

## **GEORGETOWN**

by Irene Baldwin

On the banks of the Norwalk River, straddling the boundaries of Weston, Wilton, Ridgefield and Redding, Connecticut, is the community of Georgetown (see Map III.) The greatest portion of Georgetown is in Redding, and the smallest in Ridgefield. There are no fixed boundaries, for Georgetown owns no land. The Post Office operates within boundaries it has set for mail deliveries, the voting district has one set of boundaries, the telephone exchange another, and, until recently dissolved, School District No. 10 had another. The population, which, cannot be counted accurately because of the fuzzy boundaries, is estimated at about 1,800,<sup>1</sup> all fiercely loyal, sometimes to the point of chauvinism.

The business center today, which contains several food markets and liquor stores, a dry goods and a drug store, dry cleaners, real estate offices and several other small sales and service businesses, in addition to the wire factory, is located in Redding. Georgetown has its own fire department, bank (a branch of the Ridgefield office of the Fairfield County Trust Company,) Post Office, railroad station, telephone exchange, and school. It has five churches. The Methodist and Catholic Churches face each other across Church Street, yet the former is in Wilton, the latter in Redding. The school, which had been operated originally by the adjoining towns under District No. 10, is located a few feet over the line in Wilton.

Other communities in Connecticut which have the same status, or lack of it, are Southport (legally in Fairfield,) Rowayton (part of Norwalk,) Noroton (Darien,) Saugatuck and Greens Farms (Westport,) Cos Cob, Riverside and Old Greenwich (Greenwich.)<sup>2</sup> The inhabitants of all these communities tend to resist the inference that they live in the encompassing

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times, June 24, 1954

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

towns. Georgetown's plight is the most painful, however, for it is the only one which has its 'heart' broken into four pieces. Feelings run high, and can sometimes result in some amusing situations. There was some bitterness when Redding decided to get out of School District No. 10 and sell her interest to Wilton. I heard one Redding-Georgetown resident indignantly state that he didn't see why "they" (Redding) should get \$77,000 for "our" school.

The village is a typical New England community in many ways, but it lacks a town hall. It is a community of interests with no political status, no government of its own. At least two attempts have been made to incorporate Georgetown as a separate town. In 1934, a new pastor of the Catholic Church, Father Kenney, found, as he became familiar with the parish, that there were many who felt it would be to Georgetown's interest to separate from Redding. He and Frank Hawks (a former World War I flying ace,) and Paul Connery, a Norwalk lawyer (a native of Georgetown,) did considerable work on the project, but found the difficulties involved insurmountable for them at that time. In 1951, a State Senator from Wilton, Tage Pearson, took the matter up again, but had to abandon it when his inquiries and investigations convinced him the cause was hopeless.

The development of Georgetown is closely tied to the development of the Gilbert & Bennett wire factory (see Map IV), whose early history is reported at length in the chapter "The Old Red Shop." Many years ago, the area was dotted with small mills and foundries on every stream and river. By 1872, Redding had a population of 1,758. It was a busy, self-sufficient community. Its small factories and mills were family affairs, which disappeared with the advent of steam and decrease in the need for water power. People left Redding to go to the growing industrial centers such as Bridgeport and Norwalk. By 1922 the population was 1,756. Eighteen years later, it was 1,758 (exactly what it had been in 1872.)

So, as the other small businesses disappeared, the Gilbert & Bennett wire factory grew. It formed a nucleus for the population in the southwest corner of Redding, and is located in Georgetown.

(2881)

## THE OLD RED SHOP BY THE TOLL GATE IN GEORGETOWN

by Wilbur F. Thompson

Eighty-five years ago [1835, or thereabouts] Georgetown was a quiet little village of 35 houses and about 160 people. A few years before, Benjamin Gilbert moved into the village and bought the William Wakeman farm. Most of this land lay between the road to Weston and the Danbury and Norwalk turnpike<sup>3</sup>; from the corner where Connery Bros. store now stands, south to Honey Hill woods, comprising the land afterwards owned by Sturges Bennett, Edmund O. Hurlbutt, and the Gilbert & Bennet Co. The homestead was on the west side of the road and many years after was known as the Benjamin Gilbert place. It is still occupied as a dwelling.

Before coming to Georgetown, Mr. Gilbert, who was a tanner by trade, started the industry of making curled hair and haircloth sieves. He continued this business after moving to Georgetown, being assisted by his family and later by Sturges Bennett who was admitted into partnership in 1828, forming the firm of Gilbert & Bennett (51 years later he was president of the Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Co.) Part of the work was done at this time in the basement of the Gilbert home. In 1830 Sturges Bennett married Charlotte, oldest daughter of Benjamin Gilbert.

About this time the shop was built where Connery Bros. store now stands and later, as the business grew, a three-story addition was built on. A mill dam had been built across the brook (the rear part of Connery Bros. store stands on what was part of the old mill dam.) A small pond was formed about 100 feet long and 60 feet wide. On the north side of the pond was the road to Weston, along the roadside was a row of willow trees. The supply pond, or reservoir, was on the hill south of where the Swedish Church now stands.

On the north shore of the reservoir were vats for cleaning, washing and sorting the hog, horse and cattle hair used in the curled hair industry; also platforms for drying the hair. Later this work was done in the rear of the shop. The first story of the shop was used for sieve making, and the second for the curled hair business. On the floor was a hairpicking machine and two hair rope twisters. The power was furnished by a wooden overshot water wheel (this

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<sup>3</sup> Now Covenant Lane in Weston, and Old Mill Road in Redding. *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

was outside the shop on the north side.) The water was carried in a wooden flume from the pond onto the top of the wheel. The gate in the reservoir was opened every morning and shut down at night.

After the horse and cattle hair was cleaned it was twisted into ropes, then boiled to set the curl. After drying, it was wound into hanks or bundles, and sold in this form or picked out by hand ready for use in cushions, etc. The longer horse hair was picked and kept separate and woven into bottoms for the hair cloth flour and gravy sieves. This was woven on small frames called looms, into squares a little larger than the sieves they were to cover. This weaving was done by women (at their homes) of the village. First by the women in the families of the firm, and later by Mrs. Polly Canfield, Mrs. Ezra Brown, Mrs. Sherman Bennett, Mrs. Matthew Bennett and her daughters (one daughter, Mrs. Waterman Bates, was one of the last ones to weave haircloth in Georgetown,) and others.

In making the sieves, the thin wooden rims were sawed from whitewood plank (the planks were sawed from logs at Timothy Wakeman's saw mill that stood north of where the upper Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co.'s plant now stands,) then smoothed by hand, steamed and bent into shape and nailed; the hair cloth bottom was then put on and held in place by a narrow hoop or rim, which was fastened on by nailing. The edges of the haircloth were then bound around the sieves with waxed thread. This work was done by women at their homes - it was called binding sieves. Mrs. Aaron Bennett, Mrs. Samuel Main, Mrs. Aaron Osborn, Mrs. Samuel Canfield, Mrs. Burr Bennett, Mrs. Orace Smith and others did this work.

The men who worked to the curled hair and sieve industry at different periods in the Red Shop were Benjamin Gilbert and his sons William J. and Edwin; Edmund O. Hurlbutt, John F. Hurlbutt, William B. Hurlbutt, Aaron Bennett, Sturges Bennett, Isaac Weed (Mr. Weed married Angeline, daughter of Benjamin Gilbert, and built the house opposite the Sturges Bennett place,) Samuel Main, Aaron Osborn, and others.

The salesmen were Edmund O. Hurlbutt and William J. Gilbert, who started out with great wagons loaded with goods, going through Connecticut and New York State, selling the goods and coming back on the home trip stopping at the tanneries and slaughter houses, collecting the horse, cattle and hogs' hair to be made up into the finished product at the Red Shop. Years ago, the many carriage factories used large quantities of curled hair in the backs

and cushions of seats.

In the year 1832, William J. Gilbert was taken into the firm, forming the Gilbert & Bennett Co. (48 years later, he was president of the Gilbert & Bennett Co.) About this time, Sturges Bennett bought of his father-in-law, land south of the shop and built the house he lived in for nearly fifty years [see map 4] now owned by Eli G. Bennett.

In 1834 it was found that the growing business needed more power than the little mill pond furnished. So a mill site was bought on the Norwalk River and a shop was built, known later as the Red Mill, and that part of the industry using power was moved into it. On Oct. 15, 1835, Benjamin Gilbert deeded to Sturges Bennett and William J. Gilbert each a one-third interest in the Red Shop, the land (1/4 of an acre) with the mill pond, also rights in the reservoir on the hill.<sup>4</sup> Near the Red Shop on this land was a small two-story building used by Uncle David Nichols as a wagon shop<sup>5</sup> (part of this building was used by the Gilbert and Bennetts before the Red Shop was built.) The price paid was \$133 for each third. The land was bounded on the north, east and west by the highways, on the south by Sturges Bennett's home lot.

In 1836, with the introduction of the weaving of wire cloth for sieves and other uses, it was found the light cloth and carpet looms in the village were not heavy enough for wire weaving. A few looms were built and set up on the third floor of the Red Shop. Among those who wove wire cloth at this time were Isaac C. Perry, George Perry, Moses Hubbell and his wife Betsy, William Perry, and probably others. William Perry wove a fine wire cloth, called strainer cloth, used for straining milk and other liquids. Later George Perry built a shop south of his home [see map II] now owned by John Hohman, and wove for the Gilbert & Bennett Co. Isaac Perry's son-in-law also built a shop for weaving; it stood on the corner where Frederick Foster's house now stands. (Moses Hubbell married Betsy Perry).

Years later James Byington, Aaron Jelliff, Henry Olmstead and his brother William, Lorenzo Jones, Thomas Pryor, George Gould, Anton Stommell, George Hubbell, and Granville Perry wove wire cloth in the old Red Shop. As the business grew, Anson B. Hull was hired as Bookkeeper. The office was on the first floor of the shop; in connection with book-keeping, he ran a small store. He was with the company for many years. Later he moved to Danbury, where

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<sup>4</sup> The reservoir, in Weston, was the small pond located on Sasqua Trail, off Covenant Lane. *L. M. Barrelle 2001*

<sup>5</sup> Probably the building identified as "H. Cole" on map IV. *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

he was freight agent for the D. & N. R.R., until his death.

In 1840 Edmund O. Hurlbutt was admitted into the firm - he married Mary, daughter of Benjamin Gilbert. He bought land of his father-in-law and built the home he lived in for many years, known as the Hurlbutt place.<sup>6</sup> He withdrew from the firm in 1860.

In 1844 Edwin Gilbert became a member of the Gilbert & Bennett Co. (40 years later he became president of the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co.)

In 1847, Benjamin Gilbert, the founder of the business, died. In 1853 David H. Miller of New York City entered the employ of the Gilbert & Bennett Co. as bookkeeper. He brought in new ideas and ways of working and the business of the company was greatly increased. (Fifty-three years later he became president of the Gilbert & Bennet Mfg. Co., and held that position at the time of his death in 1915.)

With the building of other factories, one by one, the various branches of the industry were moved from the old Red Shop, until only the wire weaving was left. In 1861, Eli G. Bennett opened a dry-goods and grocery store on the first floor. The business grew until the whole floor was occupied, and a large business was done. Here many young men received their first business training.

In 1869 Sturges Bennett (now owning the property) had the old Red Shop torn down and built the store now standing on its site [see Map 4.] The timbers of the old shop were bought by Anton Stommell, who used them in building his house on the street running east from the Weston road.<sup>7</sup> Later he sold it to Elijah Gregory.

While the store was being built, Eli G. Bennett carried on the business in the old wagon shop next door. The grocery store on the first floor and the dry goods on the second. This building was later sold to Charles Osborn who moved it farther north and used it for a meat market. The second floor was used by the Masons for a lodge room. It was burned some years ago.

Uncle David Nichols, who ran the little wagon shop, lived on the west side of the street opposite the shop. (This house was years later bought by Charles Osborn, father of Clarence Osborn of Georgetown.) With his good wife, Aunt Sally, he looked like a Quaker with his

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<sup>6</sup> See map IV. Hurlbutt's home was south of the Red Shop, on Old Mill Road. *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

<sup>7</sup> Now Highland Avenue - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

broad-brimmed hat and long coat. He was everybody's friend, but the boys did annoy him sometimes. North of the Nichols home was the toll gate across the road, and Uncle David collected tolls. This was a heavy timber gate that blocked the highway. After the tolls were paid, the gate was opened and the team passed through. Near the gate was a milestone erected in 1787 by the orders of Benjamin Franklin, who was Postmaster General at this time. This was the post road from New York City to Hartford. There is one of these milestones still standing near Miss Sarah Coley's home [G. Coley on Map II] on the road north of Georgetown and another on South Street, Danbury.

Fifty or more years ago the reservoir on the hill was a favorite place in the winter for the boys and girls of those days who enjoyed skating.<sup>8</sup> Later Mr. Edward Hurlbutt,<sup>9</sup> who now owned it and the surrounding land, stocked it with fish.

Just before the Civil War Sturges Bennett, who owned a large farm on the hog ridge (a high ridge of land east of the village,) employed Ezra Brown to work the farm. Part of the farm equipment was a yoke of oxen and a heavy cart. Uncle Ezra was very proud of this team. In driving, he would march 100 feet ahead of the oxen and then march back again. One night some of the young men of the village, Sam and John Main, Alonzo Morgan, James Byington, the Albin boys and others, took the cart to pieces, hoisted it up into one of the willow trees by the Red Shop pond, put it together with the tongue in the air. Next morning Uncle Ezra came over from Osborntown to begin his day's work. Missing his cart, he called Boss Bennett, who, coming up and seeing the cart in the tree and some of the boys standing around, winked at Uncle Ezra and said in his quiet way, "Boys, I guess you had better take that cart down." They knew he meant business and got to work. It was harder work to take it down before an audience of fifty people, than it had been to put it up the night before. Not long after, most of these young men were at the front fighting for our country.

(Concluded)

The above is a very concise history of the very interesting commencement of the large wire manufacturing company in Georgetown. The names and dates given will be cherished by those who are still alive and remember many of the families who lived in this settlement, and gained a good livelihood from this industry. There are

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<sup>8</sup> As it still was in the 1950s and early 1960s - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

<sup>9</sup> Thompson probably refers to Edmond Hurlbutt - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

relationships mentioned which will help the genealogist who will compile genealogies of these different families in years to come. - Editor<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> David H. Van Hoosier edited a genealogy column in the Norwalk Hour. He often included Wilbur Thompson's writings. - *Carol Russell, Wilton Historical Society, 1986*

## (2,902) THE OLD RED MILL - GEORGETOWN

On the banks of the Norwalk River from its source in Ridgefield to Norwalk are many abandoned mill sites. Fifty-five or sixty years ago (about 1850) there were sixteen busy shops and mills along this stream. Now there are four or five; one of which, belonging to the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co. plant, stands on the site of the Old Red Mill, the subject of this article (see Map IV.) This mill site (near the long railroad bridge)<sup>11</sup> has been occupied almost continuously for manufacturing purposes for over 118 years.

Some years after the War of the Revolution closed, David Coley of Kettle Creek, Fairfield (now Weston) moved to Georgetown. He bought of Isaac Rumsey part of the Applegate long lots and built a home in Boston district. Miss Sarah Coley of Georgetown, who is ninety years old, told me that eighty years ago, David Coley lived in the house later owned by Hezekiah Osborn, the father of Hezekiah Osborn of Cannondale. This house is near Boston corners.

David Coley was an iron worker; he bought a mill site on the Norwalk River; built a dam and shop, put in a wooden water shed, a furnace for smelting iron ore and a trip hammer, and commenced business. Some of the ore was brought from Roxbury and Brookfield and some was taken from the ledge east of where Jessie Burr Fillow now lives, on the road from Branchville to Boston district. (There is a tradition that there was an iron furnace near this ledge before the War of the Revolution.) The limestone used in smelting the ore came from Umpawaug hill. Many kinds of iron goods were made, ploughshare points, shovels and irons, cranes, pots and kettles, and ovens. Fifty years ago some of these pots and kettles were in use - they had legs to stand on in the old fashioned fire places.

This industry gave work to quite a number of men and continued for many years. In the later years of the industry, Moses Jennings (grandfather of Miss Jane Canfield of Georgetown) worked in the iron works - he had charge of smelting the ore. Benjamin Lobdell worked here (he was a great uncle of Clarence Osborn of Georgetown) and many others, whose names are now forgotten. Later David Coley gave up the business and the shop was vacant. Later it was burned. The head of the iron trip hammer lay by the side of the road; it weighed over 500

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<sup>11</sup> On Old Mill Road - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

pounds. It was sold, I think, to the iron works at Valley Forge, Weston.

In 1821 Winslow and Booth came to Georgetown and started a comb factory on the old iron works site, erecting a small shop. Mr. Booth lived in the house that Mrs. Waterman Bates years afterward owned. This business continued for some time and gave employment to quite a number of people. The cheaper grades of combs were made of cattle horns. The horns were scraped thin, split and pressed flat, and the blanks for combs were cut out and the teeth cut in. The finer grades of women's side and back combs were made of tortoise shell. Later the firm gave up the business and moved away.

In 1834 the Gilbert & Bennet Co. bought the mill site, rebuilt the mill dam and built the shop long afterward known as the Red Mill. A wooden water wheel was built to furnish power. The mill was two stories and a basement. The first floor was used for the curled hair industry using power. In the basement the sieve rims were steamed, bent into shape, and later other work was done there.

With the weaving of wire cloth, the making of cheese and meat safes was commenced. Aaron Osborn did this work, assisted by his brother, Eli Osborn. (Aaron Osborn worked on cheese safes for nearly fifty years.) With the introduction of hard coal for fuel, the coal ash sifter or coal riddle was made. Samuel Bennett, Henry Williams and others worked at this branch. Later ox muzzles were made from wire. Most of the men who worked in the Red Mill had worked in the Old Red Shop to the same kind of work.

In the winter of 1840, it was found thrt the wooden shaft to the water wheel was worn and had to be replaced. William Bennett, William Morgan (later known as Captain Morgan) and Orace Smith went down into the Honey Hill woods to cut a tree from which to hew a new shaft for the wheel. While cutting down this tree, a limb broke and struck Mr. Smith and killed him. (Mr. Orace Smith was the father of Mrs. Jonathan Betts and lived in the house that Mr. Betts long afterward owned.<sup>12</sup>) Years later the old wood en wheel was replaced by an iron one, and the old wooden shaft lay by the roadside for many years (as late as 1865.)

Years passed on and the stone factory was built and the curled hair industry was moved there. Among those who worked at this branch at this time were Will iam, Charles and George Albin. Among those who worked at the sieve industry were William and Brewer Gilbert,

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<sup>12</sup> In Weston, at #6 Covenant Lane - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

William B. Hurlbutt and Lewis Hurlbutt. With the rapid growth of the Gilbert & Bennett Co., Edwin Gilbert went out as salesman and Charles Olmstead ran one of the freight wagons. With the building of the D. & N. R. R., the freight wagons were taken off one after another and the railroad did all the carrying of goods. One of these old freight wagons was used as late as 1864 in carting between the factory and the depot.

