to shape them, were of pleasing design.

The warriors trusty bow and arrow was formidable indeed; but his tomahawk was indispensable.

Clothing was designed to cover the body only below the waist and was so styled for men and women. The women's skirts and the men's leggings were of deerskin or elk's hide, and their moccasins were fashioned of the same material. The men painted their bodies in a grotesque and fantastic manner especially when on the warpath and hung about them trophies such as scalps of enemies, fangs of rattlesnakes, etc.

Their writing was meager; stick men and rude drawings symbolic of ideas they sought to convey, cut in rock and etched upon tree trunks. Their language was sparing but of great force, and they expressed themselves in a round about fashion, as for example, to deceive was "to talk with a split tongue."

In his personal appearance the Hoosac was taller than Europeans, but lighter in build. Eyes were very dark but not prominent. The face was well proportioned with high cheek bones and a generous nose.

Their religion was based on the belief in the great spirit, "The Manitou," which ruled the elements and was everywhere present, which favored the obedient and punished the wrongdoer. They believed in a host of lesser spirits, some good, some bad, some that brought peace, sunshine and plenty, others that worked famine, pestilence and grief.

The Medicine Man or prophet, they thought, could establish contact with the spirit world by fasting and prayer and could in this way inform them of impending events. These rites and ceremonies were carried on with great solemnity and sincerity.

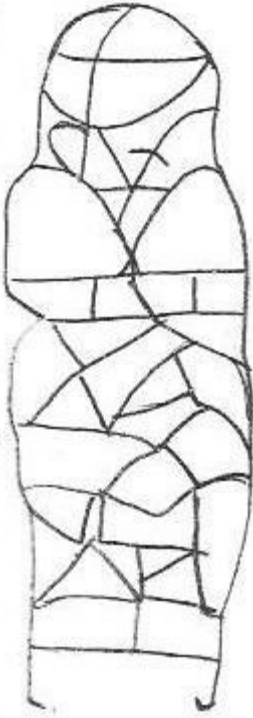
The Owl, or Orator's sacrificial altar to the Great Manitou and Hobbamocko, the God of Thunder, was located just below the junction of the Owl Kill with the Hoosick River.

The Hoosac Kitsmah (great powwow priest), used the quartz crystal rock found so abundantly in the Taconic hills, to carve symbols of the Wakon-bird (Spirit-dove) to appease the thunder god. The Hoosacs and Mahicansacs called the translucent quartz the "rocks of light," which the eye of morning reflects from the

hilltops and to them they became the Manitou Aseniah or spirit stones.

In every burial mound were included some personal effects of the deceased and ceremonial pieces to see the departed comfortably along his journey to the "Happy Hunting Ground." In the tombs of the Kitsmac, powwow priest, and as an indication of his holy office, have been found Wakon-bird stones, quartz crystals carved in the form of a dove, the Hoosac symbol of peace.

Symbols of the Wakon-bird were incorporated in each gate that formerly swung from the "Arch of Truth," the entrance to the old Knickerbocker Mansion at Old Schaghticoke. A symbol of the Wakon-bird may be seen today where it is carved on the huge beam over the fireplace in the old VanCorlaer and Lake Trading Post (1711) in White Creek, New York. A reproduction of the symbol is shown below.



Wakon-bird
symbol

Sites of several planting grounds have been fixed in the White Creek area including Chief Soquon's corn field of a dozen acres at the junction of the Owl Kill and the Hoosick on lands belonging to the Moses family. On the edge of this field and up against the present Troy and Hoosick road was the site of Chief Soquon's castle and it was here that the ceremonial fires were kept continuously burning. It is not uncommon today to dislodge quantities of charcoal and embers when working the land near this site.

The pumpkin and bean fields and the village of Mawwehu, the

Pequot, were situated along the Pompanac Creek, a tributary of North White Creek.

Ceremonial items, hammers, and celts, tomahawks and arrowheads and implements of agriculture used by the Hoosac Indians have been found in the Hoosick Valley of White Creek, The Vandenburg, Harrington, and Moses families in particular have made excellent collections of these valuable relics.

The Hoosacs and Mahicans belonged to the great Abenaki Democracy of New York and New England, the most important confederation of the Algonquin people. The Abenakis capital was located at Chescodonta, the Indian village opposite Albany. In 1609 they moved their capital to Schodac.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF WHITE CREEK VILLAGE ITS EARLY HISTORY

On April 22, 1795 a meeting was held at Jacques Johnson's house to discuss the building of a house of worship in White Creek village. The old log church west of the village had been destroyed in the war, and Elder Waite's group had rebuilt at Waite's Corners. This left the village without a Church group other than the Quakers.

The meeting decided to build a church in the village near John Allen's-to buy land for that purpose from him-and to proceed as

soon as a thousand dollars was subscribed.

Building began in 1796 and the "Union House" of worship as it became know was complete by 1807.

Elder Waite had withdrawn from the Shaftsbury Baptist Association. A new Baptist society, organized in White Creek village, united with it. This was the first group to use the new building. Until 1800 the minister was Israel Craw, later Joseph Craw, and many others. It was then called "Cambridge Church" and the thirtieth anniversary of the Shaftsbury Association met with this church in 1810. They recorded: "This was the first session ever held in the beautiful village of Little White Creek (as then called), and there was much of interest on the occasion to all present."

The Methodist Church organized in 1831, but did not become a strong church until after the Civil War. They used the "Union House" along with the Baptists. In 1855 the building was remodeled by the Baptists, with the Methodists providing the bell and the citizens in general assisting. The early Methodist ministers were: John Sawyer, John Weaver, Henry Smith, E.B. Hubbard, Wright Hazen, A.A. Farr, Lorenzo Sherwood, William Henry and A.Jones.

CHAPTER II

VISITORS FROM A FOREIGN SHORE

In the springtime of the year 1540, the Indians of the Mahican villages along the course of that waterway later called the Hudson, witnessed a remarkable sight. Strange craft, unlike anything these natives had before seen, were discovered ascending the river. From the decks of these vessels rose tall spars to which were rigged great squares of canvas that filled to the wind and as if by some magic, though no one was seen to paddle, these boats were being gently wafted upstream. They were so much larger and unlike the Indian canoes, this, coupled with the fact that the crew aboard wore a strange and monstrous garb, was a spectacle the Indians viewed with awe.

The visitors meant no harm; they were as friendly as the natives were curious, and in no time at all, as they went ashore in this village and that, any fear that either might have entertained toward the other was quickly dispelled. The visitors had come to trade with them and had all manner of trinkets and trifles as well as blankets, hose and items of clothing, which they were willing to exchange for beaver skins, pompions, grapes and other possessions of the natives.

At the head of this trading expedition was Captain Jean Fonteneau, known more familiarly as Allefonsce of Saintonge, chief pilot to Francis I, and perhaps the most experienced navigator of his time, The French people were leaders in

Maritime enterprise, and the Province of Saintonge and the Port of Rochelle were points of origin for many of the earliest voyages of exploration and discovery to the new world as well as countless expeditions for trade, hunting, and fishing. Indeed there is good reason to believe that the French were familiar with the area around Newfoundland before the time of Columbus. In the year 1507 a French voyager counted not less than 17 fishing vessels in the Roads of St. Johns.

Captain Fonteneau and his Saintonge crew became the first Europeans of record to set foot on the soil of the Town of White Creek. Captain Fonteneau and his companions were so taken with our locality, and such conviviality made cordial good feeling developed between the Saintonge crew and the Mahican-Hoosacs that the visitors remained throughout two summers. The French Kings were zealots in the work of spreading Catholicism among the heathen people and Francis I, the reigning monarch at this time, was bent on carrying Christian Doctrine to the far corners of the earth.

In accordance with these aims several Roman Catholic Priests accompanied Allefonsce on his voyage, and the men of the flowing black robe and the cross gave Christian names to the various localities where they set up mission schools and chapels for the Indians. At Green Island, opposite Troy, where they labored with the Mahican warriors of Chief Maquon, they christened the locality Saint Ange, (place of the Holy Angel) and also to honor their native province. The meadow-land along the Hoosick between the Owl Kill and the Walloomsac, partly in the Town of White Creek, partly in the town of Hoosick, was christened St. Croix, and here both a chapel and a mission school were erected. On maps of New France (c. 1577) and on

Champlain's map these sites are clearly marked.

"At this time" writes Miss Niles, the Hoosick historian and author, "Partridge berries and straw berries grew along the edges of the fields, and grapevines embowered the oak and the pine groves. The Owl, Captain Soquon of the Hoosac Bears, and the Hero, Captain Maquon of the Mahicansac Wolves, feasted on bear, wolf, venison, corncake, squash or pumpkin, known as vine apple, and succotash. They quenched their thirst with water from the hillside fountains and knew nothing of grapejuice or crabapple brandy or the lightning weapons of the sky until the arrival of the French, English and Dutch Christians in 1609."

The following excerpt from the writings of John Fonteneau, which have been translated from the old French by Mrs. Paul Jones of White Creek, reveals the high opinion he held of the natural advantages of our White Creek locality and the fine prospects he entertained for French interests here.

" I went in at a bay between Norumbega and Florida unto the 42nd degree, and I have not searched the end thereof and I know not whether it pass through. And in all this country there are oaks, and bortz, ashes, elmes, maples, pines, spruce trees, wild grapes and there have even been found red plums. And very fair corn groweth there, and peason grow of their own accord, gooseberries and strawberries. And there are goodly forests wherein men may hunt; and there are great store of stags, deer, porespiks, and the savages say there be unicorns. Fowl there are in abundance as bustards, wild geese, cranes, and turtle doves, ravens, crows, and many other birds. All things which are sown there are not past two or three days in coming up out of the ground. I have told in one ear of corn an hundred and twenty

grains, like the corn of France, and if the country were tilled and replenished with people it would be as hot as Rochelle. And the reason why it snoweth oftener here than in France is because it rains there less often; for the rain is converted into snows. All things above mentioned are true. (signed)Jean Alphonse.”

(Ed. Note) Champlain's map of New France of 1628 and the maps before the year 1600 show the 42nd degree of latitude running directly through the Hoosick Valley. Actually White Creek lies between the 42nd and 43rd degree but we must remember that this was before the invention of the sextant, and calculations were made by use of the astrolabe a less accurate measuring instrument.

It was a sad occasion when the Hoosacs and Mahicans bade farewell to their guests in the autumn of the year 1541. But the memory of that visit was long cherished in the hearts of the simple forest folk and became the "Golden Legend of the Hoosacs". The names the Saintonge Priests gave to the two mission sites in Green Island and White Creek have survived unto this day in the altered spellings of "Nastagione" and "Sancroick".

Jean Fonteneau was not only Chief Pilot to Francis 1 but later acted as Chief Pilot for Count Roberval's expedition to colonize the region of the Saint Lawrence which Jacques Cartier had explored in 1534.

Fonteneau did considerable writing on the subject of navigation and his life as a trader. Several charts prepared by him and a cosmography now in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, have been handed down. Perhaps his work of the most far

reaching significance and greatest impact upon the destiny of mankind was a small volume "The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Jean Alesfonsce, Sainctongois, Containing the Rules and Instructions for Safe Navigation also the Way to Conduct Oneself toward the Savages as towards Ones Own Countrymen, the Kind of Merchandise Which is Found in Abundance and Procured for a Small Amount for Trading with the Savages So as to Make the Greatest Profit."

Beyond peradventure of a doubt, it was this small booklet, falling into the hands of enterprising Dutch and English Merchant Men, that led to the formation of the great trading companies of the early seventeenth century and culminated in the period of exploration and settlement spear-headed by Hendrick Hudson's voyage of 1609.

After a seafaring life of forty one years, Allefonsce was killed towards the year 1557 in a naval battle with the Spaniards near Rochelle. Thus ended the life of a man whose vision penetrated the future, who, unlike his contemporaries, saw the promise of the New World in a fresh light: "a country to be tilled and replenished with people" a region rich in opportunities for trade and commerce. While others sought vainly for a " passage through" or plundered the natives of what gold and riches they had, Fonteneau spoke boldly of trade and colonization. He stirred the imaginations of men of enterprise who moved swiftly to implement his suggestions. In truth, as this man perished in 1557, generations then unborn were to benefit from his having lived, as the events of the following century were to prove.

CHAPTER III

THE DUTCH SETTLE THE HOOSICK VALLEY OF WHITE CREEK

In 1603 Samuel Champlain sailed from France to become Governor General of Canada, and the first permanent settlement of what had long been called New France was underway.

In 1609 Sir Henry Hudson, an Englishman in the service of the Netherlands, explored the river since named for him, the same river referred to us as having been visited by traders and missionaries from France three-quarters of a century earlier.

The expeditions of Samuel Champlain and Henry Hudson relate to White Creek history in that the former was responsible for the erection of the Province of Lake Champlain which threw White Creek on the frontier of New France and involved our earliest settlers in a lengthy period of border warfare in their bloody dispute with the Dutch and English over territorial claims, and the latter was responsible for the creation of the Colony of New Netherlands, the peopling of which culminated in the eventual settlement of the Hoosick valley of White Creek.

Hudson called the waterway he explored the “River of the Mountains”. It was not until the English had taken New

Netherlands from the Dutch after 1664 that it was honored with his name. Hudson knew from the writings of Jean Fonteneau published in 1578 that the French had ascended the river to trade with the Indians, and it is not to be doubted that he saw the ruins of the stone chateau on Castle Island which the French had built.

The native Mahicans were as friendly toward Hudson and his crew as they had been towards the French traders. Hudson's mate noted in his journal that they went ashore to find "a very loving people and very old men." Says George Baker Anderson, "The natives were so kind and gentle that when they found he would not remain with them overnight, and feared that he left them, – poor children of nature – because he was afraid of their weapons, he whose quarterdeck was heavy with ordnance! -- They broke their arrows in pieces and threw them into the fire!"

The Indian historian, Grace (Greylock) Niles, says that the Abenaki King welcomed Hudson as "Onetho" (The Great Spirit) returned from Saint Ange, the land of angels beyond the sea.

Lest the reader be confused it should be here noted that our native Mahican-Hoosacs of the Algonquin strain were by nature far more friendly and hospitable to strangers and newcomers than were the fierce Mohawks of the Iroquois they were somewhat timid, rather slow to anger, trusting with an almost childlike face, but once aroused to hatred, their passion for retaliation for and war has at least equal, if not superior, to that of their enemies.

In Cooper's Last of the Mohicans, Hawkeye, the white scout and hunter says: "Look to a Delaware, or a Mohican, for a warrior!"

On the 21st of September the Halfmoon rode at anchor opposite Schodac. From Juet's Journal we excerpt the following account with its quaint spelling; "The master and mate determined to trie some of the chief men of the countrie whether they had any treacherie in them. So they took them down into the cabin and gave them as much wine and aqua-vitae that they were all merry; and one of them had his wife with him, who sat as modestly as any of our countrie-women would do in a strange place. In the end one of them was drunke which had been aboard of our ship all the time we had been there; that was strange to them, for they could not tell how to take it. The canoes and folks went all on shore, but some of them caime again and brought stropes of beades—some had six, seven, eight, nine, ten—and gave him. So he slept all night quietly."

Not long after Hudson's departure the Hoosacs and Mahicansacs became embroiled in bitter warfare with their old enemies the Mohawks and the tide of fortune went against them. By 1620 they were entirely routed from the region of the upper Hudson and took up their homes with their kindred along the banks of the Connecticut. Adrian Block's figurative map of New Netherlands (c.1614) shows them located in their new homes.

It was not from lack of military superiority that the Hoosacs-Mahicansacs and their great Abanakis Democracy eventually fell apart, more because of the superior cunning of the white man, the use of strong drink introduced to them by him, and other dissolute traits acquired through their relations with him. John Underhill and Cotton Mather upheld the contention that the Abanakis were descended from heathen tribes and had no rights a Christian was bound to respect.

The fur traders cheated them of their peltry and robbed them of their lands for a few kegs of beer and wine, or perhaps a few trinkets and blankets. The English, French, and Dutch throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries plundered them of their hunting grounds and the natives found that they had received in turn only an unquenchable thirst for the white man's liquor.

Says Thoreau: “The white man comes, pale as the dawn, with a load of thought, with a slumbering intelligence as a fire raked up, knowing well what he knows, not guessing but calculating;... He buys the Indian's moccasins and baskets, then buys his hunting grounds, and at length forgets where he is buried and plows up his bones.”

Other visits by the Dutch merchantmen followed by hard on the heels of Hudson's voyage and by the year 1614 according to Block's map there were settlements at New Amsterdam (now New York), Sopus (now Kingston) and Fort Orange (now Albany). These were trading posts merely, and the enterprise netted the operators a handsome profit.

Something more stable than a few isolated trading communities is essential to hold a colony together. What the New Netherlands colony needed was settlers to till the soil, who would be rooted in the land and be a solid sub-structure and foundation for the new country.

Accordingly several score families of displaced persons, French Huguenots, and Walloons, were encouraged to settle in the vicinity of the posts of New Amsterdam, Sopus and Greenbush. The settlements were further swelled by thrifty immigrants from the Netherlands fatherland.

The Walloons and Dutch bughers, snug and secure in their settlements along the Hudson valley, looked around for broader unsettled areas that would offer pleasant prospects for homes for their growing families. They took hunting trips to the deserted lands of the Hoosacs along the Hudson, the Battenkill and the Hoosick. These trips were in reality land and reconnaissance missions. They visited the Hoosick valley of White Creek and took note of the fertile fields deserted by the Indians. In a letter dated in the autumn of 1630 Dominie Michaelous of Esopus wrote to friends in Europe: "The Hoosacs and Mahicansacs have fled and their lands are occupied and they are very fertile and pleasant."

By the year 1650, Louis Viele (or Fele) son of Cornelius Viele, the Colonial plenipotentiary of several Indian treaty meets, had pushed up the Hoosick to within three miles of the present town of White Creek, there to subdue a portion of the wilderness and lay out a farm. He was a man of considerable means for those days and brought with him a large family and a number of negro workers. He proceeded with his improvements on the strength of his deed from the Indian sachems only; nor does there appear to have been any confirmation of his purchase by letters patent.

