The Story of

COLUMBIA

Published by

THE WOMEN'S GUILD

of the

COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Columbia, Connecticut

DEDICATION

TO THE YOUTH OF COLUMBIA, TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY HELP TO AWAKEN THEIR INTEREST IN THE STORY OF THEIR TOWN, AND THAT AN UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THEIR HERITAGE MAY CHALLENGE THEM TOWARD EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP.

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Preface

It may be difficult to imagine how this tiny spot we now call Columbia appeared as it began to emerge from wilderness to civilization. Too insignificant even to be noticed when considered as a part of the infinite universe, it had lain here for many centuries; cast of nature's mold and little disturbed by the Indian inhabitants. Then the white man began to move in from the well established colonies to the north and the coastal settlements to the south. They found this crossroads of the future centuries serene in its peacefulness; scoured, scarred, and left stony by glaciers long since gone. Here they settled, accepting and adapting to the elements as they found them. The trees of the forest were cleared to make pasture and cultivation possible. The lumber was used to build their homes, which we know were large, sturdy, and graciously simple in the early architecture which has survived for three hundred years and is still loved today.

It is this story we attempt to tell here — insignificant perhaps, but fascinating and exciting. It is a story of a beginning; steeped in antiquity; perpetuated by tradition; cherished by those whose roots penetrate deep into the soil tilled by their ancestors.

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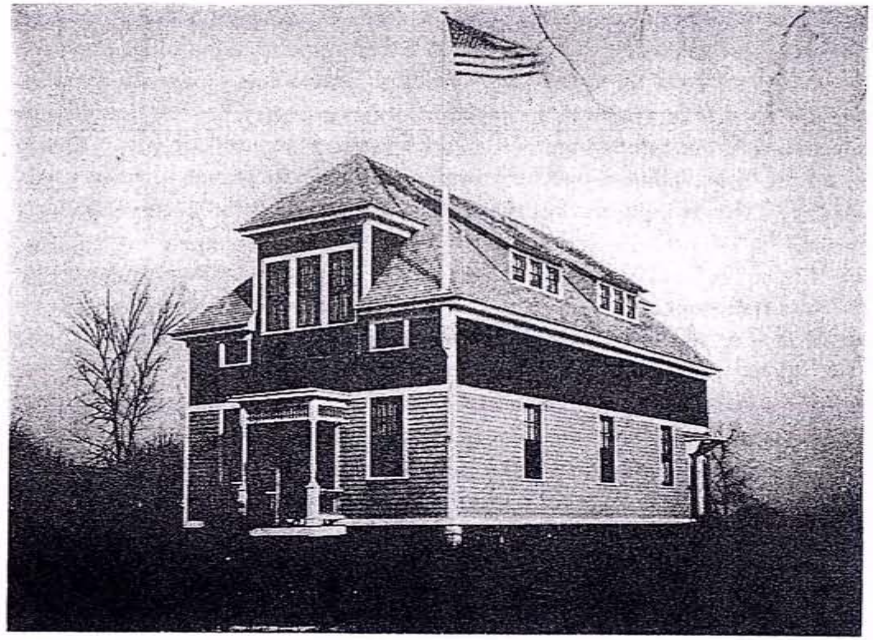


THE FIRST YEOMANS HALL

Given to the town by Mary B. Yeomans in 1900, destroyed by fire in 1940.

Government

The earliest settlers in this part of the country were seeking to establish homes where they could worship according to their own consciences. Consequently, the early government was primarily established and controlled by the church.

Columbia was an offspring of the town of Lebanon. Practically all of the territory that is the town of Columbia today was included in the Clarke and Dewey Purchase. Antique records, now preserved on silk parchment, tell us that on September 25, 1699 William Clarke and Deacon Josiah Dewey acquired from Thomas Buckingham and William Clarke, in behalf of Abimeleck, a tract of land. Thomas Buckingham and William Clarke were probably guardians of this young Indian. On May 2, 1700, this property was again conveyed to these men by Owenego, son of Uncas, as both Indians had laid claim to the land.

The only exception to the original boundaries and those of today is a small triangle of land which was set aside in 1748 to the town of Andover.

Josiah Dewey and William Clarke were two of the nine men who were founders of the town of Lebanon. Mr. Clarke's home was located in the section known as Old Hop River, which was then part of Lebanon. Many of his descendants are still residing in Columbia today. Lebanon's records

show that he was their first Town Clerk, in 1698, a position which he held for forty-four years. He was also First Selectman for a number of years. In October of 1698 the town chose William Holton and William Clarke to petition the General Court in Hartford to create the town's bounds. In December of the same year, Mr. Clarke made a request for home lots to be set off, a lot being twenty acres; this was later increased to forty acres. It was at this time that they "laid out ye Broad Street" (now Lebanon Green).

Early in 1700 the inhabitants of the town of Lebanon completed their town organization. It was then that they "gathered" their first church and settled their first minister. It is interesting to note that in those colonial days it was necessary to have a church and a minister before the town could function, and no man could be a voter who was not a church member.

Only sixteen years later, in 1716, a second ecclesiastical society was constituted, which was known as Lebanon North Parish or Lebanon Crank. The following is a copy of the original petition of the people to be set off as a separate society:

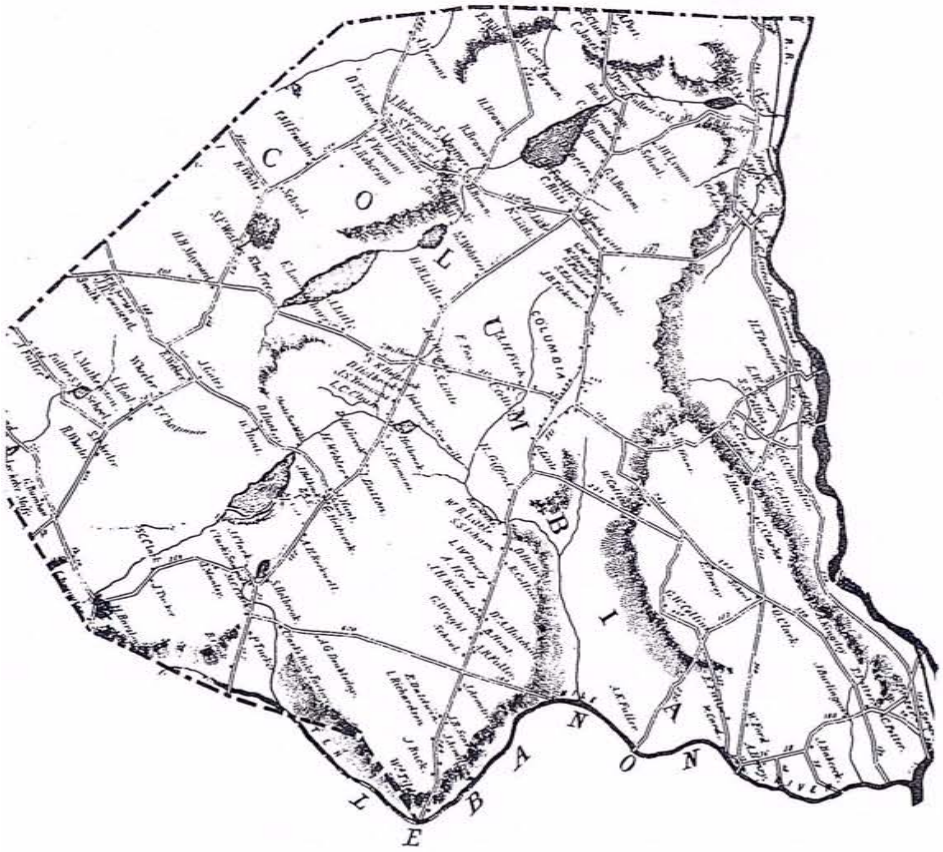
"To ye inhabitants of Lebanon the humble petition of us whose Names are under written inhabiting at a place called the crank and at Hop river and adjacent to ye crank with some others that have a right of land near sd Crank. Humbly showeth that whereas the providence of God who bounds our habitations hath so ordered our settlement in the world so remote from ye publick worship of God, which we and ours stand in great need of we by Reason of ye Remoteness of the place of worship, which way ever we goe, that there are but few of our families can constantly attend and we being got to such a number of famileys that are here and preparing to come among us that we hope that in case you that are our fathers, breathren & Christian friends in Lebanon would be pleased to grant us with ye accommodation of part of ye land in the township of Lebanon wc we might have ye worship of God set up among us in some short time wc we hope, we greatly desire & shall indeaver after, according as ye providence of God shall lead in that matter; and we hope and are confident that you would do for us wt you can that may be reasonable for to incorage & promote so good a work. We therefore desire and intreat you who are our fathers, brethren and Christian friends in sd Lebanon to consider our case & do what you can conveniently to promote such a good work & set out to us for ye promoting of a society heare, as much of your Township as may be incoueging for ye same. We dont here pretend to be our owne carvers but desire and request of you that a line may be run from ye North Pond the westerly line of ye five mile to ye great Cheastnutt tree on Cheastnutt Hil, which is the Northerly corner of ye five mile; then to turn eastward in the line of ye five mile to ye southarly branch of ten mile brook so down by ye brook as the brook runs to (the) ye eastward part of ye town bounds to be, to incorieg the above sd sociaty, but in case you cannot comply with ye above sd line takeing in all ye Land in ye town bounds towards hebron

& windham we then desire your compliance, in any other line that you may se cause to afford us for ye incorieging so good a work; we also desire and crave your holys with respect of gaining in to ye Township that land lying between Lebanon bounds & Coventry or so much of it as you may judge necessary for to obtain ye end above sd; and it seems needful that there be speedy care taken about those of us that live out of ye bounds of Lebanon that they be brought into the bounds, for we understand in case nothing be propounded to further & promote ye motion above sd, that our friends at Coventry do intend to petition the Generall Court that such of us as are out of ye bounds of Lebanon might be annexed to Coventry, & if it be once don their may be aboundance of more difficulty in bringing about the designe above sd, and further, seince it is so that we or ye most of us must attend it & we be thereby forcd to do it we pray that we maybe freed from paying to ye ministry in Lebanon; and also that provided we are incorieged in so good a work as ye settling of a sosiaty heare that we in a short time be at Charge towards ye settling of a minister heare by building, breaking up of Land & forming of it in that we thereby may incorieg a minister to settle among us; we then desire our publick taxes as to town charges might be also Released to us all, wc we hope you will Readaly Grant to us your Humble petitioners; and in so doing you will greatly oblige us who are your friends & Neighbours.

"Lebn, february ye 28th, 1714-15.

"Richard Mason, Josiah Loomis, Jr., Benjamin Woodworth, Charles Dowolf, Josiah Loomis, Henry Woodworth, Benony Clark, Ebenezer Richardson, Ezekiell Woodworth, Isaac Tilden, Joseph Clark, Ephraim Sprague, Benjn. Woodworth, Jr., Samll Wright, John Sweetland, Josiah Lyman, Thomas Porter, Ebenezer Woodworth, Joseph Fowler, Ephraim Tupper, Caleb Loomis, Benjn. Small, Nathll Dewey, Thomas Woodward."

"April the 26th 1715, at a Legall town Meting of ye inhabitance of Lebanon they then granted the petition of ye people at ye Crank either to be a sosiaty by themselves or a township according as the honoured Courte shall see cause to incorieg either for a sosiaty or a township, allways provided that ye town Reserve to ym selves all ye Right of Land in sd tract, both alottments & Comon Right as to ye, for ye land & also exept petitionning for an adition between Coventry & Lebanon, and also provided there be no publick taxes Layd on ye Land untill ye Land be improved as ye Law directs & also whereas the petitioners to ye all the land on the westerly side of ye five mile it is agreed & we do alow they shall goe southwards on ye west side of ye five mile, so far as Hebron Road from Lebanon; likewise provided they pay publick taxes to ye town untill they have liberty & incoriegement from the Generall Courte to be a sosiaty or township by themselves, the above written was voted by the town; at the same time Stephen Tilden, Joseph Owen, John Huchison, Joseph Hutchinson, Joseph Owen, Jun., & Moses Owen, all entered their protest against the above sd vote."



OLD MAP

From a map of Tolland County, Connecticut, dated 1857.
Published by Woodford and Bartlett of Philadelphia.

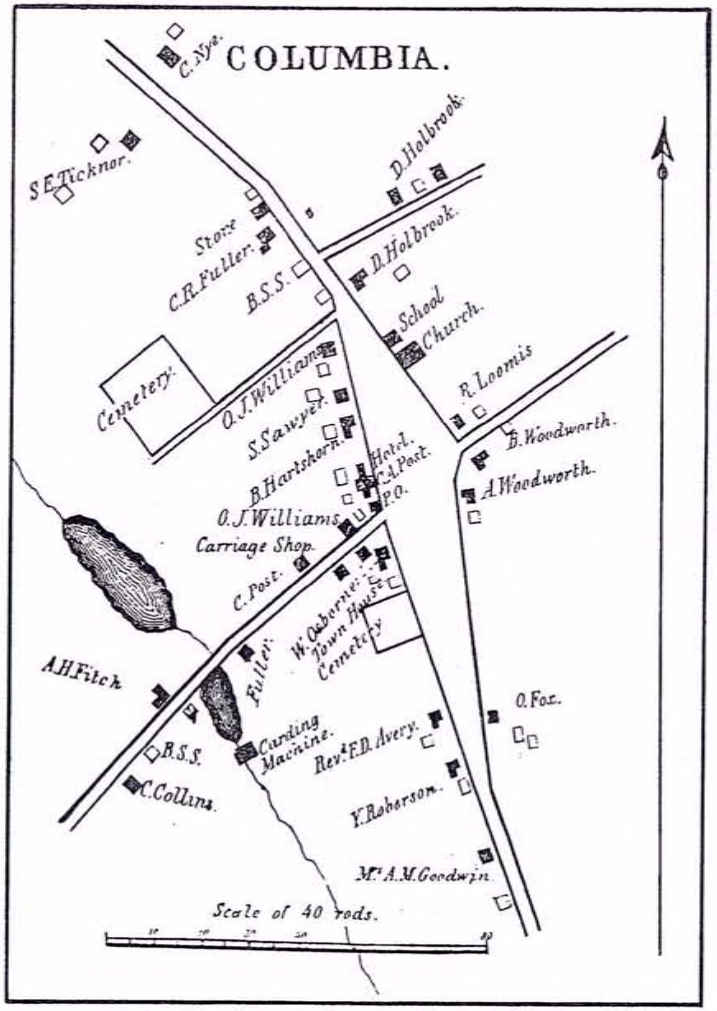
The Lebanon records show that following this separation, the sections were called First Society, meaning Lebanon, and Second Society for the Crank.

From the year of 1716 the village of Lebanon Crank prospered under the law and rule of the parish, the church being the center of all activity. It was nearly a century before the citizens of the Crank made an attempt to be incorporated as a separate town. In 1803 there appeared in the warning of the Lebanon town meeting:

"To see if they will vote that they will not oppose the 2nd Society in this town in their petition to be incorporated into a distinct and separate town and concent to have a part of the first Society annexed to the new proposed Town." (3rd Article of the warning).

16 May A.D. 1803.

"The 3rd article in the warning was taken up and confidence urged some from the Crank and opposed by others in that Society, and it



SKETCH OF COLUMBIA CENTER, 1857.

being found that no petition had been entered in the docket of the Assembly, the supporters of the application to have a vote passed that no objection should be made to the Incorporation of a new Town in the limits of this Town, withdrew their Preapplication and no vote was taken on the article." (Signed) Elkhanah Tisdale, Town Clerk.

The town records of Dec. 16th, 1803 read:

"At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of Lebanon legally warned by Notification of selectmen dated the 16th Instant and mentioned on the 21st day of Nov. 1803 to see if the Town is willing the 2nd Society shall be set off as a separate Town. And to see if the Town will assist 2nd Society in obtaining a separation or selling off. . . ."

Daniel Tilden was chosen moderator of this meeting. The subject was debated and finally this question was put to the meeting: "Will this Town oppose the 2nd Society in their intended application to the next assembly to be incorporated into a separate Town, not to take off any other part of the Town?" The vote was in the negative, and they also voted to do nothing further relative to the 2nd Society.

In the General Assembly of May 1804 in Hartford, a petition was presented by Stephan Hosmer. This petition mentioned "a great distance from the place of holding Town and Freemen's meetings" and "the great inconvenience under which they labor from their local situation".

At a meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Lebanon on Aug. 21, 1804, it was voted that the Town appoint a committee to meet with the Selectmen of Columbia to set the town bounds. Columbia, the poetic name for the United States, was chosen as the name of the new town. It is bounded on the north by Hop River, which separates it from Coventry; on the east by Lebanon and Windham; on the south by Lebanon; on the west by Hebron and Andover.

The early voters had the following slate of officers to elect: Selectmen, Constables, Grand Jurors, Surveyor and Highway Tax Collectors, Fence Viewers, Leather Sealer, Tything men, Hayward (one who looked after hedges and fencing to keep cattle and pigs from roaming), Chimney Viewers, Packer of Tobacco, Sealer of Weights and Measures, and Key Keeper.

The first Freemen's meetings were held in the church. The records of those early years show high taxes and low income. The first tax rate was four cents on the dollar, and the wages for a day's work on the highway were fifty cents for a man who "should perform a day's work in a day". It was also voted that Assessors and Board of Relief would work without pay.

It was not until June 1, 1835 that the town voted to build a "Town House" "with ten foot posts, 40 by 26 feet, or in less proportion so that the expense shall not exceed $400". It was to be completed by November 1st of the same year. A special tax of 4½ cents was laid for this purpose. The building was erected just north of the cemetery, approximately where the present home of Town Clerk Hubert P. Collins stands.

The first town meeting held in this building was on May 1st, 1836, and it was then voted that the building might be used for religious meetings and singing schools. Five years later, the use of the hall was voted to the young men for lyceum purposes, with permission to put in a stove. Later, in special meeting, the Town voted to pay all reasonable bills for the stove then in the hall.

The minutes of one meeting show that it was voted "to dispose of the poor of the Town in such way and manner as will be for the best interest of the Town". The way these unfortunate individuals were "disposed of" was to "farm them out" to the lowest bidder.

In 1839, when the town was considering a new State law for licensing

sellers of intoxicating liquors, it was voted that every elector in the town be licensed. In 1872 a new law left the liquor traffic with towns, and a resolution was presented at a town meeting recommending that the Selectmen grant no licenses, because "the sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage is an evil, and only evil, destructive of the material prosperity, social happiness and moral well being of the community". The resolution was lost, and a similar one was lost several times later, but in 1879 the result was reversed. No liquor has been sold legally in Columbia since that date.

In 1869 there was a serious attempt to bond the town to aid in building the Air Line Railroad, but without success.

In 1883 the question of building a new town hall was first raised but was turned down. It was brought up again in 1895, and was agitated until 1900 when Mrs. Mary B. Yeomans made her generous and acceptable gift of Yeomans Hall to the town. It was dedicated with appropriate exercises on December 19, 1900. The principal address was delivered by the Rev. J. P. Harvey, who spoke on "Economic Problems of the New England Town". That first Yeomans Hall burned down in 1940, and the present building was erected by the town the following year. Mrs. Yeomans left a legacy of $1500, the interest on which was to be used to paint the hall every four years so long as the hall bears the Yeomans' name.

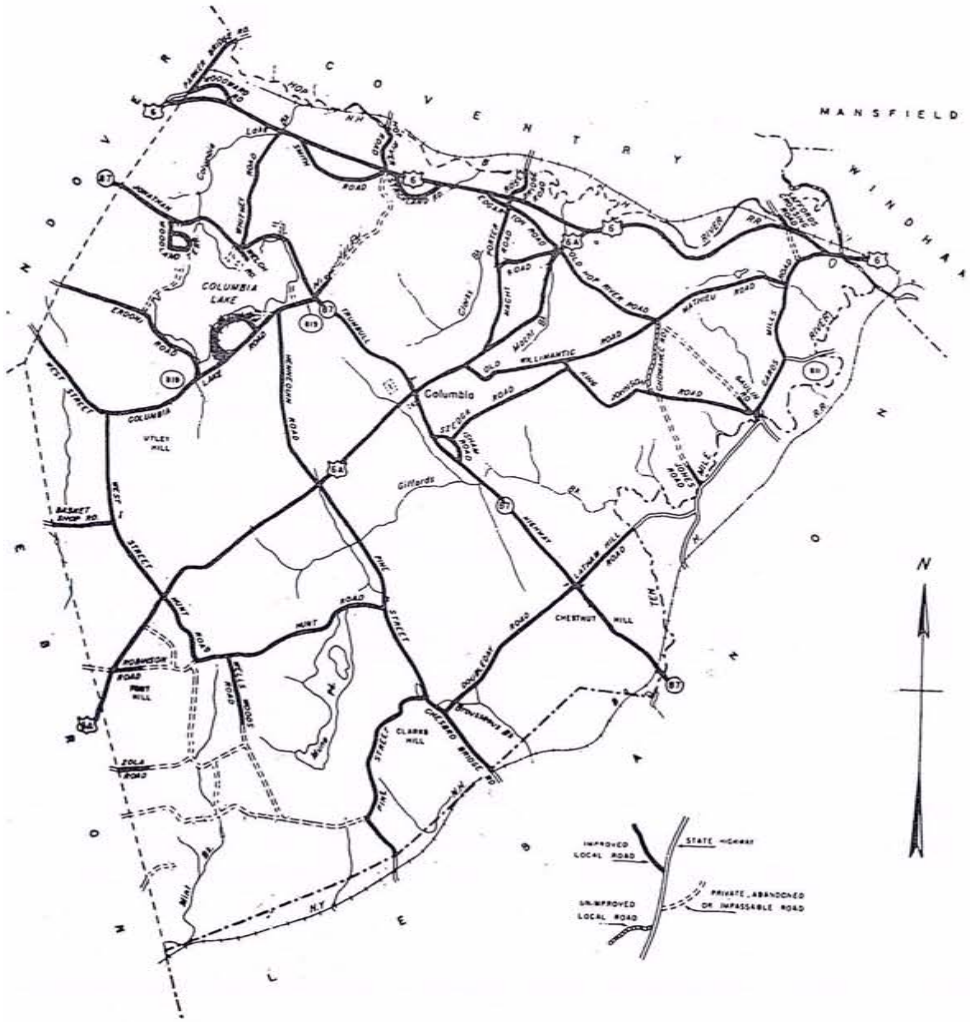
In 1947, Columbia adopted a Zoning Ordinance under which property owners are protected from any objectionable enterprises. These laws cover the appearance of the town as well as the general welfare. A Town Planning Commission was added in 1953, its chief concern being long term plans for the future benefit of Columbia and its residents.