In the sixties the sieve making and other branches were moved into other shops and the Old Red Mill was used for drawing fine wire and later for tin ning and galvanizing wire. In 1889 the Old Mill was burned, and the mill now standing on its site was built.

Wilbur F. Thompson - Danbury, Connecticut

(2,908) **THE OLD RED MILL - GEORGETOWN.** - continued.

In the fifties, Aaron Jelliff (who had worked for the Gilbert & Bennett Co.) built a shop for wire work on the Weston road<sup>13</sup> in Osborntown (a part of Georgetown.) The motive power used in this shop was a one-man-power tread mill. This tread mill wheel was on the outside of the shop (south side.) It was about twelve feet in diameter and six feet wide. It was built with treads to step on. The weight of the person inside the wheel stepping on the treads turned it and furnished the power to run a saw and other small mach ines. The wheel was operated by Abraham Dreamer, a veteran of the Mexican war. It was a great treat to the boys of fifty or mere years ago to see Uncle Abe walking in this wheel, never reaching the top. Years later Mr. Jelliff's sons, Aaron and Charles, were in the wire business, Aaron in New Canaan and Charles in Southport.<sup>14</sup>

On the top of the hill in front of the Waterman Bates place can be seen an old ditch running back from the brow of the hill to the old reservoir. This was dug by the Gilbert & Bennett Co. to bring the water from the reservoir to the Red Mill to wash cattle and horse hair, but it was never finished.

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<sup>13</sup> Jelliff's shop was in the vicinity of Kramer Lane and Indian Valley Road, Weston. - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

<sup>14</sup> The Jelliff Corporation, founded in 1880, is still doing business out of Southport. - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

(Concluded)

Wilbur F. Thompson - Danbury, Connecticut

## (2,965) **THE OLD GRIST MILL - GEORGETOWN, CONN.**

*by Wilbur F. Thompson*

From the early settlement of our state until about 60 or 70 years ago, the people living in our rural communities were, to a great extent, independent of the outside world; the farms and little shops and mills producing almost everything used in the homes of their day. The first mill to be built in the early days was the Grist Mill, then the saw mill, blacksmith shop, woolen mill, tannery and cider mill. Georgetown was no exception to the general rule, and along its streams and highways are found evidences of many little home industries that flourished, long years ago (and some at a late date.) It is probable that the first corn and grain raised in Georgetown was ground in the home-made mortars of wood or stone, with a pestle, or in the old Indian stone samp mortars which can be found in the rocks in many places.

The first Grist Mill where the early settlers of Georgetown had their corn and rye ground stood on the west bank of the Saugatuck River, a short distance north of where Ferd Gorham's house now stands near the foot of Nobb's Crook Hill.<sup>15</sup> (This was about 1730). The miller's name was Jabez Burr. Many years later a wind grist mill was built in what was called Dumping Hole, or Hill<sup>16</sup> (now in Cannondale School District,) about two miles southeast of Georgetown. The first grist mill in what is now the village of Georgetown was probably built and run by George Abbott. If there was one before this, the name of the owner is not known.

In 1764 George Abbott, formerly of Salem, Westchester Co., Province of New York, bought of Ebenezer Slawson, of Norwalk, a mill privilege on the Norwalk River for the purpose of erecting a grist mill. The mill was built and he commenced to grind corn and grain. There is a tradition that John Belden had built a saw mill on or near the same site, and Abbott bought it. The mill was on the only road between Danbury and Norwalk and did a great business; people from miles around brought their grain to be ground, or logs to be sawed up into lumber.

Abbott ran the mills for many years. He lived in a house that stood south of where the Waterman Bates house now stands [down Old Mill Road.] His wife (called Aunt Lucy) kept a tavern or half-way house for the teamsters on the Danbury and Norwalk turnpike.

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<sup>15</sup> This area was flooded when the Saugatuck Reservoir was created. - *I. Baldwin, 1965*

<sup>16</sup> Probably also known as Dumpling Hill, at or near Wampum Hill. - *L. M. Barrelle, 2001*

The next owner of the mill was Stephen Perry, an ancestor of the late Nathan Perry. He rebuilt the dam and mill; it was then known as Perry's Mill. Later Joseph Goodsell 1st. ran the mill. He was the father of Joseph B. Goodsell 2nd., who lived on Goodsell's Hill, 30 or more years ago.

The next owner was Ephraim B. Godfrey, who lived in a house south of the mill. This house was moved to the east side of the highway 50 years ago. He was called Uncle Eph and the hill west of the mill was called Uncle Eph's mountain. He married Mary, daughter of Timothy Wakeman 1st., and had two sons and a daughter. One son, Wakeman Godfrey, was in business with him and lived in the house long after owned by Henry Olmstead. He was called "Wake" Godfrey! One of his daughters, Mary Ann, married Burr Betts of Norwalk.

The other son, Silliman, built and lived in the house long after owned by Dr. Lloyd Seeley. Silliman had a store south of the house. (This house is now owned by Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co.) The store was burned and in 1851 or '52 he built the building long known as the depot building. He had a store in the north end; the railroad depot was in the south end. On the second floor was a large hall known as Godfrey's Hall. This was used for various purposes. (This will be spoken of in a later article.) The old depot building burned down several years ago.

Ephraim Godfrey's daughter Mary married Matthew Gregory of Georgetown. Godfrey & Son ran the grist and saw mill for many years and did a large business. In 1853 or '54 Ephraim Godfrey died. His son then continued the business. About this time a new grist mill was started in the old woolen mill lower down the river and the Godfrey Mills did not have much to do, and later the mills were closed. Some time after, Edwin Gilbert bought the property, rebuilt the mill dam and mill, enlarging it, fitting it up for other manufacturing; for a while, Betts & Northrop had a carpenter shop there. Blood's patent flour sifter and other wire goods were made there at that time. Later the Gilbert & Bennett Co. owned it and changed it into a wire mill, and it was used for that line of work until it was burned some years ago.

On the third floor of this mill was set up and run (in 1869 and '70) the first machine in this country for making wire netting and fencing. [According to another source, it was in 1865 that Gilbert & Bennett & Co. installed the first power machinery for making wire poultry netting. For years it was exclusive manufacturer of this innovation. The salesmen worked for a

good many years trying to educate the trade to its use. “You never can replace wooden lath for poultry enclosures,” was a common remark.]<sup>17</sup>

On the west side of the river in the ledge of rocks below the mill dam is what is probably one of the oldest grist mills in the state. It is a circular hole in the rock about two feet in diameter and four feet in depth; it is shaped like a round-bottomed pot. There are two more on the banks of the Saugatuck River in the rocks east of what was the Daniel Hull house in Weston. These holes are called pot-holes and were worn or made by the action of water ages ago. The Indians of long ago used them for grinding the Indian corn raised in the valleys; with a stone pestle the corn was soon reduced to a coarse meal called samp. The early settlers called them samp mortars. The use of stone pestles for years in these samp mortars made them deeper and larger.

On the east bank of the river a short distance below the mill dam, there was 65 years ago, a spring of water called the oil spring. The oil was found on the surface of the water. When the D. & N. R. R. was built, this was covered by the stone from above. Near here Chambers first started to dig for coal. In the railroad cut nearby the rocks in the summer show a white coating of alum. This is on the east side of the railroad.

The old mill is a memory of the past with the Abbotts, Perrys, Goodsells and Godfreys. But Nature’s work still remains, and old Mount Ephriam still overlooks the valley as it did 232 years ago, when the original eight settlers passed up the valley, following the Indian trail through swamp and forest to found the new settlement of Danbury. Or 139 years ago when the minutemen hurried past on their way to Danbury to guard military stores there. Or 54 years ago, when the boys in blue left Georgetown to go to the front to fight for freedom.

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<sup>17</sup> 100 Years of Progress 1818-1918, G&B Mfg. Co., Georgetown 1918

## THE OLD STONE MILL AT GEORGETOWN

*by Wilbur F. Thompson*

Many persons riding on the D. & N. R. R. have seen and admired the old stone mill a short distance below Georgetown, but very few know who built the mill or what it has been used for. It was built over seventy years ago, by John Taylor of Wilton. It was called Taylor's Woolen Mills or Satinet Factory. He built a dam a short distance above and a canal to convey the water to the mill. He also built the house near the mill and lived there many years. His wife was Miss Hannah Varian, of New York City; one of their children was drowned in the canal. (Levi Taylor, father of John Taylor, many years before the mill was built had a store in Georgetown, a little way below the old Red Mill.)

Farmers in those days kept sheep and brought the wool to the mill to sell or to have dyed and woven into cloth. Broadcloth, flannels, etc., homespun, and a cloth called satinet (part cotton) were woven here. Henry Williams, who lived a short distance below the mill, had charge of the dyeing, carding and spinning department; his wife was one of the weavers. A man named Glover worked there. He afterward ran the mills known as Glover's Woolen Mill at Sanford's Station.

Mr. Taylor was in business many years, and after he retired, a Welshman named Evans, from Derby, continued the business. After this, Blackman Bros., from New Milford, ran it for a short time. Later Dr. N. Perry, of Ridgefield, bought it; and fitting it up for a grist mill and to grind spices, called it the Glenburg Chemical Works. He wanted to change the name of Georgetown to Glenburg, but did not succeed. His son, Samuel Perry, had charge of the mill for many years. The famous remedies so well known forty or fifty years ago were made here - composition powders for colds, magnesia powders for indigestion, the No. 9, a pain killer, demulcent, compounds for coughs, and many others. Spices were ground and all kinds of extracts were made and sold. The country stores all kept the Perry remedies, spices and extracts.

After the death of Samuel Perry, the mill was sold to William J. Gilbert. He leased it to different parties who ran it as a grist mill. It is now owned by Samuel J. Miller. [Today it is no more.] After the death of Samuel Perry, the formulas for the Perry remedies came into the

possession of his brother-in-law, Eli Osborn, who made them for many years, at his home in Georgetown.

W. F. T., Danbury

Two of the most important products of the farms of long ago were wool and flax. In the summer days flocks of sheep were feeding on the hillsides and waving fields of blue-flowered flax could be seen on almost every farm.

Flax was not harvested the same as grain or hay, but was pulled up by the roots and stacked. Later in the season it was put through a process of sweating or rotting to separate the fibre from the woody part of the stalk. It was then crackled to break the wood or straw of the flax. This was done by beating it with wooden mallets. After this, it was hatched or hackled; this was done by drawing the stalks of flax over sharp pointed iron teeth thickly set in a block of wood. This separated the fibre from the woody or straw portion of the flax. The fibre, after hatching, was called tow or lint; this was cleaned and spun into linen yarn or thread, and woven on the hand looms into different kinds of linen cloth, and then bleached.

The wool was worked up in a different way. After being sheared from the sheep, it was washed and cleaned. Then it was carded into a light fleecy mass (like the cotton batting of today.) The hand cards were pieces of leather or thin wood thickly set with fine wire points which caught and separated the fibre of the wool. Sometimes the wool was bowed the same as hatters' fur was in the olden times. This was done with a large bow strung with catgut; pulling the string caused it to vibrate in the wool, separating it the same as in carding.

After carding, the wool was formed into rolls, from which it was spun into woolen yarn or warp and then woven into woolen cloth of many kinds, and blankets. A cloth for dresses and skirts was woven, called linsey-woolsey. It had a linen warp and woolen filling; a heavier cloth made of the same materials was called fustian. After washing, the cloth was dyed, fulled, and finished.; oftentimes the warp and filling were dyed before weaving. For many years all this work was done by hand on the farms where the wool and flax were raised. Later little shops and mills were built along the stream where the wool and flax were prepared. for weaving and where the home-made cloth was fulled and finished.

The first mill where the early settlers of Georgetown and Boston district took their wool to be cleaned and carded stood on the east bank of the Saugatuck River, near Nobb's Crook. In 1746 Abram Fairchild and wife (Sarah Scribner) of Norwalk, moved to what is now Boston district, not far from Nobb's Crook. He built a small mill on the east bank of the river for cleaning and carding wool, and fulling and finishing cloth. He ran this mill for many years and raised a large family. Six of his sons were in the American army in the war of the Revolution at the same time.

Later he sold the mill to Moses Fox, who lived nearby. Fox was in business for some years. In 1803 he sold the mill to Joel Foster, who lived a short distance north of the mill. Foster was in business until 1812, when the firm of Comstock, Foster & Co. was formed, and a new mill was built a short distance below the old mill. This firm did a large business in weaving woolen goods of all kinds.

Later Foster bought the interests of the other partners and continued the business until 1843 or '44 when the mills were burned. The remains of the old foundations of the mill could be seen some years ago on the east side of the river. Isaac Perry, who later lived in Georgetown, worked in the Comstock & Foster Mills. He was an expert weaver as were other members of his family. A son, George Perry, made a specialty of weaving fine woolen blankets or coverlids, which met with a ready sale at \$15 a pair. Many of these were woven in Georgetown years ago.

## (3407) THE OLD MULBERRY TREES GEORGETOWN

A few years ago, there could be seen along the highways and in the thickets of Georgetown and vicinity many specimens of the white mulberry tree (*Morus Alba*). Ask any old resident what these trees were used for, and they would answer "to feed silk worms." These trees represented all that was left of an industry that flourished in the rural communities of our state 75 or more years ago. It was called "sericulture," or the rearing of silk worms. It was first introduced into New England by French colonists, some of whom settled in New Rochelle. In 1783, the General Assembly of our state offered bounties and rewards for the rearing of silk worms, and many were engaged in the industry. In 1838 there was a revival in sericulture, causing a great demand for the Mulberry tree, which could not be supplied. Trees of one year's growth were sold for \$1 each. Georgetown, in common with other rural sections, had the silk worm craze, and hundreds of trees were set out (some of these are still living.) [I was unable to determine whether there are any living today - I. Baldwin, 1965] The industry gave employment to many women and children. The children gathered the leaves of the mulberry tree, and the women took care of the silk worms. The rearing houses or feeding sheds where the worms were fed had to be well-lighted and ventilated, and kept at an even temperature. The eggs (called graine) of the silk worm were hatched out by artificial heat. After hatching, the worms were placed in shallow trays, which slid into frames, one over another. The bottoms of the trays were coarse muslin, which gave required ventilation. The trays were filled with chopped mulberry leaves for the worms to feed on. They were great eaters and grew rapidly. Persons who can remember back 70 years say that when the worms were feeding, the noise could be heard 20 feet or more away from the feeding sheds.

After feeding a number of days, the silk worm matured and ceased eating. At this time, small branches and twigs of trees were placed near the trays, the worms crawling up into them, commenced to spin their cocoon, always finishing them in three or four days. The cocoons, which were a light yellow color, were collected. Some of the best were saved to furnish eggs for the next season's silk worms. The others were pricked to kill the pupa and prevent further growth. These were placed in hot water to loosen the gum on the surface. The silk was unwound onto reels or swifts and formed into hanks or skeins. It was then spun into thread or

warp and woven into silk fabrics on the hand looms of the Olmsteads, Perrys, Bennetts, Battersons, Osborns, Wakemans, etc.

Years ago (and perhaps now) there were many families who had carefully laid away silk dresses, waist coats, neckerchiefs, etc., which had been woven on the hand looms in Georgetown and vicinity, from silk that had been unwound from cocoons that had been spun by worms, fed on the leaves of the old Mulberry trees.

Of the many feeding sheds, there were two large ones. One was owned by Silas Olmstead, in Chicken Street; the other by Matthew Gregory, in Georgetown.

WILBUR F. THOMPSON - Danbury, Connecticut

*“Multicolis,” a species of improved and mammoth-leaved Mulberry. These were propagated from cuttings which brought such fabulous prices, bearing much larger leaves than the common mulberry. Wilton had the craze and enthusiasts in the enterprise claimed this new departure would produce fabric so cheaply that even farmers would wear silk clothes instead of linens, because of its cheapness. Some took on this as a business of raising trees for the cuttings. The Betts family plowed up nice fields and planted these with cuttings and trees for their leaves to feed their worms with and fitted up south, warm, sunny rooms for the worm culture.*

*When the craze faded out, these planted lands had grown full trees and then trouble began to remove them, for they had taken such strong hold, great force was needed to pull them out. The writer has one of these trees growing on one of these fields by the fence side, now bearing nice mulberries.*

*Some lost fortunes in the enterprise. As Mr. Thompson says, the cocoons were placed in hot water which loosened the gum, and were stirred with a stick which would catch the end to reel the silk off. - Editor*

[Unfortunately, the Editor's note gave no information which would help identify his newspaper. I. Baldwin, 1965]

*(David H. Van Hoosier of Hurlbutt Street in Wilton wrote for the Norwalk Hour.*

*- C. Russell, Wilton Historical Society.)*



(2851) The Old Silver Mine by Wilbur F. Thompson

Halfway between Georgetown and Cannondale, a short distance east of the old Danbury and Norwalk turnpike (just below Steep Pitch,) a great ledge of rock stands out from the hillside facing the west. Along the face of this ledge can be seen particles of lead ore in small veins. This was well known to the early settlers of Georgetown and Pimpewaug (Cannondale.) They broke out the rock containing the ore, crushed and smelted it in a primitive way, extracted the lead and moulded it into bullets. Some years later an Englishman who had worked in the mines of Cornwall, England found that there was silver with lead in the ore. Several persons became interested, and a stock company was formed to get out the ore. The land the mineral was found on was owned by Alexander Resseguie, of Norwalk (what is now the town of Wilton was to that period part of the town of Norwalk.) It was about 40 acres in extent, and bounded on the north by lands of John Belden, east by lands of Ezekial Wood, south by lands of Ezekial Wood and Solomon Wood's heirs, and west by the Danbury and Norwalk highway. A lease of the land was given by the owner, Alexander Resseguie, to run 100 years from May 17, 1765. It was very comprehensive; it gave permission to dig pits, trenches, sink shafts and tunnels; to take out copper, tin, lead, or any other mineral found on the property; to build retorts, smelting houses for the reduction of the ore; to use the timber, stone, sand or any other substance found on the premises. The following are the names of the stockholders: Samuel Betts, Nathan Hubbell, Matthew Mead, James Olmstead Jr., Silas Olmstead, Jessie Ogden, Joseph Rockwell, Matthew Merwin, all of Norwalk, and Mather Fountain of the town of Bedford, Province of New York. Alexander Resseguie and his heirs and assigns were to receive one-eighth of all ore and bullion taken from the land.

Work was commenced at the base of the ledge and continued until a large vein of ore was found. A shaft was sunk and the ore taken out. The work was done by English miners. There was no way of separating the silver from the lead at that time in this country. So the ore was sent to England for reduction into bullion.