The antiquarian is often puzzled over the conflict between dates of actual settlement of a locality and the dates of these formal land grants which gave a sound legal title to the settler's land claims. The manner in which the land was taken up in those days would appear strange to us in this day of "warranty deeds, deeds with full covenant, etc. etc.". But it was not uncommon at that time for SETTLEMENT TO PROCEED IN ADVANCE OF TAKING TITLE, and the King's Grants almost always followed

after the settlement of a region was underway to secure the pioneers in the results of their labor.

In the decade 1650-60 Viele was followed by others who had learned of the great fertility of the Central Hoosick valley country and the fine waterpower which abounded for miles thereabouts, and at least one venturesome family had cleared a homesite within the present limits of White Creek near Buskirk's Bridge. This several acre tract was referred to by Judge George W. Jermain in his Centennial Day address at Cambridge in 1873.

Declares George Baker Anderson, author of Landmarks of Rensselaer County, who is our authority for the assertion that other families followed the Viele family into this part of the Hoosick Valley during the decade 1650-60, "Comparatively nothing is known of Viele's neighbors, or the other settlers until the year 1707."

But the settlers were there, nameless as they may be. It may, therefore, be said with reasonable certainty that the first Dutch settlers were in White Creek towards the year 1660. This establishes the town, with respect to its earliest permanent settlement, the contemporary of such historic places as Williamsburg, Charleston, Boston and Philadelphia.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAHICAN-HOOSACS RETURN; THE POMPANACS SETTLE IN WHITE CREEK; THE SCHAGHTICOKES DEED THE LAND FOR THE HOOSICK GRANT

In the decade that followed the advent of Hendrick Hudson and the coming of the Dutch to New Netherlands, the Mahican-Hoosacs became embroiled, as we have seen, in a bitter struggle with their old enemy, the Mohawks, and were forced by the fortunes of war to take up new homes beyond the Green Mountains on the banks of the Connecticut River. They were located above and below Coos Falls where they were joined by their kindred of the White Mountains and Maine woods. The New England tribes combined with the Mahican-Hoosacs to help them regain their old homeland and hunting grounds.

For two score years the cauldron of conflict seethed. The old trail which became the warpath of that dark and bloody period ran through the Hoosick Valley and across the town of White Creek on its southern and western sides. The hills and dales of our Owlkill and Hoosick valley have oft resounded to the fierce warwhoop, and the soil of our town has been stained with the blood of the foemen as they met here from time to time in mortal

combat.

King Philip, the mention of whose name once struck terror to the hearts of the New England settlers, once passed through White Creek at the head of several hundred of his Wamponoag warriors, bound for the Mohawk Indian country. The famous old chief Grey-Lock, last sachem of the Waranoaks, traversed the town many times on similar missions.

The Hoosac and Mahican chiefs, Soquon and Maquon led many an expedition against the foe in the unrelenting struggle to repossess their native forests.

Towards the year 1669 a band of French and Algonquins led by the Marquis De Tracy, Viceroy of Canada, fell upon the Mohawk castles and slew large numbers, leaving many of their villages in ashes and ruins. Chief Soquon, the Hoosac, learning of the plight of the enemy, determined to strike before they could recover.

The last mortal combat between the age-old enemies took place near Amsterdam, New York and proved to be a fight to the finish. With this battle the vaunted terror of the Mohawks ceased to be, nor was ever again known in the region of the Saratoga and Hoosick hunting grounds.

The Hoosacs and Mahicans returned to their native forests and Governor Lovelace went up to Albany to mediate the formal peace that would end for all time the age-old hostilities. Under the terms of the treaty of April 1670, Maquon was awarded a tract on both banks of the Hudson from Haver Island northward indefinitely to Canada, The Schaagtecoug Tract extending from

the junction of the Hoosick and Hudson eastward to the Hoosac Pass of the Taconac Mountains was then assigned to Soquon. The Hoosacs, soon after their return, adopted the new tribal name of Schaghticoques or "Warriors of the mingling Waters."

The Pequot sachem, Mawwehu, with two hundred and fifty warriors, fugitives of old King Philip's New England Indian uprising of 1675—76, fled over the old trail to their kindred along the Hudson, and shortly thereafter settled in White Creek. They were discovered by the Connecticut militia, near Westfield, and pursued to the headwaters of the Hoosick where fifty of their number were slain or captured. The remainder made good their escape to Dutch Claverack and located for a time among their blood relatives in the Catskills. A few years later Mawwehu and his tribe joined Soquon's Schaghticoke colony. They built their village and the chief his lodge along the Pompanac rivulet in the Taconac Hills of White Creek. Mawwehu eventually deserted the Pompanac Lodge and wandered south to Florida.

In the meantime the New Netherlands Colony had been seized by the English. It had long been a source of annoyance to them, lying as it did between their seaboard colonies to the north and south. King Charles II solved this problem by granting the region to his brother, the Duke of York, throwing in for good measure, Long Island, Martha's Vineyard and the Pemaquid in Maine. The Duke moved swiftly to take possession of this lavish gift, and in 1664 New Netherlands was in English hands and the name of the colony was changed to New York.

On the heels of this dispute the French began to contend over their boundaries and pushed down Lake Champlain and Connecticut Valleys and cross country through the Hoosick to

annoy the New England and New York settlers, for they had no intention of abandoning their claims to that region which they considered a part of New France.

In 1685 the Duke of York took the English throne as James II. In the meantime, settlers had been pushing into the Hoosick Falley, and it was time something was done to secure them in their claims as well as to pave the way for the further settlement of the valley. Accordingly, a deed was negotiated with the Schaghticoke sachems for a tract of land lying along the Hoosick River, embracing some seventy thousand acres of the central Hoosick meadowland, two miles in breadth; it followed the watercourse from Old Schaghticoke to a point between the junction of the Little Hoosick with the main river.

It was confirmed by the King as the Hoosac Patent in 1688 during the administration of Governor Dongan and just before the King's unpopularity at home compelled his flight to France.

This was the first of the Royal Grants to cover any part of the lands of White Creek. It covered in whole or in part, four towns of Rensselaer County and two in Washington County, to wit: Schaghticoke, Pittstown, Hoosick, Petersburg, White Creek and Cambridge.

The proprietors, as set forth in the patent, were the following, all from the highest aristocracy of the Province: Maria Van Rensselaer and Hendrick Van Ness of Albany, Jacob VanCortland of New York City and Garret VanVechten of Catskill. The terms provided for an annual quit—rent to the government of "ten bushels of Sweet Marchantable winter Wheat, delivered at the City of Albany."

In return for relinquishing their claim, the Schaghticoke received a quantity of duffels, shirts; hose, blankets, guns, powder, lead, rum, beer, wine, tobacco and a number of pipes.

CHAPTER V

ARENT VANCORLAER AND OTHERS

Arent Van Corlaer settled in White Creek in 1709 at the age of 19. He was not the first to locate within the town, as indeed a previous chapter has made clear, but he was the first of our settlers whom we can call by name or give a detailed account of. At the time of his coming, the place names so familiar to us today such as Cambridge, White Creek, Hoosick, etc. were unheard of and the community center which gave its name to the locality was Sancroick. Van Corlaer settled in that part of the Sancroick neighborhood which fell in the Town of White Creek, Washington county toward the year 1800, when town and county lines were established.

Van Corlaer came to Sancroick to engage in the fur trade and brought with him Adam Vrooman, the experienced trader and son of Bartle Vrooman of Old Saratoga. In 1711 he built the trading post, standing today with but little change, on a terrace just under the summit of Quaker Hill in White Creek and about two and one-half miles north of the Hoosick River.

He was born April 19, 1688 to Benoni and Elizabeth (widow of Sybrant Van Schaik) Van Corlaer. On September 23, 1743 he married Mary Lake of Middlesex County, New Jersey and was joined in his fur trading enterprise by his four brothers-in-law, John, Thomas, James and Nicholas Lake. He and his associates subsequently took title through an Indian deed and

King's Grant to five thousand acres of the surrounding land including that on which the trading post stands.

The name of Van Corlaer is emblazoned upon the pages of the Colonial History of New Netherlands and New York. The Grandfather of the White Creek settler was not only the founder of the City of Schenectady in 1661, but earlier (1636-42) was Commissary-General and Superintendent of the Colony of Rensselaerwyck as well as the agent for the Indian Affairs of that Colony. He was the Indians' great friend and they were all his friends.

The following quotation from Cadwallader Colden's History of the Five Nations merit reiteration here: "He (VanCorlaer) had a mighty influence over the Indians; and it is from him, and in Remembrance of his Merit, that all Governors of New York are called Corlaer by the Indians to this day, (1738) though he himself was never Governor."

He rescued the Jesuit, Father Isaac Jogues, from the Mohawks on two separate occasions and he befriended a party of French under Courcelles, Governor General of Canada, who had set out to attack the Mohawks, but who, unused to snow shoes and the severe cold, were nearly dead of cold and hunger when they appeared near Schenectady, so that had not VanCorlaer intervened and contrived their escape and supplied them with provisions they would have fallen victim to the Iroquois or perished from the elements.

To quote Colden further: "The French Governor, in order to reward so signal a service; invited Corlaer to Canada; but as he went through the great lake which lies to the Northward of

Albany, his Canoe was overset, and he was drowned; and from this Accident that Lake has ever since been called Corlaer's Lake, by the people of New York. There is a Rock in this Lake, on which the Waves dash and fly up to a great Height; when the wind blows hard, the Indians believe, that an old Indian lives under this Rock, who has the power of the Winds; and therefore, as they pass it in their Voyages over, they always throw a Pipe, or some other small Present to this old Indian, and pray a favourable Wind. The English that pass with them sometimes laugh at them, but they are sure to be told of Corlaer's Death. Your great Countryman Corlaer (say they) as he passed by this Rock, jested at our Fathers making presents to this old Indian, and in Derision turned up his Backside, but this Affront cost him his life."

The actual place of Corlaer's death in Lake Champlain was near Split Rock, new Perne Bay, Essex County, New York. The Lake was known by Corlaer's name until about the year 1760.

Benoni, father of the White Creek settler, was the only child of record of the Illustrious grandfather, His mother was Ameke Schaets, daughter of the Dominie at Beaverwyck. The circumstances of Benoni's birth are set forth in the council minutes of the period. Benoni took his father's name and became more or less prominent at Albany during the years between 1688 and 1694.

From all this it should be clear to the reader that the Arent VanCorlaer who settled in White Creek was indeed the scion of a Colonial New York family of distinction. In his dealings with the Indians, his name alone won him spontaneous acceptance and brought him their confidence, trust and loyalty. The red men, be it

remembered, were at this time' calling the Colonial Governors "Brother Corlaer" out of respect to the memory of his illustrious grandfather. For a trader, located on the outermost fringe of a perilous frontier, such friendship was essential to survival.

Van Corlaer's Trading Post was admirably situated along the trail to the Pompanac village of the Pequot, Mawwehu, and not far from the Schaghticoke Tioshoke village which lay along the Hoosick River a few miles to the south.

There was a period of several years duration during which a very considerable number of fur traders including Van Corlaer and his associates were handicapped in their operations by government interference. Says Claude Nelson McMillan in his book, *A HISTORY OF MY PEOPLE AND YOURS*; "The then governor of the Colony of New York would grant only a limited number of hunting and trapping licenses. It is quite apparent that he expected a part of the income from this trapping and hunting so that all furs must be sold either at Albany or in New York, There developed, as by necessity a plan for outwitting such measures. So these trappers would load their canoes just below Albany, paddle down along the west bank of the Hudson River passing New York quietly in the dark, and so on to Jersey... which thus became a market for furs and where the trappers could secure a fair price for their labor without any kick back to the New York Governor. By 1760 the colonial government had restricted the fur trade to only three licenses. The Lakes and Van Corlaer were not licensed, but they appear to have carried on trade in spite of this from their New Jersey headquarters, as did many others. The practice was to come up river by boat and anchor just below Albany where in the cover of darkness the boats were loaded by faithful Indian

Helpers who conveyed the pelts from the Hoosac (St. Croix) post."

While Van Corlaer and his associates were busy plying their Indian trade the settlement of the Hoosick Patent to the south of them was proceeding apace. In the division of the lands of the Hoosick Grant, Cornelius Van Ness, his cousin Philip Van Ness and the heirs of Maria Van Rensselaer came into possession of that part of the patent contained in White Creek. The Van Nesses retained manorial rights and were called the Patroons of the lower Hoosick. Settlers came onto their lands as tenants, or sharecroppers, after the Old World feudal fashion. Cornelius Van Ness's St. Croix Manor embraced the land along the Hoosick between the Owl Kill and the Little White Creek, while his cousin, Philip's Manor, known as Tioshoke, followed the north bank of the river from the Owl Kill to Buskirk's and beyond.

The patroons encouraged a mixed tenantry and in the years immediately following Van Corlaer's coming a considerable settlement sprang up with immigrants pushing up from Albany, Schenectady, Lansingburg and elsewhere. Tioshoke village, now Buskirk's became a center for trade and had its sawmill, blacksmith's shop, grist mill and church. The Saincroick settlement flourished also during this time, and it is said that by 1724 a quaint Dutch village had sprung up around the Van Ness Mansion which consisted of a number of dwellings, houses for tenants and slaves, a schoolhouse, ashery, store, blacksmith shop, wagon shop and tannery. The leases between the Patroon and his tenants revealed that the crossroads of the Saincroick Manor connected with the "Great Road", since known as the Cambridge Turnpike.

A partial list of the tenants, by name, who located on the Tioshoke Manor during this time, some of whom were within White Creek includes the following: Johannes Quackenbush, Nicholas Grosbeck, Peter Viele, Johnnes VanBuskirk, Walter Van Vechten and Lewis Van Wirt.

Those who located in the White Creek portion of the Sancroick Manor were families by the name of DeFonda, Fort, Bovie, Van Rensselaer, Vandenburg and Searles.

The period between 1671 and 1744 was in interval of peace in the Hoosick Valley for white man and Indian alike. As a result, great progress had been made in settlement; the wilderness was tamed and the frontier extended.

The vicious assault on Schenectady in February 1690, when a party of French and Indians slew the inhabitants and burned the town, kept the Hoosick Valley settlers mindful of the ever-present menace of the French Provinces to the north, but that raid was the only really alarming incident during these years.

The English officials at Albany had employed a mixed band of Mohawk and Hoosac Indians to continually scout the war-trail leading to Canada. These scouts had taken it upon themselves to negotiate a pact with their kindred at St. Francis, under the Canadian Jesuits, not to molest each others' domains so that the scalping forays of the Canadians during that time were directed toward the New England settlements in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire.

But now the storm clouds were gathering anew. In 1744 war

broke out in Europe between England and France, and as we turn to our next chapter we shall see how this conflict involved America and those early White Creek and Hoosick Valley settlers.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDIANS SELL THEIR LANDS ALONG THE LITTLE WHITE CREEK; A VILLAGE ON THE WHITE CREEK FLATS; BORDER WARS, TURMOIL AND STRIFE (1713-1759).

From an historical address by the Hon. G. W.

Jermain of Albany and White Creek delivered at Cambridge on the 29th of August, 1873, the writer excerpts the following:

“In the division of New York (when a British Province,) into counties, in 1683, Albany County was established, and extended north to Canada and included Vermont, then claimed to be within the jurisdiction of New York, and several counties west of this. At a very early day grants and patents of wild lands were sought by speculators from the British government, and in 1688 a patent was obtained for a tract along the Hoosick river, called the Hoosic Patent, a portion of which became included in the towns of White Creek and Cambridge. Soon afterward another patent, adjacent to it on the east, was procured, extending northerly and easterly about a mile in width, called the VanCorlear and Lakes Patent.”

“In 1731 a purchase was made of the Indians of land contiguous to and east of the VanCorlear patent, but as 'Lo, the

poor Indian, was not supposed to have any rights which the white man was bound to respect, ' a patent for this same land was afterwards, in 1739, procured from the British government by Stephen Van Rensselaer and others, called the Walloomsac Patent, of about 12,000 acres, extending north and east along the Walloomsac river and to the Green Mountains, covering the White Creek valley.”

On the strength of their Indian deed to these lands, and without waiting for the King's confirmation by letters patent to Van Rensselaer and his associates, a number of families of French Walloon extraction from the towns along the lower Hudson valley emigrated to the banks of the stream which they named Walloon's Creek, and soon other Walloon families pushed northward to the banks of the Little White Creek, where they subdued the wilderness and built new homes. During the decade 1730-40 a frontier village sprang up on the flats along the Little White Creek, mostly on what is now the Gordon and Harriet Byars farm (The Ebenezer Allen homestead). The settlement failed to survive the period of the French and Indian Wars that it terminated with the English conquest of Canada in 1759, and although no contemporary records exist to show when it was destroyed, it was doubtless during the August 1746 invasion of General Rigaud and his Indian allies from Canada.

Col. Harold F. Andrews, who was in charge of the field work for the New York State Conservation Department through which the data was obtained for the preparation of the bronze relief map which Col. Andrews designed for the Bennington Battlefield Park Monument, told the writer that his field crews found positive evidence of that former village on this side.

From 1744 through 1759 the inhabitants of the then settled portions of the Hoosick Valley and White Creek were sorely tried. With the exception of the brief six year truce from 1748 to 1754 the border warfare raged continually. England and France were at war in Europe and in America were locked in a bitter struggle for supremacy on the continent.

The Hoosac Valley was encompassed during this time by three of the most powerful strongholds of New York, New England, and New France: Fort Frederick at Albany, Fort Massachusetts on the upper Hoosick and Fort St. Frederick at Crown Point on Lake Champlain. And a cordon of not less than forty stockaded forts were garrisoned from time to time within a range of seventy miles of the Hoosick Valley.

The scalping forays the French, headed by Mohawks and Algonquin praying warriors, (Indians baptized by Jesuits), followed the old Ticonderoga trail along the Owl Kill, thence along the Hoosick River to Northfield, Deerfield, and Colerain villages of the New England frontier.

Lying in the path of these objectives were the White Creek settlements, and both Tioshoke and the Little White Creek village met the torch as did also Sancroick. Many a settler's home was laid in ashes; many of them took to their flat bottom boats and sought the protection of the garrisoned towns along the Hudson. Those off the beaten path sometimes stood their ground an either were miraculously overlooked or perished at the hands of the Red Men or were led captive back to Quebec there there languish for months and perhaps to die in the squalor of prison pens.

