



RIDGEFIELD
in Review



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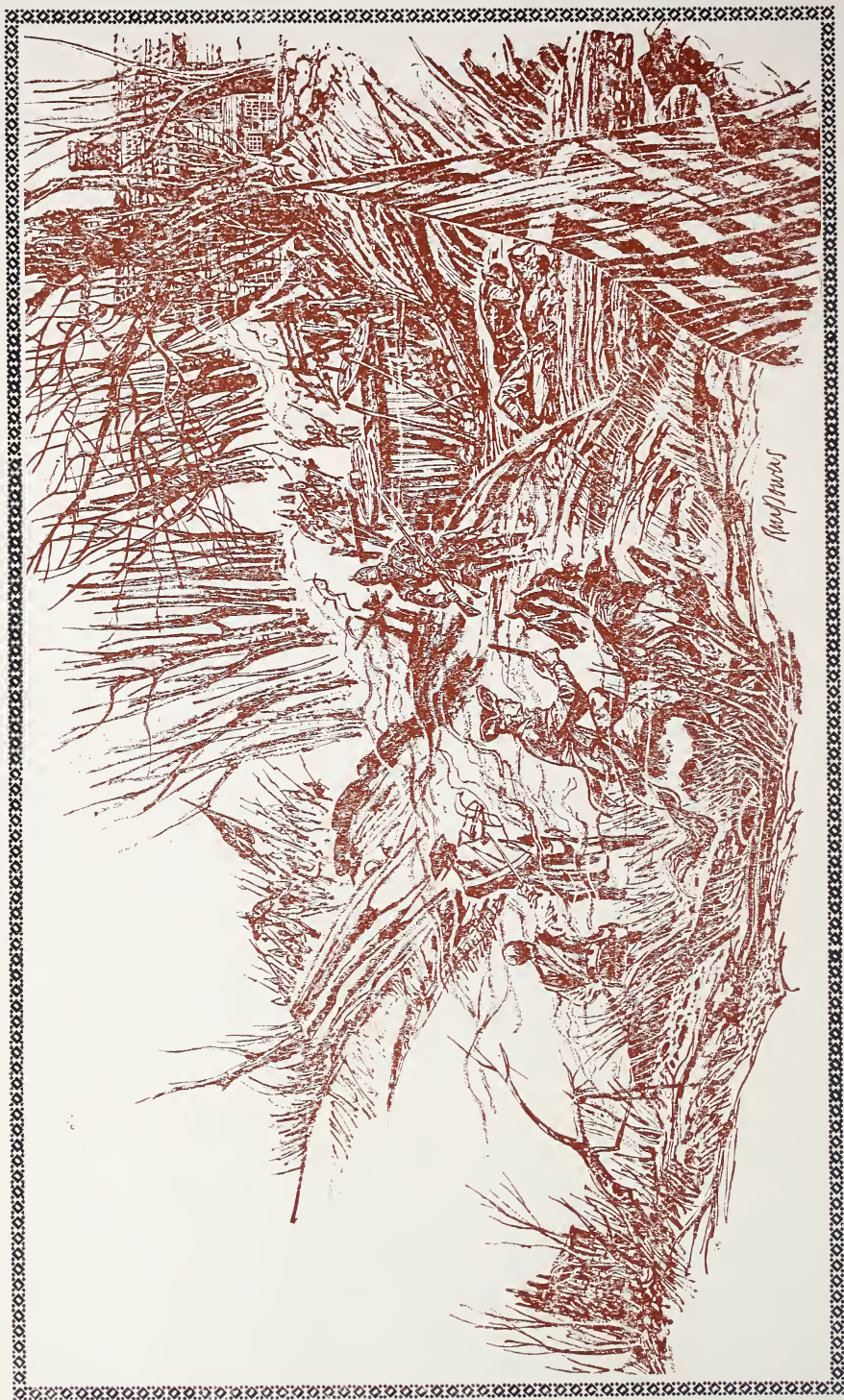
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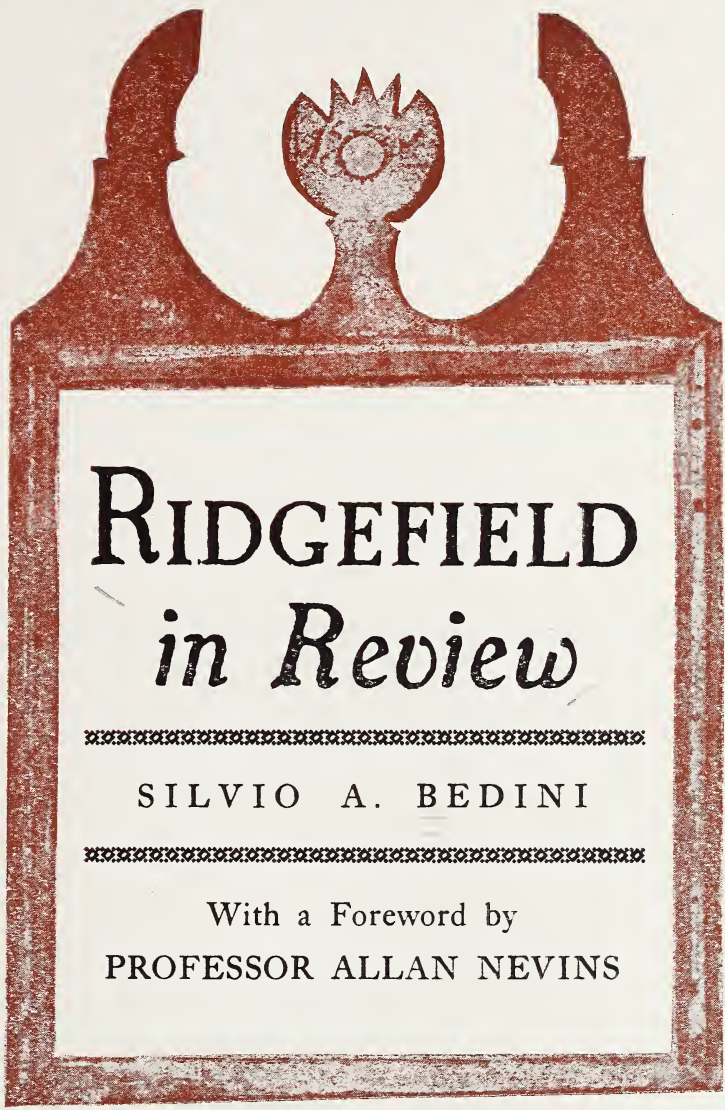
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RIDGEFIELD
in Review



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RIDGEFIELD
in Review

SILVIO A. BEDINI

With a Foreword by
PROFESSOR ALLAN NEVINS

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1958

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SILVIO A. BEDINI

for

The Ridgefield 250th Anniversary Committee, Inc.

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FOREWORD

by

Allan Nevins

A nation that steadily grows more urban in character, and in which whole districts tend to become mass-cities, should cherish its villages and small towns. The Atlantic coastal zone from Boston and Worcester south to Baltimore, Washington, and Norfolk, is already one vast urban community, termed "megalopolis" by sociologists. Happily, even in its penumbra a number of communities like Ridgefield, set apart from railroad trunk line and super-highway, keep some of the quiet traditions and folkways of rural life.

They contain a core of old families, in which experience and wisdom descend from generation to generation; they have a strong local pride, rooted in history; they let their life be shaped, in part, by the scenery, geology, and natural productions of the area. Somebody has said that a metropolis is "a city of strangers". A town like Ridgefield may be called a community of friends or acquaintances. The people who dwell there are bound together in a way impossible for inhabitants of great cities; they are united by shared experience, by pleasure in a beautiful environment, and a common simplicity of outlook. (At any rate, it *should* be simple). If America keeps a sufficient number of such communities, they will counterbalance the standardizing, dehumanizing, disillusioning effect of large cities. In local customs, stories, recreations, crafts, and even prejudices and limitations, they will provide sturdy roots of culture.

When I made acquaintance with Ridgefield some three decades ago, it delighted me for several reasons. The chief was that it made an ideal center for long country walks, as picturesque as those from a Cotswold or Burgundian village, and a good deal wilder. On a breezy autumn day every prospect from the High Ridge invited the pedestrian. He might turn east towards the Norwalk River, or south to the Sound seen far-shining from high hills, or west to Mamanasquog Lake and Titicus Mountain. Ridgefield is set in a remarkably diversified terrain of hills, streams and woods, where no factory smoke stains the sky, and the distant train whistle seldom interrupts the cawing crows. My second reason for taking pleasure in the place lay in its historic memories, for it cherishes and fittingly exhibits its relics of colonial and Revolutionary days. Perhaps this filiopietistic trait has developed because Ridgefield has grown and changed but slowly. As a third reason for delight in the place I liked its neat elegance. It is not merely shining and well improved; it has a

distinct touch of old-fashioned gentility. Finally, it seemed to me a remarkably successful amalgam of new and old, of the provincial and the cosmopolitan.

No doubt the real distinction of the place lies in the fact that it has an enduring personality. Every resident would define this personality in his own terms; but the power of amalgamating disparate elements certainly comes close to its heart. Ridgefield unites in one bond the old Puritan stock, scions of the "new" immigration, and New Yorkers who came as summer residents and remained to become citizens. Not even one of the old Stebbins or Hawley line could have been prouder of Ridgefield than was my distinguished friend Dr. Fabian Franklin, foreign-born and late-comer though he was. He respected and loved the peculiar character of the town. Moreover, Ridgefield has known how to play various roles well. A village or town may be significant in itself, a self-contained unit; or significant as the core of a larger community, the center of a township or county; or significant in relation to a metropolis. Ridgefield has filled all three roles. It is a refuge to which, though not strictly in the suburban zone, exhausted New Yorkers have long repaired for refreshment and renovation. It sheds its influence over a sizeable part of Fairfield and Putnam Counties in Connecticut and New York, and upper Westchester. Above all, it is a thoroughly independent, full-flavored, self-reliant locality in the special sense of the word, its life marked by unity and neighborliness.

This new history of Ridgefield—"*Ridgefield in Review*"—prepared with scholarly care for the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the town, does great credit to its author, and deserves the attention of all believers in vigorous local institutions.



Columbia University
August 1958.

PREFACE

“**RIDGEFIELD IN REVIEW**” is the chronicle of a small New England town, and attempts to present the record of its life and times from its conception as a settlement in 1697 through two and a half centuries of war and peace and progress to the present. The story of Ridgefield’s past is an eventful and significant one that deserves to be told.

It was Thucydides who observed that “History is philosophy learned from examples”. As much can often be learned from the annals of a small town as from the saga of a nation. The events of the past, and their effect on the people who lived them, occasionally furnish the perspectives necessary in dealing with the problems of the present. The written record can become a mirror reflecting ourselves and our times sharply in focus in relation to the specific community, the nation, the world, and Time itself. An understanding of Ridgefield’s magnificent historical heritage is inspiring, and it may help to engender a cooperative and personal interest in the town’s present and future by arousing pride in its past, especially among the younger generation.

History is defined in the dictionary as “a systematic written account of events, particularly of those affecting a nation, institution, science or art, usually connected with a philosophical explanation of their causes”.

“*Ridgefield in Review*” complies with this definition to the extent that it is a written account of the events that transpired in the town during the past two hundred and fifty years. The account is presented in chronological order, as concisely yet as comprehensively as the subjects allowed. No matter how well or how badly the story is told, Ridgefield cannot fail to emerge as the prototype of the American community—one of the many that form the foundation upon which a free world can eventually be built.

History can be many things. In actuality it is much more than a mere systematic account of events. It is a composite of the deeds of the men who have gone before, and of the thoughts and needs and desires that motivated their actions. The passage of Time alone does not make history—history is the coincidence of Time with the thoughts and deeds of men with dreams, men of the caliber of the sturdy Proprietors and the hard-grained stock they fathered. The chronicle of Ridgefield is not written in ink alone: it was indelibly recorded long ago in the perspiration, heart-throbs and bloodstains of

the pioneers who first carved the community from the wilderness, the patriots who fought to defend it, and those who labored to make it flourish.

Under Ridgefield's peaceful exterior, along its shaded streets and within its older dwellings, exists an exciting world of the past, peopled by the shadows of men who made history in Ridgefield. If that world has come to life even occasionally in these pages, this work has achieved its purpose.

S. A. B.

Part One

THE COLONIAL PERIOD



Figure 1

Chapter I

TOPOGRAPHY AND ABORIGINES

The Location of Ridgefield is defined to be in the west central part of Fairfield County. It is bordered by Danbury and Putnam County of New York State on the north and northeast, by Wilton on the southeast, and by Westchester County of New York State on the west. The town forms one of the major gateways from New York State into Connecticut on Routes 35A, 33, and 102.

The Area of Ridgefield is thirty-four and eight-tenths square miles, or 22,399 acres. At the widest point the town measures five miles in width and approximately nine and three-fifths miles in length. In size Ridgefield is the fifty-fourth town in the State of Connecticut.

Historically, Ridgefield is the seventh town established in Fairfield County and it is the forty-third town settled in the State.

The Altitude in Ridgefield is an average of 760 feet above sea level at Main Street, and generally about 1,000 feet for the town area. The largest and most extensive high tract is Scott's Ridge on Titicus Mountain which averages 900 to 1020 feet above sea level. The highest point in the township is considered to be Pine Mountain in Ridgebury which is 1040 feet above sea level.

The lowest point in the town is located near Branchville Station and measures 342 feet above sea level.

Lakes and Ponds combine to total 183 acres of Ridgefield's area. The largest body of water in the town is Mamanasco Lake which has an area of 104 acres, and the next largest is Round Pond which is 32 acres in area. The eight remaining lakes and ponds make up the balance of 47 acres.

Streams and Rivers of Ridgefield empty into the Housatonic and Hudson Rivers and into Long Island Sound. Among these are the Limestone River (which becomes the Norwalk River in the lower part of its course), the Titicus River, Mopus River, and Cooper Brook which rises in Great Swamp and becomes a tributary of the Norwalk River. It is estimated that Ridgefield has sixty-six miles of streams.

The Earliest Map of Ridgefield which has been discovered to date appears in *Clark's Map of Fairfield County, Connecticut From Actual Surveys By and Under The Direction of J. Chace, Jr., Civ. Eng., Troy, N. Y. & W. J. Barker N. Hector, New York.* The map was published by Richard Clark, 115 Wharton Street in Philadelphia in 1856. The scale was 250 rods to the inch. The Ridgefield segment of the Clark map is illustrated in *Figure 158*.

The Indians who inhabited the Ridgefield area were members of the *Ramapo* and *Titicus* villages in the *Tankiteke* sachemdom of the Wappinger tribe. The name *Wappinger* meant "Easterners". This tribe formed part of the Algonquin linguistic family, allied with the Mohican, Montauk and the New England tribes. The Wappingers were among those tribes that manufactured "siwan" or wampum. They occupied much of the mainland territory of Greater New York, exclusive of Manhattan Island. They were generally wanderers, peaceful and friendly towards the white men.

Indian Camping Sites in Ridgefield included the shores of Lake Mamanasco, particularly in the vicinity of the sand rocks, where they spent most of the summer. On the grounds of the present Mamanasco Lake Lodge and the adjacent former Tenger estate a number of relics have been recovered from old camp sites. The Indian village itself was located on the area east and south of the present Elms Inn extending to Prospect Street and westward to the brook which joins with the stream north of the Elms Inn.

An Indian Trail existed from Mud Pond to Poundridge running through South Salem over West Mountain, passing through the present Oreneca Trail to Round Pond and over the mountain to Lake Mamanasco.

Indian Relics recovered from the sites of the various encampments include arrow and spear heads, shards of pottery, stone mortars and other items. In 1875 a large canoe was found near the south end of Great Pond. This vessel, which was unquestionably of Indian workmanship, had been hollowed from a large tree and measured about twenty feet in length.

A former camp site which was located on the premises of Mr. Douglas A. Main between North Salem Road and Tackora Trail yielded a large number of arrow heads and chips as well as a bow, which is believed to have been made by Indian Tom. Tom's Spring Mountain was named after this Indian, who was one of the last aborigines in the town.

A number of personalities among the Indians in the area who were known to the original proprietors, include:

Catonah (Catoonah, Katonah) the head sachem of the Ramapos, who sold the land to the white men. After the sale he moved his village westward to what is now Bedford in Westchester County in New York State. There he later died. According to local tradition, his burial place is marked by two boulders on a farm in that town.

Tackora was the sachem of the Titicus village. He was identified by several other names including Oreneca, Norraneke, Narranoke, Naraneka, Tachora and Narranoka. He was the signer of the second and third deed of sale of land and he was included among the signers of the first deed.

Chickens Warrups was also known by such other names as 'Chickens', Warrups Chickens, and Sam Mohawk. He was a member of the Mohawk nation, and notorious among the red men of this area. After having committed a murder in Greenfield Hill he moved to Redding and later to Ridgefield. He spent much of his time on the great rock on the shore of Great Pond, which was consequently known as 'Chicken's Rock'. In 1749 he exchanged a tract of one hundred acres in Redding with John Read for a parcel of two hundred acres at Schaghticoke in Kent. He died in 1765.

Tom Warrups was the grandson of Chicken Warrups and in 1776 he served with the company of Captain Edward Rogers in the Long Island campaign. He was reported to be a courageous and daring soldier. Tom Warrups was with General Putnam's division in Redding in the winter of 1778 and 1779 and rendered important service as a guide and scout. He had the Indian's weakness for the white man's 'fire water' and was often in disgrace and punished by 'the wooden horse' which consisted of being ridden on a wooden rail in front of his regiment. His home was in the southwestern part of Redding but later he moved with other members of his tribe to Kent in Litchfield County.

Yebecum was an Indian living at the northern corner of Main and Gilbert Streets, a section which was formerly known as 'the clay-holes'.

Tony's Cave was located in Whipstick District east of the Mortimer Keeler homestead on Nod Road. Tony, an Indian, retired to this natural shelter in order to escape service with the Continental Army.

Peter and Indian Jane were an Indian couple who made baskets and sold them in the Ridgefield area. They maintained three camp sites, including one

at Mamanasco near the old mill, another at Umpawaug Pond and a third near the present Branchville Railroad Station.

Indian John lived on West Mountain; another Indian, not named, lived nearby and died in that section. He was buried in the swamp east of the corner near the Culter residence.

Poctocton made his home on the easterly side of Stonecrest Mountain in a hut situated near the Norwalk River. His hut consisted of a wall of stones which he covered over for shelter, and the remains of which could be seen until quite recently.

Wild Animals abounded in Ridgefield during the first century after its settlement. Black bears were found and killed in several districts including Titicus and Farmingville. Wild cats were killed as recently as 1875 by Abner Gilbert near Great Pond Mountain in Farmingville.

Wolves were fairly common in Ridgefield in the 18th Century. According to a story handed down in the family, the wife of Benjamin Benedict who lived on the shores of Lake Waccabuc desired apples from her father's farm in Ridgefield. She travelled through the woods on horseback and after filling a sack with apples, she started for home. After a short distance, she discovered that she was being followed by several wolves. Having no weapon, she urged her horse forward but the wolves followed close behind. In desperation she threw a few apples to the ground and the wolves stopped to eat them. Again and again as she sped homeward, she threw some apples behind as the wolves approached, and each time they stopped to eat them. She finally arrived at her home safely, but with her apple sack empty.

Among wild animals still commonly found in the town and environs are deer, red and grey foxes, rabbits, weasels, skunks, muskrats, raccoons, woodchucks, red, grey and flying squirrels, opossum, mink and otters. Pheasants, quail, and woodcock are also present. The eagle has occasionally been found and killed, and wild pigeons were at one time plentiful, although now extinct. Venomous reptiles of the area include copperheads; timber rattlesnakes have also been reported.



Figure 4

Chapter II

THE PURCHASE OF RIDGEFIELD

The First Plan for the Settlement of Ridgefield that is on record was made in 1697. In the 3rd volume of the Colonial Records in the Connecticut State Library is the following entry illustrated in *Figure 5*:

Upon the Petition of Sam^l Haist, Sen. John Belden, Jn^o Whitnie, Ralph Keeler, Jachin Gregorie, Jn^o Nash, Sam^l Keeler, William Lees, Zorubbabal Hoyt, Will Hains, to purchase of the Indians a certain tract of Land lying about fourteen Miles Northward of the town of Norwalk to settle a plantation there. The Court made a Choice of Matthew Marvin, M^e John Wakeman and David Waterbury to be a Committee to view the said Land and to inform them whether there be accommodation sufficient for a body of people to settle upon in a plantation way . . .

The First Appointed Viewers, consisting of a committee of Marvin, Wakeman and Waterbury, were apparently unable to visit the site proposed for the new settlement, because on 9 May 1706 the General Court appointed Captain Jonathan Selleck, Mr. David Waterbury and Mr. John Copp to visit the area. However, even this second committee was unable to fulfill its function, according to the following report

“To the Honourable Generall
Assembly Convened at Hartford
May ye 1708.

By y^e Appointment of the Generall Court in May y^e 9 1706 That Capt Jonathan Selleck, Mr. David Waterbury & Mr. John Copp, Should upon y^e Charge of the petitioners, Take a View of a certain Tract of Land Lying North of y^e Township of Norwalk — — — Delayes in that matter Ocasioned for want of proper Methodds to prosecute y^e promises untill y^e Death of M^r Waterbury and Upon our Applications to Cap^t Jonathan Selleck to Move Upon that design and his business not allowing a Compliance according to his inclination. The Company moving in y^e Said promosess Made Choice of M^r John Raymond to Assist in y^e mattor with y^e said M^r John Copp — — — — —

Upon the Request of Said Company Wee the Abov Said John Copp & John Raymond upon y^e 3^d Day of this Instant Wont up to View Said tract of Land, And Upon our diligent Indeavour for a discovery, We find it to be accomodated with Upland Considerably good & for quantity Sufficient for thirty Families, or more and as for meadow & meadow Land Something ≠ Surpassing (both for quantity as well las quality) what is Comon to be found in many Larger plantations, and that within the Limitis of Conecticot Government it may Contain in quantity Five Miles Square Given under our hands in Norwalk this 10th Day of May Anno Dom. 1708.

John Copp
John Raymond.”

A Petition for Purchase was signed by 26 persons and submitted to the General Assembly at Hartford which convened on 13 May 1708. It requested, immediately following the report submitted by Copp and Raymond, the liberty to purchase

“of y^e Indians a Certain Tract of Land Bounded South, Upon Norwalk Bounds, North East Upon Danbury and West Upon York Line. Which hath been Viewed as we Could obtain According to y^e Appointment of y^e Generall Court, and have Run y^e Distance between y^e Said Tract of Land and Hudsons River and find it to be Twenty three miles . . .”

The petitioners stated that they were ready to complete the purchase which had already been negotiated with its native proprietors, and that most of them contemplated a speedy improvement of some part of the tract. The petition was formally signed on 10 May 1708 by John Belden and Samuel Keeler.

On 18 May 1708 the Lower House of the General Assembly approved the petition, provided that it did not prejudice any former grants of that Court, and that the grant would be under such regulations for the settlement thereof as the Court required.

The Original Petitioners for the purchase were the following: John Belden, William Haines, Samuell Keeler, Senr., Matthew Seamor, John Whitne, Senr.,

Matthias Saint John, James Brown, Benjamin Wilson, Joseph Bichard, Daniell Lockwood, John Whitne, Junr., Benjamin Hecock, John Bebee, Samuell Saint John, John Bowton, Joseph Keeler, Daniell Raymond, Samuell Smith, Junr., Jonathan Stevens, Daniell Olmsted, Richard Olmsted, John Stirdevant, Samuell Keeler, Junr., Joseph Bowton, Jonathan Rockwell, Ebenezer Canfield.

The petition was approved in the upper house of the Assembly on the same date with the further stipulation that the General Assembly reserved for itself a Power for the settlement and allotment of the land to be so purchased among the said petitioners "and such others as the Assembly shall judge meet".

The purchase was formalized on 30 September 1708 for the sale of an area of approximately 20,000 acres for the sum of one hundred pounds sterling. The deed was signed for the Indians by Catoonah, Gootquas, Wawkamawwee, Woquacomick, Mahke, Naraneka, Waspahchain, Tawpornick and Cawwehorin, and by John Holmes, Jr., Joseph Seeley and John Copp for the settlers.

The Boundaries of the original purchase were specified to be ". . . a Rock with Stones Lay'd thereon that lyeth upon y^e west side of Norwalk River about twenty rod northward of the Crossing or where Danbury old Cart path crosseth the River which said Rock is the South East Corner and from said Corner a line Runneth upwards unto Umpewange pond to a White Oak Tree, Standing by the Northwest Corner of said Pond, the said tree being marked and Stones Lay'd about it and is the North East Corner, and from the said Corner Tree, another line Running near Two points to the North of West into a pond called Nesopack and Continues y^e Same Course untill it meets with a second pond Called Aokkeels, Crossing by y^e south End of both ponds, and from thence Running Near West untill it Extends to a place Called Mamanasquag, where is a Oak Tree Marked on y^e North Side of the outlet of water that Comes out from a sort of a grassy pond, which is known and Called by Said Name, which tree is the North West Corner, and from said Tree another line Runing South bearing to y^e East About one mile and half. Runing by y^e East side of another Mountain Called Asoquatah untill it meets Stanford Bound line, about a quarter of a mile to y^e Eastward of Cross River pond, where stands a Marked White Oak tree with Stones about it, and is y^e South West Corner, and from said Marked tree a long by Stanford line untill it Comes to Norwalk purchase and so by Said Purchase Bounds to the Said Rock at the South East Corner. Containing by Estimation Twenty Thousand Acres, be it more or less. The Four Corners of Said Tract of Land being Called by the following Indian Names South East Corner 'Wheer Cock' North East Corner 'Wononkpkagoonk' North West Corner 'Mamanasquag' South West Corner 'Narahawmis'."

The original deed of the First Purchase has not been found either in Ridgefield or in the State Archives in Hartford and is presumed to be lost. It may have formed part of a collection of Ridgefield documents known to have been owned by the late Mr. Hubert P. Main of Newark, New Jersey, as late as 1914, but recent research has not brought it to light. The copy of the trans-

action which appears in the Town Record Book as recorded by John Copp on 3 February 1709/10 is shown in *Figure 6*.

The Survey of the land purchased was to be made by a committee appointed on 12 May 1709 by the General Assembly in Hartford. Major Peter Burr of Fairfield, John Copp of Norwalk and Josiah Starr of Danbury were selected to survey the tract and lay it out for a town plat, and to report on this undertaking to the General Assembly at New Haven in the following October. The Survey was made and the grant was given by the General Assembly in session at New Haven on 13 October 1709.

Settlers' Rock is the first and still among the most important of Ridgefield's landmarks. According to local tradition, soon after the land was purchased, the proprietors moved to Ridgefield. It is said that five of the new owners preceded the others, and that five men spent their first night in Ridgefield on Settlers' Rock. They built fires around the base of the great boulder (*Figure 4*) to protect them against wild animals.

It is quite likely that even before the arrival of the proprietors, the boulder may have served as a shelter for John Copp and John Raymond when they first visited the area on 3 May 1708 in order to determine the suitability of the land for the settlement of a plantation. The two men undoubtedly singled out this rock as a prominent landmark which would be easily identified in the wilderness because of its great size and its elevated location along the Indian trail to the Titcus River.

It is of interest to note that of the first five men appointed to view the land—Matthew Marvin, John Wakeman, David Waterbury, in 1697; and Jonathan Selleck and John Copp, in 1706—Copp was the only one to visit the area. Yet neither John Copp, nor John Raymond who accompanied him, appeared at any time on the lists of petitioners or proprietors, nor did either own land in Ridgefield at any time.

The Benchmark selected for surveying the town may have been Settlers' Rock, for the great boulder appears to be located in almost the exact center of the area of the original purchase. Burr and Copp appear to have measured in the four directions from this point.

In the Layout of the Town, Burr and Copp selected as the site for the settlement the central ridge of three which ran north and south. This ridge was situated near the geographical center of the tract.

The Village Street was laid out north and south along this central ridge and measured eight rods in width. The home lots were laid out on either side of this ridge, each measuring two and a half acres with additional lots of five acres in the rear of each of them.

Although three men had been appointed to make a survey, only Burr and Copp signed the report to the General Assembly.

The Naming of the Town was done in the General Assembly's grant of 13 October 1709 which granted “. . . That the said Tract of Land shall be an Intire Township of itself, and shall be Called and Known by the name of Ridgfield . . .” The grant specified that if the settlers “Do not or shall not within four years next after the date of this act or Grant, Settle or Dwell upon the said tract of Land to y^e number of twenty Eight families, and after continue and Dwell there for the Space of four Years next following, that then it shall be in the Liberty and power of this Assembly to grant of the said Tract of Land Settlement to any other persons as they shall se cause.”

The Patent for the town (*Figure 9*) was not issued until 1714, five years later. This imposing document is preserved in the Town Hall and may be viewed upon application to the Town Clerk. During the Great Fire of 1895 it was presumably saved from threatened destruction, together with six of the original Proprietor's deeds.

The recovery of these historic documents is described on Page 17 of the Report of 1908 of Charles R. Hathaway, Temporary Examiner of Public Records for the State of Connecticut:

“During the last summer I learned of the existence of the original patent of the town of Ridgefield, and after some correspondence I succeeded in obtaining from Mr. Hubert P. Main of Newark, N. J., a former resident of Ridgefield, this original patent to which was attached the great seal of the governor. This patent together with several other documents relating to Ridgefield lands, which were also turned over to me by Mr. Main, have all been repaired and are now in the town clerk's office in Ridgefield.”

An exhaustive search of the Connecticut State Archives and the files of the Office of Public Records and of the Department of State in Hartford has failed to reveal any of the Hathaway-Main correspondence, or other information relating to the recovery of the Ridgefield documents.

The Assignment of Lots was made by a lottery which was held in Norwalk at a town meeting of the Proprietors in November 1708. Each proprietor drew a numbered slip of paper from a hat, and the lot which corresponded with that number on a map of the town area was assigned to him.

The first lot on the southeast side of the Main Street was reserved for a burial ground. Lots 1 through 12 were northward from this burial ground. Lots 13 through 25 started at the northernmost point of the west side and extended southward.

The drawing of the lottery was as follows:

No.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Samuel St. John | 7. Joseph Whitney |
| 2. Samuel Keeler, Jr. | 8. Samuel Smith of Milford |
| 3. Jonathan Rockwell | 9. James Brown |
| 4. Thomas Caufield | 10. John Belden |
| 5. The Proprietors Reserve | 11. Richard Olmsted |
| 6. Matthias Saint John | 12. Thomas Smith |

No.

13. Jonathan Stevens
14. John Sturdevant
15. Thomas Hyot
16. Benjamin Wilson
17. Benjamin Hickock
18. Matthew Saint John
19. Joseph Keeler

20. Matthew Seamer
21. James Bennedick
22. Joseph Crampton
23. Samuel Smith of Norwalk
24. Daniel Olmsted
25. Samuel Keeler, Sr.

Later Assignments of lots included Lot No. 22, which was drawn by Joseph Crampton, but which did not appear again in the town records. Lot No. 13, which had been drawn by Jonathan Stevens was sold by his mother, Mary Bouton to David Scott on 3 June 1712, soon after her son's death. On 9 July 1711 Lot No. 17 was purchased by Thomas Rockwell of Norwalk from Benjamin Hickock.

Plow Land was divided by order of the Proprietors at a town meeting held 1 March 1709. Samuel Keeler Sen^r, Matthias Saint John and Samuel Smith were appointed to view suitable lands within an area of 1½ miles from the center of the town, and to make a division of such lands equal to the number of the Proprietors. Divisions in which the land was poorer were compensated for by being larger in area.

Additional Land Divisions were assigned by the Proprietors during the years between 1715 and 1718 by the First and Second Twenty-Acre Divisions, so-called. On 21 February 1718 "y^e Committee for laying Out y^e third Twenty Acre Division were by a Major Vote empowered and ordered to make good by an Equidistancy in lands, those Lottments which have been . . . impaired by y^e road laid out to Norwalk".

A map of the Second Twenty Acre Division is shown in *Figure 17*, from Page 68 of the Town Record Book.

Great Swamp or "Thousand Acres" as it was called, was the source of fire-wood for the Proprietors of the town even during its earliest period. In 1717-1718 a Committee was appointed to divide the area and a lottery was held for its division, and portions were drawn by each of the 29 Proprietors. "A Mapp of y^e Great Swamp" which is illustrated in *Figure 16* was drawn by Thomas Hawley in February 1718 as part of the Town Records.

Exemption from Taxation by the State was requested by the Proprietors of Ridgefield following the enactment of the General Assembly's order of May 1725 whereby the town was to make a list of all polls and taxable property. Ridgefield's petition for exemption from public taxes was granted for a period of two years "provided they draw no money out of the treasury for the schools, nor send any representatives to attend this Assembly during such exemption." After the two year period had expired, Ridgefield found it necessary to ask

for an extension of the tax exemption for the following two years, which was again granted.

From about 1730 Ridgefield apparently paid its public taxes in accordance with the Colony's requirements. In the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society is a manuscript shown in *Figure 19* which stated that

"The Sum Totall of y^e List of y^e Town of Ridgefield in y^e Year 1732 as may be seen upon Record amounts to £ 5419-1-4. A True Account taken from off y^e Record.

Test TimO Hooker, Regist."

However, the town must have defaulted again because on 8 May 1740 it was enacted in the General Assembly to

" . . . sentence and doom the inhabitants of the town of Ridgefield to pay into the publick treasury of this Colony the sum of twenty-nine pounds, fifteen shillings, . . . and the Treasurer is ordered and directed to send forth his warrant to the constables of the said towns, respectively, to levy and collect the said sums of the inhabitants of the towns to which they belong . . . "

There were eight purchases of land from the Indians during the period from 1708 to 1739 inclusive. They may be summarized as follows:

The Second Purchase was dated 18 March 1715 from Tackora (Oreneca) for four pounds in Connecticut currency for a tract of land bounded by a whitewood tree about 4 rods west of the Isaac Keeler grist mill and extending to the north side of the outlet from Mamasasco Pond and running along said outlet "to a small Elm Staddle on each side" and standing on the east side of the Mill outlet and thence over Titticus to a butternut tree and thence under the Mountain as bounded by marked trees to the point marked by a Black Oak marked on each side, thence elbowing to a marked Bass tree beside the brook near the lower end of Mopoos Ridge then immediately across the brook to a Black Oak tree a little below the lower end of Mopoos Ridge, then over Titticus near a northwest line as bounded by trees, to a small black Oak Staddle by a small brook, running out of the West hills, thence over a brook near a southwest line to a white oak tree under the mountain with stones laid about the same corner boundary then south or south east in a line as bounded to a small walnut Staddle on a heap of rocks then southeast to the pond and eastward between the mountain and Mamasasco Pond to its lower end over a small run named Punch Brook then about 40 rods southeast to a white oak tree marked and stones laid about it which is the lower corner meeting with the Old Purchase.

Tackora (or Oreneca) specified in his deed (*Figure 7*) that he had
" . . . Sold and Confirmed unto y^e the above named proprietors their heirs and assigns for ever to enjoy y^e same in quantity and quality, according to each man's interest or propriety of Lands in Ridgfield, immediately before the purchase hereof, i.e., a half right man shall have but half so good an interest in the bargained prem-

ises as a whole right man shall (the said James Wallace excepted) . . . ”

Among the Proprietors' deeds in Ridgefield is an instrument dated 4 May 1750 whereby John, James and Jacob Wallace of Salem, New York remised, released and quit claimed all their rights to the common or undivided land in the township of Ridgefield excepting their interests in Mamanasco Pond in exchange for a tract of about eighty-four and a half acres which was laid out in the so-called New Purchase.

James Wallace was born in about 1675 in Lanark, Scotland. He was shanghaied on the wharves of Glasgow by the British and placed aboard a man-of-war, and he was forced to serve for eight years. One night, when his ship was anchored off Long Island Sound he managed to escape ashore and make his way to Norwalk, where he obtained employment. In 1696 he married Mary Hyatt, daughter of Thomas Hyatt. In 1715 James Wallace was listed among the men who purchased a tract of land in Ridgefield from the Indians.

James Wallace had eight children. His two sons, John and James, achieved a great age, and were among the early settlers of North Salem, when that area was part of the Oblong under Connecticut jurisdiction.

The descendants of James Wallace played prominent roles in the community life of North Salem during the ensuing generations.

The Third Purchase was made from Tackora by the proprietors of Ridgefield on 22 November 1721. The deed, shown in *Figure 8*, specified that for six pounds of currency, the town acquired a tract from the north side of the brook at the south end of Titicus or Tomspring Mountain to a great tree marked on the line of the Old Purchase, then southwest to the south end of the long swamp, then to the east side of Round Pond and along the Pond to its northwest side. The line then moved northwest along the Hills to a brook which fed into the east end of Long Pond then in a direct course over the brook to a hemlock standing on the Titicus River by the Sand Bank near a brook which fed into the Titicus and then along the river to Tackora's Old House to a white oak near a horse pound, crossing the river to a Tree marked on the river then across the south end of Mopoos Ridge to a great white oak on the northernmost end of the swamp then across the marsh to a tree, crossing the end of a plain ridge over Mopoos Brook. The line then moved in an eastern direction to Asproom Mountain (now Barlow Mountain) and southerly down the mountain to a white oak tree on Mamanasco Hill on the east side of the river near the Watering Place. The line followed the base of Asproom Mountain to Copp's Mountain (now Stonecrest Mountain) and down to meet the old line and along that line westerly to the Mill and then returning to meet the first mentioned point in the boundary of the New Purchase.

The Fourth Purchase dated 4 July 1727, was made by the Proprietors from Japorneck & Moses of the Indians of Long Pond and Richard and Samm, Indians of Ammawogg. For eighteen pounds in currency or goods, two guns,

eighteen shillings paid in advance in currency, and three bottles of rum, the four Indians sold a tract of land from a white oak at a point about twenty miles and three hundred and five rods from Cortland's Point along the line agreed upon by the Commission in a southerly direction parallel to the line called 'Twenty Miles' from Hudson River until it met the Old Purchase and defined by another line from the said tree in a northerly direction to the same Twenty Mile Line to meet the Second Purchase and including all the land eastward of these lines to the point where it met the Old Purchase Lines.

The Fifth Purchase, which was negotiated on 7 March 1729 by the proprietors with the Long Pond Indians named Japporneck, Ammon, Wett Hams, Samm Moses, Pawguenongi and Crow specified that for "a valuable reward" paid or to be paid by the proprietors, the Indians sold them an area of land lying westward from the outlet of Long Pond, along a line running southward to the Old Purchase line as established by a Mr. Lewis, and from the Oak Staddle northward to Titicus River, to be bounded on the East by the lands of the Third and Fourth Purchases.

The Sixth Purchase was completed on 6 April 1729 between several Indians of Hooppacks and Jacob Turkey of Narrahawtong and the proprietors for a valuable sum or reward not specified. The tract purchased at this time was located between the southwest corner of Danbury along the Patent Line to the Twenty Mile Line and southward to cross the Titicus River and easterly to Danbury South West Corner, bounded on the south side by the former purchase.

The Seventh Purchase which became effective 28 February 1738 included land lying within the limits of New York State on the so-called Oblong.