Stephan Hosmer was the First Selectman of Columbia, and through the years this position was held by many different men, until 1924 when Clair Robinson was first elected. Since that date he has served in this capacity continuously. Edward P. Lyman served as Town Clerk for twenty-two years. The present Town Clerk, Hubert P. Collins, is now in his forty-sixth year of service, and is the dean of Town Clerks in Connecticut.

In October 1953 there were exactly 800 registered voters in Columbia. The grand list shows taxable property to the amount of $4,358,433. The town's indebtedness is $81,375.24.

Town of Columbia votes for President of the United States:

1864		1892		1896	
Abraham Lincoln	75	Harrison	88	McKinley	105
George B. McClellan	122	Cleveland	81	Bryan	56
		Bidwell	6	Palmer	3
				Levering	1



COLUMBIA IN 1953

Columbia is about five miles long and four miles wide. The Green is about 500 feet above sea level The highest point, on Post Hill, is 837 feet.

Several of the older residents can remember a little poem which they say was told to them when children, about David Huntington, bell-ringer for the Church for thirty-six years. It runs as follows:

Crank town has a bell,
David Huntington rings it,
Thomas Brockway reads the Psalm,
Hannah Bennet sings it.

Congregational Church

Our forefathers speak to us in many ways across the generations. Their wisdom and peculiarities, their artistry and achievements are recorded for us via buildings, furnishings, implements, records, and legends which have survived the centuries. Early church history is indispensable in "The Story of Columbia" as church and community were nearly synonymous.

The church was originated when Rev. Samuel Smith was established here as the first pastor probably in the year 1720. Desirous of establishing themselves firmly in the eyes of God, the originators of this Second Ecclesiastical Society (as it was then called) at Lebanon Crank entered into the following covenant:

"In A Seriouse Sense of our indispensible duty to answer the call of Christ, who, notwithstanding our own cursedness by nature, inviteth us to partake of the Covenant Grace, not only in the Internall but Externall priviledges thereof, as we have obtained help of God, we do avouch the Lord to be our God, giveing up ourselves unto the Lord and unto one another according to the will of God, promising by the help of Divine Grace to watch over one another, and to bear witness against sin, to walk in the ordinances of the Gospel of Christ, and to uphold the worship of God in this place, and to Subject to the Discipline of Christ; we do also give up our Children unto him, promising to bring them up in the nurture and Admonition of the Lord. In Testimony of our Consent and Engagement as above, we have Sett to our hands.

Samuel Smith, Josiah Dewey, Samuel Wright,
Richard Lyman, James Pineaux, John Sullard,
John Hutchinson, Nehemiah Closson, George Way,
John Newcomb, John Swetland, Josiah Loomys,
Benjamin Woodworth, Nathaniel House.

"This Covenant was owned and Subscribed as Above on the Day of ordination, and Embodying of the Church of Christ, in the North Society of Lebanon."

Rev. Smith held his services out of doors in the summer or at his home or those of his parishioners. Early church records tell of a vote on January 27, 1725 to "remove the meetings to the house of Benony Clark."

At this time, there were but four counties in the state — Hartford, New Haven, New London, and Fairfield. There were probably less than sixty Congregational Churches (the principal denomination at that time) and only about 140 such churches in the United States. There were two others in what is now Tolland county, one at South Mansfield and one at South Coventry.

MEETING HOUSES

On December 15, 1725 a meeting of the North Society in Lebanon "granted to Richard English the sum of four pound fourteen shillings and six pence for vi(c)tualling of ministers and messengers." At the same time they "granted to John Morey twelve shillings for sweeping the meeting house." This is the first mention made in the church records of the existence of a meeting house, and it was probably raised during the summer of 1724 on a site nearly in front of the first Yeomans Hall.

The building was not completed for some years as on December 14, 1726, the parish "voted to make provision for laying the gallery floors, and for making the stairs and finishing the coving and building the breast work of the gallery and for making steps for the three doors." Henry Woodward, Lieut. Martin, and Josiah Lyman were appointed a committee to see that the work was carried out and at the same meeting, it was voted to "pay Deacon Wright the sum of one pound for sweeping the meeting house." On December 26, 1728, they "voted to procure boards to seal the meeting house and for the pews and slit work for the galleries and pews and all other stuf needfull for said work." December 4, 1730, they "voted to do something towards finishing the Meeting House."

On November 3, 1731, it was voted to "finish the seats and the walls of the meeting house. At the same time they voted to plaister the walls of the meeting house."

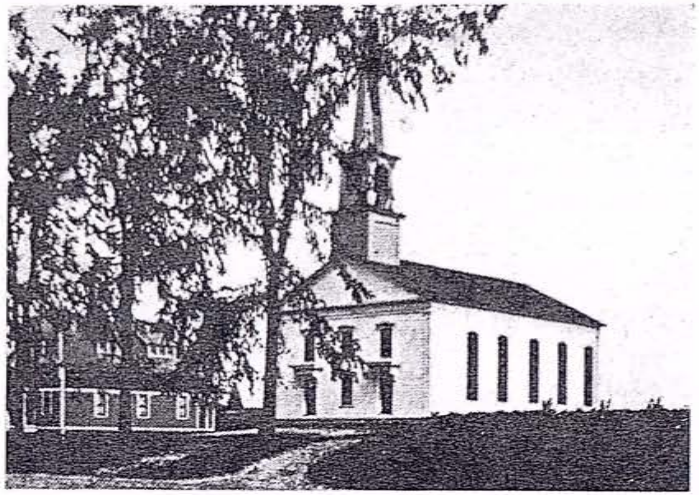
By January 10, 1733, they were ready to "seat the meeting house" and a committee was appointed to do this according to age, estate, or office. The following regulations were set up at the meeting for carrying out this interesting process — evidence that even in the land of freedom and equality there still existed the remnants of a strong caste system.

"Then voted that no man shall be brought lower than he was seated before. Then voted that the seaters should reckon one and but one head to Each List. At the same time they voted to seat the meeting house by the last rate or list. Then voted to vallue one years age to two shillings in the rate.

"Then voted that the pews next to the great door shall be vallued next to the first or highest pews and those by the stairs Equail to the second seat; the fore seat in the front to be Equail to the second seat in the body of the meeting house and the fore seat in the side gallery to be Equail to the sixth seat.

"At the same time they made choice of Deacon Wright, Capt. Sprague and Sargeant Lyman to be a committy to seat the seaters."

At the same time they "voted that Samuel Woodward, Israel Woodward, William Simes, Noah Dewey, Samuel Wright and Preserved Wright shall have Liberty to build themselves a seat or seats, a pew or pews for them and their families in the front gallery behind those seats that are allready built to be built at their own charge and allso be debared from any other seat in the meeting house, they to have all the room that is behind the seats that are now built."



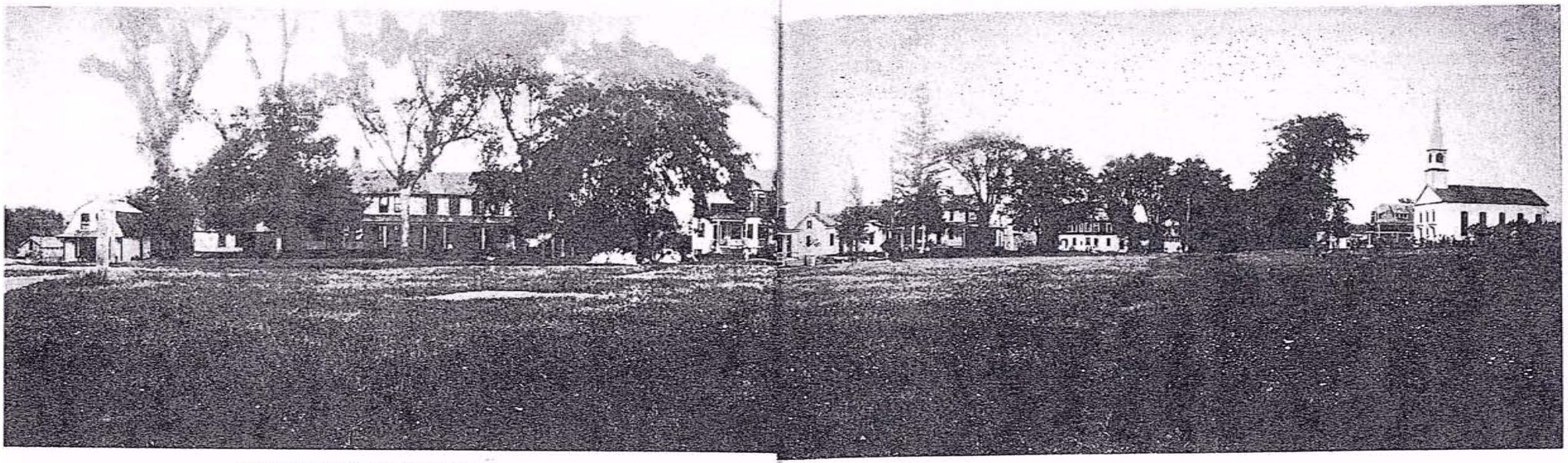
COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Built in 1832.

In less than a month on February 8, 1733, they met again with the only item of business apparently to vote "that the pew by the great door in the meeting house shall be reckoned Equail to the fore seat and corner pew." Whether the degradation was attributed to the pew or the occupants, we have no way of knowing.

November 27, 1733, they "gave Liberty to Joseph Loomis, John Simes and Benony Loomis to build themselves a pew over the women's stairs not hurting the stairway nor the window" and in November of 1742 they "impowered the parish Committy to Grant Liberty to Nath. White junr, John Pain with sundry others to build a seat or pew over the men's stairs as they think proper." At this same meeting they "Granted Liberty to Ensign John Doggit and Benajah Bill to build a stable or stables for their horses near the meeting house according to the direction of the Parish Commity."

It would seem that by this time the meeting house must have been completed, repairs had been made, seats assigned, and the Society should have been able to slacken their efforts. But the "Great Awakening" of 1741 had swept over New England and Mr. Wheelock was hard at work in his new parish. The throngs returned each Sabbath to fill the pews as fast as they were added and the building soon became inadequate. On November 21, 1745 they voted "to make some provision for Building a new Meeting house" and "to repair the meeting house for present comfort."

A committee appointed by the Legislature of 1747 selected the site of the new meeting house by placing a stake about ten rods south of the first — "the sills to enclose the stake." This would place it in front of the house now owned by Miss Marion McCorkell. The building, according to a vote on November 11, 1747, was "sixty four foot in Length and forty six foot in



COLUMBIA GREEN LOOKING NORTH
Taken about 1910

width and the height twenty six foot from the top of the sill to the under side of the plate." At the same time they "voted to get the timber hewn and frame and raise the meeting house and cover the Roof and Board the outside and provide timber either pine or Cedar for the window frames by the first day of December 1748." On August 18, 1748, they "voted to Claboard the south side and both ends of the meeting house with Ceder. At the same time they voted to Claboard the back or north side of the meeting house with Chesnut." November 17, 1748, it was voted to "collour the new meeting House the body of it with sky collour," also to "Glaze the new meeting House and provide stuf for and finish the inside all the lower part Except the plaistering." October 5, 1749, "voted to improve the old Meeting House toward finishing the new one" and November 23, 1749, voted "to provide stuf for and lay the gallary floor and to finish the breast work in the gallary to be done by some time next fall." September 18, 1751, they chose a committee to seat the meeting house and "Impowered the Parish Committy to Erect a signpost at some convenient place on the fore side of the meeting house and that proper notifications set on sd. post for parish meetings shall be accounted Legal."

In December, 1753, they decided to "allow to those persons that have given anything towards the building (of) our meeting house a seat in the meeting house," and to "pave round the meeting house either by round stones or flat . . . " November 20, 1752 during Mr. Wheelock's pastorate it was "voted to have part of the money they raised this year to be expended in buying a cushin for the pulpet."

They "voted to Allow Mr. Wheelocks Indian Girls Liberty to sit in the hind seat on the Womens side below" on November 30, 1761.

It wasn't until the year 1792 that money was raised through the circulation of a subscription paper (their means of financing special projects in the early days) to erect a steeple and install a bell. For a period of thirty six years, until his death in 1828, Mr. David Huntington was ringer of the bell. No man was more attached to his work and he tolled the hour faithfully each day at twelve o'clock noon and nine o'clock in the evening, year in and year out. He was greatly plagued by youthful pranksters who delighted in sneaking into the church to indulge in a little unscheduled bell ringing and he always made every effort to apprehend the offenders, but seldom did he enjoy the pleasure of catching up with them.

In June of 1827 the Society voted to have the bell recast and this was apparently done for the bell still in use today having survived time and hurricane, is inscribed, "Cast by G. H. Holbrook, Medway, Mass., 1827."

Much of the business of the early Society meetings was that of the annual sale of "slips" or pews, the chief means of raising money to meet current expenses. On a scheduled day each year, the slips were put up for sale, the bidding on each pew starting at the figure at which the pew had been appraised.

Again, the thoughts of the Society turned to bigger and better things and as early as 1829 talk of a new meeting house was prevalent, and on April 25, 1831 it was voted to erect a new one. The present church building was started in June of 1832 and dedicated November 21, 1832. It measured 58

feet by 42 feet and many of the timbers from the old building were utilized in the new. Cost of the building site was $75, contract with Weber & Newell for the actual construction $1900, laying foundation $29.67, door steps $71.67, contingent expenses $15.08; making a total of $2091.42.

On February 20, 1832 it was voted that "the Town of Columbia be permitted to build a basement story under the meeting house to be used as a town house provided sd. house is located on S. T. Hosmer('s) land." This of course was not carried out and on November 26, 1832 it was voted that "town and election meetings may be held in the vestibule or gallery of the meeting house."

In the Spring of 1850 the meeting house was thoroughly repaired — roof reshingled, outside painted, windows on east end closed up and chimneys built (probably for the first stoves), supports placed under the steeple, the ceiling relathed and plastered and white washed, the desk remodeled and the inside painted and varnished.

In addition the house was completed and the desk trimmed by the Ladies' Benevolent Association.

On October 30, 1852, seven young Elm trees were planted in front of the meeting house, most of which still shade the green today.

On August 12, 1870, after the original steeple had been blown off about 1868, it was "voted to instruct committee to employ Messrs. Chappell & Potter of Willimantic to put a spire on meeting house after their plan & price of $300.00." The spire was again hurled to earth by the hurricane of 1938, the present one being the third to grace the edifice.

The meeting house was renovated, side galleries removed, and an "orchestry" or "singer's gallery" built on the east end in the summer of 1879. Also, a furnace was installed, all at a cost of $3100. The interior was furnished by the Ladies' Benevolent Association at a cost of $838.

The church was again repaired and remodeled during the summer of 1910. A new metal roof was put on at a cost of $182.22. The walls and ceiling were newly painted and decorated, floors carpeted and seats reupholstered at a cost of $934.09.

The building has been painted and redecorated twice since that time. In 1937 the job was done by the Ladies' Aid Society and again in 1952 the interior was transformed into the vision of beauty we enjoy today. An efficient and modern heating system has been installed to environ the worshiper in physical comfort and a new organ placed in the "orchestry" to instill the mood of reverence.

Early in 1870, the Society "voted that Soc. Committee be authorized to receive a deed of D. D. Little (for the consideration of 100 dollars) for 50 ft. square in his west front corner as a site for proposed conference house." Thus the first step was taken toward the erection of the Chapel. The building was completed during that year and financed entirely by subscription, the donors having contributed $1346.50 for the job. The ladies of the parish contributed over $100 to furnish the building including chairs and a Bible.

The proceeds of an Old Folks Concert were used to furnish blinds and door steps.

Of the parsonages, we know there have been at least three. The oldest one is the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Francis Lyman and this was used until 1926 when the house directly across the street from the church was given to the parish by Mr. Howard Yeomans. After the pastorship of Rev. Ralph Rowland this large Victorian house was sold and the smaller one now in use was purchased from the estate of George Champlin who for many years served as Sexton of the church.

PASTORS

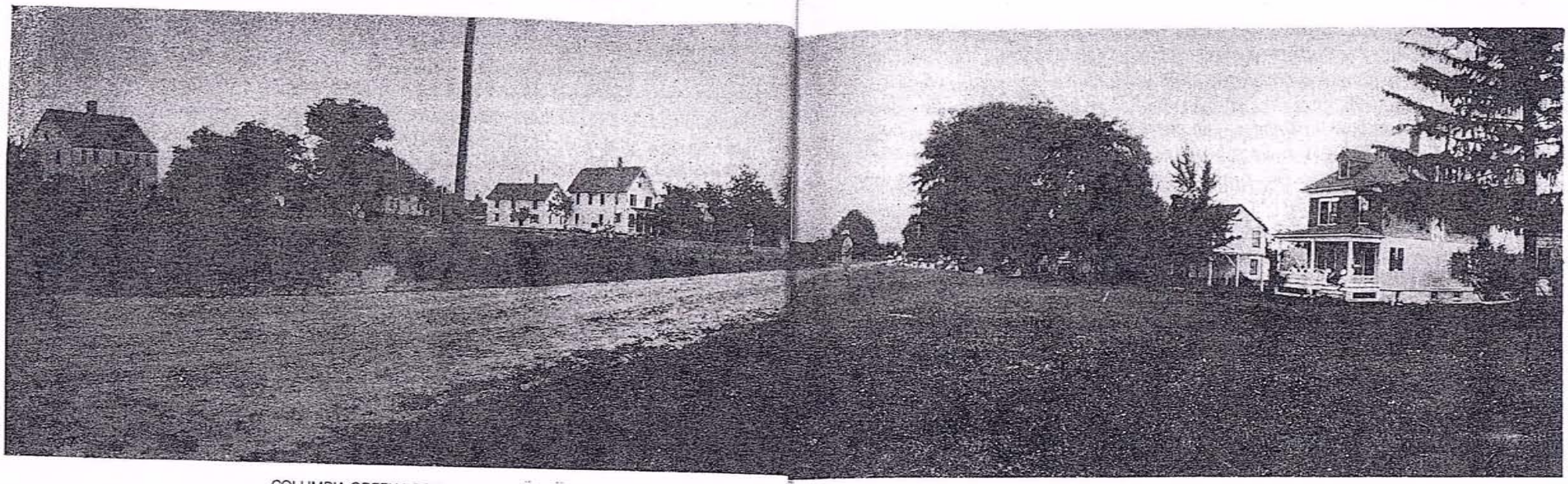
Rev. Samuel Smith was a native of Glastonbury, Connecticut and was one of three members of the class of 1713 at Yale College where he also tutored. He served Lebanon North Parish as the first pastor from 1720 until 1724 and died the following year.

Rev. William Gager was also a Yale graduate and served this parish from 1725 until 1734. He died in May 1739 at the age of thirty three.

Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, D.D. served from 1735 to 1770. His story is related in a chapter to follow.

Rev. Thomas Brockway was born in Lyme, Connecticut and graduated from Yale College in 1768. He also served the parish for thirty five years from 1772 until 1807, and ministered to the community through the trying Revolution years and the ensuing recovery period. The terms of his settlement were as follows: "Voted also to give Mr. Thomas Brockway . . . two hundred pounds settlement, one hundred to be paid at the end of the first year . . . , and fifty pounds at the end of ye second year and fifty pounds at the end of ye third year. Also voted to give him ninety pounds (less than $440) salary annually so long as he shall continue in the work of the ministry and that they would get him as many cords of wood yearly at six shillings per cord as he desires not exceeding thirty cords, to be reducted out of the above sd. ninety pounds." During the war years, Mr. Brockway proposed "to give in fifteen pounds a year till the enemy withdrew, and ten pounds a year till the Continental debt be paid." When news of the burning of New London reached the Crank, he "started off with his long gun and deacons and parishioners to assist in doing battle with the enemy." At the start of his pastorate, the church consisted of sixty nine members. Religious revivals added thirty members in 1781 and thirty five in 1801. He baptized about 421 children and believers during his service and lost 446 by death. He returned to his birthplace in Lyme to recover from an illness, but died suddenly on July 4, 1807.

Rev. Thomas Rich was born in Warren, Massachusetts and was graduated from Dartmouth in 1799. He was settled here in March of 1811 and served until 1817. It was during his ministry that the form of Covenant and Confession of Faith used for many years was adopted by the Church.



COLUMBIA GREEN LOOKING SOUTH
Taken about 1910

Rev. William Burton of Washington, Vermont was ordained here on February 24, 1818 and dismissed at his own request because of poor health June 23, 1819. He was a Dartmouth graduate.