Throughout the Hoosick valley probably not more than a dozen houses of the settlers of those days stand today. They include the Van Vechten house of Old Schaghticoke, rebuilt recently after a damaging fire near Stillwater, the VanCorlaer Trading Post at White Creek, The Center house in White Creek. Others are being discovered anew as historical interest grows and research proceeds.

Certain frontier communities suffered more than others during these times. Knickerbocker's Schaghticoke settlement on the lower Hoosick settlement near Pownal suffered repeatedly from these avenging forays by former friendly Indians who had been won to the side of the French. One French writer noted that within a certain period of short duration the French partisans led not less than twenty-seven detachments of St. Francis warriors against the settlements of the Dutch and English protestants. The reader can picture what the frontier settler endured, his constant state of alarm. That they persevered through these harassing times is a tribute to the steadfast, unflinching character of these pioneers.

One of the captives was the Rev. John Norton, chaplain of Fort Massachusetts, in whose JOURNAL OF CAPTIVITY a detailed account of this unhappy incident has been preserved. Poorly coordinated military plans had resulted in the fort's being inadequately garrisoned, and this with a delay in the arrival of reinforcements, left them an easy of the bloody-flux. On the 15th of August, fresh moccasin tracks had been observed a few miles from the fort, and a scout was dispatched to Deerfield requesting help.

Before the help came, however, the French struck. Of the

garrison of twenty soldiers, ten were very ill. But Sergeant Hawks, the commandant, resisted a twenty-seven hour siege, in the hope that help would come and capitulated only when it was evident the fort would be burnt and they within it, if he did not.

They were outnumbered one to one hundred in that unequal contest. On the morning of the 19th, the resistance ended. The French burned Massachusetts and Chaplain Norton was permitted to leave a note on the old well to give a brief account of their plight to those who had been expected to relieve them.

The captive band numbered thirty-one, including the wives and children of the garrison. The march to Quebec began on the morning of the 21st and that evening, while they were not far from the present village of Petersburg, John Smead's wife gave birth to a baby girl, who, considering the circumstances of her birth was named "Captivity."

The following day, a White Creek settler, concealed in the hills along the Owl Kill, might have seen that pitiful band plodding wearily northward under the guard of the painted warriors. The chivalrous French, however, had made a litter for Mary Smead and Little "Captivity," and they were borne along thus until the mother's strength was recovered.

Being so ordered by General Rigaud, several of the powerful warriors improvised seats for carrying the sick and ailing during a part of the journey. These incidents do show that the French did at times feel a degree of compassion for their victims.

The Indians preserved a friendship for some of the settlers and these were purposely passed by or given advance warning to

take cover as the following letter from Perry's ORIGINS OF WILLIAMSTOWN proves. Among this number was undoubtedly Arent Van Corlaer, who was greatly respected out of the memory of his famous father, and his property went untouched throughout this dark and bloody period.

"Fort Massachusetts, August 25, 1754 Sir, This day there came a man from the Dutch and informs me that four days past and there came 5 Indians From Crownpoint and informs them that there is eight hundred Indians desine to destroy Hosuck to hear farther about the affair, but the people was all moved but two or 3 that was coming to the fort and they tell him the same account. The Indians that brought the account was sent in order to have some parsons move from Sencroick that they had regard for, but if they come I hope we are well fixt for them. In hast from, Sr. Your's etc. Command. Elisha Chapin"

CHAPTER VII

THE ALLEN AND STEWART FAMILIES; AND THE GENESIS OF WHITE CREEK VILLAGE

With Wolfe's victory on the Heights of Abraham in 1759 Quebec fell to the English and the conquest of Canada was assured. Going on the assumption that with this defeat the French were permanently crushed in the region east of the Mississippi, adventurers and home-seekers, men who had kept a covetous eye on the wild lands of the colonial frontier, did not wait for the signing of the official peace at Paris in 1763, but began immediately to crowd into these regions, to make their clearings in the forests, turning the trees they felled into homesteads, barns, tanneries, mills and factories, stores, churches, shops and schools, to the end that they and their families would prosper, live secure and comfortable in their homes!

Of those who came at this time to settle in White Creek, the man in the forefront was Quaker John Allen, "Pioneer John", as his descendants call him. This hardy frontiersman was born in Dartmouth; Massachusetts, July 29th, 1734. On a visit to Boston, or perhaps to Hartford, he had seen the advertisements of those who eagerly sought to persuade enterprising men to settle on the patents they owned in Albany County; and had bought a quarter section of Lot 16 of the Walloomsac Grant, six hundred acres flanking the Little White Creek, the southwesterly corner of

which is embraced within the present village.

In 1760 John Allen blazed the trail that was shortly followed by several score families of Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists, and the Scotch-Irish and English Protestants of other denominations from New England and Dutchess County, New York. In this way the village of White Creek was founded.

Quaker John and his wife Mary either lived for a time or tarried with their Quaker brethren at the "Oblong" in Dutchess County before coming to White Creek. He went on, in advance of his wife and family, to take possession of and improve his enclosure, traveling by sloop to Lansingburg and traversing the distance from that place to his home by foot. After he had built a log house on the creek, a little below the present homestead, he sent for his family. John Allen was a versatile man, a carpenter and a miller. With his nephew, Paul Cornell he built the grist mill, the site of which can still be discerned about twenty rods above the present home of Mr. and Mrs. William Murphy. Cornell later added a trip-hammer for the manufacture of scythes and hoes.

The frame house, the Allen homestead, was built by the pioneer about the year 1770, and it has since been in the continuous possession of the Allen family.

John Allen's older brother, Zebulon, also settled in White Creek, his homestead, the present Marshall Fillmore farm. A sister, Elizabeth, married Daniel Cornell, and with their son Paul built the mansion now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Niles and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Niles.

Paul Cornell, nephew of the pioneer, became very much a man of affairs in and around White Creek. In addition to the enterprise above referred to, he was associated with Dr. William Richards and Garner Wilkinson in the manufacture of cotton sheeting, having adapted the old Aiken grist mill to that purpose, calling it the Washington Company factory. In Bennington there was an iron works with which he was associated. Cornell was an ardent Free-Mason and finished off a room in his home for the use of the White Creek Lodge of which he was for several years the Master.

Dr. William Richards married Sarah, a daughter of the pioneer, and they built the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Murphy. Dr. Richards was the first supervisor of White Creek when it became a town in 1816 and in 1820 was elected a Member of Assembly.

Besides Sarah there were eleven other children born to John and Mary Allen as follows: Christopher who married Meribah Burdick; Gilbert, who was twice married, first to Mary Blanchard and second to Chloe Waite; John Jr. who was also twice married, first to Rosanna Stewart and second to Mary Hathaway; George who never married; Anna who married Ebenezer Deuel and lived in Easton, N.Y.; David, who died in young manhood, unmarried; Lydia, who married Elihu Cross; Elizabeth, who married Nathan Draper, both sisters living in Shaftsbury; Rhoda married Calvin Murray, and Ruth married Dr. Elihu Allen, both of Williston, Vt.; Mary married Beardsley Hendryx and lived in Bennington, Vermont.

Gilbert lived on the homestead. He, with the Millingtons, also an early family, carried on an extensive lumber and logging

business at the "runway" above Shaftsbury Hollow. A considerable settlement once flourished there of which but little trace remains today.

Christopher Allen lived where Miss Myra Jones now resides, He employed the skilled G.W. Stanley to construct the house, a splendid example of early workmanship. The ballroom on the second floor has arched ceilings, and much interesting paneling is in evidence throughout. Christopher is said to have kept a tavern there, and there is a tradition that some of the wounded of the Battle of Bennington were treated in an improvised hospital set up in the upstairs ballroom.

The early tannery was built somewhat to the rear of Christopher's home, and from this it is inferred that he was also active in that enterprise.

John Allen, Jr. manufactured hats for the trade. Where or how he learned the business we are not told but many there were who learned it from him in his little shop on the bank of the brook across from Christopher's home. Among those who apprenticed to John, the Hatter, was George N. Briggs, son of the blacksmith at Briggs Corners. Briggs abandoned hat making to study law and became a member of Congress and later Governor of Massachusetts.

At a brilliant party he once attended while he was in Washington, a lady said to him, "May I ask, Sir, at what college you graduated?" whereupon he replied without a moments hesitation and with the greatest gravity and courtesy "At John Allen's hat shop, Madam!" Briggs is said to have left White Creek for a lawyer's office in Lanesboro, Mass. with five dollars

in his pocket earned at haying.

The large white house now occupied by Miss Marian Dean, on the corner opposite the Allen homestead was the home of John, the mat maker. At the Allen-Stewart family reunion marking the bicentenary of the birth of Pioneer John Allen, the late H.Q. Allen exhibited a Quaker gray felt hat made in the hat shop. Relics that belonged to the pioneer, a silver pin, silver buttons and buckles, a lock of his hair and other articles were exhibited by H. Q. Allen and James Allen.

The Stewart (Stuart) family from Londonderry, New Hampshire emigrated to White Creek not long after John Allen came. The Stewart mansion stood on the bank of the creek just east of the Rosewood, originally the Stewart Cemetery.

The Stewart family trace their lineage direct from the English Royal House of Stuart. In a letter dated White Creek, August 28, 1818, Joseph Stewart, Sr, writing to his son John explains the royal connection as follows: "By all accounts of our descent we are of the Royal House of the Stuarts. My father was John, the eldest son of my grandfather, Robert, who was obliged to fly to Ireland when they were newly married. My grandmother conceived and was sent to Edinburg, Scotland, and my father was born there . . . They belonged to the house of the White Rose yet were not altogether separated from the Black Hall. My grandfather had a good estate in Scotland, when he fled from it. King William would do nothing about it, neither would Queen Anne, but when King George came to the throne, then Uncle Samuel Stewart, by help of the Duke of Argyle, recovered it I was informed that Uncle Samuel Stewart died without issue, left no heirs."

Joseph Stewart Jr, in spite of his youth must have been the White Creek pioneer of that family. Born in 1752, he married Susanna Harmon in 1772, and probably had come to White Creek and made considerable progress in improving his property before his marriage.

Letters written by Joseph Sr. show that he lived in White Creek a good deal, probably throwing in with his son, in improving the White Creek property.

Joseph's sons were David, Joseph 3rd, Enos and Reuben. His daughters were Rosanna, who married John Allen, the latter; Ann, who became Mrs. Asa Kellogg; Eunice who married Dr. Barnum and Polly who married Francis Lauderdale.

Of the sons and their marriages little is recorded except for Sylvester, who found a devoted wife in Almira Doty of North Bennington. Almira Doty Stewart kept a diary all her life, and from this diary she wrote a "personal history" in which a great deal of information pertinent to the Stewart family is preserved. Since this history touches on a very early White Creek family and gives a vivid picture of early life here, the writer, at the risk of including some irrelevancies, feels in duty bound to his readers to quote freely from it.

Skipping over its prior contents to the time of her marriage to Sylvester Stewart in February 1811, we quote directly from her manuscript as follows: "My husband removed me, and my little stock of household goods, -- (consisting of one bed, bedding, and bedstead, two tables, a kitchen - and Tea Table - One Bureau, six Chairs, one Light Stand, - A good assortment of Crockery and Glass Ware; - A tea-Kettle, Spider - Gridiron, Toasting iron and

a Chopping Knife, 1 sett of Silver Tea Spoons) &c -- to his Father's - Joseph Stewart Esq. I was pretty well clothed --- I had Eleven Dresses-eleven pairs of Stockings, with every other article of clothing necessary for my wear. All of which I had earned by the labor of my hands, and made up”.

" Father Stewart said to me one day, after I was fairly settled with his family - ‘Almira, I will give you as much, flax as you can spin.’ I accepted the offer joyfully, took the flax and hatchelled it, and then commenced spinning, and with my own hands spun enough to make 65 yards of tow and linen cloth, before it was time to spin wool. My husband had sheep, I spun woolen yarn to make 40 yards of cloth - Stocking yarn for husband and myself, yarn for two Coverlids - Colored it, and had it ready for the weaver by September”.

... "Sept. 11, 1811 my son Asa was born at Father Stewart's house...Early in the month of March my husband removed to the farm 1 ½ miles from his father's, called the "Mountain Farm"; his brother Reuben living in the house with us. In the course of the summer I went after Maria H. Johnson, a little girl of 10 years and a few months to live with me. In the month of January 1813, my husband removed a family to the town of Homer, Cortland Co., N.Y. State. He had relations living 12 miles beyond in the Town of Locke, Cayuga Co. Whom he went to see. He was all in raptures with the Country - returned home, made preparations for removal, and on the 15th of February 1813, with three sleigh loads of household goods: - his father driving one team; - David Woodard one and himself one we left the home of his birthplace to go among strangers. A few days before we left, Mother Stewart came to see us, - as soon as she came in, she said to me with her eyes full of tears, ‘Almira, you are not going to leave us,

are you?' I said, (Thoughtlessly) 'I hope so;' not thinking how much it might hurt her feelings; for a better woman than she, lived not. 'well;' said she, 'If you will go, you will want a comfortable cloak for your little boy; Here I have brought you some flannel to make one.' I did not then even think that I was parting with her forever; but so it was; for on the 25th of April following, she departed this life".

..."During the two years we resided in Locke 1813 & 1814, my husband owned four places; he built a nice snug framehouse and repaired two log cabins, - and in 1815 in Feb. we left all - all sold out - and removed to Susquehanna Co., Pennsylvania. We started on the 15th of Feb. 1815, my two babies were only six weeks old, I carried one, and my Sister Sabra the other. We removed into the house with my father and stayed until June, when we went on to our own place at Silver Lake Township. There was 14 acres cut down and burned over - 1 1/2 acres sowed to Rye --. There was timber cut for a small-frame house on the place when we bought it - my husband and brother William framed the timber, put up the house, shingled it, and planked it up - threw down loose floor -- put three windows in and then we moved in without doors or fireplace, the day that my twins were six months old. I cooked out of doors until October when Edmund T. Locke built us a fireplace and a good hearth, and a nice white ash floor and to have two good out-side doors made and hung; - and then I took down the blankets that we had used four months for doors, and then how nice it was, when I could open the door to go out, and shut it when I came in".

..."In the month of August 1818 my husband and I started for a visit to White Creek in a two horse wagon, Harmon, (my son) was nearly eight months old; - I carried him, a large fat baby all

the way in my lap. We visited in Troy, Bennington, and White Creek. Asa Kellogg's wife Margaret (Ann), was then in poor health and had been spending a little time at Father Stewarts'. When we drove up to the house, she came to the windows to look out-- she was very pale; we had a good visit, the last time that I saw her. She gave me a great many things to take home to my family which was gratefully received. In these times I used to be very thankful for clothes for my family”.

...."In the forepart of October we started for our home. Soon after our return Sylvester traded his farm for a tavern stand in Delhi, Delaware county New York. He swapped the farm of 150 acres, a good barn & house on it, for the tavern stand which had a two story house and barn on it, also a horse shed and 1 ½ acres of land, lying on the Delaware River. ..The house was in miserable condition and he was obliged to make repairs to make it comfortable, - or not get any custom, which was the way that we were to gain a livelihood”.

...”May 1st 1821 we removed to Stamford at the head of the Delaware River -- my husband having exchanged his tavern stand for a house and lot at this place. He had launched into the business of carrying the mails--it proved to be a bad business for us and here all that we possessed was sold by the Sheriff”.

...”In the month of September 1822, we sold our house and lot and moved to Groton, Tompkins Co., N.Y. In 1825 we moved into a house there opposite Dr. Wright's on the hill. Here we lived some two years. I was very sick here so that my life was despaired of, but through the mercy of God it was prolonged”.

... "In the month of July 1827, I prepared to leave my Groton

home to take a journey to Bennington and White Creek to try to recover my health”.

... “The day after I arrived at Brother’ Doty’s I had a severe Ague Fit;’ Also Warren (son) had a severe Ague Chill. I had an Ague Fit every other day. I became so weak after two weeks that I could neither dress or undress myself, my friends thought I must die, and they were all so sure that I could not live, that Father (Stewart) said that I should be brought over and buried in the Family Burying Ground. But the great dispenser of events saw fit to prolong my life. After two weeks I could discover that I gained a little more strength my well day than enough to bear my "fit" my sick day. I soon was able to ride over to White Creek”.

... "My husband left Groton came to Bennington - found me getting better - went to White Creek to see his father, who immediately beset him to come back and live with him, and take care of the farm. He would give him one half the farm, and an equal share with the rest of the heirs, in the other half. He accepted his Father's proposition, made writing and went after our children and household goods, - returned with them, (they came by canal from Groton to Troy) all safe September 27th, 1827”.

“About the first of Oct. we were all safely domiciled in the small house near the mansion of Father Stewart. My husband assumed charge of the whole business, - his brother, Enos, having gone west again. Business all went satisfactorily to Father Stewart. On the first day of Sept. 1828, Father Stewart died.”

After settling his father’s estate and selling his half interest in the property to David Niles, Sylvester and his family once again

removed to the west, to Clinton, Ohio, where Sylvester was, as his wife expressed it “perfectly contented”. He lived there thirteen years, dying of typhoid fever in the year 1846.

Chapter VIII

GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT AND BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN THE WHITE CREEK SECTION PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION

It would be difficult, if not well-nigh impossible, to list in the chronological order of their coming, the families that followed soon after John Allen. Suffice it to say that those named in this chapter had settled in or around the village of White Creek before the clash of musketry at Concord and Lexington announced the beginning of the Revolutionary War and the end of the Colonial Period. In General, this chapter relates the happenings of that fifteen year interval.

The major peril to the frontier – The French threat – was gone. But there were a host of lesser perils and hazards which the frontier settler faced – among which were the predatory animals that stalked the forests and even ventured into their enclosures; the outlaw and mobster elements arising from having lived so long in a state of war that hostilities for one reason or another might break forth anew.

With an eye to their safety should some new peril arise they joined hands and built a block house for their mutual defense. This stood on John Allen's land on the high ground in the field across from the present home of Enoch Tollisen. It was similar to the hundreds of other heavily timbered structures designed for the

military defense of the frontier villages, about twenty feet square at the base with the upper portion projecting over the lower in order to enable its defenders to fire downward in all directions. It was made of hewn timbers more than a foot thick set one atop the other and dove-tailed at the corners. Its walls were loop-holed and pierced for musketry.