The Eighth Purchase was made on 19 December 1739 between the proprietors and Betty, the mother of Jacob Turkey and Captain Jacob Turkey Mokquaroose, for six pounds five shillings in currency a tract which lay within the bounds of the New Patent bordered on the east by Danbury Township, north by New Fairfield, west by the Government line and south by the Sixth Purchase.

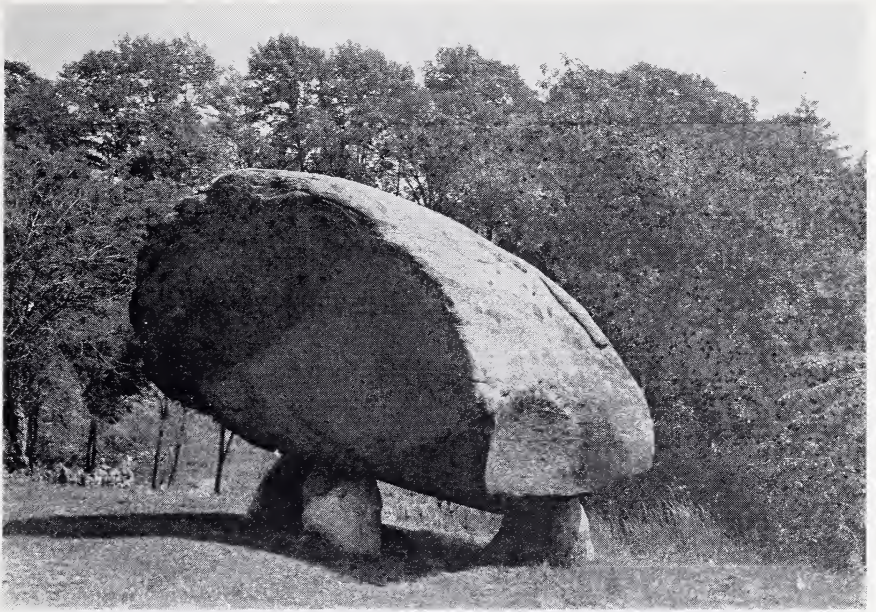


Figure 2

Boulder Stone deposited by glacial action in North Salem, N. Y. formerly part of the Oblong



Figure 3 "Indian Village at Mamasasco". Painting in Oils by Peter Wick

The Court did also order that the said Indians were inhabiting should unite
 together in one body and be thro'ly exercised under the command of a
 leader of their own Election.
 Ordered by this Court that the said Indians in Wofflowfield should be so
 yearly divided that the trainbands may be divided to an equality in
 one as near as may be. ^{To} ~~the~~ ^{John} ~~the~~ ^{Harris} ~~the~~ ^{son} ~~the~~ ^{John} ~~the~~ ^{Baker} ~~the~~ ⁱⁿ
~~upon the Election of~~ ^{John Harris} ~~the~~ ^{son} ~~the~~ ^{John} ~~the~~ ^{Baker} ~~the~~ ⁱⁿ
 whatso Ralph Kooler factor Esquire to give his of the Indians a certain tract of land
 forubbal May with Harris to give his of the town of Cornwall to
 being about four or five hundred of the town of Malabar in
 a plantation there. The Court made a grant of Malabar in
 Malabar and David Waterbury to be a grant to give the land
 and to improve them who the Court to accommodate the
 body of people to settle upon in a plantation way
 this Court shall give power to the treasurer upon the credit of the
 to borrow and deliver it to the said Governor William Stoughton Esq to
 to convey and deliver it to the said Governor upon the
 to give a bill for the same to be charged upon the
 England
 The Court grants liberty and authority to Elizabeth Mitchell Esq to
 to the Mitchell of the said town of Wofflowfield with the
 to the said town of Wofflowfield

Figure 5 Plan for Settlement of Ridgefield noted in Minutes of General Assembly in 1697. The earliest record relating to Ridgefield

This deed of purchase by proprietors from Catoch.
 Copy entered in Town Record Book

Figure 6 First Deed of Purchase by Proprietors from Catoch.
 Copy entered in Town Record Book

Know all Men by these Presents that Tackora alias
Orencha indian one of the Native Proprietors and owners of
those Tracts of unpurchased Lands lying above Ridgely in County
of Saydel and Colony of Connecticut in New England. For and in
Consideration of four pound Currant money of a Colony of Con=
necticut to me in hand paid or securd to be paid by Proprietors
of a Town of Ridgely in the County and Colony aforesd. viz: M^r
= char: Osburn, Samuell Saintjohn Benjamin Wilson Thomas
= Smith Thomas Hawley Jonah Keeler, Timothy Keeler Samuell
= Smith no: Daniell Olmsted Jonathan Zochwell Benjamin Hayt
Henry Whitney Joseph Northrup Mil: Sam Smith Jeremia Loddill
Moses Northrop Benjamin Benedick Richard Olmsted Ebene: Smith
James Wallis Daniell Sherwood David Scott John Hu
= deaver Joseph Nath: Mil: Thomas Knatt of Heirs, off: Thomas Rockwell
= deaver Mattheu Saintjohn Mattheu Saintjohn Joseph Keeler Mattheu
= deaver Daniell Armer James Benedick Joseph Benedick James
= deaver Joseph Crampton and Jonathan Wood Have Do by these pre=
= sents freely, Clearly and absolutely Grant, Sell and Confirm unto of
above named Proprietors of a Town of Ridgely and to their heirs and
assigns for ever, a Certain tract or parcel of Land belonging unto me
the said Orencha, lying, situate and being bounded as followeth: viz: beginning
at a white wood tree standing about four rods west of a Mill and haudt
on of North side of a Outlet running out of Mamasnaquoy pond on which
a small new bridge is a and from thence running by a said outlet till we come to
a small Elm tree Mark on each side and standing on a high ridge
the said outlet and from thence over a mountain to a hollow oak tree and from
thee to a brook near a lower end of Mopos ridge, thence imp: directly
to a black oak tree a little below a lower end of Mopos ridge, thence
to a black oak tree near a North west line of a white oak tree under of
thee to a brook near a southwest line to a white oak tree under of
= ceety over a brook near a southwest line to a white oak tree under of
= ceety with stones and about a lower end of same which is a corner boundary
= thence a South or South East line as tis bounded to a small walnut tree
= standing on a heap of rocks thence something South East down towards
pond, to a lower end thereof over a small run then Narred punch brook
= thence about a fowr rods South East to a white oak tree Markt and from
= said about a fowr rods which was a lower corner meeting with a small
= all which quantity or parcel of Land of said Orencha have I do and confirmed
= in quantity and quality according to each mans interest or proportion of share in
= said to go to god an interest in of the bargain premises as a whole might be
= of said James Wallis no: Daniell Armer To Have do to hold unto them of said proprietors
= and assigns for ever of said bargain premises with all of priority
= and appurtenances thereto belonging to the only Use, Benefit and Comfort
= of above named proprietors of Heirs and assigns for ever, without any
= let, Claim or Interruption from me of said Orencha alias Tackora, or my
= heirs, Executors, Administrators or assigns for ever, or from any person or
= persons Indian or English or any other, by from or under me or Thier what
=soever Laying any Claim or Challenge or Claim, In title and of above sta=
= tioned Orencha, to the said my Heirs, Executors and Administrators
= by these presents, to free and Quietly enjoy, possess, hold, use, and
= what they shall think proper, in Witness whereof I the said Orencha have hereunto set my
= hand and Seal this 18 day of March Anno Dom: 1714.
Signed and delivered in
presence of us.
Joseph Col: Lockwood
for
Joseph Wall: Armer

*Now made up in the County of Fairfield March 18 1714 by John...
Tackora alias Orencha had this deed recorded to his satisfaction and the proprietors...
and 1714*

Figure 7 Deed of Second Purchase by Proprietors from Tackora in 1715

and I solemnly grants Liberty unto the inhabitants²¹⁶
 of the Town of Ridgefield to embody into Church
 State and settle an orthodox ministry amongst them
 and to have Brand for the Town at Ridgefield to give
 them help with the figure

pass in the Upper House
 (Soft Herz. Whittys Seal)
 pass in the Lower House
 Toff. Sam. Lake Clerk

Figure 10 Assignment of first horse brand to Ridgefield

James Town 1715 Benjamin Wilson Milt. Samuel Smith
 Joseph Bingham were by a Major vote chosen Select Men
 for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 at a Meeting above Divided Church was chosen for
 Preb. for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 Joshua Roberts to James Hartthrop were chosen Select Men
 for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 Jonathan Rockwell Richard Clapham and Nathan Smith
 were chosen Select Men for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 Timothy Keeler was chosen to make and collect of Town
 for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 Mr. Oliver was chosen Town Clerk for a year beginning
 on the 1st of January 1715
 at a Town Meeting it was voted by a Majority of yeerly that
 yeerly have his things as money for day for working and
 was convenient for a Meeting of yeerly to people at a
 time of meeting and if he had to attend for yeerly that
 yeerly was to be in yeerly
 at a Town Meeting James Boscawen and Joseph Hartthrop
 were chosen Select Men for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 at a Town Meeting it was voted by a Majority of yeerly that
 yeerly have his things as money for day for working and
 was convenient for a Meeting of yeerly to people at a
 time of meeting and if he had to attend for yeerly that
 yeerly was to be in yeerly
 at a Town Meeting by a Majority of yeerly that
 yeerly have his things as money for day for working and
 was convenient for a Meeting of yeerly to people at a
 time of meeting and if he had to attend for yeerly that
 yeerly was to be in yeerly
 at a Town Meeting Joseph Keeler James Boscawen and Nathaniel
 were chosen Select Men for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 at a Town Meeting it was voted by a Majority of yeerly that
 yeerly have his things as money for day for working and
 was convenient for a Meeting of yeerly to people at a
 time of meeting and if he had to attend for yeerly that
 yeerly was to be in yeerly
 at a Town Meeting James Boscawen and Nathaniel
 were chosen Select Men for a year beginning on the 1st of January 1715
 at a Town Meeting it was voted by a Majority of yeerly that
 yeerly have his things as money for day for working and
 was convenient for a Meeting of yeerly to people at a
 time of meeting and if he had to attend for yeerly that
 yeerly was to be in yeerly

Figure 11 First Record of a Town Meeting in Ridgefield, 27 December 1715



Figure 12a

Lannon Homestead believed to have been part of Indian trading post built circa 1710

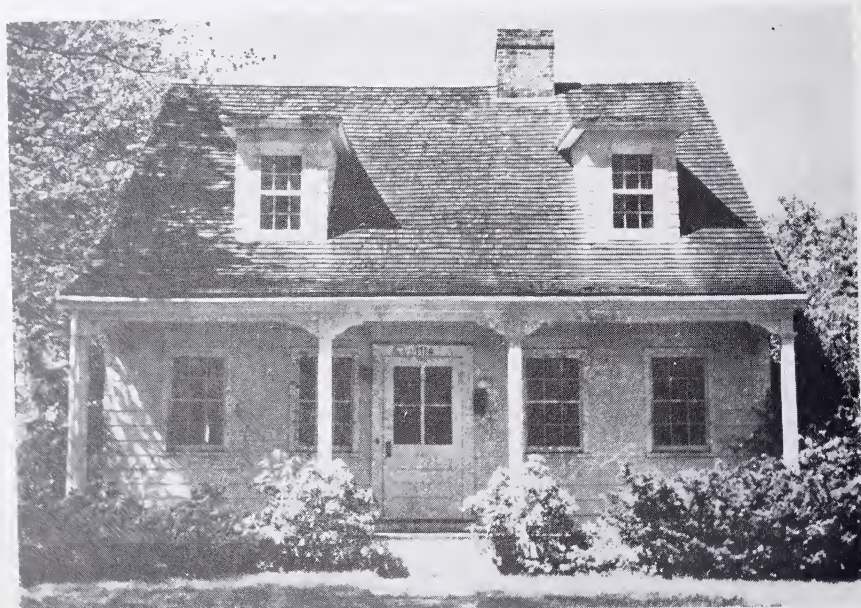


Figure 12b Now the residence of Mrs. Mary Olcott



Figure 13

Residence of Mr. Raymond H. Krotz on site of former Indian trading post of Matthew Seamore



Figure 14 Probably the oldest house in Ridgefield built for first minister in 1713-14
Residence of Miss M. Frances Trainor

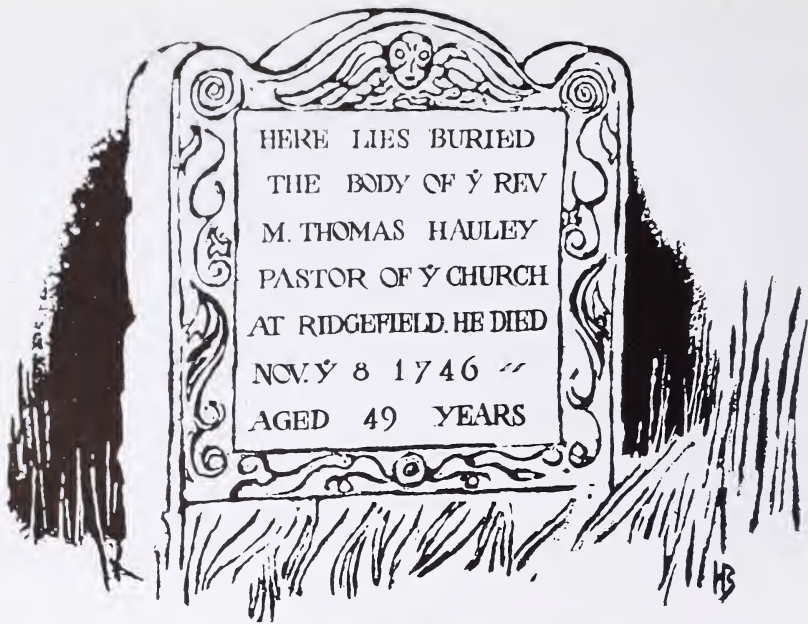


Figure 15 Oldest gravestone in Titicus Cemetery

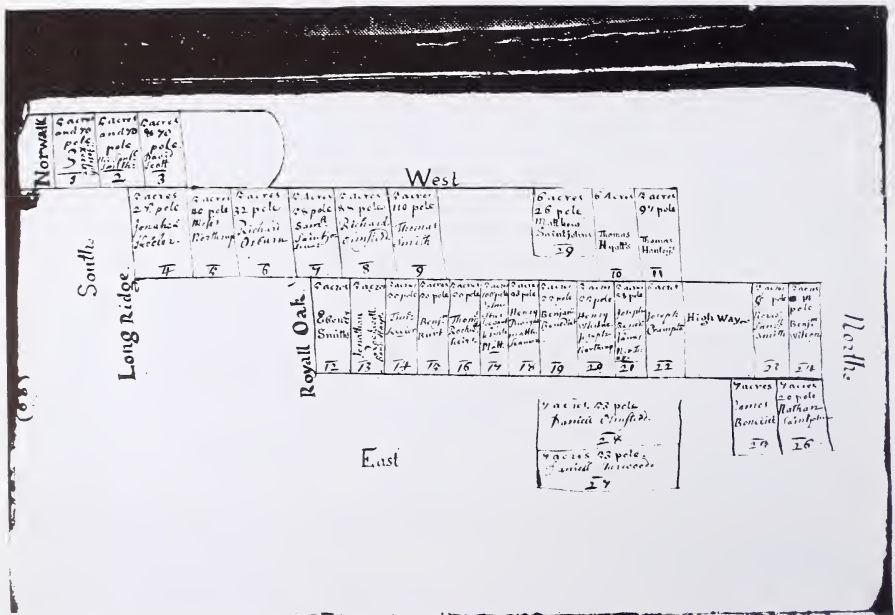


Figure 17 Map of Second Twenty-Acre Land Division

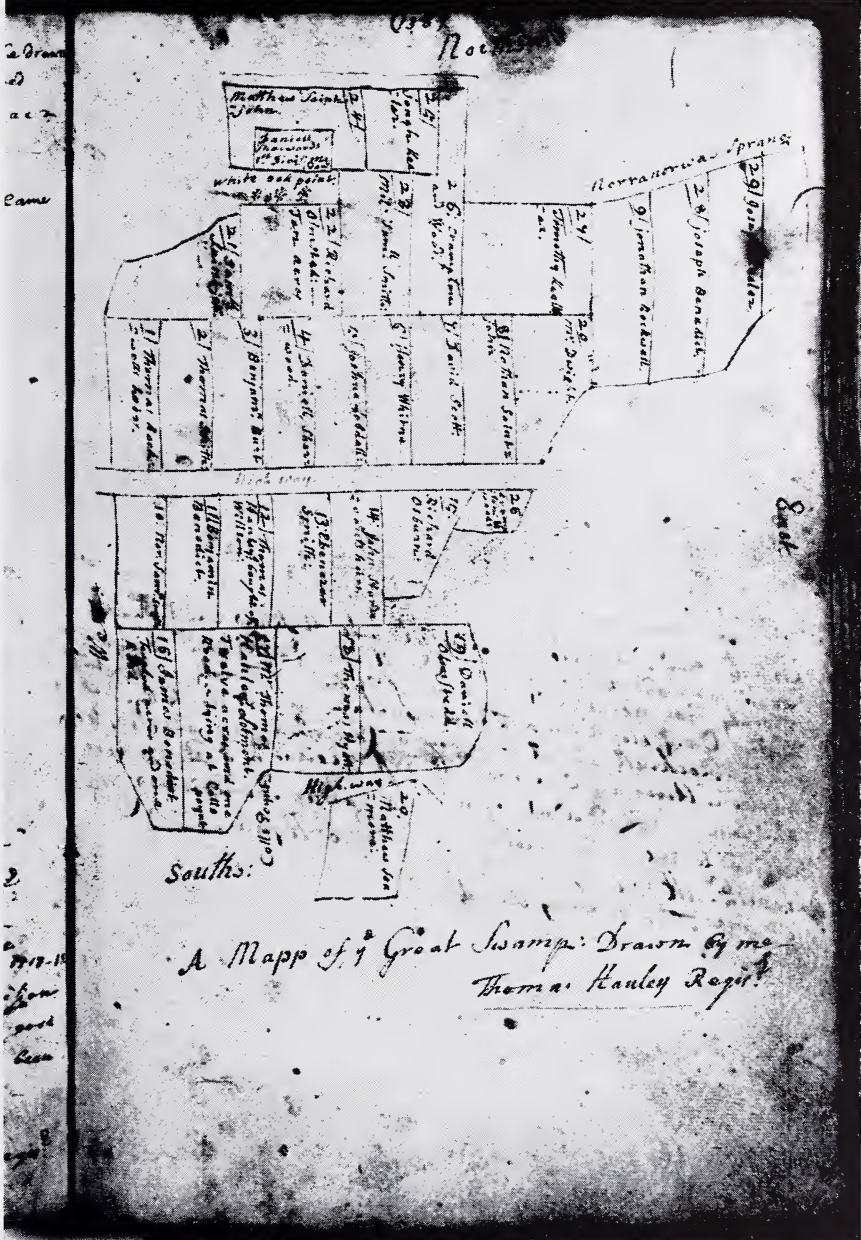


Figure 16 "A Mapp of ye Great Swamp" drawn 1718

This Indenture made this 10th day of March, in the Year of our Sovereign Lord George the Second King of Great Britain: 8: the ninth. Do hereby witness that whereas We Thomas Harley Nathaniel Fisher, Lemuel Smith, Benjamin Boudier Thomas Smith, Richard Chudde (Deceased) Lewis Smith, James Brown, James Burd, Thomas Hyatt, Benjamin Withers, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, James Benedict, Richard Osburn, James Smith, Daniel Clifford, Timothy Keeler, Joseph Keeler, Joseph Northrop and James Brown together at Mann Island, Benjamin Birdsell, and John Thomas Having jointly obtained a patent of Eight thousand acres of a Clog or Equivalent Land, of his Excellence John Montgomery Esqr, late Gov: of the Province of York, and Having since obtained a release of said Patent, and given Orders, of the Southern Liberties of said Province, and also other whose Names are in the said Patent, whereby it is expressly intimated therein, to gather from us, and no Division having been made for the said Province, before We Thomas Harley, Nathaniel Smith, Benjamin Birdsell, Richard Clifford, James Smith, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Osburn, Lemuel Smith, Daniel Osburn, Richard Hyatt, Benjamin Withers, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, Richard Osburn, Lemuel Smith, Daniel Osburn, Benjamin Birdsell, Timothy Keeler, Joseph Northrop and James Brown, do so proceed to make a Division thereof, and so give, grant, Enfeoff, alien, release, convey and confirm, and by these presents, have given, granted, Enfeoffed, aliened, released, conveyed and confirmed, unto the said Richard Chudde, Benjamin Birdsell, Timothy Keeler, Joseph Northrop and James Brown, the following Parts of said Release of a release obtained of said Province and bearing Date herewith, The following Parts of said Land, viz: One Part in the South West Ridge, Beginning at the North West Corner, and run with one Degree and thirteen rods, then South thirteen Degrees, East, with one rod, and an half, then South, Six Degrees East, a hundred and twenty and Six rods; then North twenty-four Degrees, and an half, west and

Figure 18 Indenture between Proprietors and Matthew Seamore

THOMAS FITCH, Esq;
 Captain General, and Commander in Chief
 of His Majesty's Colony of Connecticut in
 NEW-ENGLAND,

To *Vivus Dauchy* Gen. Greeting.

Y^OU, being by the General Assembly of this Colony Accepted to be *Captain of the*
1st Company of Foot in Ridgefield Reporting special
 Trust, and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage, and good Conduct, I do, by Virtue
 of the Letters Patents from the Crown of England to this Corporation, Me there-
 unto's Enabling, Appoint, and Inpower you to take the said *Foot Band* and
 Charge as their *Captain*, and diligently to discharge that Trust, and Mercing your
 Inferiour Officers, and *Soldiers* in the use of their Arms according to the Discipline of War:
 keeping them in good Order, and Government; and Commanding them to Obey You, as
 their *Captain* for His Majesty's Service. And you are to observe all such Orders, and
 Directions as from Time to Time you shall Receive either from Me, or from other your Superior
 Officer, pursuant to the Trust hereby imposed in you. Given under my Hand, and the Seal of this
 Colony, in *New-Haven* the *fourteenth* Day of *May* In the *fourteenth* Year of
 the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Second, KING of Great Britain, &c.
 Annoque Domini, 1756

By his Honour's Command,
Samuel Huntington Secy.

Thos Fitch

Figure 20 Vivus Dauchy's Commission as Captain of Ridgefield Militia 1756



Figure 23 Titicus Bridge in 1880s

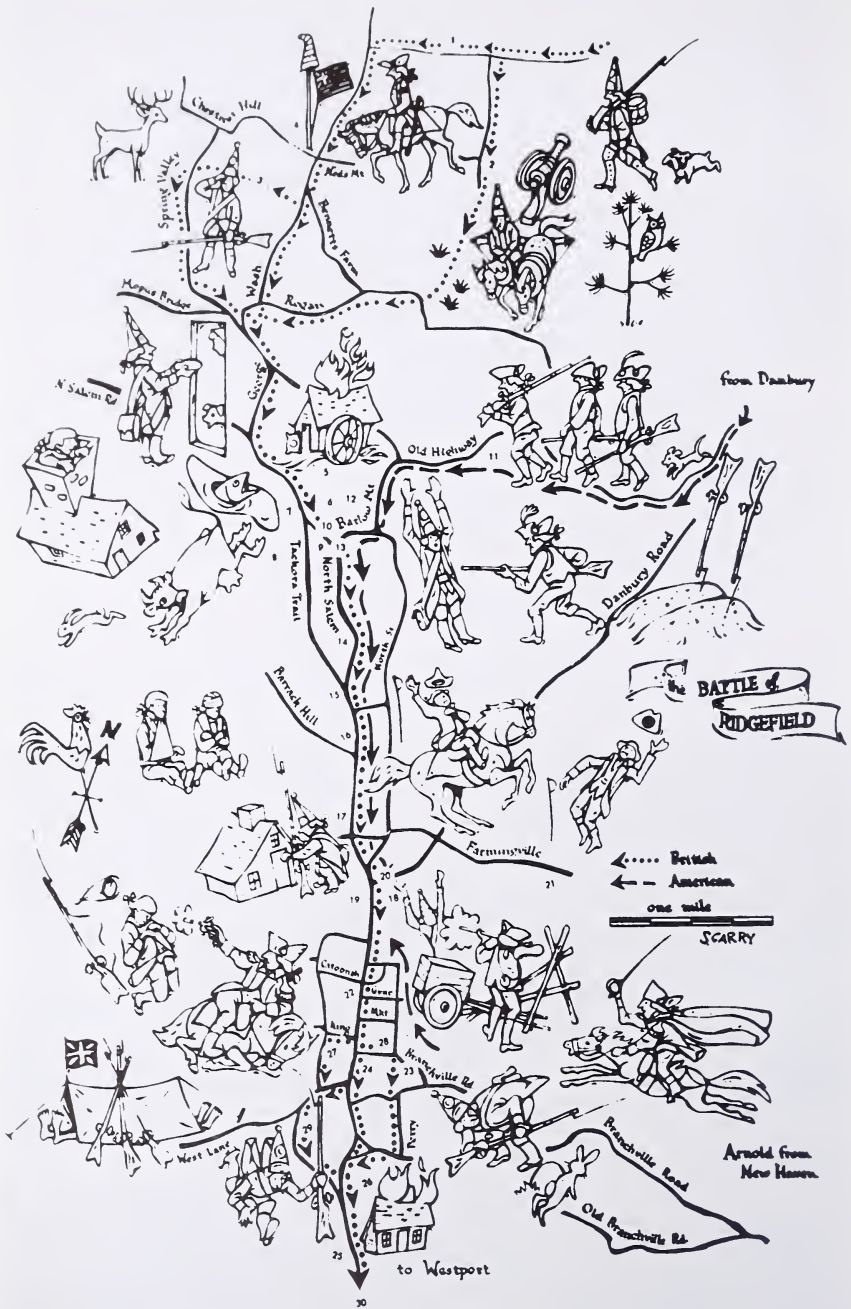


Figure 24 "The Battle of Ridgefield" by Richard Scarry



Figure 26 The Wooster Monument at site of second skirmish

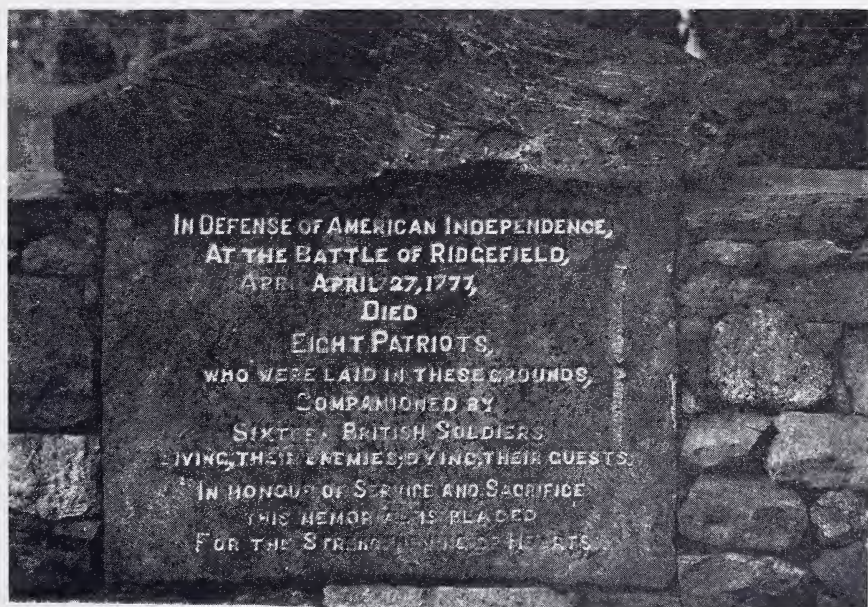


Figure 28 Monument marking site of The Battle of Ridgefield



Figure 29 House used by British as Hospital after Battle of Ridgefield
Now residence of Mrs. C. D. Bailey, Jr.



Figure 30 Dibble Homestead in Danbury where General Wooster died.

The Sum Totall of y^e List of y^e Town of Ridgefield
in y^e Year 1792 as may b^e seen upon Record
amounts to £ 419 - 1 - 4. A true Account Taken
from off y^e Records. Test: J^m Krotz Register.

Figure 19

Chapter III

SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN

The First Houses in Ridgefield are said by tradition to have been built in Farmingville and Limestone Districts before the first homes were built on the Town Street in Ridgefield. Local legend relates that in Farmingville the old Hawkins farm was cleared and a house built in that area, and that in Limestone District a house was built on the former Dann farm. It was reported that a second house was erected on the old Haviland farm, now the property of Mr. Harold Ritch. No documentation of this tradition has been found, however.

Trading Posts are mentioned in several early records of the town. A trading post for bartering with the Indians was maintained by Matthew Seamor on Lot 20, which is near the corner of Main Street opposite the entrance to Branchville Road. A remnant of this structure is now part of the house owned by Mr. Krotz on Main Street, shown in *Figure 13*.

An earlier trading post is believed to have been established in about 1710 at the northern end of the town, behind the present First National Stores. This consisted of a series of simple but well built shacks attached together. During a fire most of the buildings were destroyed and only one frame building remained. This had been constructed into a dwelling and was known as the Lannon homestead (*Figure 12a*) and was later moved to south Main Street, where it is now the home of Mrs. Mary Olcott, illustrated in *Figure 12b*.

Domestic Life in the little community was marked by hardship and privation for the first several decades. In the beginning temporary dwellings were constructed from logs. After a sawmill was established the homesteaders built for permanency from the very first, as is exemplified in the Pink House, the Nathan Scott House and Hawley Homestead, the oldest existing homes in the community. The greater part of the settlers were farmers and it was for the purpose of farming that they had come to Ridgefield. Currency was extremely scarce during the first half century of Ridgefield's establishment and the trades and professions—including the minister, doctor, tailor, shoemaker and other trades and professions—were repaid for their services in rye, Indian corn and wheat.

The land was fertile but covered with rocks which had to be cleared before a good yield could be obtained. Then it became necessary to establish a market for the items produced. It was not until the end of the Revolution that the town became prosperous, and in the interim the settlers traded services and products amongst themselves and gradually grew into an almost self sufficient community.

An interesting document of this period which exists in the Town Records is the Last Will and Testament of Sarah Burt, dated 27 August 1759:

“Know all men by these presents that I, Sarah Burt of Ridgfield in y^e County of Fairfield and y^e Colony of Connecticut in New England, for and in consideration of that parental love that I have and do bear to my daughter Sarah in Ridgfield of y^e County and Colony aforesaid, Do give the severall things hereafter mentioned to her, namely: my two cows and my wearing clothes and I provisions that I have in the house and my right in y^e hay and apples. As witness whereof I have set my hand and seal, this 27 Day of August, A. D. 1759.

Sarah her
 mark Burt.”

The First Blacksmith was Benjamin Burt of Norwalk, who was granted the one/28th part of all purchased lands reserved for a blacksmith, by the Proprietors at a town meeting held 6 May 1712. Burt was to carry on his trade in the new settlement and for his services he was assigned Lot No. 28, situated at the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets, now the site of the Methodist Church.

The First Minister was the Reverend Thomas Hawley. He was assigned the lot reserved for the minister, Lot No. 5, opposite the Green. Hawley arrived in Ridgefield late in 1712 or early in 1713. He was 28, and came from Northampton, Massachusetts. He had been graduated in the Class of 1709 from Harvard College and ordained in 1712. He had recently married Abigail Gold of Fairfield and his young bride accompanied him to the new settlement. A house was built for him and was probably completed in 1713 or 1714. This dwelling has been preserved in remarkable condition (*Figure 14*) and is now the residence of Miss M. Frances Trainor at 41 Main Street.

The First Town Clerk or Register was John Copp of Norwalk and he was chosen at a town meeting on 23 December 1709. He was sworn in on 3 February 1710 and served the town until 1713 when the Rev. Thomas Hawley succeeded him. Copp, who had been one of the first viewers of the land and one of the surveyors of the tract, served also in the capacity of schoolteacher during the first few years of the settlement. Prior to his employment in Ridgefield, he had been a schoolteacher and doctor of medicine in Norwalk.

His appointment is noted on the first page of the Town Record Book immediately prior to the record of the Deed of Purchase from Catoonah. The record stated that

“At a Town Meeting Convained in Ridgfield December 28th 1709. The Town by a Major Vote Have Chosen, and Desire John Copp of y^e Town of Norwalk to Accept y^e office of Register for us to Record what by Law is Required, for y^e Year Insuing. and on February 3^d 1709/10 was Sworn, according to Law.

Recorded February 3^d 1709/10 per
John Copp Recorder.”

The First Town Meetings were held in Norwalk until a sufficient number of the Proprietors had established homes in the new tract. The first record of a town meeting in Ridgefield is entered in the Town Record Book on Page 29 under date of 27 December 1715 (*Figure 11*). The previous page records some entries of ear marks of the Proprietors. During the early period the town records were kept in a haphazard fashion, apparently being entered at occasional intervals at the convenience of the Town Register.

Tavern Keepers were considered to be as much a necessity as shoemakers and a minister, and they were appointed by the Proprietors at town meetings. The first tavern keeper chosen was Richard Osburn at a meeting in 1715.

At a meeting held 22 April 1709 Ebenezer Smith of Milford had been permitted to move into the settlement and he was assigned Lot No. 26. At a town meeting held 8 December 1718 he was chosen Tavern Keeper. At his home (now the site of the present Library) travellers were accommodated during the following years. In 1797 Amos Smith, a descendant, built Smith's Inn on the site.

The First Miller was Daniel Sherwood who signed the Mill Covenant on 30 January 1716 whereby he agreed with the proprietors to erect a grist mill in consideration of the 29th part of the purchased lands. The mill was specified to be situated at the outlet of Mamasasco Pond, and Sherwood agreed that on every Tuesday and Friday he would grind all sorts of grain for the proprietors into meal. His toll was to be 3 quarts of each bushel of Indian corn, 2 quarts of each bushel of wheat and 1 quart of each bushel of malt. The mill was erected at the designated site and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant by Sherwood and his successors until the 19th Century. Sherwood was assigned Lot No. 29, just north of the home lot of the blacksmith, Benjamin Burt.

The First Physician of the town, after Dr. John Copp, was Dr. Jonathan Abbott who lived in Ridgefield as early as 1720 and served as Collector of Taxes.

A Horse Brand was assigned to the town at a General Assembly held in Hartford in May 1714 (*Figure 10*). The mark to be used in the town to brand horses was the figure of an inverted heart. Ear marks had been noted in town records from 1712 but it was not until 9 December 1728 that the Proprietors voted that “all Ear Marks of Creatures (to) be entered in y^e Town Book.” The only example of the use of the symbol of the inverted heart in any existing

memorabilia related to Ridgefield's history a thumb-latch which may have belonged to Isaac Keeler's grist mill, which is reproduced in *Figure 25*.

The **First Pound** was built at the church yard on the village Green. Prior to its establishment, cattle, horses, pigs and other animals were allowed to run free in the streets and property, often to the distress of the owners on whom they trespassed. At the town meeting of 27 December 1727 Joseph Lees was chosen "Keeper of y^e Pound Key". Other pounds became a necessity. On 19 December 1737 the town voted permission to the inhabitants of the Ridgebury area to establish a pound on the tract set aside for the meeting house. On 18 December 1753 it was voted to build a pound on Catoonah Street to be

" . . . built in y^e Lane northward of where David Scott lives to be 30 foot in Length & 25 foot in Breadth & to Consist or be built with 4 sills and 4 plates & four new posts & Eight Braces all of good Sound White Oak timber hewn Square & well framed together & to be 5 foot between y^e sills & plates."

As the town expanded, it became necessary to add other pounds. On 15 December 1766 a pound was erected near Matthew Seamor's trading post on south Main Street and another in Ridgebury near the burial ground. A pound to be built in Limestone was ordered on 15 December 1789 and another was established opposite the South Ridgebury School House.

On 14 December 1795 the town proprietors voted to build a Pound on

" . . . y^e South side the Rocks, in the street on y^e west side the Path near Samuel Stebbins Dwelling House not to contain more ground in it, than is equal to Forty feet Square."

A year later on 12 December 1796 the decision was rescinded and the location of the pound was moved northward from its situation between the present Wagner & Pierrepoint residences to the corner of the present Pound Street, and it

" . . . shall be set in the Street North of & near the Bridge north of Samuel Stebbins Barn at such place as the Selectmen shall choose."

Although the number of public pounds had grown, the problem of straying animals persisted. At a town meeting on 14 December 1773 it was voted that "swine should be free commoners in this town for the future". At the same time it was voted that "the blanders of horses for the future in Ridgefield have liberty to brand any horse kind at each of their own doors."

On 4 December 1786 it was further voted that "Swine have liberty to go at large on the Highways and Commons provided they are Ringed after they are two months old, and that in the Months of December, January and February they may go at large without Ringing." It was not until October 1, 1854 that it was voted that "Horses, Neat Cattle, Mules, Swine and Geese shall be prohibited from running at large on the Highways or Commons of this town".

In a later period a town Pound was maintained at Silver Spring near the Wilton Line by Charles Nash (1794-1878) who lived at the corner of Silver Spring and St. John Roads.

The Whipping Post was another of the public installations in the new settlement. It was situated at the southerly corner of Main Street and Branchville Road.

The Meeting House was the first public building in the settlement. It was erected on the Green at the intersection of Main Street and Branchville Road within four years of the town's founding. This building served many purposes—as a school, town hall and place of worship.

The First School was probably taught in the meeting house on the Green on south Main Street. John Copp, the Town Register, was probably the first schoolmaster and may have served until 1713, when he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Hawley, the first minister.

The first mention that can be found relating to schools occurs in the minutes of a town meeting in 1721 when it was voted that “. . . eight pounds shall be raised for y^e support of a school.” In 1725 the General Assembly released the citizens of Ridgefield from payment of taxes with the provision that no money was to be drawn out of the treasury for the school.

In 1726 there is mention in the records of a town meeting of steps to be taken “to repair the schoolhouse”, which was then located on the Green. This was undoubtedly the same building which was used for a meeting house and town house. At about this period it was enlarged with an addition at the easterly side. When the first church was built, the addition was removed, and the original building was maintained as a schoolhouse until the first town house was constructed in 1743.

On 7 September 1744 it was voted that “what is remaining of the old school-house be sold at a vendue on Tuesday September 18th.”

On 22 December 1741 the town resolved that “each scholar shall find a third part of a Cord of Good Sound Wood, and there shall be allowed after ye rate of 18 shillings a Cord out of ye scholars rate”.

On 24 December 1742 at a “sheep meeting” the town voted that “the money coming for the hire of the sheep last year shall be given as a Bounty to help maintain in Town School forever, and when the money is gathered it shall be delivered to the committee that is appointed to take care of the bounty money given by the Government to support y^e school, and ordered by the above said vote to let out the said money as ye money is that comes from the government, and to improve the use thereof to pay it towards ye maintenance of said town school forever.”

It was the practice of the town to maintain a considerable number of sheep which was lent to the highest bidder twice weekly to lay in his plow land during the night for the purpose of enriching the soil. It was the toll collected for this service that was to be applied for the expenses of the school. This practice of sheep hire was continued until about 1760. According to Goodrich, the town owned as many as two thousand sheep

The town schools were maintained by four sources of revenue: by the sale of lands in Litchfield County by the State and appropriated by the schools; by the produce of an excise duty on Rum and Tea; by the 40/ on the thousand, so-called, by the produce of the sale of western lands, and finally, by a tax levied on the scholars in case of deficiency.