Rev. David Dickinson was the seventh pastor and was installed here January 19, 1820. He was born in Conway, Massachusetts and was engaged in the medical profession for six years. During his seventeen year pastorate 123 members were united with the church, 103 of them by confession of faith. Forty one were added during the revival of 1831. Rev. Dickinson ended his pastorate on July 4, 1837 and again resumed his medical practice.

During the pastorates of Rev. Wheelock and Rev. Brockway, morality ran high and the church was generally filled. About 1800 there was much political excitement and many converted to other denominations out of town and the membership of the North Ecclesiastical Society dropped decidedly.

Rev. Charles Kittredge served from March of 1839 to April 1841. He was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts and was a graduate of Dartmouth.

Rev. James Wheelock Woodward was a fourth generation descendant of Dr. Wheelock. He was born in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1805 and graduated from Dartmouth in 1826. He served the church from 1842 to 1848.

Rev. Frederick Avery was the tenth pastor and served for forty five years, from 1850 until 1895. He was born at Groton, Connecticut in 1818, obtained his early schooling there, and prepared to enter the cabinet-maker's trade. Subsequently, he decided to enter the ministry and graduated from Yale College and Yale Theological Seminary. After substituting in several towns, he was called to Columbia April 29, 1830 and ordained the following June. It was here that he married and seven years later buried his first wife by whom he had a daughter, Miss Julia Avery. He married again and they were blessed with a son, Frederick H. Avery. Mr. Avery was beloved by all who knew him and affectionately called "Father Avery" by many. He was conservative as a preacher, yet firm in his convictions and unafraid to voice them. At his farewell sermon he remarked: "My continuance in this parish has been of unusual length. I have never had a thought or desire to seek and find any other field of labor. . . . I have had great comfort in this pastorate. . . . You have saved me from the distractions and waste of a scattered ministry."

The parish voted to honor him with the title of "Pastor Emeritus," and in 1901 a bronze tablet, suitably inscribed, was erected to his memory by Mrs. Mary B. Yeomans and still can be seen on the east wall of the church. He died in 1908 and his funeral was held in the church he served so well.

Rev. Jasper Harvey was installed in 1896 and served until 1905.

Rev. W. A. Shelton was the twelfth pastor and served from 1906 until 1908.

Rev. William H. Harris served two years from 1908 to 1910.

Rev. Elliott A. Foster was pastor from 1912 to 1915.

Rev. Thomas Owen served eight years, 1915 to 1923.

Rev. C. C. Haun was the sixteenth minister, serving from 1923 to 1925.
Rev. Duane V. Waln was minister from 1926 to 1928.
Rev. John Howell served from 1928 to 1930.
Rev. Asa Mellinger was pastor from 1930 to 1937.
Rev. Ralph Rowland served ten years from 1937 to 1947.
Dr. George S. Brookes served as interim pastor from 1947 to 1952.
Henry G. Wyman, the twenty-second minister to serve the church, is the present pastor.

The academic training of this distinguished group of men represents the educative result of some of the finest institutions of learning. Most of the earlier ministers were graduates of Yale or Dartmouth. Their religious philosophies would be as varied as their number and if they could gather before us today, such a theological discussion as we would hear!

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Sunday School was organized in May of 1820 with Deacon Benjamin Lyman as the first Superintendent. For the first thirty five years, classes were discontinued during the winter months. For a great many years, there were classes for all ages, from young to old. Now, as ever, it continues to play a most important role in church life.

Just prior to 1890, a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized to take the place of the afternoon worship service. Originally, it too was attended by all age groups, but gradually developed into a youth group. The modern version known as the Pilgrim Fellowship is an active group today, eager to assume its share of responsibility.

Until 1917 when the church was incorporated, the business affairs of the church were handled by the Ecclesiastical Society, membership in which was restricted to the male members of the parish. They engaged, paid, and dismissed the ministers; built, repaired, and renovated the buildings; and raised the necessary funds. They raised money by a direct tax, rental of pews, or subscription — or a combination of the three. They provided schools and roads at that time in history when it was the duty of the parish to do so. In 1725 the Society appointed a "Commity to look after the laying out of convenient highways," and on January 13, 1752 they chose a committee to "view the land proposed for highway through sd. Pains, Loomis and Nath Whites Land and to agree with the owners Respecting the above sd. ways." The Society also sent representatives to the general assembly, especially when an issue was under consideration which directly concerned the parish — usually a disputed boundary line.

The church was one of several in this area which were united in a federation known as the "Consociation." This group often settled disputes between Societies and also supplied impartial judges or moderators when a controversial issue had to be settled within the Society. The Consociation played a large part in the ordination services of new ministers.

It would seem that the women of the parish, though barred from the important business in the earliest days, have always found a way to provide financial assistance for a variety of projects. One of the earliest women's groups was the Ladies' Benevolent Association. The Ladies' Society, formerly the Ladies' Aid Society, still plays an important role in church life after many years of service. The Women's Guild, now in its fifth year, is comprised of those women who can meet in the evening but are not free during the day.

Believing that nothing should be necessary to foster an attitude of worship but the bare necessity of shelter, early Protestant churches had even eliminated all music from the service. Gradually the Puritanical ideas were relaxed and worship through song became an increasingly important phase of the service. Ordination services were apparently the first to merit the added attraction of a choir, for early records show that special committees were appointed to recruit singers for such affairs. In October of 1864, S. H. Dewey and S. F. West were appointed a committee to solicit funds to purchase a Melodeon for the "benefit of the church and society." Choirs soon became a permanent part of the church organization. Musical accompaniment became necessary and choir leaders and organists played an indispensable role.

THE PIOUS PAST

Pages and pages of the early church records (many of them in Dr. Wheelock's own handwriting) were devoted to the accusations, testimonies, confessions, and disposition of discipline cases. At one such trial, according to the record of Asahel Dewey, Clerk, fifteen members met at the home of Rev. James Woodward in 1841 to hear a complaint against two members charging "neglect of duty for not attending meetings." All present agreed that something should be done. The suggestion was ventured that one of the accused was insane and the subject was brought to a vote with the unanimous decision resulting that he was not insane. A committee consisting of George Williams, A. Dewey, Sylvester Manley and Norman Little was appointed to visit the offenders and try "in a Christian manner to induce them to return to duty." It was also voted to keep Wednesday of that week a day of "fasting, humiliation and prayer to Almighty God in reference to their doings."

Lengthy details are given in the records of the meetings between the committee and the two offenders. To one of these the committee confessed their "unfaithfulness and that of the church in not watching over him as they ought to have done." They "earnestly requested" and even "demanded" his attendance and return to duty. The accused gentleman refused to answer questions and said he "wished the church would let him alone." At a subsequent meeting of the church, the unanimous vote was cast to cut off the offender from "full communion & fellowship with this church." The second offender told the committee he felt the new generation was

not as good as the last and he had been ill treated by some of the members. The membership also voted to cut him off.

And so it goes — administering discipline was a major problem in the church. The charges were varied and ranged from failure to attend services sometimes for as long as a year to "Laughing and Irreverent Deportment in ye Publick Worship of God our Lord."

Many of the families living in Columbia now can be traced back through the records of baptisms, marriages, and deaths appearing in the church records. Though life in the world of today seems precarious indeed, the roster of deaths is a grim reminder that no age has been without its hazards. There were many old timers in the early days and if you lived to be ninety three, it could safely be said that you died of old age. But infant mortality was especially high and it declined little as the years were added. No age was immune to the maladies of the day which ranged from "consumption" to "dropsy of the brain" and included scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhus and a multitude of other ailments. The railroads seemed to be the cause of most of the "traffic" accidents of the day.

The earliest worship services were held in an unheated, uncushioned, and uncarpeted meeting house. Few of the worshipers owned carriages and those who had to travel any distance rode horseback or went afoot. In winter the meeting house was icy cold and foot stoves gave little relief. The communion bread often froze. While the hour-glass silently measured the lengthy sermons, the tything men carried out their important job of keeping the congregation awake, alert, and solemn during the service. When the final "Amen" had been said, they went home to a cold meal, for no cooking or work of any kind could be done on the Sabbath.

THE "ROTARY" AT THE FOUR CORNERS
As it looked in 1909.

POPULATION OF COLUMBIA

1810 -	834
1820 -	941
1830 -	962
1840 -	842
1850 -	876
1860 -	832
1870 -	891
1880 -	757
1890 -	740
1900 -	655
1910 -	646
1920 -	706
1930 -	648
1940 -	853
1950 -	1329

Eleazar Wheelock

PASTOR AND EDUCATOR

One of New England's most famous pastors, the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, came to Lebanon Crank in the early days of its settlement. He was born in Windham in May 1711. Having been left a legacy for his education, he was graduated from Yale College in 1733, and licensed to preach the Gospel by the New Haven East Association in 1734. Rev. Mr. Wheelock was a handsome, middle-sized man, with light blue eyes, and his prominent features bore a pleasant expression. He carried himself erect and dignified, although he suffered from poor health. He could melt his audience into tears with his full, harmonious and commanding voice.

Eleazar Wheelock received a unanimous call to settle at Lebanon Crank in February 1735. In April of the same year he married his first wife, Mrs. Sarah Maltby, a widow from New Haven. He was ordained at Lebanon Crank the first Wednesday of the following June.

The terms of his settlement were as follows:

"Voted to give Mr. Wheelock that part of the minister's farm which they reserved in their agreement with Mr. Gager, which they suppose is something more than twenty acres, and two hundred pounds in bills of public credit, for a settlement, in case he settle in the work of the ministry among us.

"Also, voted to give Mr. Wheelock one hundred and forty pounds a year salary, to be paid in bills of public credit, or in provision at the following prices: viz. wheat at nine shillings per bushel, rye at seven, Indian corn at five, oats at two shillings and six pence, pork at six pence a pound, and beef at four, which are to be the standard by which his salary is to rise or fall proportionally as they in general rise or fall among us."

Mr. Wheelock was pastor at Lebanon Crank for thirty-five years. His first wife died in November 1746 at the age of forty-three. Her grave is near the center of the old cemetery, and their two sons who died in infancy, both bearing his name, are buried by her side. The inscription on her gravestone reads: "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Sarah, the wife of ye Rev'd Eleazar Wheelock, who died Nov. 16 A.D. 1746, and in the 44 year of her age, and of a character too great and good to have any worthy of it inscribed here." They had one daughter, who became Mrs. Patton of Hartford. The second Mrs. Wheelock was formerly Miss Mary Brinsmade from Milford. This union was blessed with five children. One daughter, Mary, married Bezaleel Woodward, first Professor of Mathematics at Dartmouth. A second daughter, Abigail, was married to the Reverend Sylvanus Ripley. He was one of the first four graduates and the first Professor of Theology at Dartmouth. The Wheelocks' son John, also a graduate of the first class at Dartmouth, succeeded his father as president of the college, and held that office for nearly forty years. Two other sons were Colonel Eleazar Wheelock and James Wheelock.

Prior to the year 1714, due to an obvious deterioration in the lives and characters of the people, described as quarrelsomeness, drunkenness, lying and slander, the General Assembly of Connecticut passed special resolutions. The General Association of Churches was called upon to inquire into this religious indifference and immorality which threatened to ruin the land. The ministers reported in 1715 that they found a lack of Bibles in the homes, lack of worship, and that tale-bearing, defamation, contempt of law and intemperance abounded. The legislature then ordered all judges and justices of the peace to be strict and to enforce all laws for the suppression and punishment of immorality and irreligion; that selectmen and constables were to see to it that children should be educated, every householder was to obtain a Bible and other good books were to be distributed. Officers were bidden to make diligent search for breaches of education, profanity, lying, and tippling at unlicensed houses. This unfavorable condition of affairs was not strange in view of the demoralizing effect of the hardships of life and trouble with the Indians. But the pendulum of history was about to make its return to more favorable times.

There was soon a deepening seriousness here, and it is evidenced by the solemn church trial held at Lebanon Crank in 1738. "Dr. Timothy Huchisson, a young physician and member of that church, had recently been to a party (or a frolic as it was then called) with many other young persons, members of that church and society. He escorted Miss Martha Root, whom he carried behind him on a horse to which had been given the name of 'Old Groan'. At this frolic some things had taken place which called for severe reproof, and this was being given in the form of a sermon by Dr. Wheelock, May 20, 1738. It was customary then for men who were drowsy or weary with sitting to rise and stand up in their pews. It was while the doctor was thus standing that the irreverent conduct complained of took place." Thus wrote the Reverend Elliot Palmer to his nephew, Elbert C. Little, in 1888. He was particularly interested in a case of church discipline, and had consulted the ancient records of the North Church of Lebanon, written by the Rev. Mr. Wheelock. Mr. Palmer then put the record into verse, which, the compilers of the present volume find, follows closely Mr. Wheelock's account:

THE COST OF A SMILE

Being an account from the original manuscript of the trial of Dr. Timothy Huchisson, for irreverent conduct in the House of God, on a Sabbath Day in the year 1738.

Reports very serious, indeed very trying,
For many a week through the place had been flying,
Concerning one H - - - , a youthful physician,
Who held in the town an honoured position.
Complaint had been made by some in the church
That young Dr. H - - - had been found in the lurch,

THE REVEREND ELEAZAR WHEELOCK

And so far gone astray that he needed the birch,
So that good Pastor Wheelock his duty saw clear
And the derelict doctor was called to appear,
And the charges and specifications hear;
So the day for the trial was set,
And the church and council together had met.
The Doctor was there,
And stern in the chair
Sat good Pastor Wheelock. The court crier reads,
And frankly not guilty Huchisson pleads,
Wherefore, certain members being called, testified

To the facts which the Doctor thus pleading denied.
The first was John English, according to law,
Who solemnly swore to the smile that he saw;
It was on the twenty and first of last May,
In the afternoon of the Sabbath day.
I saw Dr. Huchisson in the act of a smile
And the same he continued for some little while;
Three or four minutes think it might be,
At Dr. Wheelock he looked — I did see.
Thus John. Then Abagail E. testifies
To facts which she saw with no little surprise,
And with her own eyes.
It was on the twenty and first of last May,
In the afternoon of the Sabbath Day,
That I saw Dr. Huchisson look for a while
At some one in the gallery, then visibly smile,
And the same he continued for some little while.
The testimony next given in,
Concerning young Timothy Huchisson's sin,
Ebenezer deposes, whose surname is Wright,
And throws on the fact of smiling more light.
It was on the twenty and first of last May,
In the afternoon of the Sabbath day,
That I saw Dr. Huchisson visibly smile
And the same he continued for some little while.
And the witness deposed still further, and said
That the Doctor's face grew exceedingly red,
The while Mr. Wheelock was preaching, until
His eye caught the eye of Jediah Bill.
And while he was looking direct at Jediah,
I saw his face turn just as red as the fire.
What made you think, Sir, he was looking at Bill,
Quoth the Court; Why, I thought, and I think so still.
They turned each to each, till their eyes met at least,
When the smile of the Doctor was somewhat increas't.
Next, Abagail Clark was called to the stand,
And quickly did she obey the command.
It was on the twenty and first of May,
In the afternoon of the Sabbath day.
Saw Dr. H - - - stand in his place,
Put his handkerchief to his face,
And thus, by all that I could see,
It seemed to be quite clear to me,
And I'd no doubt it was the case,
He covered o'er a smiling face.

But, to be still more explicit,
'Twas the truth I did solicit,
As he looked very narrowly
To the opposite gallery,
He turned a very little aft,
And I perceived he smiled or laughed,
As near as I can determine
'Twas toward the close of the sermon.

Here closed the testimony at the first meeting, which was held August 1st, 1738. The witnesses were then sworn, or, according to the record of the Moderator, the above evidences made oath or a solemn declaration to the truth of their testimony, in the following words, viz: You and each of you do solemnly declare, before God as you expect to give an account to Him at the great day, that the evidence which you have here given in is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

To all which Timothy Huchisson replies and says —

Brethren, I surely did not know,
That my eyes had wandered so,
As testimony seems to show.
Indeed, I am somewhat astonished,
That while being thus admonished,
I should look hither and thither;
I didn't know I looked any whither
But as the Pastor of this flock —
Our Reverend Teacher, Mr. Wheelock.
I rose and stood up in my pew,
Not that I might see anything new,
Or might the congregation view
But that I might better attend
And hear the sermon to the end.
To laugh surely I had no disposition
Until Mr. Wheelock used this expression —
Their very horses to be delivered them, groaned,
That on them such riders ever sat enthroned.
And it was a wonder of mercy to me
That they did not themselves thus speed off free,
And their dancing, frolicking sets expel
By throwing their abusive riders swift-hell.
When he remarked that our very horses groaned,
It put me in mind 'a horse we had owned,
And which we used to ride; we called him Old Groan
Because when we rode him he used to grunt or groan.
The young woman whom I carried to the frolick
Laughed about him; said no doubt he had the cholic.
As to my laughing, I wish you to believe it,

I tried, as hard as ever I could to leave it,
Had it been in my power, I certainly would,
I did it, Moderator, as soon as I could.
And now, as it was sudden, and came with a gush,
Putting me in a flutter, my face in a flush,
As it was accidental, and came with a rush:
And because not allowed, and what I couldn't repress,
Because involuntary, which I could not suppress,
I ought not in public be obliged to confess.
Now, when the speech of H - - - was through,
And when the case was viewed anew,
Some desired to let it drop,
And all proceedings henceforth stop.
Others thought 'twould be very wrong,
He'd laughed so hearty and so long,
Before the church in full session
He ought to come, and make confession.
But, as they could not all agree,
Nor to compel, nor set him free,
They adjourn at length the meeting,
Have a little friendly greeting:
Then they part, once again to meet
And try the matter to complete.
Awhile the case it did remain,
In January came up again.
The church, council, moderator,
All were now again together.
The Doctor too was on the spot,
To wipe away the dreaded blot,
And as some members were agrieved,
More testimony was received.
Noah Dewey at length arose,
And did some other things disclose.
'Twas on the twenty first of May,
Afternoon of the Sabbath day,
I saw T. Huchisson stand upright
Having his arms upfolded quite,
And his face as it had been wont
Turned to the gallery in front;
And though he did not look on me,
Yet he smiled or laughed I see,
And his face as friend Wright had said
Appeared to me to be very red,
So that I thought, indeed at first,
He was just a-going to burst

Into a ha ha laugh, the which
I thought would be of law a breach,
And I was just going to tell
Two that sat by me, mark him well,
So that we might his case present
According to the law's intent,
And thus might bring him face to face
Before chief justice of the place,
When lo, at once his face so red
He covered o'er and bowed his head.
I think the time I saw him laugh
Not two minutes — say one a half.

Question by Moderator,
What do you mean by his laughing or smiling?
The same things said and the same things done,
Testified Mr. Eddy Newcomb.

Third witness — Mrs. Martha Negus.
Miss Root, whom to the frolick he carried,
Had since to his friend Negus been married.
She came by special request to the court,
To tell what she knew or make her report.
Requested to tell what passed on the road,
She arose and certain facts in order showed.
Returning, as we our way back did wend,
Myself indeed and my medical friend,
His horse groaned as we came to the frolic.
I said I thought it a case of Cholic.
He supposed the upheaving and jolting
Was cause of what he called it his grunting,
By clearing away the stones in the road
And freeing himself of part of his load,
He thought that the horse would no more complain,
Nor very soon would he grunt again.
But you see Doctor the horse is distressed,
He must be inwardly very much pressed,
And you should ever show yourself inclined
To soften pain in brute as in human kind.
Take my prescription, mentastrum steep long
And give it to the nag quite strong.
It may effect a genuine cure,
It will not hurt him, that is sure,
And if the horse should thus be eased,
You Doctor must of course be pleased.
Yea, you should be very grateful

To think you'd been so successful,
And should you thus subdue the pain,
Increase of custom you may gain.
Thus we merrily rode in state,
Till we came to our picket gate,
When our pleasant confab ended
And I the granite block descended.
What was further said on the way,
Deponent thinks not best to say.
Council now have a little discussion
Concerning the whole matter in question.
First they examine the reason, to see
Whether the Doctor should now be set free.
Questions in the outset seem to arise,
Which should be discussed by heads clear and wise.
1. Whether the cause he assigns is the true,
Which has raised all this excitement and stew —
Can this for all his laughing account?
Aint there something down deep at the fount
Which has been long time seething and steeping,
And which is cleansed only by sorrow and weeping?
2. What allowance for offence shall be made
When human frailty's considered and weighed?
And how much it lessens Doctor's offence
When is shown on both sides the evidence,
And when over against the whole of these
We have presented on both sides the pleas?
We think surely we ought not to pick flaws
With what H. for laughing gives as the cause.
We ought not to be so mulish and blue,
But give all credit to him it is due,
While we would not surely the Doctor abuse,
We cannot indeed his conduct excuse,
For 1st his laughing continued quite long,
On this point the evidence bears down strong.
The many positions in which he stood
Show him not thinking of anything good,
Especially as he under the ban
Was now being pointed out as the man.
Then again the whole assembly might think
He was giving the girls above the wink.
We think it does him clearly behoove
That he should at once the scandal remove,
If he'd done what he could he'd soon refrained,
At any rate he'd not in it long remained,

Nor would he have so very open been
In what we view an increasing sin.
We think he should now most publicly say
That he has been greatly out of the way.
The Doctor here arose and pleasantly said
He thought he had been sufficiently bled.
Huchisson thought he ought not for a smile
Be brought to confess in the Broad Aisle,
But as this thing has made a great noise
Among old and young, the girls and boys,
And some of the church have taken offence,
And from their communion hold me with suspense,
I think perhaps on further reflection,
'Tis due that I should make some concession,
And as I wish the affections of all,
To remove the offence lest any should fall.
What is thought best on the whole I should do,
I'm ready at once, that course to pursue.
Then the church having a committee of nine,
Made out a writing for the Doctor to sign;
This was to be in Pastor's possession,
And read by him at the Disconfession.
Huchisson then took it, scanned it over awhile,
Said they'd got in laughing, but left out the smile.
He thought it quite proper that smile should be in
To show the nature and extent of his sin.
Council on further consideration
Put the word smile in their accusation.
After a little, H - - - publicly said
The following acknowledgment might be read.
I, T. Huchisson, do solemnly say,
I condemn all laughing, lightness and play
In the House of God on the Sabbath day;
It's unbecoming a serious mind,
To engage in anything of the kind,
Yet on this subject, I see I'm lame,
I think I did smile, and so am to blame:
'Gainst testimony I cannot say no,
But have cause to think it was even so,
I do not complain of being suspended,
But sorry I've my brethren offended.
I ask the church, Pastor, elders and lay,
That they would for me most earnestly pray,
That God would forgive the sins of that day,
Even the memorable twenty-first of last May;

Also all my sins of the past and plead
That I may to my ways take heed,
And be kept from sin in appearance and deed,
And from its dire sequence eternally freed.