There are many traditions about the working of the mine; one is that it was worked until the War of the Revolution, when the miners, who were English, went back to England. Another is that the mine was operated until a large amount of ore was taken out and the manager went

down to Norwalk to see that the ore was loaded onto the ship, and did not come back. This left the stockholders minus.

It is said the mine was worked for the lead during the War of the Revolution and this seems probable, as lead was very scarce at that time and everything that could be melted was run into bullets, including pewter plates, teapots, and even the statue of King George that stood in Bowling Green, New York City, parts of which were found in Wilton years ago.

After the war was over, some of the English miners who had worked in the mine when it was first opened, came back and began operations again. (The land was now owned by Azor Belden.) They put up a small building and a furnace for smelting the ore. After working for some time, they left taking with them a large quantity of silver and five barrels of ore. Years passed on, the timbers and windlass at the mouth of the shaft fell and made it unsafe for the cattle and sheep grazing nearby, and Azor Belden had the mine filled up even with the surface.

Fifty or more years ago, there were many stories told of the old mine. The older people who had known of the working of the mine were gone, but the stories had been handed down to their children and grandchildren. One of the traditions was that the mine shaft was over 160 feet in depth and tunnels ran back from it under the ledge. During the Civil War when silver coin was but a memory of the past, and the circulating medium was shin plasters and postage stamps, the boys from Georgetown school would go down to the mine and break out from the ledge what they thought to be pieces of silver ore, proudly boasting of the silver they owned. Aar on Lee (who ran the Glenburg Mills for Samuel Perry) took some of the ore, smelted it over a blacksmith's fire and got enough lead to mould into bullets.

(2,857) The Old Silver Mine Continued

In the summer of 1875, Mr. Tiffany of New York City came to Georgetown. (He was a connection of Tiffany Bros., Jewelers.) He boarded with Edmund O. Hurlbutt and heard the story of the old mine and became interested. (The land the mine was on now belonged to Mr. Hurlbutt.) Mr. Tiffany had investments in silver mines in Nevada. He went down to the mine with Wesley Barrett of Georgetown, and had him blast out some ore from the face of the ledge, sending it to New York to have it assayed. It was found to contain silver and lead. He thought

it would be a paying proposition to reopen the mine; it was easy to find where the old mine shaft was, as the ground was always wet there. After obtaining permission from Mr. Hurlbutt, he commenced operations. Wesley Barrett had charge of the work. After a windlass was erected and a hand pump set up, several men were employed.

After three weeks of hard work the shaft was cleared of stones and water, and the bottom reached by splicing long ladders together. It was a great curiosity to hundreds of people who visited the spot. All the stories of the mine were retold. In the bottom of the shaft were found broken drills, miner's hammers (I have one of the old hammers,) picks, parts of ore buckets, bones of some animal that had fallen in before the shaft was filled up, and pieces of oak timber; the arsenic in the water had turned the wood a dark green color. Samuel Main took some of the oak and had some canes made of it, giving them to his friends.

The mine shaft was found to be six or eight feet in diameter and 75 or 80 feet deep. About ten feet down the shaft, a lateral or tunnel was found, about six feet in diameter running back under the ledge; this probably was opened up when the mine was first worked, following a vein of ore. It was about 20 feet in depth. Mr. Tiffany had some samples taken from the bottom and sides of the shaft and had it assayed. It was found to be rich in silver. He made plans to work the mine. In looking over the record, it was found the old lease had run out in 1865, and that the mine reverted back to the heirs of the original owners. Finding that the expense of searching out the heirs and obtaining a lease would be too great, he gave up the idea of working the mine.

There was a tradition that silver had been found farther north on the same ridge of land that the old mine was on. Mr. Tiffany sent for an expert miner to look for the silver-bearing rock along this ridge. Mr. Chollar, a miner of fifty years' experience, came to Georgetown. He was an Englishman 80 years old (but looked 15 years younger.) He was the discoverer of the famous Chollar lode in Nevada (40 years ago this was a rich silver mine.) Chollar followed the ridge north through Georgetown and Boston district. He found indications of silver in various places, but not rich enough to warrant the expense of opening up a mine, so the project was abandoned.

I heard Mr. Chollar tell many interesting stories of his life as a miner. One incident he related was about the old silver mine. He said that when he was a young man he overheard two

very old men talking about a mine they had worked many years before. It was about 50 miles from New York, and the ore was taken out and shipped from Norwalk and sent to England for reduction. The two old miners had worked in the mine before and after the War of the Revolution. Mr. Chollar had forgotten about the incident.

When Mr. Tiffany sent for him to look over the old mine, and search for the mineral bearing lode farther north, he recalled what the old timers had told him 60 years before about the old mine.

The mine shaft is now filled with water. Some time it may be reopened and worked again.

WILBUR F. THOMPSON, Danbury, Conn.

*(Alexander Resseguie lived near the noted Split Rock of Egypt, or North Cannondale, of today. He was the ancestor of the wife of the writer. The name of Matthew Merwin, if spelled as above, was better known as Matthew Marvin, although we have seen Marvin spelled as Merwin, but wrongly, I think - Editor.) [David H. Van Hoosier]*

## THE OLD COAL MINE, GEORGETOWN - By Wilbur F. Thompson, Danbury

In these days of high prices for coal and other necessities of life, what a boon it would be if coal could be found and mined in our state. In almost every town there are traditions of mineral wealth beneath the surface. And in many places excavations, shafts and tunnels show that thousands of dollars have been spent in the endeavor to find the minerals supposed to be hidden in the earth.

In all the search for minerals very little has been said about coal. 80 years ago there was a blacksmith shop in Boston district, Redding, owned by Elias Andrews. In those days there was no mineral coal used in the rural sections. Every blacksmith had a charcoal pit for making coal. One day a man came into the shop and told Andrews he could get a black stone that would make a hotter fire than charcoal. He was told to get some. He went into what is known as Seventy Acres (a great tract of woods on the west of Boston district) and returned with a bag of black stone. It was placed on the forge - it burned with an intense heat. He would never tell where he found it, and many have looked for it but never have found it.

In 1848, a coal miner named Chambers, from Carbondale, Pennsylvania, came to Georgetown to visit friends. He heard the story of the lost coal mine and tried to find it, but was not successful. In his search he noticed that the formations of rock in many places was the same as in coal regions. He started to dig in many places up the valley into Boston district. At last he found what he thought to be good indications of coal, and commenced to dig in earnest. He hired local help, paying them \$1.00 per day from sunrise to sunset. The shaft or tunnel was cut through solid rock about six feet in diameter running back on the level under the hill. It is said that he found small veins of coal but was looking for a large vein.

After weeks of hard work the tunnel was dug under the hill about 50 feet. One Saturday night some of the young men who worked for Chambers in the mine drove down to Norwalk and secured some large lumps of coal. This they placed in the back end of the mine and covered with rock. The first stroke of the pick in the morning uncovered the coal. Chambers was happy, the long sought-for coal was found. He soon found that he had been fooled. This disappointment, with the lack of funds, put an end to his mining. It is possible if he had kept on he would have found coal enough to pay him to mine it.

This old mine is about 250 feet south of the house long owned by Aaron Osborn (now owned by Mrs. Leroy Sturges) and was on his land. It was long known as "Chamber's Coal mine." Fifty years ago Aaron Osborn used the old coal mine in the summer as a cooler for milk, eggs, butter, etc. The water, icy cold, dripping from the roof and sides of the mine drained off into the Boston brook that flowed by the entrance of the mine. The writer, with many other boys of 50 years ago, had many a drink of ice cold milk, that had been put in the old mine to cool.

The entrance to the mine has been closed for many years by the debris that has fallen from the hill above.

Wilbur F. Thompson, Danbury, March 10, 1922.

## (2923) The First Settlement of Georgetown and the Schools its Children have Attended

The first settlement of what is now the busy growing burg of Georgetown was made 190 or more years ago [in about 1726] along the high ridge of land then known as Barnham's Ridge (now the Hog Ridge.) This ridge of land extends from the Norwalk (now Wilton) line to Nobb's Crook. [This ridge follows the line of Route 107 from Georgetown to Redding Glen] with all the land in what is now the village of Georgetown in the towns of Redding and Weston. It was the time of the first settlement in the northern part of the town of Fairfield. The old north boundary line of Fairfield was on or near where the highways now run from Redding Ridge to Redding Center and from there west to the Ridgefield line about two and one-half miles above the boundary rock in the Norwalk River now in Georgetown. The upper half of the town of Fairfield was surveyed into what was known as the Fairfield long lots. These lots were surveyed or laid out on what was known as the eleven o'clock line. They were of different widths, but were narrow when compared with their depth, which was eight or ten miles. They were owned by the early settlers of Fairfield near the tidewater, or were granted to persons for services rendered the colony or town in civil or military life; and were known by the names of the owners. What was known as the Osborn long lot was granted to Richard Osborn (an ancestor of William E. Osborn of Westport) for military service in the Pequot Indian War. The long lots we are interested in are those that comprised the land now in the village of Georgetown in the towns of Redding and Weston and also what is the Boston district in Redding. Some of these lots were settled on by the original owners - others were settled on by persons who bought of the first owners.

The first long lot in what is now the village of Georgetown in the south was known as the Osborn long lot. This was bounded on the west and northwest by the Norwalk (now Wilton) line and came to the boundary rock in the Norwalk River. The next lot was known as the Applegate long lot, the next the Drake long lot, and so on up through Boston district to Nobb's Crook. The Osborn, Applegate and Drake lots comprised a large part of what is now Georgetown and Boston district.

In 1721 Robert Rumsey of Fairfield bought of John Applegate a large tract of land known as the Applegate long lots. In 1724 he willed it to his three sons Robert, Benjamin, and

Isaac, who built homes on the tract. Isaac built on the hill in front of where the Aaron Osborn house [see Map II] now stands (Isaac married Abigail, daughter of Noah St. John the first.)

Robert Rumsey built near where the home of Mrs. Nathan Perry now stands. Sixty years ago [about 1856] when Samuel Main was building the house Mrs. Nathan Perry now owns, he started to dig a well. Uncle Timothy Wakeman (who owned the house later owned by Edson Smith) asked Mr. Main what he was doing. On being told, Uncle Timothy took an iron bar, striking through the sod, and found a stone slab saying there is the old Rumsey well dug in 1726. Mr. Main uncovered and cleaned out the well and used it as long as he lived in Georgetown.

Above the Rumseys other settlers built. The Perrys, Mallorys, Morgans, Hulls, Lees, Darlings, Coleys, Bradleys, settled along this ridge, and later the Sherwoods, Battersons and Parsons.

That part of Georgetown in the town of Weston was settled about the same time, or later. It has been said that Richard Osborn built on the Osborn long lot at an early date but this has not been proven. The first settler we have record of who built on this section was William Osborn, who built a log house in 1734 on or near where the Gregory Osborn house now stands. (This house is now owned by William E. Osborn of Westport, a direct descendant of Richard Osborn, the first owner of the land.) Later members of the Osborn family built here, giving it the name of Osborntown. This section is in the Weston part of Georgetown.

The first settlement of that part of Georgetown in the town of Norwalk (now Wilton) was made many years later than that of the other sections, Burnham's Ridge, etc. The early settlers always chose the high ground first for building their homes, thinking the lowlands unhealthy. Most of the land in this section was owned by John Belden, Solomon Wood and Ezekial Wood. In 1756 Noah St. John 1st bought of Solomon Wood fifty acres of land, and built a home. His son Nehemiah St. John also built on this land. Nehemiah built the Matthew Gregory place today owned by Arthur Clark. The St. John farm remained in the family for many years and was later owned by the Rev. Samuel St. John.

Later the Taylors, Olmsteads, Gregorys, Morgans and other families settled. In 1756 Solomon Wood sold the remainder of his land north of the St. John farm to James Morgan of Redding, who built a house on or near the site of the house built and long owned by Hiram St.

John. In 1764, George Abbot came to what is now the village of Georgetown and built a grist mill and was a prominent man in the community for many years.

Soon after the close of the War of the Revolution, the people living on the hillsides and along the valley of the Norwalk River held a Fourth of July celebration on the top of the hill in front of where the Waterman Bates house now stands [the first house on the river below Connery Bros. office] and having no cannon to fire a salute, bored a hole in the ledge of rocks on the hillside, loaded it with powder and fired the salutes in honor of the day. For many years after it was used for the same purpose, by Matthew Bennett, who lived nearby.

At this time the localities around the valley were called by different names: Osborntown, Honeyhill, Burr's Hill, St. John's corners, Sugar Hollow, Jack Street, etc. At this Fourth of July celebration, it was voted to give these localities one name. Someone suggested Georgetown after George Abbott, the popular miller. It was put to vote and Georgetown became the name of the hamlet. That is how the hustling town of today got its name.

The first school the children of the early settlers of what is now the village of Georgetown attended stood on the west bank of the Saugatuck River at the foot of Nobb's Crook hill a short distance north of where Ferdinand Gorham's house [this is now Redding Glen] now stands. It was one of three schools established by the parish of Redding, town of Fairfield, in 1737, and was known as the West Redding district school. (The other two were called the Redding Center and the East Redding schools.) It was a small log structure with rude seats made of slabs and a stone fireplace. The district comprised what is now Diamond Hill and Boston districts and that part of George town in the town of Redding.

In 1767 the parish of Redding became the town of Redding. In 1768 the town was divided into school districts. Boston district No. 5 included that part of Georgetown now in the town of Redding. The school house stood near where the present school house stands in Boston district [the James Driscoll Sr. house.] In the early days of the last century this was a famous school. The ancestors of many who have lived in Georgetown attended school here, as it was the nearest one in the neighborhood. Among the teachers at this time were Elias Bennett, Nathaniel Perry, Walter Bates (who later had a large select school,) William Bennett, Gershom Banks and others.

The first school in Georgetown was started about 1800; the school house

stood near where Walter Perry's house now stands. Not much is known about this school; it was a small building and some of the teachers who had taught in the Boston school taught here.

School House No. 2 [built in 1818] stood on the south end of William Wakeman's home lot. This also was a small building; it is not known how long school was held here. In 1824 William Wakeman sold his farm to Benjamin Gilbert and bought the Matthew Bennett place on the road to Weston, years later owned by Jonathan Betts [across from the Swedish Church.] Mr. Wakeman moved the little school house up the hill and attached it to the rear of his new house for a kitchen.

School House No. 3 stood in the hollow [today it is the area at the junction of Routes 7 and 107] back of Wilkie Batterson's blacksmith shop on the road to Nod [see Map IV.] At this time or later the present school district of Georgetown was formed,<sup>18</sup> taking in what is known as Chicken Street, which at that time was a thickly settled section. This schoolhouse was used until the winter of 1850, when it was burned.

A new site was bought on what is now known as School Hill and the erection of a new school was commenced. Until the completion of the new building the school sessions were held in Taylor's hat shop, which stood at the top of what was known as Aunt Sal Taylor's hill, on the road to Nod. This shop was later moved and attached to the Taylor home, now owned by William Lockwood [now the Pfhal house] and is part of the house today. The new school house No. 4 was up-to-date, having seats and desks. Something new for Georgetown, the old school houses having benches for seats and a board fastened around the wall for desks.

Among the teachers who taught in the new school were Peter Fayerweather, George Godfrey, Lyman Keeler, Charles Sherwood, Miss Sturges (daughter of Charles Sturges,) Miss Margaret Moore, Luzon Jelliff and many others later than 1876. Among the scholars who attended school here in the early sixties from 1860-1864 were Francis, Eugene, Aaron, Frank G. and Lydia Albin; Lester, Ezra P. and William R. Bennett; Frederick Brown; Medora and Allie Batterson; Will, James and John Corcoran; Francis de Garmo and sister George; Charles and John Gould; Mary, George, Eva, Will, Lester, Lucius and Luther Godfrey; Frank and Mary Elwell; Emma and Addie Hurlbutt; Rosalie, Will, Gilson and little Sid Jennings; Charles,

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<sup>18</sup>

District No. 10 originally comprised parts of Redding, Weston and Wilton. It was dissolved in 1964.

Carrie, John, Francis and. Ida Jelliff; Augusta, Rebecca and Ben Lobdell; Addie, Alida and Joe Lockwood; Ida and Will Lee; Samuel J. and Mary Miller; Huldah, Eli G. and Nettie Main; Ed, Julia and Annie Mills; David, William E., Edmund, Isadora, George, Nettie and William H. Osborn; Charles and Dell Olmstead; El Iza Prior; Jennie Luick; Alice, Lizzie, Ida, Stell and Eddie St. John; Wilbur F. and Herbert Thompson; Frank, Mary and Dan Welsh; Henry Willams; Charlie Wells, and others whose names are forgotten.

The old school house on the hill has been enlarged many times to accomodate the growing school population. Many persons of mature years have pleasant memories of the old school house, surrounded. by its fine grove of trees. And many friendships begun there have lasted through the long years that have passed since we were boys and girls attending school.

But the old school house on the hill has outlived its day and generation, and School House No. 5 has taken its place. This fine up-to-date building<sup>19</sup> is a model for every school building committee to follow, and is a fitting memorial to those who have the best interests of Georgetown at heart. And here again, after a lapse of 100 years, the children of Georgetown and Boston districts attend the same school.

It is a far cry from the little log school house on the banks of the Saugatuck River (and the rude little school houses of later days) to the beautiful building that is the school house of the children of Georgetown and vicinity. They and the coming generations of children will appreciate (with the parents) the facilities afforded for a better education.<sup>20</sup>

*WILBUR F. THOMPSON*

*October 20, 1916*

*Danbury, Connecticut*

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<sup>19</sup>

The Gilbert and Bennett School near Route 7 was completed in 1915. - L. M. Barrelle, 2001

<sup>20</sup>

Today this school is operated by the Wilton School Board. Georgetown residents who do not live in Wilton may apply for and be granted permission to attend. - I. Baldwin, 1965.

## THE OLD BOSTON DISTRICT SCHOOL, REDDING

*On a hill in Old New England  
Stands a schoolhouse old and gray,  
The Schoolhouse of my boyhood.  
Many years have passed away.*

The sale of the Boston district schoolhouse to M. Connery of Georgetown forms the closing chapter in the history of a school that had had an existence of over 150 years.<sup>21</sup>

In 1767 the town of Bedding was organized and in 1768 was divided into school districts. Boston district No. 5 took in the section now known as Georgetown in Redding. The schoolhouse stood on the site of the building recently sold. It was for many years a famous school. Elias Bennett, later known as Pest Rider Bennett, was teacher from 1800 to 1815. Nathaniel Perry, Walter Bates, Aaron B. Hull, Gershom Banks, Oliver Dudley and William Bennett taught in the old schoolhouse later.

In the '50's the present schoolhouse was built. It was a great improvement on the old school, where the seats had no backs, and a wide board fastened to the wall on three sides of the room formed the desks, with an open fireplace to heat the room in winter. In the new school were desks, and seats with backs, and a box stove standing in the center of the room to heat the school in winter. In the winter of 1864 the writer was a pupil in the Boston school. The ages of the pupils ranged. from six to twenty years. Many were men and women grown. Teachers in those days had to be men of muscle as well as of brains. David L. Rowland of Weston was teacher for the fall and winter term of 1864.