In 1742 the inhabitants of Ridgebury District were released from the payment of a school tax with the provision that they maintain their own school in Ridgebury for at least six months of every year.

It was voted in a town meeting held 18 March 1746 "that there shall be two women Schools be kept from y^e first of April next till y^e first of October ensuing, y^e one of s^d Schools to be kept at y^e Town house and y^e other at y^e house that was built for that purpose, a little northward of Jonah Smith^s."

On 24 December 1753 it was voted to have "two Men Schools kept 3 Months between this time and y^e first of April next one of them at y^e Town house and y^e other at y^e School house near L^t Jonah Smith^s. It was also voted in s^d meeting that there shall be three School Mistresses provided and put into Schools y^e first of April next and continued therein until y^e first of October next, one of them to be kept in y^e School house neat L^t Jonah Smiths, one of them in y^e Town house, and one of them in or near Benⁿ Rockwell's house." It was also voted that two Men Schools be kept by two Masters.

In 1742 the second school, other than the one in the Town house, was located on north Main Street approximately at the property boundary between the estate of the late Dr. E. J. Wagner and the property of Mrs. J. J. Pierrepont.

The Town House was built in 1743 at the southwest corner of the Green in what was later the yard of Irad Hawley. On 29 December 1743 the Proprietors at a town meeting voted to build a Town House which would be one storey in height, twenty six feet long and eighteen feet wide with a chimney at one end. The building was to be covered with good cedar shingles, which were to be three feet long if laid upon sawed lath and eighteen or twenty four inches if laid on sawed boards. Other specifications included two good floors, a door and clapboards of white wood. There were to be three windows, one to be on the back side of the building, to be twenty inches wide and twenty four inches long. The other two windows were to have three and a half feet of glass and the casement was to run into the wall. A good hearth was to be provided, and the proprietors made provision for such minor details as a well fastened bench which was to be raised inside the building, a good lock and key at the door, and the jams and the top of the chimney to be well painted.

Gamaliel Northrop had offered to build the Town House according to the proprietors' specifications for the sum of £97-17s. old tenure and he agreed that it would be completed by 1 December 1744. A part payment of £50 was to be made to him by 1 April. In the year after it was built, the building was moved to a location south of the Pound on the Green. It was used for a school-room as well as a Town House for several decades.

When the Independent School-house was under construction in 1786 on the premises of the present Veteran's Memorial Park, slightly south of the Community Center near the street, financial difficulties were encountered after the frame had been raised. The Proprietors of the town voted to consign the old Town House building to be used for the completion of the School, with the provision that the Town would thereafter be enabled to use the School for the meetings of the Proprietors, of the First Society and of the Freemen of the town, and that seating facilities would be provided in the new building for the purpose.

In 1830 the Town purchased the first floor of the Masonic Hall, which had previously been a store, and converted the interior for town meetings and other community use. This served as the Town House until 1876 when a new Town Hall was constructed on the Town Lot at a cost of six thousand dollars. This building was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1895. Following its destruction, a small wooden building was erected for temporary use by the town offices at the rear of the Town Lot. In the following year, 1896, the present edifice was built with the assistance of contributions from several New York businessmen.

The First Sign Post was placed on "y^e White Oak Tree Standing near Henry Whitne's" near the corner of Main Street and Branchville Road in accordance with a resolution passed in a town meeting on 9 January 1726/27.

Additional sign posts became necessary with the expansion of the town and at a town meeting held 18 December 1738 it was voted to have others installed on a tree at or near Matthew Benedict's home, a tree near Jabez Rockwell's home, on a tree near Sergeant Daniel Sherwood's, another near Justice Benedict and one other in the vicinity of Joseph Keeler's home at Mamanasco.

Other sign posts were ordered at the town meeting of 11 December 1761 and designated to be within the area of the Meeting-house Yard, to be continued there indefinitely. On 22 December 1788 it was voted to have a sign post installed on an oak tree near the house of Thomas Smith, on the corner of Main Street and Prospect Street opposite the present theatre sign.

A Windmill was constructed, following the request presented by Burrell Betts and Joseph Betts of Norwalk at a town meeting held 19 December 1752. The construction of a building and windmill was to be an experiment, and met with the unanimous approval of the Town.

The First Carpenter in Ridgefield was probably Joseph Keeler, one of the first Proprietors. He undoubtedly built, or assisted in the construction of, a number of the first houses erected in the town.

In 1715 he was appointed by major vote at a town meeting to repair the meeting house and in the following year he was designated to be the first lister and sealer of weights and measures in Ridgefield. In December 1722 he was selected to be the surveyor for the town and three years later, in 1725, he was

appointed one of the committee to fix the boundary between Norwalk and Ridgefield.

Keeler was commissioned a Justice of the Peace in 1735 and continued in that capacity for many years.

In 1735 he was appointed to the position of Town Miller and served in that work for the next several years. He died in 1757 at the age of seventy-four.

The First Vital Statistics for the town of Ridgefield can be derived only with extreme difficulty. Most of the early births, deaths and marriages are entered in the second half of the Land Records Volume I. They were not entered consecutively, but according to the inclination and time available of the Town Clerk. Then, when a birth occurred in the family of one of the Proprietors, the opportunity would be taken to enter also the names and dates of birth of all the other children in the family. No division was made between the births, deaths and marriages that occurred in Norwalk immediately prior to moving to Ridgefield, and the ones that occurred in the new settlement. Following are three births, three deaths and three marriages which were most probably the first to have occurred in Ridgefield as compiled from this earliest record of vital statistics:

The First Births of children in Ridgefield include Sarah, the daughter of James and Sarah Benedict, born 23 May 1709; Benjamin, son of Benjamin and Jane Williams, born 17 June 1709; and Gideon, son of Joseph and Ann Benedict, born 15 March 1710.

The First Deaths of persons in the new settlement included Uzziell, the son of Thomas and Experience Hyatt, who died on 14 February 1712; Samuel Keeler, one of the original Proprietors, who died at the age of fifty-eight on 19 May 1713; and the death of Sarah Keeler, his widow, who passed away on 15 April 1714.

The First Marriage to have taken place in Ridgefield appears to have been the marriage of Matthew St. John with Anne Whitne of Norwalk on 13 October 1709. The next in chronological order was the marriage of Daniell Olmsted with Hannah Ketchum on 9 May 1711. The next was the marriage of Jonah Keeler with Ruth Smith of Norwalk on 5 November 1713.

The First Library was established in 1795 and consisted of 150 volumes, according to Goodrich.

The First Cemetery was established by the first lottery to be located at the southernmost point of the town. A section of this old burial ground continues to be maintained and is marked by a memorial stone and granite markers at the corners. Two gravestones remain, one marking the grave of Sarah (wife of Richard) Osburn who died 6 November 1719, and the other is a slate marker for the grave of Captain Matthew Benedict who died 7 July 1757. In about

1850 East Wilton Road was cut through the old burial ground and many tombstones and remains were removed.

The Second Cemetery was established at a Proprietors Meeting held on 27 January 1735 by a major vote which

“ . . . by their order do appoint for y^e town’s use a certain Spot or piece of land for their burial burying place or yard; s^d Spot or parcell of Land lying a little Southward of that lott or homestead that Milford Sam^l Smith bought of Drinkwaters, and Northward of y^e Cart-path or Rhode that comes over Titticus River.”

This burying ground comprises the oldest part of the present cemetery in Titticus. The oldest lettered monument in this cemetery was believed to be one marking the grave of Reverend Thomas Hawley, the first minister, who died in 1738 (*Figure 15*). However, in 1932 a field stone was uncovered just east-erly of the Hawley monument which is dated 6 December 1736. Another field stone with crude lettering in the same area which was found at the same time is marked “M. O. Aug. / 3 1746”. This is believed to be the marker of the grave of Mary Olmsted, the daughter of Richard Olmsted, who died 3 August 1746.

Crime and Scandal—According to an account of Ridgefield written by the Rev. Samuel Goodrich in 1800, to that date no one in the town had been convicted of any crime punishable by the laws of the land with death. There were two suicides, one male and one female, and each with families.

However, a study of the town records reveals that there were occasional social problems of lesser importance. For instance the Town Book recorded on 25 January 1750/51 that

“Then we y^e subscribers warned Annie Hix y^e wife of old Hix to depart out of y^e Town of Ridgfield upon penalty of suffering as y^e law provides.

Jonah Smith
Timothy Benedict } Selectmen.

Slaves were owned in Ridgefield during the first century and among the town records is found a report that on 13 February 1740 David Scott 1st sold to Vivus Dauchy “a certain Negro woman named Dinah and a Negro boy named Peter to be slaves or servants during the term of their natural lives together with all their waring apparel . . .”

Among papers found in the Keeler Tavern was the following document:

“Know all men by these Presents that I William Johnson of Norwalk for and in Consideration of the sum of Twelve pounds New York Money Received to my full satisfaction of Esther Kellogg of s^d Norwalk the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge have Bargained, Sold and Delivered, and by these Presents do Bargain, Sell and Deliver, unto the s^d Esther Kellogg one Negro Child about fourteen months of Age. Named Betty . . . to have and to hold the

s^d Bargained Betty unto the s^d Esther Kellogg her Executors, administrators & Assigns for Ever and I the s^d William for Myself, my Executors, & Administrators Shall & Will Warrant and forever Defend Against all Persons by these presents the said Bargained Negro Child and the Said Esther Kellogg her Executors Administrators & Assigns for Ever. In Witness whereof I have hereunto Set my hand & Seal this 10th Day of April A. Domini 1769.

In presents of
Goold Hoyt
Stephen Hoyt.

William Johnson (seal).”

Esther Kellogg was married to Timothy Keeler, Jr. of Ridgefield on 6 December 1770. Keeler had just purchased the new building on south Main Street which he was later to open to the public as the Keeler Tavern and which exists to this date as the home of Mr. W. P. Welch. The slave child was brought to Ridgefield in 1770 and lived with the Keeler family until its death many years later.

Contrary to popular belief the negro woman named Phyllis who was employed in the household of Miss Anna Ressiguie, the grand-daughter of Timothy Keeler, Jr. was not the daughter of the negro child Betty. Miss Phyllis Dubois was well known and greatly respected in Ridgefield. She was born in Ulster County in New York State, the daughter of a slave woman who had purchased the freedom of her children. Phyllis was brought to Ridgefield early in the 19th Century as a very small child and placed in the service of the Ressiguie family which she served for over seventy years. Phyllis died at the age of eighty-three. In *Figure 71* Miss Anna Ressiguie is shown as a small child with Phyllis.

Several town records have been found that relate not to the purchase but to the freeing of slaves. On 24 November 1777 Jonathan Ingersoll gave his freedom to Cyphax, a young negro slave twenty years of age.

On 8 January 1782 Matthew Keeler gave his freedom to his negro man slave, Dick, in consideration of the latter's long and faithful service.

In the town records is also given the birth of a slave child named Nancy on 14 December 1795, born of the slave woman Jenny belonging to Stephen Smith. The child was to become free, according to state law, at the age of twenty-five.

At a town meeting held 30 August 1798 it was voted to recommend and nominate Benjamin Smith, Eliphalet Brush and Nathan Dauchy as assistant assessors to ascertain the value of houses and lands and to enumerate slaves in accordance with a recent Act of Congress.

Land Allotments were not always satisfactory and there were instances where one or more of the Proprietors desired to change the property which they had received in one of the divisions. In one of the earliest existing deeds dated December 1727, James Northrop took advantage of the provision made by the Proprietors for just such instances, to exchange his additional division because of the inconvenience of its location.

Later Twenty Acre Divisions were made by the Proprietors at various times during the 18th Century. The fourth such division was completed in January 1740/41 and a sixth such division took place several years later in November 1744.

The Last Proprietors' Deed issued in Ridgefield was given and recorded on 25 April 1815 for three roods and twenty-three rods of land near the easterly and northerly sides of Great Swamp.

Town Boundaries were established by marked trees or piled stones, and it became necessary to have the boundaries restored or re-marked every few years. For this purpose the selectmen of the town appointed perambulators. On 10 April 1733 the town of Ridgefield appointed Joseph Keeler, Samuel Smith and Nathan Saint John to join two perambulators from Norwalk to survey the line from the Norwalk-Ridgefield boundary to the New York State line. In 1744 James Benedict, Thomas Hyatt and Nathan Saint John met with two perambulators from Danbury to walk the line between Danbury and Ridgefield and reestablish the markers. As time went on there was some problem connected with the line between Ridgefield and Norwalk because a town meeting held 3 December 1798 appointed Joshua King to act as agent to procure "the Testimony of some Aged Gentlemen, to perpetuate the remembrance of the Bounds between Ridgefield and Norwalk Towns".

The Danbury Boundary was perambulated and the monuments repaired and re-marked since early in the settlement's history. Part of the boundary runs through the wild area of Pine Mountain, which has an elevation of 1062 feet above sea level, and Spruce Mountain, which has an elevation of 1020 feet. For this part of the boundary there has never been a defined line.

During the second part of the 19th Century a large iron bar was imbedded into a large rock to further define the line by Ebenezer Keeler of Whipstick District. Keeler served the town of Ridgefield as Selectman for a total of twelve years between 1875 and 1890. It is not known exactly when Keeler set the marker, but it is believed to have been in 1889.

In subsequent perambulations of the line the iron bar has not been discovered. At least it was not noted as late as 1937.

The Oblong is a tract of land which was given by the State of Connecticut to New York State in exchange for an equivalent tract which was acquired by Connecticut. Considerable contention had existed about the boundary between the two states since the middle of the 17th Century. When the Connecticut-New York boundary was established in 1664, Greenwich, Stamford and portions of several other towns came within the Connecticut boundary. In exchange, New York demanded a tract of sixty-two thousand acres of land which was popularly known as the Oblong because of its shape. Finally, in 1731 an area of sixty-one thousand, four hundred forty acres was relinquished to New York State by Connecticut.

The matter was not yet permanently settled, however, for in 1855 the line was again in dispute and it was not until the sessions of 1880 to 1881 of the legislatures of both States that the final settlement was made.

The tract of land which the township of Ridgefield lost in the exchange included the Waccabuc Lakes and Peach Lake, as well as part of the Salems.

At the time that the Oblong question was at its height, the Proprietors of Ridgefield attempted to annex a small tract of land as yet unclaimed, at the northern border of the town between New Fairfield, Danbury, New York State and Ridgebury. The tract was granted to Ridgefield in June 1731 and was annexed to the town. Anticipating the approval of the General Assembly, the Proprietors of Ridgefield at a town meeting held 19 March 1732 appointed a committee to meet with representatives from Danbury to establish the boundaries between the two towns. The Ridgefield Committee consisted of Daniel Olmsted, Lieutenant Ebenezer Smith and Joseph Keeler.

John Barlow was one of the most interesting personalities in Ridgefield during the 18th Century. Indications exist in old documents that Barlow may have been a man of greater importance than can be established with certainty at this time. John Barlow was the son of Jabez Barlow of Fairfield, Connecticut and he was born in that town on 22 October 1744. On 10 January 1769 he married Sarah Whitney of Greenfield, Connecticut and was established in Ridgefield in that same year if not before. A number of children were born to the Barlows in Ridgefield, the first of which was a son John born 13 July 1769, followed at two year intervals by three more sons—Jabez, Mansfield and Samuel-Whitney and five daughters—Abigail, Amy, Amelia, Polly and Anna.

Barlow established a blacksmith shop on Barlow Mountain on the highway between Bennetts Farm Road and the Ledges Road. He did a thriving business shoeing horses, for this was then one of the stage coach routes. Barlow also produced many wrought iron appliances for the home as well as tools for the farm and for the trades. His hand wrought andirons were famous in Ridgefield. According to local tradition in Scotland District, Barlow was also a gunsmith during the years of the Revolution. His name does not appear in the rolls of the Committee of Safety of Connecticut, however, nor have any weapons been found which bear his name. It seems much more likely that he repaired guns, but did not make them.

Another tradition of the district is that John Barlow was the inventor of the Barlow knife, which was very popular in rural communities in the past century and a half.

In one of the old deeds of property sale in the town records dated 30 January 1787, John Barlow sold to Jacob Ressiguie, Jr. for the sum of twenty-one pounds lawful money his home lot in Ridgefield including his dwelling and barn and eight and a half acres of land.

Several years before, Barlow and his wife had petitioned in a Memorial to the General Assembly at Hartford for permission to sell the real estate of Nehemiah Whitney, deceased. This was presumably property belonging to the estate of Barlow's father-in-law. Permission was granted to the Barlows in the May term of 1785.

In about 1802 Barlow moved from Ridgefield to make his home in Ballston, New York. His house and shop, which were located on the old highway just north of the main entrance to the residence of the late Mr. Seth Low Pierrepont, were abandoned for a number of years and only the foundations now remain. During World War II a considerable quantity of iron was collected from the grounds for the scrap drive.

John Copp, who played several important roles in the founding and settling of Ridgefield, has received little consideration from local or other historians, despite the fact that he was quite prominent in the colony of Connecticut during his lifetime. John Copp was a doctor of medicine of Norwalk, and he served the Governor and General Assembly in several capacities. At a meeting of the Governor's Council in New Haven on 24 July 1711, it was ordered that a letter be dispatched to Dr. Copp "desiring him to attend and go as Doctor in the expedition against Canada, which letter was drawn and sent accordingly." On 3 August 1711 the Governor's Council

"Agreed and Resolved, that Doctor John Copp shall be allowed and paid out of the Colony treasury the sum of six pounds a month, in money, for his service on the present expedition against Canada, and that he shall have a suit of the regimental cloaths, gratis, and have one month's pay or wages paid him forthwith."

Although the General Assembly had concluded to have three "phisitians or chirurgeons" to go with their regiment to Canada, only two could be found, Laborie and Copp, and accordingly the sum of twenty shillings per month was paid to each of them.

In October 1711 it was recorded that the General Assembly

". . . do choose and appoint Mr. John Copp of Norwalk to be Surveyor of Land in the county of Fairfield, and order that he be sworn to that trust."

At the Assembly's session of 10 May 1716 Copp as the appointed surveyor of Fairfield was directed to assist in a special survey for the colony.

In addition to his other activities, Copp had political inclinations as well, for on 10 May 1716 he was named one of the two representatives from Norwalk to serve in the General Assembly at Hartford.

At the same time he petitioned the Assembly to have the sum of eight pounds seven shillings and eight pence abated on the interest of one hundred pounds which had been lent to him by the State Treasury. It was voted in the affirmative.

In view of Copp's various public trusts during the first several decades of the 18th Century, it is surprising to find that he was able to serve as Town Register and schoolteacher in Ridgefield from 1709 to 1713.

Daniel Sherwood, the first miller in Ridgefield, was born at Fairfield in 1686, the eldest son of Isaac Sherwood. In 1711 he married Elizabeth Bradley and had eight children born in Ridgefield. Although he signed the Mill Covenant in 30 January 1716, Sherwood apparently was already living in Ridgefield and he probably moved to the town from Fairfield almost immediately after his marriage in 1711. His first child, Hannah, was born in Ridgefield on 7 March 1712. Further evidence of Sherwood's early residence is found in the Deed of Second Purchase of land from the Indians in 1715 in which the name of Sherwood appears with others. Furthermore, reference is made in that deed to one of the boundaries as a certain white-wood tree "near where ye mill now stands". Finally, the Covenant itself begins with the words "Know ye that I Daniel Sherwood of *Ridgefield*".

Sherwood was a prominent man in town affairs. He served as a senior warden of the Church of England, and together with Alexander Ressiguie was under bonds with a penalty of forty pounds "to see that a minister of the Church of England shall receive the rates due from the members of the Church in Ridgefield for the support of the ministry." This document was dated 27 April 1737. Under date of 1732 the names of Daniel Sherwood and his two oldest sons, Daniel and Nathan, appear among those who had paid their ministerial dues.

Sherwood continued the operation of the grist mill at the outlet of Mamasco Lake until his death in 1749.

He was succeeded by his eldest son and second child, Daniel Sherwood, Jr., who was also a miller. On 18 March 1747 Daniel, Jr. bought land from his brother, Nathan which adjoined the Colony line and was bounded on the east "by the brook running through Moppo's bog." He acquired considerable real estate which was divided into eleven shares upon his death, which occurred at some time before 2 January 1787. His last will is of considerable interest for the division of property is carefully delineated, with current values for buildings and land. A dwelling was valued at 25 pounds, a barn at 5 pounds and woodland was worth one pound per acre.

Although the graves of Daniel Sherwood, Sr. and his wife have been located in the Titicus Cemetery, the burial plots of Daniel, Jr. and his family have not been found even after the most extensive search of the cemeteries in the vicinity of Ridgefield. It is believed that inasmuch as many of the Sherwoods were members of the Episcopal Church in Ridgebury, they may have been buried in the burial ground of the Episcopal Church of Ridgebury which was located at the junction of Ridgebury Street and Ned's Mountain Road. Most of the stones in this cemetery were thrown into excavations for fill, or used for foundations under buildings, and to the present day several may be

seen in the cellar wall of the nearby Coley house, now the residence of Captain Clifford Zieger.

Matthew Seamore 2nd, one of the original Proprietors, was born in 1691 in Norwalk, the son of Matthew Seamore 1st who was born in May 1669 in the same town. Matthew Seamore 2nd, married Hannah Smith in Ridgefield on 14 June 1722, and three children were born to them. The oldest was Matthew 3rd, born 7 April 1723, followed by Thomas born in 1727, and by Hannah born on 15 November 1737.

Tradition relates that Seamore established a trading post with the Indians on the site of the residence of Mr. Raymond H. Krotz on Main Street. He died in Ridgefield on 30 April 1768. After the first generation in Ridgefield, the family changed the spelling of the name to "Seymour", which continues.

The Seamore Indenture is a significant contract made with Matthew Seamore by fourteen proprietors of the town of Ridgefield on 5 March 1732. This agreement related to an area of fifty thousand acres in the Oblong and/or equivalent lands acquired by the Proprietors by a "pattent" from the Governor of New York Province which by this document was being conveyed to Seamore in consideration of a release for a tract of land in Ridgefield's "southwest Ridges". Seamore was enjoined by the agreement to cultivate three acres of every fifty within the space of three years in accordance with the Patent's terms, and specified that furthermore Seamore or his heirs was required to pay a yearly quit rent of two shillings sixpence, for each hundred acres payable by lotts to the King.

The original document bearing the signatures and seals of nine of the Proprietors is among the family papers of Robert Seymour, a direct descendant of Matthew Seamore, one of the parties of the contract, and the founder of the Seymour family in Ridgefield.

The agreement, which is illustrated in *Figure 18*, reads in part as follows:

"This Indenture made this 10th day of March, in y^e 5th Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord George y^e Second, King of Great Brittain & Annoq. Domini 1731/2. Witnesseth, that Whereas We Thomas Hawley, Nathan St. John, Sam.^{ll} Smith, Benjamin Benedict, Thomas Smith, Richard Olmsted, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Smith, Daniel Olmsted, Timothy Keeler, Jonah Keeler, Joseph Northrop, and James Brown, together with Adam Ireland, Benjamin Birdsell and John Thomas having Joyntly obtain'd a pattent of Fifty thousand acres of y^e Oblong or Equivalent lands, of his Excellency, John MontGomery Esqr., late Govn^r of y^e Province of New York and having since Obtain'd a release of said Ireland, Birdsell and John Thomas, of the southern ten (miles?) of said Pattent and others also whose names are not in said Pattent or release, Being interested through investigation from us, and no Division having been made of y^e promises, wherefore we Thomas Hawley, Nathan St. John, Sam.^{ll} Smith, Benjamin

Benedict, Richard Olmsted, Thomas Smith, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Burt, Thomas Hyatt, Benjamin Willson, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, Richard Osburn, Sam.^{ll} Smith, Daniel Olmsted, Timothy Keeler, Jonah Keeler, Joseph Northrop, and James Brown. Do not proceed to make a division thereof, and do give, Grant, Enseosse, Alicne, release, convey and Confirm and by these presents have Given, Granted, Enseossed, aliened, released and confirmed unto Matthew Seamore his heirs and assigns forever, on consideration of a release obtain'd of said Seamore and bearing Date herewith the Following Tracts of Land, viz., One tract in y^e Southwest Ridges beginning at Joseph Northrop's South East Corner, and runs west one degree south thirteen rods, then South Fourteen degrees East, Forty seven rods and a half then South Six degrees East, one hundred and twenty and Six rods, then East ten degrees North Sixty rods, then North twenty four degrees and a half west one . . .

. . . do hereby Oblidge Said Seamore his heirs and assigns Effectively to cultivate within y^e Space of three years from y^e date hereof, three acres of Every Fifty and that according to pattend, and tis to be understood, and tis the true intent and meaning of both parties of y^e Said Seamore his heirs and assigns shall always pay ye Yearly Quit rent of at ye rate of two Shillings and Six Pence.

For each hundred acres reserved payable by Lotts, pattend unto our Lord the King, at Lady Day yearly, and this we insert as an abiding duty and obligation always attending this release, and as a Special Condition thereof. Furthermore We y^e said Thos. Hawley, Nathan St. John, Sam.^{ll} Smith, Benjamin Benedict, with all y^e above Named Proprietors and y^e Survivors and Survivors of us our heirs and assigns, shall and will at any time hereafter, upon y^e reasonable request and at y^e Cost and Charge in y^e Law of y^e said Seamore his heirs and assigns, make, do, achnowledge, Execute and perform all such further and other, reasonable act and acts, thing and things, assurances and Conveyances in y^e Law . . .

In presence of ye witnesses

Recompense Thomas	Thomas Hawley	Benjamin Benedict
John Rockwell	Richard Olmsted	Benjamin Burt
	Joseph Lees	Joseph Northrop
(incomplete)		Daniel Olmsted [?]

Another document which has descended in the Seymour family is a Deed of sale dated 17 August 1733, conveying a third Ten-Acre Grant of Daniel Sherwood, the town's first miller, to Matthew Seamore. This tract was conveyed to Seamore to compensate for a tract of land which Sherwood had sold Seamore previously in the so-called "Tapporneck division . . . which happened to be Cutt off by y^e Colony Line", (the setting off of the Oblong to the Province of New York in 1731).

David Scott 1st was one of the original Proprietors. He moved to Ridgefield from Fairfield immediately after his purchase of Lot No. 13 on 3 June 1712. Little is known about him and there are no estate records or birth records

in the Probate files in Hartford. However, several early records exist which are of considerable interest.

Page 88 of Volume I of the Fairfield County Court Records contains the record of a legal suit brought against David Scott of Ridgefield on 21 April 1719 by Mary Scott of Ireland, of the Town and County of Londonderry, and now also a resident of Ridgefield. Mary Scott obtained a judgment against her husband, David Scott, and she took 3 acres and 72 rods by execution. The only town record relating to David Scott is that on 13 February 1740 he sold two slaves.

Lack of additional documentation makes any interpretation of the legal suit a matter of guesswork. The implication is that David Scott 1st may have left his wife and family in Ireland and emigrated to Fairfield, and moved from there to settle in Ridgefield.

Whether Scott abandoned his family is a matter of conjecture, but the implication is obvious. No reconciliation appears to have taken place after the court action; David Scott continued to live in his home as before until his death at the age of about eighty-five on 3 February 1760. Mary Scott, meanwhile, became a resident of Ridgefield, with her children. Since no records of birth of the children of David and/or Mary Scott can be found in Ridgefield or in the probate files or State Archives in Hartford, it is apparent that the children were born outside the state of Connecticut, undoubtedly in Ireland.

In spite of the fact that David Scott 1st was one of the original Proprietors, the pedigree of the Scott family begins with James Scott 1st. Until now there was no certainty whether James was a brother or a son of David. The foregoing records, coupled with a genealogy provided by the Daughters of the American Revolution, establishes the fact that James 1st was the son of David Scott. It is a matter of further interest that in every generation of the Scott family each David Scott had a son named James, and every James Scott had a son named David through the generations.

James Scott 1st married Hannah Hyatt, daughter of Thomas Hyatt on 24 April 1722. Of their five children one son was named James 2nd for the father, another was named David for the paternal grandfather, and a third was named Thomas for the maternal grandfather.

The children of James Scott 1st are listed in the volume of Ridgefield Vital Statistics in the State Library at Hartford as follows: James 2nd (1721/2), Thomas born 1724/5, David 2nd (1727), Sarah (1729) and Hannah (1731). The date of James Scott 2nd is evidently in error and should be 1722/3. James Scott 1st died as a fairly young man and his widow remarried a man named St. John, one of the Proprietor families.

The Scott line in Ridgefield descended through David Scott 2nd who was born on 21 February 1727 and married Hannah Smith in 1751. They had twelve children and when he died in 1802 his will provided for his widow and each of his children. Despite advances of considerable amounts which he had

made to his children during his lifetime, the estate after his death was inventoried at four thousand one hundred and fifty-three dollars and thirteen cents. This was a respectable estate during the period following the Revolution.

The Scott family included a number of Ridgefield patriots. James Scott 2nd, David's oldest brother, served as a captain during the Colonial Period and was on the Town Committee of Inspection 17 December 1775 and on the committee to provide for the families of soldiers, 4 April 1777.

David Scott 3rd was commissioned an Ensign of the 2nd Company, 16th Regiment in May 1777 and he was appointed a Lieutenant in May 1778. Gideon Scott, another brother, was a private in the same Company in July 1779.

No indication is given of the location of the land which Mrs. Mary Scott obtained from her husband's property but it probably was situated in what later became Scotland District, and her home on this property thus became the first Scott homestead. David Scott 2nd, the son of James 1st, had ten children born between the period from 1752 to 1778. In 1779 one of his sons, Gideon Scott, married Anna Burt, a descendant of the first blacksmith, whose family owned property around Lake Mamasasco. A daughter, Rana Scott, married John Barlow (Jr.) in 1789, and she continued to live on Barlow Mountain in Scotland District for the rest of her life.

David Scott 2nd had married Hannah (1734-1829) the daughter of Gideon Smith. Captain James Scott married Martha, the daughter of Deacon James Benedict. The wife of Gideon Smith, who was at the time the mother-in-law of David Scott 2nd, was Sarah Benedict before her marriage to Smith. He was a man of property as evidenced by the fact that he owned a negro slave named Caezer who died 2 August 1749.

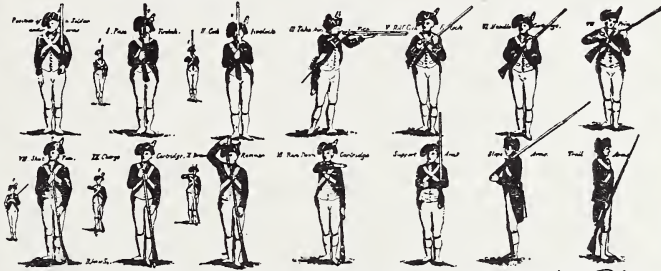
The commission of James Scott, Junr. as sergeant of the 3rd Regiment of Horse Artillery was issued by Abel Hull, Colonel of the 3rd Regiment of Horse Artillery in the State, at Weston on 22 August 1817, and is illustrated in *Figure 37*.

Part Two

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD

TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL
 DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
 IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,
 NOW RAISING UNDER
 GENERAL WASHINGTON,
 FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
 LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
 OF THE UNITED STATES,
 Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE,



THAT *Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday at New Haven*
Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday at New Haven
 with his multifarious recruiting party of *Company in the* *Company in the*
 of the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aaron *Company in the*
 The ENCOURAGEMENT at this time, to enlist, is fully liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of twelve dollars, an annual and fully sufficient
 supply of good and handsome clothing, a daily allowance of a shilling and sixpence, together with three dollars a year in solid
 and silver money on account of pay, the whole of which the soldier may lay up for himself and friends, as all articles proper for his subsistence and
 comfort are provided by law, without any expence to him.
 Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have an opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular
 manner, the great advantages which their brave men will have, who shall embrace this opportunity of spending a few happy years in serving the
 different parts of this beautiful continent, in the honourable and truly respectable character of a soldier, after which, he may, if he pleases return
 home to his friends, with his pockets full of money and his heart overflowed with laurels.
 GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

Figure 21

Chapter IV

RIDGEFIELD AND THE REVOLUTION

The Ridgefield Militia was established long before the beginning of the Revolutionary War. There is relatively little data on the subject but the town records show that action was taken by the town Proprietors for the establishment of a military company. A list of proposed nominations was submitted to the General Assembly, and was approved:

“The General Assembly in session at Hartford, A.D. 1727.

“This Assembly do establish and confirm Mr. Samuel St. John of Ridgfield to (be) Captain of the company of trainband in the town of Ridgfield aforesaid, and order that he be commissioned accordingly.”

“This Assembly do establish and confirm Mr. Benjamin Benedict of Ridgfield to (be) Lieutenant of the company or trainband in the town of Ridgfield aforesaid, and order that he be commissioned accordingly.”

“In 1732 General Assembly, then in session at New Haven did establish and confirm Mr. Benjamin Benedict to be captain of the company or trainband in the town of Ridgfield, and Mr. James Benedict, Lieutenant and Mr. Daniel Olmstead, Ensign.

“At a Town Meeting held in Ridgfield March 14th 1735, Whereas by a Special Warrant from Maj^r Burr y^e Townsmen are

directed Forthwith to procure y^c Town stock of powder, Bullets, and Flints, according to law. We do therefore desire ye Townmen Speedily to procure y^c same and do hereby oblige ourselves to Fulfill and answer such obligations, and pay such Debts as they shall make in order thereto.

“Test Thos. Hawley Regist’r.”

Nothing further on the subject appears in the town records until a few years before the outbreak of the French and Indian War. Then at a town meeting held 20 September 1748 it was voted by a majority that the powder and lead “that was taken up by the Soldiers, that went for us, to guard the upper towns, the present year, should be paid in a town way, amounting to the sum of 16, old tenure”. This referred to one of the Indian alarms, several of which were sent out during the period.

Ridgefield men took part in the French and Indian Wars since 1755. During the month of August in 1757 a total of twenty-two men from Ridgefield served in the company organized by Captain Perez Fitch of Stamford. This unit took part in the alarm for the relief of Fort William Henry and the adjoining areas. Several of the Ridgefield soldiers served under Captain David Wooster, who later lost his life at the Battle of Ridgefield.

Vivus Dauchy was one of the Ridgefield enlistees who died in this war, according to local tradition. He was born on 7 October 1738 the son of Vivus Dauchy, a native of France who emigrated to New Rochelle in about 1725. According to Dauchy’s commission, which is illustrated in *Figure 20*, he was appointed a captain in the First Company or Train Band in Ridgefield on 28 May 1756 with the approval of the General Assembly by Thomas Fitch, Captain General, and Commander in Chief of His Majesty’s Colony of Connecticut in New England. His father, Captain Vivus Dauchy, continued to live in Ridgefield and died on 16 December 1795 at the age of eighty-eight years. He was one of the most active members of the First Episcopal Society and the meetings were often held in his home.

Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, the minister of the Congregational Church from 1740 to 1788, was the most prominent citizen of Ridgefield to serve in the French and Indian War. He first saw service as chaplain with the Fourth Regiment under Colonel David Wooster in the Lake Champlain campaign from 27 March 1758 until 8 October of the same year. He continued in his appointment under Wooster’s command until March of the following year.

The Ingersoll Family became well known in the town for several generations. Rev. Ingersoll’s son, named Jonathan like the father, became Judge of the Superior Court and in 1817 was elected Lieutenant Governor of the State in which capacity he served until his death in 1823. The Judge’s daughter, Grace Ingersoll, married M. Grellet and moved with her husband to France, where she became a favorite in court circles.

The First Cup of Tea served in Ridgefield, according to local tradition, was brewed in the home of Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll. The story relates that the leaves were placed in a copper kettle which had been brought from England on the *Mayflower*. Water was added and the leaves were boiled. Whereupon the water was poured off and the tea leaves were eaten.

The Revolutionary War was the result of many remote causes, of which the most immediate was probably the incident of the Boston Port Bill enacted by the British to destroy the trade of Boston. This excited considerable sympathy for the people of Massachusetts throughout the colonies, and particularly in Connecticut, the settlers of which were closely linked with those of Massachusetts by ties of blood, origin, friendship and mutual interests. The House of Representatives at Hartford passed strong resolutions against the British act. Many Connecticut towns expressed their sympathy for Boston and held large town meetings where special resolutions were passed. Many Connecticut towns sent donations of food and funds for the relief of the inhabitants of Boston and Charlestown. When the great alarm went out from Boston that ships of war were cannonading the town, and that regular troops were massacring the inhabitants, the news spread through New York and Connecticut. In less than thirty-six hours the country side was rallied for almost two hundred miles. Men of all ages and stations began to prepare arms and provide stores for a possible immediate march. Soon the roads to Boston were crowded by armed volunteers making their way to the scene of conflict.

In April 1775 the General Assembly that met in New Haven enacted a law to raise one-fourth of the militia for the special defense of the colony to be formed into companies of one hundred men each and into six regiments, and in 1776 all state regiments were formed into six brigades. This force was sent to the relief of Boston following the Battle of Lexington. Ridgefield was not among the towns that were represented in this force of militia.

Ridgefield's Position at the beginning of the struggle that shook the colonies is indicated in a letter from Connecticut to a gentleman in New York, which was quoted in Hinman's *A Historical Collection*. This letter mentioned that the towns of Newton and Ridgefield had protested against the proceedings of the Grand Continental Congress, and that other towns were expected to follow their example.

On 30 January 1775 the inhabitants of Ridgefield were called to a special town meeting, which was held at the request of several of the townspeople, to consider the resolutions adopted by the Continental Congress. The minutes of the meeting provide a lucid picture of the controversy that must have resulted and the dilemma that must have confronted each of the townspeople that attended. Great deliberation and careful consideration went into the phrasing of each of the resolutions. Ridgefield was well aware of the reaction that would result from its decision to uphold the King in the face of the ferment of patriotism that was sweeping through the neighboring towns. Considerable

courage was required to take the action indicated, which reflected the temperament of the Proprietors of the town, who were still too much concerned with the struggle for the existence of their own settlement to extend their interest to the struggle for the existence of the colonies :

“First. Whereas application hath been made to the Select Men of the Town of Ridgefield in Connecticut Colony by several of the inhabitants of s^d Town, to call a Special Town Meeting in order to take into consideration the Resolution Entered into by the Late Continental Congress; and the Inhabitants being accordingly met the 30th day of January AD 1775 Mr. Nathan Olmstead was chosen Moderator. The Meeting then proceeded to take into Consideration the said Resolutions, and after mature Deliberation in said meeting the question was put, Whether this Town will adopt and Confirm to the Resolves contained in y^e association of the Continental Congress or not. Resolved in the Negative 9 Desent.

“Second. Resolved N C D That we do acknowledge his Most Sacred Majesty King George the 3^d to be our rightfull Sovereign and do hereby publicly avow our allegiance to him & his Lawfull successors—And that we will to the utmost of our power, Suport his thorne & Dignity against Evry Combination in the Universe.

“Third. Resolved N C D, that we do acknowledge that the three branches of y^e Legislation (to wit) the King, the House of Lords and the House of Commons Convening and acting together have a constitutional Right of Government over the whole and Every part of the British Empire.