This period of time was called "The Great Awakening", and enveloped all of New England. Eleazar Wheelock became an earnest and efficient fellow-laborer with the Reverend Jonathan Edwards. Before the year following his settlement had passed, the Parish of Lebanon Crank began to receive the fruits of his faithful and well-directed labors. Such success attended the preaching of Mr. Wheelock in that revival season, that he found himself drawn away from his own special field, to engage in similar efforts with other churches and ministers. So constant were his efforts to bring sinners to Christ that in one year "he preached a hundred more sermons than there are days in the year." He was a man of such deep piety and enthusiasm that the North Parish was not enough of an outlet. Eleazar Wheelock felt free to work elsewhere, as he claimed that his income here was insufficient and he had to draw on his own funds to support his family.

It was in his own home that he held his first school for a few English boys who were preparing for college. It was then that Samson Occom came under the influence of "The Great Awakening", and came seeking, even pleading, for further education under Wheelock's teachings. Occom was a Mohegan Indian, born in 1723. There are two popular spellings of his name. Locally it is usually found as Occum, but a letter bearing his personal signature gives the name as Occom, and The Dartmouth Manuscript Series does likewise, therefore that spelling will be used in this writing.

Occom prepared for college here from 1743 to 1748, but his poor health prevented him from carrying out his wish to further his education. He was ordained by the Suffolk Presbytery on Long Island. His living was made by fishing, hunting, and weaving baskets among the Indian tribes. As he worked among his people, he converted many. It is painful to say that this lonely and comparatively respectable product of Christianity drifted from drunkeness to repentance. It is said that he wept over his sins until he got thirsty, then drank again. Occom died in New York at the age of sixty-nine, in 1792.

It was due to Samson Occom that Wheelock decided to take in Indian students. By 1762 he had more than twenty Indians preparing themselves to go back to their own tribes to teach. Wheelock's idea was to take selected youths from various tribes and train them, away from the temptations of the Indian village. He wished to instill in them a deep love for Christianity and to inspire them, through long, close contact, with a civilized way of life. Then they would be sent back to live among their own people as teachers, preachers, and agriculturists. English missionaries would visit them from time to time to direct their work. Frequently Wheelock had to use his own funds for this purpose, but his determination never wavered. The people of the colonies felt it a blot on their own souls if they allowed

the Indians to miss this opportunity for salvation. Wheelock argued that if half the money spent in supporting troops and building forts against the Indians had been used in converting them, there would not have been the cruelties and tortures of Indian warfare.

A farmer in Mansfield, Mr. Joshua More, made the first large contribution for the school, by will in 1754: a house to be used for school purposes, and two acres of land adjoining the Wheelock home. Because of this the school was named "Moor's Indian Charity School". The spelling of the name varies, but when applied to the school it is usually given as Moor. In 1758, because of a flaw in the original deed, More's widow reconveyed the property to Wheelock personally. From then until the incorporation of Dartmouth College the original name, Moor's Charity School, was dropped. On the title page of Wheelock's nine Narratives he gives the name "Indian Charity School".

Missionaries from Indian tribes sent boys of eleven years and up to the school. The first two were Delawares who arrived on December 18, 1754. Soon Mohawks, Pequots, Montauks, Mohegans, Narragansetts and others were represented. They were to be trained in the rudiments of a secular and a religious education, and in husbandry. Indian girls were placed with the families in the community and taught "housewifery".

Wheelock gave completely of himself and solicited funds as he travelled through the colonies. People responded, but not sufficiently. Some support came by appropriations from the legislatures of Connecticut and Massachusetts, and some funds came from England. Other contributions included Bibles, johannes, pisterenes, "a little girl a copper", a bell, clothing, lawful money, and sterling.

Some Indian boys did not respond favorably to Wheelock's efforts, and early letters show that many slipped back into their old ways. Drunkenness was extremely common. But Wheelock had the great satisfaction, eleven years after opening the school, of sending to the Six Nations of Indians in the Province of New York ten "graduates". In the same year these missionaries and schoolmasters reported that there were one hundred and twenty-seven Indians attending the various schools which had been established.

Samson Occom was Wheelock's greatest pride, and when more funds were needed to forward the work, he sent him to England, in 1765, with the Reverend Nathaniel Whitaker of Norwich, to solicit contributions. As Occom spoke in all the large cities in Scotland and England, he aroused a great deal of enthusiasm for the project. He was the first Indian Christian preacher these people had ever seen. The Earl of Dartmouth was so impressed that he not only gave generously, but also secured a contribution of two hundred pounds sterling from King George. A fund of over ten thousand pounds sterling was collected from these two countries. Occom's excellent English, fine bearing and unassuming manner won friends for him and his cause wherever he went. They were abroad for about two years,

and on their return in 1768 Dr. Wheelock had more money on hand or pledged than any other educator in this country. Much of the money was never released, and there were years of struggles to get it here, without complete success.

The following letter, written by Occom from London to his daughters at home, is a curious example of Mohegan ingenuity:

My dear Mary and Esther —

Perhaps you may query whether I am well: I came from home well, was by the way well, got over well, am received at London well, and am treated extremely well, — yea, I am caress'd too well. And do you pray that I may be well; and that I may do well, and in Time return Home well. And I hope you are well, and wish you well, and as I think you begun well, so keep on well, that you may end well, and then all will be well.

And so Farewell,

Samson Occom

On June 29, 1767, Mr. Wheelock received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburg.

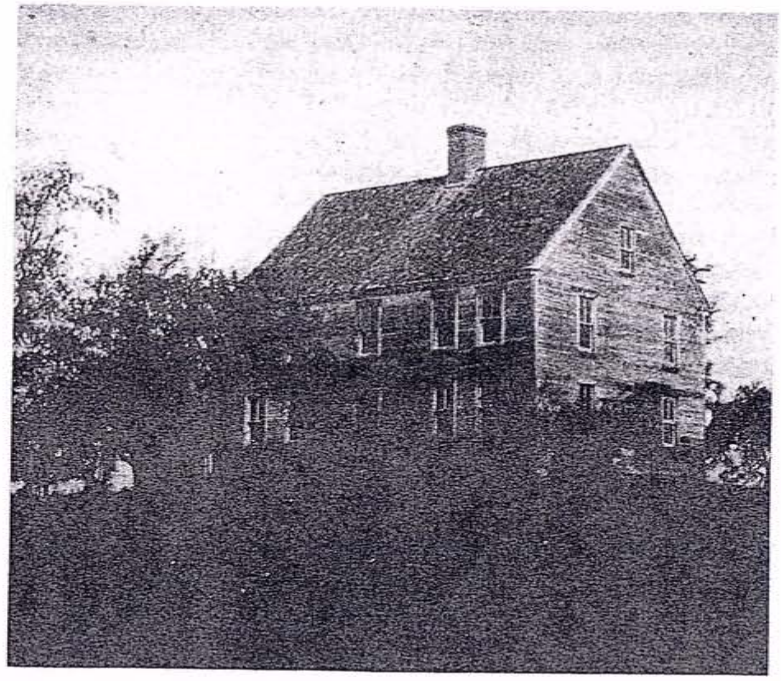
It was time for a change. Wheelock was not satisfied with the results of the school at Lebanon Crank. He felt that he was too far away from the Six Nations of Indians of the north, where his work was needed. He was not satisfied with the stability of the boys after they returned to their own tribes, and there was also the fact that Yale College was located in Connecticut and required funds. Consequently the decision was made with the consent of his advisors here and abroad that he would move the school. He would have a school for Indians and also start a college for English boys. What his parishioners in Lebanon Crank thought of his plan to move the school is recorded thus:

"At a legal and full meeting of the Inhabitants, legal voters of the second society in Lebanon, in Connecticut, held in said society on the 29th day of June, Anno Domini 1767, We made choice of Mr. James Pinneo to be moderator of said meeting, and passed the following votes, nemine contradicente.

"1. That we desire the Indian Charity School now under the care of the Rev. Mr. Eleazer Wheelock, may be fixed to continue in this society; provided it may consist with the interest and prosperity of said school.

"2. That as we have a large and convenient house for public and divine Worship; we will accommodate the members of said school with such convenient seats in said house as we shall be able.

"3. That the following letter be presented to the Rev. Mr. Eleazer Wheelock, by Messrs. Israel Woodward, James Pinneo, and Asahel Clark, in the name and behalf of this society; and that they desire him to transmit a copy of the same, with the votes foregoing, to the Right Honorable the Earl of Dartmouth, and the rest of those Honorable and Worthy Gentlemen in England who have condescended to patronize said school; and to whom the establishment of the same is committed."



WHEELOCK HOUSE

Dr. Wheelock's home, where his first classes for Indians were held. Well known as the home of Horace W. Porter, it has the old Dutch oven in the kitchen, fireplaces in five rooms, a steep narrow stairway, kitchen chamber, wide floor boards, large rooms and high ceilings.

The Inhabitants of the second society in Lebanon in Connecticut to the Rev. Mr. Eleazer Wheelock, Pastor of said society.

Rev. and dear Pastor,

As you are witness to our past care and concern for the success of your most pious and charitable undertaking in favor of the poor perishing Indians on this continent, we are confident you will not be displeased at our addressing you on this occasion; but that you would rather think it strange if we should altogether hold our peace at such a time as this; when we understand it is still in doubt both with your self and Friends where to fix your school; whether at Albany or more remote among the Indian Tribes, in this society where it was first planted, or in some other part of this colony proposed for its accommodation.

We have some of us heard most of the arguments offered for its removal, and however plausible they appear we are not at all convinced of their force, or that it is expedient, every thing considered, it should be removed, nor do we think we have great reason to fear the event, only we would not be wanting as to our duty in giving such hints in favor of its continuance here as naturally occur to our minds, for we have that confidence in you and the friends of the desire, that you will not be easily carried

away with Appearances: but will critically observe the secret springs of those generous offers, made in one place and another, (some of which are beyond what we can pretend to,) whether some prospect of private emolument be not at the bottom; or whether they will finally prove more kind to your pious institution as such considered, (whatever their pretenses may be,) than ever have been or at present appear to be to the Redeemer's Kingdom in general. We trust this institution so well calculated to the advancement of its interest will flourish best among the Redeemer's friends; and although with respect to ourselves we have little to boast as to friendship to our divine Redeemer or his interest, yet this we are sure of, that he has been very kind to us, in times past, and we trust has made you the instrument of much good to us, and to lay a foundation for it to succeeding generations; we humbly hope God has been preparing an habitation for himself here, and has said of it this is my resting place, here will I dwell forever, (not because they deserved it,) but because I have desired it, and where God is pleased to dwell, under his influence your institution (which we trust is of him,) may Expect to live and thrive. We desire it may be considered that this is its birth place, here it was kindly received, and nourished when no other door was set open to it — here it found friends when almost friendless, yea when despised and contemned abroad — its friends are now increased here as well as elsewhere, and although by reason of our poverty and the hardness of the times, our subscriptions are small compared with what some others may boast. Being at present but about 810 pounds lawful money yet there are here some other privileges which we think very valuable and serviceable to the design, viz. 400 acres of very fertile and good land, about forty acres of which are under improvement, and the remainder well set with choice timber and fuel, and is suitably proportioned for the various branches of Husbandry which will much accommodate the design as said land is situated within about half a mile of our Meeting House, and may be purchased for fifty shillings lawful money per acre. There is also several other small parcels of land suitably situate for building places for the use of the school to be sold at a reasonable rate. We have also a beautiful building place for said school within a few rods of said meeting house, adjacent to which is a large and pleasant Green: and we are confident that wood, provisions and clothing, &c., which will be necessary for the school, may be had here not only now, but in future years at as low a rate as in any place in the colony, or in any other place where it has been proposed to settle your school. These privileges we think are valuable and worthy your consideration, and also of those Honourable and worthy Gentlemen in England to whom you have committed the design of the affair, and from the friendly disposition which has so many years past and does still reign in our breasts towards it. We think it may be presumed we shall from time to time be ready to minister to its support as occasion shall require and our circumstances permit. We take the liberty further to observe that such has hitherto been the peace and good order

(greatly through your instrumentality), obtaining among us that the members of your school have all along been as free from temptations to any vicious courses or danger of fatal error as perhaps might be expected they would be on any spot of this Universally polluted Globe.

Here, Dear Sir, your school has flourished remarkably. It has grown apace; from small beginnings how very considerable it has become; an evidence that the soil and climate suit the institution — if you transplant it you run the risk of stinting its growth, perhaps of destroying its very life, or at least of changing its nature and missing the pious aim you have all along had in view: a danger which scarce need to be hinted: as you are sensible it has been the common fate of institutions of this kind; that charitable Donations have been misapplied and perverted to serve purposes very far from or contrary to those the pious donors had in view; such is the subtilty of the old serpent that he will turn all our weapons against our selves if possible. Aware of this, you have all along appeared to decline and even detest all such alliances and proposals as were calculated for, or seemed to promise any private emolument to your self or your friends. This we trust is still your prevailing temper and rejoice to hear that your friends and those who are intrusted with the affair in England are exactly in the same sentiments, happy presage not only of the continuance of the institution itself but we hope of its immutability as to place. One thing more we beg leave to mention, not (to tire your patience with the many that occur,) viz. if you remove the school from us, you at the same time take away our Minister, the light of our eyes and joy of our hearts, under whose ministrations we have sat with great delight; whose labors have been so acceptable and we trust profitable for a long time; must then our Dear and Worthy Pastor and his pious institution go from us together? Alas shall we be deprived of both in one day? We are sensible that we have abused such privileges and have forfeited them; and at God's bar we plead guilty — we pray him to give us repentance and reformation, and to lengthen out our Happy State; we own the justice of God in so heavy losses, if they must be inflicted; and even in the removal of our Candlestick out of its place, but we can't bear the thought that you our Dear Pastor and the dear friends to your pious institution should become the Executioners of such a Vengeance. However we leave the matter with you, and are with much Duty and filial regard Dear Sir, Your very humble servants or rather Obedient Children.

By order of said Society,

Israel Woodward,
James Pinneo,
Asahel Clark, Jr.

June 29th, 1767.

Invitations came from Virginia for Wheelock to start a school there; also from Carolina, New York State, Pittsburgh, Stockbridge, Pittsfield, and New Hampshire. After visiting, and considering the merits of the different places, and after an eight-weeks tour of the north country on horseback, in the spring of 1770 he decided on Hanover, New Hampshire.

In August he was directing thirty pupils at felling trees which rose one hundred feet up in the air to the first branches, two hundred and seventy feet tall. That first summer the trees on six acres were felled, and used to erect log cabins during the winter.

In August 1770 the first letter came from Hanover, signed "From my hut, but without glass, brick or nails".

In September the final instructions came for the migration of the family. "Don't bring cows unless they give milk, 100 pounds of tobacco, if you have a barrel of old pork bring it with you. You would do well to bring a gross of pipes, Jabes barrel of rum, barrel of molasses, keg of wine, half barrel of sugar".

Dr. Wheelock sent Dr. Crane back on horseback, as a special messenger with a license to travel on Sunday, to meet the procession which was on its way, consisting of a horseman or two at the head, an English coach carrying Mrs. Wheelock and family, John Thornton, another Indian student who later graduated, ox cart bearing rum, school books, negro servants, cows, and thirty students on foot. There was great confusion, and they could travel only a few miles a day.

Dr. Crane met them and told them that they were to go back to Lebanon Crank to wait further orders from Dr. Wheelock, because there was not enough water near the house that they had built to supply their needs. But Mrs. Wheelock was a determined woman, and decided that as she had come thus far, the getting of a little water wasn't going to stop her, so Dr. Crane turned around and joined the procession on its way to Hanover.

Besides the rum that was carried in the ox cart, there were two hundred books, two hundred manuscripts, and letters from Lebanon Crank.

A song sung at Dartmouth today tells the story thus:

"O Eleazar Wheelock was a very pious man,
He went into the wilderness to teach the Indi-an,
With a gradus and a parnacum, a Bible and a drum,
And five hundred gallons of New England rum."

Overcoming all difficulties, Wheelock established his Indian school, and along side it Dartmouth college, named in honor of his great benefactor, the Earl of Dartmouth. The Indian school did not survive long, for in 1772 he had only five Indian scholars. Dr. Wheelock was Dartmouth's first president.

The weather vane on the Baker Memorial Library at Dartmouth depicts a tall pine tree, Dr. Wheelock preaching, the traditional barrel of rum supporting his Bible with an Indian squatted before it. His spiritual resolve is preserved in his own words:

"And it is my purpose, by the grace of God, to leave nothing undone within my power, which is suitable to be done, that this school of the prophets may be, and long continue to be, a pure fountain. And I do with my whole heart will this my purpose to all my successors in the presidency of

this seminary, to the latest posterity, and it is my last will, never to be revoked."

Eleazar Wheelock.

The publications of Dr. Wheelock are:

A Narrative of the Indian Charity School at Lebanon — dated 1762.
A Sermon at the Ordination of Charles Jeffrey Smith — 1763.
Narratives — in several numbers from 1763 to 1771.
Continuation of the Narrative — 1773.
A Sermon — "Liberty of Conscience, or no kind but Christ in the Church" — 1775.

Dr. Wheelock's Memoirs, by Dr. McClure and Dr. Parish, were published in 1811.

The Reverend Dr. Wheelock was seized with epilepsy, and after three months of illness, he died on April 24, 1779, at the age of sixty-eight.

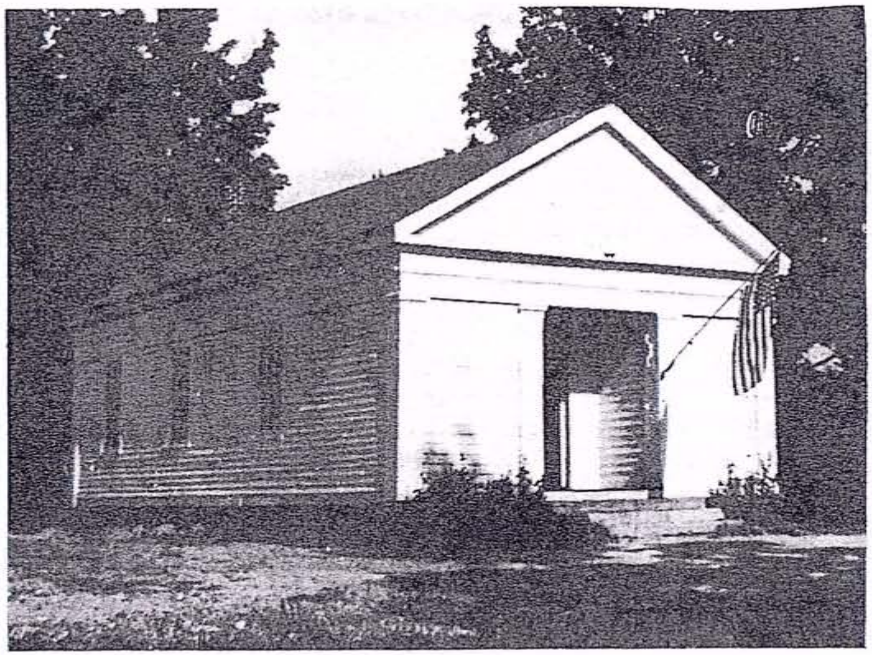
Two lasting memorials to Dr. Wheelock may be seen in Columbia today.

On the Green in front of the Congregational Church is a gray stone slab which reads:

In 1755
Eleazar Wheelock D.D.
Minister at Lebanon Crank
(Now Columbia)
Founded Near This Spot
Moor's Indian Charity School
In 1769
The School Was Removed To
Hanover New Hampshire
From This Beginning Arose
Dartmouth College
Eleazar Wheelock President 1769-1779
Presented by The Connecticut Society
of The Colonial Dames of America 1949

Carved near the top of the monument in a circular insert is the head of an Indian, to represent Samson Occom, Dr. Wheelock's first Indian student.

The other memorial is more unusual, perhaps unique. It is a plaque depicting the migration of Wheelock and his students from Lebanon Crank to Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1770. About five feet long and twelve inches wide, it shows, in colorful bas relief, the old school here, an ox cart, a cow, Mrs. Wheelock beside her coach, servants, Indians, and a man on horseback, all headed toward a log house in New Hampshire; there stands Wheelock preaching to Indians ("vox clementis in deserto"). Then the Dartmouth Library of 1950 is shown, with its famous weathervane, and Wheelock's face looking down upon it from the clouds. "By the Gospel he subdued the ferocity of the Indian, and to the civilized he opened new



MOOR'S INDIAN CHARITY SCHOOL

Now located in front of the Horace W. Porter School.

paths of science." In the lower corner appears Occom receiving money bags from the Earl of Dartmouth. Pine trees form a background for the scenes.