During this period, what they considered the White Creek village (Little White Creek) community was less compact and more sprawling than it is today and included the three corners (now called Barker's Corners) from thence to the village including the places on the Quaker Meeting House road as well as "The Street." It was the chief village of the town then, a distinction that was later to belong to Cambridge or North White Creek.

Near the bridge over the creek, where the road to Cobble Hill turns off, was the store of Jacob and Benjamin Merritt. Later, to improve their location, they moved their store to the site now occupied by Bennett & Sisson. The old building burned in 1849, and the present one was raised on its site by the late Dyer P. Sisson.

From this location the Merritts did an enormous volume of business for those times, said to have exceeded fifty thousand dollars trade a year, part of which came to them from Vermont. They were 'factors' for the wheat farmers, arranged the sale of their wheat at the Troy warehouses, and after the wheat was hauled with the proceeds of its sale, the farmers returned to trade no small part of it at this White Creek store.

Edward Aiken came to town, perhaps a little earlier than the

Merritts, and built the frame house where Harold and Raymond Taber live, adding the brick portion before the year 1770. He obtained water power privileges and built the gristmill which stood on the corner opposite the present dwelling of Robert Masten. The mill-pond was behind the dwellings on the opposite side of the street, and a wooden trough carried the water over the highway to turn the overshot waterwheel as pictured in J. Geoffrey Jones' sketch elsewhere in this book.

Edward Aiken subsequently sold this mill to Paul Cornell, Dr. William Richards and Garner Wilkinson, who operated it for a time as the Washington Company Sheeting Mill. It has been by turns, a grist mill, cotton mill, flax mill, woolen mill and lastly a paint factory. With the proceeds of the sale of his White Creek properties in gold in his saddlebags, Edward Aiken departed White Creek to become the proprietor of the Sir William Johnson Hall at Johnstown, New York towards the year 1800. His descendant, Bert Wells, was the proprietor of the Johnson Hall at the time it was bought by the State of New York to be maintained as an historical shrine.

Stephen Kellogg was operating a flax mill before the year 1775. He later built and lived in the house where Mr. and Mrs. Peabody now reside. The mill pond was a few rods east of the present Byars Feed Store and the flax mill next to the pond.

Joseph Dorr came from Connecticut in 1778 and worked in this mill, and it was he who set up the fulling and carding works for Mr. Kellogg. The retstone used there for breaking flax is still doing duty as the door step of Alfred Bennett's home.

Comfort Curtis was a skilled cabinet maker as well as a coach and body craftsman. The writer has not been able to determine if his shop was located in the village or near his home, the site of which was just south of the present Curtis Spring on the Chestnut Woods Road. At the latter site, by the side of the foundation of a former building embedded in the ground, is some of the iron work of a stage coach, discovered there by the writer and his son last fall.

The Seth Chase tavern of pre-Revolutionary days is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Donald George. Originally the road that now ends at this house continued east until it intersected the state line road on the east bounds of the town.

Robert and Noah Wilcox built the house which was until recently the home of Horace Lake and his son James. Robert operated a trip-hammer mill here for the manufacture of cut-nails, scythes and agricultural implements. The site of this mill was just east of the homestead by the bank of the creek opposite the upper bridge and may with care be detected today.

The village had its ashery where good hardwood ashes has a standing value, sometimes as much as a shilling a bushel, the ashes being converted by leaching into pearl of potash and lye. Lye was an essential ingredient in soap making. J. and B. Merritt the merchants, accepted ashes at current value in payment of merchandise.

And last in this list but among the first in importance to the early settlers was the lime kiln of Ebenezer Dwinnells (pronounced Dunnels) situated just under Notch Mountain on its south side. Viewed today in its ruined condition

it is impressive and picturesque, and one marvels at the ingenuity of its builder and puzzles over the problems he must have faced in raising this immense structure of rough field stone, some of which are several feet in girth, a ton in weight, to a height of twenty feet.

The product of Ebenezer Dwinell's lime kiln is incorporated in plaster walls, fireplaces and chimneys, and foundation structures of most of the White Creek houses that were built before the War Between the States. The plaster made from it clings to the old split lath in these houses with grim determination as anyone who has had to remove any quantity of it will admit. Dwinell's source of limestone was the mountain behind his home where the rock was quarried and skidded down to the kiln.

The Dwinells were also machinists and by the side of their mountain home had impounded a small stream fed by a perennial spring that gushed from the hillside to power a waterwheel. Here they installed a trip-hammer, and their genius for making things found expression. One of the Dwinell boys is said to have invented a dump rake, in all respects similar to those which later were manufactured by the thousands and used on farms throughout the United States. At the White Creek Centennial in 1916, Kenneth Potter exhibited a flintlock musket which belonged to William Dwinells. A dent in the ground and the stonework of the mill-site and kiln are all that mark this site today.

Isaac and John Wood, brothers, from New Bedford, Massachusetts, had their homes within a few rods of each other on the farm now belonging to James McCart. The site of John

Wood's home is marked by a shield of the New York State Education Department commemorating the invention of the mold-board plow by John's son Jethro. Isaac Wood's home is the large house in which James McCart and his family reside and was built about 1808 probably on the site of his earlier home. A grand-daughter of Isaac Wood married Stephen Barker and the property passed into the possession of the Barker family. Both families were Quakers.

By 1770 there were enough settlers in White Creek of the Quaker persuasion to warrant the formation of a Friends' Meeting known as the White Creek Preparative Meeting. These early meetings were at Isaac Wood's home with his brother John as meeting clerk. In 1784-85 the meeting house was completed on land leased to the Friends by Edward Aiken at the foot of Quaker Hill. The rent was to be one peppercorn a year. By 1804 the meeting house proved to be too small, so rapidly had the Quaker community increased in numbers. In that year the structure was remodeled or rebuilt but still with those simple lines in accordance with custom. It was a two story building twenty-five by twenty-eight feet and stood on the site of the earlier meeting house. Its cost to the Quakers was about a thousand dollars. In 1875 the building was burned, was not rebuilt, and the Quakers were amalgamated with Methodists and other White Creek churches.

Across from the Red School House and adjacent to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph McCart is a church site marked by a New York State Education Department Shield which reads: A LOG CHURCH WHICH STOOD HERE WAS BURNED BY THE BRITISH DURING THE BATTLE OF WALLOOMSAC, AUGUST 16, 1777.

Although this historical marker does not so state, this was a Baptist church, the site of the original church of Elder Waite, who was later to form the Baptist Church at Waite's Corners.

From Benedict's History of the Baptists we excerpt: "In Cambridge a church was planted in 1772, by Elder William Wait, from Rhode Island." "It was at first called White's Creek; is situated near the line of Vermont, and within a half mile of Elder Wait's house, the Bennington Battle terminated."

Proof that this was a Baptist Church is found in the description of the road districts in the early records of Cambridge District where the old road from Cambridge to Little White Creek is described as terminating at the Baptist Church where it meets the road from St. Croix to White Creek.

Besides those mentioned there were several more of the early settlers we must not fail to note; among these was Asa Rice, who was abducted by Indians when three years old, and when ransomed at the age of ten was reluctant to leave the Indian life. He lived most of his long life in White Creek village.

Then there was Ebenezer Allen, a cousin of Pioneer John, who settled where Gordon and Harriet Byars now live. He took up arms with the patriots during the Revolution, and Quaker John, it is said, would not speak to him thereafter, saying: "Ebenezer has blood on his hands." Ebenezer Allen, while a Captain in the continental army and stationed at Pawlet, Vermont issued the first executive order of record directing the freeing of slaves: It reads, "Whereas Dinah Mattis a negro woman with Nancy her child of two month old was taken prisoner on Lake Champlain with the British troops I do therefore give the said Dinah and Nancy there

freedom. (signed) Ebenezer Allen, Captain.”

Simeon Covell lived in the village of White Creek in Colonial times and was elected the first supervisor of old Cambridge District. In the Revolution he formed a company of Loyalists and fought with General Burgoyne on the side of the British during the Battle of Bennington.

Many other families, not mentioned elsewhere, settled in or near the village prior to the Revolution and among these the following names appear: Jonathan Jacques; John Sweet; Allen, John, and Joseph Mosher; Benjamin, Joseph, and Howland Smith; Nathaniel and Francis Lucas; George Bowen; Isaac Perrine; David Gooding; Allen Briggs; Isaac Lacy; Benjamin Joslin; Elias Wheeler; Duty Sayles; Oliver Barber; John Barrett; John Corey; Arent Van Corlaer; Nicholas; John, James, and Thomas Lake; and Peter and Nicholas VanSuydam (or Surdam).

Elisha Southwick was an early store-keeper. His place of business was a few doors south of the J. and B. Merritt store and was, toward recent times, kept by the Randalls.

Dr. Sanford Smith preceded Dr. Richard as the village physician. Dr. Barnabus Smith practiced at about the same time as Dr. Richards.

Legal matters were handled by the village lawyers, Sider O. Carpenter and Judge Dyer Walworth.

CHAPTER IX

THE VILLAGE OF CAMBRIDGE AND ITS EARLY SETTLERS

In 1761 the Cambridge Patent was granted to Isaac Sawyer, Jacob Lansing and others, embracing 31,500 acres north of the Hoosick Land Grant. It was known as Sawyers and Lansing's Purchase, and included the Cambridge Valley of the Owl Kill, the northern two thirds of the present town of Cambridge and a portion of the present town of Jackson.

A village grew up on lot 9 of that tract or that portion of lot 9 that had belonged to James and Thomas Morrison. It developed at three crossroads; where the Lansingburg Turnpike intersected the road to Saratoga; where the Shunpike enters Cambridge three-quarters of a mile east of that, and where the Arlington or Anaquassacoke Turnpike crossed the Ashgrove and Pumpkin Hook Road a half mile further east. This last settlement was known as Dorr's Corners.

Prior to the Second War for Independence (The War of 1812) Cambridge was behind White Creek village in business enterprise, but in the years that followed, because of its more central location, its position on the Lansingburg Turnpike and the completion of the Troy and Rutland Railroad in 1852, it grew to be the chief village of the town.

Settlement of the village undoubtedly began in 1761, and by

1765 there had arrived a sufficient number of the Presbyterian persuasion to warrant sending to Scotland for a minister. Accordingly, the Rev. Mr. Telfair arrived the following year and preached to them. The old yellow meeting house which stood on a lot adjacent to the old burying ground on the turnpike just south of the village was their place of worship. It was not fully completed until 1783 and was built on land given by William Smith, an early Cambridge settler.

Ruel Beebe, an early settler, kept a tavern where the Presbyterian Church stands. Adonijah Skinner's Tavern, erected in 1795, stood on the opposite corner. It was subsequently raised an additional story in height in order to provide rooms for the Masonic Order, and this was said to have given the house a tall, quaint appearance. (See sketch on page 39) Major John Porter was its proprietor until about 1815, and it was afterwards known as Comstock's and lastly as the Fenton House. The four story brick hotel on the opposite corner was originally kept by James Furwell about 1840, later being known as the "Irving House."

In Colonial times a tavern was kept at the turnpike crossing by a Mr. Peters and later by Aaron Chase. In an illustration on Page 39 this hotel is shown as it appeared not long after the Civil War when it was known as the "Union Hotel", it having been much improved by the management of the Fentons. It was destroyed by fire in 1875.

Dr. Johathan Dorr came to Cambridge before the outbreak of the Revolution and built the elegant mansion, in Georgian style, which was subsequently owned by Dr. Henry C. Grey and the Andersons. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Randall,

acquired the house from the Anderson estate. This house has nine fireplaces; the woodwork throughout is of the finest craftsmanship and handmade moulding is generously used in the exterior. The door-way, a masterpiece of the woodworkers art, is said to have been much coveted by the late internationally famous architect, Sanford White, whose offer of a thousand dollars cash was refused for it. The house was completed in the year 1779.

This section of Cambridge was long known as Dorr's Corners, and Jeremiah Stillwell kept a mercantile establishment here in the pioneer days. Rice and Billings, also Eddy and Brown were merchants here.

On the site of the Brick Hotel was the former store of Paul Dennis who was also once Postmaster. Adinojah Skinner, the tavern keeper, was the first postmaster when that service began in 1797.

The Owl Kill and a small tributary of it flow through the village but afford no useful waterpower. For this reason the village did not develop as a mill center, as White Creek and Pumpkin Hook did, but seed factories, sash and blind factories, machine shops and other enterprises not dependent on water power substituted for these.

In 1836 S. W. Crosby was engaged in the seed business in the Tracy Building and a house at Dorr's Corners, the enterprise having been started in Coila by Simon Crosby in 1816. Roswell Rice was also in the seed business in Cambridge at this time. In 1844 R. Niles Rice, who had been working up a seed business in Salem, acquired the interests of Roswell Rice and the Crosbys,

and his son, Jerome B. Rice, shortly thereafter laid the foundation for the present business, the chief enterprise of the village. This concern employs a large number of men and women, and their product is sold throughout the United States.

John P. Putnam, a grandson of Israel Putnam, of Revolutionary War fame, came to Cambridge in 1812 and began the practice of law. In 1813 he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Dr. Dorr. Mr. Putnam owned the famous "Pitcairn pistols" which fired the first shots of the Revolution, They had been presented to his grandfather and were carried by him throughout his service in the War for Independence.

Towards the year 1840, a foundry was in operation on the site of the Presbyterian Church, run by S. W. Warner and Levi Tilton. It was moved to the site of Lovejoy's Blacksmith Shop, and the firm was known as Warner and Lovejoy. In 1861 the location was shifted to the banks of the White Creek east of Dorr's Corners. Here sawmill machinery was subsequently manufactured and shipped throughout the world.

The church history of the village of Cambridge is practically equivalent to a history of the village, so great was the role of the churches in the everyday life of the times. A difference among the Presbyterians in matters of ritual soon after the planting of the first church, which had been formally organized in 1769, resulted in a division of the original congregation into three separate bodies each of which built its own church edifice. The separation stemmed from the three distinct classes of early settlers. Says the Rev. M. S. Fales in his Historical Review of the Presbyterian Church: "There were the died-in-the-wool old Scotch-Irish Presbyterians; there were also Presbyterians whose

Presbyterianism had never been so rigid and was inclined to be still less so by reason of previous tarrying among the Puritans of the New England Colonies, and finally there were the New England Congregationalists or greatly modified Presbyterians”.

The first group to withdraw from the mother church organized the Coila church in 1785. The second defection broke away in 1792, These were the people of New England background and influence, and they built their house of worship on the site of the old Beebe tavern. The original edifice begun in 1792 gave way to a larger, more commodious building built in 1832, which still stands though not now used for church purposes. In 1872 they completed the building on the opposite side of the street from this former church, adjacent to the park, and this is their house of worship today.

The congregation which remained with the mother church organized according to law, January 7, 1785 under the name of "The First Protestant Presbyterian Congregation of Cambridge," and at some time not now ascertained, organized a church by the name of "The Associate Reformed Church of Cambridge," and in 1791 settled the Rev. John Dunlap as their minister. The old building on the turnpike becoming dilapidated, in 1845 it was abandoned, and the brick church in the village built.

The Embury Methodist Church of Cambridge village may properly claim to have had its origin in the second earliest Methodist Church in all America, Philip Embury's Ashgrove Church, which was planted in White Creek in 1770. The history of the Ashgrove body is detailed in our account of that part of the town in another chapter. In 1836 the Embury Church building was completed.

The Baptist Church of Cambridge was organized in July 1843 "This little band," says the Rev. Thomas Cull, "must have had great faith, for there were already five organized churches within about a square mile." In 1844 they built the church edifice in which they now worship.

St. Patrick's, the Catholic Church of Cambridge, had its origin in 1839 when the Rev. J. B. Daly celebrated mass in the house of James Connaughty. This body met from time to time in private homes, and in 1853 the Rev. Father Quigley began to build the present St. Patrick's church edifice completed in 1855.

The movement which resulted in the formation of the Episcopal church of Cambridge began in August 1866 with a meeting at Woodworth's Union Hall at which the Rev. Charles S. Hale, Rector of St. James Arlington, Vermont, officiated, The church edifice was completed in 1870, and the number of communicants has grown steadily year after year.

For the detailed historical background of the various Cambridge churches which our limited space does not permit of, the reader is urged to read, "An Account of Old Home Week, Cambridge, N. Y." published in 1916, bound with a blue board cover, available at the local libraries.

The Cambridge Public Library had its beginning on the 26th of January 1793 when forty-five of the leading citizens of Cambridge village met together and organized this time-honored institution, In 1802 its administration was taken over by the Cambridge Washington Academy, and after the passing of that institution, it was conducted in conjunction with the Union Free School District. Among the library's earliest subscribers we find

the following names: William Skinner, Philip Smith, William Wait, Peter Whiteside, John Forrest, William Cooper, William Hay, John Whiteside, Benjamin Cook, James Bell, Samuel Dennis, Caleb Gifford, Thomas Whiteside, Joseph Durham, William Macomber, Amos Freeman, Jeremiah Thomas, John Gifford, Asabel Duffy, Abijah Sherman, Isaiah Gogold, George Allen, Darias Bordwell, John Allen, William Whiteside, Thomas Ford, Amasiah Taber, John Dunlap, Calvin Skinner, Edward Whiteside, Daniel Beadle, George Barber, Mischall Beadle, Oliver Whiteside, John Crocker, Laban Allen, Samuel Cook, Oliver Sherman, Gerrit Ford, Saniel Thomas, and Paul Dennis.

Between 1818 and 1866 the part of Cambridge village east of the turnpike was known as North White Creek, the part east of that continued under the old name of Cambridge.

After White Creek was set off as a separate town in 1816, a separate post office was established which brought about the change of name. Copies of the Washington County Post printed between these years carry the North White Creek dateline.

When the village was incorporated in 1866, it was possible to return to the original name.

The division of the town in 1816 brought about some ill feelings among the older inhabitants, those for and against; but of this old controversy no bitterness survives today.