“Fourth. Resolved N C D that the Governour Council and Representatives of this Colony being Indulged with and having an Established Right of Legislation (tho’ restricted) in and over this Colony, We do hereby acknowledge & avow their Right of Government and Legislation in and over this Colony And are confident that they are the Rightful & Constitutional Rulers, Directors and Guardians of our persons, properties Rights Liberties and priviledges, and We desire no other political Guides or Guardians than Said Assembly and the Officers Constitutionally appointed by them, to keep the peace & Order of y^e Colony and to Superintend the Execution of the colony Laws.

“Fifth. Resolved N C D That it would be dangerous and hurtfull to the Inhabitants of this Town to adopt the said Congress measures; and we do hereby publicly disapprove of and protest against said Congress and the measures by them directed to as unconstitutional—as subversive of our real Liberties—and as countenancing Licentiousness Resolved N C D That the Town Clerk be directed to make out a true copy of ye above s^d votes & transmit them to one or more of the printers in New York, that they may be published to the world.

“Test STEPHEN SMITH Register.”

The identity of the nine patriots who cast dissenting votes is not known. There is no doubt that they played some part in swaying local opinion, however for another town meeting was held on 7 March. No action was taken and the meeting was adjourned until 10 April. The question was raised whether the

town should explain the Resolutions it had passed earlier in January, and the matter was decided in the negative. During the next few months many events took place throughout the New England colonies that created considerable indecision among the Ridgefield townspeople. The rebellion was well under way. Many Connecticut men fought at the battle of Bunker Hill and many others were taking part in the conflict in Massachusetts. Finally at a special town meeting on 17 December it was voted to rescind the resolutions upholding the King, and the town transferred its loyalty to the Continental Congress. Ridgefield joined in the struggle for independence, in loyalty if not yet in fact:

“On Motion Made Whether Said Meeting, upon Reconsideration do disannul the resolves April 10th entered into and passed on the 30th Jan'y 1775, And adopt and approve of the Continental Congress and the measures Directed to in their association, for securing and Defending the Rights and Liberties of y^e United American Colonies.

“Resolved in the Affirmative Nem Con.

“Said Meeting voted that the Town Clerk make out a Copy of the above, Resolve and transmit the same to one of the printers in New York, in Order that the same may be made public in the News Papers.

“Question put wheither s^d Meeting will choose of a Committee of Inspections agreeably to the 11th article of y^e association of the Continental Congress.

“Resolved in the Affirmative.

“And Samuel Olmstead Esq^f Col Philip Burr Bradley Daniel Coley Esq^f Jacob Jones Stephen Smith Timothy Keeler, Capt Jonah Foster Nathan Olmstead William Forester John Benedict James Scott, Ebenezer Jones Abraham Betts Matthew Keeler, Timothy Benedict Nathan Stevens Samuel Gates David Platt Bartholomew Weed John Jones Daniel Smith, Ichabod Doolittle Abraham Gray Abraham Nash, Silas Hall and Azor Hurlbut were chosen Committee as above said.

Liberty Poles with the word ‘liberty’ inscribed upon them were raised prior to the outbreak of the war in many towns of New England by patriots who opposed unconditional submission to the authority of the British parliament. Some of these poles were of extraordinary height, such as one in East Haddam which rose 147 feet into the air. The poles were erected and dedicated by the patriotic ‘sons of liberty’ in the towns with much cheering and firing of guns, and the adoption of suitable resolutions. Such a pole was erected in Ridgebury at about the beginning of the war. During the night the pole was cut down by the Tories, to the exasperation of the patriots. They replaced it with another, and filled the base of it for several feet with old iron and spikes to make its removal more difficult. In about 1860 a part of this pole, a fragment measuring about two feet in length, was dug up by William M. Lynes. It was well preserved and contained part of its original iron contents. This pole was located near the old Episcopal Church, at the southerly end of the triangle between Ridgebury Street and Ned’s Mountain Road.

A Liberty Pole was erected in Ridgefield on Main Street soon after Ridge-

field entered into the Revolutionary War. The pole was made from an old buttonball tree which grew opposite the approach to the former residence of the late Mr. David Hurlbutt near the entrance to Market Street.

Military feeling in Ridgefield must have run high with the news of events taking place elsewhere in the colonies. At a special session of the General Assembly held in June 1776 seven regiments of men from Connecticut were ordered dispatched to join the Continental Army in New York.

Captain Gamaliel Northrop of Ridgefield commanded a company in the First Battalion of Wadsworth's Brigade at White Plains. After having served with Sullivan's Brigade in 1775 he was discharged but reentered the service once more in 1776. Sixty-four Ridgefield men were listed in his muster roll of 1776 and these were probably the first patriots of the town to take part in the war.

Phillip Burr Bradley of Ridgefield was appointed one of the seven colonels named by the Assembly's special session, and he was placed in command of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment in the Continental Army. Previous to his military service, he had been a justice of the peace in Ridgefield by appointment of King George III.

As the struggle for independence progressed, its demands on the town became greater. Following the request of the Governor of Connecticut and the Committee of Safety, Ridgefield was asked to establish a committee for the purpose of providing for the needs of the families of the men who enlisted in the Continental Army, and to encourage additional enlistments:

"At a Town Meeting held in Ridgefield April 4th 1777 Timothy Keeler was chosen Moderator of Said Meeting Said Meeting by a Major Vote is adjourned to the Meeting House.

"Said Meeting Pursuant to a request and Resolve of the Governor and his Committee of Safety, Chose James Scott, Mathew Keeler, Timothy Benedict & Samuel Gates, a committee to provide for the families of such soldiers as shall enlist into the Continental Army with necessaries at the prices stated by law.

"Voted also that this Town will Give to each man that shall Inlist as a Soldier into the Continental Service (for three years or during the war being an Inhabitant of this Town, till the Quota of the Town to fill the Continental Army be Completed) Six Pounds Lawfull money for every Year they are in said Service, to be paid as follows viz Six pounds at the time of their Inlistment.

"The next Six pounds to be paid within the second year & so on Yearly During their Continuance in Service.

"And those that engage, that have families, if they die in Service by Sickness or y^e Sword to be paid their Widows or Children one year after their Death.

"Also the Town by their Major vote do agree to adhere to the Law of this State, Regulating the prices of the Necessaries of Life.

"Voted that the Select Men procure Money in Loan or Otherwise, on the Town Credit or in the Towns behalf for the purpose of Encouraging Soldiers to Enlist into the Continental army And

when the sum necessary for that purpose is know, said Meeting vote, agree and grant a Tax on the polls & Rateable Estate of the Inhabitants of this Town, on the list of 1776, in order to repay the money that is or may be so procured and Laid Out and either of the Select Men for the time being, or any other person, that the Select Men shall nominate & Depute, Shall be fully Authorized to collect the said tax & and the same apply to the use aforesaid.

“Said Meeting is Dismissed.

“Test STEPHEN SMITH Register.”

The Minutes of Ridgefield's town meetings during the course of the next year reflect the requirements of the Continental Army. Clothing for the troops had to be provided, and arrangements had to be made for the distribution of scarce commodities. On 3 March 1778 a committee was appointed to distribute the town's store of salt, one quart being allotted to each person of the families of the inhabitants that had taken the oath of loyalty to the State of Connecticut. The same distribution was made in the families of widows that were friendly to the patriotic cause as well as to each person of the families of the men serving in the Continental Army, at a toll of six pence per quart.

The meeting of 3 March 1778 also voted to take six pounds from the town's treasury for the benefit of the widow and family of Elisha Gilbert. Gilbert had been a sergeant in Captain Isaac Hait's Company and had been frozen to death at Valley Forge.

The Recruiting Poster of the Continental Army (*Figure 21*) was among the items discovered in the Keeler Tavern. Only one original print of this poster remains in existence, and this is preserved in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Although the Keeler Tavern copy appeared to be an original item at first study, it was discovered to be a facsimile copy made on antiquated paper in about 1850, over a hundred years ago.

The Diary of Elisha Frisbie, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, furnishes evidence that in December 1776 extensive encampments of Continental soldiers were situated in or around Ridgefield.

Elijah Frisbie of Litchfield was Quartermaster of Captain Moses Seymour's Company, which formed part of Major Elisha Sheldon's Regiment of Light Horse. Frisbie had been among those who had served under General Washington at Greenwich, and took part in his retreat through New Jersey after the Battle of Trenton. Seymour's Company was dismissed by Washington at Upper Makefield, Pa. in December. Following dismissal, the troops marched home to Connecticut to be discharged. At night they sought shelter in inns and taverns along the way.

Frisbie and his companions passed through Ridgefield on the day before Christmas and spent Christmas Eve, 24 December 1776, at the Keeler Tavern. According to Frisbie's diary, they

“ . . . marched to Ridgefield where we put up for that night. There we saw great numbers of people going to the camps after their sons which were sick, being at Landlord Keeler's . . . ”

The entry is of considerable interest because it relates to an incident in Ridgefield's Revolutionary War history that has not previously been noted. Frisbie's words indicate that not only were extensive encampments of the American forces situated in or near the community before the Battle of Ridgefield, but that there appeared to be an epidemic of sickness in the camps and possibly in the town.

A search of town records has failed to reveal mention of camps or an epidemic. No special town meetings were called and the regularly scheduled town meeting of 23 December 1776 was concerning with ordinary matters of the community's administration.

However, some explanation of Frisbie's reference may be derived from the progress of the war during this period. In the summer of 1776 General Washington made two calls upon the Connecticut State militia for active service. Fourteen regiments west of the Connecticut River and nine regiments from the eastern side of the River were requisitioned to service. The troops were hastily summoned, poorly armed and provided for, and generally undisciplined. Among the units requisitioned was the Sixth Company of the First Battalion of Wadsworth's Brigade. This company had been raised by Captain Gamaliel Northrop of Ridgebury District and consisted of men from various districts in Ridgefield.

The First Battalion, including Northrop's Company from Ridgefield, served on the Brooklyn front before and during the Battle of Long Island in August. They narrowly escaped capture on the retreat from New York in September. After a temporary post on Harlem Heights, the Battalion was engaged in the Battle of White Plains and suffered some losses.

The term of duty of the Battalion and of the Sixth Company expired on 25 December 1776. Following the Battle of White Plains the Company under Northrop was probably encamped in or near Ridgefield to await discharge, and it may have been to the camps of the Sixth Company that Frisbie referred.

Some further verification may be found in Trumbull's letter to Washington several months earlier. In October, as the British sent their ships up the Hudson to threaten American communications, Washington sent Governor Trumbull another plea for help. The Governor issued a proclamation calling upon the militia and all able bodied men within the State to equip themselves and be ready to march upon the shortest notice. At the same time he replied to Washington that the State was doing all that was possible or that could be expected, in view of the services and suffering of the militia during the past summer, and ". . . the present sickness that prevails among them since their return from the army . . ."

The notation in Frisbie's diary provides a tantalizing glimpse of Ridgefield's past which, lacking additional documentation, remains an intriguing mystery for future historians to explore.

Frisbie's diary is being edited for publication by the Litchfield Historical Society.



Figure 22

Chapter V

THE BATTLE OF RIDGEFIELD

Tryon's Raid on Danbury took place on 26 April 1777. This was the first British invasion of Connecticut and it opened the campaign of 1777. Sir William Howe, the British commander-in-chief with headquarters in New York City, had been informed that the American patriots had collected large depositories of military store in Danbury and the adjacent area. His information was quite accurate. For the past few months the commissioners of the Continental Army had collected considerable amounts of clothing, provisions, pork, flour, munitions, medicines, Army tents and other items which were stored in Danbury. Tryon's object was to destroy this property. He landed at Compo Beach in the town of Fairfield at four in the afternoon on 25 April 1777, with a force of two thousand men, consisting of infantry, cavalry and artillery. With two Tory guides to show them the way, they moved forward along the distance of about twenty-two miles to Danbury. The guides were two young men from Danbury, Stephen Jarvis and Eli Benedict.

The British forces arrived in Danbury on Saturday afternoon, 26 April at two o'clock. The few Continental soldiers in the town could not make a stand against such a large force and had to withdraw. The population, except for several Tory families, escaped to adjoining towns taking as much moveable property as possible. Tryon established his headquarters at the house of a

Tory named Dibble at the south end of the village, near the public stores, and all convenient houses were filled with British soldiers during that night.

Most of the public stores in Danbury had been placed in the Episcopal Church and these were soon moved into the streets by the British and burned. Within the course of several hours, 1800 barrels of pork and beef, 700 barrels of flour, 2000 bushels of wheat, rye, oats and Indian corn, clothing for troops and 1790 tents were burned. The smoke that arose from this holocaust overhung the town and was strangulating, and the streets ran with melted fat and grease from the pork and beef.

Meanwhile the alarm had gone out through the countryside to the neighboring towns, and volunteers flocked into the camp of the patriots, which was established a short distance north of the township of Danbury. The British commanders in Danbury paid little if any attention to this small concentration of the American forces, and did not send out any raiding or scouting parties. Instead, the night was spent in drunken revelry, for there had been a large quantity of liquor in some of the buildings, and the British partook with such liberty that only a few hundred remained fit for duty.

Early the following morning Tryon awoke to discover that the whole force of the countryside was being collected for the purpose of cutting off his retreat along the dangerous return route to his ships. He accordingly accelerated the work of destroying the stores. Since there was not sufficient time to remove the supplies from the buildings in which they were housed, the British preceded to set fire to the buildings with their contents. The Congregational meeting-house joined the dwellings, stores and barns that were consumed by fire, until only those buildings marked with the white cross of the Tory families remained unharmed. When the British marched out of Danbury, the meeting-house, 19 homes and 22 stores and barns and much grain and hay were in flames.

Meanwhile the news of Tryon's raid had swept along the coast and the American forces were being collected in numbers and hurried to the scene. When the enemy had first landed, General Silliman assembled the militia in Fairfield in order to protect Continental Army property there. When it became apparent that Danbury was the target instead, Silliman hastened forward with about four hundred men in pursuit of the invaders.

On Saturday afternoon he was overtaken by General Benedict Arnold, and later at Redding they were joined by other troops. Towards evening General David Wooster, who had hurried from New Haven immediately upon receipt of the news, joined the two other generals. The pursuing party now totalled six hundred men, and by mutual consent, General Wooster assumed command. A heavy rain had begun to fall and the men marched through the mud. At half past eleven that night they reached Bethel. Many of the men had marched for thirty hours without food, so a halt was called, and camp was made near Bethel. Next morning, the troops were divided into two divisions and took up a position at a cross-roads, so that one division could be available to support the other if necessary. One division under Generals Arnold and

Silliman was stationed near the highway leading from Danbury to Norwalk. Wooster headed the other division not far from the Fairfield road. Here they waited until half past nine in the morning until news of the invading forces reached them. The British had left Danbury an hour before, retreating westerly towards the New York State line.

Apparently in an effort to mislead the Continental forces, Tryon decided to return to Norwalk by another route, taking up a line of march through Ridgefield and detouring by way of Ridgebury. One part of the British forces left Danbury from Wooster Street over Miry Brook while another part departed by way of South Street over Hull's Hill.

The British discovered too late that the bridge over Wolf Pond Run had been removed by the Americans and their cannon became enmired in the stream. Finally a temporary bridge of rails was constructed. The incident gave birth to the stream's new name, which was thenceforth known as Miry Brook.

The British Passage Through Ridgebury was accomplished with little or no interference. The inhabitants along the route collected on the high hill which was situated about a mile and a half northwest of the present Congregational Church to watch the troops as they progressed through the village. Local legend relates that the main column of the British troops passed along Ridgebury Street and another portion of the troops turned off below the second hill west of the Church and proceeded along Bogus Road to emerge on the George Washington Highway through Reagan Road. Although Bogus Road was sufficiently passable then to allow the British to move some of their artillery by that route, it was later abandoned and became impassable through disuse in the years that followed.

A single incident was reported at Ridgebury during the passage of the British. According to contemporary reports, a young girl looked out of the upper window of the house of Captain Timothy Benedict (now the residence of Mr. O. F. Lippolt) just as the British were marching past. They fired on her and she ducked just in time to escape a shower of bullets.

After passing through Ridgebury Street the British forces moved south and proceeded through a gap in the Asproom Ledges towards the town of Ridgefield, following the road which is now known as the George Washington Highway. Arriving at the northern end of Scotland District, the column halted for a meal on the flat south of the old schoolhouse. This flat field is now defined to be the area east of the highway and south of the intersection of North Salem Road and Tackora Trail to the boundary of the house lot of Mr. Richard L. Jackson.

Meanwhile British flanking parties had kept west of the main body along the route from Ridgebury, marching towards Ridgefield through Spring Valley and near the South Ridgebury School, to join the main body at the Scotland District encampment.

Isaac Keeler's Grist Mill was burned by this last detachment of the British. The mill was located adjacent to the present home of Dr. Frederick F. Solley on the easterly side of the North Salem Road on the outlet of Lake Mamasasco, which was formerly known as Buffalo Creek.

According to the report later submitted by the British to London, the mill was deliberately destroyed because it was known to be the storage place of supplies for the Continental Army. General Howe reported that one hundred barrels of flour and a quantity of Indian corn were destroyed at the mill. This was undoubtedly the largest mill in Ridgefield, for contemporary sources indicate that it was known as the "Great Mill".

A wrought iron thumb-latch, which is illustrated in *Figure 25*, is believed to have been part of the hardware of the house or the grist mill of Isaac Keeler, and may have been salvaged from the debris of the mill after its destruction. The initials, I. K., are quite clearly visible above the thumb-piece.

Some interesting aspects of the burning of the mill and the engagement which followed are presented in manuscript notes written many years ago by an unidentified member of the Scott family from word of mouth reports handed down through generations of his forebears.

According to these notes, "Aunt Lizzie Hunt", grandmother of J. L. Hunt, was a little girl of twelve at the time of Tryon's raid and she recalled having watched the British march down over Ridgebury hill as she and other children ran down to the bank of the road to watch their advance. She related that it was nearly noon when the British stopped at the Isaac Keeler grist mill. She watched them roll out the barrels of flour and set fire to them and to the mill itself before continuing on their march to "the lot just west of the house of Ferdinand Burt (now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Jackson) where they halted for dinner.

As the barrels of flour caught fire they exploded and the bungs shot out with a noise like gun fire. It was for this reason, according to this source, that this section of Scotland District became known as Bungtown, a name which it still retains.

The mill was burned by the British flanking party which had been detached at Ridgebury Street and proceeded along the Spring Valley Road and followed the main column along the George Washington Highway to the encampment.

The British captured and killed a number of heads of cattle belonging to the neighboring farmers for their meal. The animals were butchered at the encampment and cooked over the open fires. Several soldiers chased a cow down the slope adjacent to Mamasasco Lake below the present Mamasasco Lake Lodge, which was then the property of the Burt family. The cow evaded capture, however, by running into the Lake and drowning.

Several of the British officers called at the house of Nathan Scott across the road from the present Jackson residence and asked to borrow knives and

A Skirmish in AMERICA between the KINGS Troops & Gen^l ARNOLD,



25
The first of these is a detachment of men who were ordered by General Arnold to go to the hills near the town of Fort Mifflin, where they met the British. They gave a warm battle, but were driven back by the British. The British then moved on to the town of Fort Mifflin, where they were met by General Arnold. The British were defeated, and the town of Fort Mifflin was captured.

The second of these is a detachment of men who were ordered by General Arnold to go to the hills near the town of Fort Mifflin, where they met the British. They gave a warm battle, but were driven back by the British. The British then moved on to the town of Fort Mifflin, where they were met by General Arnold. The British were defeated, and the town of Fort Mifflin was captured.

London: Printed and Sold by J. Johnson, in Pall Mall. 1780.

Figure 27 "A Skirmish in America between the Kings Troops and General Arnold"

forks with which to cut the meat. The cutlery was loaned, and when the British had finished using them, they returned them to the owners.

A day or so after the British encampment, Mrs. Nathan Scott related, she and her neighbors collected a sufficient amount of fat and bones from the leavings to make two barrels of soft soap.

The American Forces, meanwhile, were moving in on the invaders. Four hundred men were detached under Generals Arnold and Silliman to gain and occupy a position in advance of the enemy. In the interim, General Wooster had added some additional volunteers to his forces as well as about one hundred fifty Continental recruits under Lt. Col. Smith. He marched quickly forward in pursuit of the invaders with a strength of about three hundred fifty men. Within one hour of the time that Tryon's rear had passed Ridgebury corner, Wooster was hurrying along the Barlow Mountain Road with his militia. He had made a forced march from Danbury to Sugar Hollow and from there he branched off to follow the Barlow Mountain Road in an attempt to intercept the enemy on the main highway, now the North Salem Road. At that time no highway existed between Ridgefield and Danbury, since the road from Sugar Hollow was not constructed until 1812. The Barlow Mountain Road was a good road then, being much in use. It has since become overgrown and is barely passable as a wood road at present.

Wooster's Surprise Attack took place at the British camp site near the intersection of Barlow Mountain and the North Salem Roads. His forces reached the area shortly before noon. Wooster first sighted the encampment as he proceeded quickly down Barlow Mountain at the head of his men. He made his first charge through a copse of trees that grew along the Titicus Brook at the base of the slope to the east of the Jackson residence and northerly of the road just below the dwelling. Wooster's attack was so completely unexpected that the British were disorganized, and provided little resistance. Wooster was reported to have taken forty prisoners on this first charge, and to have inflicted heavy losses. Although most published sources credit Wooster with two score prisoners taken on this charge, a more conservative estimate of the British soldiers captured would be twenty men—"one score" instead of two.

The time of the attack is variously given as eight o'clock in the morning by Rockwell and Teller, and as having taken place between eleven and twelve o'clock by McDonald and others. The latter is the more probable. It was Sunday morning and it was raining.

After the initial attack, General Wooster withdrew his men and waited while the British hurriedly moved their camp and again resumed their march, toward Ridgefield.

The Second Skirmish took place south of the southerly intersection of North Salem Road and Tackora Trail, a little more than two miles from the center of Ridgefield. The best known local accounts state that Wooster swooped down on the rear of the British column, the main body of which was hidden from

view by the hill lying west and south of the site of the attack. Wooster's charge was a sudden one, and once again it threw the British into confusion and broke their ranks. Their rear guard faced about to meet the attack with a discharge of small arms.

The hill referred to in these accounts was a ridge or tongue of land which extended at a high eminence across the highway between the present residences of Mrs. Sarah Wettingfield and Miss Mary Huber on the north and eastern sides and the present residence of Mr. James Bellagamba on the south and western side of the highway. The ridge was cut through when the highway was improved by the State many years ago. Older residents in the area remember that there was a steep incline at this point, and that the highway followed the natural contours of the land.

Tradition states that a makeshift barricade was erected along this ridge by the inhabitants of Titicus when word was received of the impending approach of the British. The barricade was no deterrent and apparently did not even give pause to the advance of the British forces.

According to the account given in the McDonald papers, Wooster followed the retreating British column and skirmished with them for nearly an hour, leading his inexperienced men in person and often exposing himself to enemy fire. At length the British were so closely pressed that their rear guard halted upon "some rising ground" about a mile and a half from Ridgefield, and facing about, stood at bay. They were now waiting for a close attack and they turned the three cannon at the rear of the column upon the Americans. Wooster saw a good opportunity to capture one of the field pieces by a rapid movement and he exhorted his forward men to follow him. At that moment his horse was shot from under him and he instantly mounted another belonging to one of his aides. He rode along the highway, sword in hand, followed in close order by those to whom he had appealed. Just then a British cannon shot took effect among his men, whom it covered with sand. Seeing disorder that resulted in his ranks, Wooster turned about in his saddle, and he called "Come on, my boys, never mind such random shots! Follow me!" He had scarcely finished the words when a musket ball struck him and produced spinal dislocation, followed by immediate paralysis. He dropped from the saddle, and was conveyed first to a neighboring house and then in a litter back along the route towards Danbury. The roadside where he fell was long distinguished by two great chestnut trees which grew like sentinels to guard the spot where he fell, but in time they too disappeared.

Wooster's fatal shot is said to have been fired by an American loyalist who carried a musket of unusual length. He had been along with some volunteers in a barn east of the road and on the right of the British rear guard, as it appeared after facing about. Recognizing General Wooster, although the latter was almost three hundred yards away, the Tory asked permission to fire at the American general. "You shall not do so," replied his officer, "The distance interval is too great for a successful shot and the attempt will subject us

to retaliation!" Persisting in his request the Tory caused his officer to finally yield and he fired with remarkable accuracy. After Wooster fell, his men became disorganized and fell back. General Tryon thereupon ordered a general halt of the British column in order to rest the men and to study the situation before him. The delay caused by Wooster's harrassment of the British rear had given Arnold enough time to build a barricade.

As Wooster fell from his horse, his aides ran to his assistance. Stripping his sash from his waist, he was removed from the field of action and moved back along the route of march to the corner of the main highway and Barlow Mountain Road. At this intersection there existed, until a few years ago, a large flat black rock that jutted out from the roadside. Wooster was carried to this point and laid on the rock. His wound was dressed by Dr. Turner and then the General was placed in a carriage and conveyed back to Danbury with the greatest possible speed.

Wooster's men had fallen back in disorder when their commander fell, but his aide, Captain Stephen Rowe Bradley, reorganized them to a withdrawn position. He then moved them forward to join with the forces of Benedict Arnold. Meanwhile, the annoyance of attack from the rear having been removed, the British column moved towards Ridgefield with quickened pace.

General Arnold's Arrival in the village of Ridgefield had taken place at about eleven o'clock in the morning. As Arnold and Silliman and their militia forced a march across country from Bethel, the Generals accosted each person they met by the wayside and urged them to turn out and join in the repulsion of the British. Only a brief argument was necessary to convince the inhabitants. Many followed the Generals fired by a blaze of patriotism, leaving their work to follow along on foot and on horseback. General Arnold's fame was widespread and all men considered it a unique privilege to serve under his command. By the time the militia had reached Ridgefield, its ranks had swollen to the number of five hundred men.

Upon his arrival at Ridgefield, Arnold set his men to work at once to protect the village from the advancing British by providing an impediment to their progress. Arnold selected as the site for his breastworks the narrowest part of Main Street because it lent itself most easily to his scheme.

A Barricade was hastily thrown up near the home of Benjamin Stebbins at the northern end of Main Street. At this point the road narrowed considerably and rose to a higher grade to form a natural point for a barricade. Facing the town the road was bordered on the left by the Stebbins house and a steep slope that dropped precipitously. On the right side of the road was a rocky ledge which formed a natural barrier, the ground south of it was a wet marsh. At this point the patriots hastily threw up a barricade of logs and stones and carts across the road. Then Generals Arnold and Silliman waited with their forces for the approaching British troops.

Before General Tryon resumed his march after the second skirmish with

Wooster, he carefully reconnoitered the rebel position. He re-grouped his men into three columns, according to some accounts, until he was near the barricade. Then he reorganized his men and at about two o'clock in the afternoon he proceeded at the head of his whole force to attack. He moved forward slowly and cautiously, secured on all flanks, by guards of nearly two hundred men each. With three field pieces in front, he advanced to the sound of music with all the military pomp and circumstance at his command.

Finding that Arnold was most vulnerable at the left, he directed his attack towards that quarter. As the British column moved forward slowly against the barricade, pausing again and again for the purpose of cannonading, a strong detachment of British was sent under cover of an orchard to cross the low swampy ground in order to mount the ledges that protected Arnold's left.

The Americans maintained their ground for about a quarter of an hour under an incessant musket fire. Again and again the patriots fired deadly volleys at the attackers. Finally, when the British realized that they were unable to advance on the Americans from the front, they made repeated attempts and finally succeeded in scaling the rock ledges at the side of the barricade. An entire platoon of men forced this approach in advance of the regiment, and finally the Americans were forced to fall back.

General Arnold was the desirable target and the whole platoon on the ledge singled him out and fired on him at a distance of less than thirty yards. Although he was unharmed, his horse was killed under him. As he struggled to free his feet from the stirrups, a Tory named Coon rushed forward with his bayonet in hand, and called out: "Surrender! You are my prisoner!" "Not yet!" Arnold replied, as he freed his foot from the stirrup. He drew his pistol at the same instant and shot his would-be captor dead on the spot. Arnold fled through the nearby swamp and over a fence through a hail of bullets. According to legend, when he regained cover, Arnold looked at his pistol and remarked that "One live man is worth more than ten dead ones!"

According to Grumman's version of the incident, a man named Ebenezer Patchen of Redding was said to have saved Arnold's life by presenting his musket at the breast of the British soldier who was about to fire on the general.

Another version of the incident is related in Spark's biography of Arnold in which a most creditable account is given of General Arnold's escape. Sparks wrote that the American militia

" . . . took a position at the northern extremity of the village and erected a barricade of carts, logs and earth across the road by which the British were to pass. The post was well chosen, the road was narrow, his right flank covered by a house and barn, and his left by a ledge of rocks. At three o'clock the enemy appeared, marching in a solid column, and they commenced a heavy fire as they advanced toward the breastwork. It was briskly returned. For nearly a quarter of an hour the action was warm, and the Americans maintained their ground by the aid of their barricade against four times their number, until the British column began to extend itself,

and to stretch around their flanks. This was a signal for retreat. Arnold was the last man that remained behind. While alone in this situation, a platoon of British troops, who had clambered up the rocks on the left flank, discharged their muskets at him. His horse dropped lifeless, and when it was perceived that the rider did not fall, one of the soldiers rushed forward with a fixed bayonet intending to run him through. Arnold sat unmoved on his struggling horse, watched the soldier approach till he was near enough to make sure his aim, then drew a pistol from the holsters and shot him dead. Seizing this critical opportunity, he sprang upon his feet and escaped unharmed."

The Stebbins House, meanwhile, was at the center of the conflict. The owner, Benjamin Stebbins, was 86 years old and infirm and he remained in the house while the battle raged about him. He sought refuge in a bedroom in the east attic. Being farthest from the scene of fire, he thought this room would be the safest, but he had a narrow escape nonetheless. A bullet passed through the room near his head and bore a jagged hole through the bedroom door. Countless bullets and cannon balls struck the house and the marks remained as long as the building stood. It caught fire several times during the battle, and each time, the son, Josiah Stebbins, managed to extinguish the flames.

While Tryon's forces assaulted Ridgefield, the Americans who held possession of the parallel road on the east were briskly attacked by a British detachment to which they offered steady resistance until the fall of Col. Gould, after which they became confused and abandoned their position.

After the retreat from the barricade Arnold tried to rally his men for another combat at Ridgefield but this was impracticable. He fell back towards the Sound with all the men he could muster, and he and Silliman gave orders that the militia and volunteers would reassemble at Saugatuck Bridge to make another attempt to stop the British. The action at Ridgefield lasted about an hour and was followed by light skirmishes.

The British Occupation of the town followed the forcing of the barricade and the escape of General Arnold and the withdrawal of the American forces. A scattered fire persisted through Main Street and along East Ridge throughout the day until nightfall as the British sent out small parties to search for and destroy Continental stores in the village.

The British moved their position forward and placed one of their artillery pieces in front of the Episcopal Church, which stood just southeast of the present structure. Several shots were fired with this cannon along the Main Street. The target was presumably the Keeler Tavern because it was reported that patriots in the building were making bullets. One ball passed between the feet of a man ascending the stairs; he was so frightened that he rolled down the staircase. Another cannonball lodged in the white oak corner post on the northeast side of the Tavern, where it has been viewed by many thousands of people through the years, and exists to this day.

Local legend relates that the Keeler Tavern was actually set on fire by the British and that it would have burned were it not for the intervention of a Tory named Hoyt who owned the adjoining house, now the home of Dr. James H. Inkster. Hoyt obtained permission of the British to extinguish the fire in order to protect his own home. After the British withdrawal, Timothy Keeler, Jr. returned from the woods where the patriots had hidden during the brief enemy occupation of the town. He was immediately accosted by Hoyt with the words that "You may thank me that your house was not destroyed." "No, sir!" Keeler replied, "I will not thank a Tory for anything. I would rather thank the Lord for the north wind!"

The British Encampment in Ridgefield during the night of the Battle was situated on West Wilton Road on Soundview Acres, on the grounds of the present home of Mr. Peter Lorenzini. They proceeded to this camp site by several routes. The main body marched along Main Street into Wilton Road West to the location selected, while a detachment of troops reached it from Olmstead Lane.

When night came the British forces formed themselves into a square and bivouacked on this site which was then known as Ressiguie's Ridge. It was described as a smooth upland field by the roadside half a mile south of the village and on the easterly side of the highway leading to Norwalk. Although the British tried to obtain "a quiet repose," with the posting of numerous outguards around the camp, they were disturbed all through the night by small parties of American militia that prowled nearby and often fired on the camp with effect. In spite of this harrassment the British nevertheless managed to sleep. As a result, a number of captured patriots made their escape from the camp as their captors slept.

The Red Petticoat Story exists in several versions in the local lore of the Battle of Ridgefield which has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. One account told of Mrs. David Olmstead, who lived in either the original Olmstead homestead on Olmstead Lane, which is now the home of Mrs. M. Estelle Benjamin, or in the Olmstead house now owned by Mr. Frank Lischke. Captain David Olmstead, the owner of the homestead, fought at the barricade, and took shelter in the woods when the British advanced through the town. His wife remained at home with her children, anxiously awaiting word of her husband and of the progress of the conflict. When the detachment of British troops came marching along Olmstead Lane to the camp site, she feared that her home would suffer the fate of others that had been burned by the British during the day. Looking about for some means of saving it, she thought of posing as a Tory. Having no other suitable symbol at her disposal, she removed her red petticoat and waved it from the house as the British soldiers came marching off West Lane Road and along the lane. The British, thinking it was a Tory house, left it unharmed.

When her husband arrived home at last during the night or on the following day, Mrs. Olmstead proudly recounted the incident, pleased with her

presence of mind. Not so her husband. Livid with rage, Captain Olmstead thundered "Woman, if I had seen you, I would have shot you dead!" Far better it would have been to have this home destroyed than to have his wife suspected of being a Tory.

British Scouting Parties were sent out into various sections of the town. When they entered the house of Wakeman Burritt in Farmingville, a musket was discovered and the building was set on fire. After the British soldiers rode away, the neighbors returned in time to extinguish the flames.

The house which is now occupied by Mr. C. D. Bailey on Branchville Road was used by the British as a hospital on the day of the battle, and there was constant movement of troops to and from the building during the day. There was some passage of the British between Main Street, Rockwell Road and the Branchville Road, along a lane no longer used.

A skirmish with the British troops is believed to have occurred near the present residence of Mr. A. Tuccio in this general vicinity. Beside the great rock near this residence a wounded British soldier was discovered by a number of young boys that had been following behind the British left flank as it moved through the town. As the boys came up to this large rock they found a soldier lying there fatally wounded but still alive. One of the boys, Ebenezer Jones, ran home to tell his father, Captain Jones. The latter rode to the spot. He took up the soldier and brought him to his own house where he was nursed. The soldier finally died, however. Jones built him a coffin of pine and buried him in the yard east of the barn of Joel Benjamin.

Casualties occurred on both sides during the battle. The total British loss is not known but in General Tryon's report to Lord George Germaine submitted by General William Howe, the casualties of the entire invasion stated that one drummer fifer and 23 rank and file were killed; 3 field officers, 6 captains, 3 subalterns, 9 sergeants and 92 rank and file were wounded; and one drummer fifer and 27 rank and file were missing.

Sixteen British soldiers and eight Americans were buried in a small field to the right of the American position on the battlefield. The site is marked by a memorial stone designed and provided by Miss Mary Olcott (*Figure 28*). Single graves of combatants of both sides marked points of the line of march. The "Return of the Rebels, Killed and Wounded, on the 27th & 28th April 1777 in Connecticut by the detachment under the Command of Major General Tryon" submitted by Sir William Howe to Lord Germaine included the following:

- "Killed: General Wooster, Colonel Goold, Colonel Lamb of the Artillery, Colonel Henman, Doctor Atwater a Man of considerable Influence, Captain Cooe, Lieut. Thompson, 100 Private
Wounded: Colonel Whiting, Captain Benjamin, Lieut. Cooe, 250 Private
Taken: 50 Private including several Committee Men."

According to a letter written by John Brooks in 1841 to Royal R. Hinman, " . . . at the battle of Ridgefield, on the return of the British from the burning of Danbury, a Lieut. Middlebrooks was killed; Lieut. William Thompson was slain; Col. John Benjamin was shot with three buck shot lodged in his neck, which he survived, and lived many years after; Lieut. DeForest was shot in the leg, and Capt. Ebenezer Coe who commanded the same company, was shot in the head, which deprived him of part of one ear and his right eye, he, however, recovered and lived many years after the war ended. I once asked him how it was, that so many officers were killed and wounded—he said it was because the privates run off just before they were flanked by the British. Arnold commanded our troops on this occasion; he had his horse shot from under him."

John Brooks was a boy at the time of the Battle of Ridgefield. His father, Captain John Brooks of Stratford, was an active participant in the Revolutionary War. Young John Brooks, the writer of the letter, personally knew many of the veterans from Stratford who fought at Ridgefield, and the survivors of those who perished in the engagement.

At a special session of the General Assembly at Hartford held by order of the Governor on 13 August 1777

" . . . Capt. Ebenezer Coe of Stratford informed the Assembly that on the 25th day of April 1777, when the British made an excursion to Danbury, he was ordered with his company and that in an engagement with the enemy at Ridgefield, on the 27th of said April, he received a wound by a ball shot by the enemy, and destroyed his right eye; and asked said Assembly for a reward for his time and money expended in his cure. The Assembly ordered the sum of £60 lawful money, to be paid said Coe from the State treasury; also directed the pay table to adjust his account, and allow what they should judge just and reasonable for his expenses."

Prisoners of War taken during the raid on Danbury and the Battle of Ridgefield were listed in a letter dated 2 May 1777 from James Rogers, one of the prisoners taken, to Squire Sanford. The letter included the names of James and Benjamin Northrop and John Smith of Ridgefield.

The Flag Bearer for the American militia at the battle at the Ridgefield barricade was Squire Holmes of Boutontown (now known as Boutonville).

The British Retreat to their ships at Compo took place on the morning of 28 April, and the column marched through Wilton over Bald Hill. They collected food from homes along the route and only minor incidents occurred before they approached the shore.

When dawn came, the British drums beat to arms and the invaders resumed their march to the Sound by the Norwalk road. First, however, they fired several houses upon the most elevated ground in the town for the purpose, it is believed, of signalling their fleet. They halted their march about one quarter of a mile north of the present Congregational Church in Wilton. They wheeled to the left, leaving the Ridgefield road, and crossed the fields

to a smooth elevated area about half a mile north of St. Matthews' Church. There the British column stopped for breakfast, and again resumed their march at about nine o'clock.

Timothy Delavan of North Salem, a wealthy farmer, had sent his nine sons in arms against the British at Ridgefield. The elderly man followed them on horseback with provisions for their support. During the afternoon of the 27th and on the following morning, the sons travelled with small parties in advance of the British to join Arnold at Saugatuck. They were often stopped by women who came out of their houses and begged them to turn back and fight the enemy instead of running away. Some of the volunteers did as the women urged, out of confusion or shame, and a number of them lost their lives as a result of this ill advice.