The plaque was designed in 1950 by Mrs. Robert C. Tuttle, sculptor and artist, who chose several of the town's boys and girls, of different faiths, to help her with the project, which took six months to complete. She presented the plaque to the Horace W. Porter School, and it is displayed in the little white schoolhouse where the history it depicts had its beginnings. A keen student of the town's history, Mrs. Tuttle wrote an article about Wheelock, part of which is included in the story printed here. In an accompanying plaque, she acknowledged assistance in her research by Mrs. Lillian Rice, Librarian, by Dr. George S. Brookes, and by Professor N. Arnold of Dartmouth.

Some years ago, April Fool jokes were not as tame as they are today. The young folks went to a lot of bother to enjoy a good laugh. There is a story told of a joke played on the late Edward P. Lyman when he was a young man. His doorbell rang, and upon opening the door, he encountered a white horse, tied to the door latch and about to enter his home.

Education

The first indication in the records that the settlers were thinking of education for their children was on January 6, 1732, when a School Committee was elected with Captain Ephraim Sprague, Nehemiah Closson, and Deacon Wright as its members. Money was given to various towns by the state for instruction of children of the parishes, and this first school committee in the North Parish was allowed to spend the money at its discretion.

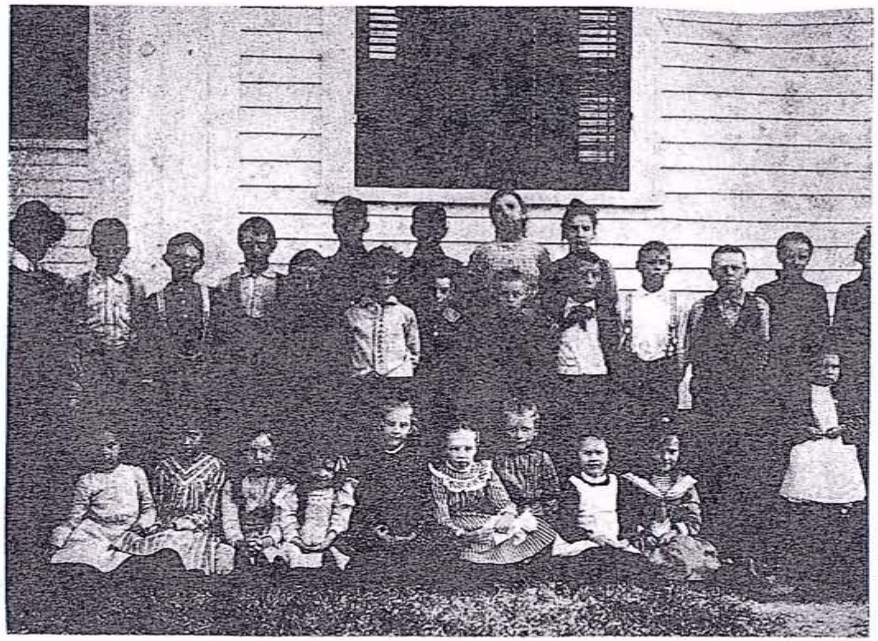
The entire life of these people centered around the church, and it was a written obligation of every parent and guardian of children "not to suffer any child to grow up in their families unable to read the holy word of God and the good laws of the colony under penalty for each offence."

In 1738 the parish voted to raise by tax fifty pounds to be added to the country money to keep two schoolmasters for the three winter months. In those early days there were no school houses, and school was held in the homes, the teachers moving from place to place for the best advantage of the parish in general. It was the duty of the school committee to see that the teachers fulfilled their jobs. These first teachers lived with their pupils' families, their time with each being allotted in proportion to the number of children in each family. Many of the early teachers were young men filling in time between the farm seasons, and young women occupying themselves until they were married. During the winter months when all the big boys were in school, men were hired to cope with the discipline problem, but when the big boys had gone back to the farms, women teachers would always finish out the year.

The parish voted in 1744 to allow the neighborhood adjacent to the meeting house to build a schoolhouse on the common, and that two other sections north and south could also build schools. Because of having fewer families and being less able to maintain a school, no school was built in the center at that time, that district being temporarily divided between the north and the south. The "Indian Charity School" described elsewhere in this book eventually became the center district school.

Our forefathers appointed committees, much as we do today, to solve their school problems. In 1768 such a committee was chosen to set off the school districts in the parish. By 1773 there were five districts, and the School Committee then included Henchman Bennet, Rufus Collins, Jabez Wright, Nathaniel White and Lt. James Pineo.

Eventually there were eight districts, which remained the same throughout the years except for the one school in the Wells Woods development, which was abandoned for lack of pupils. These districts were: Center, Pine Street, West Street, North, Old Hop River, Hop River Village and Chestnut Hill.



SCHOOL CHILDREN — 1903 - 1904

Back row: Raymond E. Clarke, Herman Wolff, Raymond Strickland, Herbert Collins, Ned Squier Myrtle Collins, Josephine Lyman.

Second row: William Wolff, Clinton Loveland, Edward Lyman, Horace E. Little, Cassius Fuller, Clement Lewis, Richard Lyman, Lena August, Helen Lyman, Edith Lyman (front)

Front row: Vera Collins, Lura Collins, Agnes Lyman, Dora Tucker, Marion Lyman, Lena Wolff, Ruth Harvey, Ruth Lyman, Gertrude Loveland. Teacher, Miss Alice Carey.

These schools were operated for many years, until they were no longer of use to the town. The first school to be sold was the North District School which was closed on June 17, 1929 and sold for $1000. The other district schools remained in use until 1948, when a new consolidated school was built. The old schoolhouses in the outlying districts were then auctioned off, but the one at the Center, originally Moor's Indian Charity School, was retained by the Town because of its historic associations. Originally standing near the southeast corner of the crossroads at the center, it has been moved several times. Still retaining the original timbers, the little building had to be moved with the greatest care in order to preserve it intact. It now stands permanently in front of its modern successor — a study in contrasts.

The consolidated Horace W. Porter School can boast of much modern equipment available to the teaching profession. Gone forever are the one room schools with their ink wells, double seats, many grades, outdoor toilets, wood-burning stoves, drinking water in a pail, and absence of lights.

Old Houses

An accurate list of houses now standing in Columbia which were here in 1804, would be rather difficult to compile. From our Town Records since 1804, and older records in Lebanon, we can trace ownership of land, but can only surmise as to the buildings which stood on these early homesites.

On October 24th, 1866, John S. Yeomans, who was born in Columbia, read a paper at the 150th anniversary of the organization of the Congregational Church. The following quotation from his writing is of interest:

"In 1816, the dwelling houses were mostly in a dilapidated condition, weather-worn and mostly unpainted; such as were painted were a dingy red. I can recall to mind but two in town at that time that were painted white. All were warmed by fires in the large old-fashioned fireplaces of the olden time. There were no stoves in town; not more than two or three houses with a carpet upon any of their floors.

"Today, as compared with fifty years ago, we are abundantly blessed. The most of our dwellings have put off their brown, and are painted white; are comfortably furnished, warmed, and carpeted. The majority have probably been built new or essentially remodeled."

One of the houses which was old in 1804, and is still red, has in recent years been known as "The Bailey House." It stands at the junction of Basket Shop Road and West Street. This was the homesite of Nathaniel White (1629-1711) and the house was probably built about 1723. It is believed to be the oldest house in town. Seven generations of Nathaniel's descendants have lived there and the house is still owned and occupied by one of them, Edward Merritt. It has been deeded down from Frederick White, a soldier of the Revolution. The house is of the story-and-a-half type and covers an area 37 by 41 feet. It is rather an unusual design to be found in this part of the country, in that it has two large stone chimneys separated on the first floor by a central hall. Unfortunately, some of the original panelling and wainscotting have been removed from the downstairs rooms. On the north end of the house the old hand "rived and shaved" oak clapboards are still intact. These vary in width from narrow at the bottom to wider at the top.

None of us who now live in Columbia need an introduction to the building on The Green known as "The Old Inn", now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Squier and family. Built, probably before 1750, on the stage route from Hartford to Norwich where the Willimantic-Hebron road crosses, it served as a place of refreshment for weary travellers as well as for the horses which pulled the heavy coaches in olden times. About a mile and a half north of the old inn on the west side of Route 87 near where the Whitney Road joins it, stands an old milestone inscribed

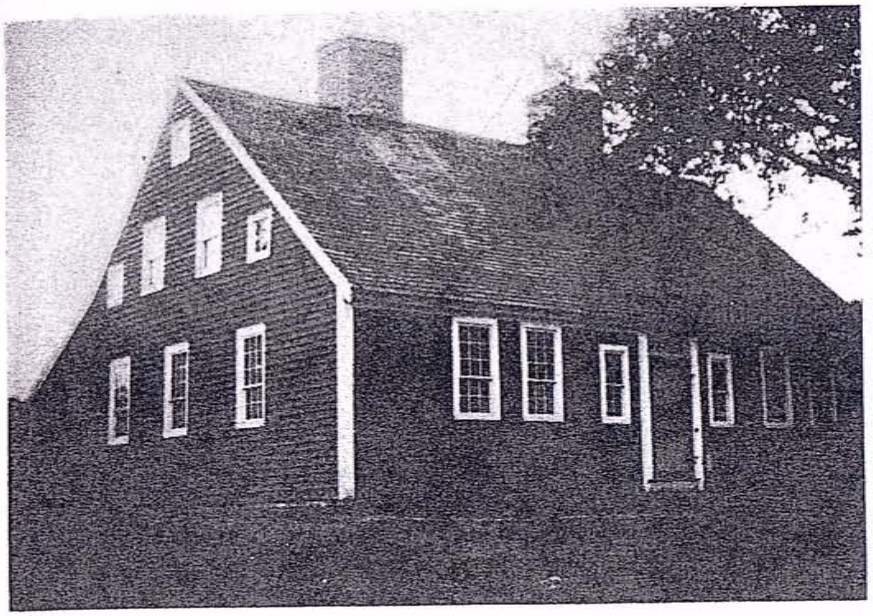
"18 M N T H" — eighteen miles to Norwich Town House. Through the years this old building has been known as Lebanon Crank Inn, Tavern Stand, and some of our older residents remember an old suspended sign bearing the inscription "Tavern House 1840". A crude metal eagle surmounted this sign and "How it squeaked and squawked as it blew in the wind." Sign and eagle disappeared many years ago. At a later period it was known as Bascom Hall.

During the period of our seven year conflict with the "Mother Country", French troops bivouacked on Lebanon Green and there were camps at Bolton, Windham, and other towns in this region. French officers and men were no doubt familiar with the inn at Lebanon Crank. In his diary, de Chastellux speaks of the Lebanon Crank as a little inn, and notes that he secured excellent green tea and fine loaf sugar there. A few years ago, Marshall Squier found a musket of French manufacture of the type used in the Revolution. It had been hidden in the wall of the attic at the inn, put there no doubt because the barrel had burst.

This old building as originally built was square, with a hip roof. A long, low, one-story ell extended from the south side, and beyond that stood a small gambrel roof building which served as a store and post office. The ell and store were taken down when the new and wider Hebron road was constructed some years ago. In the ell was a supplementary chimney with a fireplace and oven for the heavier cooking. Under the floor of the ell was a deep, dug well and the inn was sometimes spoken of as "The house with the well". On the second floor, opening out of the stair hall, there is a narrow door made of one wide board, in the top of which is a swinging panel through which someone may have been fed. The original room into which this opened was very small and apparently had no other opening than the door. The use made of this space can only be conjectured. A door in the cellar has unusual tapered wooden hinges held by wooden pins. In the attic a large brick smoke-oven adjoins the massive chimney. Its interior is incrusted with black residue of years of hickory or corn cob smoke and one easily imagines the smell of the beef and pork hams which in years gone by hung on the hand-forged hooks.

Just when the north end of the inn was added is not known, but its construction would indicate early nineteenth century. Downstairs, a small room was used as a pantry-bar from which the bar parlor and the dining-room in the rear could be served. The dining-room is a long room with a curved ceiling, and can be divided by folding doors into three small rooms. The bar is the simple counter type with cupboards, on the glass doors of which could be seen traces of lettering which advertised "All drinks 5c".

The entire second floor is occupied by the ballroom, which extends over a porte-cochere and is supported by large wooden posts. This room has a domed, curved ceiling, and the floor was so constructed as to spring under the weight of the dancers. Benches for spectators extend along both sides of the room. Mrs. Raymond Squier has an old program for the



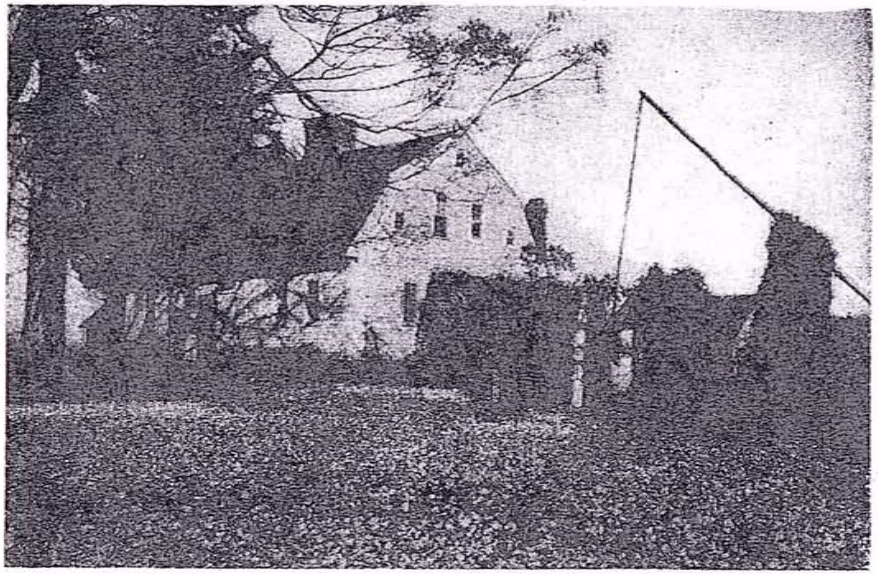
THE BAILEY HOUSE ON WEST STREET

This may be the oldest house in town, dating back to 1723.

"Dedication Ball, C. I. Hills Hall, Columbia, March 21st, 1854". This dedication probably took place when Mr. Hills became landlord. In later years, Masonic Balls were held annually in the ballroom for several years until Columbia Lodge was disbanded. During World Wars I and II, Red Cross work and British War Relief work were carried on there.

Space does not permit description of the many other old houses, but among the more interesting may be mentioned three of the gambrel roof type, probably built in the late 1700's. One of these is the home of Raymond E. Clarke on Route 87, a half mile north of the Green, and further along on the same road, the home of Irving W. Lohr. The other is the home of William Macht on Cherry Valley Road.

Of the early two-story, central chimney construction, are the Porter house on The Green, the Hennessy house on Lake Road, the Ramm house on Woodward Hill, the Brand house on Old Willimantic Road, the Robinson house on Post Hill, and the Rubin house on West Street. This latter home was formerly known as the old West house, named for Samuel West who purchased a large farm in Columbia and came there to live in 1773. He rebuilt the house after a fire, raising the lower half, and adding a first floor sometime before 1800. On this property near the house stood an elm tree so venerable that it appears on a Tolland County wall map printed in the eighteen thirties, and called "Big Tree". As the tree had become weakened by a very high wind in August 1871, it was taken down limb by limb. The circumference at the base of this tree was forty feet, and at the smallest



THE PRESENT HOME OF MR. AND MRS. RAYMOND CLARKE

On Jonathan Trumbull Highway. An excellent example of a gambrel-roofed home surrounded by old-fashioned gardens.

place between the ground and the branches, twenty-six feet. Twenty-five years afterward, the old stump, sixteen feet high, was still standing.

Among early story-and-a-half houses are the Roland Smith and Lyman houses near the dam, the Wilbur Smith, Jr. house on Route 87, the Burnham house west of The Green on Hebron Road, the Tennenbaum house at the foot of Chestnut Hill, and the Sharpe house on Cards Mill Road. The salt box house owned by John Demesko, on Chestnut Hill, is a fine example of the early homes of this style. At the junction of Lake Road and Route 87, the only old stone house in town is occupied by the Holmes family and was built by Alanson Little in the early 1800's. He admired a house in Pennsylvania and reproduced it with stone from his own property. It is constructed with very deep window casings, and originally contained the early small panes.

At the north end of The Green, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Rice, built about 1800, was in early days a stopping place for travellers on the old turnpike, as well as townspeople. There was a bar in the front room, and ovens built in the chimney in the cellar. On the second floor was a large hall where debating societies met and social gatherings were held.

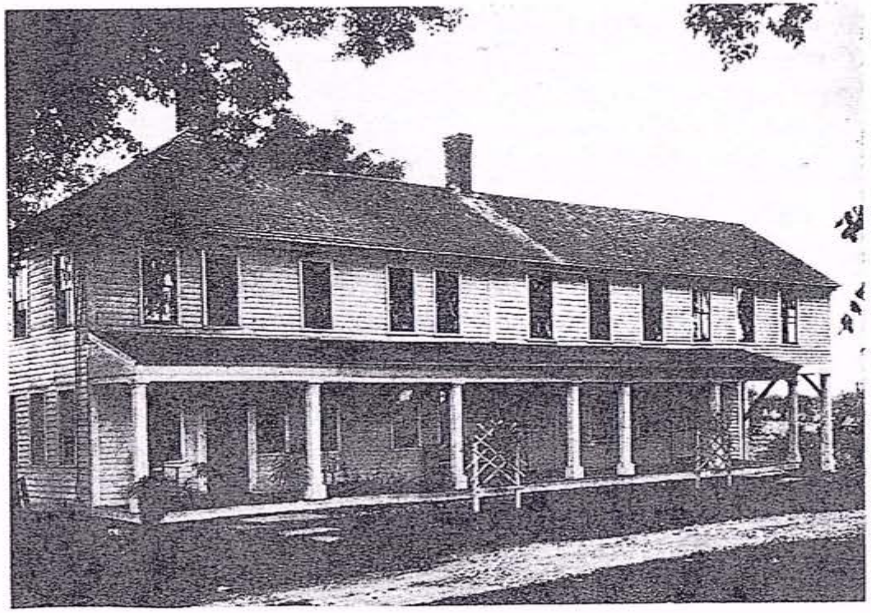
The present home of Miss Marion McCorkell was built by Dr. Henry Fuller in 1815 after he had returned from the War of 1812. It contains wide floor boards, the Christian doors with latches, and a huge chimney with Dutch ovens in the basement. In one small room in an ell of the house one can see the marks on the wall where at one time there were post office

boxes. The postmaster who resided there also ran a small store in the same room, selling small wares such as candy and notions.

A map published in 1857 shows the homesites mentioned in this article to have been occupied at that time as follows:

Clarke (C. Nye); Lohr (G. W. Morgan); Macht (N. H. Clark); Porter (R. Loomis); Hennessy (H. Brown); Ramm (M. Woodward); Brand (E. Dewey); Robinson (J. H. Townsend); Rubin (S. F. West); R. Smith (J. Perry); Lyman (B. Lyman); W. Smith Jr. (S. E. Lyman); Burnham (A. H. Fitch); Tennenbaum (W. B. Little); Sharpe (J. Burlingame); Demesko (R. Collins); Holmes (A. Little); Rice (D. Holbrook); McCorkell (J. Armstrong). The Old Inn, in 1857, was owned by C. A. Post, and the Merritt place by N. White. The Porter place was the home of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock from 1735 to 1770. The Sharpe house was the early home of the Buckingham family.

At one time many socials were held in the upstairs hall of the present Howard Rice home. There is a story told of a maiden lady in town who disliked having to do her part when home-baked goods were solicited for these affairs. However, feeling that she really should contribute, she would bring something and put it away up on a top shelf in the kitchen, so that, more than likely, no one would discover it, and she could take it home again when she went. She received a surprise one night when she found nothing there but the empty plate. Some young boys had caught on to her trick and had eaten the whole cake.



THE OLD INN

Probably built before 1750 and was a stage coach stop between Hartford and Norwich.

Service to the Nation in Time of War

The compiling of a list or giving the accurate number of men from Columbia who served their country during the several wars, especially the earlier wars, would be a difficult if not impossible task, except for those who are known to have been killed, or who died or were wounded while in service. A visit to the cemeteries in Columbia where many veterans are buried shows that the men from Columbia have served their country well in time of war.

Columbia's oldest cemetery, The Old Yard, contains the graves of twenty veterans who fought in the Revolutionary War and one who fought in the French and Indian War. These graves are easily located by headstones erected by the State of Connecticut. According to volume 6, page 5, Columbia Congregational Church Vital Records, four were killed in battle: Mr. Gould, Charles West, Nathan Hovey and Phinehus Sprague.

In the new cemetery are buried three veterans of the War of 1812, eleven veterans of the Civil War, and three veterans of World War I.

In the West Street Cemetery lie the remains of one veteran of the Revolution, six veterans of the Civil War, one of the Spanish-American War, and one veteran of World War I.

There were eighteen men from Columbia who served their country in World War I, and several of these served in France with the American Expeditionary Forces. Two men from Columbia lost their lives during that war: Cyrus Hilton, who lived with James P. Little as a boy, was killed in action in France: Stanley Hunt, who was in the Navy, died while in service and is buried in the new cemetery. Soon after the end of hostilities, a boulder was erected on Columbia Green by the town, with the names of the veterans inscribed on a bronze plaque.