The Washington County Post; the oldest weekly newspaper in the United States with continuous publication, is a White Creek institution. This newspaper's right to claim an unbroken

succession to the first successful newspaper published in Washington County in the year 1768 cannot be challenged. The Times and National Courier was acquired by the Washington Patrol, which was printed on the same press and from the same type. The name was changed to the Northern Centinel, then to the Northern Post and then to the Washington County Post. The publication has endured week after week for one hundred and seventy two years; its name has been changed from time to time as has its place of publication, and many are those who have occupied the editorial chair. On the map (page 62) the printing office of the Post is indicated on the south side of the street where the railroad crosses Main. Its publisher at that time was Mr. R. K. Crocker. On November 17th, 1865 it was acquired by Mr. James S. Smart, who for a time published the paper along with Henry Noble. In 1875 the Post moved into the building it occupies today. About 1933 Charles John Stevenson became the editor. In the fall of 1959 Gardner Cullinan who had succeeded Mr. Stevenson acquired the paper and is its present editor and publisher.

The White Creek Historical Booklet has been produced in the plant of The Post, using the litho process, Mr. Cullinan having recently equipped his plant for this type of work.

CHAPTER X

SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN GENERALLY; MORE CROWN LANDS GRANTED; LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZED

In the preceding chapters we told of the growth of the villages of White Creek and Cambridge and how from the year 1761 through the Revolutionary War period they came to be flourishing communities. In the meantime there had been no idling with respect to inhabiting the interior of town; even the more hilly and isolated portions yielded to the forward push of the pioneers. Soon the town was crisscrossed by about a dozen crude byways; some no more than paths, over which the pioneers traveled by horseback or in their oxcarts. In many a secluded nook in the White Creek Taconic hills, the smoke could be seen lifting skyward from the great stone fireplaces of the log homes. Most of these early settlers were of Scotch-Irish stock, and they were perfectly at home in this hilly country so similar in many ways to the highlands of their native land.

The settlement of the town had been undertaken as early as 1650-60. Many had withdrawn to safer places down river during the perilous French War period; others had somehow braved it out. Of those who had left, some now returned and made a fresh start. Those who had remained, relieved of anxiety; redoubled their efforts;

The Tioshoke village which had been burned was now rebuilt and took the new name Buskirk's Bridge.

The Sancroick settlement was rapidly reestablished. At Buskirk's, Martin Van Buskirk, the leading citizen at this time, built a tavern on the White Creek side, a stopping place which gained wide reputation. Several enterprises were established there at this time - Carpenter's store did a thriving business; The grist mill and saw mill were not idle, but the business interests have long since been transferred to the Rensselaer County side.

The grants of Crown Lands through 1761 have been described in preceding chapters. These were the Hoosick, Walloomsac, Van Corlaer & Lake, and the Cambridge. Now the remaining lands were being sought. In 1762 the Annaquassacoke Grant was confirmed to Ryer Schermerhorn and Johannes Quackenbush. This lay in the north part of town.

In October of 1763 King George issued a proclamation that entitled officers and soldiers of the old French Wars to draw parcels of the Crown Lands in America. The usual fees, which had long been the source of graft and corruption among the Colonial authorities, were to be waived. A field officer might draw as many as four thousand acres; a Captain, three thousand. Lieutenants or other sub-altern commissioned officers were entitled to two thousand, but sergeants or corporals could have only two hundred and privates a mere fifty.

The New York authorities parceled out the remaining wild lands in White Creek to the former military men by the name of Gregor, Grant, Campbell, Bain, Gordon, Small, Hepburn and M had served in the Regiments of the Scottish Highlanders, who

drew their allotments. The Embury and Wilson Grant in the northeast part of town confirmed during this time does not appear to have been of military origin.

Several of these military tracts overlapped grants which had been made by the New Hampshire authorities (who claimed that region also) and led eventually to a bitter controversy which involved some of the White Creek settlers. All this we shall come to shortly, but first more about those families who were moving onto the Grants.

Toward the 1770's three brothers from Dutchess County; Aaron, John and William Perry bought four hundred acres of the VanCorlaer & Lake Patent. This they at first held in common. For a time they occupied a log house which stood on the north side of the present James Harrington home. The old well was discovered several years ago by Maurice Perry beneath a stone wall fence not more than a dozen yards from the highway.

The Perry homestead is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Perry and was probably framed and raised by the brothers during their first two or three years here. When the property was divided, Aaron remained on the homestead and William took the Farm east of the log house and built his homestead a few rods north of the present Harrington House, the former James place. John left White Creek to live in Lansingburg.

Aaron, who was a soldier in the Revolution and fought in the Battle of Bennington married Anna Hoag, the daughter of Amos Hoag, an early settler of Pumpkin Hook. Their children were

Israel B. who built the house where Wilfred Robertson lives, Mary who married Moses Bristol, Lydia who married Anthony Hart; Isaac died young; Elizabeth settled in White Creek, Lucinda married and settled in Post Corners; Deborah-Mrs. Levi Bristol; Phoebe - Mrs. Peleg Fisher; Arvilla and Ruth, successive wives of James F. Telford; Patience died young, Angelina died young.

William's children were Delevan, Philene - Mrs. Jonathan Fowler; Ovando settled on the homestead; Juliette-Mrs. David Fisher; Cornelia, and William I. Perry, son of Elihu, grandson of Aaron.

John Younglove, for many years a judge of the court of Common Pleas in Albany and later in Washington counties, lived in the Perry neighborhood. Younglove incurred the animosity of James Parrot; a White Creek loyalist, when he, in his legal capacity, directed the confiscation of the latter's property under the law whereby loyalists forfeited their holdings to the state. Parrot went to Canada, but in 1787 returned to White Creek to bring back his brother-in-law, John Lake and family. At this time, it is said, Parrot made a murderous attack on Younglove, entering his home and shooting him. The wound, however, was not fatal, and Younglove subsequently sold to Dr. Sanford Smith and moved to Jackson.

Aaron and William Perry acquired the Younglove property from the Sanfords in 1802, also the Searles and Swift farms which adjoined it. Younglove's old home was burned during the Revolution, and the large farmhouse which stands here now was erected by Israel Brayton Perry in 1862. The old Dutch style house which stood on the Searles part of this farm was taken down about this time. The Searles family have already been

mentioned as among the earliest settlers in Sanicroick.

The David Sprague family from Rhode Island came about 1771 and settled on the farm now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Andrew. He sold to his brother-in-law Joshua Gardner of Argyle, in 1794. Sprague was Supervisor of Cambridge District in 1776, and later, a magistrate. Joshua Gardner built the present brick house in 1813, a splendid example of the elegant trend in

Early American architecture.

The Cottrell family, whose several homesteads are in the VanNess hill locality were probably among those very early settlers who came in before the end of the French Wars, The present homes of Mr. and Mrs. Emory Clark and Mr. and Mrs. William Perry were the S. T. Cottrell and Nathaniel Cottrell homesteads.

Austin Wells, a son of Edmund Wells, the pioneer of Cambridge patent, settled in White Creek just south of Cowden's Checkered House tavern. The Wells mansion is one of White Creek's architectural treasures.

Austin Wells was a Revolutionary soldier and served in the Battles of Bennington and Oriskany: The "Wheel House", the Edmund Wells homestead, is not of White Creek, being on the west side of the turnpike and hence in Cambridge but part of that farm is in our town. The stocks and pillories of Colonial Times, used for punishing wrongdoers were located across the road from this house on the White Creek side.

The Preston family were very early settlers; by 1770 or even

earlier, along the old road from Cambridge to White Creek. This old highway, of which scant trace remains today, forked to the south from the Ashgrove Road; about a mile east of Cambridge, surmounted the Barber Hills, passed Lewis Hunt's present home (the old Hoag Place), out his lane, crossing the Shaker Hollow Briggs Corners Road, thence across fields belonging to Florence and Julia Niles; then over the Taber Brothers fields, Crossing the Quaker Hill Road between Jones' and Tabers; through the fields now owned by Gordon Byers, then across the present Rice farm, joining the present main road at James McCarts.

In a letter written by Miss Julia Niles to Jared VanWagenen Jr. January 18; 1941, substantiating theirs as a "Century Farm" of New York; Miss Niles a great-great-great granddaughter of Levi Preston writes of that family as follows: "The farm here at Preston's Corner, Washington County; on which Mother and Father, Mr. and Mrs Herbert J; Niles live; has been held in the family over a century. Of course, I understand it dates back farther on the Preston side, but I haven't the records or dates at present. My great-great-great grandfather, Levi Preston, lived here at the time of the Revolutionary War. While he was away at war, it has been told that his wife, Deliverance Mosher Preston, with ear to the ground, could hear the cannon. Levi Preston didn't come home. He was burned in a church down the Hudson River, where he and others were driven by the enemy".

"Their daughter; Hannah Preston, married Elijah Slocum, and their daughter, Mary, married Jonathan Niles who was my father's grandfather on his mother's side. Jonathan's brother Samuel was my father's grandfather on his father's side".

“On our farm there is quite a large Preston cemetery. My father remembers one stone that had a record on it. The name was Othineal Preston, Died Aug. 1777. That stone has disappeared. The other stones haven't any names or records.

Elder William Waite mentioned previously in connection with planting the Baptist Church near White Creek village in 1772 (across from the Barker Schoolhouse) obtained a sizable tract of land about that time at what has since been called Waite's Corners or Center White Creek. He gave the land for the cemetery and the Baptist Church which was then transferred there from its former situation in 1788.

Hercules Rice from Worcester, Mass., settled near Waite's Corners towards the close of the Revolution and lived on a farm although his trade was blacksmithing. He set up a saw-mill between this place and Post's Corners about 1790.

About a half mile south of the Corners was a grist mill run by James Hay about the same time as Rice's sawmill. These enterprises have long since been abandoned, but the Rice mill-site can be seen a few rods south of the highway as one travels towards White Creek village.

Zerah and Eza Waite were storekeepers. Zerah lived next to the church, now the Moscrip residence. A tavern was kept on the opposite corner by Ishmael Gardner and later by McConough Cornell. Next to this was Jonathan Hart's shoe shop. The post office was kept at W. P. Fowler's between the shoe shop and the hotel. Of these institutions none remain today.

The Fowler family were well represented in this part of town

from earliest times. The homestead built by Abel Fowler is now the Dibble residence.

About a mile west (should be "east") of Center White Creek is Post's Corners; named for a town physician who resided there. A store was kept here for a short time, and there was a post office (discontinued in 1866), the storekeeper, James Hay, being the Postmaster. The Methodist Church stood a few yards to the rear of the late Mr. Gooding's home. The Kenyon family settled in this vicinity;

Once a very thriving section of town but now a thing of the past, is Pumpkin Hook, the proper name for which is Pompanac, the site of a Pequot Indian village. This place had excellent water-power facilities for the needs of the times, and a mill center of consequence sprang up here. There was a saw mill on the stream here before 1770 much resorted to by the pioneers. They could draw their saw-logs to this mill and return by way of the Dwinnell lime kiln for a barrel of plaster lime, then another stop at then Cornell trip-hammer mill for nails, and they were ready to put up a house. Pumpkin Hook had the Leonard Darby machine shop where equipment for early Massachusetts Cotton Mills was manufactured. A woolen mill here was run by J. Gordon.

Frank Crocker operated a distillery. At other shops, clocks and combs were manufactured. The old woolen mill was dismantled and the framework moved to Cambridge where a store; since gone, was erected opposite the Brick Hotel. The chair factory at Pumpkin Hook was run by Mr. John Warren. A sketch of this appears on page A42. The names of persons living at Pumpkin Hook more than a century ago are: J. R. Warren, J.

Madison, D. A. Lambert, W. Monroe, J. McCumber, S. Broadway and W. Pierce.

Thomas Ashton from Ballingran, Ireland, settled in 1769 in that part of White Creek since known as Ashgrove. He had been associated with the Wesleyan movement in Ireland and was greatly moved by the fervor of John Wesley. By an unusual coincidence Philip Embury, the earliest exponent of Methodism in America, had a large grant of land in the north part of White Creek. The two men met and straightway planted a Methodist Church in the Ashton neighborhood, the second such church in America (1770), the first having been founded in New York City by the same Mr. Embury in 1766, The writer's great-great grandfather, Samuel Draper, a Methodist circuit preacher, preached at Ashgrove in 1810-11; 1819-20; 1822-24.

Very nearly in the center of town is the neighborhood known as Shaker Hollow. William Ellis who lived here was of the New Lebanon Shaker settlement and hence the name. The Russell family were well represented in this locality at an early date, and the Betsy Russell house, now Mr. and Mrs. Hall's home, was built toward the close of the Revolution.

In the northeast corner of town is the Black Hole Hollow neighborhood, a secluded and picturesque locality lying along a narrow valley of the North White Creek between the Taconic hills. Its early settlers were of Scotch-Irish stock, the McKie, McCabe, Harrington, Hodges families, among others. It is not to be doubted that these families had been identified in the old country with the "Black Hall" party, and that the name of the settlement was originally Black Hall Hollow signifying that its inhabitants had been of that old Scottish order.

By 1772 the outlying regions of Albany County had become so populous that the legislature felt pressed to provide a form of local government for the settlers. Accordingly, the county was broken up into districts and Cambridge District, which included the present towns of White Creek, Jackson and Cambridge, was organized. Shaftsbury and part of Arlington in Vermont were included. The eastern bounds of the County or even the State were for many years indefinite-and until Vermont became a state in 1791, a contest had for many years existed between New Hampshire and New York over territorial rights.

The first town meeting was held in May of 1773 at the home of Archibald McVicar a half mile east of Wait's Corners.

White Creek was very aware of its identity as a community even at this early date and agitated for separate status, but was held as a part of Cambridge until 1816. "At a special meeting of the inhabitants of White Creek, February 1, 1775" it is recorded in the old records, "voted to petition the Assembly to set off from Cambridge".

The number of road districts during 1772 - 82 had increased from thirteen to twenty-eight, and in the following ten years to forty eight, an indication of the rapid growth of the town.

UNEXPLORED CAVES - LEAD AND SILVER MINES

The Taconic hills of White Creek may yet disclose valuable

mineral ores. A mine of silver and lead was discovered in 1848 by Samuel Chase while digging a post hole on the old Noxon farm in the Perry neighborhood. The vein assayed twenty-two percent silver but was difficult to work. Chase worked it, gave up and sold to Charles Tripp. Tripp sold to Bruitt & Kane, mining engineers, who sunk a shaft but gave it up as unprofitable about 1880 and it is not known to have been worked since. At one time there were promising signs of iron ore in town.

The underground cavern which lies partly within the Taber and partly within the Rice farms has probably never been explored beyond its first chamber. This spot was formerly much resorted to by picnickers but because of the breaking away of the rock formations which makes entering the cave much more dangerous than formerly, it is seldom visited today.

CHAPTER XI

YORKERS AND VERMONTERS CLASH, WHITE CREEK AND THE REVOLUTION

In 1765 Duncan McVicar of the 55th Scottish Highlanders drew his military grant of two thousand acres of White Creek land. He purchased an additional three thousand acres of brother officers and brought it all together to form the Durham and Clarendon Manor of White Creek and Shaftsbury. This tract and others granted under New York authority overlapped patents given by Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire.

Under the Charter given to the Duke of York by Charles II in 1644, the New York colony extended to the Connecticut River, but the New York authorities had compromised with Massachusetts and Connecticut, agreeing to honor a line twenty miles east of Hudson River. New Hampshire claimed a similar western extension and without reaching a formal agreement with New York as Massachusetts and Connecticut had done, Governor Wentworth proceeded to issue Patents to the land beyond the Green Mountains, From 1749 to 1763 he issued 163 such grants.

Shortly settlers from both colonies began moving onto the same lands. Settler strove with settler over the validity of their titles. The two governors sent protests back and forth. In

desperation they asked the King to rule on the question. His decision favored the Yorkers, but the Vermont settlers refused to get off the land or pay for it a second time in order to remain.

Duncan McVicar's daughter Anna wrote that the "conversation" of these people was tainted with "Cromwellian politics," and that they "refused to be slaves to arbitrary power" In 1770 McVicar, alarmed at the widespread declaration of "Republicanism" embarked for Scotland leaving his Clarendon and Durham manor in charge of his friend and countryman John Munro of Shaftsbury Hollow.

Munro accepted an appointment as Justice of the Peace under New York authority and undertook to protect McVicar's interest but to no avail. Sheriff Ten Eyck of Albany with the King's Writs was equally helpless and met the first open rebellion to Royal authority that was expressed anywhere in the American Colonies. Just as war between the two provinces seemed imminent the Revolution broke out and the controversy was put aside in the common interest.

The Revolution in White Creek as elsewhere had all the elements of Civil War. Families were divided in their loyalty, brothers were hostile to brothers. Mutual distrust was everywhere and many an individual suspect. At Seth Chase's tavern, a party of visitors from Kinderhook, it is said, "feigned Tory sentiments" in order to test the local people. When the White Creek men learned that their visitors were from Kinderhook, they accused them of not merely feigning such sentiments, but of being Tories in truth, for they had heard that locality was a loyalist nest.

Nonetheless there was a sizable body of loyalist feeling in White Creek although it did not even begin to match the sentiment that favored the cause of liberty.

Simeon Covell of White Creek, Cambridge District Supervisor formed a company of loyalists and fought on the side of the British during the Burgoyne invasion.

On August 15, 1777, the day before the Battle of Bennington, Lt. Col. Baum skirmished with several White Creek settlers near Waite's Corners.

The Bennington Battlefield Bronze Map (see page 63) charts the action of this engagement in the four towns where it took place viz., White Creek, Hoosick, Shaftsbury and Bennington. The fiercest phase of the battle was the fighting on Jewett's Cobble which opened with an assault by Col. Nichols detachment approached from the White Creek side. The old well where Nichols' men paused to refresh themselves is pointed out today in a field on the Donald George farm.

Benedict in his history of the Baptists says: "During the battle some of the members of Elder Waite's Church went over to the enemy and during the bloody conflict the heavens and the earth witnessed the shocking spectacle of brethren, who, but a few days before had set together at the table of the Lord, arraigned in direful hostility against each other amidst the clangor of arms and the rage of battle. Brother fighting against brother! Such are the horrors and unnatural effects of war 'O tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon' This melancholy affair threw the church into confusion and entirely broke it up."