General Washington's First Report of the landing of the British at Compo, with the stores at Danbury as their target, reached him on the morning of 28 April at three o'clock, in a communication from Colonel Huntington. He expressed concern at the fact that the stores of supplies "were but too large and considerable, if the event has taken place". He added that the post (Danbury) had been considered as a proper depository for stores by gentlemen acquainted with it, and its security was not considered questionable while troops were passing through it. Washington had directed that as many of the drafts in Connecticut as possible that could be accommodated should be collected at Danbury and inoculated to answer the purpose of a guard, until a stronger and more permanent one could be established there.

The First British Report of Tryon's raid on Danbury was given by Captain G. Hutchinson in a dispatch to Lord Percy dated 30 April 1777. Among references to Ridgefield were included the statements that General Tryon had succeeded beyond his expectations "... having completely destroyed two principal magazines belonging to the rebels at Danbury and Ridgefield, consisting of provisions and other military stores ..." and that he had met with little opposition on the way to Danbury but that on his return he "... was attacked by Arnold at the head of a large body of rebels from Peek's Kill, who harrassed his march exceedingly almost the whole way from Ridgefield to near the water-side ..."

According to General Agnew's major of brigade Lesslie, Major Stewart of the British forces had distinguished himself at the Battle of Ridgefield by conspicuous bravery. Stewart had rushed forward into the enemy (American) line with only ten or twelve men and by his own example had animated the rest of the British troops to make a general charge, "... which by that time was become absolutely necessary from a want of ammunition, etc."

In a letter dated 22 May 1777 Sir William Howe advised Lord George Germain in London, that Tryon's raid had been quite successful and that because it was "... impossible to procure Carriages to bring off any Part of the

Stores, they were effectually destroyed, in the Execution of which the Village (Danbury) was unavoidably burnt.”

General Howe went on to report that

“On the 27th in the morning the Troops quitted Danbury and met with little Opposition until they came near to Ridgefield, which was occupied by General Arnold, who had thrown up Entrenchments to dispute the Passage, while General Wooster hung upon the Rear with a separate Corps: The Village was forced and the Enemy drove back on all Sides.

General Tryon lay that night at Ridgefield, and renewed his March on the morning of the 28th . . .”

In the formal listing of the stores, ordnance and provisions found and destroyed in Danbury and Ridgefield which Lord Howe forwarded to Lord Germain, were the following notations:

“At a Mill between Ridgeberry and Ridgefield.

One hundred barrels Flour, and a quantity of Indian Corn.

At the Bridge over the West Branch of Norwalk River and in the Woods contiguous.

One hundred Hogheads of Rum

Several Chests of Arms

Paper Cartridges

Field Forges

Three hundred Tents.”

On 6 August 1777 Lord Germain advised Sir William Howe that the news of the success of Tryon’s raid had reached England before the formal reports submitted. He added that

“Your Account of that Expedition nevertheless gave the King great Satisfaction; as it was accompanied with Assurance that His Majesty’s Troops had sustained a Comparatively small Loss and the wounded Officers were in a fair way of Recovery.”

Damage to Property by the British on their march through Ridgefield including destruction of six houses by burning, plundering of cattle, clothing and provisions of the inhabitants as well as other damage.

On 26 May 1777 the Selectmen of the Town submitted a Memorial to the General Assembly in order to obtain some compensation. The original document is in the files of Revolutionary War Manuscripts of the Connecticut State Archives and reads as follows:

To the Hon^{bl} General Assembly of the State of Connecticut now sitting at Hartford within and for the States afores^d

The Memorial of the Selectmen of the Town of Ridgefield in the State of Connecticut Humbly Shewith—

That the Enemy, in their late incursion to Danbury on their return through Ridgefield and, burnt the Gristmill & Saw Mill of M^r Isaac Keeler of s^d Ridgefield, six dwelling houses two barnes and killed and carried off a number of horses, & Cattle, and on then Army took up their quarters in that Town for a Night, they plundered the inhabitants of almost all their Provisions and of a

great part of their clothing, etc.—by which Means many are reduced to the greatest Straits and such a Number that said Town are unable to make an adequate Provision for the relief of the sufferers . . . Your Slemⁿ therefore humbly pray your Honors to take into your Wise Consideration the Sufferings of the Inhabitants of said Town, and to make some provision for their Relief, such as Your Honors shall think just and proper and your mem^{or} as in duty bound shall in prayer . . .

Hartford May 26th 1776

By order of Selectmen }
William Forrester } A Select-
man of
Ridgefield

In the Lower House

On this Memorial Granted that a Committee be appointed to Enquire into the matters Represented and Report make to this *or some future* Assembly and that a Bill . . .

Concurr in the Upper House, exclusive of these words in the Vote of the Lower House viz, *or some future*.

George Wyllys”

Although the date which appears on the Memorial is 1776, this was undoubtedly an error and should have been 1777. On the reverse side of the Memorial appeared the following notations:

In the Upper House

Abraham Davenport Esq. and such Gentⁿ as the lower House shall join with him are appointed a Committee to enquire into the Matters represented in the within Memorial of the Selectmen of Ridgefield, and bring in a Bill thereunto proper (in their Opinion) for this Assembly to pass into a Resolve in Reference the Affairs mentioned and set forth therein.

Test. George Wyllys Sectr.

In the lower House

Col. Beardslee Col. Hall & M^r Edward are appointed jointle as a Committee for the Purpose above mentioned.

Attest. Benj. Huntington Clerke.

The Committee’s comprehensive report was dated 5 December 1777 and is also filed in the Revolutionary War Manuscripts in the Connecticut State Archives in Hartford. The text is given below:

To the Hon^{bl} General Assembly of y^e State of Connecticut to be holden at Hartford by adjournment on y^e 2nd Thursday of January 1778.—We the Subscribers a Comm^{tee} appointed by Your Hon^{ts} at your Session in May last upon the Memorial of the Select Men of the Town of Ridgefield, Representing that the Enemy in their Late Incursion to Danbury on their Return passed thro’ said Ridgefield & burned many Dwelling houses and other Buildings therein, Killed and carried off many of their Cattle, and plundered the Inhabitants of their Provision, and much of their Clothing.—

And we being appointed a Com^{tee} as afors^d to estimate the losses of every Individual in said Town of Ridgefield in consequence of said Hostilities and Report make to this or some future Assembly so that y^e Real losses the unhappy Sufferers have sustained by the Desolation and Ravages of our Merciless Enemies may thereby be clearly known, and such Representation made thereof and attention to the Condition of the Unfortunate as any future Assembly may think proper, etc. —

We beg leave to Report that in pursuance of s^d Commission we Repaired to said Ridgefield on ye 1st day of December (having first notified the Inhabitants) and by several adjournments down to this day we have examined the Acct^s of the several sufferers on Oath and otherwise according to the best of our Discretion and find that y^e several Person hereafter Named have suffered loss to the amount of the sum affixed to their Names —

Sam ^{ll} Olmstead Eqr.	112- 8-1	Gamaliel Northrop	131-10-4
Ebenz ^r Olmsted	9- 2	Benjm Northrop	239- 1
Thad ^{us} Rockwell	40- 7	Dan ^l Smith	274-16-8
Sam ^l Olmsted 3	35-10-4	John Northrop	214-5-11
Col. Phillip B. Bradley	30-14	Thoms Saymor	98-14-9
Lydia Gilbard	51-15-9	Hannah Saymor	27-10-10
Timothy Keeler	78-14-0	Sarah Morehouse	284- 1-9
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£358-11-2		£1270- 1-3

Capt ⁿ David Olmsted	54- 3-0	Rena Sam ^l Camp	58- 6-9
Joseph Stebbins	29-14	Isaac Keeler	291- 0
Dan ^{ll} Smith	46- 9-9	Lemuel Abot	8-14-
James Sturges	15-17-6	James Northrop	80-16-
John Dauchy	16-16	Abraham Rockwell	16- 1-6
George Follit	19- 6	John Keeler	48- 0-6
Dan ^{ll} Smith Jr	4- 0	Capt Timothy Benedict	10- 7-9
Capt Eenz ^r Jones	7-17	Capt Ichabod Doolittle	8-13-0
Bartlet Follit	8- 6-3	Jarmina Keeler	1- 8-0
Ebenz ^r Stebbins	2-19-6	David Rockwell	12- 6-9
Jeff Benedict	17- 5-3	Sam ^{ll} Keeler	6-19-6
John Abot	6- 4-0	Ebenze ^r Sherwood	7-15-0
Bartholomew Weef	5-10-0	Steph ⁿ Norris	4-10-0
Hope Rhodes	11- 5-0	Dan ^{ll} Cooley Esq ^r	2-18-0
Steph ⁿ Smith	12- 7-6	Mary Hays	5-14-0
Martha Keeler	6- 3-6	Abijah Rockwell	4-17-9
John Waters	5- 8-0	Abijah Smith	25- 1-0
David Perry	4-13-0	Jona Foster	16-17-3
Capt James Scott	3-19-0	Sarah Silster	4- 0-6
Phillip Dauchy	5- 2-6	Elihu Deforest	3
Mathew Keeler	10- 5-0	Prne Northrop	6- 6-0

John Smith	20- 0-9	Nathan Foster	0-16-0
Sam ^l Smith	28- 2-9	Mary Gray	2-
Benj ⁱⁿ Smith	7- 1-0	David Rockwell Jr	4-14-3
Jeremiah Burchard	0-18-0	Abner Wilson	13-10-0
		Sam ^l Keeler Jr	2- 1-6
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£349-14-3		£ 646-15-0
			349-14-3
			358-11-2
			1270- 1-3
			<hr/>
			£2625- 1-8

Amounting in the whole to £2625-1-8 all
 which is Humbly Submitted to your Hon^{ts} by your
 Hon^{ts} most Obedient humble Serv^{ts}

Ridgefield y^e 5th Decem^r

AD 1777 —

Increase Moseley }
 Nehemiah Beardsley } Com^{tte}
 Lem^l Sanford }

According to the petition, the houses which the British burned appear to have been the homes of Gamaliel Northrop, Benjamin Northrop, John Northrop, Daniel Smith, Sarah Morehouse and Thomas Seymour (Saymor). The greatest loss was that of Isaac Keeler of Scotland District, who suffered the destruction of his sawmill and grist mill. Another who suffered damage to property to a considerable degree was Samuel Olmsted and the one or both of the barns that were burned might have belonged to him.

Two years later the Assembly, after deducting the amounts previously advanced to Ridgefield for the purpose, allowed a balance of £1,730, 1 sh. 10 d.

Hessian Soldiers may have formed part of the British forces under Tryon that took part in the burning of Danbury. The presence of Hessians during this raid has been the subject of considerable controversy among local historians and others. The major source for the belief that Hessians fought at Ridgefield was the discovery of the bodies of two Hessian soldiers in a sand bank on the premises of Zebulon Main. In about 1874, when workmen were shovelling out sand and gravel to be used on the premises of Dr. A. Y. Paddock who then lived just south of the Episcopal Church, two skeletons were uncovered in the sand bank on the site of the present home of Ronald Bassett Jr. The bodies were buried about four feet deep and lay next to each other. Dr. Paddock acquired the skeletons, of which only one was relatively intact. The other was only partially complete. The more complete skeleton was exhibited by Dr. Paddock in 1876 at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition which commemorated the centenary of the Declaration of Independence. It is said that he refused an offer of two hundred dollars for it. Nothing is known of the final disposition of the skeletons. Following the tragic death of Dr. Paddock late in the 19th Century, his home was removed and divided to make two separate houses which were moved along to north Main Street and Danbury Road. It is

said that at the time the houses were thus divided, a skeleton was discovered. The story has not been verified, however, by any additional evidence.

Modern historians are inclined to the belief that Hessian soldiers did not form part of the British forces that took part in the burning of Danbury or the Battle of Ridgefield. On the basis of a comprehensive study of Revolutionary War records, Colonel Case and others are of the opinion that the error is one of identification, and that the unusual tall hat of the British grenadier, and the grenadier plates, could easily be confused for those of the Hessians. During the entire 18th Century the Hanoverian kings of England favored the German models of military uniforms which had been devised by Frederick the Great to increase the splendor of his troops; one of the most striking of these was that of the British grenadier.

Nevertheless earlier historians made specific references to the German troops among the British forces at Ridgefield, as evidenced in an article by Clifford A. H. Barrett which appeared in the March 1888 issue of *The Magazine of American History*, in which he related that

“ . . . When within a few miles of Ridgefield, General Wooster fell upon the rear of the column, and a sharp engagement ensued, in which forty Hessians were captured . . . (At the battle at the barricade) a strong body of Hessians under Agnew finally turned the left of Arnold's position.”

The Military Quota presented peculiar problems in Ridgefield as well as in other parts of the country during the Revolutionary War, as exemplified by a Memorial submitted to the General Assembly by Jonah Foster and noted in the Public Records of Connecticut in October 1784.

Foster was “Head of a Class in said Town ordered to raise a Soldier for the Continental Army”. Foster's Class hired a man for the Army and paid him sixty hard dollars but before the hired soldier could be mustered, he deserted and resisted every effort to induct him. Because of this deficiency the town was fined fifteen pounds, and an execution against the town was placed in the hands of the Sheriff of Fairfield County. Upon the town's petition, the General Assembly voted that

“ . . . the said Sheriff be and he is hereby Authorized and directed to receive of said Town the Amount of said Execution in Orders drawn by the Committee of Pay Table on the 2/6d Tax or any Securities of this State for hard Money which are due and Payable and the Treasurer is directed to receive the Same of said Sheriff in satisfaction for said Execution.”

Veterans' Benefits is a subject occasionally encountered in the Public Records of the State during the decade following the end of the war. In October 1784 Talcott Hawley of Ridgefield petitioned the General Assembly for financial aid. His Memorial related that he had been a soldier in the Connecticut Line in the Continental Army and that he had fallen sick while in service. By order of General Washington he had been “removed to his Friends in Ridge-

field where he remain in a weak and languishing State, that he is poor, and been at great expence and unable to Join the Corps of Invalids". The Assembly ordered the State Treasurer to pay Hawley the sum of five dollars per month for a period of two years in payments to be made every six months "if he shall so long live".

Town Meetings were often quite as warmly conducted in the period immediately following the Revolutionary War as they have been in recent times. In the Public Records of the State entered January 1784 a peculiar situation was reported to the General Assembly by "Nathan Olmsted & Inhabitants of the Town of Ridgfield". On 2 December 1783 a number of the townspeople in Ridgefield convened and called themselves a Town Meeting "and then and there Chose and appointed a set of Town Officers for said Town who have been sworn to faithfull Discharge of the Duties of their respective Offices".

Later on the same day the Selectmen, the Town Clerk, and the major part of the inhabitants "convened together to an antient Usage and Custom of said Town" and appointed another set of town officers and had them duly sworn, causing considerable confusion to the inhabitants of the town.

The General Assembly accordingly decreed that each of the meetings and votes and doings thereof were null and void. The legal voters of the town were called together to meet on the third Monday of the following February to choose their town officers and to do any other business that might be necessary. Joseph Platt Cook of Danbury was appointed moderator of the meeting. Several months later, in May, Cook was selected as one of the two Representatives from Danbury to the General Assembly. Colonel Philip Burr Bradley and Captain David Olmsted were the deputies from Ridgefield.

Cannon Balls have been found in various parts of the town during the course of the past hundred years. Ebenezer A. Hoyt plowed up a cannon ball in front of his house opposite the Keeler Tavern in about 1880. During the same period two cannon balls were dug up near the northwest end of the premises of the present Community Center by the late Mr. Hubert P. Main. One of these he kept and the other he presented to Governor Phineas E. Lounsbury.

Another cannon ball was found by Charles W. Sterling in Titicus in 1944 while he was spading his garden. He dug up an unidentified mass of bones together with a ball measuring four and a half inches in diameter. They were buried less than a hundred feet from the Titicus River. He sent the ball and bones to the Connecticut Archeological Society, of which he was a member.

Two cannon balls were discovered on the grounds of the Elms Inn by Robert Scala within the past several years. One was buried in the stump of a large old tree which he was removing, and the second ball was found under a porch of one of the buildings.

In 1925 a small cannon ball was dug up on High Ridge on the premises of Mrs. Gerardus P. Herrick.

Tories in Ridgefield included a number of prominent families, members of which worked for the cause of the British monarch during the Revolutionary War. One of these was Josiah Stebbins, who accompanied the British on their march from Danbury. There were several Tory families in Ridgebury who converted their cellars into places of security with trap doors built into the floor under the beds, by means of which concealed persons could be fed. One unidentified Tory sought safety in England during the war and returned to Ridgebury after its termination and lived there for the rest of his life. He was buried at town expense.

Hoyt, the owner of the house lot now owned by Dr. J. H. Inkster, was an acknowledged Tory, as related in the incident of the burning of the Keeler Tavern. He is not further identified in the histories but it is presumed that he was David Hoyt, who formerly owned and sold the Keeler Tavern to Timothy Keeler 2nd in 1769.

Another Tory was Epenetus Howe who lived in the house west of the Titicus bridge. This house is now owned by Mr. Ernest Conti. Local historians reported that as the British advanced through Titicus to the barricade, they attempted to make entry into the Howe house, where a spy was believed to have been concealed. Finding the doors bolted, one tried to enter through a window but was repelled by Howe's wife wielding a knife on his fingers. Marks made by the knife remained on the window sill for many years and may still be discerned.

However, another version of the story is given by a direct descendant, Mrs. Frederick E. Nelson of North Salem. She claims that Epenetus Howe was loyal to the royal cause. The family legend is that when the entire family was gathered at the table for dinner, Mrs. Howe became uneasy, feeling that they were being watched. Leaving the room she looked out to find that the house was being surrounded by patriots. As one of them attempted to enter through a pantry window, she wielded a kitchen knife on his fingers, leaving the marks on the sill.

Another tale told in the Howe family related that when the troops marched along the North Salem Road towards Ridgefield, British officers entered the house and searched it. Howe was the father of twin infant daughters, named Nancy and Betsy. An officer picked one of them out of the cradle, and holding the infant aloft in his hand, said "If you are Tories, God bless you! If you are not, God d - n you!"

Epenetus Howe was a hatter by trade who had been born in South Salem in 1743. His South Salem cousins were patriots. It was reported that Howe maintained a Tory-hole in his house, for the hiding of loyalists.

The family name was originally How without an 'e' but Howe's descendants changed the name to its present form in the course of time. Many of them became prominent citizens in North Salem, in civic life, in business, and in the early circus establishments. A great-grandson founded the New York Condensed Milk Company in that town.

According to the Acts of the Governor and Council of Safety in Connecticut which was in session in Hartford on 13 June 1777,

“George Folliot of Ridgefield, who was committed to the gaol in Hartford as a tory, was liberated from said prison, by paying all costs, and taking the oath of fidelity.”

More locally, at a town meeting held in Ridgefield on 9 August 1779 it was recorded that

“In s’d meeting the question was first whether any person that was an inhabitant in this town had and hath absconded and gone over to, or joined the enemy of the United States and hath returned or shall return into the town, be admitted to dwell in the town without the liberty and approbation of the town first had and obtained by such person or persons? Resolved in the negative.”

Local tradition relates that the Burt family of Mamanasco, which was descended from the first blacksmith, were Tories and that the Burt property was confiscated by the government during the Revolution and sold at public auction. This property was located along Mamanasco Lake and included the area from the North Salem Road between Pond Road and Tackora Trail along the lake front, a piece of property which was later designated as the ‘King Lotts’, since it had been owned by adherents of the King. The Burt homestead is now the home of Mr. Peter Grommes. Tradition states that during the first skirmish the residents sought shelter inside the unusually wide chimney in the cellar. Another tradition relates that this chimney was in actuality a Tory-hole for the hiding of loyalist fugitives.

Hurd wrote that on 9 August 1779 those Tories of Ridgefield who had harbored or given assistance to the British during Tryon’s invasion of Danbury and the Battle of Ridgefield, were taken one night to the river by the indignant patriots. There, by the light of the stars, they were given a prolonged ducking.

The Sherwood family of Ridgefield was Episcopalian in denomination and loyalist by political inclination. During the Revolution some of the Sherwoods went to Canada to make permanent homes in St. Johns in New Brunswick. Others remained in Ridgefield or returned to it after the war was over.

As with many of the Tories in Ridgefield, the Sherwoods suffered for their loyalty. In the records of the Danbury Probate Court under date of 25 February 1786 is noted that

“Richard Sherwood, Feb. 25, 1786—Whose estate both real and personal forfeited to state . . .”

Yet the same property was distributed on 27 November 1786 after the proba-tion of the will. There is the possibility that the Sherwoods may have been among those loyalists that repented and were reinstated in community life in Ridgefield.

Divided Allegiance was to be found occasionally within the same family. The Hawley family of “Reading-on-the-ridge” (Redding Ridge) provided an example of the problem sometimes encountered in Colonial families with

divided allegiance. There were four Hawley brothers, of whom two had declared for the King and two had joined the Continental Army. William Hawley, a patriotic brother, had captured General Agnew's horse and concealed his prize safely (at least he thought so) in a cellar. However, his loyalist brother, Samuel, discovered the animal and delivered it the same night to its former owner in Danbury. The next day these two brothers met each other face to face in hostile ranks at the Battle of Ridgefield.

Another instance occurred in the family of Benjamin Stebbins, whose home figured so prominently in the barricade of Ridgefield. Although one of his sons, Josiah, was a loyalist and had served as a guide for the British forces on their march from Danbury to Ridgefield, three other sons of Benjamin Stebbins—Thomas, Joseph and Samuel Stebbins—were patriots fighting in the Continental Army.

Virtually the same situation existed in the Morehouse family. Captain Lemuel Morehouse, Jr. served valiantly with the patriotic forces from Ridgefield in the Revolution prior to his death in 1777, while his brother, James Morehouse, was an admitted Tory. After James Morehouse had gone off to Canada with the British, Ichabod Doolittle was appointed administrator of his estate. A deed of sale dated 25 April 1780 specified that

“ . . . whereas James Morehouse, late of Ridgefield . . . hath absconded and taken side with the British Troops against the United States of America, and his real estate lying in said Ridgefield adjudged forfeit to the said State, by the County Court held within and for the County of Fairfield and his just debts not discharged, whereupon the General Assembly of said State have ordered the Court of Probate held within . . . Danbury to appoint an Administrator . . . to make sale of so much thereof as will raise sufficient to pay said debts . . . ”

There are a number of references to the confiscation of the property of the Tories after the end of the war. In February 1782 the Governor and Council and Committee of Safety resolved to allow Colonel Philip Burr Bradley to receive in exchange for the large sum of money that the State was indebted to him the equivalent in

“ . . . a certain Tract of Land in Ridgefield containing about Twenty Acres late the property of Benjⁿ Stebins who has joined the Enemy & his Estate been by Law declared Forfeited to this State . . . ”

In May of the same year Phineas Smith and Levi Smith of Ridgefield received, by order of the General Assembly, a deed to ten acres of land with buildings thereon. Except for this tract, all other properties of their father, Josiah Smith, had been confiscated by the State and sold for its use because in the year 1777 he had “joined the Enemies of the United States”.

In the records of the General Assembly which met in January 1784 reference was made to a Memorial of

“Thomas Hawley of Ridgefield in Fairfield County Shewing to this Assembly that some Time in April 1780 he purchased the Confiscated Estate of Josiah Stebbins late of said Ridgefield . . .”

General Benedict Arnold had his horse killed under him on the west side of Main Street near a maple tree about a hundred yards southwest of the home of Benjamin Stebbins. A tamarack tree traditionally marks the spot where the horse fell. The tamarack stands close to the masonry which supports the bank of earth fortifications and is the one situated closest to the steps leading to the home of Mrs. J. J. Pierrepont.

When Benjamin Lossing visited Ridgefield and was making the sketch of the scene of the Ridgefield barricade which later appeared in his *The Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*, an unidentified old man came along and chatted with him. The old man said that on the morning after the battle he and some other boys skinned Arnold's horse and discovered nine bullet holes in its hide.

Some years prior to 1908 *The Ridgefield Press* announced the discovery of the skeleton of Arnold's horse near the above mentioned tamarack tree and offered it to the local historical society, adding that the horns (sic) and hooves, which had been found at the same time, had been reinterred.

Congress was considerably impressed with Benedict Arnold's courageous conduct at the Ridgefield battle and directed the quartermaster general to “procure a horse and present the same, properly caparisoned, to Major General Arnold as a token of their appreciation of his gallant conduct in the action against the enemy in the late enterprise to Danbury”.

Arnold's exhibition of heroism at Ridgefield resulted in his appointment to the coveted rank of Major General, although the date of his commission still left him the junior of the five previously appointed. This did not heal the wound which his vanity had suffered some time before. In a further attempt to make amends for the omission of Congress, Washington offered Arnold the command of the Hudson, but Arnold declined it.

Arnold's bravery at Ridgefield was the subject of conversation in many quarters, and his behavior was vividly described by Colonel Hugh Hughes in a hitherto unpublished letter dated 3 May 1777 which he wrote to his commanding officer, Major General Horatio Gates.

Hughes reported that although he had collected sixteen hundred and ninety tents the previous winter and had stored them at Danbury by order of Washington, together with stores for the Commissary General, Quartermaster General and Ordnance Stores, the supplies had been destroyed by the British who had landed at Compo Hill with about two thousand men and marched to Danbury the previous week. He went on to describe the engagement at Ridgefield as follows:

“ . . . they set out for Ridgefield, on their Return to the Shipping, but a different Rout from what they came. At Ridgefield they were attack'd by General Wooster, with some Militia & other Troops in

the Rear, and General Arnold, and a few of the same Kind of troops in Front. I believe the Whole of our Force did not exceed 4 or 500 Hundred, so amazingly slow did the Inhabitants turn out on this alarming Occasion.

However, a few brave Men, headed by two Gallant Officers, General Arnold and Col. Lamb attack'd them in Front, while General Wooster, as mention'd above, harras'd their Rear, and Kill'd as I was told by People of that Place upwards of thirty. They burnt five Houses, & a Mill, at this Place, when I arrived on Sunday evening, just after Dark, hir'd two Guides and rode all Night in Quest of General Arnold, who had been from Place to Place, in order to stir up the People and Collect them so as to make a Stand. It was 9 O'clock on Monday Morning before I found him, which was at Saugatuck, owing to Misinformation over Night. When I arriv'd there he had but 250 Men, and the Enemy just in Sight. He made the best Disposition of this small Force that their Numbers would admit, on an advantageous Situation, waiting for their arrival, which happened in half an Hour after the Troops were posted . . .

General Arnold exerted every Power and Faculty in order to excite the Troops to a manly Discharge of their Duty.

Indeed, he Expos'd himself, almost to a Fault, and had not the Carriage of one of the Pieces given way, and the other two expended their ammunition, we should have gain'd some Laurels, but it seems they are reserved for some more important Occasions . . .

Here again, the General exhibited the greatest Marks of Bravery, Coolness and Fortitude. He rode up to our Front Line, in the full Force of the Enemy's Fire, of Musquetry and Grape Shot, encourag'd them from Right to Left, the Enemy advancing fast towards him and our men retreating. He conjur'd them by the love of Themselves, Posterity and all that is sacred not to defect him, but it was all to no Purpose, their Nerves were unstrung at the Thots of the Artillery, and having no Officers, of Spirit, among them, till the General and Col. Lamb came, they became panic-stricken . . .”

Hughes went on to report that he had been told that 32 men had been lost at Ridgefield. He mentioned that Lt. Col. Oswald and Captain Brown of the Train (Militia) had distinguished themselves at Ridgefield as had several others whose names he did not know. He added that it was reported that some Prisoners had been taken, forty or fifty in number.

A Unique Engraving of the Battle of Ridgefield was discovered in the summer of 1956 by Mr. Richard Wunderlich of the Kennedy Galleries, Inc. of 785 Fifth Avenue in New York City. This colorful and action-packed print shows the fighting at the barricade during the major engagement, as Arnold's horse was killed under him and he faced the British soldier who was about to capture him or run him through. Danbury was shown burning in the background.

The engraving is not recorded in the British Museum, nor is it listed in the Stokes catalogue. It is believed to be the only copy in existence.

The title which appears above the battle scene is "*A Skirmish in America between the Kings Troops & Genl Arnold*". A legend in script appears below the engraving and reads as follows:

"A Skirmish in AMERICA between the KINGS Troops & Gen^l ARNOLD 25th of April, 1777, A Detachment of 200 Men commanded by Governor Tryon assisted by those able and active officers, Brigadier Genl. Agnew & Sir Willm. Erskine, advanced to Danbury, where they destroyed the Rebel Magazine & burnt the town, in their return Genl. Wooster hung upon their rear with what militia he could collect, & in a Skirmish was killed at an age approaching nearly to 70.

"The Royal Force had only got quit of Wooster when they found themselves engaged with Arnold, who had got possession of Ridgefield, the village was forced, & the Americans drove back on all sides; the Action was sharp, & Arnold displayed his usual intrepidity, his horse having been shot within a few yards of our foremost ranks, he suddenly disengaged himself, & drawing a pistol out, Shot the Soldier dead who was running up to transfix him with his bayonet.

"London, Printed for Jas. Sharpe (late Clerke & rider to Messrs. Sayer & Bennett) at No. 20 Portugal Street near Lincolns Inn—published as the Act directs April 4th 1780."

This engraving assumes considerable importance to scholars and historians for several reasons. First of all, it is most unusual to depict and report a battle between the British and Americans in which the bravery and courageous behavior of an enemy commander is deliberately made the subject. For this reason alone the print is of great interest, since it was produced during the Revolution.

Secondly, the fact that only one copy appears to be in existence is significant. The engraving was produced in April 1780. Five months later, Arnold's treason was discovered as a result of the capture of Major John Andre. The most likely assumption is that the entire run of the engraving was suppressed by the British Government. The British Government might logically attempt to avoid directing attention to one of the foremost American military leaders who, at the time of the engraving's publication, was already a traitor to his cause. The existing print may have accidentally escaped destruction or may have been reserved for file and later lost or discarded. Whatever the circumstances of this engraving's publication may have been, the fact remains that its existence places the Battle of Ridgefield among the important engagements in the Revolutionary War in the estimate of the British.

The engraving was recently acquired for a private collection in Connecticut. It is with the permission of the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, and with the kind assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wunderlich of the Kennedy Galleries, Inc. that a copy of the engraving was furnished to this writer, and permission was granted for its reproduction in *Figure 27*.

Dr. Amos Baker was prominent in Ridgefield's early history as a local physician who served as a surgeon's mate with Colonel Philip Burr Bradley's Battalion of the Wadsworth Brigade at the Battle of Ridgefield. He was part of Captain Isaac Hines Company at the alarm at Fairfield in 1779.

Dr. Baker was the discoverer of the famous Baker Apple which was native to Ridgefield. According to the story, while Dr. Baker was waiting for his grain to be ground at the grist mill operated at Lake Mamasasco by Isaac Keeler, he passed the time by taking a walk through the fields around the lake. He noticed a tree with brilliantly colored apples and he tasted one of them. They were of excellent quality and Dr. Baker made a mental note of the tree's location. The following spring he returned to take some grafts from the old tree and the apple produced in this manner has since become known throughout the country.

According to *The Apples of New York* by Beach, Booth and Taylor (Volume I) ". . . it is stated that the original tree was in full bearing in its native place, Ridgefield, Conn. during the Revolutionary War. Forty years ago it was but little known outside the vicinity of its origin."

The apple is described as a red apple of good size, uniform and of fairly good quality.

Dr. Baker was later one of the organizers of the Methodist Church in Ridgefield, and his kitchen served as one of the several meeting places for the first classes that were formed.

Philip Burr Bradley was one of the most prominent citizens of Ridgefield during the Revolutionary War and the period that followed. Born in Fairfield in 1738, the son of Captain Daniel Bradley, he moved to Ridgefield with his parents in 1759. A matter of interest is the fact that he was a first cousin of Aaron Burr of duelling fame.

Bradley was elected to the State Legislature in 1769 and served in that position until 1791. In 1770 he received a royal commission as Justice of the Peace and he received his Colonel's commission from John Hancock on 18 January 1777. He had previously served with Colonel Waterbury as Lieutenant Colonel and in late 1776 he had served with the rank of Colonel under General Jeremiah Wadsworth.

Bradley commanded a battalion at the Battle of Ridgefield. He later saw action at Germantown, Monmouth and at Stony Point. Following the end of the war, Bradley received an appointment from Washington as First Marshal of the Connecticut District.

Bradley served as Ridgefield's first postmaster in 1792, following his appointment by Colonel Timothy Pickering, the first Postmaster General of the United States. The postoffice was then housed in the Keeler Tavern.

Bradley's home in Ridgefield is now the residence of Mrs. Edward L. Ballard. The original building was remodeled several times and moved further to the rear of the property from its original location near the Main

Street. According to family tradition, it was to this house that George Washington came to visit Bradley. Bradley descendants for many generations preserved a chair, a china bowl and a pitcher which were said to have been used by Washington during his visit.

Washington and Bradley were reported to have been friends. Whether such was the case does not become apparent from the Washington Papers and similar collections, but it is a matter of record that Bradley had the highest esteem for his commander-in-chief, and that Washington valued Bradley's services in the war.

Several letters exchanged between Washington and Bradley form part of the collection of Washington Papers in the Library of Congress. These letters do not reflect an intimate relationship between the two men, although there is every evidence of great mutual respect. The first of these letters was written by Bradley from Bergen on 20 July 1776 to General Washington, and stated that

"I have made strict enquiry (pursuant to your orders) into the Conduct of Capt. Ephraim Burr and upon Examination find that by order of General Putnam, and Col. Molyne he was authorised and Empowered to secure the property and Effects of all the Tory Refugees which he could come at and am of opinion that he no more than fulfilled his Orders. I believe that some of his men without his knowledge or approbation Did take some things which were the property of persons whose principles were not inimical; But these together with those secured by himself are safely deposited in the hands of a Gentleman in the Jerseys by orders which he produced from under the hands of Col. Molyne. —

Capt. Burr hath fully satisfied the owners of said last mentioned Effects as to his conduct and the principles by which he was actuated; Upon the whole am of Opinion that Capt. Burr's Conduct upon the Strictest Scrutiny will appear unexceptionable. Nothing worthy of Observation hath transpired since I reported last to Your Excellency except that our men discovered this morning on an Eminence near the Ministerial Shipping that the Enemy were Erecting a Fortification.

I have the honour to be with every possible mark of esteem and respect, Your Excellency's Most

Obedient Hum^l Servant,
Philip B. Bradley."

Another letter from Bradley at Bergen two days later to George Washington reported that a barge from the Ministerial Fleet while under constant fire attempted to land on Bergen Point. His men exchanged a "warm musquetry" and forced the barge to retire in confusion and disorder. Bradley stated that he reported the incident inasmuch as the report of the guns might have alarmed Washington's headquarters. He added that on the previous night a stranger was apprehended by his guards on Bergen Neck. Since the individual could give no satisfactory account of himself, Bradley was of the opinion that he was a dangerous person and requested Washington's further directions.

In a letter from Ridgefield dated 24 March 1777, almost a month before the Battle of Ridgefield, Bradley addressed General Washington as follows:

“May it please Your Excellency —

I have forwarded the Pay Abstracts for the Regt. which I commanded last Campaign the peculiar difficulties attending the making out of the Abstracts arising from our broken situation, will I hope apologise for any small inaccuracies which may be discovered. I have endeavoured to do them with as much precision as possible. —

Being appointed by General Parsons to superintend the Small Pox in the Western end of this State Prevents me from doing myself the Pleasure of waiting upon Your Excellency and drawing the Money. I hope you will give an Order for the payment, to the Bearer, Mr. Rogers.

Being often shifted into different Brigades, rendered it impracticable to procure particular Certificates have only been able to get a General one from Brigadier Genl. Wadsworth, which I wish may meet with Your Excellencies Approbation. I beg leave to acquaint Your Excellency that being at a loss respecting the pay of those persons who were made prisoners, I consulted his Honour Gov. Trumbull & his Council who directed me to make out their pay unto 28th of Dec. at which time the Regiment was discharged.

With every sentiment of Respect I am Your Excellencies

Most Obedient Servant
Philip B. Bradley.”

The sum of twenty-six thousand dollars was paid out to Bradley’s messenger, Hezekiah Rogers, and it was noted that the Abstract was made out incorrectly.

The next item in the collection is a letter from General Washington dated 6 January 1780 to several officers, including Bradley, in which he stated that due to lack of sufficient provisions, he was forced to order them to discharge all men in their brigades whose term of enlistment would expire close to the end of the current month. By the same token, the officers were to advise commanders of regiments that they must prevent discharges of any men not coming under the stated provision.

The last of the letters in the Washington Papers is a communication from General Washington to Colonel Bradley dated 14 November 1780 which stated that Bradley was to assume charge of Invalids and such detachment of the Connecticut Line as were mentioned in the General Orders of the 13th as well as of such baggage as would be sent from there to the winter quarters of the troops. Bradley was to proceed from King’s Ferry, moving the baggage ahead. Boats were to be kept in readiness for transportation of the baggage so that the wagons might be vacated and returned without delay. The troops under his command were to move on the easterly side to the vicinity of West Point where further orders would be forthcoming from General Heath.

Washington enjoined Bradley to "be pleased to pay the utmost attention to prevent the destruction of fences, violation of any other property of the Inhabitants on the March; as well as to the accomodation of the Troops under Your Command".

An interesting incident which occurred when Bradley returned to civilian life after the end of the war is noted in the public records of the state of Connecticut. Bradley had taken the oath of fidelity to the United States to execute the office of Justice of the Peace for the County of Fairfield, but he neglected to take the oath of the State of Connecticut. Meanwhile he served as Justice from 1 December 1781 until January 1783, before the omission was brought to official notice. Then, in order to avoid possible litigation and contention, an appeal was made to the General Assembly at Hartford. The Assembly resolved thereupon that the acts and doings of Bradley during his term as Justice of the Peace be declared valid in Law as if he had taken the required oath.

Major Thaddeus Crane of North Salem, New York was among the soldiers wounded in the second skirmish in Ridgefield. He was shot through the body at almost the same time that General Wooster received his fatal wound. Although bleeding profusely, Crane managed to keep on his horse until he was carried to the rear. His boots were filled with blood and he was laid on the same flat rock at the intersection of the highway and Barlow Mountain Road where the surgeon had cared for Wooster's wound.

Crane was very weak from loss of blood. The bullet had passed through his body and punctured the lungs, remaining lodged in the skin of his left shoulder blade. It was probed out, and after the wound was dressed, Crane was conducted to his home in North Salem.

Thaddeus Crane received the commission of Colonel, and three years after the Battle of Ridgefield he was again serving in battle. He died in 1803 at the age of seventy-four. Some of his descendants made their home in Ridgefield for many years.