In those days the teachers boarded with the parents of the children who attended school -i t was called "boarding around the district." The schools were not free schools as they are today, and the burden was heavy on many par ents who had large families. Following are names of the pupils who attended the winter term of 1864, giving the father's name also: Orrin

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<sup>21</sup> On December 6, 1920 this property was sold. to Michael Connery and on March 15, 1921, he sold it to James Driscoll, who used the site to build a home. Parts of the old schoolhouse were used. in the construction of the garage. It is still Mrs. Driscoll's home. - *I. Baldwin 1964*

Adams' children - Leroy, Imogene, Julia; William Albin's children - Frank, Lydia, Warson, Albert; Burr Bennett's children - William, Polly, Mary, Elmer; Gershom Banks' children - George, Jane, Will; Zalmon Fil low's child - Effie; Aaron Fallow's child - Fred; Joseph Goodsell's child - George B.; William Gorham's child - Ferdinand; Richard Higgins' children - Richard, John and Ellen; Moses Hill's children - Gcrshom, Deborah, Ebenezer, Mary, Samantha; Bradley Hill's children - Arthur B. and Albert; Burr Hill's children - Helen, Celia, Nathaniel; Edmund Lee's children - John, Margaret, Thornton and Jessie; Henry Lee's child - Frank; Ashur Marchant's children - Joel and Arthur; Aaron Olmstead's children - Hawley, Sarah, Samuel, Eva; Granville Perry's children - Georganna, Eva, Timothy; Parson's grandchild - Hattie; John Rady's children - John, James and Ellen; Peter Smith's children - Ed.die and Ruth; Dimon Sturges' children - Oscar and Ida; Edward Thomp son's children - Wilbur F. and Herbert B.; Francis Welch's children - Mary and Daniel.

Fifty-seven years have passed by and many of the pupils of the old school term of 1864 and '65 are dead, and few of those alive are living in the old district. But their descendants are scattered all over this state. The children in Boston district, Redding, are now pupils in the Gilbert & Bennett School, Georgetown. Following are the names of the teachers in the Boston listrict school from 1864 to 1872: winter terms; David L. Rowland, Seth Platt Bates, John Belden Hurlbutt, Ambrose Platt, Arthur B. Hill; summer terms, Sarah Hill and Emma Olmstead.

*Smooth and hollow are its doorsteps,  
Worn and thin its ancient sill,  
By the many feet that entered  
In the schoolhouse on the hill.*

WILBUR F. THOMPSON

February 22, 1922

Danbury, Connecticut

## **Brief Historical Sketches of the Churches in Georgetown Today**

by Irene Baldwin

Before continuing with Wilbur Thompson's article "The Old Pipe Organ," it is appropriate to introduce some historical sketches of the churches which exist in Georgetown today. His anecdotes about the Methodist Church will be more meaningful if the reader has some background.

### **The Methodist Church of Georgetown**

The first circuit organized in New England. by Jesse Lee was called the "Fairfield Circuit." It included roughly the area from Norwalk, east to Stratford and Milford, then north and west to Danbury and Redding, and south again to Norwalk. The Georgetown class was formed in 1790. For many years this group met at various homes, for it had no regular place of worship.

In 1830, a small plain building was erected, and served for nearly thirty years as the Society increased in numbers. However, on March 15, 1857, it was voted, and pledges were made, to build a new house of worship. This building now stands, and with some alterations, houses the church today. By 1861, the Georgetown Charge had increased in prestige with its new church, and was taken out of the circuit and put in the New York East Annual Conference.

This church has been called the Methodist Episcopal, and it is to this group that Wilbur Thompson's articles about the Old Pipe Organ and the Christmas Service relate. In 1820, a Reverend William Stillwell organized another Methodist group in Georgetown. This followed a small schism in the New York Conference. This group adopted the name Methodist Protestant when it met in convention in 1829. Information about

these Methodists is available in Todd's History of Redding, Connecticut. This group was the forerunner of the present Congregational Church in Georgetown.

The present Methodist Church has a fine record and history to be proud of. Its membership today is ministered to by the Rev. Mr. Worley, who followed Rev. Marsland. The membership is active and contributes their full quota for World Service and Benevolence, as well as the Home for the Aged in Danbury.

### **Georgetown Bible Church (formerly Gilbert Memorial Church)**

This lovely stone church facing the Gilbert & Bennett office building, was donated to the Georgetown Congregational Church by Edwin Gilbert. The cornerstone was laid October 1901, and it was formally dedicated. the following year.

Until 1867, when the name Congregational was adopted, this group had been the Methodist Protestant Meeting. Started in 1820 as a separatist group from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgetown, this congregation grew and joined the Society of Wilton Circuit in 1839. In its early years it shared a meeting house with the Baptists and a Mission Sunday School of the Wilton Congregational Church, which was organized in Georgetown in 1826.

The early church property was crossed by the Danbury & Norwalk R.R. The group sold the Railroad a right of way for \$150 in 1851. In 1867 the members voted to change their denominational preference to Congregational. In July 1944 they withdrew from the Fairfield County Congregational Association and Ministerial Society. The church used the name "Gilbert Memorial Church" until April 7, 1965, when it was changed to the "Georgetown Bible Church." At the present time, it is administered by the Rev. Mr. Seely.

## **Sacred Heart Church**

With the completion of the Norwalk & Danbury R. R., Catholics began to move in and settle about the halfway mark known as Georgetown. The spiritual needs of these families were taken care of by priests from both St. Mary's Church, Norwalk, and St. Peter's Church, Danbury. Holy Mass was celebrated in private homes both in Georgetown and Branchville. By the late seventies, the number of Catholics had increased considerably, so the use of Bennett's Hall, located over the now Connery Brothers store, was secured for services. The Rev. Thaddeus P. Walsh was appointed first pastor of Georgetown, with Ridgefield and Redding Ridge as missions. He took up his residence in Georgetown in 1880. The Catholics of Georgetown had already made plans for a church and the present grounds were purchased and transferred to Father Walsh shortly after his coming. He immediately began the erection of a church which was soon completed. It was solemnly dedicated in the late summer of the same year by the Most Rev. Lawrence S. McMahon, under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A special train was run from Danbury on that occasion to accommodate all who wanted to take part in the ceremony.

Father Walsh later moved his residence from Georgetown to Ridgefield, but continued to minister to the needs of the Catholics of Georgetown until his death in 1886. He was buried from Sacred Heart Church, Georgetown.

The Rev. Patrick Byrne succeeded Father Walsh; for the next six years he was pastor of both Georgetown and Ridgefield Catholic Churches. Father Byrne was in turn succeeded by the Rev. Joseph O'Keefe, who labored in spite of ill health till the coming of the Rev. Richard E. Shortell, May 13, 1893.

Under the direction of Father Shortell, the original church building was greatly enlarged, the interior relocated, the marble altar, the marble sanctuary and a new organ installed, making it one of the best mission

churches in the diocese. Father Shortell continued as pastor of Sacred Heart Church until his death Oct. 4, 1934.

On Dec. 1, 1934, the Rev. Walter F. Kenny came to Georgetown as resident pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, which was new separated from Ridgefield. He immediately began the building of a rectory, and the filling and grading of the parish grounds. As the property is about an acre and three-quarters in extent, it proved quite a task. Most of the labor was voluntary and completed on a pay-as-you-go basis.<sup>22</sup>

Since that time, the parish has continued to grow and has prospered not only materially but spiritually. In Nov. of 1951, Msgr. Joseph Cleary arrived. He has seen a great growth spurt and the church is now "bursting at the seams." He is well-loved by all his parishioners, and is very much a part of the community life of Georgetown.

### **Covenant Congregational Church**

This church, located on the old Weston Road<sup>23</sup> in Georgetown, was founded in March 1889 by Swedish immigrants. The building was erected in 1891 with a parsonage on Maple Street. In March of 1964, they celebrated their 75th anniversary. One charter member, Mrs. Gustaf Wahlquist, still survives. She is about 97 years old and lives near the church on Old Weston Road. The church has its roots in the Lutheran State Church of Sweden and the great spiritual awakening in Sweden in the 19th century. The members use the Congregational name because they were assisted in getting started by the American Congregational Church. The church is associated with the Evangelical Covenant Church, with headquarters in Chicago, and with the East Coast Conference of Covenant Churches, with headquarters in Worcester, Mass.

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<sup>22</sup> Taken from a newspaper article that appeared in the Bridgeport Post in 1939.

<sup>23</sup> Now known as Covenant Lane, in Weston. *L. M. Barrelle 2001*

There was a wave of emigration to America from Sweden during the 1880s. "America Fever" almost threatened to depopulate Sweden. Many of these emigrants were added to the population of Georgetown<sup>24</sup> and their culture considerably enriched the community life of George town.

The church was the agency by which the immigrant was best able to preserve his identity, and in a few years the Swedes, working through their churches and with the help of friendly neighbors, had established schools, colleges, Old Folks' Homes, Orphanages and hos pitals in their new land.

In Georgetown the Lutheran community soon grew large enough to support another church, and the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed.

### **Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church**

As early as 1900 pastors from the Seamen's Mission in Brook lyn, N. Y. were visiting Georgetown, and by January 1908, a Seamen's Mission Society was formed to gather Lutherans in Georgetown for religious services and mission work. The group rented space in Mrs. Edda Peterson's house for meetings. Within a few months they decided to organize a Lutheran congregation and affiliate with the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church. On July 7, 1908, the Bethlehem Evangel ical Lutheran Church in Georgetown was born.

It has been a source of pride to Lutherans, and one the community must share, that so much good will existed that when the sub scription drive started for a building, non-members contributed so generously that the building could be completed and dedicated before the end of the year. It was dedicated on Sunday, Nov. 29, 1908.

Since then, the congregation and building have grown, and both are in excellent condition today. In.1958 the church celebrated its Golden

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<sup>24</sup> Coming from Castle Garden, the forerunner of Ellis Island, New York, many of them found employment in the expanding Gilbert & Bennett wire mill in the 1880s and 1890s. - *Irene Baldwin, 1965*

Jubilee, and at that time received a letter from one of its former pastors, now residing in Ahus, Sweden. Samuel Swensen said in his letter, "...I...a very young and inexperienced pastor some 43 years ago...remember most vividly and with great gratitude how willing and steadfastly the pioneers co-operated with me, striving for the maintenance and upbuilding of Lutheran faith within the boundaries set by the Swedish language and church tradition from the old country. I also recall my impression from my visit some years ago of how that spirit still lingered..."<sup>25</sup>

Many of the clergy who assisted through the years were from Upsala College, and warm ties exist between the Georgetown church and that college. At the present time, the congregation expects a new pastor soon, having lost Rev. Mr. Elmer L. Olsen last year. He had served since Oct. 3, 1955 and seen the membership grow, as did the building under his faithful leadership.

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<sup>25</sup> 50th Anniversary, 1908-1958 (pamphlet,) Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church.

## THE OLD CHURCHES OF GEORGETOWN

*by Wilbur F. Thompson*

The first settlers of our state were members of the Congregational Church, and for many years there were no churches of other beliefs. Proof of this is to be found in the history of every town in the state. As the years passed on, settlers of other religious denominations came into the state and organized their own churches. What is now the town of Redding was settled in 1712 by members of the Congregational Church in Fairfield. It was known as the Parish of Redding, Town of Fairfield.

In 1729 the Congregational Church of Redding parish was organized, and in 1730 the first church built. The first settlers of what is now the village of Georgetown were members of the Redding church. The record of the Redding Congregational Church - of marriages, births and deaths - shows the names of well-known families who settled in what is now the village of Georgetown - Batterson, Bennett, Banks, Byington, Bates, Coley, Darling, Gray, Godfrey, Hull, Hill, Lee, Meeker, Morgan, Mallory, Osborn, Olmstead, St. John, Rumsey - showing they were members or attendants of the Redding church.

The first church organization in what is now the village of Georgetown was known as the Baptist society in Redding. The exact date of its formation is not known. In the records of the Congregational Church in Redding is found this entry: "Dec. 9, 1785, Deacon John Lee gives certificates to Michael Wood, John Couch, Micah Starr, Jabez Wakeman, to the Baptist Church in Redding." The older records of the Baptist Church have been lost, and only those dating from 1833 to 1849 are in existence and in possession of the Baptist Church of Danbury, and form very interesting reading. In them we find that on Jan. 28, 1833, a society meeting was held at the home of Timothy Wakeman; voted to adjourn to our meeting house," showing that the Baptist Church in Georgetown had been built long before that date. The church record gives the names of members from 1833 to 1849: "Male members - Elias Andrews, Perry Andrews, William B. Beers, Sherman Beers, Harry Beers, Elezer Beers, Jonathan Betts, Mathew Bennett, Steven Buttery, Riley Buttery, George Grumman, Stephen Jones, Lorenzo Jones, Nathan Jones, Lewis Lobdell, Jasper Olmstead, Walter Olmstead, Sanford Olmstead, David Rowland, Edward Sherwood, Timothy Wakeman, Levi Wakeman, William Wakeman; Female members - Mary

Andrews, Eunice Bennett, Mary Bennett, Mary Beers, Delia Beers, Ann Beers, Rebecca Beers, Felecia Buttery, Betsy Coley, Sarah Coley, Eunice Coley, Eliza Dykman, Polly Edmunds, Esther Edmunds, Susan Godfrey, Anna Hawley, Anna Hull, Ruth Hull, Abigail Hodges, Mirinda Jelliff, Mary Jones, Mirah Jones, Ruth Morehouse, Esther Olmstead, Caroline Olmstead, Harriet Olmstead, Ellen Parsons, Mabel Rowland, Ellen Wakeman, Sarah Wakeman, Pelina Wakeman.”

For many years it was a strong society, having the only church edifice in the village. Following are the names of the pastors: 1833, Elder S. Ambler was in charge; in 1834, Elder Steven Bray; in 1838, Rev. William Bower; in 1841, Rev. John Noyes; in 1843, Rev. George B. Crocker; in 1844, Rev. David Pease. The salary paid was \$150 a year. From 1845 to 1849 there was no settled pastor. The Baptist church was for many years the only meeting place the villagers had, and in it lectures on temperance and anti-slavery were given. At this period many in the north were in favor of slavery and the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions had many a debate. Georgetown was strongly anti-slavery and it is a historical fact that the first anti-slavery society in Connecticut was started in Georgetown in Oct. 1838. Dr. Erasmus Hudson and Rev. Nathaniel Colver were appointed by the Anti-Slavery Society of Connecticut to lecture on slavery.

On Nov. 16, 1838, a call was issued for an anti-slavery convention to be held in the Baptist Church in Georgetown. On Nov. 26, 1838 Messrs. Colver and Hulson addressed the meeting. But the opposition was so strong the meeting was adjourned until Nov. 27th. That evening the enemies of the movement broke up the meeting, and on the 28th of November the Baptist Church was blown up with gunpowder. A keg of gunpowder was placed under the pulpit. [So we see, church bombings are not new to our generation.]

On Dec. 4, 1838, the Georgetown Anti-Slavery Society was formed. President, Eben Hill; Secretary, William Wakeman; Treasurer, John C. St. John. Among those who were members of this Society were Sturges Bennett, Aaron Bennett, William Bennett, Sauruch Bennett, Jonathan Betts, Alonzo Byington, Edwin Burchard, Walter Bates, Ezra Brown, Charles Cole, Benjamin Gilbert, William Gilbert, Matthew Gregory, Bradley Hill, Edmund Hurlbutt, John B. Hurlbutt, Aaron Jelliff, William Jelliff, Aaron Osborn, Gregory Osborn, Timothy Parsons, William Wakeman, Timothy Wakeman, and many others who years later

became Republicans and voted for Abraham Lincoln.

In the old church record we find the following statements: “Nov. 26, 1838, the Rev. Nathaniel Colver lectured in our meeting house on slavery, and was disturbed by unruly persons: Nov. 27, 1836, another lecture, disturbed as before; Nov. 28, 1838, our meeting house blown up but not entirely destroyed; Nov. 30, 1838, plan to collect money to repair our meeting house; Dec. 8, 1838, Society meeting held at the house of Brother Timothy Wakeman; Deacon Elezer Beers was appointed to ferret out and prosecute any and all those who have been engaged in blowing up and damaging our meeting house.”

[The census statistics of the United States show that slavery had dwindled in Connecticut at this time (1838). In 1790 there were 2,764 slaves in Connecticut, in 1840 there were 17, and by 1850 none.]

The record does not show that anyone was found out and prosecuted. There is a tradition that the blowing up of the church was done by some of its members who opposed the anti-slavery movement. In the thirties, the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Protestant societies built churches, and many who had been members and attendants of the Baptist church joined the other churches. This was a death blow to the old church. In the church record we find that on Sept. 11, 1847, “Church meeting was called and it was voted to disband, members free to join any church without certificates.” A committee was appointed to hold meetings and Elias Andrews, William Wakeman and William S. Olmstead were the committee.

On Nov. 6, 1848, a church meeting was called and the old Baptist Church was reorganized, with the following male members: Elias Andrews, Perry Andrews, Elezer Beers, William B. Beers, Sherman Beers, Harry Beers, Sanford Olmstead, Nathan Jones, Timothy Wakeman, William Wakeman, Edward Sherwood; Brother Gardner was asked to preach once a month for \$50 per year.

On Oct. 11, 1849, a society meeting was held and the officers for the coming year were appointed: Clerk, Sherman Beers; Treasurer, W. S. Olmstead; Collector, Perry Andrews; Trustees, Elezer Beers, Timothy Wakeman, William B. Beers.” This is the last entry in the old record as the church was disbanded in 1849.

The old church was a one-story edifice, clapboarded and unpainted; it was lighted by six windows glazed with 6x8 glass. There were two entrances on the east end of the building.

The singers sat on a raised platform in the rear of the pulpit. In the evening services the room was lighted with candles and on the pulpit was a whale oil lamp. The church was heated in winter by a Franklin box stove standing in the center of the room. New members who were received into the church were immersed in Timothy Wakeman's mill pond, which was a short distance from the church. The only person now living who was a member of the old Baptist church in 1840 is Miss Sarah Coley, b. 1828, who lives in the old Coley homestead on the Danbury Road, Georgetown.

In 1848, a select school for young ladies was held in the old church. The school was taught by Miss Celestine Chambers. Her father came from Carbondale, Penn., to dig for coal in Georgetown. He was not successful. After opening up what was long known as the "Old Coal Mine" he returned to Carbondale. Among the pupils of the school were: Mary Bennett, Lucy Bennett, Adele Bassett, Eliza Gilbert, Mary A. Godfrey, Josephine Godfrey, Mary E. Taylor, Jane Taylor, Mary E. Scribner, Evelyn Weed, Isabelle Weed, and others. The tuition fee was 25 cents per week.