In spite of Burgoyne's careless reference to this defeat as "the affair at Sancoick's Bridge" it has been appraised by Bancroft and other historians as the true turning point of the Revolution. Here, then, the fates decreed those movements of men to occur that were to shape the nation's destiny. What had the fortunes of war been reversed? If the sought-for supplies had fallen to the British, would Saratoga have been won or lost?

CHAPTER XII

STAGECOACH DAYS-TURNPIKES & COVERED BRIDGES

From the close of the Revolution through the first half of the 1800's White Creek enjoyed its period of greatest progress. During this time the rural areas of the town became more densely populated than they have been at any time since.

In 1799 the Northern Turnpike Company was formed. This company built an improved road from Lansingburg through Cambridge to Granville which connected near Hampton with a similar road to Burlington, Vermont. Until the railroad was built through White Creek in 1852 it was the chief means of communication, north and south. Over it passed endless processions of teams with the settlers produce bound for the markets in Lansingburg. The coaches-and-four kept regular schedules and Inns along the route made for the passengers comfort.

A log tavern had been built on the "Great Road" three miles south of Cambridge by James Cowden in 1763. In 1775 he replaced the log house with a commodious frame building, and paint having been recently introduced, did the exterior in red and white squares resembling a checker-board. The turn pike followed the "Great Road" past the Cowden tavern which

became known as the "Checkered House." Cowden and his successors the Longs gained such a reputation for their hospitality that the query "How far to the Checkered House" was often heard.

In April 1816 Cambridge, which had been annexed to Washington County was subdivided to form the additional towns of White Creek and Jackson. The turnpike became the dividing line.

The first covered bridge was built at Buskirk's in 1804. At Eagle Bridge the crossing had always been made by ferry in summer and on ice in winter. In 1818 John King organized a company which built a pontoon bridge at this point but the following year Joe and Dave Niles, the White Creek drovers, returning from the west with a large herd of cattle, could not prevent the rush of the herd across the bridge which collapsed when the animals stampeded. In 1825 the Hoosick and White Creek Bridge Company spanned the stream at this point with a covered bridge.

Joe and Dave Niles were born on a farm in the west part of the town of Shaftsbury. In the year 1840 they moved into the village of White Creek, Dave having married a daughter of Paul Cornell and taken up his residence in the old Cornell mansion.

Fabulous tales of the exploits of the Niles Brothers are told to this day in White Creek and Shaftsbury. During the first half of the century they became virtually the "land barons" of the two towns; buying all the property they could lay hands on to further their speculative interest in land and cattle.

They followed the colorful life of the drover. They traveled on horseback and paid for their cattle in currency. Because they could buy more cheaply with gold than with bills, they carried a considerable amount of gold in their saddlebags. There would be about ten men and all with revolvers. They didn't fear being robbed. In fact, of the two, they solicited trouble rather than avoiding it.

They would get to Wyoming County in early April buying cattle and paying for them on the spot. They would say to the farmers "we can get these cattle when we come back for them whether you are home or not". They rode away with no thought of coming after the animals for two months. When they did come in many instances, the farmers tried to collect for the pasturing. If he locked his gate they tore down his fences and drove the cattle into the road.

There was always an advance agent who rode ahead of the drive to notify the taverns that the Nileses would be there that night. He warned residents to keep their gates shut, to get men and boys out to prevent the animals from trespassing - and if they did trespass, land owners were seldom paid for it. There were drover laws - you had no right to stop these drovers. Their arrangements were made ahead and they must reach their destination that night. If your cattle got in their herd you had to wait until night to look them up.

Sheep husbandry was introduced into White Creek on an industrial scale about 1810, and by 1850 the combined flocks numbered as high as forty thousand animals. Cambridge became a mart for wool second to no place in the country. Some of the pure blooded Merino stock from White Creek are said to have

been shipped to Australia marking the beginning of the sheep industry on that continent,

Mrs. Sarah Hanna in the northeast part of town had a single flock of more than three thousand animals. The hilly districts afforded extensive and excellent pasturage. Stephen Barker and Simeon Sweet had two thousand. The McKies, G. Barber, and J. Lake had flocks of nearly a thousand.

The creamery established in White Creek village in 1877 by J.B. Jermain of Albany was a boon to the farms of the town and was a great loss to the community when it was destroyed by fire in 1927.

Garner Wilkinson, an earlier proprietor of the Reed's Hotel, did manufacturing also. In his woodworking shop were made coach bodies, ax handles, scythe snaths, etc.

Sylvanus Taber who came to White Creek as a shoemaker in 1803 subsequently established a mitten factory and tannery in the village which employed a number of people and provided a market for hides.

Stephen, a son of Sylvanus, followed the same trade as his father and continued the mitten factory after his father's death in 1848. The enterprise was abandoned about 1885.

Sylvanus Taber's old account books reveal the names of some of White Creek's residents during stagecoach times, among them the following; Warren Bunker, Henry H. Burrington, Elias Huntington, Martin Mann, Ashley Witherell, Ebenezer Allen, George Joslin, Tappan March, Stephen Williams, Harmon

Cornell, James Houghton, Joseph Richards, Levi Bristol, Reeman Whiteny, Henry Cotton, Christopher Allen, Benjamin Perrine, Joseph Stewart, George Richards, Solomon Fuller, Gilbert Allen, Benjamin Orcutt, Norman Harden, Wesson Cornell, Luther Ford, Andrew Cole, Johnson Sewart, Sylvia Burt, Sylvester Stewart, Ann Fisher, John March, Samuel Gross, William Duncomb, Burdick Allen, Paul Cornell, John Stevens, John Allen, Ezra Lamb, William Richards, Christopher Dexter, David Mosher, Benjamin Wheeler, Seneca Mosher, Abraham Hazelton, Joshua Gardner, John Mattison, Theodore Welch, John Brooks, Silas Palmer, Benjamin Merritt, Joseph Niles, and Hiram Chase.

The White Creek village Harness Shop is pictured on page 47, an essential service indeed in those days of horse-drawn vehicles.

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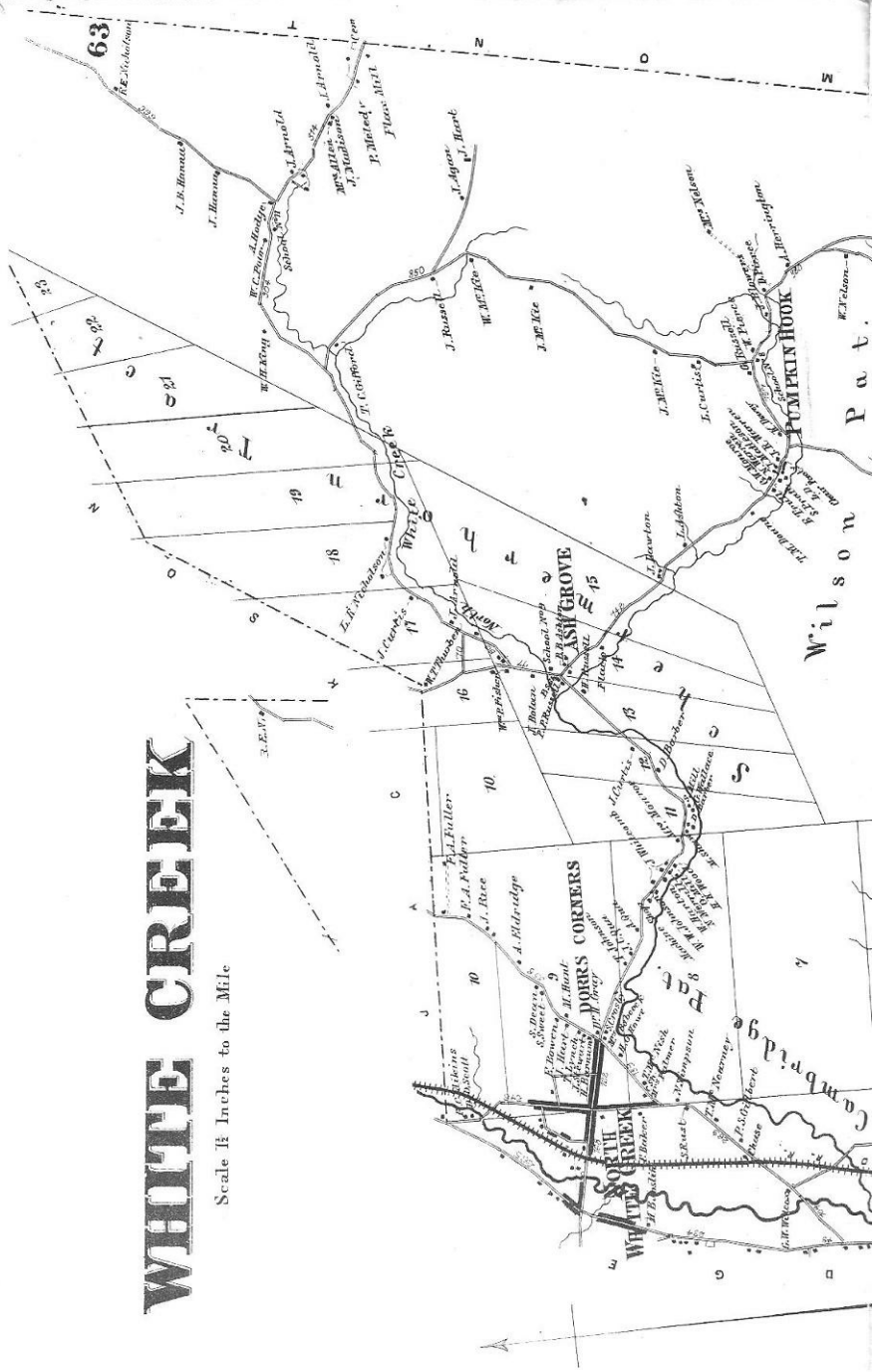
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**CENTERFOLD MAP FROM 1866
BEERS ATLAS**

WHITE CREEK

Scale 1/2 Inches to the Mile



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EARLY WHITE CREEK HOUSES— SOME NOTES AND PICTURES

Pages 50, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60 we devote to pictures of twenty-six White Creek houses built by the early settlers. The greater number of the houses shown exhibit the plain, sturdy lines that characterize the work of Colonial and Early American builders, as the Wilcox-Lake house (16), the Ebenezer Allen house (4), and the Isaac Wood house (15).

Still others are splendid examples of architectural elegance. In this group might be cited the Jonathan Dorr house (10), the Austin Wells house (20), the Hodges house (7), and the John Allen house (1A).

The especial charm of still another group lies in their unique and quaint appearance. The VanCurler-Lake house (1), the Zebulon Allen house (6), and the William Richards house (18) fall in this group.

It is not merely the antiquarian who falls under the spell of these old White Creek houses, so appealing are they with their wide board floors, brick ovens, fireplaces, cranes, trammels, batten doors, cross doors, L and H hinges, wrought iron latches, strap hinges, pintels, Parson's cupboards and so on and on.

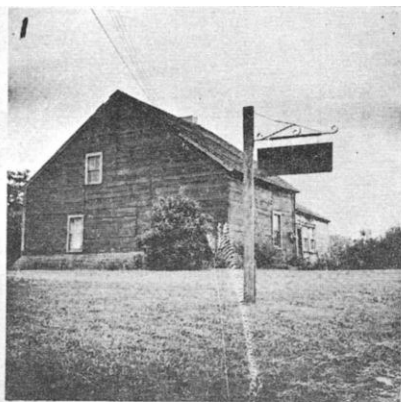
Notes on these houses follow, keyed by number to the illustrations.

(1) VANCURLER-LAKE HOUSE-1711. Built by the fur trader, Arent VanCorlaer, for a trading post. Eastern half entirely of virgin pine boards; exterior covered with land-shaved clapboards up to 16 inches wide. Interior in hand planed sheathing up to two feet wide. Post and beam construction. Beamed ceilings. Floors of two-inch splined plank.

(2) CENTER HOUSE-c.1750. On White Creek-Eagle Bridge Road, first fork east of Route #22. House has beamed ceilings and steep roof in the Dutch tradition. Most likely this house was built for one of the patroons of the Hoosick Patent.

(3) EDWARD AIKEN HOUSE—1761. Frame house with brick exterior. Brick was handmade and baked on the premises. Much interesting wrought iron hardware. House is now owned by Harold Taber.

(4) EBENEZER ALLEN HOUSE-1765. Quaint curved staircase and original corner cupboards are features. The north ell of this house has very low ceilings, typical of these early times. A great deal of this house is original, as doors, hardware, floors, etc. It now is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Byars and Mrs. Howard Robinson.



(5) AARON PERRY HOUSE-c.1770 Small house in the Cape Cod style. Retains its original floors held in place with large headed hand-made nails. Has several cross doors, batten doors and original wrought iron hardware. Present home of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Perry.

(6) ZEBULON ALLEN HOUSE-c.1770- Quaint colonial, hugs the ground, has double pitched roof and front overhang. Unusual wrought iron hinges and doors. Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Fillmore.

(1A) JOHN ALLEN HOUSE-c.1770.Almost entirely original. Rear ell has central cooking fireplace of very broad dimensions. Thick doors are hung with strap hinges. All fine craftsmanship throughout. Has quaint front porch. Present home of Atwood Qua.

(7) HODGES HOUSE-c.1770. Spacious house with original wrought iron hardware, wide board floors, several fine fireplaces and one such has quaint Parson's cupboards. Exterior clapboards are original with original hand-made nails. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Cuneo.

(8) HARRINGTON HOUSE-1768. Part of house originally stood near forks of two stagecoach roads a half mile east. Extensive additions have been made since photo shown, but the owners, Mr. and Mrs. J.F.C. Bryce have faithfully preserved all its original features. Fireplace and brick oven, old doors and floors, wrought iron work, all are intact.

(9) CHRISTOPHER ALLEN HOUSE-c. 1772. original features of this house have been carefully preserved by present

and former owners. Has second floor ballroom with arched ceilings. Construction is on two levels. Much use of paneling throughout. Wrought iron hardware is original. Residence of Miss Myra Jones.

(10) JONATHAN DORR HOUSE- 1779. Elegant Georgian style with exquisite handcrafting, Palladian window and pilastered entrance are features. Has nine fire-places including a cooking fireplace in basement. Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Randall.

(11) BENNETT HOUSE AND HOTEL-1775 and 1840. North part is a very old house which was remodeled and added to by Joe and Dave Niles about 1840 to provide a hall for public functions. Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Bennett.

(12) BOWEN HOUSE-c.1765. This is the old Seth Chase tavern. Ceilings have summer beams and several rooms are done in hand planed sheathing. Wrought iron work and old doors. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Donald George.

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(13) VANBENBURGH HOUSE-c.1780. This house was built by a descendant of one of the earliest settlers of the Sancroick Community. Has old fireplace masonry. Quaint rear part may be considerably older than the date given.

(14) FOWLER HOUSE-c.1785. Built by Abel Fowler from Rhode Island. House has many interesting points but the kitchen fireplace is perhaps its highlight. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Condit Dibble.

(15) SISSON HOUSE-1787. This house was built by J. and B. Merritt, White Creek merchants. One of the few houses to have survived modern times completely unchanged except for the modern conveniences. Masonry work in fireplaces and chimney has the master's touch Home of Mr. and Mrs. George Lobdell.

(16) WILCOX-LAKE HOUSE-c.1788. Built by Noah Wilcox who operated a triphammer mill adjacent to it. Some handmade block moulding under eaves is a feature.

(17) BETSY RUSSELL HOUSE-c.1789. House has its original massive fireplaces. Building is undergoing repairs. Mr. and Mrs. Hall are the present owners.

(18) DR. WILLIAM RICHARDS HOUSE-1798. This house is one of the town's best preserved. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy who own it, have furnished the house in the best of good taste. Photo shows quaint earlier portion. Fireplaces, floors, hardware, etc., all have Early American charm.

(19) WOOD—BARKER HOUSE-c.1804. The old Isaac Wood house. Possibly kept as an Inn by him at one time. Very

substantial fireplace with brick oven. This house has been carefully preserved in its original style by both its present and former owners. It is the home of Mr. and Mrs. James McCart.

(20) AUSTIN WELLS HOUSE-c.1805. Built by Austin, son of Edmund Wells, a Cambridge District pioneer. This house is magnificent, shows master craftsmanship.

(21) SPRAGUE—GARDNER HOUSE-1771 and 1813. The house David Sprague built in 1771 was moved to the rear when the brick house was erected in 1813. The older structure is still doing duty as a farm implement building. The brick house was built by Joshua Gardner who bought the property in 1794. This house is one of great excellence. Brick was baked on the premises and some of these show the impress of the feet of livestock, sheep, goats, cattle, geese, etc. which had stepped in the soft clay before the bricks were baked.

13



16



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(22) SQUIRE LAKE HOUSE-c.1820. The major part of this house is of post and beam construction similar to the old VanCurler-Lake house where Squire Lake was born in 1790. It is quite possible that the western portion is of a much earlier date, c.1775. Beamed ceilings, old hardware and doors are in evidence here. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood.

(23) VANRENSELAER-MOSES HOUSE-c.1820. Grandma Moses old home. Acquired from the original patentees of the Hoosick Grant. Probably stands on the site of an earlier house.

(24) NILES—DEAN HOUSE-c.1780. Home of John Allen Jr., the hatter, originally. Later belonged to Walter Niles who made some changes in interior. House has exquisite interior woodwork of rare design. Floors are mostly wide boards of random width and beautifully redone. Fireplace uses original native marble. It is now the home of Miss Marion Dean of Barnard School for Girls in New York City.

(25) PAUL CORNELL HOUSE-c.1772. We devote a full page (p.50) to reproduce an old photograph of this house, which was the home of Paul Cornell, White Creek pioneer business man. This house is a shrine for White Creek Masons, a room having been set aside for their use during Colonial times by Mr. Cornell. The house has fine interior work and fireplaces. The exterior has a fine Palladian window.