Jack Congo was a negro resident of Ridgefield who was killed in the Revolutionary War. Although there are no other records relating to him, there is in the collection of the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association an original letter from Congo's employer to Colonel Philip Burr Bradley, which reads as follows:

"Ridgefield 10^t October 1793

Sir

I have called at your house in your absence to get some information Respecting a Soldier who enlisted a soldier in your Regiment under Capt Eli Catlin and served in March 1777 & served till December 1778, said soldier was a Negro by Name Jack Congo who at the time of Enlisting & During the time he continued in the service was

my Servant, consequently I consider myself entitled to his wages, as he left no other Legal Representative & there is no Remaining in the Comptrollers office an army Note issued by the Treasurer in favor of s^d Jack Congo for the sum of Twenty four Pounds, four Shillings & three pence being for his service in the 5th Connecticut Regiment commanded by you—If, Sir you would help me to any positive evidence that said Negro is Dead which I expect you may find in your Roles is would do me a peculiar favor and would be all the Evidence needful to support any Petition which I have once layd befor the General Assembly of this State for want of positive evidence that said Negro was Died I could not obtain the said Sum Due—Therefore, Sir, if you could Direct a Letter to Adino Hale Esquire who is a Representative for the Town of Goshin and forward it to New Haven by your Representatives you shall receive from his such compensation for your trouble as you shall consider an Equivalent—and if you cannot find such returns so as to help in any way Please to write so that I may not Depend on your Evidence at a future period — .

from your friend in hast

Nath^l Baldwin

Col. Philip B. Bradley.”

Bradley forwarded the letter to Hale with the following message in his own hand on a blank page of the original missive:

“Ridgefield Octobr 5th 1795

Sir

I cannot give Mr. Baldwin any information of his Negro death I would advise him to enquire of Col. Elijah Chapman of Tollond who was a Lieut. in that Company.

Most Obedient
Servt

To Adino Hale, Esq.

Philip B. Bradley.”

Lt. Col. Abraham Gould of Fairfield, who commanded the Fourth Connecticut Militia was killed on his horse about 80 rods east of the Stebbins house. This was probably the result of an engagement with one of the British flanking parties during the action at the barricade. Later on that same day Gould's body was secured to the back of his horse and carried through the town.

Silas Haines was one of the Connecticut patriots killed at the battle in Ridgefield. After the British had established a cannon at the Episcopal Church they fired several volleys in the direction of the Keeler Tavern. As each volley came over, the American soldiers dropped to the ground to escape the shower of musket bullets and cannon balls. Haines, a soldier of the North Stratford Co. (now Trumbull), was lying on the ground to avoid the volley. An apparently spent cannon ball skipped along the ground in his direction. The ball struck Haines on the hip and he died instantly. His brother and an officer named Captain Najah Bennett of North Fairfield Co. (now Weston) were eye witnesses.

The fatal missile was picked up off the ground by Bennett and preserved in his family. It descended to Ormel Hall from whom it was acquired by George Turner of Luddingtonville. The missile, mounted on a plaque with an inscription by Hall, is now in the collection of Mr. Philip Russo of Danbury.

The body of Silas Haines was returned to Trumbull and interred in Long Hill Cemetery. According to legend, his young widow gave birth to a child a short time later, and the body of the infant was marked with a birthmark on the hip in exactly the location where the infant's father had received his fatal wound.

Lieutenant Ephraim Middlebrook was another native of Trumbull who lost his life at the Battle of Ridgefield. The inscription on the tablet which marks his grave in the Long Hill burial ground relates that it was erected

"In Memory Of
LIEUT. EPHRAIM MIDDLEBROOK

Who fought, bled and died in
defense of his Country, at the
Battle of Ridgefield, on the 27th
day of April, 1777, in the 41st
year of his age; and on the 3d
day of May was interred here
with the Honours of War.

In memory of which these lines:

“ Here on this Tomb cast an eye,
and view the Eagle great:
He represents our Liberty;
in the Union of the States;
View in his claws the arrows sharpe,
in the branch of oak likewise;
A lively emblem of our smart,
for victory o'er our enemies;
For which cause this Hero bled
On Ridgefield's bloody plain;
And there was numbered with the dead
his country's freedom to obtain;
In memory of which these lines were wrote
and to perpetuate his name;
That his descendants ne'er forgot
that for their freedom he was slain.' ”

Jeremiah Keeler was a boy of about seventeen when he witnessed the Battle of Ridgefield. His older brother, Timothy Keeler 2nd, the proprietor of the Keeler Tavern, was one of the town's foremost patriots. Another brother, Thaddeus Keeler, was a Captain in the Continental Army. It was inevitable that the boy's enthusiasm would be aroused by the stirring events of that time. Inspired by the happenings of the day, and with the urging of Col. Philip Burr Bradley, young Jeremiah enlisted in the regular Continental Army on 28 May 1777

from in front of his brother's Tavern. As a member of the 7th Company of the Connecticut Line he served under Colonel Nehemiah Beardsley during the three years that followed. Soon after his enlistment young Keeler was selected by Baron von Steuben to join the Light Infantry under the command of General de Lafayette. Like all the men who served with him under the brilliant French officer, Keeler cherished a feeling of great admiration and loyalty for the Marquis. Keeler was promoted to the rank of Orderly Sergeant, and he was frequently selected for the execution of difficult and responsible duties. It was on one of these occasions that Lafayette presented young Sergeant Keeler with a sword in appreciation for his faithfulness and courage, shown in *Figure 32b*.

Jeremiah Keeler saw action in several of the important battles of the war, including the Battles of Jamestown and Monmouth. He was present at the siege of Yorktown and witnessed the surrender of the British which terminated the war. At Yorktown Keeler won a special commendation for his skill and daring. Lafayette's brigade was employed to storm the British fortifications, two of which were captured, one by the French and the other by the American troops. Keeler was the second man among the Americans to scale the redoubt in the midst of a murderous fire. His skill in organizing his men kept the British from counterattack. As an old man he often recounted the story of the battle, adding that "Those were the days when I was spry".

Keeler was mustered out of the service with an honorable discharge in Virginia in 1783, and soon thereafter he began his homeward journey to Ridgefield on foot. Using the famous sword as his cane, he walked the entire distance to his home. It was often difficult to find food and even a place to sleep on the way.

In 1784 Keeler returned to Virginia where he taught school during that winter. Then he gave up his teaching career and came back to Ridgefield and Salem where he bought a farm and remained for the rest of his life. In 1788 he began the construction of a large house on the farm between South Salem and Ridgefield. The frame for the house was taken from the old Episcopal Church, which had been closed down in 1776 and turned into an inn known as the Church Tavern. When the house was finished in 1789, he settled down with his new bride, Hulda Hull, a cousin of Aaron Burr of duelling fame. He devoted his life to farming and raised eleven children. He died in 1854 at the age of ninety-three. A year before his death a daguerrotype portrait was made by R. A. Lewis of Chatham Street in New York City. This portrait, shown in *Figure 32a*, is still carefully preserved in the family, together with the chair in which he sat, and his long musket.

An interesting document which is owned by the Keeler descendants in South Salem is signed by Thaddeus Keeler 2nd, leasing to his brother Jeremiah the one-third part of his dwelling house in which Thaddeus lived, for and during the term of the natural life of a mutual sister-in-law, Benjamin Keeler's

widow, with the stipulation that Jeremiah did not hire, rent or sell the premises to any person during the widow's occupancy. The lease is signed and witnessed on 6 April 1802.

When Jeremiah Keeler died on 9 February 1853, he was buried in the private family burial ground a few rods from the house. The farm was inherited by his son, Thaddeus H. Keeler, who had lived on the premises and taken care of the aged Jeremiah.

Jeremiah Keeler's sword passed into the hands of first Thaddeus H. Keeler and then to the latter's son, Jeremiah W. Keeler, who in turn later passed it on to his grandson, also named Timothy, of Danbury. When this latest Timothy died he was living with his sister, who bore another old family name, Hulda Hull Keeler. Upon Timothy's death, the sword and family Bible of the original Jeremiah Keeler, in addition to one of the original Jeremiah's belt buckles, a shoe buckle and a mantel clock, became the property of his sister. When she died they descended to Gilbert Keeler, then the oldest living grandson of the original Jeremiah. He lived in upper New York State.

The famous sword was lent to the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association many years ago. It remained on exhibit in the Historical Room until it was reclaimed by a member of either the New York or Chicago branches of the family several decades ago. Its present whereabouts are not known.

Keeler's personality made him a popular figure in the area and he served as Justice of the Peace for many years. He was elected Overseer of Highways in 1789. Keeler was fond of making rhymes and his letters and notes were usually in this form. He operated a cider mill across the road from his home, and on one occasion he wished to purchase a wooden scoop from a man named Hezekiah Brown. Accordingly, he sent the following message by means of one of the traders:

“Jeremiah to Hezekiah
Sends greeting, and asks that he will
Make a shovel for his mill.
Make it out of butternut wood
Or something else that's just as good.
Finish off as sleek as ribbons
and send it up by Hull or Stebbins.”

The last line referred to Captain Jacob Hull and Jere Stebbins, among the earlier market wagoners. These men carted local products to Long Island Sound for shipment by boat to New York, and brought back groceries and other commodities and did errands along the way.

Joshua King ranked among the most prominent residents of Ridgefield. He embarked on a military career at the age of seventeen when he enlisted in Sheldon's Dragoons and rose to the rank of Lieutenant by 1779. In September 1780 he was stationed in South Salem with the Second Regiment of Light Dragoons. When Major John Andre was captured at Tarrytown, the prisoner

was conducted to King's headquarters in South Salem and was placed in his safekeeping. The two officers became friendly and during the prisoner's first night in South Salem they shared the same bed. Lieutenant King personally had charge of Andre during the period of his imprisonment and with two of his men he was detailed to convey the prisoner to headquarters upon General Washington's orders. King remained with the British officer until his execution, and walked with him to the gallows. The account of the circumstances of Andre's capture and imprisonment are given in a letter which King wrote to a friend on 17 June 1817 and which has been widely quoted in all works relating to Andre. Lieutenant King acquired the chair which was used by Major Andre during his imprisonment in the Jacob Gilbert house in South Salem, and on which the prisoner probably sat when he wrote his well known letter to General Washington and executed his celebrated self-portrait (*Figure 34*). The chair was preserved in the King family home in Ridgefield for many years, and it was last reported in the possession of J. Howard King. Its present owner is not known.

A letter written from Ridgefield on 17 June 1817 by Lieutenant Joshua King to an unidentified friend has been widely quoted again and again because of its pertinent account of the capture of Andre. In his letter King specified that

“ . . . I was the first and only officer who had charge of him (Andre) whilst at the Headquarters of the 2nd Regiment of Light Dragoons, which was then at Ensign Gilbert's in South Salem. He was brought up by an adjutant and four men belonging to the Connecticut militia under the command of Lieut. Col. Jamison from the lines near Tarrytown, a character under the disguised name of John Anderson. He looked somewhat like a reduced gentleman. His small clothes were nankin, with long white top boots in part, his undress military suit. His coat purple, with gold lace, worn somewhat threadbare, with a small brimmed tarnished beaver on his head. He wore his hair in a *Quieu* with a long, black band and his clothes somewhat dirty. In this garb I took charge of him. After breakfast my Barber came in to dress me,—after which, I requested *him* to undergo the same operation, which he did.

“When the ribbon was taken from his hair, I observed it full of powder. This circumstance with others that occurred, induced me to believe I had no ordinary personage in charge.

“He requested permission to take the bed, whilst his shirt and small clothes could be washed. I told him that was needless, for a change was at his service, which he accepted.

“We were close pent up in a bedroom with a guard at the door and window. There was a spacious yard before the door, which he desired he might be permitted to walk in with me. I accordingly disposed of my guard in such a manner as to prevent an escape. Whilst walking together, he observed, he must make a confidant of somebody and he knew not a more proper person than myself, as I had appeared to befriend a stranger in distress. After settling the point between ourselves, he told me who he was, and

gave me a short account of himself from the time he was taken at St. Johns in 1775 to that time. He requested pen and ink and wrote immediately to Genl. Washington, declaring who he was. About midnight the express returned with orders from Genl. Washington to Col. Sheldon to send Major Andre immediately to Headquarters.

“I started with him and before I got to North Salem meeting house met another express with a letter directed to the Officer who had Major Andre in charge, and which letter directed a circuitous route to Headquarters for fear of re-capture, and gave an account of Arnold’s desertion, &c. . . .”

Lieutenant King (*Figure 33*) remained in the Dragoons until the conclusion of the Revolutionary War and was present at the Battle and surrender of Yorktown. With the coming of peace, King returned to Ridgefield where he married Miss Anne Ingersoll, the daughter of the Congregational minister. He established himself in commerce in the town in partnership with a former fellow-officer, Lieutenant James Dole of Wethersfield, who settled in Ridgefield at the same time. In 1783 the partners established the store which was known as King and Dole.

When Lieutenant Dole left the business in 1805, William Hawley became King’s partner and the firm was known as King & Hawley for the next thirty-five years. In 1840 Joshua King died and Lewis H. Bailey went into partnership with Hawley, changing the firm name to Hawley and Bailey. In 1842 Bailey became the proprietor and the name of the firm changed to L. H. Bailey Co. Subsequent to this date, Bailey established the Bailey Inn. There were a number of partners in the next few decades. In 1867 D. Smith Gage joined Bailey under the firm name of Bailey & Gage, and in a few years Gage bought out the store and operated it alone until 1884.

During this period the store was located in the building which was locally known as “Old Hundred”. In 1884 Gage moved the store to its present location on the corner of Main Street and Bailey Avenue and the old building became a residence. In 1885 David F. Bedient of Wilton was hired by Gage as a clerk, and ten years later he purchased the store from Gage in partnership with Howard E. Mead. Mead had previously operated the store at Titicus with John D. Nash. Shortly after Gage sold the store, the great fire of 1895 swept the business district. The holocaust probably started in the store, and destroyed it. Early in 1896 Bedient bought out his partner’s share in the store and built the present building on the old foundations. After operating for several decades under his own name as D. F. Bedient, it became the D. F. Bedient Company in 1919. At the present time the store is owned and operated by Abraham F. Morelli.

An interesting item relating to Andre’s capture is a song which was recently discovered by Miss Louisa Scott among family papers. The song is written in thirteen stanzas of the popular ‘Come hear ye’ form and it

appears to be an original manuscript—perhaps a unique copy. The reverse side bears the name of Clany Sanders and it is dated Ridgefield, July 18 . . . 1812, indicating that it is of local origin. The words of the Song are as follows:

A SONG

1st

Come all you brave americans and unto me give ear,
And I will sing you a ditty that will your courage cheer,
'Twas of a brave young gentleman near aged twentytwo,
He fought for north america his heart was just and true.

2nd

They took him from his native land and they did him confine,
They put him into prison and kept him for a time.
And with a Resolution not Long with them to stay,
He set himself at Liberty and soon he ran away.

3rd

And with a scouting party, around to tarrytown,
And their he met a British officer a man of high renown.
He said to this young gentleman youre of a british score,
I trust that you will tell me the Dangers are all or'e.

4th

Then up steps this young gentleman and bid him to Dismount
Tell me where you've been traveling give me a strict Account.
I am a british flag I've a pass to go this Way,
I'm on an Expedition I have no time to stay.

5th

Then up steps this young gentleman, John Spalding was his name
Tell me where you've been traveling tell me from whence you came
Or else I am Resolved that you shall not pass by
With a strict Examination they found he was a Spy.

6th

He begged for his Liberty he begged for his Discharge,
And often times he told them if they would set him at Large,
He'd give them all the gold and silver that he'd laid up in store,
And when he come to New York he'd give them ten times more.

7th

I scorn your gold and silver I've enough Laid up in store,
When that's all spent and gone I'll likely fight for More
If you will take your sword in hand and gain your Liberty
If then that you do Conquer, O then you shall be free.

8th

I am a man from British with courage stout and Bold,
I fear the face of no man although he's cloth'd in Gold,
The time it is imperative a Valiant for to try,
If we should take our swords in hand One of us two must Die.

9th

He found that his conspiracy would soon be brought to Light
He called for pen and paper and begged Leave to Write.
A Letter to General Arnold to tell him of his fate,
And begg'd for his assistance But alas it was too Late.

10th

When the news to general arnold Came it put him in a fret,
He walk the room in trouble his eyes his Cheeks Did Wet.
The news went through the Camp although throughout the fort,
Then arnold Called for a Boat and sailed for New York.

11th

Now Arnold is in New York a fighting for his king
He left poor Major Andrea the gallows for to swing
He was a man of honor from Briton bred and Borne
To die upon the Gallows he Did most highly scorne.

12th

When he was Executed he look'd both meek and mild
He look'd on his Spectators most pleasantly did smile
He look'd so meek and mild Caus'd every heart to bleed
They wished him Released and Arnold in his Stead.

13th

Heres a health to John Spalding and let your voices sound
Fill up your flowing glasses and drink his health around
Here's health to the other two which was his Company
Cheer up you brave americans Ye sons of Liberty.

Clany Sander's Poetrys

Ridgefield July 18th 1812.

Jabez Rockwell of Ridgebury District is of particular interest because his powder horn is exhibited at the Valley Forge Park in Pennsylvania. He served at the Battle of Trenton and it is recorded in the family histories that he crossed the Delaware River with General Washington. The legend about the powder horn relates that during the period of extreme privation at Valley Forge, where Rockwell wintered, horns for storing powder were in great demand. As new head of cattle were driven into the camp, there was a great contest for the horns, and General Washington decided the assignment of the horns of a particular new batch of cattle by the device of selecting a number between 1500 and 2000. The ten soldiers who guessed the correct number, or the closest numbers to it, would be given the horns. The correct number was 1776 and only one of the soldiers guessed it. Rockwell was among the nine others who guessed closest to this number. The powder horn, shown in *Figure 35*, presumably the same one which he won in the number contest, is inscribed

Jabez Rockwell of
Ridgebury, Connecticut, Hif. Horn
made in Camp at Valley Forge
First used Monmouth, June 20, 1778
Last at Yorktown 1781.

The horn came into the possession of Valley Forge Park when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acquired the Washington Headquarters Building in 1905. In the Park Library are several photographs of members of the Rockwell family which were acquired in 1895 from a great-nephew of Jabez, a Mr. C. F. Rockwell.

General David Wooster was fatally wounded during the second skirmish which preceded the battle at the barricade. As he turned back to face his men to exhort them to move forward, an enemy musket ball struck him, entering his back obliquely, cutting the spinal cord and lodging in his stomach. Wooster dropped from his horse to the ground. His sash was removed from his waist and used to carry him from the field. He was brought first to a house, then carried back along the route which the troops had previously taken, to a large flat rock which was at the side of the road at the junction of Barlow Mountain and North Salem Roads. On this rock Dr. Turner dressed the General's wounds and he was then placed in a carriage and driven back to Danbury where he was nursed in the house of Nehemiah Dibble which the day before had served as Tryon's headquarters. Wooster suffered untold pain for three days before he sank into a coma. He died on 2 May and was buried two days later in the old cemetery on Wooster Street in Danbury.

According to Lossing, the spot where Wooster fell was stated by tradition at that time (1850) to be situated beside a large chestnut tree. When Lossing visited the site a century ago the tree had been cut down and converted into rails. The stump, which had almost decayed into dust, was flanked by two sugar maples. The owner of the premises, who pointed out the spot to Lossing, expressed the hope that Congress would make some effort to commemorate the location. He had contemplated erecting a chestnut post at his own expense, but he added that he had not done so because people would expect him to letter it. The spot went unmarked until 4 July 1896 when Edward A. Housman of Danbury caused the present stone tablet, illustrated in *Figure 26*, to be erected.

For many years the sword and sash of General Wooster were believed to have been deposited in the collections of Yale University of New Haven, but these articles cannot be found and have been missing for a considerable period of time. The earliest mention of them at Yale is found in a letter written in 1837 by Charles W. Wooster, a descendant of the General, to Jeremiah Day. Wooster was an admiral in the Chilean service at Santiago, Chile, and he found the sword and sash and a contemporary portrait of the General in the possession of an English gentleman living in Valparaiso. Wooster had the portrait copied and acquired the sword and sash and presented them to the Trumbull Gallery at Yale, according to the letter. There is a tradition that when the Wooster Monument in Danbury was dedicated on 27 April 1854, the sword and sash were borrowed from Yale and worn by the orator of the occasion, Henry C. Deming. However, no mention of these items was made in the accounts of the dedication and Deming's family reported that the incident was not known in the family.

Another lead came to light in 1875 in a handbook of the Centennial Exhibition of antiquarian and revolutionary relics which was held to aid the national centennial fund of Philadelphia. Item 225 of the exhibition listed the sword and sash of General David Wooster, lent by an official of the Treasurer's office at Yale.

Subsequent sources which were published between 1885 and 1926 refer to the Wooster memorabilia at Yale, where they could not be found, although they were generally assumed to be stored there. An article in the 14 August 1929 issue of *The New Haven Evening Register* remarked about "the faded clothes, rusty sword, and bullet-ridden hat of General David Wooster" which, together with several truckloads of other Revolutionary War relics, which were the property of the DAR, had been stored in the Fairfield County Court House in Danbury since its erection several decades before, in the small court room on the first floor of the building. According to the article, the items had to be moved to another storage place at that time. In 1938 the FWP "*Guide to Connecticut*" mentioned that the Revolutionary War memorabilia were stored in the Danbury Court House. However, at this writing, the Wooster items have not been located either in Danbury or at Yale.

A Spy from Ridgefield was apprehended by scouts from General Putnam's outposts in Westchester County early in 1779. The man was found lurking within the American lines. Upon being questioned, he was unable to give a satisfactory reply regarding his business. He was brought back over the State line to Putnam's headquarters in Redding. During a formal interrogation, he revealed that his name was Edward Jones, that he was a Welshman by birth, and a resident of Ridgefield. He had settled in the town several years before the outbreak of the war. He admitted that he was a loyalist and that he had always been an adherent of the King's cause. When war broke out he had fled to the British Army. He became a butcher and several weeks before his capture he had been dispatched to Westchester County to purchase beef for the army. It was in the execution of this assignment that he was captured. Jones was remanded to the guardhouse and his trial was immediately ordered. Among the papers of Lieutenant Samuel Richards, paymaster in Colonel Wylly's regiment, was the following account:

"Feb. 4, 1779. Was tried at a General Court Martial Edward Jones for Going to and serving the enemy, and coming out as a spy—found guilty of each and every charge Exhibited against him, and according to Law and the Usages of Nations was sentenced to suffer Death.

The General approves the sentence and orders it to be put in Execution between the hours of ten and eleven A.M. by hanging him by the neck till he be Dead."

Two days later a soldier of the First Connecticut Regiment was tried and found guilty of desertion to the enemy, and General Putnam ordered the two prisoners to be executed at the same time. Accordingly, the hill which rose above and beyond the American camp (now known as Gallows Hill) was selected for the execution and a gallows was erected. Barber related that the hangman absconded and several boys about twelve years of age were ordered by Putnam to serve in his place. Jones was compelled to ascend a ladder to the gallows, which was about twenty feet from the ground. After the rope had been placed about his

neck, General Putnam ordered him to jump from the ladder. Jones refused, however, and stated that he was not guilty of the crime with which he was charged. Putnam then reportedly ordered the boys to overturn the ladder, and, upon their refusal, forced them to do so at the point of his sword. However, this account of Putnam's cruelty has been questioned by other historians of Redding as being inconsistent with the General's character.



Figure 25 Thumb latch with initials I. K.



Figure 38

Chapter VI

CONTINENTAL ENCAMPMENTS IN RIDGEFIELD

During the summer of 1779 the town of Ridgefield was host to a considerable portion of the Continental Army. Among the troops stationed here for periods ranging from several weeks to perhaps as long as several months, were Colonel Stephen Moylan's cavalry, Brigadier General John Glover's brigade, Colonel Charles Armand's Independent Corps, the two Connecticut Brigades under the command of Major General William Heath, Colonel Sheldon's cavalry regiment and Nixon's brigade. The importance of the location of the Continental Army in Ridgefield at this time is indicated by the fact that Washington placed Major General Robert Howe in command of the troops here.

Strangely enough, none of the existing histories of Ridgefield have taken any cognizance of the presence of Continental troops within the township's boundaries. This oversight is as surprising as it is inexplicable, inasmuch as a wealth of documentary evidence is readily available, particularly in the writings of General George Washington.

The first mention of Ridgefield that occurs in the military papers of General Washington appears to be a letter he received from Major General Samuel H. Parsons in reply to the commander-in-chief's inquiry concerning facilities that might be available in the Redding area, where Parsons was encamped, for the disposition of troops.

Parson's reply to Washington dated 17 October 1778 stated in part:

“On the whole I am of the opinion that about six or seven thousand men should be kept in a collected body at or near Fishkill, . . . that about one thousand be posted in the garrison at West Point, about three thousand at or near the Clove on the west side of Hudson's River, and the remainder, about two thousand, not far from Danbury or Ridgefield . . .”

Late in April 1779 Washington communicated to General Putnam that the British appeared to be planning an important move, and desired him to send General Parsons' brigade to reinforce General McDougall in the Highlands. A month later Washington forwarded additional details, indicating that General Clinton had collected his forces near New York. It was anticipated that his target would be either Washington's own headquarters in Middlebrook, New Jersey, or the American posts in the Highlands. Accordingly, he ordered Parsons' brigade to march at once to reinforce McDougall's forces. Parsons departed from his camp at Redding on 25 May 1779.

Brigadier General Parsons' Brigade of about one hundred fifty troops were encamped at Ridgefield for one night, on 30 May 1779. Parsons' Orders of the Day were posted in the camp as follows:

“Ridgefield, May 30th, 1779.

General Parsons orders that Colonel Wyllys furnish a sergeant, corporal and twelve privates to be posted as a guard this night one-quarter of a mile in front of where his regiment is quartered on the road leading to Bedford. That Colonel Meigs furnish a guard of the same number to be stationed the same distance on the road leading to Norwalk. The reveille to be beat tomorrow morning at the dawn of day, the troops to parade at four o'clock half a mile below the meeting house on the road leading to Bedford, for which place they will march immediately after, in the same order as this day.”

The site of Parsons' encampment is believed to have been at the intersection of South Main Street and West Lane, with the encampment along the southerly side of West Lane. However, documentary evidence is not available and it is possible that the encampment was located elsewhere in the town.

The next single encampment of the Continental Army in Ridgefield was that of the brigade of Major General William Heath. The first record of it occurs in a letter dated 10 July 1779 to General Heath in which General Washington advised Heath that following the burning of Fairfield and in anticipation of the destruction of Norwalk he had decided to send two Connecticut Brigades in that direction under Heath's command and ordered that

“You will therefore be pleased to march tomorrow morning as early as possible, in the first instance towards Crompond, thence by way of Bedford or Ridgefield as circumstances may point out, regulating your movements by those of the enemy giving all the aid and countenance you can consistent with prudence, to the Militia to repress their depredations . . .”

On the same day, 10 July, Washington replied to several letters he had received from Brigadier General Parsons in Reading (Redding). After expressing concern at the ravages made by the British he went on to add that

“ . . . I have written to General Heath, to move with the two Connecticut brigades towards the enemy, by the way of Crompond in the first instance, and from thence to Ridgefield and Bedford; which I hope will animate the militia, and in some measure prevent the enemy’s incursions . . . ”

On the same date Washington advised Governor Trumbull at Hartford that upon having heard of the British movements he had detached a body of troops under Major General Heath to counteract the enemy, and added that he regretted that he was unable to provide more assistance to the protection of the State of Connecticut.

The following day, 11 July, Washington forwarded a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Udny Hay, the Deputy Quartermaster General, advising him that

“General Heath is to march the route you propose for sending provisions, and therefore your first convoy may go that way; but it will not be safe for your future supplies.

These must go by the way of Mahopack Pond (or Robinsons Mills) through Salem, Ridgefield, etc . . . ”

In his General Orders from Headquarters dated 19 July General Washington specified that the Army was to be disposed in two wings, and that

“The left Wing to be composed of the two Connecticut brigades, and of Nixons and Glovers, forming two divisions under the command of Major General Heath; Moylan’s and Sheldon’s regiments of Cavalry and Colonel Armand’s Independent corps to be attached to this wing ’till further orders.

Major General Howe will take the immediate command of Nixon’s and Glover’s, the Cavalry and the Independent Corps.”

Major General William Heath encamped at Ridgefield with his brigade on 13 July 1779 on his line of march to Stamford. The best account of this visit is to be found in “*The Memoirs of Major General William Heath*”:

“July 7th: The enemy landed at Fairfield, and burned many houses, etc.

July 10th: About 6 o’clock our General received orders from Gen. Washington to march, with the two Connecticut Brigades by way of Crom Pond, towards Bedford. The next morning, although rainy, the first brigade marched to the Village.

July 12th: The storm ceasing, the tents (although as wet as water could make them) were struck, and the troops took up their line of March, reaching Amawalk about sun-setting. A report having been spread in the fore part of the day, that the enemy were at or near Pine’s Bridge, our General ordered the baggage wagons, under proper escort, to file off to the left and pursue a road running parallel with the one on which the column was moving, thereby keeping the column between the enemy and the wagons. Both arrived on the

grounds of encampment within a few minutes of each other. The troops lay on their arms, without pitching their tents. The enemy continued their depredations at the Sound and burned some houses at Norwalk.

July 13th: At 5 o'clock A.M. the troops took up their line of march and reached Ridgefield, where they halted for the night.

The next morning, our General (Heath) sent off all the tents and other baggage to Danbury and took up his line of march towards Stamford.

When he ascended the high grounds in sight of the Sound, the enemy's fleet was observed under sail, standing off and on between Stamford and Long Island.

Early on the morning of the 15th our General received information that the shipping had gone towards New York; he therefore moved and took a strong position between Ridgefield and Bedford, sending out patrols of horse and foot, on all the roads.

This movement towards the Sound quieted the minds of the people, and saved Stamford and other towns from destruction."

On 14 July General Washington communicated with General Heath at Ridgefield regarding a supply of cartridges, and referred to the movements and positions of the British. On the same date General Heath sent a letter from Ridgefield to Washington regarding his line of march towards Canaan and requesting the Light Infantry.

On 15 July Washington sent another letter to General Heath at Ridgefield regarding his march eastward and the support of the Highlands.

On the following day, 16 July, Washington again wrote to General Heath at Ridgefield, ordering his march towards Peekskill. This letter crossed with a report from General Heath written from Ridgefield, the subject of which was the maneuvers of the enemy and the disposition of his own troops.

On 18 July Washington forwarded orders to General Heath at Ridgefield for the latter's guidance, and on the following day he sent additional orders to Heath, again addressed to Ridgefield, regarding the disposition of troops.

In a letter of 18 September General Washington told Major General Heath that he had a particular object in sending Howe to Pines Bridge but inasmuch as there is no probability of the matter he had in mind taking place, he was asking Howe to return to join the brigades of Glover and Nixon near Lower Salem (South Salem).

Brigadier General John Glover encamped with his brigade at Ridgefield from about 14 July. On 13 July Governor Trumbull wrote to General Glover "enroute to Ridgefield" submitting General Washington's permission for Glover to halt in Connecticut.

On 15 July General Glover sent a letter to General Washington from Ridgefield enclosing Governor Trumbull's letter.

On the same day General Heath in Ridgefield forwarded a letter to Washington regarding the conflicting desires of the residents of Connecticut regard-

ing the position of troops, and he enclosed a report of information obtained by Richard Humble about British troops at Mamaroneck.

On 17 July Washington communicated from his position at Stony Point with General Glover at Ridgefield ordering the latter to join General Heath. On the same day Washington expedited orders to General Heath at Ridgefield regarding the proposed operation against Verplanck's Point, where General Howe was then situated.

On the same day Oliver Wolcott wrote to Washington regarding the movements of his militia to protect the Connecticut coast and he made reference to the Continental troops at Ridgefield. Wolcott expressed Connecticut's willingness to suffer for the general good and asked for additional protection for the State.

On 23 July General Washington sent a letter to Major General Oliver Wolcott at Horse's Neck regarding General Glover's brigade at Ridgefield, and on the same day Washington wrote to General Glover advising that

“ . . . Before this reaches you I expect you will have received directions from Genl. Heath to halt at Ridgefield till further orders. I have only to add my request, that you will use your best endeavors to obtain information of the situation and movements of the enemy from time to time . . . ”

On 24 July Washington reported to the President of Congress that the British had repossessed Stony Point and were fortifying it and that there appeared to be a considerable embarkation near Tarrytown, possibly destined for Baltimore. His information was derived in part from

“General Glover stationed at Ridgefield writes me that on the evening of the 21st, forty sails of vessels, four of which appeared to be large ships, passed by Norwalk . . . ”

On the same date Washington advised Brigadier General Oliver Wolcott of the Connecticut Militia that

“General Glover has been directed to halt his Brigade at Ridgefield, a situation that will enable him to afford you some assistance, should the enemy return to the object they began with in the sound . . . ”

To Major General Horatio Gates Washington wrote on the 25 July stating that

“General Glover stationed at Ridgefield writes me that on the evening of the 21st, forty one sail of vessels passed by Norwalk steering Eastward . . . We know nothing of the object of this movement, nor whether it be serious or a mere feint.”

Colonel Stephen Moylan was the next to join the concentration of troops at Ridgefield with his cavalry regiment. On 21 July 1779 Colonel Moylan was already at Ridgefield, for on that date he wrote to General Washington regarding his detachment which he had left at Peekskill.

On 24 July General Washington addressed a letter to Colonel Moylan at Ridgefield in which he indicated that

“You will receive orders from Genl. Heath to join Genl. Glover at Ridgefield under whose command you will be for the present. I have only to request your utmost exertions to render the Cavalry as serviceable as possible.”

Major General Robert Howe was ordered to move to Ridgefield from Peekskill by a letter from General Washington dated 28 July 1779, which specified that

“You will be pleased, without delay, to repair to Ridgefield, and take your quarters with that part of your command. This will comprehend Glover’s brigade, the cavalry, Armand’s independent corps, and the militia in service in that part of the country. The primary object of this command is to cover the country, and prevent as far as possible the depredations of the enemy; but this is not to be done at the expense of the security of the troops, which are, therefore, not to take any stationary post, within such a distance of a superior body of the enemy as will admit of surprise. As far as circumstances will permit, you are to keep constantly in view a communication with the main army. On this account, in case of any movement of the enemy on your right flank by land or water, you are to approach this post, and always preserve a relative position. It is suggested, in a letter from General Glover, that Pound Ridge would be a good position for your corps. I am not certain where this is, but as far as I recollect, it is an intermediate point between Ridgefield and Bedford, which would at once bring the troops nearer to the Sound and nearer to this post.

If this should be a just idea, I should recommend that place in preference to Ridgefield, because it better answers the two objects, of covering the country, and communicating with the forts, and is, at the same time, sufficiently secure. When you arrive at Ridgefield, you will be best able to determine the propriety of the change . . .”

On 1 August General Washington addressed General Howe at Ridgefield, *New York* and that same address appears on letters which Washington sent to Howe on 4 August, 6 August and 9 August.

On 1 August Washington informed Colonel Moylan that

“General Howe has gone to Ridgefield to take the command of Glover’s brigade and all the Troops in that Quarter, and will make such dispositions of them as may appear best.”

On 4 August Washington replied to a letter he had received from General Howe in which the latter apparently asked approval of some alterations which he proposed in the disposition of the troops at Ridgefield. Washington added that he had as yet not seen the supposed spy concerning which General Howe had written to him. The spy may have been taken at Ridgefield, but further information on the subject is lacking. He may possibly be identified with a soldier name Daniel Johnston of the 8th Connecticut Regiment who was tried by the courts martial on 11 August.

On 6 August General Howe wrote a letter to Washington which he dated from Salem, New York.

On 18 September Washington sent a directive to General Howe advising him to “march immediately back with Glover’s and Nixon’s Brigades to Lower Salem, or to the position a few Miles below, which you proposed to take for the convenience of foraging to more advantage.”

The Independent Corps under the command of Colonel Charles Armand, to which General Washington referred in his letter to Major General Robert Howe dated 28 July 1779, was one of the most colorful units of the Continental Army. The corps formed part of

The Partisan Legion which consisted almost exclusively of French officers and soldiers assembled from various parts of the United States and included many recruited by the Colonel directly from France. A number of French Canadians joined the Legion, and Brunswickers of the convention troops at Saratoga were also included.

Armand received no pay from Congress for his own services and he undertook to pay all the expenses incurred by the Legion as well as the payroll of his troops from his own personal funds.

The Legion was not attached to the Line of any of the States but functioned under the immediate direction of Congress. It was on a similar footing with the corps under Count Pulaski.

Because the States occasionally objected to having men recruited within their limits without special authority of Congress, since it interfered with their quota of Continental troops, General Washington advised Armand and Pulaski that such recruiting would not be permissible without special authority. Congress later removed the States’ objections by resolving that recruits enlisted in the two corps would be credited to the quota of the State to which they belonged.

Colonel Charles Armand was a convenient pseudonym adopted by the French nobleman while he served with the Continental Army. His complete name was Charles Armand Tuffin, Marquis de la Rouërie. He was born at St. Malo in Brittany in 1756. He belonged to one of France’s most important and wealthy families of nobility. He received a fine education and from boyhood his family and his own inclination destined him for a military career, (*Figure 39*).

He was little more than a boy when he fought a duel over the favors of a popular actress. Then, either in an effort to make amends for his folly or to evade domestic discipline, he hid himself for a period of time in a Trappist monastery. However, this was a type of life which he could not long endure, and having heard about the cause of the American patriots, he espoused it with enthusiasm and embarked for America in March 1776.

He arrived in Philadelphia, after an eventful voyage during which his ship was chased by British vessels and forced aground in Delaware Bay. He immediately applied to Congress for a commission in the Continental Army and on May 1776 he received an appointment as Colonel from General Washington.

Colonel Armand was first mentioned by Washington in his letter to the President of Congress written from Morristown on 16 May 1777. Washington stated he would deliver a commission from Congress dated 10 May to Armand at his first opportunity and added that since it was impossible to give commands for every appointment, there was then no vacancy for Armand.

Inasmuch as there was no immediate prospect of having a command given to him, Armand asked permission to raise a partisan corps of Frenchmen, and his request was granted. Congress agreed with military authorities that there would be a decided advantage in having a unit to bring together such soldiers as did not understand the English language.

Armand served with Lafayette in an encounter at Gloucester in November 1777 and he took part in an engagement at Red Bank and Brandywine. In a letter of 4 February 1779 he asked permission from Congress to return to France, which Congress approved. Armand changed his mind, however, and postponed his departure indefinitely. On 13 February 1779 Congress appropriated \$94,000 to enable Armand to recruit his Partisan Legion.

Armand spent the greater part of the spring and summer of 1778 drilling his legion and completing its complement, assisted greatly by Monsieur de Vienne, a much experienced officer who had come from France. Constant practice in field exercise and the manual of arms rendered the legion very efficient.

With the American army about to retire from White Plains, it was foreseen that American farmers in upper Westchester would suffer from British irregulars. To protect the patriotic inhabitants, Armand was ordered to cross the Hudson and take a post on the neutral ground. The first position was at Bedford-new-Purchase near North Castle Church, then later on the high ground east of Sing Sing and Tarrytown. In the spring of 1779 the corps prepared for the campaigns to follow. In June 1779 when General Heath was ordered to join the main army, Armand's corps escorted him from Springfield to New Windsor. The corps recrossed the North River soon after and encamped for some time near Lower Salem under General Howe. Along with the forces under Glover, Moylan and Sheldon, Armand's Legion was charged with shielding the country from the enemy's ravages.

At this time the corps amounted to almost two hundred men, of which one third was cavalry. Two muzettes or wall pieces, which carried one and a half pound balls to great distances, were attached to the corps.