In 1849 the Gilbert & Bennett Co., intending to build a factory, bought of Timothy Wakeman his sawmill, with the mill rights and land, building a large factory. They also bought the old church, remodeling it into a dwelling. In 1875, the old church was torn down to make room for new buildings. The writer of this article assisted in the work. Some of the timbers were found to be shattered by the explosion of 1838.

The old Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co. office stands on the site of the old church, and great factory buildings cover the old church lot. The busy hum of machinery is now heard in place of the hymns and prayers of the villagers of long years ago. Many descendants of the members of the Old Baptist Church live in Norwalk, Wilton, Weston, Redding and Georgetown, and may be interested in the story of the old church. The story of the other two churches in Old Georgetown will be told later.

*WILBUR F. THOMPSON, March 1, 1923, Danbury, Connecticut*

(3467) **The Old Pipe Organ of Georgetown** by *Wilbur F. Thompson*

In the choir gallery of the Methodist Church, Georgetown, there is a quaint old pipe organ. Its mahogany case is scratched and marred. Its gilded frontal pipes have lost their lustre. Its solid ivory keys, worn by the touch of many players' fingers, are silent. This old organ standing silent and alone awaiting the "touch of a vanished hand" has a history which may be of interest to many readers of *The Hour*.

Three-quarters of a century ago [about 1840] Georgetown was a quiet little hamlet of some 200 persons, all of whom were descended from the 'old stock' who settled our state. The coming of anyone from outside our state was an unusual occurrence. And when it was known that Daniel Wakeman had sold his homestead to a Scotchman named Alexander McDougall, there was great curiosity to know what the "furriner" looked like. The Daniel Wakeman house stood (and is still standing) on the west side of the Danbury and Norwalk Turnpike, at the top of the long hill that was known as Burr's Hill. (It is the hill north of the home of Mrs. Nathan Perry.) In due time the household goods of the McDougalls arrived, brought from New York to Norwalk by boat and from Norwalk to the new home by teams. On one of the loads of goods was a great piece of furniture carefully boxed. The villagers thought it was a "highboy."

The goods were soon unloaded and Alexander McDougall and wife were settled in their new home. Soon after persons passing the house heard strains of sweet music, the like of which was never heard in Georgetown before. Then it became known that the great box contained a pipe organ, a new kind of instrument. The only instruments of music in the village at that time were fifes, drums, and fiddles. Edwin Gilbert and John O. St. John each had a bass viol, which they played in the Methodist Protestant choir.

McDougall was a fine organist, and on pleasant summer evenings the passers-by stopped to listen as he played old Scotch airs - "Scots Whom Bruce Had Often Led," "Annie Laurie," "Come O'er the Heather," etc. Later the singers of the village were invited to the McDougall home to have a "sing." This was the first musicale ever held in Georgetown, but not the last, for the village has always been noted for its good singers. Following are the names of many of the singers among the residents at that time: Sturges Bennett and wife Charlotte, Aaron Bennett and wife Mary, known as the "sweet singer" (the writer's grandparents,) Samuel

Main and wife Marriette, John Taylor and wife Hannah, Aaron Lockwood, Joseph Lockwood, James Lobdell, Eiwin Gilbert, John O. St. John, Hiram St. John, Aaron Jelliff, Sr., Silas Hull, Orrin Jennings, William and George Nichols, William and James Cargill, Sarah Morgan, Eliza Hull, Polly Osborn, Harriet Nichols, Sally Ann Nichols, Mary Gregory (married Aaron Osborn.) One who remembers back 75 years says that when the singers met at the McDougall home, the roadway and dooryard were filled with eager listeners.

Years passed on and the old organist sold the homestead to Aaron Osborn and built a home on the mountain east of the Ridgefield Station (Branchville) where he lived in the early sixties. His widow, wishing to dispose of the old organ, asked a friend, John Fayerweather, to find a buyer. It was sold to Sherman Fitch of Wilton, who placed it in his home.

Fifty-five years ago [1860-1865] very few of the churches had musical instruments, depending altogether on vocal music in the church services. The Methodist Church, Georgetown, had a good choir led by James Lobdell until he went to the front in 1862 with the 23rd Regiment. John Fayerweather was the next leader. In those days the leader with a "pitch pipe" or "tuning fork" would give the key saying "Do, me, sol, la - sing." This was called "raising the pitch of key." The singers did not always get the key.

The members of the choir at this time were Charles Albin, William Bennett and wife Caroline, Aaron H. Davis and wife Lucy, Cornelia Beers, Mary Thompson, Bertha Bennett, Hattie Bennett, Rosalie Jennings, Mary Esther Jennings, Charles Jennings Sr., John Fayerweather, Stanley Mead, John Mead, Lewis Mead, Lottie Moore, Loie Fuller, Julia Fuller, Medora Batterson, Francis Jelliff. About this time a small melodian belonging to Bertha Bennett was placed in the choir gallery to "help out the singing." Miss Bennett was the musician. There was strong opposition to instrumental music by some of the older members of the church and the pastor had hard work to still the troubled waters.

#### (3453). THE OLD PIPE ORGAN OF GEORGETOWN (Cont.)

In 1864, Ephraim Fitch asked John Fayerweather to sell the organ for him he had bought of Widow McDougall. Fayerweather, thinking it would be a good chance for the Methodists to secure an organ, spoke to members of the choir, who favored buying it. As there was still strong opposition to instrumental music by some of the church members, it was not

thought best for the church society to buy the organ, but to let individual members secure it. The price to be paid was \$190. This amount was divided into five and ten dollar shares, which were taken by members and friends of the church. That is the way the organ was bought.

Aaron H. Davis, Charles Albin, Lewis Northrop, Jonathan Betts, Stanley Mead (the only one living) with one of the Gilbert & Bennett Co.'s teams, brought the organ from Wilton to the church doors and prepared to unload it. Two members of the church (who had opposed instrumental music) with arms extended stood in the church doors, saying "that music box shall not come in here."

Aaron H. Davis had the organ taken to his house where it remained for some time. The Rev. George L. Fuller, who was pastor at this time, called a church meeting, and it was voted to place the organ in the church, which was done; some of the members who had opposed it before, now voting in favor.

It was soon found out that the organ was a great help in public worship and the choir became one of the best in the conference. Following are the names of the musicians who played the old organ: Loie Fuller, daughter of Rev. George L. Fuller; Bertha Bennett, Lottie Moore, Hattie W. Bennett, John Fayerweather, Ezra P. Bennett, Dora G. Albin, William R. Bennett, Frederick Foster, Edith Davis Foster.

In 1896, a larger organ was bought and placed in the chancel of the church, which is still in use. This is the story of the "old organ," 150 years old, that has stood in the choir gallery of the Methodist Church over 54 years.<sup>26</sup> Of those who listened to its sweet, mellow tones 75 years ago, when "Uncle McDougall" played the music of the homeland he loved so well, only four are living. And of the choir of twenty voices, who in 1864 sang accompanied by the organ, only six are left.

*WILBUR F. THOMPSON, Sept. 16, 1918, Danbury, Connecticut*

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<sup>26</sup> The original old organ is now in the possession of the Wilton Historical Society.

## **CHRISTMAS IN OLD GEORGETOWN, 1862**

by Wilbur F. Thompson

Fifty-five years ago, our country was in the midst of a great war, not with foreign nations, as we are today, but with people of our own blood and kindred. From homes all over the Northland, men had gone forth to battle for freedom. Georgetown (with other communities of our State) was learning of the hardships of war. In 1861, many men of the village had enlisted and gone to the front, and on Nov. 14, 1862, Co. E, 23rd Regiment, had been mustered into service and was on its way to the south with the Regiment.

The fall and early winter were days of anxious waiting and suspense. The 25th of November had not been a day of Thanksgiving, for in many homes the chair at the head of the table had been vacant. This fact, with the scarcity of money and the high cost of living, made the outlook for a merry Christmas very doubtful.

It had been the custom of the two churches of the village, Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant, to hold Christmas services for the Sunday Schools connected with the churches. Some of the members of the churches thought it would be well to dispense with the Christmas services, while others did not want to give up the time-honored custom. It was voted to hold a union service for the children, in the Methodist Episcopal church. Great preparations were made. The woods were searched for ground pine and other evergreens, to trim the church. A great spruce tree was placed in one corner of the church, and a platform built out over the pulpit rail. The young people and children were rehearsed in the parts they were to take in the great event of the year.

On the evening of Dec. 24, the church was crowded with children and friends. The Christmas tree was brilliantly lit up with many candles and loaded with Christmas presents, cornucopias filled with candy, bags of popcorn, nuts and raisins. After prayer by the Rev. Samuel Keeler, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the exercises of the evening commenced. Let us look over the old program and see if there are any names of those we knew long years ago on it.

### **Christmas Entertainment**

By  
**The Georgetown Sunday Schools**

In the M. E. Church

Dec. 24th, 1862

**-Programme - Part First**

**1 - Prayer**

**2 - Singing: We Come with Songs to Greet You - By the Schools**

**3 - Address: The Advent of Christ - Master C. Lester Bennett**

**4 - Chorus - When the Day with Rosy Light - By the Schools**

**5 - Dialogue: Dress and. Devotion - Misses Sarah Jane Quick, Malvina B. Osborn, Rosalie N. Jennings.**

**6 - Solo and Chorus: Miss Alice St. John and the Young Ladies' Chorus**

**7 - Dialogue: Joseph and. His Brethren**

**Characters:**

**Joseph - Oscar Davey**

**Ruben - Ezra P. Bennett**

**Simeon - Charles Jelliff**

**Levi - C. Lester Bennett**

**Judah - Edmund S. Osborn**

**Issachar - George W. Webb**

**Zebulon - Eli G. Main**

**Dan - Charles Lewis**

**Napthali - Wilbur Jennings**

**Gad - George Godfrey**

**Ashur - Charles Gedney**

**Potipher - LeRoy Adams**

**Attendants -Willie E. Csborn, Willie R. Bennett, Willie H. Osborn**

**8 - Song: Monitor and. Merrimac - Sidney A. Jennings, The Infant Drummer**

**9 - Dialogue: Cold Water and Fire Water - Masters C. Lester Bennett and Charles Jelliff**

- 10 - Song: The Blue Birds' Temperance Song - Misses Nettie Main and Alice Batterson**
- 11 - Recitation: A Child's Thoughts on God - Miss Allie Batterson**
- 12 - Song: I Want to Be an Angel - by the infant classes**
- 13 - Recitation: The Rose - Miss Susie Webb**
- 14 - Recitation: The Hope of our Country, Master Charles Nichols**
- 15 - Recitation: The Child's Lament for his Mother - Master Willie R. Bennett**
- 16 - Recitation: A Visit from St. Nicholas - Master Clarence Keeler**

### **Part Second**

- 17 - Recitation: There None Shall be Missing - Miss Emma A. Keeler**
- 18 - Dialogue: A Mother's Lament and the Child's Reply - Misses Cornelia A. Main and Isadore Osborn**
- 19 - Recitation: The Widow of Nain, Miss Augusta A. Lobdell**
- 20 - Singing: Zion's Pilgrim - by the schools**
- 21 - Recitation: The Flag of our Union - Master C. Lester Bennett**
- 22 - Chorus: The Dear Old. Flag - by the Young Ladies' Chorus**
- 23 - Dialogue: The Rainbow**
- Red — Miss Ettie N. Bennett**
- Green - Miss Mary Godfrey**
- Orange - Miss Carrie Jelliff**
- Yellow - Miss Huldah Main**
- Blue - Miss Della Olmstead**
- Indigo - Miss Helen L. Keeler**
- Violet - Miss Nettie Main**
- 24 - Recitation: A Dream - Miss Frances Jelliff**
- 25 - Song: What is Home Without a Mother? - Misses Addie Hurlbutt and Etta N. Bennett**
- 26 - Recitation: Sun, Moon and Stars - Merwin B. Keeler**
- 27 - Dialogue: John Hasty and Peter Quiet - Masters Edmond. S. Osborn and. Willie H.**

**Osborn**

**28 - Solo: Christmas Tree - Miss Cornelia Main**

**29 - Distribution of Gifts**

**30 - Closing Chorus: Merry Christmas - by the schools**

**Exercises commence at 6 and 1/2 o'clock. Admission, 10 cents.**

The Christmas entertainment was a great success, and was remembered for many years. Fifty-five years have come and gone since that memorable Christmas Eve. Many of those who were present have passed away. Those who are still living (residents of Georgetown, Wilton, Norwalk, Stamford, Westport, Bridgeport and Danbury) may take pleasure in looking over the old program again, bringing back memories of the past.

The Methodist Protestant Church (Miller's Hall) later became the Congregational Church of Georgetown. In 1862 the Rev. N. A. Rude was pastor.

WILBUR F. THOMPSON

Dec. 24, 1917 Danbury, Connecticut

## THE OLD TORY HOUSE, GEORGETOWN

by Wilbur F. Thompson

One hundred and forty-five years ago our country was in the midst of a great war, fighting for freedom from England's tyranny. In our state every effort was being made by patriots to aid in the fight for liberty. From the town of Redding, 133 men served in the American army during the war. Following are the names of many from the section now known as Georgetown and Boston district in Redding who were in the American Army: Seth Andrews, Jonathan Andrews, Joel Barlow, Samuel Barlow, Ezra Bates, Justus Bates, Jeremiah Batt erson, Daniel Bennett, John Byington, Gershorn Coley, James Coley, Nathan Coley, Timothy Foster, Captain John Gray, Ezra Hall, Zalmon Hall, John Mallory, Daniel Mallory, Joel Merchant, John Merchant, Joseph Morgan, David Osborn, Abraham Parsons, Daniel Parsons, Timothy Parsons, George Perry, Isaac Perry, Isaac Platt, Ezekial Wain, Ezekial Sanford, Jeremiah Rumsey, Thomas Sherwood., Thomas Warrups (the noted Indian Scout.)

Joel Barlow was prominent in national affairs. From 1779 to 1783 he was chaplain in the American Army. In 1795 President Washington appointed. him consul to Algiers. In 1811 President Madison appointed him Minister to France. He died in Poland Dec. 26, 1812. The Barlow home was in Boston district. It was near to where the Bradley Hill house now stands.<sup>27</sup>

There were many who were not in sympathy with the American cause, but gave aid and allegiance to England. They were called Loy alists or Tories. Redding in the early years of the war was a hotbed of Toryism, and scattered through the town were many families who gave aid to British spies and plotters against the young republic. As a rule the Loyalists were persons of wealth and culture. Many were leaders in the communities where they lived. At the outbreak of the war, a Loyalist Association was formed in Redding, pledging alleg iance to King George and Great Britain, drawing up a set of resolu tions to that effect. Of the signers, 73 in number, 42 were freeholders (taxpayers) in the town. The names of these sympathizers and Loyalists were published by the Committee of Safety. Many were imp risoned and fined.

Following are the names of those who lived in what is now Georgetown and Boston

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<sup>27</sup> Today owned by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Clark

district in Redding who were known to be Loyalists: Nathaniel Barlow, Shubael Bennett, Stephen Betts, Ezekial Hill, James Gray [two Grays - senior and junior,] Enos Leo, John Lee, William Lee, Seth Hull, Ephraim Meeker, John Mallory, Jonathan Mallory, Timothy Platt, Nehemiah St. John, Amos Morgan, Eleazer Olmstead and others.

In 1758 James Morgan bought land and built a house that stood where the Hiram St. John house now stands in Georgetown. Enos and John Lee, who lived in the Boston district, were arrested, sentenced and confined with others for giving aid to the enemy. On Feb. 10, 1777, the two Lees were permitted to return home after giving bonds for their good behavior. The estates of many were confiscated and sold, the owners being in the service of the enemy. Many Tories were fined for refusing to perform military duty. The encampment of a brigade of American soldiers in Redding [Putnam Park] had a quieting effect on the Tory element in Redding and Newtown, and whatever aid was given to British spies was done secretly. In some Tory homes were hiding places for spies and plunder. One of these houses is still standing in Georgetown. If its walls could speak, they could tell strange and exciting stories of the stirring days of long ago. On March 10, 1756, Solomon Wood of Norwalk sold to Noah St. John 1st, of Ridgefield, 50 acres of land lying in the section now known as Georgetown. He built a log house and moved his family from Ridgefield.

In 1760 he built a house for his son Nehemiah, who had married Ruth Wheeler. They were living in this house when the War of the Revolution broke out. Tradition states that the St. Johns, with the exception of Nehemiah, were loyal to the American cause. His wife Ruth was a Tory and aided the British, hiding spies and Tories in her home. On the north side of the house a small addition had been built on - called in those days a leanto or linty. Under this room was a shallow cellar, the cellar bottom being about five feet from the floor of the room above. This was separate from the main cellar and was entered through a secret opening in the cellar wall. It was in this hiding place that spies and Tories found refuge when on their way to British headquarters. It was by this method the British were kept posted on the plans of the American army. On the day the British landed at Compo to march on Danbury, Ruth St. John said to her neighbors, "The British are going to burn the military stores in Danbury and you rebels will catch it now." Many of her neighbors' husbands were in Danbury guarding the military supplies stored there, and fought in the Battle of Ridgefield.

After the close of the war, many Tories were driven into exile, some settling on lands given them by the British government in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Many families are living there today having good old Redding names. After the close of the war, Nehemiah St. John traded his house and farm in Georgetown for a farm in Vermont, moving there - the owner of the Vermont farm moving into the St. John place. The new owner's name was Matthew Gregory 1st. In this house Matthew Gregory 2nd, was born in 1791, and lived there until his death in 1881. He had three children; Minot, Charles and Mary Eliza.

The entrance to the old "Tory hole" was closed by Matthew Gregory in 1845. The house was long years ago known as the "Old Tory House" and the secret cellar was called the "Old Tory Hole." The mothers of long ago would say to their children, "If you don't mind, the Tories will get you." And the children of many years ago, on their way to school, would be very quiet in passing by the old house, thinking the Tories would come out and get them. The writer was one of the school children.

The Patriots, Loyalists and Tories have long since departed, but the "Old Tory House" still remains, a well-preserved relic of old Colonial days. And the "Old Tory Hole" is still under the linty.

Noah St. John's daughter, Abigail, married Isaac Rumsey; their son, Jeremiah, was in the American army in the War of the Revolution. The Rumseys were the first settlers of Georgetown. In 1721 Robert Rumsey of Fairfield bought of John Applegate a large tract of land in the section now known as Georgetown. It was known as the "Applegate Long Lots." In 1724 he willed it to his three sons, Robert, Benjamin, and Isaac, who built homes on the tract. One house stood near where the Nathan Perry house now stands. Another was on the hill in front of where the Aaron Osborn house now stands. The third house was a short distance from where the Gilbert Agricultural Farm now stands.