About a year after World War II started in Europe, the United States again instituted the draft, and all young men of specified ages were called upon to register for military service. After Pearl Harbor, the calling up of men under the Selective Service Act was very much accelerated. Before the war ended in the fall of 1945, between one hundred and one hundred twenty-one from Columbia were called to the colors or voluntarily enlisted. They served in all the theatres of the war, in the Army, Navy, Air Corps, Marine Corps and Sea Bees. Men from Columbia fought in the Philippines, on many islands in the Pacific, and later some served in Japan. They also served their country in England, France, Germany, Africa and Italy. No matter where they were, on land or sea or in the air, they all did their share to bring victory to the Allies. It should also be mentioned that two girls from Columbia served in the Womans' Army Corps.

Columbia was very fortunate in that no men or women lost their lives in the conflict, but the names of those who were wounded in action

should be mentioned. Benjamin Plesz was wounded in action in the Gilbert Islands; Lester Thompson was badly wounded in Munda; Michael Wilke was wounded twice, once in France and once in Germany; Karol Michalik was wounded twice in Luxembourg; Arthur Cobb was wounded in action in Germany; Alfred Barrett was shot down flying over Italy and was taken prisoner; he was released when Italy withdrew from the war.

In connection with World War II there should be mentioned an organization which did a great deal for the boys while they were in service. In 1943 six Columbia girls organized under the name COGS, standing for Columbia Older Girls Society. They were Jean Isham, Olive Tuttle, Jane Lyman, Carol Lyman, Shirley Trythall and Kay Sharpe. In March 1943 they started writing a newsletter, "The Cogwheel" and they issued it each month until December 1945, and mailed it to all the boys wherever they were stationed in the service. A copy was also mailed each month to the State Library for the War Record Exhibit. Raising money by running weekly dances, the COGS purchased and presented to the town an Honor Roll and flag which were dedicated on March 26, 1944; they mailed Christmas gifts to all service men for three years; installed an amplifying system in the Town Hall for use of any organization. A Welcome Home banquet honoring all Columbia veterans was served and paid for by the COGS on October 26, 1946. When the Columbia Post No. 157, American Legion, was organized, the COGS presented the Post with Standards and Colors in a colorful ceremony. The Legion Post then presented the COGS with a Meritorious Service citation for their service as a force for good in community, state and nation.

The Selective Service Act has remained in force, and young men are continually being called into the service from Columbia. When the United States was forced into the Korean conflict to stop the spread of communism, more boys from Columbia were called up. Some were stationed in the States and others in the occupation forces in Germany, and several were stationed and fought in Korea. One of them, Alton Lathrop, Jr., was wounded in Korea but returned home safely.

Columbia's service on the home front has also been effective in many ways. The young farmers who under Selective Service were drafted to help feed a nation at war, even though not under arms gave an essential service in a way they were best equipped to do. Older citizens served on the unpaid but time-consuming Selective Service and Ration Boards. There are no records of women's part in the early wars, but during World War I they worked actively for the Red Cross, as they did again during World War II, knitting for service men and making thousands of surgical dressings. The ballroom of the Old Inn was used for this work during both wars.

That room was also the meeting place of the British War Relief Group of Columbia, formed in 1940 and affiliated with the Hartford Branch, to help the civilian victims of bomb raids in England and meet other needs occasioned by war. This organization was active for five years in Columbia,

and its members, numbering fifteen or twenty, produced an amazing amount of work at their weekly meetings. They made more than five hundred wool-filled or wool-pieced quilts, many crib quilts, several afghans and throws knit from odds and ends of yarn donated by everybody. They also produced nearly six hundred new woolen garments for English civilians, and sent nearly one thousand garments they had collected from everywhere, cleaned, repaired or made over. About five hundred knit garments were made for the armed forces, and forty soft toys for English children. After June 1941, they worked at alternate meetings for the Windham Community Memorial Hospital, to help meet the town's quota of the hundreds of supplies the hospital was accumulating as its share in the Home Defense program.

Special mention should be given in this permanent record to the contribution of Mrs. Raymond Squier, who gave use of the ballroom and built and maintained the fires there so that it was a comfortable work room, and to Mrs. Marshall Squier, who made coffee for the women every week. Those who carried on for the five years in the quilting group under supervision of Mrs. Henry Hutchins were Mrs. Raymond Squier, Mrs. Clayton Hunt, Mrs. Arthur Smith, Mrs. Bessie Trythall, Mrs. Ralph Wilson and Mrs. Hubert Collins. In the sewing group under the skillful direction of Mrs. Raymond Clarke were Mrs. Clair Robinson, Miss Edith Sawyer, Miss Katherine Ink, Mrs. Charles Natsch, Miss Katherine Christhilf and Miss Anne Dix. Miss Dix was the able director of the whole project, and Miss Lois Clarke, Secretary-Treasurer, was also the mechanically-inclined member who kept the sewing machines in running order.

Also in connection with home defense, a group of women established a well-equipped casualty station, an adjunct of the Windham Hospital, in a basement room of what is now St. Columba's Chapel, and maintained it while the need existed. Mrs. Arthur Smith was in charge of this project.

The Defense Council, of which Harvey Collins was Chairman, had several sub-committees, all doing important work in preparing for defense of the community. Lavergne Williams was in charge of Air Raid Wardens, and Lucius Robinson of the Observation Post. At first Columbia shared responsibility with Hebron for the Aircraft Warning Station in that town, but later a lookout tower was built by the Town, on Post Hill, and it was manned twenty-four hours a day. Teenaged boys and girls, and men and women of all ages, served on a regular schedule. The Observation Post, and the aircraft beacon light located nearby for the guidance of planes, have now been removed, remaining only in the memories of those who lived and served through those most recent war years. A fine spirit of patriotism and cooperation was shown by Columbia people, whether in salvage drives, war bond and fund drives, or personal volunteer service.

Wells Woods

The Wild West isn't the only section of the country that has "ghost towns".

Many years ago there was a settlement in this town, known as Wells Woods, named for the Boston merchant who bought the land on June 14, 1818. It stretched for 812 acres from the present-day Pine Street to Hebron Highway in Columbia, and to the adjoining tract of land in Lebanon known as Wells Great Meadow, now known as Lake Williams.

Mr. Wells cut a road through the center of his land and sold farms on both sides. Known as Wells Road, it branched off the old Boston-New York post road, which went past the present home of First Selectman Clair L. Robinson.

Mr. Wells sold land to families by the names of Wheeler, Root, Gates, Leland, Burnham, Fitch, Mathewson, Webber and Fuller. He made these transactions over a thirty-year period, then returned to Boston and was heard of no more.

Today, hikers can see the foundations of twelve homes, a schoolhouse, a sawmill and an axe helve factory. The road is now closed to the public, being open only to the present land owners, who use the land for hunting, grazing cattle and forest products.

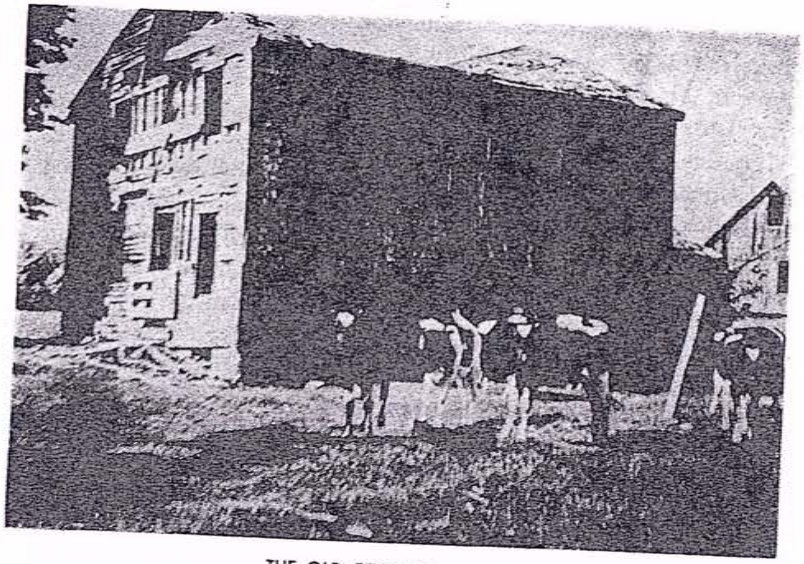
In the old town records there is evidence of two schoolhouses having been built in this district, twenty years apart, the first one having burned. The land for these schoolhouses was given by a man named Ira Root.

Sunday School as well as day school for at least fifty children was held here. Some living residents can remember attending Sunday School in the second schoolhouse that was built. Miss Lillian Pinckney, (now Mrs. Howard Rice), taught her first term in the school, the last year school was in session in Wells Woods.

Located on one of the ponds in the woods are the remains of the Fuller Sawmill, while on another pond further down lie the ruins of Leland's Axe Helve Factory.

The population of the section was approximately one hundred inhabitants. The whole population of Columbia in 1850 was 431 males, 445 females, a total of 876. The names of these inhabitants and the population figures were taken from an old map published by Woodford & Bartlett of Philadelphia, made from actual surveys of the towns of Tolland County in 1857.

Today a passerby can see an old cemetery in Wells Woods which is located on the old Ira Root homesite. Herein lie the graves of Mr. Root, his two wives and his sister. These stones were tipped over and covered with moss and dirt when Mr. Root's foster grandson, Clayton, decided to restore the burial plot. He cleaned the stones and reset them, and surrounded the plot with a stone wall.



THE OLD FITCH HOMESTEAD

Today only a pile of boards remains. This picture was in the April 1943 edition of "The Connecticut Circle". Harry Judd was the photographer.

One can observe the enormous stones used for the foundations or underpinnings of the homes and the long slabs of granite used in the buildings. On the Fitch house in the rear, set in earth and approaching the back entrance, are a number of huge irregular blocks weighing a ton or more apiece. In front of the house they form a fence on either side of a pair of upright granite gate posts.

All over the woods are the remains of stone fences made by these men to show their boundary lines. The stones in these fences are mammoth.

Through the years, the children of these people left the farms for the larger towns and cities. Some of the homes burned and the children never bothered to rebuild them, while other homes were simply abandoned. As soon as the woods had been cut, they had found that the land was not too good for farming. So again the place is woods, but evidence of former residents is everywhere about.

Several years ago, when some necessary digging was being done to the west of Holmes' house, two old tombstones were uncovered which bore the inscription "Ye Distemper called Smallpox". The people were so afraid of this dreaded disease, that the dead were not permitted to be buried in the public cemetery, but were interred close to the homes they had died in.

Romance of Industry

The present generation will hardly believe that this town had as much industry as history discovers, there being none today. Scattered throughout the town are many old mill sites. In the early 1900's only one industry was left, a cotton mill in Hop River, and the rest of the town was mainly agricultural.

Hop River is a small village on the river of the same name. It is located in the northern part of Columbia, on the New York and New England Railroad (now the New York, New Haven and Hartford), but is no longer a stop on that road, although trains pass through there for Willimantic or Hartford. The railroad station has been moved and converted into a house. Hop River is one of the oldest mill sites in the state, where manufacturing has been carried on for over a century and a half. Most of the time satin or cotton warps were made, while some machine work was done. The mill property has passed through various hands. In 1850 the village consisted of three houses, a grist mill and a cotton mill. In 1865 the property was bought under the name of the Hop River Warp Company, and they began the manufacture of cotton thread, yarns and white and colored warps. Later, a speciality was made of white and fancy yarns for webs and tapes, and many styles of shoe webbing. About 1890 one firm held the patents and manufactured a newly-patented Whipper cotton opener, a device which was one of the most successful cotton openers in use at that time. More recently, a paper mill was located there; it manufactured paper mache chair seats and fibre board. The old mill has long been gone, and a newer building built along the track. This factory has had many changes of occupants, but no company of any importance has used it for any length of time.

In the Wells Woods section, described elsewhere in this book, were several mills at very early dates, now completely gone. Nothing in the wilderness was easily taken, and there is a sadness about all the hard work of pioneers, lost completely.

Cards Mill section, east of the center of town, boasted a combination mill, sawmill and gristmill, on their beautiful stream. This mill, up-stream near the road, is only recently gone, and many people remember it well. Gristmills ground the grain and corn for home use. They also ground cobmeal from dried corn cobs with the corn on them, for use in feeding farm animals.

On Basket Shop Road, running west from the old West Street District School, was the town's basket shop. Norman P. Little, most adept of basket-makers, gathered his own pussy willow fronds for his work. His work was meticulous, and he was justly proud of his willow baskets. He made all kinds of baskets, both in size and material. Ash lumber was used for splint

baskets, of which he made market, peck and bushel baskets, and hampers. For the latter he would take the steaming ash strips, dye some of them red with homemade dye, and trim the natural color hampers with the red strips. After Mr. Little, the business was carried on by his step-son, John McMurray, who, having at one time the idea that he was losing some of his choice lumber, put a self-printed sign on the fence reading:

"The Lord helps those who help themselves,
but the Lord help those I catch helping themselves."

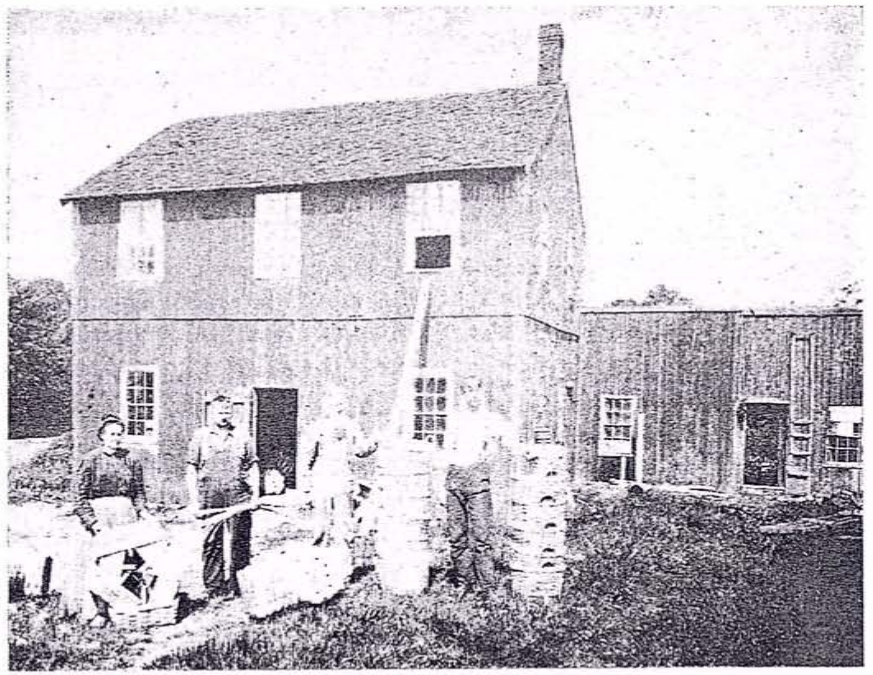
A hat factory located near Columbia Lake at the ravine was run by Norman P. Little before the Civil War. The ravine now disperses the water from the spillway which takes the overflow from the lake. After the hat factory was closed, the building was moved to the E. P. Lyman property and used for many years as a garage. Torn down in the fall of 1953, it was missed as it was one of the oldest buildings in Columbia. Another mill at the other end of the ravine was located on the pond there known as Franklin pond. It supposedly used old up-and down saws.

A furniture factory was located across the road from the lake on the stream which feeds the lake at Buell's cove. This was a cabinet shop and under a shelter had a bench for woodworking. Hickory hoopers for barrels were also made here. Five mills were built on this stream, and all have disappeared except for a dam fallen in, or a wheel under water to mark the sites. Further than that, nothing remains in the three-fourths of a mile where they all once worked. In this vicinity there was also a sorghum mill. Sorghum, a kind of cane looking much like corn growing, with the exception of long tassels, was reduced through a process of cooking and dripping at lower levels to a kind of molasses.

There was a sawmill on Mono's Pond (formerly Hunt's Pond) at its overflow. This, history says, was an old up-and-down saw run by Simon Hunt. Old up-and-down saws were very, very slow, and in those days cut principally chestnut and oak. Years ago, chestnut was THE timber around here. It was beautifully grained and took a handsome polish, and had the advantage of being fast growing. Of the most suitable trees, wide boards were cut for the floors of the early homes. Simon Hunt used to draw the pond off in the spring so that he could cut hay on the meadow; then he would dam it up again in the fall for water power, and so that the boys could skate. On the same stream at Pine Street was another sawmill known as Uncle Daniel Holbrook's mill. On another stream on Pine Street, "Uncle" Joseph Clark's mill sawed lumber and steamed and cut shingles.

Near the foot of Tennenbaum hill, a grist mill once stood and 'way up in the woods on the same stream are the remains of an old dam which no one living here now remembers the use of.

Chestnut Hill is south of Columbia center, and is part of the town. The Air Line R. R. ran a short line through there from Willimantic. Years ago students going to High School travelled by train from Chestnut Hill to Willimantic. There are no longer any trains over this track.



BASKET SHOP

Located on Basket Shop Road, no longer standing.

In our earliest times, lumber mills were nonexistent and lumber used in construction was all hand-hewn. Railroad ties, for which there was quite a thriving trade, were all hand-hewn of chestnut. Chestnut was especially popular as tie-beams for house and barn alike, and may be found today in many of the old barns and houses, and they are all hand-hewn. The first shingles were split out by hand and hand shaved. They were usually about one inch thick at the butt, 16 to 18 inches long, and shaved almost to a point. Shingles taken recently from a barn eighty years old were found to be still good.

Years ago there was a toll house at Post Hill to help defray the expense of the new road which ran from Hebron to Willimantic. The original toll house is still on the farm of Lucius Robinson, in use for storage. Recently when a stone wall was removed, the well for the toll house was found under it, and was filled in. The Hartford-Norwich Road ran from Well Road in Hebron past the front of Lucius Robinson's house and past Clair Robinson's to Hunt Road. This was a very busy thoroughfare before the new road was laid.

Near Hunt Road there was a very busy blacksmith shop on the old road from Willimantic to Hebron. Another blacksmith shop, run by Chester Collins, was on the new road near the center. Horses being the only means of transportation, both shops ran a thriving business. They also shod oxen,

made wagon repairs, and set wagon tires. Mr. Collins, in conjunction with his blacksmith shop, made wagons.

A cattle pound was located just south of the Old Yard cemetery on the main road. Stray pigs, goats, sheep, cows, and horses were impounded until claimed by their owners.

Baseball bats were manufactured by Mason Squier, who owned a big lathe run by a steam engine. It is said that none of the bats went to market as the local demands were great.

The principal hat plant was located about a quarter of a mile from the center on the south side of the Hebron road. All who could do mechanical work were hatters. The shop was run by water with an overshot wheel about 12 feet in diameter. The hats were made of wool cones, therefore the fields were full of sheep. The cones were delivered around town to the women, who ironed them into shape with very heavy irons, some of which weighed 15 pounds. The forms for shaping were about the same as are used now. The hats were hard, heavy and hot. It was a common sight those days to see all the females old enough to sew, trimming hats during the long winter evenings. The trimming consisted in sewing in the hat band, piping the edge and putting a band around the crown. What a trial this was for their eyes can well be imagined, and they were satisfied if the family earned a couple of dollars a week. These hats were known as "Nigger Hats" as the whole output was sent to the south and sold to slave owners for the outfitting of their slaves. This industry was killed by the Civil War. With the outcome of the war and freedom of the slaves, the negroes were compelled to furnish their own clothing, and the demand for the hats ceased.

Mills requiring water for running could operate all year in those earlier days, because the ground was covered with virgin timber and there was plenty of water from drainage of the land to enable them to keep operating. There were the remains of five dams on the brook in back of the hat factory property, which before the Revolutionary War was called Dam Brook. "Tres" Tucker bought the property and ran a sawmill and later a wood turning and woodworking shop. He was forced to give this up as the finished lumber was more valuable than the articles he could make to sell, but what he did there later made him one of the town's most interesting residents, and this article would not be complete without a bit about him.

Tressillian Tucker, now in his eighties, was known as "Tinker Tucker" and is a mechanical and electrical genius. He developed the first electric lights in Columbia, even building his own batteries, and the same system is still in use. In 1886 he made a camera which took excellent pictures, and he also made the paper on which to print them. He had the first high wheel bike in town, and later the first motorcycle and also the first automobile, all of which he could fix if there was anything wrong with them. He probably was the first automobile repairman to have a garage here, and he repaired cars for eighteen years. In his machine shop he made many of his

own tools, and no parts needed were too complex for him to make. Several institutions of learning sent him intricate drawings of equipment for special manufacture, and he had customers from far and near. Failing eyesight forced his retirement in 1953.

With this backward glance, Columbia is seen as a town which once had diversified industries.

Cemeteries

Of the three cemeteries in the town of Columbia, the oldest, The Old Yard, is situated a short distance southeast of the crossroads at the Center. Many of the first residents of the town are buried there.

In 1851, a new cemetery was laid out and the Columbia Burying Ground Association was formed. The grounds, covering an area of three and one half acres, south of the library, have been improved from time to time.