The Legion operated along the Hudson River in almost continuous reconnaissances even to the enemy camp. On 12 October 1778 a body of twelve dragoons of the Legion surprised a patrol of twelve men and took them prisoner. After removing their arms and three horses, the captors discovered that they had to allow all but three of their prisoners to go free because of lack of means of transportation.

Armand selected Ridgefield for his headquarters and in the summer of 1779 he established his barracks in the western part of the town on a site about

five hundred feet west of the present garage of the former residence of the late Mr. B. E. Levy. This was where the northerly end of West Mountain met the southerly end of Titicus Mountain, at the crossing of the two old roads—Old West Mountain Road and Barrack Hill Road—at the junction formerly known as the “Four Corners”.

Colonel Armand located his encampment as indicated near the summit and a barracks was built on the site for his company. Field forges were set up for the shoeing of the cavalry horses and one or two skilled farriers and blacksmiths were members of the corps.

The location was ideal for Armand’s purposes, being situated 960 feet above sea level and commanding a view along the Hudson River and the mountain ranges which ringed the area.

The barracks were maintained with discipline, dignity and cleanliness.

From the barracks the Legion was within easy reach of Armand’s usual targets in Westchester and Putnam Counties. Armand made many forays into the adjacent areas with notable success.

In a letter dated 21 June 1779 from his headquarters at Smith’s Clove to Major General Sullivan, General Washington asked Sullivan to send back the part of Armand’s corps which was attached to that command to rejoin the remainder of the corps at the first opportunity.

The presence of the Partisan Legion under Armand in Ridgefield is mentioned also in Lossing’s work on the Revolution. According to Lossing, Armand was stationed in Ridgefield, Connecticut under General Robert Howe, in the summer of 1779. The historian described Armand’s career with Lafayette in 1777 and the fact that in the following year he was actively engaged in Westchester County against the forces of Simcoe and Emerick and the Loyalists under Bearmore.

The Legion’s most notable feat was probably the capture of Major Bearmore on 7 November 1779 when Armand marched from Tarrytown through Greenburg and Eastchester over Williams Bridge. Leaving his infantry and a few cavalry at this point he moved on rapidly with twenty dragoons to the quarters of Major Mansfield Bearmore at Oak Point on the East River. Armand captured the Major, five others, their horses and equipment without the loss of a man. Bearmore was the first Major of Delancey’s Refugee Corps and he was well known for his harsh treatment of inhabitants inclined to Whig sympathies. Armand surprised him at his headquarters in the Cornelius Leggett house below West Farms. To make sure of his six foot prisoner, Armand secured him behind himself on his own horse. He passed within two miles of Colonel Von Wurmb’s camp above King’s Bridge without raising an alarm. This feat brought unstinted praise for Armand and his men and relieved the countryside of the terrifying raids of Bearmore.

It was probably during Armand’s raid to capture Bearmore that the incident of the killing of the blacksmith occurred. This incident has figured prom-

inently in the writings of Westchester County historians. An officer of Armand's cavalry went into the village of Eastchester on a Sunday morning to have his horse shod. The only person at the smithy was the proprietor's son, Gilbert Vincent, Jr., who refused to shoe the horse on the grounds that he was out of coal. Inasmuch as the Vincent family was known to have Tory sympathies, the Westchester guides who accompanied the French officer tried to compel the young man to work by force. In the ensuing scuffle one of the dragoons shot the young blacksmith dead on the spot. Later writers have claimed that young Vincent refused to work on a Sunday because of religious scruples.

In a letter from Washington at Morristown, dated 28 December 1779, to Colonel Armand, the Commander-in-Chief wrote:

“Colonel Hamilton delivered to me your letter. It is with pleasure I declare to you, that I have the most favorable opinion of your conduct and services, particularly in the course of the last campaign, in which circumstances enabled you to be more active and useful. But, notwithstanding this, so far from recommending the promotion you desire, I confess to you with frankness, I should be unwilling to see it take place, because it would be injurious to the pretensions of a great number of senior officers, who have every title to consideration. If, however, Congress have given you reason to expect this advancement, they will no doubt perform their engagement . . .”

In a subsequent letter from General Washington to Armand, written from Morristown on 6 February 1780, he informed Armand that he had recommended to the Board of War that the corps of Armand and Pulaski be incorporated into one. He excluded the Marechaussee, however:

“ . . . I do not unite the Marechaussee, because that corps is destined for a particular service, to which it will be altogether applied in the course of the next campaign, not should I think it advisable to convert it to any other purpose . . .”

The Marechaussee Corps, which was part of the Legion stationed at Ridgefield, was a company of cavalry. Its duties pertained chiefly to the policing of the army. In an encampment, the corps patrolled the camp and its vicinity for the purpose of apprehending marauders, deserters, rioters, stragglers, and any soldiers found guilty of violating general orders. Strangers and persons found near the pickets without passes were to be taken and brought back into the camp. The sutlers of the camp were under the command of the corps commander. During a march, the Marechaussee troops patrolled the rear and flanks of the columns, and brought up stragglers, and they were responsible for the proper transportation of baggage. In action they patrolled the roads right and left of the army and collected and rallied fugitives. The Marechaussee corps was directly under the command of the Adjutant General. Because at this time Armand was probably to be removed from Washington's direct command, the Commander-in-Chief gave him a certificate as an assurance of his esteem. It read:

“I certify, that the Marquis de la Rouërie has served in the army of the United States since the beginning of 1777, with the rank of colonel, during which time he has commanded an independent corps with much honor to himself and usefulness in the service. He has upon all occasions conducted himself as an officer of distinguished merit, of great zeal, activity, vigilance, intelligence and bravery. In the last campaign, particularly, he rendered very valuable services, and towards the close of it made a brilliant partisan stroke, by which, with much enterprise and address, he surprised a major and some men of the enemy in quarters, at a considerable distance within their pickets, and brought them off without loss to his party. I gave him this certificate in testimony of my perfect approbation of his conduct and esteem for himself personally.”

It is believed that Colonel Armand maintained his barracks in Ridgefield, on Barrack Hill, until late in the summer of 1780 when the Legion joined the forces of Major General Baron de Kalb in North Carolina. Later Armand and his Legion took part in both the battle and surrender at Yorktown on 19 October 1781.

In February 1782 Armand joined with the Duc de Lauzun's legion in the Carolinas under General Greene. While in France during the summer of 1782 he made many purchases for the American army. Upon his return to the United States in September, he appears to have been directly under Washington's immediate orders. Armand was appointed Brigadier General on 26 March 1783 by order of Congress.

NEW-YORK, May 5.

In consequence of information received of the Rebels having collected large magazines at Danbury, in Connecticut, a detachment of 250 men from each of the following regiments, 4th, 15th, 23d, 27th, 44th, and 64th, a battalion's command of dragoons, 200 of Governor Brown's corps, and six pounders, under the command of Major General Tryon, and Brigadier Generals Agnew and Sir William Forbes, proceeded up the East River, and on Friday evening the 5th ult. at 6 o'clock, landed at Camp Point near Norwalk. The detachment being completed about ten, the troops got in motion, and after a march of 25 miles, arrived without opposition at Danbury, at three o'clock on Saturday afternoon. The remainder of that day, and part of next morning, were employed in destroying the stores, which were found to exceed their expectations. At nine o'clock they began their march back to the flappings, and proceeded without interruption until they approached Ridgefield, where they found a body of the rebels under the command of Mr. Arnold, who had fortified the entrance of the town, which they carried after small opposition, with considerable loss on the side of the Rebels; the rear repelling another body, who attacked them at the same time, under Mr. Wooler. The troops continued their march next morning at 4 o'clock, the rebels firing on their flanks and rear, but from such a distance as to do them little injury. About half a mile from the ships where the troops halted, part of the rebel army, which consisted of at least 4000, kept up a heavy fire from behind some hills, while two columns made a show of attacking; but part of the detachment charged them with fixed bayonets, and put them to a total rout, with considerable slaughter. The troops, after remaining some time upon the ground, embarked with the greatest order and regularity, without further interruption from the rebels, who never showed themselves more.

The spirit and firmness shown by the troops on this occasion, does them infinite honour.

The Loss sustained, was 14 Men killed, 10 Officers and 20 Men wounded, most of them slightly.

An Account of the stores, ordnance, provisions, &c. as nearly as could be ascertained, found at the Rebel stores, and destroyed by the King's troops at Danbury, &c. in Connecticut, on April 27, 1777.

- A quantity of ordnance stores, with iron, &c.
- Four thousand barrels of beef and pork.
- One thousand barrels of flour.
- One hundred large tierces of biscuit.
- Eighty nine barrels of rice.
- One hundred and twenty punctures of rum.
- Several large hogsheads of wheat, oats, and Indian corn, in bulk, the quantity thereof could not possibly be ascertained.
- Thirty pipes of wine.
- One hundred hogsheads of sugar.
- Fifty ditto of molasses.
- Twenty casks of coffee.
- Fifteen large casks filled with medicines.
- Ten barrels of salt petre.
- One thousand and twenty tents and marquees.
- A number of iron boilers.
- A large quantity of hospital bedding, &c.
- Engineers, gunner, and carpenter's tools.
- A Printing Press complete.
- Ten, tallow, &c.
- Five thousand pair of shoes and stockings.

At a mill between Ridgebury and Ridgefield.

- One hundred barrels of flour, and a quantity of Indian corn.
- At a Bridge over the West Branch of Norwalk River, and the Woods contiguous.
- One hundred hogsheads of rum.
- Several chests of wine.
- Paper cartridges.
- Field Forges.
- Three hundred tents.

We hear the Commander at Tickowaga has informed the Congress at Philadelphia, that his Garrison of 2000 Men, that they expected

HARTFORD, May 5

The following particulars of the late affair at Danbury, are here received from our last.

On Saturday the 26th of April, express came to Danbury from Brigadier General Sullivan, advising that a large body of the enemy had landed the day before at Compo, a point of land between Fairfield and Norwalk, and were marching towards Danbury. Measures were immediately taken to remove the most valuable stores, which was in part effected. At a little after one o'clock the same day, the enemy entered Danbury with about 2000 men, and a number of field pieces, under the command of Gov. Tryon. As there were only 50 Continental troops, and about 20 many militia in Danbury, the former with but a cartridge or two each, it was not prudent to make any stand, as from the circumstances of the ground and disparity of numbers, they must have fallen into the enemy's hands; they therefore retreated to the heights north of this town. Ten o'clock Sunday, they were joined by more militia, and 140 Continental troops from Massachusetts, under Lieut. Col. Smith, but without any ammunition; happily however, there soon arrived 2000 cartridges from Peabody Hill, upon which a disposition was made to harass the enemy, until a sufficient reinforcement should come in to make a vigorous attack. In the mean while, the enemy burnt about 20 houses and stores, more than 1000 barrels of pork, as many tents, and many other valuable articles. At half after ten they left the town by Peck's Kill road, in great haste—Gen. Wooler, who had followed them to Danbury with a small body of militia, pursued them with the Continental troops and militia, and overtook their rear in Ridgebury, where a skirmish ensued and continued in a loose scattering fire until night; the next day it commenced again, at Wilton, and continued by intermissions, until they embarked at the place where they landed. Gen. Arnold attacked them in front, with a party of militia at Ridgefield, and again near Sagstack Bridge, which obliged them to alter their route, and ford the river, just above crossing the bridge. The enemy's loss was at least 100 killed, wounded and taken; our's about 60, among which are, Gen. Wooler, Col. Lamb, of the artillery, Major Craun of the militia, and one Captain wounded; Lieut. Col. Gould of the militia; 4 Lieutenants, one Surgeon killed.

The following account of the above affair was sent us by another hand.

Governor Tryon, whose blood-thirsty, thievish disposition, and beggary circumstances, impel him to rob and plunder for subsistence, having collected a gang of thieves and ruffians wretches from among the British troops and Tories, came over from Long Island the 26th ult. and landed at Compo, between Norwalk and Fairfield, from thence they bent through the woods to Danbury, where they found a quantity of provisions, some of which they eat, and some they destroyed, and some they attempted to carry off; but a number of people collecting, alarmed their guilty fears, and caused them to flee back with great precipitation, through thick and thin, wet and dry, rough and smooth, leaving bag and baggage, about 50 killed and forty taken prisoners, 18 or 20 of whom are now in goal in this place. Thus ended the glorious expedition of the freebooter Tryon. The poor rogue found his good picking while governor of New York, that his had axes beyond conception to get possession of that government again; but he must gaze his trencher a grey while before that time arrives. We expect another visit from these hungry bellies in a short time, that it may be proper enough to keep a good lock out.

On Wednesday last about 40 of the enemy landed at the Saw-Pitts, but were soon repulsed.

Last Friday 15 prisoners taken at Danbury, were brought to the town and delivered to the care of the committee.

Same day 17 Tories belonging to New Cambridge. a

Figure 31 Newspaper Accounts of Battle of Ridgefield dated 5 May 1777
British version in New York Gazette—American version in Boston Gazette



Figure 32a Sergeant Jeremiah Keeler



Figure 32b Sergeant Jeremiah Keeler's Sword presented to him by Lafayette



Figure 33 Portrait of Lt. Joshua King



Figure 34 Self-Portrait of Major John Andre drawn while he was a prisoner



Figure 35 Powder Horn made at Valley Forge by Jabez Rockwell of Ridgebury



— DAVID WOOSTER, Esq. —
Commander in Chief of the Provincial Army against DEER

Figure 36 General David Wooster

Abel Hall Esquire, Colonel of the Third Regiment of Horse-Artillery
in the state of Connecticut.

TO ALL PERSONS TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, Greeting.

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the valor, fidelity and abilities of *James Scott* I do hereby appoint him *Sergeant* of said *3* Regiment of Horse-Artillery; he is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of a *Sergeant* by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging; and I do strictly charge and require all Officers, Soldiers, and others under his command, to be obedient to his orders as *Sergeant* and he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or other his superiour Officers set over him, according to Law; for all which, this shall be his sufficient WARRANT.

Given under my hand and seal, at *Wilton* this *22* day of *August*
A. D. 1817 and of American Independence, the *42*

Abel Hall

Figure 37

Commission as Sergeant in Horse Artillery Regiment of Conn. issued to James Scott Jr.



Figure 39 Colonel Charles Armand Tuffin, Marquis de la Rouërie

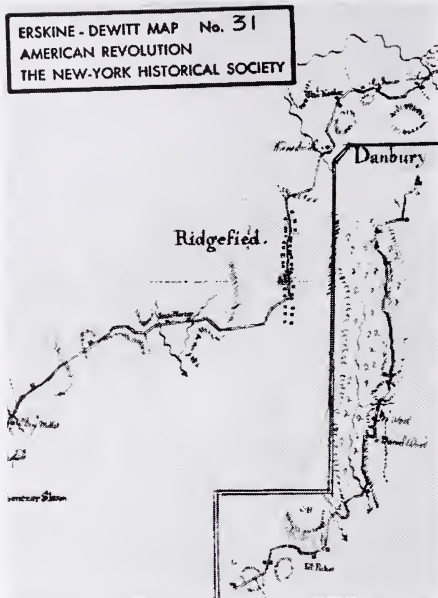


Figure 41 Erskine-DeWitt Map No. 31

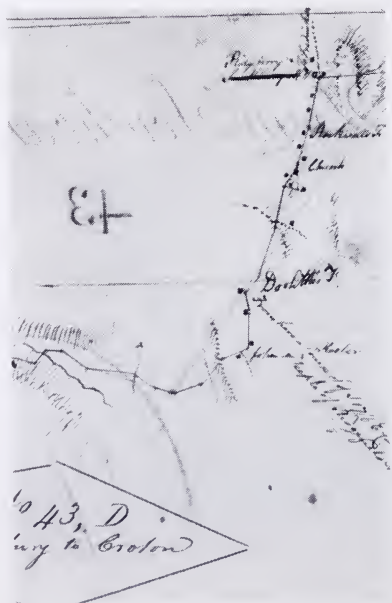


Figure 42 Erskine-DeWitt Map No. 43-D—Detail Section of Ridgebury

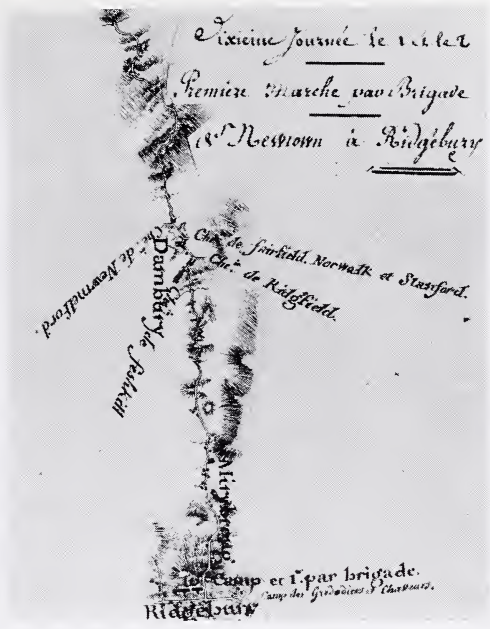


Figure 44 Berthier's Road Map of Route from Newtown to Ridgebury 1 & 2 July 1781

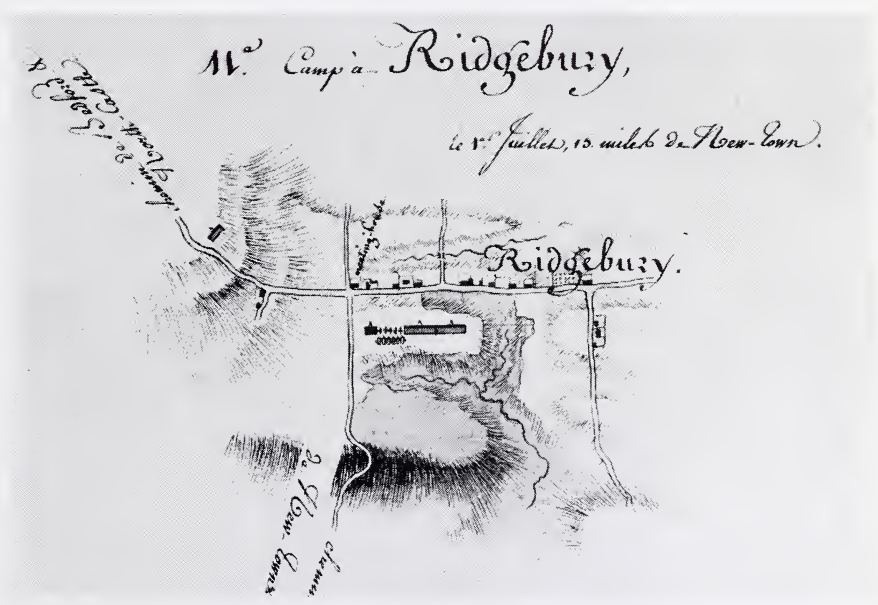


Figure 45 Berthier's Map of Camp Site of Main Body of French Troops at Ridgebury 1 July 1781



Figure 46 Berthier's Road Map from Ridgebury to North Castle 3 July 1781

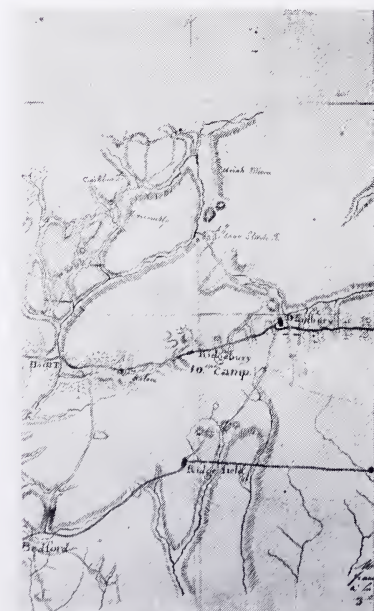


Figure 47 Rochambeau Papers Nos. 42-44. Map of Marche de l'armee française de Providence a la riviere du Nord—(Courtesy Library of Congress)



Figure 48 Rochambeau Papers No. 64. Map of Different camps de l'armee de York-Town a Boston (Courtesy Library of Congress)

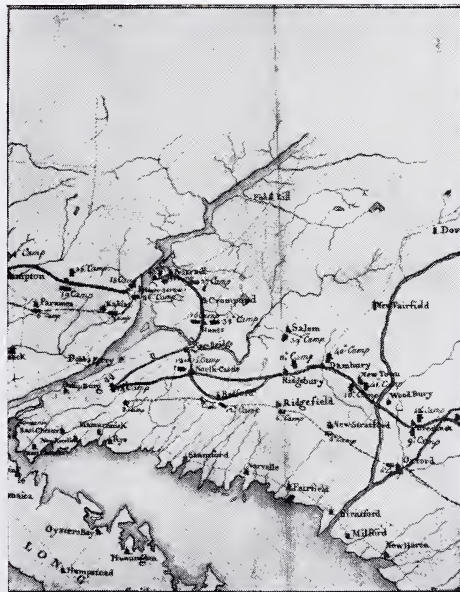


Figure 49 Rochambeau Papers No. 65. Map of Cote de York-Town a Boston Marches de l'Armee (Courtesy Library of Congress)



Figure 50 Duc De Lauzun




Figure 51 Residence of Miss Mary Huber adjacent to "Fort Hill"

New York 3rd February 1791
 Miss Isaac & Andrew Cook.

Bought of Peter & George Lorillard
 34 Lb^{rs} Tobacco wth 1/6 £ 3 " 8 " 0
 36 1/2 lb Plug " " " " " " 1 " 10 " 5
 Barrel " " " " " " 0 " 1 " 6
 £ 4 " 19 " 11

Figure 53 Tobacco receipt from Keeler Tavern

NATURAL
Curiosities,
 NEVER BEFORE EXHIBITED IN THIS COUNTRY.
 TO BE EXHIBITED
 at the Anniversary of the Society of the Friends of the Arts, on the 10th of February 1791.



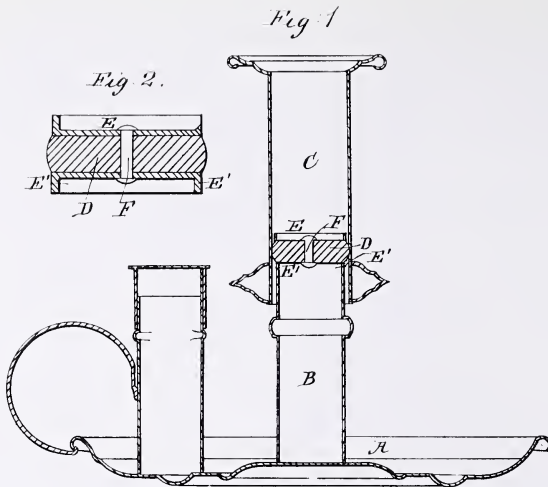
A FULL GROWN
BUFFALO,
 FROM THE WILDS OF MISSOURI

The animal was taken six years since, at some considerable risk and great expense. He is one of the most curious animals of his species. His symmetry is a complete model of strength, before and after, behind. His measurements and capacity exceed that of any animal ever exhibited in this country, the Elephant excepted; and no animal is capable of withstanding the power of his front. Much would be proper only to record, so that spectators need not apprehend any danger.

ALSO AN
Extraordinary Cow
 FROM MEXICO.
HAVING SIX LEGS AND TWO BAGS

From the upper part of each shoulder blade is emitted a large broad horn. These horns nearly meet above the shoulder, and form a large convex partition, which is convex underneath, and has been compared to the back of a Drumstick. Two of these legs rise just forward of the partition, both having regular joints between which is inserted a bag or bladder, and one tail from which milk may be drawn at pleasure. The Cow is slightly and in good health. Circumstances to merit other her notice, is of a bright brindle colour, 20 years old, and is just returned out of the greatest living condition ever exhibited in America. Chittam, half past 12. 1791.

Figure 55 Poster of Animal Exhibit circa 1790-1825 found in Keeler Tavern



F. A. ROCKWELL,
Candlestick.

Reissued Feb. 27, 1855.

No. 297,

Figure 56 F. A. Rockwell's Patented Candlestick



J. W. ROCKWELL'S
Price List
OF
F. A. ROCKWELL'S
PATENT
CANDLESTICKS.

JUNE 15TH, 1859.

TERMS—Cash on delivery of Goods.

JAPANESE CANDLESTICKS.		FINISHED CANDLESTICKS.	
No.	per dozen	No.	per dozen
No. 1, Slide Socket,	\$18 00	No. 1, Slide Socket,	\$21 00
" 2, " " with Sals,	12 00	" 2, " " " " " "	21 00
" 3, " " " " and Ryttingisher,	21 00	" 3, " " " " " "	20 00
" 45, " " " " for short 64,	30 00	" 45, " " " " " "	35 00
Clothes Sprinkler,	per dozen \$18 00		
Payor's Patent,	18 00		

ROCKWELL'S BRASS CHAMBER CANDLESTICKS.			
No.	per doz price	No.	per doz price
No. 19, Patent Slide-socket,	\$5 00	No. 150, Self Elevator,	\$10 00
" 20, " " with Sals,	7 50	" 450, " " " " " "	12 50
" 26, " " " " and Ryttingisher,	9 50	6 in No. 2, heavy,	5 00
6 in No. 1 Light,	8 00	54,	4 75
51,	4 50	5,	4 00
5,	4 00	41,	3 00
44,	3 50		

Discount on Japanese and Finished Candlesticks and Sprinklers, 20 per cent. and 5 per cent.
 Brass Candlesticks, 20 per cent. and 5 per cent.
 All Goods delivered in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, free of charge.

Figure 57 J. W. Rockwell's Price List 1859



Figure 58a View from East Ridge by Kelsey, 1853



Figure 58b View of East Ridge

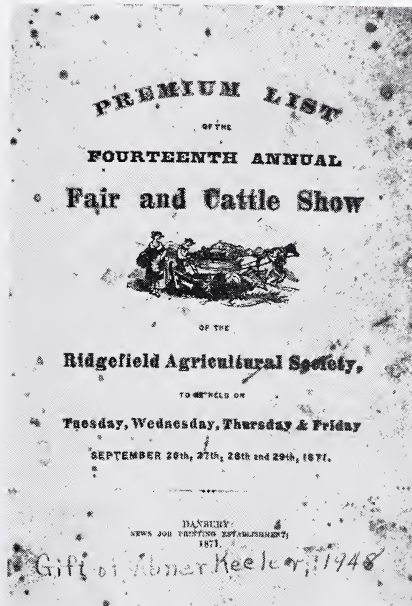


Figure 59 Premium List of Ridgefield Fair 1871

New Arrangement... Commencing on Monday, August 4th, 1845.

FOR

RIDGEFIELD, WILTON & NORWALK.

Fare through \$1.00



The Old Line of Stages will leave Ridgebury every

MONDAY, THURSDAY & SATURDAY

AT HALF-PAST TWO O'CLK. A.M.

And **RIDGEFIELD** at **FOUR** o'clock, passing through **WILTON** and arriving in **NORWALK** in time for Passengers to take the Steamboat for New-York.

Returning, leave **Norwalk** on the same days, on the arrival of the boat from New-York.

AUGUST, 1845.

D. HUNT, Proprietor.

Figure 62 Poster of the Ridgefield-Norwalk Stage Line 1845



Figure 64 Smith Tavern, built 1797

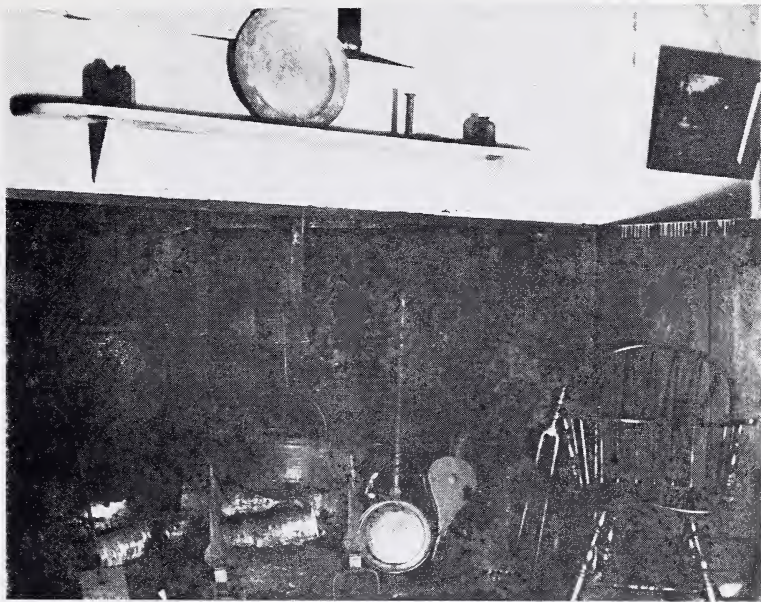


Figure 65 Interior of Smith Tavern



Figure 66 The Keeler Tavern—Earliest existing photograph, showing single gable



Figure 67 Original Sign of Keeler Tavern

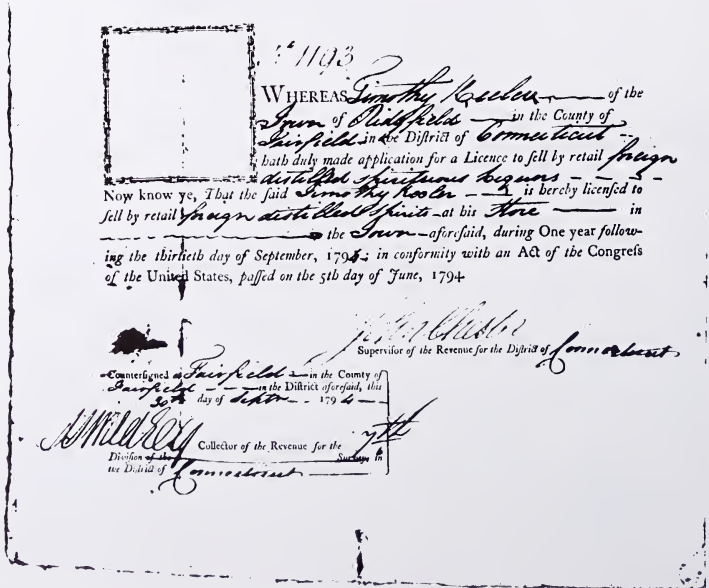


Figure 68 Liquor License of Keeler Tavern issued 30 September 1794



Figure 40

Chapter VII

WASHINGTON'S VISIT TO RIDGEFIELD

George Washington's Visit to Ridgefield is probably the greatest bone of contention among local historians, some of whom believed that Washington passed through Ridgefield at least twice and possibly a third time. In addition to Washington's stay in Ridgebury, it is believed that Washington visited Colonel Philip Burr Bradley's home on one or more occasions.

Washington made seven journeys through the state of Connecticut, the first of which occurred in February 1756 when he was a young colonel sent by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to General William Shirley in Boston to secure a decision on superiority of rank and to consult him on Indian affairs.

Washington passed through Connecticut again in June 1775 on his way to Cambridge from Philadelphia to assume command of the Continental Army. He followed the Boston Post Road from New York to New Haven. Another stop was Wethersfield.

In April 1776 Washington went from his base in Cambridge to Providence and his stops in the state were in Norwich and New London.

It was in the course of Washington's fourth journey through Connecticut that he stopped in Ridgebury. He was to meet the Comte de Rochambeau, the

commander-in-chief of the French forces in America, and he arranged for an interview in Hartford to take place 20 September 1780. Washington traveled from his headquarters at Hopper's House in Bergen County, New Jersey and met with General Benedict Arnold in Peekskill.

Sparks and Sargent state that Washington traveled to Hartford by way of Danbury but none of the intervening towns are listed in their accounts. A map made for General Tryon in 1779 included a road opposite Stony Point (Kings' Ferry) which intersects with a road through Ridgefield, Waterbury and Southington. Accordingly, the probable route taken by Washington on his eastward journey through Connecticut is generally believed to be Ridgebury, Ridgefield, Danbury, Newtown, Southbury, Woodbury, Waterbury, Southington, Farmington to Hartford. In addition to his stop at the Keeler Tavern in Ridgebury, it is claimed that Washington stopped also at Joseph Hopkins' in Waterbury and the Jonathan Root house in Southington. He arrived in Hartford at the home of Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth at seven o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, 20 September. He must have passed the night at a location not too distant.

Accompanying Washington on this journey was the Marquis de Lafayette, Colonel Alexander Hamilton, General Henry Knox and M. de Gouvion, commanding officer of the Corps of Engineers. He specified these officers in the letter he sent to Colonel Nehemiah Hubbard, Deputy Quartermaster of Connecticut, in which he requested the latter to make arrangements for quarters for the French party and for his own. He wrote:

“ . . . You will be pleased to provide the best Quarters which the Town affords and make every necessary preparation of Forage and other matters. I shall have an escort of twelve or fifteen Dragoons, the French General will probably have a like number . . . ”

When General Washington embarked on his journey with his party on 18 September, he crossed the Hudson River from his headquarters at Stony Point and proceeded along the road opposite it which intersected with the road to Ridgefield. It is believed that Washington's party spent the night of 18 September with General Benedict Arnold at Peekskill as planned and that he continued on his journey on the following morning.

According to local legend, when Washington's party reached North Salem on 19 September, the officers dismounted beside the road opposite the premises of Dr. Erie C. Tucker, near the Neptune fountain which is a well known landmark. The party rested under a large oak tree at the roadside on the northerly side of the highway just below the great boulder. For generations the tree was known as the Washington Oak by the inhabitants. It was removed in about 1922. The local inhabitants clustered to see General Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette and the other notables during the brief pause on their journey. Several weeks earlier, in July, Lafayette had made a hurried journey along the same route from Peekskill through Ridgefield to Hartford to meet General Parsons.

After refreshment under the great old oak, Washington's party resumed their horses and proceeded to Ridgebury, where they stopped for the night at Ensign Samuel Keeler's Tavern. The Tavern was located on the westerly side of the highway about two hundred yards north of the Congregational Church and it was specified to be the last house before the burying ground. It was situated on the property now owned by Mr. George Clum.

It was General Washington's usual practice to sleep elsewhere than where his party stopped for the night, as a precaution against possible bodily harm. According to George Boughton of Ridgebury, the dragoons and other officers of the party remained at the Ensign Keeler Tavern. Meanwhile General Washington and Lafayette were quietly conducted up the street to sleep at the home of Dr. David Burr, who was a relative of the innkeeper, Ensign Samuel Keeler. The Burr dwelling was a short distance to the south of the Church. The homestead was demolished long ago, but in 1929 a new house was built on the old foundation, and is now the home of Mr. Thomas E. Belden.

Rebecca Coley Boughton, the wife of Thomas Boughton who was a teamster with Rochambeau's troops, often related that she had seen Washington when he visited Ridgebury. According to her account, Washington spent the night with members of the family, or relatives, of Ensign Keeler, possibly the DeForest family in Ridgebury. It is a matter of record that Ensign Samuel Keeler's son, Timothy, married Urania DeForest in 1788.

On the following morning, Washington's party resumed their journey through Danbury to Newtown and on to Litchfield to meet Oliver Wolcott. No mention of the brief interlude at Ridgebury is found in Washington's diaries because, according to his own statement, he kept no accounts or daily records during the period between 19 June 1775 and May 1781.

On this journey General Washington undoubtedly had used the maps prepared for him by Erskine and DeWitt in the previous year. On 7 August 1779 Washington directed Robert Erskine at Ringwood, New Jersey to make a survey of the roads of New Jersey and Connecticut immediately.

Erskine was the "Geographer and Surveyor General of the United States" and he proceeded to work on General Washington's order at once. He died at his home in Ringwood on 2 October 1780 at the age of forty-six. He was succeeded by Simeon de Witt as Geographer and Surveyor General and the latter completed some of the maps.

Three of the Erskine-DeWitt maps are of interest in relation to Ridgefield. Map No. 31, shown in *Figure 41*, identifies a number of homes of the area from Stony Hill to Danbury, including Ebenezer Slason, Scofield, Dr. Benj. Miller, Isaac Norter on the route from Stony Hill to Ridgefield where a mass of buildings, including a church marked with a cross, are shown. Beyond Ridgefield the houses marked in order of the route are Widow Smith, Dan^l Keeler, one unidentified, Smith, prop., Lt. Picket, Courthouse, Daniel Wood, B. Wood and finally the Meetinghouse in Danbury.

Map No. 43-D (*Figure 42*) defines the Titicus River and marks a number of buildings along it. The first one that is labeled is Capt. Steelrod, followed by T. Honeywell, Salem Church, Salem Meetinghouse, a road marked "To the Manor", Crane, Capt. Truesdale, Benj. Titus, John Keeler, a point marked "From here a course of S 17/6 E. cuts the steeple of Ridgefield Meetinghouse", followed by Doolittle T., the triangle where the Ridgebury school once stood, the Church (Episcopal), Rockwell T., and Ridgebury, marked at the intersection of Ridgebury Street and the road to Danbury.

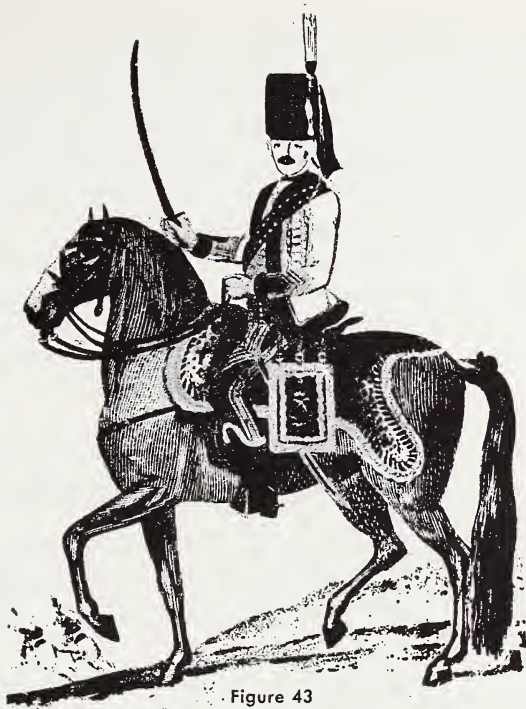


Figure 43

Chapter VIII

FRENCH ENCAMPMENTS IN RIDGEFIELD

In addition to the encampments of the Continental Army under Generals Parsons and Heath after the Battle of Ridgefield, and the encampment of the Continental troops under General Howe, Ridgefield played host to several camps of the French Army under Comte de Rochambeau as well.

Except for the service of individual French officers such as Lafayette and Armand, and the occasional cooperation of the French fleet, the forces of the French Government did not take an active part in the Revolutionary War until after the arrival of Comte de Rochambeau with a detachment of six thousand men at Newport, Rhode Island, in the spring of 1780.

The French troops remained at Newport for the winter of 1780-81. In September 1780 General Washington arranged for a conference with Comte de Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay at Hartford. It was on his journey to Hartford for this meeting that Washington passed through Ridgebury.

Later in the same year, in November 1780, the French cavalry was detached to established winter quarters in Connecticut. This celebrated Legion of Horse was under the command of Duc de Lauzun (*Figure 50*) and numbered at various times from two hundred twenty to eight hundred hussars and lancers. Quarters were arranged for the Legion of Horse at Lebanon by a committee under Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth.

Lauzun's Legion remained at Lebanon until Rochambeau's march from Rhode Island to the Hudson River after a second conference between Washington and Rochambeau which was held at Wethersfield, Connecticut in May 1781. It was decided then to unite the French and American armies for an attack on New York. Rochambeau and his staff departed from Newport on 10 June and remained in Providence until 18 June, when he advanced on his route through Connecticut.