Justus Bates, who served in the war, was father of Walker Bates, who lived in Boston district. Joseph Morgan was the grandfather of William Morgan (known as Captain Morgan) who lived in Georgetown some years ago. Ezra Hull was the father of Aaron B. Hull, who was well known to the older residents of Georgetown. Ezekiel H. Sanford for many years kept the tavern in Boston district in the house now owned by E. A. Pinckney.

Thomas Warrups, a noted Indian scout under General Putnam, lived under the great overhanging rock one mile north of Georgetown. This great rock has at the base a grotto or recess large enough to shelter several people. It has long been known as "Warrups Rock." Warrups' grandfather, Chickens Warrups, was the original owner of what is now the town of Redding.

There are many pre-Revolutionary houses in Georgetown and vicinity. The oldest one is on the south side of the highway, opposite Connery's coal yard. It is not known when it was built; 75 years ago it was said to be over 100 years old. In 1820, it was the home of Benjamin Gilbert, one of the founders of the Gilbert & Bennett Co.

Fifty-five years ago there were old people living in George town who were born during or shortly after the War of the Revolution, and many of the incidents recorded in this article were told by them to their children. The articles on "Old Georgetown" are written from notes made for many years of sayings of old people - of historical facts and traditions handed down from generation to generation - and in this form may be preserved for future generations.

## THE OLD BOUNDARY ROCK, GEORGETOWN

There are three rocks of historic interest in Georgetown.

“Warrups Rock” - where the Indian chieftain Warrups had a wigwam over 200 years ago, and many years later his grandson Tom Warrups, the famous scout under General Putnam, had a shelter until removed to the Schaticoke Indian Reservation above New Milford. This rock is on the west side of the old road from Boston Corners to Branchville.

“Celebration Rock” - this rock or ledge is on the top of the hill east of the Waterman Bates place now owned by Mrs. Harriet Bates. After the close of the Revolutionary War the people living in the section now known as Georgetown held a meeting on the hill to celebrate the 4th of July. Having no cannon, holes were drilled in the rock, loaded with powder, and fired as salutes in honor of the great event. It was at this gathering that the village of Georgetown received the name. Prior to this meeting the valley and hillsides had many names: Osborntown, Honeyhill, St. Johns Corner, Sugar Hollow, Burrs Hill, Jack Street, etc. It was voted to name the hamlet Georgetown in honor of the local miller, whose name was George Abbott. Many years later Matthew Bennett who lived in the house now owned by his daughter, Mrs. Harriet Bates, cleaned out the holes in the rock, and fired salutes on the 4th of July.

“Boundary Rock” - this rock is on the east bank of the Norwalk River, about 150 feet south of the house now owned by Mrs. Harriet Bates. When the town of Fairfield was surveyed in 1645 this rock was the intersecting point of the north and west boundary lines, and later the lines between Fairfield and Norwalk met on this rock. In 1707, when the Town of Ridgefield was surveyed, it was found that the east and south lines met at this rock with those of Fairfield and Norwalk. On the rock are deeply cut three letters: on the east side F for Fairfield; on the south side N for Norwalk; on the west side R, for Ridgefield.

There was some dispute between Ridgefield and Norwalk about this boundary. Some years later it was moved one mile farther north, where it is now the bound between Wilton and Ridgefield. The boundary lines of Redding, Wilton and Weston now intersected on the rock. Let us read what the old record has to say about it - “Ye surveyors find that ye east and south boundary lines meet on a rock on ye banks of the Norwalk River, 20 rods north of ye Danbury Cart Path fording place. Ye bounds of Norwalk and Fairfield meet on said rock.”

This fording or crossing place of Old Indian Trail or Cart Path is under the long railroad bridge. The trail led up from tidewater into the Housatonic Valley. It was used by Indians living inland in their migrations to the salt water to collect and also the connecting link between the Indians who lived on the shores of the sound and those farther north. This custom was kept up for many years after the state was thickly settled. Years ago, old persons would tell of Indians passing through Georgetown from the Indian Reservation above New Milford to Calf Pasture beach. On returning the squaws and horses would be loaded down with strings of dried clams and other sea food. After the settlement of Danbury the old trail between Norwalk and Danbury was widened into a cart path, and for many years was the only roadway between the two places. Fifty years ago there were old people living in Georgetown who could follow the course or route of the Old Trail from Calf Pasture Beach, Norwalk, along the east side of the Norwalk River into Wilton, through Pimpewaug, into Georgetown, crossing the Norwalk River where the long railroad bridge now crosses it, up over the hill near where the Matthew Gregory house now stands, crossing the river again near the upper railroad bridge, crossing up into the mountain east of Branch ville, passing near Umpawaug Pond.

Above Umpawaug Pond the trail divided, one branch going over Long Ridge and the other passing west of Simpaug Pond. It was over this branch of the trail the eight families from Norwalk passed in 1684 to found the new settlement of Danbury. Along the main trail were many branches or side trails running east and west. One of these was the trail passing Warrups Rock.

It is interesting to note that the route of the "Old Indian Trail," the "Cart Path," the "Danbury and Norwalk Turnpike," and the "Iron Trail" (D.& N. R. R.) are in close proximity to the Boundary Rock and run parallel with each other for several hundred feet to the south. The Boundary Rock is now covered with earth washed down from the highway.

WILBUR F. THOMPSON

Danbury, Connecticut

## **The Georgetown Post Office**

by Irene Baldwin

1965

No story of Georgetown would be complete without a history of its Postal Service, nor would it be complete without specific mention of the crossroads known at various times as "Little Boston Corners," "The Corners," "Gregory's," "Sanford's," and "Darling's Corners." Since Redding's first Post Office was located at this busy spot, their stories must be told, together.

In 1795 the "Norwalk and Danbury Turnpike Company was formed to repair the Danbury - Norwalk road which ran through Redding. It was the only road of consequence in the area and soon became the Post Road. About two miles north of Georgetown center at the junction of Umpawaug Road (then the turnpike) and Peaceable Street (then Whiskey Lane) and Goodsell Hill, there was a way station for the weary travelers. It was a busy crossroads and a cheerful place. Here was Darling's Tavern (site now owned by M. T. MacDonald) where it is said drivers of 10,000 vehicles a year traveling this highway paused to refresh themselves, their passengers and their horses. The tavern was, of course, a clearing house for all the news of the day.

Many other structures also were located in this Little Boston center. The town's first school stood where Mrs. James Driscoll now lives. The Michael Connery house (now Malloy) at that time housed Billy Comstock, who conducted a hat factory - the first in Redding - later operated by his son Androw, then by the Shelton Brothers and later by N. H. Lindly. There was also a general store, and a ring cider mill operated by Daniel Mallory who used oxen and horses for power. A short distance down Peaceable Street, Mallory ran a distillery where he converted hard cider into apple

jack - hence the name Whiskey Lane.

Turney Foot the Post Rider, and later Elias Bennett, carried in the newspapers and performed other small errands, so the place did not lack for news and information of events in other sections.

The residents, however, felt a real need for a Post Office and eventually, on December 22, 1810, Redding's first Post Office was established with Billy Comstock as Postmaster, keeping office in his house. Five years later, May 8, 1815, another Post Office was established at Redding Center. It was officially "Reading Town House" and William Sanford was Postmaster. This was a more central location for all of Redding. It was planned to drop the Little Boston office when the new one opened, but the road to the new one was so poor that it actually operated as a sort of substation of the Little Boston Post Office. Billy Comstock sent mail to the center Post Office once a week. This was to have been a temporary expedient, but the arrangement lasted nearly thirty years.

Eventually, the road must have been repaired, for the records show that the Little Boston Post Office was discontinued April 29, 1844. Its Postmasters and the dates of their appointments are as follows: William Comstock Dec. 29, 1810; Thomas Fanton June 20, 1818; Billy Comstock (reappointed) May 12, 1821; Joseph Darling (also Tavern keeper) Aug. 1, 1823. The last mentioned had a long tenure - until May 30, 1844.

Eight years later, on May 11, 1852, the Georgetown Post Office was established. Here follows a list of the Postmasters' names and dates of appointment: Silliman Godfrey May 11, 1852; Lloyd Seeley Aug. 27, 1853; Samuel Perry Aug. 26, 1862; James Corcoran April 20, 1864; George W. Banks Jan. 22, 1892; Thomas E. Flood Feb. 17, 1894; Charles Hubert Taylor Feb. 15, 1898; George F. Hammill May 20, 1913; William E. Hazen Jan. 21, 1922; F. Ragnar Bergfors, June 20, 1930; Julius H. Berglund May 23, 1935; Julius W. Johnson Nov. 1, 1937.

## **(4009) THE OLD TURNPIKE through Georgetown**

*by Wilbur F. Thompson, of Danbury.*

For many years after the first settlement of our state, the roadways connecting the towns were very poor. Many were mere "bridle paths," others were Indian Trails widened into "Cart Paths." One of these was the Indian Trail leading up from the Sound, at what is now known as Calf Pasture Beach, through the section now known as Georgetown, into what is now the city of Danbury. It was over this trail that the eight families left Norwalk in 1684, to found the new town of Danbury. And for many years this trail, widened into a cart path, was the only connecting link between the two places. When the section now known as the town of Ridgefield was purchased from the Indians in 1707, the south and east boundary lines intersected on a rock on the bank of the Norwalk River. The record states that "The south and east boundary lines meet on the rock on the banks of the Norwalk River 20 rods north of the Danbury and Norwalk Cart Path fording place," showing that it was a cart path at that date. This rock is about 175 feet south of the Waterman Bates house (now owned by Mrs. Harriet Bates) in Georgetown. On the rock are deeply cut three letters: F. for Fairfield, N. for Norwalk, R. for Ridgefield. The boundary lines of these towns intersected on this rock. The boundary line between Norwalk and Ridgefield was disputed by Norwalk and years later was moved one mile north, where it remains the boundary between Ridgefield and Wilton. The old rock is now the intersecting bound of the towns of Wilton, Redding and Weston. Anyone measuring 20 rods south along the river will find that the old "Fording Place" is under the long railroad bridge (south section).

As the town of Danbury grew, the need of a better means of communication became apparent. A survey was made and a new highway was opened up. Passing on the east side of Simpaug Pond (Bethel,) up over the Umpawaug Hill, Redding, through what is now Boston district and Georgetown, and on to Norwalk. The right of way was six rods wide. It was known as the great road from Danbury to Norwalk. In 1723 Nathan Gould (Gould) and Peter Burr of the town of Fairfield sold to Samuel Couch and Thomas Nash, of the same town, one hundred acres of land in the Parish of Redding, town of Fairfield, "said land lying on both sides of the great road, that leads from Norwalke to Danbury," showing that the road was in use at that date.

In 1792 the town of Redding voted to reduce the width of the Danbury and Norwalk road, in Redding, to four rods.

Near where the house long owned by Aaron Osborn now stands (in Georgetown) a road branched out from the Danbury and Norwalk road, passing up over the hill [today the Blueberry Hill area] back of where the Perry houses now stand, coming out into what was known as Osborntown. It was called the Danbury and “Saugatuck” Turnpike and connected Danbury with Saug atuck (Westport.) Fifty years ago the old roadway over the hill could be traced by deep ruts worn in the rocky roadbed by the heavy cart wheels that had passed over it for many years. The first store in Georgetown stood near where the old road branched off from the Danbury and Norwalk road. The store was kept by a man named Burr, and the long hill south on the highway was called Burr’s Hill.

On the “Hog Ridge” east of this point, one of the houses built by the Rumseys (in 1735) stood. Some of the old apple trees planted at that date are still living. [It is not known if this is so today.] Farther south on the Danbury and Norwalk road, near where the house long owned by Henry Olmstead now stands, the road ran up over the hill through the woods, coming out on the flat below, where the Glenburgh Mills, now no more, stand. In 1795, a company was incorporated for the purpose of “making and keeping in repair the great road from Danbury to Norwalk - from Simpaug Brook, Bethel, to Belden’s Bridge, Norwalk (now in Wilton) and to erect gates and collect tolls for the maintenance of the same.” Toll gates were erected at intervals along the road. One was north of where Connery’s store now stands in Georgetown.

The General Assembly in October, 1795 granted the petition of Eliphalet Lockwood of Norwalk and Timothy Taylor of Danbury to repair the Danbury-Norwalk road which ran through Redding. The Assembly set up a corporation to run the turnpike and collect tolls. In December this “Norwalk and Danbury Turnpike Company” met at the home of Ezekiel Sanford in Redding, “on said road,” to set up the necessary rules and regulations so that they could act as a corporation.

The General Assembly authorized the proprietors to collect the following tolls:

<i>Every travelling or pleasure 4-wheeled carriage</i>	<i>25 cents</i>
<i>Every chaise chair or sulky</i>	<i>12 cents</i>
<i>Every loaded cart or sled</i>	<i>8 cents</i>

<i>Empty cart or sled.</i>	<i>4 cents</i>
<i>Loaded waggon</i>	<i>6 cents 2 mills</i>
<i>Empty waggon</i>	<i>3 cents</i>
<i>Horses, cattle and mules in droves, each</i>	<i>2 cents</i>
<i>Pleasure, travelling or loaded sleys, each</i>	<i>6 cents 2 mills</i>
<i>Empty sleys</i>	<i>3 cents</i>
<i>Each man and horse</i>	<i>4 cents</i>
<i>Each sheep and hog</i>	<i>1 cent</i>

The Assembly further provided. that the following should he exempt from payment:

*Persons travelling on the Lord's Day and other public days to attend public worship.*

*Persons travelling to attend Society or Town and Freeman's meetings and Funerals, and*

*Farmers in the neighborhood of said Turnpike passing through the same to attend their farming business...*

[The company lost its privilege of collecting tolls, probably because of financial problems, in 1802. It received permission to re new collections when the road was repaired.]

A few years later than 1795 a meeting of the stockholders of the Danbury and Norwalk Turnpike was called, to meet at the tavern of Benjamin Gregory, Redding, Boston district (now owned by E. A. Pinck ney) for the purpose of petitioning the General Assembly "to grant the company power to extend the Turnpike from Belden's Bridge to the Great Bridge, at the head of Norwalk Harbor." The petition was not granted.

This Turnpike was part of the Post Road from New York to Hartford, and during the War of 1812, the stage coaches from New York to Hartford ran over this route. On South Street, Danbury, there is an old mile stone bearing the date of 1787, "68 miles to New York, 67 miles to Hartford." 85 years ago the Turnpike was a busy thoroughfare, great canvas-topped "goods" or freight wagons were continually passing north or south loaded with freight. Going north to Bethel and Danbury, loaded with fur, feather, dry and wet goods, cattle horns and tortoise shell for comb-making, etc. Going south with the finished product of the shops: hats, boots, combs and general produce, to be shipped from the docks at Norwalk and Westport. The freight rate was \$5 per ton from Danbury to Norwalk and Westport docks. The driver's seat in

the freight wagons was broad and roomy, accommodating three or four passengers, and was always filled. On the Turnpike could be seen slow-moving ox carts loaded with farmers' produce. Horse-back riding was the principal method of travel and many horsemen passed up and down the old Turnpike, women riding on side saddle or pillion. The Danbury and Norwalk stage coach made daily trips; the fare from Danbury to Norwalk was \$1 and from Georgetown was 50 cents. The stage left Danbury at 2 A.M. (morning) and arrived in Norwalk in time for the passengers to take the steamboat for New York the same morning.

For many years Boston Corners, Georgetown [see Map II] (then called Darling's Corners) was the place where the horses were changed and fresh horses put on. The first Post Office in Redding was in Boston district in the house now owned by Michael Connery [today - T. Malloy] and the house now owned by E. A. Pinckney [today - M. T. MacDonald] was known as Darling's Tavern. A stage coach ran from Redding to meet the Danbury and Norwalk stage. Later the horses were changed in Georgetown at Godfrey's store. This store was near the house (now owned by the G. & B. Mfg. Co.) long known as the Dr. Seely house and the horses were kept in the barn that stood north of the house (then owned by Silliman Godfrey.) John Collins (father of Mrs. Azor Hull of Danbury) lived in the Godfrey house and was a stage coach driver. Arthur Hull and A. Whitlock were drivers. The horses were reshod at the Blacksmith Shop of Silas Hull, which stood on the east side of the road, near the Old Red Mill. The stage coach line was owned for many years by Hiram Barnes. He ran two four horse coaches and carried many passengers. After the Danbury and Norwalk R.R. was built in 1852, the traffic on the old Turnpike grew smaller. The great freight wagons and stage coaches were taken off and many who had travelled on horseback took the railway cars. Miss Sarah Coley [b. Dec. 9, 1827, d. July 1928] is probably the only person now living on the old Turnpike who remembers the old stage coach of 80 or 85 years ago. She is living in the house [now owned by D. Mecozzi] she was born in 92 years ago, in Georgetown.

*Wilbur F. Thompson, Nov. 9, 1920*

## THE IRON TRAIL THROUGH GEORGETOWN

In two preceding articles in this column, the story was told of the methods of communication in the early days between Danbury and Norwalk. First the "Old Indian Trail," [unfortunately, this article has not been located] over which the eight families from Norwalk traveled in 1684 into the wilderness to found the new settlement of Danbury. This trail, widened into a cart path, was for many years the only traveled way between the two towns. Later the "old Danbury and Norwalk Turnpike" was opened up, passing through Bethel, down over the Umpawaug hills, through what is now the village of Georgetown, through Pimpewaug (Cannondale) to Norwalk. Many years later another road was opened up. This was known as the "Sugar Hollow Turnpike," starting at Belden's Bridge, Norwalk (now in Wilton) on the west side of the Norwalk River, up through Georgetown and the Sugar Hollow Valley, along the course of the river, through the town of Ridgefield, into the western side of Danbury. This is now [Route 7] the state road from Danbury to Norwalk.

As the towns grew and the intervening section became thickly settled, the "Old Turnpike" became a congested thoroughfare. The writer's grandfather, Aaron Bennett, b. 1810, said, in his boyhood days (1818) there was an unending procession of great canvas-topped freight wagons, stage coaches, slow-moving ox carts. Travelers on horseback and on "Shanks Mares" (pedestrians) passing both ways night and day. At about this date the Sugar Hollow Turnpike was opened up.