19



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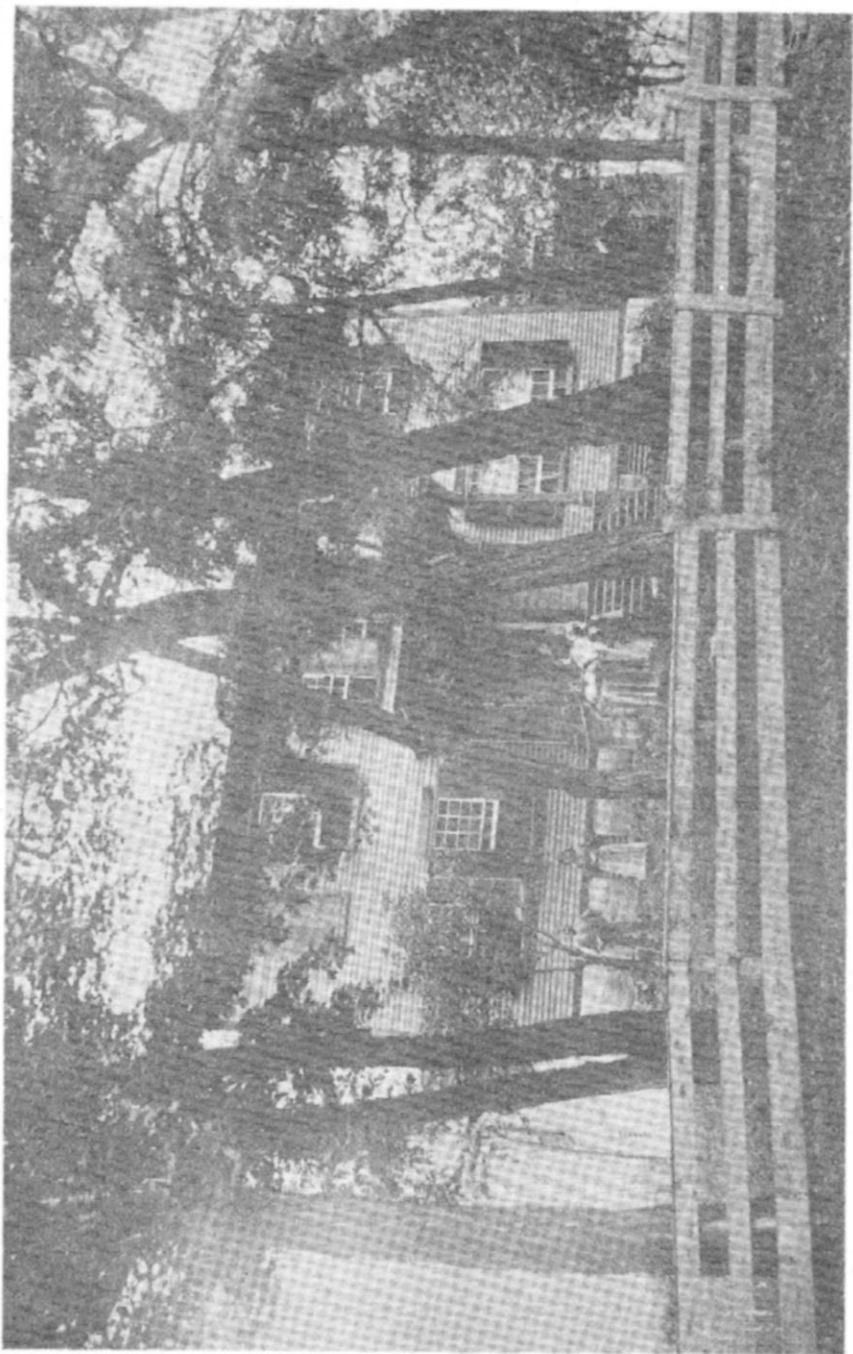


24





(1A)



Paul Cornell House, White Creek

(25)

SOME OF THE SCHOOLS THAT USED TO BE-NOTES AND PICTURES

On page 44 is a sketch of the old Union Academy of White Creek which was established in 1810 by the subscription of the principal men of the village and vicinity. It was a flourishing institution for nearly half a century and there were many persons of note who received their basic schooling there, The building was a two-story structure atop which was a belfry. Downstairs were two rooms, one of which was used for the district school.

A complete list of notable persons who attended the Academy has never been compiled. The following list gives the reader an idea of the attainments of some of its graduates: Former Governor George N. Briggs of Massachusetts (who was also a Member of Congress); Senator Joel Talmage; Judge Daniel B. Talmage and Judge Olin who lived in Washington D, C. Hon. Gideon Hard; Prof. Gilbert Morgan of Hampden College; Hon. John McDonald and John P. McVicar of Salem.

This was the first free academy in the State of New York, all costs being met by the subscribers and access to the school was free to all who might benefit from it. The names of the subscribers now follow: Christopher Allen, Ebenezer Dwinells, Henry Smith Jr., Abner Lake, Abraham Smith, Jonathan Woodward, John Barrett, Jeremiah Hoyle-, Elias Huntington, Paul Cornell, David Gooding, Benjamin Joslin, Jeremiah Wheat, Garret S. Lake Samuel Bowen, John Barber, William Perry,

Joseph Lucas, Elias Wheeler, Thomas Hart, Duty Sayles, Joseph Stewart, John Allen Jr., Dr. William Richards, Allen Briggs, Jacques Johnson, Oliver Barber, Benjamin Smith, Isaac Lacy, Gilbert Allen, Joseph Cornell, Elihu Cross, Samuel Cross, Jedediah Wood, Joshua Gardner, John Matthews and Garner Wilkinson.

On page 45 are pictured five of the old district schools. The town once had thirteen. The district schools are now a thing of the past but a few still stand, and even one is still in use – perhaps for a year or two more.

Top (left) the old red schoolhouse Barker's Corner (right) District No. 2 in the northeast part of town. (center) White Creek village common school lower (left) the Posts Corners School, (right) Checkered House Dist.



SOME NOTES AND PICTURES RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS BODIES IN WHITE CREEK

The history of the White Creek Church bodies has been presented in the chapters of the general text.

On the following page we picture a few structures which still stand and which played a part in the early religious movements of various denominations in the town. Three of the buildings shown are no longer used for religious purposes.

Pictured at the top of the page (left) is the Jermain Methodist Church, built in 1796 by subscription of the leading men in White Creek village for a place of worship of those of various faiths. The Union House as it was called, was at first used chiefly by the Baptists, later by both, and now it is devoted exclusively to Methodist worship.

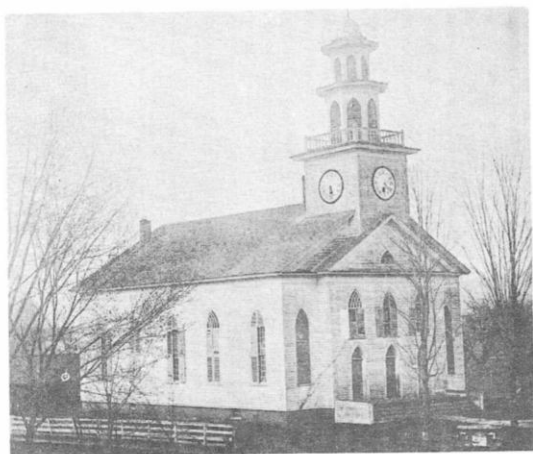
At top right is the Baptist Church of Center White Creek, still in use. Begun in 1788 it was completed in 1808. It is the house of the church body planted in White Creek in 1772, one of the earliest Baptist groups in all the region, Elder William Waite was its original pastor and founder.

In the center of the page is the "Old White Church" one of the

three churches which sprang from the original Presbyterian movement in Cambridge village. The building is no longer used for Church purposes being now a Grange Hall and voting place.

At the lower (left) is the Mission Chapel which was built in White Creek village by Rev. George A. Meagher, O.S.A. in 1875. Father Meagher, who was pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Cambridge, conducted services here once or twice a month. The Chapel was later associated with the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Hoosick Falls, and Rev. J. D. Waldron, O.S.A. conducted services. It is not known to have been used for church purposes after 1900, and the building has been moved one lot south where it is used for a feed store.

Lower right) This old structure, said to have been set aside for the use of the preachers of the Ashgrove Methodist Church, still stands. The church body was the second oldest Methodist group in America, planted by the same Wesleyan zealot who founded the first Methodist Church in America, Philip Embury. The Ashgrove site is hallowed ground to the Wesleyans.



GRANDMA MOSES, WORLD FAMOUS PRIMITIVE PAINTER



Grandma Moses (Anna Mary Robertson Moses), the self-taught primitive painter, is White Creek's most distinguished resident. She is celebrating her 100th birthday as our White

Creek history goes to press.

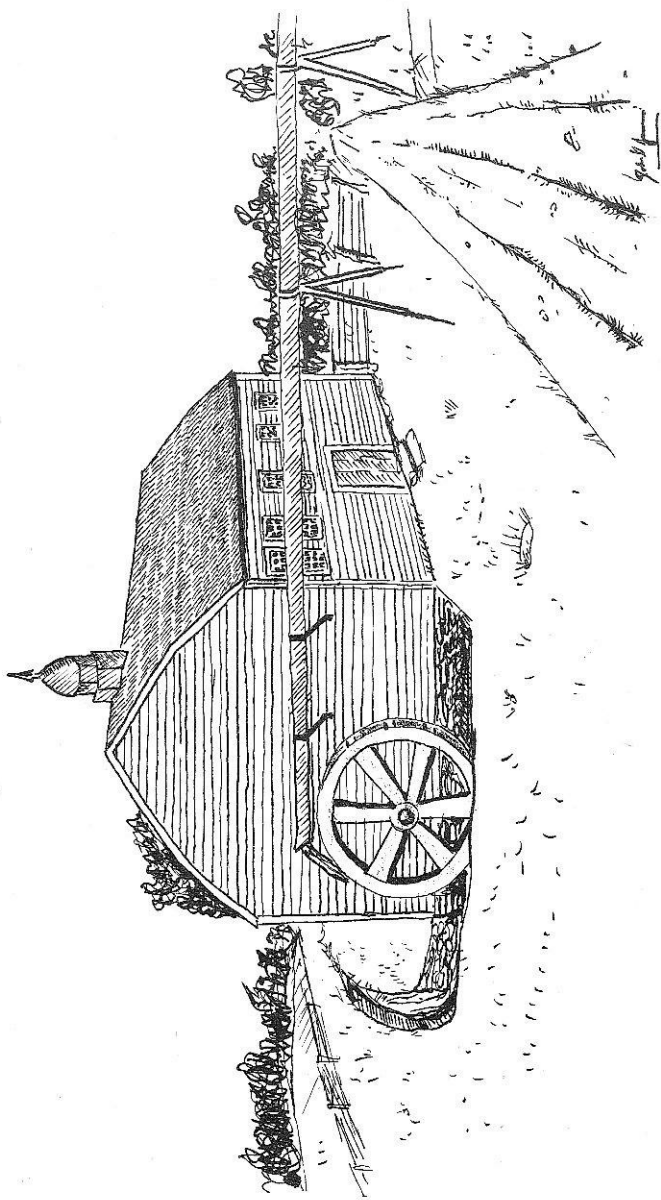
Her distinctive art is known and admired by millions throughout the world. In addition to her art, she has contributed immensely in the area of geriatrics. Here she has been an inspiration to hundreds of thousands of elder citizens throughout the land, and has shown by her example that the "golden years" can indeed be the best years of a persons life.

In the above photo she is shown talking to Geoffrey Jones, the fourteen year old artist who did the sketches for this book. "Grandma" is shown with a painting Geoffrey had done of his home, The VanCurler Trading Post, as it appeared in the year 1711.

Grandma Moses was born in the town of Cambridge but has lived most of her life at her Eagle Bridge home in the town of White Creek.

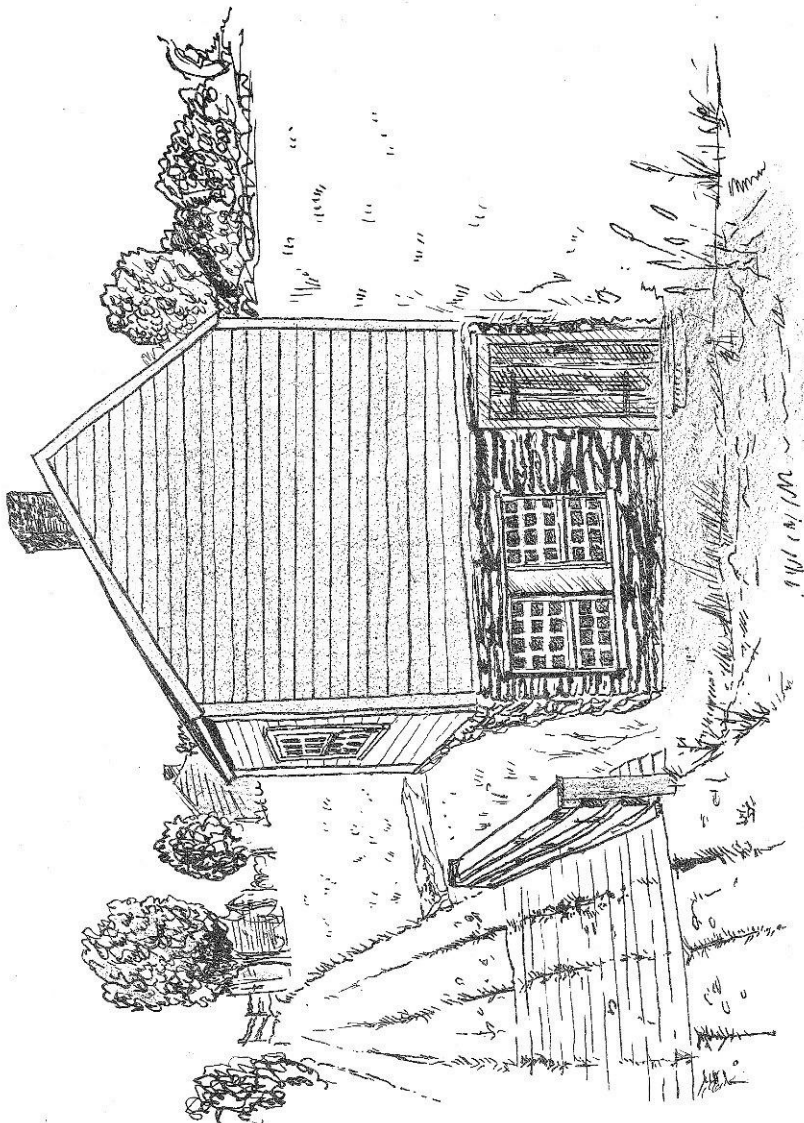
OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

The Aiken Grist Mill



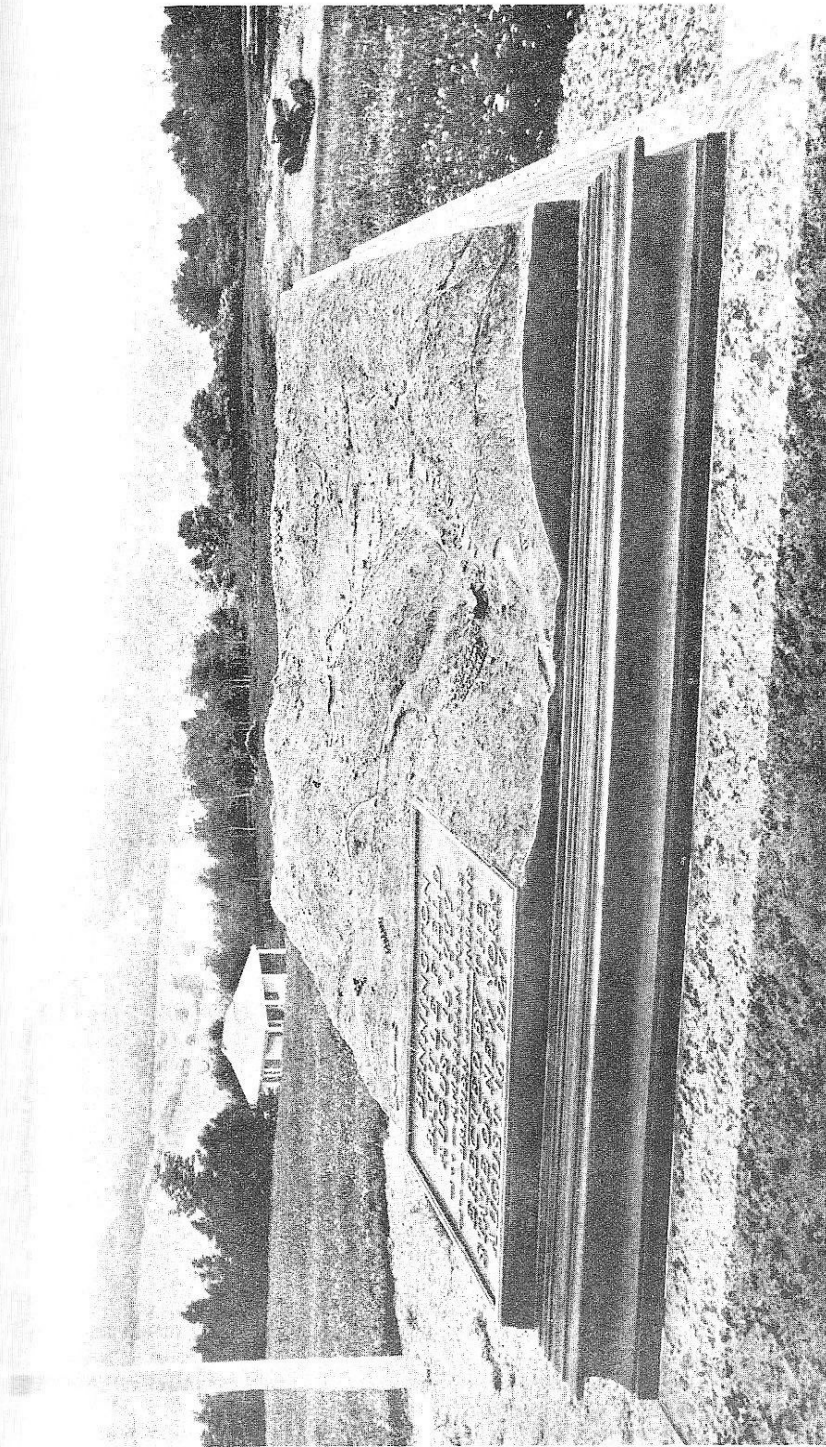
The Aiken Grist Mill, White Creek. (1770) Sketch by Jones.