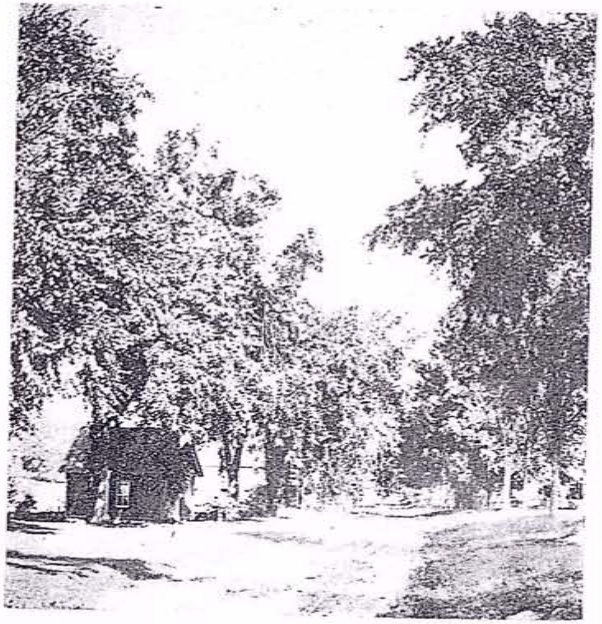
The West Street cemetery was laid out about 1825, and the West Street Cemetery Association formed. It is located on the top of Utley Hill, overlooking the lake.

Interesting old gravestones are to be found in The Old Yard. For example, the following:

Miss Anne Little, daughter of Mr. John Little and
Mrs. Anne Little, who died Dec. 2nd 1811,
aged 18 years and 14 days.
Stop blooming youth before you pass
And view my mansion here
Perhaps this lesson is the last
For death is drawing near.
Dear friends, you can't prepare too soon,
If you would happy be,
Jesus may call while in your bloom.
He did for me, you see.

In memory of Lydia, wife of Mr. Eleazer Dewey
who departed this life in hopes of a better
April 28th 1805, in the 26th year of her age.
Death is a debt to nature due
Which I have paid and so must you.

In memory of Deacon James Pinneo
who departed this life Apr. 18th, 1789
In the 81st year of his age
The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.



The Library

About the year 1882, a small group of people in Columbia felt the need of a library for the town. Dr. Charles N. Gallup, who lived in the house on the Green now occupied by Lyndon E. Little, was the leader of this group and at a meeting held on February 20th, 1883, The Columbia Free Library Association was organized and Dr. Gallup was elected its first president. Other elected officers were Edward P. Lyman, vice-president; William A. Collins, secretary; James P. Little, treasurer; and John A. Hutchins, trustee. Members of the first Library Committee were the Reverend Frederick D. Avery, Charles N. Gallup, M.D., William H. Yeomans, Joseph Hutchins, Charles Little, Amelia Fuller, and Alanson H. Fox.

Saxton B. Little of Meriden was present at the first meeting of the Association and made a donation of one thousand dollars, to be held in trust, the income from which was to be used to purchase books for the library. One of the conditions of this gift was that whoever was minister of the Church should be, ex-officio, a member of the Library Committee. Another condition was that "No book of an immoral nature, nor any book denying the vital truths of Christianity, should be placed in the library."

In January 1884, land on which to build the library was purchased from John Ticknor, the site being the northern corner of his house lot (now owned by John Kozelka), and south of Cemetery Lane. The purchase price of twenty dollars was raised by subscription. Labor, materials, and some furnishings for the building were donated by various people. The total cost in money to complete the building was $130.47. The duties and labors of the first Library Committee were many, and in that first year they met forty-six times.

The Library opened with about one thousand volumes, many donated, and in its first three weeks two hundred eighty-five books were withdrawn by one hundred sixty-eight patrons. William H. Yeomans served as the first librarian, followed by the Rev. Frederick D. Avery and Alanson H. Fox as acting librarians, Mr. Fox then serving until his death in 1908.

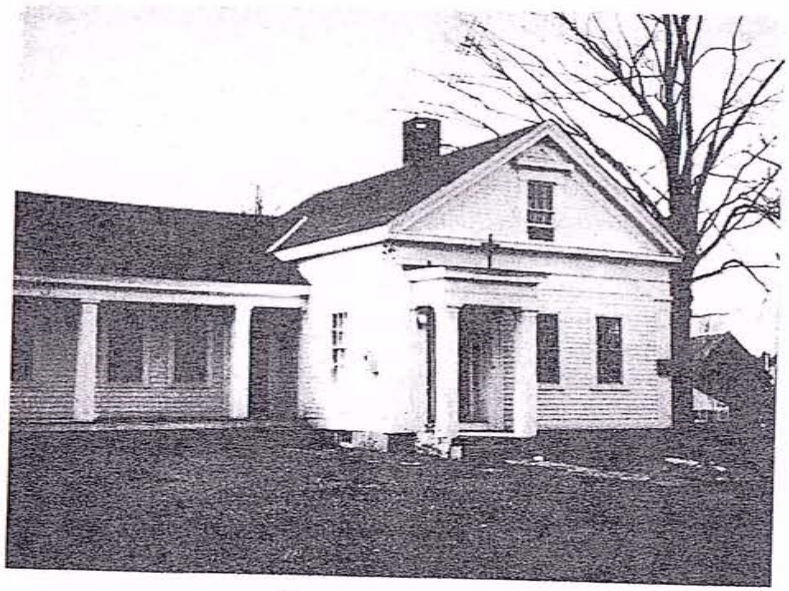
A catalogue of the Library published in 1894 would indicate that books pertaining to history, biography, travel, science, and agriculture predominated. Books listed under "Fiction" were mostly by such well-known authors as Cooper, Holmes, Scott, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Dickens, and Louisa M. Alcott. Then for younger readers were books by Oliver Optic for boys, and Pansy books for girls.

By 1900, the library had outgrown the original building and the Committee presented a petition to the Association asking that a special meeting be called to discuss needed changes. After several meetings and many ideas, Joseph Hutchins generously offered to erect a new building, the cost of which would not exceed one thousand dollars. He was to have the final say as to plans, location, and interior arrangement. Mr. Hutchins also made a motion that the library be renamed "The Saxton B. Little Free Library of Columbia". Later Mr. Hutchins changed his original offer and asked to be relieved of the duty of personally attending to the erection, and authorized the Association to erect the building at a cost not to exceed two thousand dollars, including the cost of a new site. The Yeomans family, who now occupied the former homesite of John Ticknor, wished to purchase the original site, and it was decided that the new library be built just north of Cemetery Lane. The price paid for this site was fifty dollars. The old building was sold and moved by oxen to its present location southeast of the four corners, where with some changes it is now the home of Mrs. Delvina Montigny.

Records of the Library Association state: "The Library Building presented to the Association by Mr. Joseph Hutchins was dedicated June 17, 1903. The day was noted as being the only favorable day for weeks, and was mostly occupied by the extended program which, with a bountiful collation, was enjoyed by a very large audience from this and other towns."

Saxton B. Little was born in Columbia in 1813 in the house on Chestnut Hill now known as the Tennenbaum place. As a young man he taught school in several nearby towns. Most of his life was lived on Columbia Street in Meriden, Mr. Little having named the street after his native town. For many years he was connected with the institution now known as The Connecticut School for Boys in Meriden. Throughout his life he made many gifts of both money and books to the library, and never lost interest in the town of his birth. He died in 1907.

Much credit is due Mrs. Howard A. Rice, who has faithfully served as librarian since 1908. Current numbering of books would indicate that more than ten thousand volumes have been available through the years. Today the library has more than one hundred registered borrowers.



ST. COLUMBA'S CHAPEL

At junction of Jonathan Trumbull Highway and Route 6A. Dedicated July 1944.

St. Columba's Chapel

Situated at the junction of Jonathan Trumbull Highway and Route 6-A in Columbia Center, the chapel of St. Columba is a house of worship for the Roman Catholic townspeople of Columbia, Andover and Hebron. The structure itself is the former Blakely homestead and was acquired by St. Joseph's Catholic parish of Willimantic in 1944. The chapel is under the sponsorship and care of St. Joseph's parish and receives the services of the priests of that parish.

The history of the growth and development of Catholicism in this community is typical of the many Catholic missions scattered throughout Connecticut. During the years immediately before and after the turn of the century, the number of Catholics residing in the area of Columbia was small. Beginning with Father Quinn in 1886, services were provided for them at regular intervals in the old school house at Hop River by priests from the parish of St. Mary in South Coventry. The names of such men as Father O'Leary, Father Dooley and Father Kennedy will be remembered by the older residents. Between the years 1925 and 1932, Father Dennis Moran, pastor in Coventry, said Mass on alternate Sundays in the Hop River building. After 1932, however, the parish in Coventry was assigned the territory of Storrs and regular Sunday services ceased in Columbia until 1944. Catechism classes were conducted here by a group of women from Willimantic under the direction of Father Joseph Farrell and Father

Victor Piaskowski in the late 1930's and early 1940's. It was not until the coming of Father Thomas Lynch in 1944 that the first Mass was celebrated in Columbia Center. This occurred on April 9th of that year.

With the approbation and encouragement of the late Bishop McAuliffe, Father Lynch began celebrating Mass each Sunday in the lower room of Yeomans Hall. The need for a church was most obvious and a building fund was started. The longed-for opportunity came sooner than was expected. At the death of Mrs. Ethel Blakely, Father Lynch was able to acquire this desirable property, and a mission chapel was established within the house. The interior of the first floor was opened into two large rooms, and an altar placed at the junction. This house was then named the Chapel of St. Columba, and the Catholic community in Columbia and Andover was placed under the protection of that beloved Saint. In July 1944 the Chapel was dedicated and officially opened by the Most Reverend Maurice McAuliffe, Bishop of Hartford.

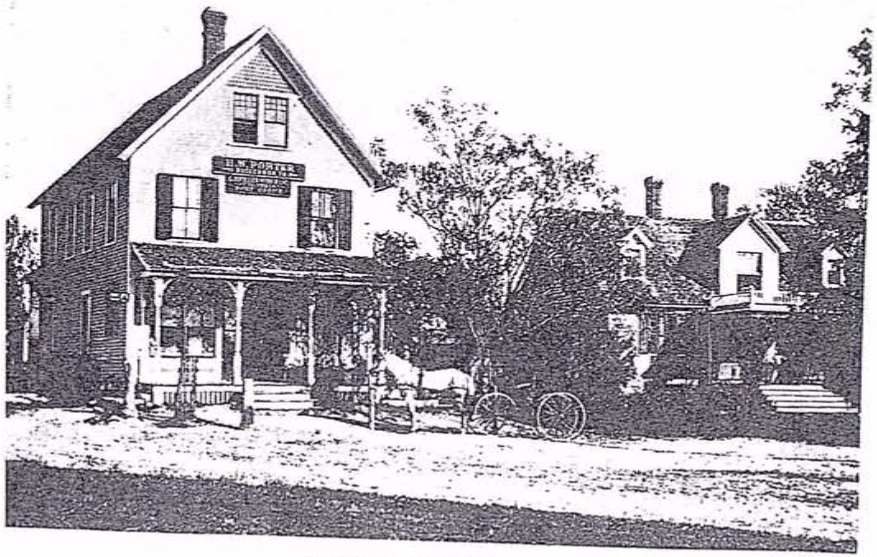
For several years Father Lynch celebrated Mass in the Chapel at ten o'clock each Sunday. Eventually, when the Chapel of St. Margaret was opened in Scotland, he turned his efforts in the direction of the new mission, and Father Lucien Siedzik came to St. Columba's each Sunday. In 1950 Father John Honan succeeded him in this work, and in the same year the growth of the population made it necessary to schedule two Masses each Sunday throughout the year. Two years later it was necessary to add a third Mass during the summer months.

In 1952 the parishioners united in a volunteer labor team and effected the complete renovation of the Chapel. What was begun as a simple paint job developed into a structural and redecoration program. The interior was enlarged and completely refurbished from the floor to the ceiling. This work was accomplished evenings and weekends. While the men were engaged in the manual labor, the women of the Catholic Ladies Society undertook the task of raising the necessary funds. Through their united efforts the work was completed by Mothers' Day, May 11, 1952. On that day a class of twenty-one children, — the largest number in the history of the Chapel — received their first Holy Communion.

Catechism classes have always been conducted by a group of faithful women teachers on each Sunday during the school year, after the ten o'clock Mass. In addition, many children attend classes on Saturday morning in St. Joseph's School. During the past year, classes were inaugurated in the Andover School on Saturday afternoons under the direction of men and women teachers.

This past year saw this territory placed under the care of the Bishop of Norwich, the Most Reverend Bernard J. Flanagan, D.D. It was with great joy that the parishioners of St. Columba's received the news that on May 8, 1954 their Bishop would visit the chapel and administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to a large class of boys and girls. This is another "first" in the history of the Chapel, and another step forward.

In February 1953, Father Francis Murphy was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's parish. Into his hands was placed the responsibility for the careful development of the Catholic parish in this community. At the end of his first year Father Murphy stated as follows: "Through the years many individuals have given generous and unselfish service to the Chapel of St. Columba. The sacrifices and labors of each one of them in whatever position has been theirs are representative of the spirit of the entire congregation. As they have grown in numbers, they have increased in their contribution to this community in which they live. The patron Saint of their church is St. Columba — a famous missionary and outstanding builder of churches. He was a Saint who won a whole kingdom to Christ. Moreover, he was a statesman, a scholar, a tireless worker, a vehement foe of evil and injustice to others. These virtues are to be imitated by us. Upon them your community will rise strong and free, prosperous and secure. You will find happiness and peace in preserving the principles upon which this nation was founded. But most of all, you will bring upon your community the multiple and fruitful blessings of God — the Creator and Redeemer of man."



THE H. W. PORTER STORE

iis building, located diagonally across from The Old Inn, contained the post office for many years. It was eventually moved to make way for the new highway.

Columbia Lake

Motorists traveling by Columbia Lake would never realize that at one time this picturesque body of water was a mere pond. The American Linen Company of Willimantic, now The American Thread Company, needing an additional source of water for power, in 1865 built a dam across the outlet near an old sawmill formerly owned and run by Doctor Silas Fuller. The reservoir behind this dam became Columbia Lake, which covers about three hundred seventy-five acres and has a circumference of five miles.

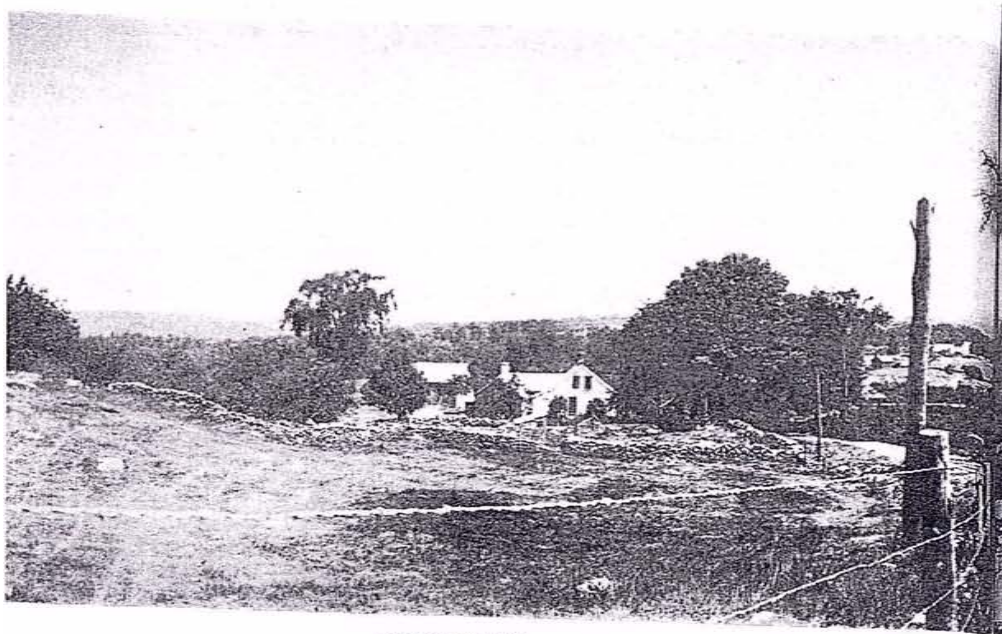
The old Turnpike Road, also called the old Lebanon Crank Road, went straight across between the present Community Beach and Lakeview Park Road. The road from Holmes' Corner to Lakeview Park Road was built by the Linen Company to replace the Old Turnpike Road which was flooded over after the dam was built. For many years the mailman continued to travel the old road during the winter months when the lake had been drawn down. This was a shallow section of the lake, and on an island protruding in the middle there was a farm house and a barn. The barn was eventually moved across the ice to the present site of the Community Beach, and later it burned down. The residents of this old homestead at one time suffered with typhoid fever, and townspeople took turns going out there by horse and buggy, over the ice, to care for the patients. Joseph J. Watson owned the farm, consisting of seventeen acres, all under water now. At the present time a marker projects above the water as a warning to sailors that the water is shallow at that point.

For many years after the lake was first dammed up, there were stumps lying just below the water level. The trees had been cut during the winter, at ice level. Many a canoe, gliding over the water, was snagged by these stumps.

August Nordlund, who came from Lenox, Massachusetts, was the first to forecast the building up of Columbia Lake as a summer resort. Mr. Nordlund ran a summer boarding house, Hillcrest, in what is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Loughrey. Rooms were rented in the main house and in the long building in the back. Meals were served in the main dining room of the big house.

The first cottages erected around the lake belonged to Charles H. Owen, who leased the land from Charles Buell and built "Outside-Inn" over fifty years ago. The next cottages were the Sawyers', known as "The Pasture", and the Spauldings'. Then the Browns built cottages along the south shore. Five members of the Thread City Cyclers Club of Willimantic owned the cottage now occupied by Benjamin Crocker. The club members would cycle out to the lake to enjoy the coolness after the heat of Willimantic.

Center Church of Hartford leased thirty-five acres on the west side of the lake and started a boys' and girls' camp, "Asto-Wamah", in 1910. Mr. Evan Kullgren, now of Erdoni Road, organized this camp and managed it for many years. The church purchased the land in 1914. The Trustees



COLUMBIA LAKE
Taken from Woodward Hill about 1905.

of Warburton Chapel of Hartford, which is associated with Center Church, bought the Chestnut Point property from the Spauldings in 1938 and for a short time operated a small camp. This property adjoins that of Center Church, and is now used by Camp Asto-Wamah.

The Browns first operated a public beach about 1915, and ran a small store by the road. In 1926 they rented their old home and the beach area to Joseph LaFleur. He and his wife were primarily responsible for the development of the beach. As many as two thousand people would visit this popular spot on summer holidays. Another public beach and a store were operated by Mason Nuhfer for a few years, on his property a short distance east of LaFleurs'. On the north side, where the lake is near the highway, a small store was run by several young men in different seasons. "Kum-sum-mor", as it was called, is now a cottage owned by Madison Woodward.

In 1933, the town purchased the lake from the Thread Company, which no longer needed a reserve supply of water power. Having previously been drawn off in the fall to a rather low level, the lake could now be kept relatively high, and was drawn off only enough to protect docks from damage by ice. Fed by springs and brooks, the level is usually at high water mark in the spring. After the hurricane in September 1938, when the lake overflowed its banks, there was serious doubt that the dam would hold, but many townspeople rallied to save it with sandbags, and were successful.

In 1935, owners of lake front property formed The Columbia Lake

Association, for the purpose of promoting the general welfare and protecting the property of its members. Charles B. Miller was one of the most active in the forming of this Association, and was its first president. The Lake Association has done much which has proved very beneficial to its members and to Columbia townspeople. It initiated the request for zoning of lake front property, which resulted in a town ordinance that was later extended to cover the whole town. It was instrumental in having the lake stocked by the State Fish and Game Commission. It has at intervals published a map of the lake showing location of homes and names of their owners — a great convenience both to local people and to visitors. Many efforts have been made to handle the motorboat problem so that operation of these boats would be safe and pleasurable for the greatest number. All motor boats must now be registered in the Town Clerk's office.

A few years ago, Ernest Molt started the publication of a weekly newspaper for all lake residents, and this has been continued by the Lake Association, keeping its readers informed about social and sports events, and Association business. Sailing has for many years been a popular competitive sport, and every summer Sunday afternoon the lake is dotted with white sails, with young and not-so-young skippers racing to win points toward the season trophies.

As years passed and the public beach became more and more popular, it seemed to local people that Columbia residents were not getting the maximum benefit from it, as ease of transportation had made it a mecca for people from many towns. At a special town meeting in September 1950, it was voted to close the beach to the public, and reserve it for the use of

townspeople. At the same meeting the Town voted to close the Old Turnpike Road leading to the lake at the beach. With the closing of this road the one-hundred-foot strip of land reverted to the adjacent owners, Herman Brown and Theodore Loughrey. The Loughreys then deeded their entire part to the town. The Browns gave a similar deed to the town, but with the reservation that they would retain a right-of-way to the house they owned on the lake front (LaFleur's), and the part of the old road which was in front of that house. This meant that the town had fifty feet of waterfront, but a one-hundred foot width back of the beach area to the intersection with Lake Road. The town voted to lease this property to an organization which would operate a beach exclusively for Columbia townspeople and their guests. The Columbia Recreation Council has thus operated the beach since 1951.

There are now about one hundred twenty-five cottages and year-'round homes fronting on the lake, and very little land is available for would-be-purchasers.