Soon the demand for a better means of transportation began to make itself felt. In 1825 a survey was made for a canal from Danbury to tidewater at Westport. From Danbury, through Bethel to the Saugatuck River in Redding, following the course of the stream [through Weston] to tidewater. This project was given up when it was found that Danbury was 350 feet above sea level. In 1835 there were two surveys made for a railroad from Danbury to Tidewater. One followed the old canal survey to Westport. The other survey was along the line of the present D. & N. R. R. In 1835 it was found that over 8,000 tons of freight was carried in freight wagons at \$5 per ton, and 10,000 passengers were carried by stage coaches to and from Danbury. The fare was 75 cents to Norwalk and 1,000 passengers from the section between Danbury and Norwalk, fare charged was 50 cents. This was the traffic to and from Danbury for

the year 1834. The first estimate was for a horse railway, between the rails there was to be a plank roadway or horse path. But nothing was done until 1850, when the contract was let to Beard, Church & Co. to build and equip a steam railroad. John Beard was a resident of Danbury. These contractors sublet sections of the work to other firms. The section between what is now Cannondale and Topstone was known as the Georgetown section. The first work done in this section was in the deep rock cut known as "Couches Cut" between Branchville and Topstone. Cannon & Fields was one of the firms who had a contract to do the grading on the Georgetown section; Charles Cannon of Wilton and Frank Fields of Croton Fall, N. Y. Fields had finished a contract on the Harlem R. R. and came equipped to do the work. The surveyors for the Georgetown section were Aaron B. Whitlock of Croton Falls, N. Y., and Jebediah I. Wanzer of Pawling, N. Y. They were assisted by a young man, John W. Bacon, who later became superintendent of the D. & N. R. R. They boarded with Aaron Bennett, who lived in the old house still standing, east of Connery's coal yard in Georgetown. The boarding house for the men employed on the section stood north of the Methodist Protestant Church (now Miller's Hall) [gone now.]

Following are names of some of the men employed on the section; Fore man, Austin Walbridge, who later was engineer on the road for many years; Blacksmith, Turney Stevens; Bridgebuilders, William Bedient, Steven Bedient, John Campbell; Stone Workers, William Avaunt, Waterman Bates, Alexander McDougal, Harden Knapp. Knapp was foreman of the stone gang. The Norwalk end of the road was finished first, and a train ran over that section carrying rails and supplies as far as the road was built. The engineer was George Tucker.

Work on the road progressed and, on March 1, 1852, the first train from Norwalk to Danbury went through. George Tucker was engineer and Harvey Smith conductor. Above Redding Station the ties and rails were placed on frozen ground. The equipment of the new road was three engines, four first-class and two second-class passenger cars, eight box and sixteen platform cars, and three hand cars. Two trains were run each way daily after the road was completed.

The first station agent in Georgetown was Silliman Godfrey, who was also Postmaster. The next agent was Dr. Lloyd Seeley, later Burr Bennett, and for many years James Corcoran. The old Railway station was burned many years ago. It was a two-story building. In the first

story was the Railway Station, Post Office and store kept by Silliman Godfrey. On the second floor was a large hall used for various purposes. In 1853 it was the lodge room of Fraternal Division, No. 79, Sons of Temperance. In the later fifties, it was occupied by Fanton's shirt factory. In 1862 it was the Armory of Co. E, 23rd Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers, who were mustered into service in the Fall of 1862. Later it was used by the Gilbert & Bennett Co. for a sieve shop.

Among those who were employed in building the Georgetown section of the D. & N. R. there were many who settled in that vicinity. William Avaunt, Waterman Bates, John Bates, George Gould, Thomas Granville, Richard Higgins, Patrick Maloney, Larry Fox, Alexander McDougal, Thomas Pryor, John Rady, Billy Spain, George Tilly, Frank Welch, Charles Vaughn, Michael Vaughn and others. Edson Smith ran a stage coach from Ridgefield station (Branchville) to Ridgefield. Later he was for many years conductor of the D. & N. Rail Road.

The "Old Indian Trail," "The Old Danbury Turnpike," and "The Iron Trail" tell of the progress in the methods of transportation between Danbury and Norwalk. And now the state road is the up-to-date method for quickness and dispatch, and is taking care of the ever-increasing traffic.

(2,825)

## THE OLD POST RIDER.

by Wilbur F. Thompson

Years ago, long before the advent of railways, and other modes of quick communication, when most of the wheeled vehicles were ox carts, and many of the roads were cart paths, the Post Rider was a man of importance in our rural communities, keeping them in touch with the larger towns of our State, traveling on horseback, with saddle bags well filled and often with one or two pack horses loaded with the smaller products of the farms - butter, cheese, honey, beeswax, home spun woolen and linen cloth, yarn, flax, wool, etc., taking them to the larger towns - selling them, bringing back dyestuffs, calicos, needles, pins and other articles used in the rural homes of that day. Delivering the weekly newspaper and letters. The few post offices were in the larger towns, and the Post Rider carried and posted the few letters sent on those early days. People in those days did not have as much to write about as we do.

Elias Bennett 2nd, the subject of this sketch, was born in Fairfield, Dec. 25, 1778. His parents, Elias and Anna (Crossman) Bennnett, were descendants of the early settlers of Fairfield. His father, a soldier in the War of the Revolution, was in the Battle of Ridgefield and later in the siege of N. Y. City.

Young Elias attended the schools of his day, fitting himself to become a teacher. The first school he taught was the Cross Highway School, Fairfield, now in the town of Westport. After teaching there he went to Georgetown and in 1800 commenced to teach in the Boston district school. While teaching there he married Mary, the daughter of Thaddeus Perry, who lived on the road south of what is now called Goodsell's Hill. Soon after, he built a home west of the Perry house. Here his five sons were born: Sturges (who years later was one of the founders of the Gilbert & Bennett Co. of Georgetown,) Aaron, Burr, William, and Samuel, and a daughter, Mary. He taught the Boston school for twelve years. While teaching there, his health failed. In looking around for some other employment, he learned that Turney Foot, Post Rider, who supplied the people with the weekly newspapers, wanted to sell out his route. He purchased it, and in 1812 entered on his duties as Post Rider.

The war between Great Britain and this country created a great demand for the weekly

paper, and the Post Rider's arrival was looked forward to with great interest. For over 33 years, he supplied the people of Redding, Weston, Georgetown and parts of Westport and Wilton with the weekly paper. Through heat and cold, rain and snow, he went over his route fifty miles every week, until his business grew so that his sons had to help him - one after another as they grew old enough, took part of his route until all of his sons had grown to manhood and had chosen other occupations, and old age compelled him to give up the business. The most popular paper in the early days of his post riding was the Bridgeport Farmer, published by Stiles Nichols. Next, the Norwalk Gazette, published by Nichols & Price, and the Bridgeport Advertiser, published by Hezekiah Ripley, and later the Bridgeport Standard. Of the 800 patrons he supplied with the weekly paper, over 400 took the Bridgeport Farmer. In looking over an old account book of the Post Rider, I find entries of many articles he furnished his customers. One charge to Joel Foster, who had a woolen mill at Nobbs Crook, Boston district in 1820, is for 3 pounds Guatemala indigo, 2 pounds Bengal indigo, 5 pounds oil vitrol and 5 pounds madder, and many other charges of the same nature, showing that he must have done quite a commission business.

I also find that the people of those good old days did not pay their bills any better than we do today. In one bill made out (but not sent) to a prominent resident of Wilton 85 years ago, for two years and one quarter of Norwalk Gazettes, he adds "Sir - Please send me what you owe me. I have a broken leg and need the money." When he gave up the business he had over \$2,000 on his books that people owed him. This was never collected. He often carried large sums of money and articles of value, always delivering to the owners in safety.

No doubt some of the residents of Georgetown and Weston remember the Post Rider known to many as Post Bennett. He was an upright Christian, but a man of few words. Years ago the Methodists held meetings at the homes of the Church members. These were called class meetings and everyone attending was expected to speak. One night the meeting was held at the home of Sturges Bennett. The old Post Rider was there, the leader asking those present to give their testimony, turned to him and said "Brother Bennett, can you tell us what the Lord has done for you?" He arose to his feet and said "I do not want to be quizzed." Thus closed the meeting.

*Wilbur F. Thompson, Danbury, Connecticut*

(2830)

## **THE OLD POST RIDER**

(Continued)

One hundred years ago there was in almost every house a loom for weaving cloth. The women of the homes wove the woolen and linen cloth used in those days. One day Post Bennett brought home from Bridgeport a quantity of what he called cotton yarn. He asked his wife if she could put a warp of it on her loom and weave him cloth for shirts. She wove the cloth and made it up into shirts and other articles of clothing. This was the first cotton cloth ever woven in this state.

The Perry family were all weavers - the first wire cloth made in this country was woven in Isaac Perry's shop (he was a brother-in-law of Post Bennett,) for Gilbert & Bennett Co. in 1836, on a cloth loom. Isaac Perry and his son George were both weavers. The shop stood back of his house now owned by Louis Miller [see Map II.] This was the beginning of the great wire cloth industry of the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co. of Georgetown.

In the year 1816, known as the year without a summer, the Post Rider wore his great coat all summer. The Perry and Bennett homes stood on the south slope of what was known as Zion's Hill, now known as Goodsell's Hill. Their land was originally part of the Drake and Applegatc long lots. It is now part of the Gilbert Agricultural School Farm.

[In 1906 Edwin Gilbert, a Georgetown philanthropist-industrialist, left to Storrs College (forerunner of University of Connecticut) his spacious farm lands of more than three hundred acres on the top of the hill overlooking the town (the eastern part of Georgetown). With it, he also left all his live stock, farm implements and tools. His will provided that this agricultural experimental station should be maintained and supported from the shares of capital stock of the Gilbert & Bennett Co., which he headed at the time of his death. Unfortunately, the distance from Storrs made the operation of the farm by the college impractical, and it was only operated as a school of instruction until 1909. The trustees of Storrs, Connecticut College, and University of Connecticut, successively, have found the property to be a white elephant on their hands. Steps were eventually taken in the 1930s to dissolve the trust. Today the state farm prop

erty is still intact, although the buildings have fallen into disrepair. *I. Baldwin, 1965]*

South of this was a great tract of woodland now known as the Den Woods. 100 years ago this was a wild section of country. Wild animals roamed through these woods. An Indian Trail or path ran through the woods, coming out onto what is now Godfrey Street, Weston. The Indians of long ago used this trail to go to Compo for seafood, and later it was used by the early settlers in that section. Post Rider Bennett often used this trail to go to Westport. One morning as he was riding through the woods, he felt something drop on the horse's back. Looking around he saw it was a panther (in olden times called a painter.) The horse gave a sudden start and the animal dropped off and slunk back into the woods.

The old Post Rider lived to see the stage coach and post riding replaced by railways. He lived to see his sons grow to manhood, honored and respected. He saw the infant industry of the Gilbert & Bennett Co., of which his son Sturges, was one of the founders, outgrow the little Red Shop by the toll gate, the Red Mill by the riverside and the large stone factory built in 1850, the site of which is now covered by the great buildings of the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Co. Living through three of his country's wars and well into the fourth, he passed away at the home of his son, Sturges Bennett, in 1863, 85 years old. He was laid away to rest in the old cemetery on Umpawaug Hill, which overlooks the hills and valleys he travelled over so many years.

Many incidents in this article were related by my mother, who is a granddaughter of Elias Bennett, the Post Rider. She remembers how he looked as he rode by on his white horse with well-filled saddle bags, leaving the weekly paper along his route.

*WILBUR F. THOMPSON, Danbury, Connecticut*

(3105)

## GEORGETOWN, CT., IN THE CIVIL WAR TIMES

by Wilbur F. Thompson

The purpose of this article is to let the younger generations know what part the people of Georgetown and vicinity (in 1861) had in the Great Civil War of long ago, on the Battle Front and at Home. Very few are living who took part in the war, and before many years elapse, none will be left to tell the story. By "vicinity" we mean Zion's Hill (Cannondale) and Nod in Wilton, Upper Parish in Weston, Boston and Diamond Hill in Redding, Ridgefield station (Branchville) in Ridgefield.

The Lincoln campaign in the fall of 1860 had been an exciting one for the residents of Georgetown and vicinity. A company of 65 men had been formed, called the Lincoln Guards, or "Wide Awakes." The uniform was a blue glazed military cape and cap. The equipment was a swing torch for burning oil. The company was drilled by David H. Miller, a veteran of a famous New York regiment. The drill room was the hall over the old railroad station. The officers were: Captain, David H. Miller; 1st Lieutenant, Samuel Perry; 2nd. Lieutenant, John W. Mead; orderly sergeant, John N. Main. The company had a fine drum corps. The members were Samuel Bennett, Charles Jennings, Lewis Bedient, Morris ("Moss") Jennings, Direll Chapman. In the torchlight parades in Norwalk, Danbury and other places, the fine marching and evolutions of the Georgetown company was noticeable. The campaign wound up with a grand torchlight parade in Georgetown. The houses were all brightly illuminated (with candles) and a great bonfire of tar barrels was built on the hill south of the Methodist church.

After the election of Lincoln, the community settled back into its usual quiet. In the spring of 1861, with the firing on and capture of Fort Sumpter, all was excitement again, and with Lincoln's first call for troops, several of Georgetown's young men enlisted. The first man to enlist was Andrew Nichols. He was a carpenter and learned the trade and worked with St. John Brothers. On the 19th of April, 1861, he enlisted in the Wooster Guards of Danbury and went to the front with the First Connecticut Regiment. He re-enlisted and served through the war; was killed in the battle of Dury's Bluff, May 15, 1864. He was engaged to be married to one of Georgetown's young women.

Nathan Couch and A. Byington went out with the First Conn. in 1861. On May 23, 1861, George W. Gould, Hiram Cobleigh, Eli Lobdell, Lewis Bedient and John N. Main went to the front with the Third Conn. Regiment. On Sept. 12, 1861, Edward Lahey enlisted in the Eighth Connecticut, with Charles M. Platt (Boston District.) On Nov. 12, 1861, George Lover enlisted in the 12th Connecticut Regiment. In 1862 a large number of men from Georgetown and vicinity enlisted in the 17th Connecticut Regiment. Leroy G. Osborn (son of Aaron,) was visiting in Ohio and enlisted in the 67th Ohio Regiment. Charles H. Albin enlisted in the 12th Connecticut Regiment and William F. Scribner in the 13th. Those who served in the 17th Connecticut were Charles A. Jennings, Waterman Bates, Francis Strong, Morris Jennings, David Bartram, George U. Banks, William Avaunt, Sylvester Albin, Augustus Pelham, Henry Albin, Silas Hull, Oscar Byington. Among those who enlisted in other regiments at later periods were Burr Mills, Nathan Perry, Eugene Parkerton, Henry Brown, Wesley Banks, Thomas Bedient, Sylvester Barrett. . . Early in 1862, a company was formed in Georgetown, known as the "Home Guards," for service in the state. The drill room and armory was in the hall over the old railroad station. Feb. 4th, 1862, a meeting was held to elect officers for the new company, known as Co. E, 8th Regiment, Home Guards. Following is the roster of the company: Captain, David H. Miller; 1st Lieutenant, Hiram St. John, 2nd. Lieutenant, George M. Godfrey; sergeants, John N. Main, James Corcoran, Lewis Northrop, David S. Bartram, Aaron O. Scribner; corporals, William D. Gilbert, Aaron H. Davis, Alonzo Dickson, Jeremiah Miller, Edward Thompson, Seth P. Bates, George U. Gould, Albert D. Sturges; privates, John W. Mead, Moses Comstock, James Lobdell, James F. Jelliff, Joseph Lockwood, Hezekiah B. Osborn, Henry Parsons, William H. Canfield., Henry Lee, Edward Banks, Minot Partrick, Charles A. Jennings, Edwin Gilbert, David E. Smith, Hiram Cobleigh, Samuel Main, Anton Stommel, George L. Dann, Charles Olmstead., Charles Albin, Fred D. Chapman, Henry Hohman, William B. Smith, William E. Brothwell, Azariah C. Meeker, Charles S. Gregory, Charles D. Meeker, Charles H. Downs, William Coley, Lorenzo Jones, Henry F. Burr, Obadiah Coleman, Charles H. Canfield, John L. Godfrey, Sylvester Albin. Some of these men had been in the service in 1861 and were looked on as veterans. The youngest men in the company were Hezekiah B. Osborn (18,) John W. Mead (19.) The oldest men were Hiram St. John (40,) Charles Olmstead (40,) Jonathan Betts (40,) Edward Thompson (42,) James Corcoran (40,)

William Coley (40.) The company drilled until August 8, 1862, when Lincoln called for 300,000 men to serve 9 months. The Georgetown company volunteered and was accepted. The company was recruited up to 108 men, and reported for duty at Camp Terry, New Haven. Some members were rejected on account of disability. Those passing examination were mustered in as Co. E, 23rd. Regiment, Conn. Volunteers, in September, 1862. At this time, Captain David H. Miller was appointed major of the 23rd. Regiment, and Lieut. George M. Godfrey was elected Captain of Co. E. Some of the members of Co. E had enlisted in the 17th Regiment.

As many of the families of those going into service were left in straitened circumstances, town meetings were held in Wilton, Weston and Redding, to vote bounties to men who had enlisted. On Aug. 23, 1862, a town meeting was called in Redding. The following voters from Georgetown were present: Edwin Gilbert, Sturges Bennett, Matthew Gregory, Edmund Hurlbutt, Eli G. Bennett, David H. Miller, Samuel Main Sr., Samuel Main Jr., John N. Main, William J. Gilbert, John O. St. John, William B. Smith, Burr Bennett, George and Charles Albin, George Coley, George Perry, Granville Perry and others. It was voted to pay a bounty of \$100 to members of Co. E who lived in the town of Redding, and to those who enlisted later. There was much opposition, one prominent resident of Redding (Lemuel Sanford) remarking that "There wasn't one of the men that would ever smell gunpowder." He was mistaken, as they were all at the front.

On August 23, 1862, a call was issued for a town meeting to be held in Wilton. Among those who signed the call were: George M. Godfrey, Aaron Bennett, Aaron H. Davis, George I. Hubbell, Wilkie Batterson, Charles Olmstead, Henry Olmstead, George I. Batterson, Azor Batterson, Elijah Parkerton, James Corcoran, Aaron Lee, Eli B. Godfrey, Andrew Partrick, George G. Nichols, John Olmstead, Edwin Burchard, Lewis Hurlbutt, living in Georgetown and vicinity. It was voted to pay a bounty of \$100 to all members of Co. E living in the town of Wilton.

A town meeting was held in Weston on or near the same date, for the same purpose. Those living in Georgetown who voted in Weston were: Edward Thompson, Jonathan Betts, William Albin, Lewis Northrop, Samuel Osborn, Gregory Osborn, Ezra Brown, Aaron Jelliff Sr., Aaron Jelliff Jr., Henry Hohman, Albert Lockwood, Edward Lahey. None of the men mentioned who voted in the three towns at that time, are living today.

(3158) GEORGETOWN IN CIVIL WAR TIMES (Continued).