John Allen's Hat Shop



John Allen's Hat Shop in White Creek. (c. 1776)

Bronze Map at the Bennington Battlefield



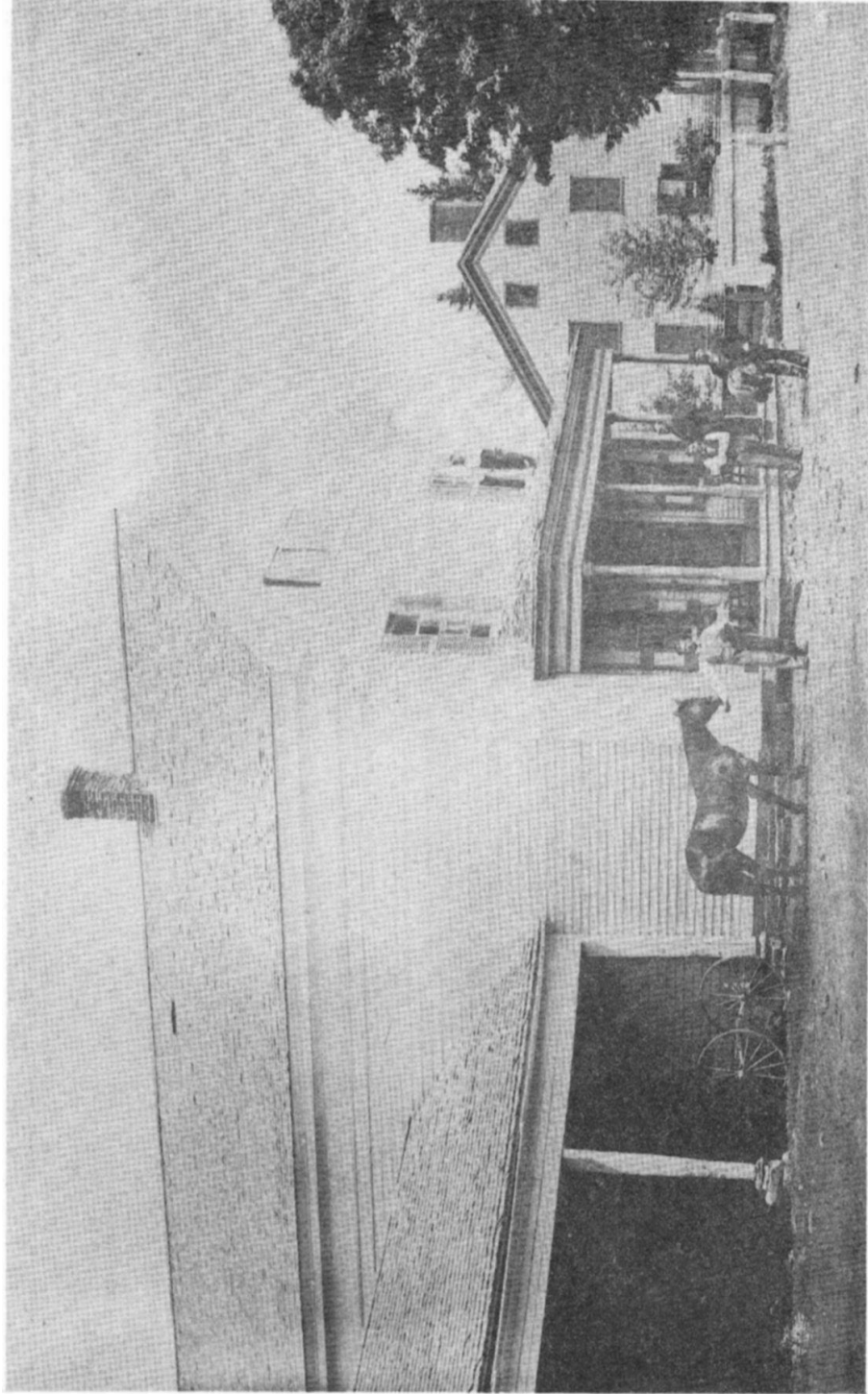
(Courtesy of Monument and Cemetery Review)

BENNINGTON BATTLEFIELD RELIEF MAP

Bronze plate, 40 x 30 inches, which reproduces an area eight miles north to south and six miles east to west. It was modelled by Mr. Harold F. Andrews of Albany on the basis of careful surveys.

Map of Cambridge Village

Dyer-Sisson Store



Dyer Sisson Store, White Creek

Main Street, Dwinell Kiln, Green Mountain Creamery



View of Main Street, White Creek, taken 1915.



View of Dwinell Lime Kiln ruins. Kiln was built in 1770.



View of Green Mountain Creamery, White Creek. Built in 1877, destroyed in the fire of 1927.

Reed's Hotel



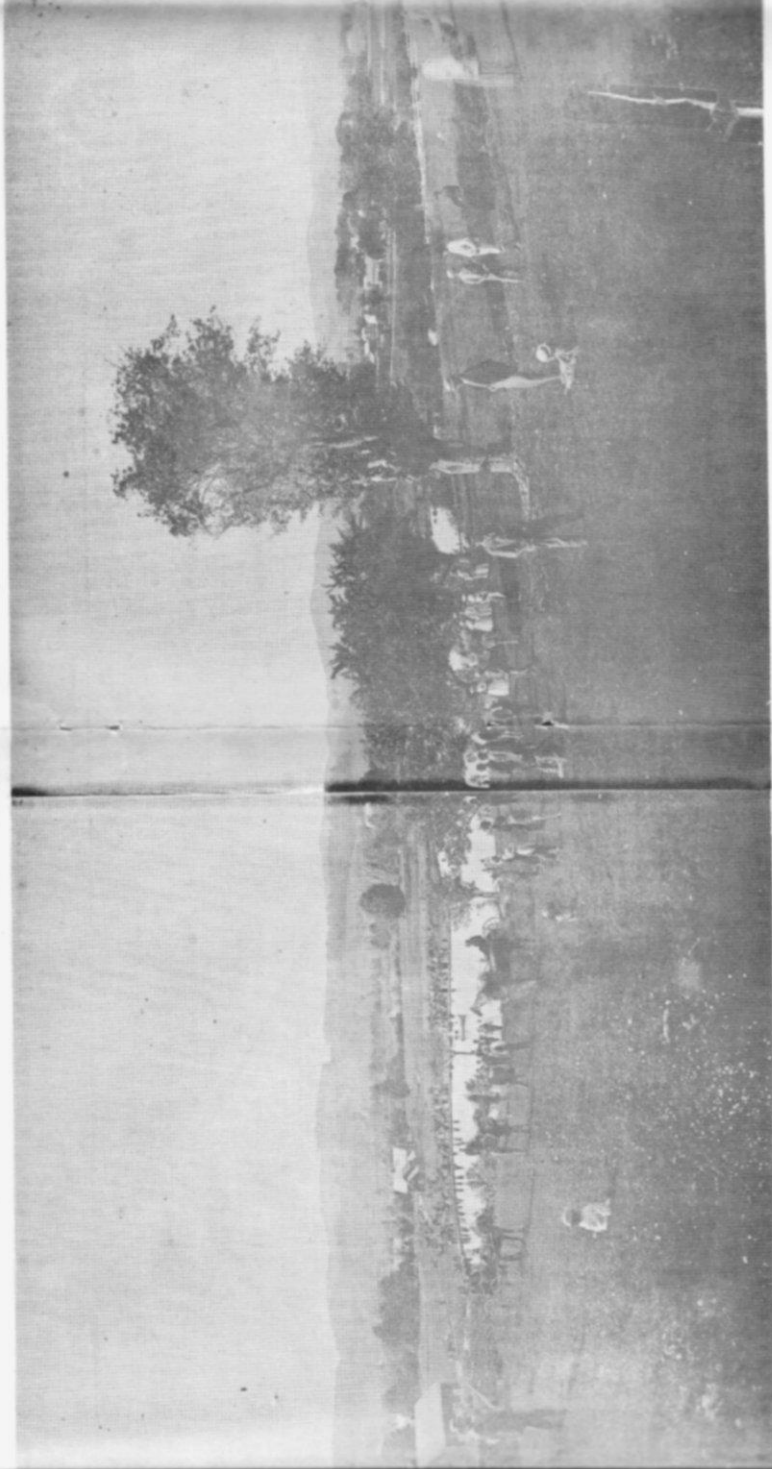
Reed's Hotel, White Creek as it looked about 1880.

Getting Water at the Taber Mineral Spring

FILLING JUGS AT THE TABER MINERAL SPRING

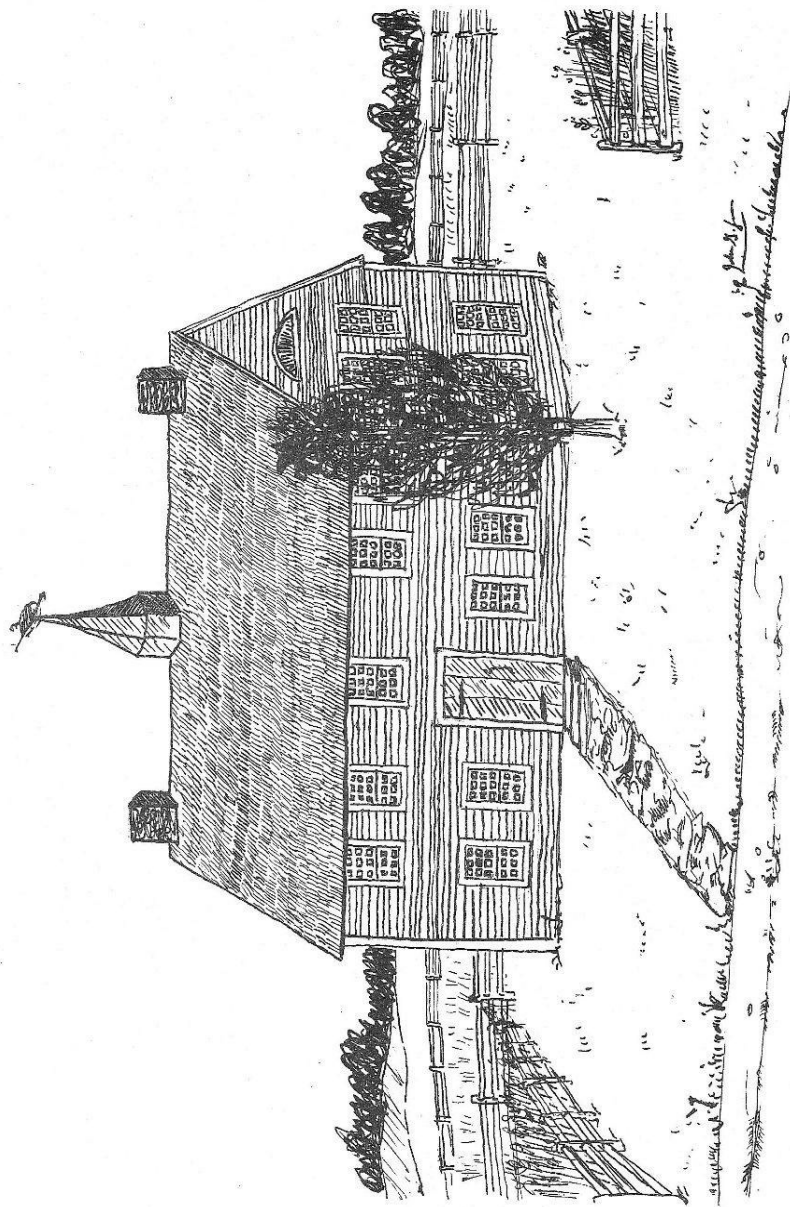


The Taber Mineral Spring



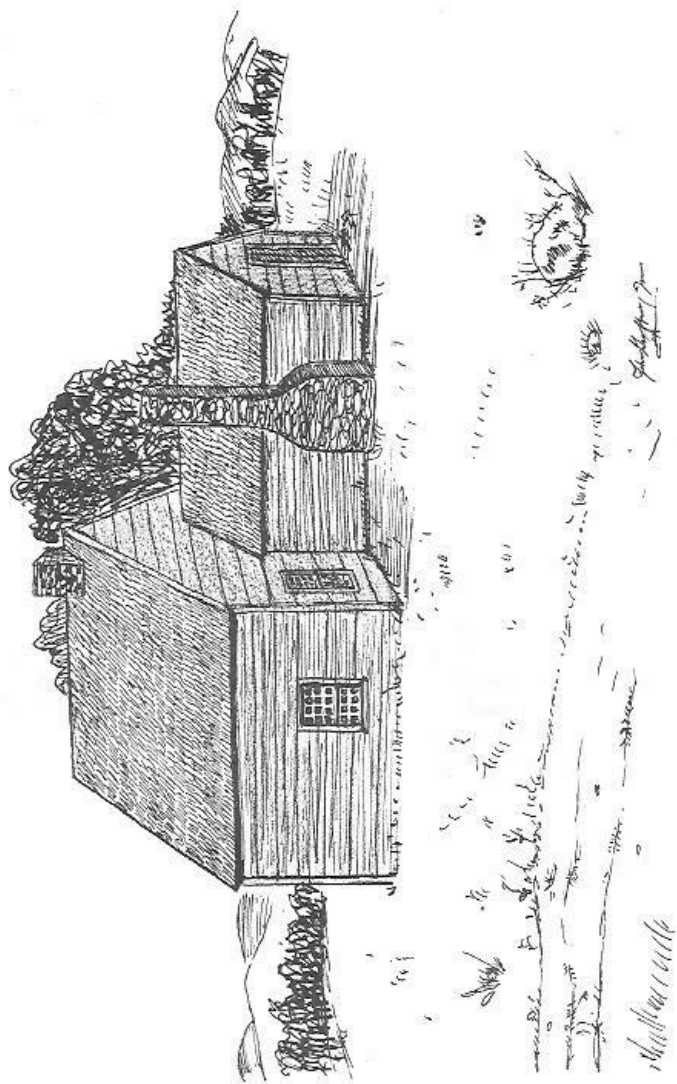
A gala day at the Taber Mineral Spring, White Creek, about the year 1870.

The Union Free Academy



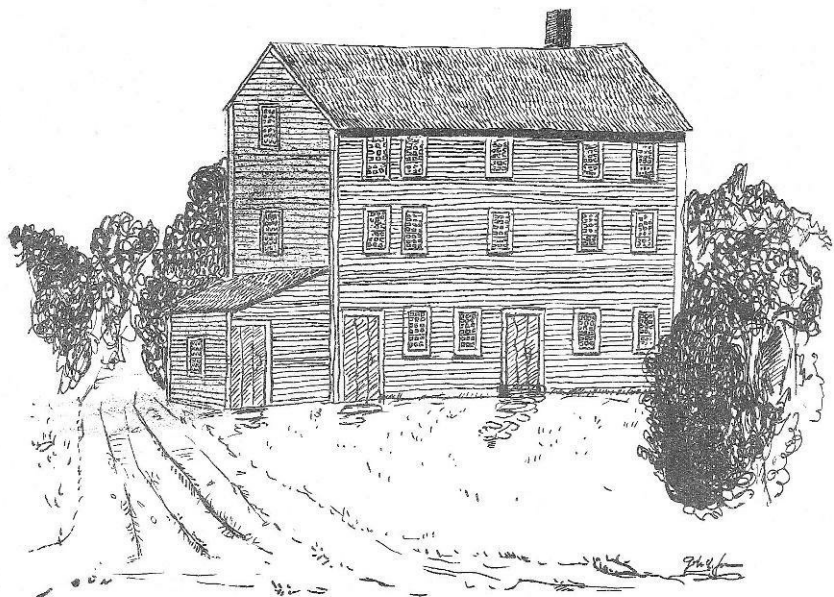
Union Academy, White Creek, as it looked in 1810.
(Sketch by J. Geoffrey Jones)

Van Corlaer/Lake Trading Post



VanCorlaer-Lake Trading Post as it looked in 1711 and as it is shown in replica on Bennington Battlefield Bronze Relief Map. (Sketch by Jones).

Warren Chair Factory, Christopher Allen Home and Tavern



The Warren Chair Factory at Pumpkin Hook (c. 1780).



The old Christopher Allen home and tavern as it looked after the cyclone struck White Creek in 1891.

Washington County Post, Checkered House



Printing Office of the Washington County Post, the oldest weekly newspaper in the United States, established 1788.



Checkerboard House, Tavern built by James Cowden about 1775. President Washington and Congressman William Smith stayed here in August 1791.

White Creek Village Map

Cambridge - Civil War Period

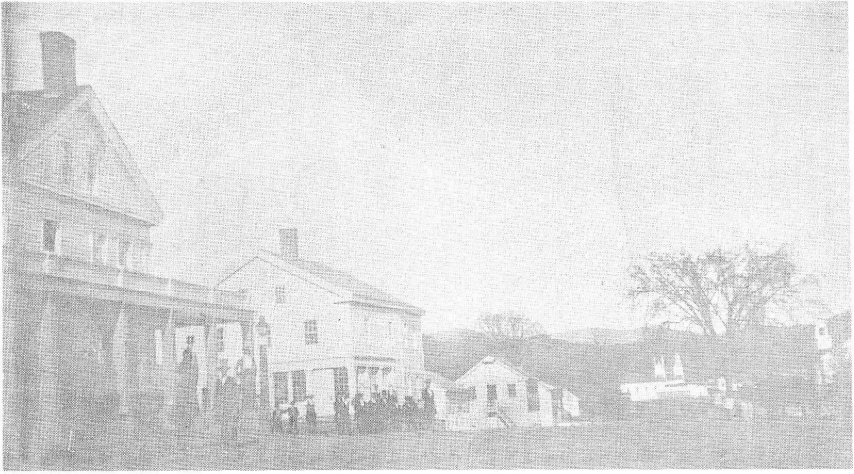


Photo of the Civil War period. Shows Main Street Cambridge looking east. "Union House" in the foreground and Leonard Wells store across the turnpike. Note oxen in lower right hand corner.



Sketch shows Fenton House and old tavern which stood on corner opposite the present Cambridge Grange Hall

Coach and Four, Cambridge Fair Grounds

White Creek and Cambridge Centennial Day Views, 1916.



The old coach and four of the turnpike times.



1916 Centennial Parade passes the viewing stand at Cambridge Fair Grounds.

Harness Shop



Old Harness Shop, White Creek

White Creek Tax Roll

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