A map of Columbia Reservoir, surveyed and plotted for the Willimantic Linen Company, Willimantic, Connecticut, February 16, 1865, shows owners from whom the reservoir area was acquired, and the number of acres from each, within the waterline of the reservoir, as follows:

	Acres
Horace Brown	78.000
M. Woodward	28.176
A. W. Lyman	36.560
Levi Grant	15.965
Jos. J. Watson	17.158
Mrs. Eunice Bascum	23.590
John M. Smith, meadow and upland	10.128
Norman Little, meadow lot and lane	8.425
Mrs. Wm. Downer, 1/3 of meadow lot	1.957
Giles Little, 2/3 of meadow lot	3.914
Mrs. Wm. Downer, upland lot	4.915
Giles Little, upland lot	0.096
W. Downer, upland lot	5.561
Albert Brown, upland lot	3.584
Albert Brown, meadow lot	7.611
Albert Brown, woodland lot	5.640
James Perry, meadow	4.000
James Perry, upland	2.242
Chester W. Lyman, west meadow	3.693
Chester W. Lyman, east meadow	4.058
Sheppard Brown	0.450
Sheppard Brown	0.314

Sheppard Brown	5.258
Henry Scherbaum, meadow	7.682
Henry Scherbaum, upland	2.718
Total	281.695

Note: The above acres are within the water line on land covered by raising the water to a height equal to 25 ft. above the water in the river at Dam, or 23 ft. above the bottom of covering stone of culvert under turnpike, except a small piece of land on the Horace Brown tract.

The 36.560 acres of A. W. Lyman includes what the dam with slopes will cover when built.

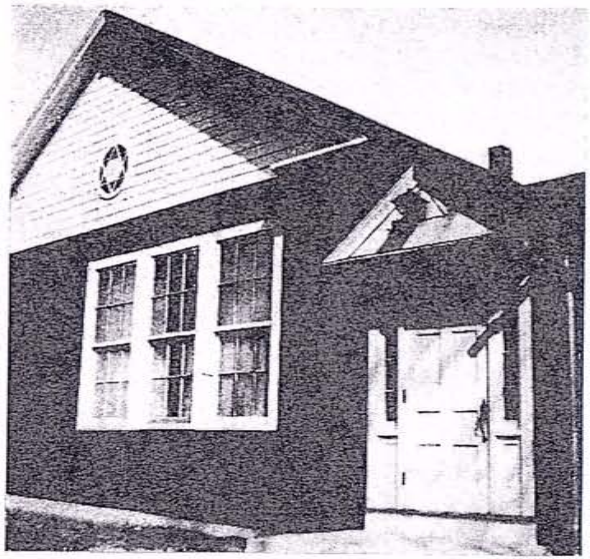
Columbia Grange

Columbia Grange No. 131, Patrons of Husbandry, was organized by Charles B. Reed, under State Master Dr. George A. Bowen, on March 28, 1892. There were thirty-five charter members, of whom Mr. Curtis A. Holmes is the only one living today.

The first meeting was held in Bascom Hall (the Old Inn), and the Grange continued to meet there until March 31, 1895, when it moved to the Masonic Hall, now the home of Miss Myrtle Collins. On March 25, 1896, the Grange voted to return to its original meeting place, then owned by Mrs. Fisk, for one year, with the privilege of five years to be secured by written lease. The price was one dollar per night for regular meetings, and twenty-five cents for special meetings.

At a Town meeting on April 7, 1900, Mrs. Mary B. Yeomans made a proposition to the town, offering to erect at her expense, subject to certain conditions as to location, size and plan, a building for free use of the Town and any of its citizens, associated by organization secret or otherwise. "Yeomans Hall" was built that year, and on December 19, 1900, the Grange first held a meeting there, with Hubert P. Collins, Master, presiding. That building remained the home of the Grange until it was destroyed by fire in November 1940, when once again they returned to the Old Inn, then owned by Mrs. Junie Squier. In January 1941, because of the sudden cold weather and inadequate heating at the Inn, regular meetings were moved to the Chapel, which was used until the present Yeomans Hall was ready for use in the spring, except on two occasions when the Chapel was too small for special events, and the Columbia Grange was invited to use the Andover Grange Hall. On June 11, 1941, the Grange first held a meeting in the new Yeomans Hall, with seventy-four members and ninety visitors present. Chauncey M. Squier was Master on that memorable occasion.

The Grange now numbers 188 members. "Golden Sheaf" members, who have been in the Grange over fifty years, include Curtis A. Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Collins, Herbert Collins, Henry Hutchins, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Hutchins, Raymond Clarke and Mrs. Nellie Macht.



SYNAGOGUE OF THE CONGREGATION AGUDATH ACHIM
Originally built in 1921.

Congregation Agudath Achim

The organized Jewish community of Columbia began in 1913 when Abraham Tennenbaum and Lewis Kaplan bought a farm on Pine Street. The first services were held in 1914 at the home of Mr. Chus on Tobacco Street. The services were held in various homes at the convenience of the individual members. In 1921, the Agudath Achim Society was founded, and plans were made to erect a synagogue. Agudath Achim means "Brothers, Hand in Hand".

In 1923 the members of the Society cut logs for the building and Mr. Lewis Kaplan donated the land on which the present synagogue stands.

The charter members of the Society were: Abraham Tennenbaum, Tom Cohen, Louis Sinder, Lewis Kaplan, Morris Kirschner, William Semel, Sam Weingrad, Jacob Zubulsky, Joseph Sultan and Archie Berkowitz.

In 1926 the synagogue was built by Mr. Caples, later Postmaster at Chestnut Hill, and Mr. Hubert Collins, the Town Clerk. In 1927, the State granted a charter to the infant organization. Jacob Zubulsky was chosen to be the first President, and Lewis Kaplan was the first Sexton. Archie Berkowitz was Secretary, and Abraham Tennenbaum was Treasurer. As is customary in Jewish Law, the synagogue was honored with the gift of a Scroll of the Law (Sefer Torah) which was donated by the Ladies Auxiliary.

The building, first consecrated in 1927, stood until 1951, when it was rebuilt. At present, the synagogue is the proud possessor of three of these

Scrolls, which are handwritten in the original Hebrew on pure vellum.

When the Society was founded there were only ten Jewish families in the entire town of Columbia. At the present time there are forty families in town, numbering more than one hundred and twenty Jews.

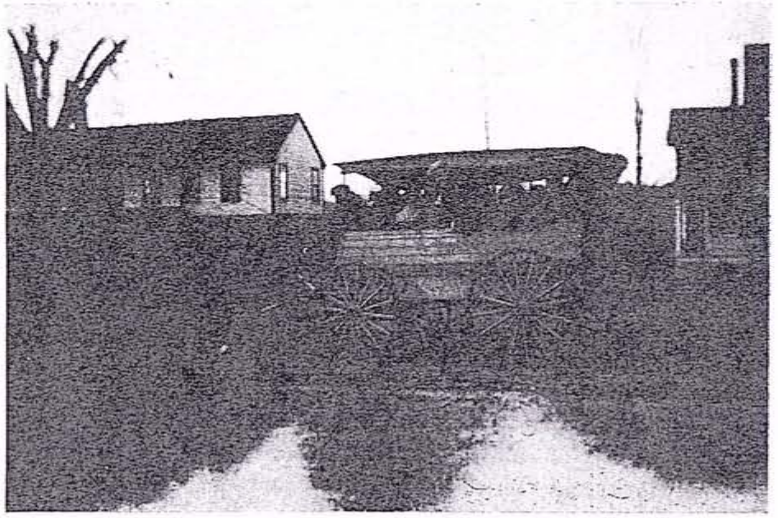
In 1943, the Jewish farmers of Hebron and Columbia donated a fully-equipped field ambulance to the United States Army, and were rewarded with a letter of thanks from the Secretary of the Treasury.

By 1951, the Jewish community had grown too large to be accommodated in the existing structure, and it was decided to rebuild and enlarge the synagogue. To this end, a Building Committee was chosen by Archie Berkowitz, then President. This committee was made up of the following members: Joseph Tashlik, Chairman: Morris Kaplan, Joseph Kaplan, Maurice Alexander, Sol Sinder, Max Lessinger, Leo Cohen, Max Price and Carl Zenchoff. This committee labored long and faithfully, and their efforts were crowned in March, 1952, when the new synagogue was formally dedicated and Chairman Tashlik turned over the keys of the new building.

The new Synagogue has a capacity of 150 people for services, and is equipped with all conveniences, including a modern kitchen for catering to affairs. It maintains a Sunday and Hebrew school for the benefit of the oncoming generation.

The present officers of the Congregation Agudath Achim are:

President	Morris Kaplan
Vice-President	Maxton Lessinger
Recording Secretary	Milton Kaskowitz
Financial Secretary	Sol Sinder
Treasurer	Tom Cohen



AN OLD SCHOOL WAGON
The driver was Frank Squier, and the picture was taken in 1912. This was the first type of transportation provided by the town to take students to Windham High School.

1912 COLUMBIA BASEBALL TEAM

Back row: Robert Cobb, Rowland Cobb, Horace Little, Raymond Squier, William Macht, Fred Ducharme.
Middle row: Lyndon Little, Claude Griggs
Front row: Homer Isham, Ernest Collins.

Baseball

Baseball, here in Columbia, in the "good old days" is said to have supplanted the excitement of the World Series. As nearly as can be determined, this town's interest dates back to 1875. At that time a baseball diamond was laid out on The Green, thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of Dr. Julian LaPierre, who lived in the house now owned by Miss Marion McCorkell. He organized Columbia's first ball team in the '70's, managed it, arranged for its games, and acted as umpire at times. The line-up of this team was as follows: Al Yeomans, pitcher; Frank Potter, catcher; Arthur Little, Captain and third baseman; Frank Cobb, second baseman; Chris Shepam, first baseman; Arthur Whitcomb, left fielder; Ed Lyman, center; Charles Strickland, right fielder; Mason Squier, shortstop; and Fred Hunt, Frank Woodward, Roger O'Neill and Oscar Seymour, occasional players. The playing record of this team showed games played with Coventry, Lebanon, Hebron, and Gilead, with a good many winnings for the local team.

John Richards, a negro boy, made a name for himself in this area in the '80's. He was one of the best all-round players of his time, and he held

the home run record for the State of Connecticut when he was in his prime. He lived with his family for years in a house that stood where the present home of Mr. and Mrs. F. Stanley Andrews stands.

From 1893 to 1903 the battery for Columbia was W. Richards, Albert Lyman and John Richards. They held the strike-out record for a number of seasons, and the older residents of town can probably recall some exciting games played during that time.

Albert Lyman, a well-known baseball enthusiast in town, taught, in 1896, in the North District School. He took a special interest in building up baseball among the pupils, and his boys' team could trim all the other schools in town. Interest was so keen that even the girls formed a team and played many lively games against the boys. The ball was sometimes hit out into the lake, and often an excited boy fell in as he tried to catch a good hit. Among the names on one of the first girls' teams are some that are familiar today. They were Fannie Lyman (Mrs. Hubert Collins), who played second base; Nellie Squier (Mrs. William Macht), shortstop; Mrs. Louise Squier Marshall, catcher; Mrs. Eva Squier LaBonte, pitcher; Eva Snow and Lydia Hall, first and third base.

Columbia is still very baseball-minded, and is bringing up a fine crop of future players in its "Little League". Many of these boys are descendants of some of the town's early players.

POSTMASTERS OF COLUMBIA

	Date Appointed
Stephen T. Hosmer	February 2, 1816 (Established)
Benjamin Hartson	February 21, 1839
William Osborn	April 28, 1848
Joseph D. Browning	April 18, 1849
Henry M. Knight	September 23, 1850
Isaiah H. Nutting	December 19, 1851
Chancey K. Hill	December 28, 1852
Charles A. Post	September 7, 1857
Lyman C. Clarke	May 31, 1861
George B. Fuller	September 27, 1866
Daniel T. Fuller	November 7, 1866
George B. Fuller	April 20, 1869
James L. Downer	September 9, 1885
George B. Fuller	April 20, 1889
William H. Yeomans	July 6, 1893
Joseph Hutchins	July 3, 1897
Horace W. Porter	May 4, 1909
Mrs. Leola W. Beck	January 31, 1940

Mrs. Leola W. Beck, President, Connecticut Chapter, National Association of Postmasters of the U. S., June 1949 to June 1950.

Fire Department

The question of organizing a Fire Department for the Town of Columbia was presented in Town Meeting October 8, 1946. At that time the sum of $3,000 was appropriated toward the beginning of a Fire Department. A committee to study the need and make recommendations to the Town was elected, consisting of Harry Jones, George Yule, Alfred Soracchi and Maurice Leonard.

This committee reported back to the Town Meeting of March 1, 1947, and at that time a Board of Fire Commissioners was formed, consisting of Harry Jones, George Yule, Alfred Soracchi, Maurice Leonard, Newton Smith, and Jerry Shine.

Subsequently a gift of $500 for the purchase of fire-fighting equipment was received from the now disbanded United Aircraft Club, Plant "L", Willimantic.

Mr. Horace W. Porter, in addition to numerous other gifts, gave a parcel of land to be used as a location for a fire house.

At a meeting held at Yeomans Hall, April 23, 1947, The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Incorporated, was organized, with seventy-five charter members.

Officers of the newly-organized department in 1947 were:

President	LaVergne Williams
Secretary	E. Malcolm Stannard
Treasurer	Francis Savage
Vice-President	Lucius Robinson. Jr.
Directors	Philip Isham
	Donald Woodward
Chief	Richard Davis
Deputy Chief	John Forryan

The fire house was built in the summer of 1947, with a majority of volunteer labor. The first fire truck, a 1930 Mack, was purchased in the fall of 1947. This was replaced with a 1948 Ford truck with modern Maxim equipment. In November 1949, a GMC, 2185-gallon capacity tank truck was purchased. In August 1950 a resuscitator was purchased with money which was donated by various organizations and individuals. It is for use in such cases as smoke asphyxiation and drowning, and is available to surrounding towns which do not have this equipment. All of the firemen have been trained to operate it. In 1952, Columbia joined the Mutual Aid System. There is a radio in each truck and during fires the men can be in contact with the fifteen other towns in the system through the central base in Willimantic. The two Columbia trucks can also be in contact with each other.

The present firemen are a group of enthusiastic men who raise a good part of the funds needed for the purchase of modern equipment. An appropriation is given each year by the Town of Columbia. At Christmas time two or three of the men take a trip to Vermont and bring back a truck load of trees to sell. Another money-making project was the sale of cider from apples they had picked and hauled to a cider mill in the fire truck. Newspapers and magazines are also collected regularly and sold. The department has purchased a tract of land opposite the fire house, and has built, entirely with volunteer labor, a fair ground named "Newton B. Smith Field" in honor of one of their deceased members who was keenly interested in the Fire Department in the early days of its organization. Here they plan to hold annual fairs to help defray the cost of running an up-to-date department which can best serve the town and surrounding areas in cases of emergency.

Extinguishing fires and raising money are not their only activities. For the past few years, the firemen have invited all the children in town to be their guests at a Hallowe'en party. Prizes are awarded for games and costumes, and refreshments and candy are given to each youngster. During Fire Prevention Week each year, a poster contest among the school children is sponsored by the firemen. A winner is selected from each class and prizes are awarded.

A very unusual event occurred in November 1952. Many a fireman's wife looked skeptical when her husband returned home one Sunday and announced that he had been out chasing a monkey. It was not a fable, however. Joe, a pet monkey belonging to Norman Batchelder, had jumped out of a window when his master was trying to remove banana skins from the cage. The firemen were called and tried all kinds of ruses to catch Joe. They pumped 3,000 gallons of water in his direction, emptying the fire truck three times. They sawed branches out from under him, only to have Joe swing safely to another tree. He managed to keep more or less in sight but out of reach for about a week, and then he made a sad mistake. He was spotted scampering into a barn owned by Miss Anna Lindholm. All efforts to lure him with food and another monkey imported from Bristol were to no avail. After more than an hour of scuttling in and out of windows and across rafters to elude the other monkey and various human beings playing Tarzan, Joe got himself cornered up by the ridge pole. His hind legs were snagged by a chain, and after taking a bite out of his rescuer and chattering a good deal, he was taken home by his master and put into a new cage.

It was the custom in early days to let the collection of taxes to the lowest bidder. One local resident can remember a story told of one bidder who, having made the successful low bid, remarked that he would have bid the job off for nothing to have the satisfaction of collecting the tax from one of his neighbors.

Community Service in Peacetime

Not only in emergencies, but in meeting day by day needs of a modern community, Columbia people have been generous and effective.

The Women's Auxiliary of the Windham Community Memorial Hospital has had an actively working group in Columbia since the hospital was opened. In financial campaigns for building funds and running expenses, Columbia has responded liberally. Each year thousands of surgical dressings, garments and other needed articles have been made, and on donation days quantities of garden produce, home-canned foods, groceries and magazines have been contributed. From time to time as there was need, old linen, picture puzzles and knitted lap robes have been sent.

In recent years, service has been given by Columbia women as receptionists and in the coffee shop at the hospital, and, in their assigned month, home-baked foods have been sent daily to the coffee shop to be sold. The work of making special surgical dressings goes on, with an average of one thousand a month turned in.

When the "community circle" in front of the hospital was prepared for the planting of shrubbery, each of the towns served by the hospital contributed soil, and that from Columbia was taken from the Congregational Church grounds. Thus a part of Columbia joined with its neighbors in this inter-town project, but more important is the way Columbia people have rallied to carry on the work.

Columbia makes a good showing and has many enthusiastic workers in the many drives which come up annually to support national organizations doing health and welfare work, such as the polio, heart disease, cancer and tuberculosis funds, and appeals in behalf of the crippled. Another important service is that of blood donors, who give regularly to the Red Cross Blood Bank or give blood to individuals in emergencies.

Many persons could be named in connection with these services to the community, but no attempt can be made to include them all. They have the satisfaction of knowing that they have made a worthwhile contribution to the well-being of their neighbors, whether they be near-by or far away.

Not too many years ago, there used to be a long row of horse sheds standing with their backs to the present property of Howard Rice, along what is now a road beside Yeomans Hall. Each of these stalls was privately owned, including the land on which it stood, and here the people would leave their horses and buggies while they attended church. Some residents can remember seeing them all covered with circus posters.

Leisure Time Activities for Youth

The youth organizations of which Columbia may well be proud today are a tribute to the unselfish adult leadership that has dedicated itself to the principles of each group. The founders of each organization have had one common objective. Simply stated, each has sought to direct the leisure time of young people into constructive activities. The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Explorers, Mariners, 4-H Clubs, YMCA, and the Recreation Council are providing for the leisure time needs of its youth, that they may become better American citizens.

Columbia records do not show affiliation of groups here in national organizations for youth until the beginning of the twentieth century. Perhaps the oldest on record, primarily a religious and social group, was the Christian Endeavor Society. In the 1920's a boys' club enjoyed a few years of popularity. In 1931 there was formed here a troop of Boy Scouts of America, which flourished for a few years and was then disbanded.

Today, national organizations are well-represented in Columbia. The Girl Scout troop was organized in 1938. As the troop prospered and filled a need in the community, younger girls were organized in the junior branch, the Brownies. The Mariners, a Senior Girl Scout unit, was organized soon after. A revived Boy Scout troop came into being in 1940. Following the pattern of all active scouting organizations, it was expanded to include junior and senior units, the Cubs and Explorers. During this same period the 4-H Club was formed, with many active club units. Each troop, pack and club has served to provide valuable creative and recreational opportunities for Columbia children.

In 1946, a number of adults met to discuss recreation for the youth of Columbia. It was the feeling of these people that there were problems in the use of leisure time by the young people. Since guidance of youth is in part a community responsibility, the meeting decided to invite each organization in Columbia to represent itself on a council to direct recreational activities. Thus the Columbia Recreation Council was formed, joining hundreds of municipal and volunteer groups across the country in the National Recreation Association. It immediately embarked upon a planned program of social and athletic activity.

The objective of a year-'round program began with weekly square dances for teenagers and young adults. In cooperation with the American Red Cross, trained leadership began swimming instruction, which at the time of this writing was starting its eighth year. One of the first recognized needs for boys was a baseball team. This soon grew to three groups, meeting each week during the summer for instruction and games. Two intercommunity leagues with neighboring towns participating were encouraged in their formation by the Council. With strong leadership, league pennants

have been won by Columbia each year. The early financial needs of the Council were met by two anonymous annual gifts and the proceeds of two Fourth of July clambakes. For five successive years, Independence Day was celebrated by parades organized by the Council. Each Memorial Day a planned observance of the community's contribution to the freedom of the country has been carried out. At Christmas there have been parties for children, and community carol sings at the outdoor tree.

The program for the winter months sought to fill a need for indoor and outdoor physical activity. Yeomans Hall became the scene of calisthenics, tumbling and gymnastics for the grammar school group each week, and in recent years this program has been expanded to include swimming, bowling and basketball for the upper grades, in cooperation with the Willimantic YMCA. Outdoors, occasional hikes and ski events were held.

In 1951, a small lake frontage became available for the exclusive use of the townspeople. The Recreation Council, seeking further to fulfill its objectives, leased the property from the town. Here the swimming classes have been held, and beach facilities have been provided, with financial assistance from the town. A small membership fee gives each resident access to a lakeside picnic area, bath houses, playground equipment and lifeguard service.

Many varied activities in the community have been sponsored by the Council. Rhythm classes for first graders were formed; a formal dance has been held each spring; basketball backboards were erected on the school grounds; a class of instruction in photography was offered; adult classes in swimming were held; there have been two hobby shows and a youth talent night.

Evan Kullgren, long a professional youth leader, called the first meeting which led to the formation of the Council. Those who were active in the Council's first year, and have served continuously during the succeeding years, are Stanley Field, Wilbur Fletcher, Philip Isham, Jean Natsch, Wilbur Smith, Ruth Soracchi, Eleanor Tuttle, Leona Wolmer and Ralph Wolmer. Many other men and women have also given of their time and skills to carry on the program, and some who started in the youth groups are now among the adult leaders.

No community can ignore a single need of its young people. Religious, academic, physical and social education must receive its proper share of community concern and support. As each national and local youth group achieves its goals, so does each child participating become a better citizen of the town and nation. It is to these boys and girls that this volume is dedicated.

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