Following are the names and ages of those who were in the 23rd Regiment, from Georgetown and vicinity: Major D. H. Miller, 31; Captain George M. Godfrey, 36; 1st Lieut. Hiram St. John, 40; 2nd Lieut. John N. Main, 21; 1st Sergt. Lewis Northrop, 28; Sergts. Seth P. Bates, 29; Aaron O. Scribner, 23; William D. Gilbert, 23; Aaron H. Davis, 28; Corporals Jerry R. Miller, 27; George W. Gould, 33; Albert D. Sturges, 21; Azariah E. Meeker, 24; Joseph R. Lockwood, 33; Hezekiah B. Osborn, 18; Charles E. Downs, 22; Elijah Betts, 22; Musicians Fred erick Chapman, 22; Samuel A. Main, 23; Wagoner Henry H. Lee, 24; Pri vates Andrew G. Armstrong, 22; Charles Albin, 34; William Allington, 18; Elias S. Andrews, 38; Edward Banks, 40; Henry W. Bates, 34; Chas. H. Bates, 28; Smith Bates, 29; Frederick Beers, 28; William P. Beers, 19; Rufus Beers, 32; William Beers, 39; Jonathan Betts, 40; Lemuel B. Benedict, 21; Peter W. Birdsall, 20; William E. Brothwell, 30; Daniel Brown, 26; William E. Brown, 18; Henry F. Burr, 38; Marcus V. Burr, 36; Aaron Burr, 18; William H. Canfield, 21; Ammi Carter, 24; Isaac Chak, 24; Hiram Cobleigh, 28; William Coley, 40; George H. Cole, 20; Moses Comstock, 24; George L. Dann, 26; Levi Dann, 22; James O'Donnell, 28; Benedict Eastwood., 25; William H. Fanton, 22; Charles A. Field, 21; Enoch Gilbert, 32; John L. Godfrey, 21; Samuel Gray, 26; Theodore Ham ilton, 20; Henry Hohman, 30; James F. Jelliff, 31; George Jennings, 30; Lorenzo Jones, 35; James Lobdell, 37; Albert Lockwood, 39; Charles Lockwood, 26; Charles D. Meeker, 20; Charles S. Meeker, 35; John M. Mead, 19; Charles Olmstead, 40; Elihu Osborn, 23; John Osborn, 21; William H. Perry, 22; Henry Parsons, 37; Henry B. Platt, 22; Sanford Platt, 20; Henry A. Raymond, 29; James Ryder, 20; Rufus K. Rowland, 18; John N. Seeley, 34; David E. Smith, 29; William B. Smith, 39; George E. Smith, 19; Anton Stommel, 33; Jacob St. John, 28; Isaac Thorp, 19; Albert N. Whitlock, 19; Augustus Winkler, 38.

Of these men, 43 were married and 44 unmarried. (After the rejection of some for disability and the enlistment of some into other regiments, the com pany numbered 86 men): Andrew Armstrong, William Allington, Elias Andrews, Elijah Betts, Henry W. Bates, Charles H. Bates, Smith Bates, Fred Beers, Rufus Beers, Wm. Beers, William P. Beers, Lemuel Benedict, Peter Birdsall, Dan. Brown, Wm. Brown, Henry F. Burr, Martin Burr, Aaron Burr,

Ammi Carter, Isaac Chase, Levi Dann, James O'Donnell, Benedict Eastwood, Wm. H. Fanton, Charles A. Field, Enoch H. Gilbert, Samuel Gray, Theodore Hamilton, George Jennings, Charles Lockwood, Elihu Osborn, John Osborn, Henry A. Raymond, Henry Platt, Sanford Platt, Rufus K. Rowland, John Seely, George E. Smith, Jacob St. John, Isaac Thorpe, Albert Whitlook, Augustus Winkler.

Of the 86 men who passed examination, 26 were from the town of Wilton, 36 from Redding, 20 from Weston, 2 from Ridgefield, 1 from Danbury and 1 from Norwalk. The occupations of the men were: farmers, 50; carpenters, 12; shoemakers, 5; Hatters, 2; wire weavers, 3; hair workers, 3; masons, 2; carriage makers, 2; painters, 2; teachers, 2; mechanics, 2; blacksmiths, 1 (H. B. Osborn).

The regiment remained at Camp Terry until Nov., 1862, when they were ordered to Camp Buckingham, Centreville, Long Island. On Nov. 14th, 1862, the regiment was mustered into the U. S. Service, and on Nov. 30th, Companies B, C, D, E, F, G, J and K sailed on the steamer "Che Kiang" for New Orleans. After a tempestuous voyage, arrived in safety.

Companies A, H, and I remained in New York under the command of Major David H. Miller, until Dec. 30, when they sailed on the steamer "Planter," which was wrecked on the Bahama Islands, Jan. 14, 1863. All on board were saved, and later the three companies joined their comrades in New Orleans.

Many members of Co. E and some of those who had enlisted in other companies had been members of the old "Wide-Awake" company in the Lincoln campaign of 1860. Many of these men became officers in different commands.

Among those who enlisted in different regiments in addition to those whose names have been given, there were Cyrus Gilbert (father of Ex-Mayor Gilbert of Danbury,) Henry Suple, Andrew Couch, Benjamin Banks, John Lockwood, Burr Lockwood, John DeForest, William Nichols, Charles O. Morgan, Edmund Godfrey. These names, with others that have been given, comprise most if not all of those who enlisted from Georgetown and the outlying districts. Company E was distinctively a home company, as every member but two lived in the section mentioned. The taking of 100 or more men from a population of not over 1,000 people did not leave many men of military age behind.

Leaving the soldiers on the battle front for a while, it will be interesting to learn what

the folks at home were doing in those trying days.

In 1861 the women of Georgetown and vicinity organized what was known as the Soldiers' Relief and Aid Society of Georgetown. It was a branch of the Norwalk Society and was the means of helping many soldiers at the front and needy families at home during the war. Mrs. Edwin Gilbert was president; Miss Hattie W. Bennett, secretary; Miss Annah St. John, treasurer. The Society met in the hall over Burr Bennett's store (years later the home of Cyrus Thomas) to plan and do work.

As almost every woman could knit in those days, this was an important feature of the work done, and hundreds of pairs of woolen socks, comforters, shirts, etc., were knit and sent to the boys at the front. Grandmother Olmstead of Nod, when in her 100th year, knit a pair of heavy woolen socks for General Winfield Scott. Mrs. Edwin Gilbert went to New York and presented them to the old general, receiving his thanks for the gift.

A few names are given of those living in Georgetown (in 1862) who were on various committees: Mrs. Edwin Gilbert, Mrs. Sturges Bennett, Mrs. Samuel Main Sr., Mrs. David H. Miller, Mrs. Jane Berry, Mrs. William B. Smith, Mrs. Burr Bennett, Mrs. Hiram St. John, Mrs. John O. St. John, Miss Annah St. John, Mrs. George Hubbell, Mrs. Gregory Osborn, Mrs. Aaron Osborn, Mrs. Aaron H. Davis, Mrs. Edward Thompson, Mrs. Aaron Bennett, Mrs. Jonathan Betts, Mrs. Lewis Northrop, Mrs. James Lobdell, Miss Sarah Coley, Mrs. George Albin, Mrs. Charles Albin, and many others.

Many of the young women were active in the work: Emma Hurlbutt, Mary Jane Griffiths, Alice St. John, Ida St. John, Dell Olmstead, Medora Batterson, Malvina Osborn, Mary Godfrey, Augusta Lobdell, Jennie Quick (Mrs. D. H. Van Hoosear,) Cornelia Main, Huldah Main, Rosalia Jennings, Ruth Jennings, Frances Jelliff, Adele Bennett, Hattie Bennett, Bertha Bennett, Jane Canfield, and others.

In 1862 the boys of Georgetown formed a company of Home Guards. The captain was Will Corcoran. The wooden guns were made by Aaron Osborn, and the bayonets were made out of sheet-iron by James Corcoran.

One of the first flags raised in Georgetown after the fall of Fort Sumpter floated from a pole in Samuel Main's front yard (now owned by Mrs. Nathan Perry.) The flag was home-made, the handiwork of Mrs. Kate Main and Mrs. Mary Thompson. As material was

scarce and high, a calico dress was used to make the red stripes and a sheet the white ones. The blue field was dyed with indigo, and the stars sewed on one side. It attracted a great deal of attention, and was stolen some weeks later.

On the 29th or 30th of August, 1862, a large flag was raised on the bell tower of the stone factory of the Gilbert & Bennett Co. This building had a flat roof, with a railing around it. Here the people assembled to take part in the ceremony. As Company E had gone to New Haven, there were very few men present. Dr. Lloyd Seeley made the address and there was speaking by Edwin Gilbert, Sturges Bennett and Samuel Main Sr. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Samuel Keeler, Pastor of the Methodist Church. Charles Jennings of the 17th Regiment, who was home on a furlough, played patriotic airs on his accordian. Sidney Jennings, the "Infant Drummer Boy," was present with his snare drum. The flag floated over the old stone factory for many years and was taken care of by Mrs. Sturges Bennett.

(A previous statement corrected - Andrew B. Nichols, the first man to enlist from Georgetown, married a resident of Weston.)

After the arrival of the 23rd regiment in New Orleans, it was under the command of General Banks and divided into battalions, guarding railroads, levees and supplies. Companies B of Danbury and E of Georgetown were sent to Camp Weitzel, La Fourche Crossing, an important point. While there, Captain George M. Godfrey was taken sick and died. April 23, 1863. Lieutenant Lewis Northrop was appointed Captain of Co. E. Learning that the rebel forces were approaching Camp Weitzel, Major D. H. Miller sent for reinforcements. On June 20 the camp was attacked by the rebels, under General Dick Taylor. A sharp engagement ensued and the rebels were defeated. Several of our men were wounded and Captain Frederick Starr of Co. B was killed. Hiram Cobleigh of Co. E was wounded. George Smith, a drummer boy in Co. B, killed a rebel officer with a stick of wood. This was witnessed by many of the Company E men.

Friendships formed at this time between the men of Companies E and B have lasted throughout the many years that have elapsed since the Civil War. The engagement was called the Battle of La Fourche Crossing. While Co. E was at Camp Weitzel, Aaron O. Scribner, a member of the company, was taken sick and died. The 23rd Regiment was in several skirmishes and on July 20 was ordered to New Orleans, and on Aug. 7 started for home going

by steamer up the Mississippi River to Cairo, Ill., arriving in New Haven Aug. 28, 1863, having been away from home one year.

The Regiment was mustered out Sept. 1, 1863. Great preparations had been made to welcome the Georgetown, Danbury and Bethel companies home at the Redding camp meeting grounds. Long tables were loaded with good things to eat, but few of the soldiers were there to enjoy them. Bailey's History of Danbury states that "only a few of the soldiers were present, as most of them were at New Haven waiting to get their pay and discharge papers, until late in the afternoon of that day." Charles Albin was the only member of Co. E present. But the good things intended for the soldiers were all eaten by those who had "never smelled gunpowder."

The train from New Haven carrying the soldiers did not get into South Norwalk until late that evening, and the train going to Danbury ran off the track below Norwalk Bridge. No one was hurt, but the soldiers were tired and hungry and many were sick. Major D. H. Miller sent to Danbury for another engine, and treated the men to hot coffee and sandwiches. Elias Osborn, of Co. B, Danbury, telling of the incident, says that the hot coffee put new life into the men, and they got busy and lifted the cars back onto the track. They never forgot the Major with his hot coffee and sandwiches. An engine was sent down from Danbury by Engineer E. Craig (now living in Danbury) and they left Norwalk about daylight next morning. There were many anxious people in Georgetown that night waiting for their loved ones to come home. Early in the morning the engine whistle sounded in the cut below Georgetown station, and everyone was waiting for the train to get in.

Those who are still living who saw the soldiers on the train that morning will never forget the sight - bearded, ragged and bronzed men, some shaking with fever and ague, others weak from sickness. The company formed and marched up the street past the old armory. Captain Lewis Northrop was in command. Wives were marching with husbands; sons and daughters were carrying fathers' knapsacks and muskets. At the head of the company marched two great negroes, George Washington and Ed Lewis (who had come from the south with the soldiers,) loaded down with knapsacks and muskets of men who were too weak to carry them. This was the home-coming of Company E.

Many of the men were sick for a long time with fever and ague or dysentery, while others seemed to be in the best of health and spirits. One man (Henry Parsons,) would never

sleep in a bed after he got home, preferring the floor.

But not all of those who went to the front returned home to their families. Following are the names of those who were killed or died from wounds or sickness, wounded, or captured: Charles H. Wells (lived with Elijah Parkerton,) Co. I, 12th Regiment, wounded, died Feb. 23, 1862; William F. Scribner, Co. H, 13th Regiment, wounded, died Feb. 23, 1862; Andrew Couch, Co. G, 17th Regiment, killed, May 2, 1863; William Avaunt, died April 23, 1863; Captain George N. Godfrey, Co. E, 23rd. Regiment, died April 23, 1863; Aaron O. Scribner, Co. E, 23rd Reg iment, died June 12, 1863; Frederick Sturges, Co. B, 13th Regiment, died Dec. 12, 1863; Andrew B. Nichols, Co. D, 7th Regiment, killed May 6, 1864; Wesley Banks, Co. E, 14th Regiment, wounded, died Feb. 12th, 1864; Sylvester Barrett, 2nd. Regiment, Artillery, died July 22, 1864.

Wounded: Charles A. Jennings, Co. G, 17th Regiment, wounded May 2, 1863; Hirarm Cobleigh, Co. E, 23rd Regiment, wounded June 20, 1863; Nathan Perry, 2nd Regiment, Artillery, wounded June 10, 1864.

Captured: Charles A. Jennings, Co. G, 17th Regiment, May 2, 1863; David Bartram, Co. G, 17th Regiment, July 3, 1863; Henry Albin, Co. H, 17th Regi ment, Aug. 10, 1864; Sylvester Albin, Co. H, 17th Regiment, Aug. 10, 1864.

Additional names of men who lived in Georgetown and vicinity and enlisted: Frederick Sturges, William Edgar Albin, Elisha Parkerton, James Gardner.

How the boys of fifty years ago would listen to the stories told by the returned soldiers. Waterman Bates, a sharp shooter in the Battle of Gettysburg, was the favorite of the boys. He would say: "The Cappen said, 'Boys, don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes.' And then we let the Johnny Rebs have it." Or listening to the stories of the voyage of the steamship "Che Kiang" where men prayed who never prayed before - never expecting to see land again. And many other interesting incidents. Peace was declared and Georgetown and vicinity settled back into the usual quiet life.

In 1875 a wave of patriotism again swept over the community. The young men of the village, learning that the Connecticut National Guard were going to the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876, were seized with a desire to fight for their country, and enlisted in (Captain Gilbert's) Co. A, 4th Regiment. The following enlisted: Lester Bennett, Ezra P. Bennett, William R.

Bennett, Abram Cole, William E. Godfrey, Gilson W. Jennings, John Kearns, Theodore Flood, Samuel J. Miller, William H. Osborn, William E. Osborn, Henry Taylor, Wilbur F. Thompson. The enlistment was for five years. As it was quite a task to go to Bethel every week to drill, permission was obtained to have a squad drill in Georgetown twice a month. Bennett's Hall was hired and Major D. H. Miller put the boys through the manual of arms, marching, etc., and soon they were as well drilled as the other members of the company. On Sept. 1st, 1876, the boys went to the Exposition, staying ten days, enjoying every minute, and returned home without the loss of a man.

Those days, with the annual encampments, were always remembered by the Georgetown boys. In 1877 John Hohman, Aaron Lockwood, and William Phillips enlisted in the company.

In 1879, the veterans of Co. E invited the 23rd Regiment to hold its annual reunion in Georgetown. The invitation was accepted. Great preparations were made to receive the veterans. A great tent was secured and erected on the lot where the Catholic Church now stands. Long tables were built and stoves set up. The ladies of Georgetown, Wilton, Weston and Redding cooked and baked the good things (for the veterans to eat) with which the tables in the great tent were loaded on Sept. 11, 1879, the day of the reunion. The houses and other buildings were finely decorated with flags and bunting, and everyone waited the coming of the veterans. Co. A, 4th Regiment, 66 men, Captain Frederick Cole, acted as escort and the Bethel Cornet Band furnished music.

On the arrival of the veterans, the procession was formed and marched to the Methodist Church. Charles Jennings of Georgetown was Marshal. The business meeting and speaking was in the Methodist Church, Captain James H. Jenkins presiding. The officers of the regiment present were Colonel Charles E. Holmes, Major David H. Miller, Adjutant Samuel Gregory and Captains of the companies. Number of men present: Co. A, 1; Co. B, 28; Co. C, 3; Co. D, 9; Co. E, 47; Co. F, 3; Co. G, 10; Co. H, 0; Co. I, 1; Co. K, 17; total, 119 men. Deaths during the year in Co. E were James Lobdell and Elijah Betts (who was killed on the steamer "Adelphi.")

After the meeting the veterans adjourned to the tent, and partook of the fine repast awaiting them. There were about 2,000 persons on the grounds, and over 1,500 persons

were served with a fine dinner.

The great success of the reunion was due to the untiring energy and hard work of Major D. H. Miller and the members of Co. E, assisted by everyone in Georgetown and vicinity. The Bethel Cornet Band gave a fine concert and the boys of Co. A, 4th Regiment, showed the veterans some fine marching, firing by platoon, etc. Among the invited guests were Stephen Olmstead, of Redding, a veteran of the war of 1812, and Abram Dreamer, a veteran of the Mexican war. The day passed with no accident to mar it, and the reunion was long remembered by those who were present.

Very few of the veterans of 1863 are left. Four of those who were in the Georgetown squad in 1876 are dead. Some of the Georgetown boys of 1917 may wear Uncle Sam's uniform before long.

(The next article will be "The Old School House in the Hollow, Georgetown.")<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This article has not been located. - *I. Baldwin, 1965*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to thank the Redding Historical Society for the original idea for the paper. It was from a sheaf of photostats of old newspaper clippings that this paper grew. The photostats belong to M. T. McDonald (the present owner of the house that used to be Darling's Tavern at Boston Corners,) and the Historical Society had requested aid in getting them identified, classified, and converted to a more readable condition.

I wish also to thank Mrs. Margaret Malloy for lending her scrapbook of clippings from which the photostats were made, and the members of the Connery family who helped with suggestions in the search for the original clippings.

Mrs. Helen Anderson, Mrs. Bess Taylor and Mrs. Lucy Connery all helped me to orient myself in "old" Georgetown. The old maps came from the Connery family, as did many old newspaper clippings. Mr. John Moore of Weston owns a scrapbook which contains typed copies of many old news articles from the Danbury News-Times, the Georgetown Star, and the Wilton Bulletin. Mr. Moore is Georgetown's unofficial historian, and was kind enough to supply me with background information.

There are many other residents who gave me time and information, for which I am grateful. These include Mr. Arthur Carlson, former State Representative; Mr. J. Bartlett Sanford, First Selectman for the Town of Redding; Miss Ebba Anderson of the Town Clerk's Office; the Rev. Messrs. W. E. Worley, Seely, Clarence Peterson and Joseph Cleary.

It was a rewarding experience to assemble all this information, and in

so doing, meet so many of my neighbors. Georgetown was a favorite place to visit when I was a child, and now it is a wonderful place to live.

Irene Baldwin

May 31, 1965

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