In a letter dated 23 June 1781 Rochambeau at Hartford wrote to Washington at Peekskill that he planned to depart from Hartford on 25 June with the first regiment on his way to Newtown. The French Army was to march in four divisions as before and he planned to remain at Newtown until the 30th, then to assemble the brigades and march in two divisions to the North River. He added that

“ . . . The corps of Lauzun will march as far advanced as my first division through Middletown, Wallingford, North Haven, Ripton, and North Stratford . . . ”

Rochambeau's army left Newtown on 30 June as per schedule. Upon advice received from Washington the Comte diverted his march past Danbury, and passed along West Wooster Street over Hull's Hill.

An Advance Camp was made in Ridgebury by a body of grenadiers and chasseurs under the command of Alexandre Berthier, which had marched in advance of the main army. After finding a suitable location for the main camp, Berthier made a second camp for the advance guard a mile south along Ridgebury Street, at a point on the westerly side of the highway on the hill opposite the former site of the Ridgebury School. The schoolhouse stood on the triangle at the intersection of George Washington Highway and Bennett's Farm Road. It is possible that this point was the center of a crossroads, for the driveway of Mr. Anton Lang appears to be part of an old road which proceeds through the property for some distance.

Berthier made his camp on the hill just south of this intersection, the site of which is now a cleared field belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Daniel M. McKeon. The camp is just west of their home. Berthier's maps of the route and camps in Ridgebury are shown in *Figures 44, 45 and 46*.

In the *Journal de la Campagne D'Amerique* (Journal of the Campaign of America) which was kept by Berthier, is the following entry:

“2 (July 1781). The second brigade left Newtown and arrived at Ridgebury—15 miles in 11 hours, it was preceded by an advance guard of grenadiers and chasseurs which marched to an encampment. I was charged with conducting them—and to find for them an advantageous position 1 mile in advance of the brigade on the route to New York, where they will encamp posting guards at all points within reach of the enemy. There we received a change of itinerary of the route, the first brigade, which was to go to Salem, must march to Bedford, and we received the same order, but at the same moment we received another order from the general, to force

the march and instead of to Bedford we were to march straight to North Castle, where the entire army would be re-united."

Meanwhile the main body of the French Army proceeded from Danbury through Miry Brook along the route that had been followed by the British in April 1777. At the homestead of John Norris, just within the Ridgefield boundary, the officers with Rochambeau stopped for a brief rest and for water. That same morning, according to a local story, a child had been born in the household. Rochambeau requested the parents to name the child De Lauzun after his cavalry officer. Whether the story is to be given credence cannot be determined, but it is a matter of record that succeeding generations of the Norris family utilized the Lauzun name, and it was used also in collateral branches of the family.

The Main French Camp, which was designated as Camp No. 11 in the records of the French Army, was located on a high ridge east of the Congregational Church, on the northerly side of the highway from Danbury. A total of four thousand eight hundred troops were quartered in the two camps, of which thirty-six hundred were infantry, six hundred cavalry and six hundred artillery, and included four regiments: Regiment Bourbonnais, Regiment Royal Deux-Ponts, Soissonnais and Saintonge.

The officers were accommodated at the Tavern of Ensign Samuel Keeler which was situated near the church, opposite and in front of the present residence of Mr. George E. Clum. This property was formerly owned by the Kleber and Washburn families, by Elmer Rundle, and Gamaliel N. Benedict.

The French Army's encampment at Ridgebury coincided with the fifty-sixth birthday of Comte de Rochambeau, and it is quite probable that a celebration of the anniversary was held in Ensign Keeler's Tavern that night.

Meanwhile, according to an entry in General Washington's *Diary* dated 28 June, he had requested Rochambeau to ". . . file off from Ridgebury to Bedford and hasten his Mar(ch)—while the Duc de Lauzun was to do the same . . ."

A letter from Washington at Peekskill to Brigadier General Knox at New Windsor dated 2 July described his plan of attack on York Island and upon Delancey's corps at Morrisiana. In preparation for the attack Washington stated that while the remainder of his army marched that morning for Kingsbridge ". . . Part of the French troops were last night in Ridgebury, and will be in Bedford this evening."

The Duc de Lauzun and his Legion of Horse had, meanwhile, proceeded from Newtown to Ridgefield with special instructions. Since the time of departure of the French troops from Providence, Lauzun's Legion had been detailed to protect the advance of the French Army, whose route was farther northward. After dividing during part of the journey, they are believed to have reunited at Wallingford for the march to Ridgefield, by way of Oxford, New Stratford (now Monroe), and Ridgefield.

A fairly accurate account of Lauzun's line of march can be obtained from several documents which make reference to it. A letter from Rochambeau at Hartford to Washington dated 23 June stated that Lauzun's Legion would march "above my first division, by way of Middletown, Wallingford, North Haven, Ripton (now Shelton) and North Stratford, which it will reach on 28 June". Contemporary records indicate that the Legion encamped in New Haven over the night of 26 June, while a tradition in Derby persists that the Legion camped in that town on 27 June. According to the Rochambeau maps of 'le 2nd feuille' in the Library of Congress, shown in *Figure 48*, Lauzun turned a little southwest. The third camp was somewhat south of Wallingford; a fourth camp was made at Oxford, and a fifth camp at North Stratford, presumably on 30 June.

Duc de Lauzun's Sixth Camp was at Ridgefield in Scotland District. Lauzun's Legion encamped along the ridge east of the North Salem Road just beyond the present residence of Mr. George H. Underhill. This site is clearly indicated in *Rochambeau's Papers No. 65, Map Of Cote de York-Town A Boston. Marches De L'Armee*, which is in the collection of the Library of Congress, and which is reproduced in part in *Figure 49*. The Legion's camp was situated almost exactly parallel to the main French camp in Ridgebury District, and indicates conclusively that De Lauzun did not encamp in the Ridgebury area, in spite of local Ridgefield tradition to the contrary.

The camp-site in Scotland District is marked "French Camp" on the map of Ridgefield which appears on Page 40 of Beers' *Atlas* of 1867.

According to Berthier's *Journal* under an entry dated

"20th (June 1781). The Legion of Lauzun which has passed the winter at Lebanon, has received orders—the corps is to march on a particular column to cover the left flank of the march of the Army at a distance of 9 miles skirting the Sound and passing by the brook of Salmon, Middletown, Wallingford, Oxford, New Stratford and Ridgefield where it will receive new orders."

A study of a map of Ridgefield will reveal that Lauzun's camp-site in Scotland District was between 8.75 and 9.0 miles distant by highway from Rochambeau's main camp in Ridgebury, and approximately 7.5 miles distant as the crow flies. The elevation of Lauzun's camp was approximately 650 feet, Berthier's camp was between 650 and 700 feet, and Rochambeau's position was about 550 feet above sea level.

The Scotland District site was a most logical choice, for the ridge commands a considerable view of the Ridgebury area and signals could be exchanged between the encampments. Furthermore, a good outlook was afforded of the east and west.

While encamped at Ridgebury, according to Berthier's *Journal*, under date of 2 July,

" . . . There we received a change of itinerary of the route, the first brigade, which was to go to Salem, must march to Bedford, and we

received the same order, but at the same moment we received another order from the general, to force the march and instead of to Bedford we were to march straight to North Castle, where the entire army would be reunited."

Berthier's entry on the following day stated that on

"3 (July 1781). The second brigade departed from Ridgebury at three o'clock in the morning and arrived at North Castle—22 miles at 1 o'clock after dinner, and was united with the first (brigade) which had just arrived from Bedford."

In his *Orderly Book* for 3 July 1781 General Washington wrote that

"The Commander-in-chief takes the earliest opportunity of expressing his thanks to the Duke de Lauzun, his officers and men, for the very extraordinary zeal manifested by them in the rapid performance of their march to join the American army . . ."

Washington's letter of 6 July 1781 to the President of Congress further expressed his appreciation with the statement that

". . . The Duke (de Lauzun) notwithstanding the heat of the day of the 2nd, marched from Ridgebury in Connecticut, and reached East Chester very early next morning."

Finally, an entry in Washington's *Diary* made on 3 July made a last reference to the Legion:

"The length of the Duke de Lauzun's march, and the fatigue of his corps, prevented his coming to the point of action at the hour appointed . . ."

Lauzun commanded the second division in the attack on Fort Knipshausen while General Lincoln was assigned to the command of the first division. Both were forced to retreat, however, and both armies joined forces again at White Plains on 6 July.

On the return march from Yorktown in the autumn of 1782, the French did not stop in the Ridgefield area. Camp No. 39 was at Salem and Camp No. 40 was at Danbury, in the South Street section.

The French encampment in Scotland District, as noted by F. W. Beers in his *Atlas*, coincides with the one given in the Rochambeau map. In an unidentified newspaper dated 13 March 1912 (perhaps *The Ridgefield Press*) is found the statement that "It is also thought that the French troops at one time encamped on the ridge east of Lake Mamasasco now owned by the town (then the Town Farm Property) and Mr. Jackson Hobby."

French Officers with the French troops on their march through Connecticut included the Comte de Rochambeau and Major General the Marquis de Castellux, in command of the Bourbonnais, Duc de Lauzun in charge of the Legion of Horse, Baron de Viomenil commanding the Royal Deux-Ponts, and his brother, Comte de Viomenil, in command of the Soissonais. The Saintonge was in the charge of Comte de Custine. Various other aristocratic officers accompanied the French troops.

Comte de Rochambeau was born in 1725 and he entered the royal service in 1742. His full name was Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau. He was sent to the United States in 1780 with Admiral de Ternay under express royal orders as Lieutenant General in command of a detachment of six thousand men to assist the Continental cause against the British. Owing to his reluctance to abandon the French fleet which was blockaded in Narragansett Bay, he remained inactive in America for almost one year, until July 1781, when he joined Washington's forces on the Hudson. The combined forces made the march to Yorktown to join Lafayette.

After the surrender of Yorktown, Congress voted the thanks of the nation to Rochambeau and presented him with two captured British cannon. Upon his return to France he enjoyed the high favor of Louis XVI and was appointed Governor of Picardy. He commanded the Army of the North during 1790 but resigned in 1792. Arrested during the Terror, he narrowly escaped execution. He was later pensioned by Bonaparte and died in 1807.

Duc de Lauzun was rich and handsome and of eminently noble birth. Born in Paris in 1747, his full title was Alexandre Louis de Gontaut, Duc de Lauzun. Later, following his uncle's death, he became Duc de Biron. He entered the military service in young manhood, and was the leader of the expedition against the British at Sambre in 1779.

Upon volunteering for service in America, he was promised an independent legion of twenty-four hundred men. This was a promise which the French ministry was unable to keep, and Lauzun was forced to accept a command of four hundred cavalry and eight hundred infantry. Even so, this number was reduced by about one-third upon embarking, because of lack of transports.

After his return to France in 1790 he became deputy of the nobles to the States-General and in 1792 he was placed at the head of the armies of the Rhine by the French revolutionists. He became deeply involved in the Revolution and he was finally arrested on a charge of disloyalty, convicted, and executed in 1793.

Marquis de Chastellux was a Major General under Rochambeau in America. Francois Jean de Beauvoir, Marquis de Chastellux, was born in Paris in 1734 and he was related to Lafayette. He entered military service in 1747 and distinguished himself in the Seven Years War. He became marechal de camp in 1780, and embarked with Rochambeau for America. In November 1780 he left the French headquarters at Rhode Island with two friends for a prolonged journey on the American continent which he described in his *Voyage Dans L'Amerique Septentrionale Dans Les Annees 1780-1783*. Upon his return to France he was appointed governor of Longwy in recognition of his service in America.

Alexandre Berthier was born at Versailles in 1753 and he was only seventeen years old when he entered the Corps Royal with the rank of Major.

Volunteering for service in America, together with his brother, he served with Lafayette in several encounters and was with Rochambeau in Westchester and at Yorktown. He served as the geographer and surveyor for Rochambeau's army, and his maps of the march from Newtown through Ridgebury to Newport are examples of his great cartographer's skill.

J. Nancrede also came to America with Count de Rochambeau. He was a polished gentleman and a scholar, and produced an important work on the subject of *Romans in Greece*, which was printed in 1799. Nancrede was wounded at the Battle of Yorktown, Virginia. He remained in the United States after the Revolution and taught French at Harvard University. He died in Paris 15 December 1844 at the age of 81.

"Fort Hill" is a name which has intrigued many persons who have noted it during the past half century where it appears inscribed, together with the date 1777, on polished round granite plaques set into two stone piers on the North Salem Road. The piers mark the entrance to the present residence of Mr. James M. Bellagamba which is located a short distance north and west of the intersection of Barrack Hill Road. These unusual piers have bedevilled historically-inclined inhabitants for years, but apparently not sufficiently so to excite constructive research.

The masonry stone piers were constructed by a former owner, a contractor named James F. Kennedy, who purchased the property at the beginning of the 20th Century. When he moved to the district, he heard the name "Fort Hill" used in connection with the area in the vicinity of his home. Older residents told him that the name was derived from the fact that the highway formerly rose sharply along a ridge which existed just south of his house and opposite the present home of Miss Mary Huber. On this ridge the local inhabitants had erected a makeshift barricade of carts, fences, etc. when they first learned that the British were marching from Danbury to Ridgefield. It was on this ridge that the British column turned and engaged General Wooster in the second skirmish of the Battle of Ridgefield. Either of these two incidents would have provided sufficient reason for the name's derivation.

However, "Fort Hill" may not have originally applied to this ridge across the highway, and may in fact have had a totally different derivation. A large wooden frame building on an old stone foundation formerly existed on the property of Miss Mary Huber, just north of Barrack Hill Road. The building occupied the site of the barn which was demolished in recent years. After the late Mr. George Huber acquired the property in about 1903, he found the building too large for his requirements and in a state of disrepair. Accordingly, he dismantled it, salvaging whatever lumber he could and utilized it to build a barn of much smaller proportions on the same site, making use of the old foundations.

According to the map of Ridgefield which appeared on Page 40 of Beers' *Atlas*, which was published in 1867, the old wooden structure on this site was

called "Fort Hill". The name was specifically not given to the area, but to the building. The farmhouse (*Figure 51*), which is now owned by Miss Mary Huber, was then the home of L. Benedict and presumably the barn was part of the same property.

There appears to be no information about the origin or use of the old building, even among the older inhabitants. Its history has been forgotten, even by those who were born and lived most of their lives in the neighborhood.

The building was unquestionably related in some manner to the events of the Revolutionary War and had some military significance. Among the possibilities which come first to mind are the following:

1) It may have been used by the detachment under General Wooster's command for the securing of the forty prisoners which had been captured at the first skirmish in Scotland District. After their capture, the prisoners are not mentioned again in any of the contemporary accounts and it is likely that they were kept safely under guard in Ridgefield until they could be sent to a more suitable camp.

2) The building could possibly have been part of the permanent camp of Colonel Armand's Partisan Legion, which was located near the summit of Barrack Hill a short distance away, on the estate which formerly belonged to the late Mr. B. E. Levy. A large level area adjacent to the building appears to have some particular significance not presently known. It may have been a parade ground, or riding area.

3) During the summer of 1779 large units of the Continental Army were quartered at Ridgefield for periods ranging from several days to perhaps several months. The location of the Continental encampments is not presently known, but it is entirely within the realm of possibility that the site was at Fort Hill which would have been within easy communicating distance with the permanent camp of Colonel Armand.

However, lack of sufficient information at the present time must make of the site an unsolved mystery to challenge the historians of the future.

Part Three

THE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD



Figure 52

Chapter IX

RIDGEFIELD'S COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Commercial Era in Ridgefield began with the end of the 18th Century, following the Revolutionary War. During the first hundred years of its existence, the township had been preoccupied with the problem of establishing a settlement and providing for itself. The necessities of food, clothing and shelter had to be produced by the settlers themselves, and they had a difficult struggle for survival for the first half century. Then when the settlement had become established, the Revolutionary War intervened and interrupted the town's progress for a considerable period of time.

With the end of the war, the townspeople were much poorer than before. Many had suffered personal loss and damage to property. Rev. Goodrich reported that from about 1760 there was a constant migration of the townspeople to other parts of the country. Particularly during and after the war, many of the young people left the town and only a fraction of them returned.

At the end of the 18th Century, the same source reported that some commerce existed in farm products. Approximately 1500 barrels of pork and the same number of barrels of beef were sold outside the town. Somewhat less than 300 firkins of butter and perhaps half that weight of cheese was exported annually, and approximately one hundred head of cattle were driven to New York to be sold each year. The making of butter increased considerably over the past twenty-year period. Improved transportation facilities made it possible to deliver butter fresh to New York markets, and consequently the price increased threefold.

Timothy Keeler, Jr., the proprietor of the Keeler Tavern, revealed himself during this period to be a most enterprising and talented business man. Following the end of the war, he ventured into importing of commodities and luxuries and retailing them to the townspeople. In the same manner he undertook to wholesale some of Ridgefield's produce in markets in New York and elsewhere outside the community.

The record books of the Keeler Tavern provide a valuable documentation of the Tavern's and of Ridgefield's economic development. The earliest entry in the first of Keeler's Tavern Record Books was dated "November y^o 4th 1772" and reported the sale of two quarts of molasses to David Hoyt for 1 shilling 4 pence. Subsequent sales to the same client included a quarter pound of tea, sundries, rum—which was sold by the quart—shoe buckles, coat buttons, "scanes" of silk, almanacs, brandy, seed, wheat and multitude of similar items. The rum was apparently wholesaled to the Tavern for retailing by Albert Forster. Another of the Tavern's early clients was John Andrews, who purchased the first of the "little tooth combs" which Keeler sold in countless numbers, "loaf sugar", papers of tobacco, shot, and brandy, of which the aforesaid Andrews was apparently an inveterate drinker.

Keeler imported many luxuries from New York for reselling at the Tavern, and his stock included every possible commodity and countless luxuries for the home, as well as tools and accessories for the farm and the trades. He dealt with a number of suppliers in New York as well as in some other cities.

Among the interesting papers of the Tavern are two bills made out to the tobacco wholesaler, Messrs. Isaac and Andrew Cocke dated from New York in 1791 and 1792. They record the purchase of tobacco in papers, plug and in barrel from Peter and George Lorillard, (*Figure 53*).

"**T. Keeler & Co.**" was the name under which Timothy Keeler, Jr. extended his enterprise to include several retail stores in Ridgefield, in addition to the Tavern.

On 29 December 1787 Keeler purchased on the open market a one-eighth part of the brigantine *Sally* and a one-eighth part of its cargo of one hundred seventy-two tons, for the price of one hundred pounds in New York currency. The *Sally* was anchored in the port of Norwalk and the bill of sale specified that Keeler acquired a one-eighth part of "Boat, Sails, Spars and Riging, together with all appurtenances belonging", from its owner, Timothy Read of Stamford. The outlay for this purchase was a considerable one considering the period, and serves as an indication of Keeler's apparent affluence.

The venture seems to have ended disastrously, not only for its owners but for its crew. In the 1 February 1791 issue of *The Farmer's Journal* appeared an account of the wreck of the brig *Sally* off Eaton's Neck, Long Island.

The brig was commanded by Captain Benjamin Keeler of Ridgefield. All twelve persons on board were drowned. Captain Keeler's body was taken to

Ridgefield for burial. The newspaper account added that he was twenty-nine years old, "the only son of his mother and she a widow."

No mention of Benjamin Keeler appears in the Ridgefield histories, but it seems likely that he was Timothy Keeler's nephew, the son of his brother, Benjamin. His untimely death may possibly explain the lease Timothy Keeler made with his brother Jeremiah for the premises whereby he provided for the widow of Benjamin Keeler, as related elsewhere.

Two years later, in September 1789, Timothy Keeler was already in partnership with Nathan Dauchy, Jr. and David Olmsted 3rd in a firm which they named "*T. Keeler & Co.*" The firm owned and operated two retail stores in Ridgefield. David Olmsted 3rd agreed to tend the so-called "lower store" in Ridgefield for wages of six dollars per month plus an allowance of 5 shillings a week for board. In return, Olmsted promised to be in constant attendance at the store. "The upper store" was to be tended by David Keeler, the oldest son of Timothy Keeler, a boy in his teens. David was to receive the same wages for his services as did Olmsted, and his board was to be paid "in company". The innkeeper, Timothy Keeler, received five pounds per year for the use of the premises for the store.

On 1 September 1791 "the firm of T. Keeler & Dauchy" agreed to transfer David Keeler to the lower store and Nathan Dauchy was assigned to tend the store in Bungtown. According to this arrangement, Timothy Keeler was to be paid the previously established amount of five pounds annually by the Company for the use of his store.

During this period Keeler and his partner appear to have opened an office in New York City for the purpose of dealing with suppliers for their country stores.

Another of the business enterprises of Timothy Keeler, Jr., which has just recently come to light, was *The Mamasco Iron Works* which was mentioned for the first time in public records in a lease filed 5 January 1789 whereby Elias Read leased to Timothy Keeler, Jr., Nathan Dauchy and Elijah Keeler "the privilege of making a dam at the place they shall judge convenient, and raising a Pond of Water (for the purpose of carrying on Iron Works) on my land lying southwesterly from my dwelling house, and of raising the waters so high in sd Pond . . . as—(they) shall see fit to use the same for the purpose of carrying on Iron Works." The area described appears to have been the outlet of Lake Mamasco on the opposite side of the highway from the Grist Mill. When Read died in 1794, at the age of thirty-eight, the inventory of his personal property included a Pottery Shop assessed at 45 pounds. This may also have been operated on or near the same site.

On 27 February 1789 Jacob Keeler of North Salem and Elijah Keeler of Ridgefield, executors of the last will of Isaac Keeler, the Miller, Conveyed by executor's deed to his son, Isaac Keeler, Jr. of North Salem

"One certain tract, or piece of land lying in sd Ridgefield near the dwelling house of the sd Elijah Keeler being the Old Mill place

Where the Great Mill lately stood that was burnt, . . . to lye in such shape or figure as shall be most convenient for the purpose of erecting an iron works with proper conveniences for the same . . . ”

A mortgage deed from Elijah Keeler to John Jay and Anne Van Horn of New York conveyed various parcels of land and added

“Also my whole interest in the Iron Works & Lot on which they stand, consisting of 1/8 part of the works and 1/ of the lands or lot.”

The Iron Works were constructed in about 1789 and must have been in operation for a decade or more. On 22 May 1817 a warranty deed from nine owners granted to Thomas and Abijah Hyatt three quarters parts of the Grist Mill and also a parcel of land “lying where the Old Iron Works stood in sd Ridgefield”.

Thaddeus Keeler 2nd, was almost as prominent in the community as his uncle, Timothy Keeler, Jr. He lived in the house immediately south of the Tavern, and it is probable that it was he who built the present splendid residence, now owned by Dr. James H. Inkster, possibly on the site of an earlier Hoyt dwelling.

Thaddeus Keeler was greatly respected in the town and he was known as “Squire Thad” or “Quality Thad”, to distinguish him from a Thaddeus Keeler who lived farther along Main Street and popularly known as “Wheelwright Thad”.

No lawyer made his home or maintained a residence in Ridgefield until relatively recent times, and Squire Thad was probably the first of the inhabitants to engage in law business. As a Justice of the Peace he executed many documents, distinguished by a flamboyant notarial seal which displayed a fully rigged ship as its central adornment. He attended to practically all of the law business in the town, and transacted it in his dining-room.

He built the Corner Store at the junction of Main Street and West Lane opposite the Congregational Church. The Corner Store was a popular center for the town, and Squire Thad catered to the many needs of the community. It was the only store in Ridgefield where medicine was sold and where prescriptions could be filled. It was finally torn down in 1929.

Squire Thad was a portly figure who served the community in many capacities, and in addition to his legal work, his service as Justice of the Peace, and his store, he was a Selectman in 1827 and 1829, and was Representative from Ridgefield to the General Assembly in 1839. He died in 1878.

Elias Read was another enterprising individual who maintained a general store in Ridgefield at the end of the 18th Century. An advertisement in the 13 February 1792 issue of *The Farmer's Journal*, the newspaper that was published in Danbury by the firm of Douglas and Ely, stated that

“Elias Read has just received and is now selling at his store in Ridgefield a fresh and general assortment of India and European goods which he will sell cheap for cash.”

Elias Read was a native of Norwalk who came to Ridgefield between 1781 and 1784. The location of his store in the township is not presently known, and it may have been operated from his home in Scotland District.

On 4 April 1783 Read purchased from the administrators of the deceased Captain Lemuel Morehouse the former Burt property and mill situated between the intersections of North Salem Road, Tackora Trail and Pond Road. On 3 March 1784 he acquired from Elijah Keeler the homestead which was later the property of Mrs. Mary H. Solley and is now the residence of Mr. Richard R. H. Beck, on the North Salem Road. This may have been the premises used for his store, because local tradition relates that it was formerly a stop on the stage line.

Read died in 1794, at the age of thirty-eight. At the time of his death he left personal and real property valued at over one thousand pounds.

Ridgefield's Tax List of 1808 provides a reasonably clear picture of the town's development after a century of existence. "A True List of the Polls and Content of the Town of Ridgefield rateable by law on this 20th Day of August 1808", which is in the collection of the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association, specified 251 Polls from 21 to 70 years of age at a rate of \$60, and 24 Polls between eighteen and twenty-one years of age at a rate of \$30. There were 410 oxen and bulls of four years and 1018 cows, steers, heifers and bulls of three years as well as 387 horse and kind of three years and 27 under that age. The List included 3807½ acres of plough land, 4498½ acres of upland, mowing and clear pastures, as well as 405½ acres of boggy land mowed and 1257½ acres of other lands and about 5259 acres of bushy land, in addition to numerous acres of unenclosed land.

Sixteen chaises were owned in the town, valued each at at rate of 15.00 and there was one four-wheeled carriage, rated at 30.00. This was owned by Col. Philip Burr Bradley.

Of particular interest was the notation that 48 silver pocket watches were listed, 19 clocks with steel and brass movements, and 20 clocks with wooden movements. Fireplaces appeared to be a guide to affluence and were numbered in three classes. There were 787 fireplaces in Ridgefield.

There were six stores in the town in one-story buildings and 2355 sheep were deducted at a rate of seventy-five cents.

A Tax List for Ridgebury bearing the same data included 81 Polls of ages 18 to 70, 619 head of cattle of various ages and types, 148 horse and kind, 1111 acres of ploughland, 2159 acres of meadow land, 3350 acres of boggy and bushy land, etc.

One chaise or chair was listed. There were 19 silver watches, 4 clocks with metal movements and 4 clocks with wooden movements, 232 fireplaces, and there were but two stores in one-story buildings. 849 sheep were deducted at the standard rate.

The tax list for Ridgefield for 1808, after the sheep deduction, was 51717.32 and the list for Ridgebury, after a similar deduction, was 15887.67.

As part of the same list were named the indicated assessments of the following

Tradesmen of Ridgebury:

Abraham Fairchild, Innkeeper	25.00
Benjamin Lynn, Innkeeper	25.00
Benjamin Barber, Trader	50.00
Henry Whitney, Tanner	10.00
Jonah Foster, clothier and owner of Sawmill	25.00
Timothy Hunt, Plasterer	20.00
Isaac Hunt, Plasterer	10.00
Uriah Deforest, Blacksmith	20.00

The 1820 Census, a manuscript copy of which recently came to light among the Keeler Tavern papers, provides considerable information about the thriving century-old town of Ridgefield as it embarked upon its commercial period. This interesting document is entitled "The Within Schedule contains the Number of Inhabitants in the Division Allotted to Me by the Marshal of Connecticut, Viz., Reading & Ridgefield" and was prepared by Hez, ^h Read, Jr. In addition to the usual data it included also identification of all persons in commerce and manufacturing.

In 1820 the total population of Ridgefield was 2299 persons including negroes. This was an increase of 196 persons since the census of 1810, which showed a total of 2103 persons in the town. In 1820 there were 2 foreigners in Ridgefield, 397 persons engaged in agriculture or farming, 16 in commerce, and 196 in manufacturing enterprises. No slaves were owned in Ridgefield and there were 28 free negroes. Of the white population, 1145 persons were males and 1126 were females. There were 17 persons aged 83 years and 4 months or over in August 1820.

As a comparison, in 1820 Reading (Redding) had a population of 1673 persons while in 1810 the population had numbered 1717 persons.

Following is a recapitulation of persons engaged in commerce and manufacturing in Ridgefield, as of 1820:

Tailors: 4	Carpenter-joiners: 2
Blacksmiths: 11	Masons: 7
Silversmiths: 3	Physicians: 1
Hatters: 3	Joiners: 2
Shoemakers: 40	Tanners: 2
Weavers: 6	Preachers: 2
Coopers: 7	Clothiers: 2
Harness-makers: 1	Millers: 1
Coachmakers: 1	Lime Mfgs.: 1
Carriage-makers: 1	Cabinet-makers: 1
Carpenters: 8	Carvers: 1

This summary reveals rather startling results. The number of shoemakers was

amazingly large and totaled one shoemaker to every 57 persons in the town. Many of the trades that were listed formed part of the several manufacturing enterprises, such as the Carriage Shop, which included harness-makers, carriage-makers, coach-makers, joiners, carvers, carpenter-joiners, and blacksmiths.

Inasmuch as data of this nature has never before been available in as comprehensive a form, and because of its possible value for research, the following is a list of trades and crafts in Ridgefield as indicated in the 1820 Census:

Tailors: Walter Smith, Amos Smith, Uriah Seymour, Silvanus Woster.

Blacksmiths: Calob Grummond, William Rider, Jonathan Rockwell, James Seymour, John Barlow, Josiah D. Benedict, Anthonia Morehouse, Ashabel Osborn, John Watrous, Nathaniel Seymour, Senr., Phillip Dauchy.

Silversmiths: Isaac Lewis, James Scott, Jr., Gould Smith.

Hatters: William H. John, Samuel Church, Thomas Hollinshead.

Weavers: Thomas Mead, Elias Chambers, David Buckley, Hezekiah Fairchild, Thaddeus Olmsted, William Sherwood.

Coopers: Epenetus Webb, Jesse Boughton, Enoch Hawley, William Cargin, Walter Hawley, Ebenezer Smith.

Harness-maker: William Crocker.

Coach-maker: Zarr Jones (Czar Jones).

Carriage-maker: Elijah Hawley.

Carpenters: Samuel B. Nash, Abraham Pulling, Nathaniel Northrop, John Mills, David Stuart, Charles Stewart, Timothy Sherwood, Nathaniel Olmsted, Thomas Hawley, Samuel Olmsted, Jr.

Carpenter-joiners: Albin Jennings.

Joiners: Lot Forester, Alanson Birchard.

Masons: Benjamin Wilson, David Hunt, Lewis June, Isaac Hunt, Uriah Birchard, John Sherwood, Rufus Keeler.

Physicians: Philo Wall.

Preachers: James Coleman, Stephen Burritt.

Tanners: Luther Dauchy, Jabez M. Gilbert.

Clothiers: Justice Banks, Widow Hannah Foster.

Millers: David Scott.

Lime Manufacturer: Joel Gilbert.

Cabinet-Maker: Widow Abigail Smith.

Carver: Aaron Edmonds.

Shoemakers: Samuel Grummond, Matthew Olmsted, Walter Olmsted, Stephen Olmsted, Josiah Bennett, Jared St. John, Charles Nash, William Olmsted, Lewis S. Nash, Briaah Nash, Charles St. John, Samuel St. John, Curtis Betts, Thaddeus Benedict, Daniel Bradley, Jonathan Sherwood,

(Widow) Mary Gates, Widow Betsy, Major Boughton, Zera Rockwell, Jahail Seymour, Joseph Gray, Abraham Fairchild, Czar Porter, Aaron Abbott, James Northrop, Harvey Betts, Beers Pulling, Peleg Arnold, Barnabas Allen, Calob Roberts, Israel M. Whitlock, James Chambers, Sturges Jelliff, Ebenezer Godfrey, Calob Miller, Nathan Dan, Stephen O. Mead, Benjamin Keeler 2nd, James Jones.

The Negro Population of Ridgefield in 1800 totalled only eight persons, most of whom were young females and would be free by law of the State at the age of twenty-five years. They were well educated "and in no ways deficient in genius". Rev. Goodrich reported that during the Revolutionary War there was in Ridgefield a freeborn Negro who had married and was a respectable member of the church. By his own industry he had acquired property which was inventoried at the time of his death at more than five hundred pounds. This he left to his adopted son, a free mulatto. The heir was apparently not as thrifty as his foster father, for he disposed of the entire inheritance within a ten year period.

Slaves listed in the first Census of the United States, which was taken in 1790, show that a total of only five slaves were owned in Ridgefield in that year. The owners were Matthew Seymour, Jeremiah Wilson, Stephen Smith, Phineas Doolittle, William Wallace and Abner Wilson. In that year Ridgefield had a total population of 1947 persons.

Paupers were relatively few in the town at the close of the 18th Century. Rev. Goodrich reported that the number of persons receiving aid from the town in 1799 did not exceed ten or twelve, of which number not more than two or three were totally supported. These were foreigners and included an unidentified woman, a nonegenarian named Jagger who had served under the Duke of Cumberland in England, and a man named Yabbecomb from Wales.

Gilbert Yabbecomb was further described in the draft of a letter from Timothy Keeler 2nd to George Bruce dated 26 August 1806. According to this document, at the time of writing Keeler had known Yabbecomb for more than twenty years. Old age and infirmity prevented Yabbecomb from earning a living and had reduced him to penurious circumstances. As a result he had become a charge of the town during the past few years.

In his letter Keeler related that Yabbecomb had received an annuity from a Samuel Compton in England from 1790 to 1802. This income had been derived from the lease or rent of property which he still owned in England at "Quarry Park" and consisted of a yearly fee of four pounds. Keeler then related that a letter from Yabbecomb's brother at Plymouth Dock in 1804 advised that the tenant claimed that Yabbecomb was dead and refused to continue payments or yield the property. The brother requested identifying in-

formation to enable him to take proper action, and it was in this regard that Keeler wrote the letter.

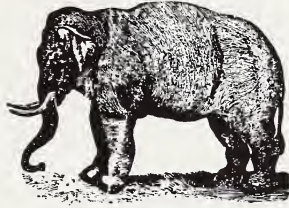
Those persons receiving partial aid from the town of Ridgefield repaid it in work and were assigned to bidders for their services.

On 8 January 1836 the Selectmen of Ridgefield signed an Indenture with Samuel Hanford of South Salem. This document, which was made in the presence of Czar Jones, Justice of the Peace, attested that the Selectmen indentured Mortimer Porter, a nine-year old boy supported at the town's expense, to the service of Samuel Hanford. The contract was made for a period of seven years or until the boy had attained his sixteenth birthday. Young Porter was to serve Hanford as an apprentice and Hanford bound himself to

“ . . . teach and instruct the said Porter or cause him to be taught and instructed in the arts of Farming and Husbandry; cause him to attend school for the purpose of being instructed in spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and train him up in habits of obedience, subordination, industry, religion and morality, & provide for and allow to him meat, drink, washing, lodging, and apparel for summer and winter on common and on holy days and provide all other necessaries in sickness and in health, and at the expiration of the term of service of the said Porter to furnish him comfortable clothing both for every day wear and holy days . . . ”

The Fairfield County Lottery of 1792 is an aspect of Connecticut history which has been little noted. The lottery was sponsored by many wealthy and outstanding citizens for the purpose of raising funds for the construction of a courthouse at Fairfield and a gaol (sic) at Danbury. The gaol at Danbury also served Ridgefield until about 1846. The managers appointed were four of the most prominent men of the State, including Joshua King of Ridgefield. Tickets were available from Joseph Burr of Hartford, and a total of nine thousand tickets were issued for sale, of which 3156 tickets were prize-winning and 5844 were blanks. The first prize was two thousand dollars, there was a second prize of one thousand and the least prize was eight dollars. The tickets were sold for four dollars each. The drawing was begun on 13 March 1792 and the prizes were to be published in *The Farmers' Journal* in Danbury.

THE MAJESTIC ANIMAL
COLUMBUS.



A Male

Elephant

To be seen at N^o 74th St. on
Tuesday, 13th June 1851

THE ELEPHANT is not only the largest and most sagacious animal in the world, but from the peculiar manner in which it takes its food and drink of every kind, with its trunk, is acknowledged to be the greatest natural curiosity ever offered to the public. It will draw a cork out of a bottle with his trunk, and manage it in such a manner as to drink its contents. The one now offered to the curious, is a Male, and the only one ever exhibited in America. He is 7 years old, and is upwards of 7 feet high; 10 feet 8 inches round the body; and 16 feet 8 inches from the end of his trunk to that of his tail...his ears are 2 feet and 1 inch in length.

Hours of Exhibition, from 9 in the morning until 5 in the evening—Sundays excepted—Admission 50 Cents

Figure 54

Chapter X

RIDGEFIELD AND THE CIRCUS

The Circus was well known in Ridgefield during the earliest period of this entertainment's existence, because some of its pioneers were natives of the town. The circus had its modest beginnings in the itinerant performer. The single animal which was placed on display in town after town developed eventually into the menagerie or collection of animals. The single trick rider, acrobat or freak developed into the equestrian, feature act and side show of the circus. These individual exhibits and acts began to appear more and more frequently in Connecticut by the middle of the 18th Century. They became such a popular, albeit occasional, form of entertainment that the General Assembly at Hartford took action. In 1773 the Legislature passed an act suppressing mountebanks and their shows because it drew large numbers of people having the result of corrupting manners, promoting idleness and being a detriment to good order and religion. A penalty of twenty pounds was set for each offense and there was a fine of forty shillings for each ticket sold. An act of the Continental Congress was passed to forbid circus entertainment in all its forms on October 1774.

With the end of the Revolutionary War, however, new acts and entertainments were even more plentiful than before in New England. The first to appear in Connecticut was probably the equestrian rider, Captain Thomas

Pool, followed by John Brenon, a slack wire artist from Dublin, and various animal exhibits, including a pair of camels, a pair of bison, an African lion and a trained dog.

According to the *Connecticut Courant* of 16 May 1796 the bison made a second appearance at that time. In this instance it was a single male animal, which was shown at Joseph Pratt's Tavern in Hartford. It was undoubtedly the same animal which was featured on a poster discovered among papers in the Keeler Tavern in Ridgefield. This poster, which was printed by Joseph Griffin of Brunswick, is illustrated in *Figure 55* and features "Natural Curiosities Never Before Exhibited in this Country" which included "A full grown Buffalo from the wilds of Missouri. This animal was taken six years since, at some considerable risk and expense. He is one of the most curious animals of his species. His symmetry is a complete model of strength before, and agility behind. His measurement and curiosity exceed that of any animal ever exhibited in this country, the Elephant excepted; and no animal is capable of withstanding the power of his front. Said animal is properly secured, so that spectators need not apprehend any danger".

Also featured was ". . . an extraordinary Cow from Mexico, having six legs and two bags. From the upper part of each shoulder blade is continued a large broad bone. These bones nearly meet above the shoulder, and from a large convex prominence, which is concave underneath, and has been compared to the bunch on the back of a Dromedary. Two of these legs rise just forward of this protuberance, both having regular joints, between which is situated a bag or udder, and one teat, from which milk may be elicited at pleasure. The cow is sprightly and in good health. Courtesies to and salutes her master, is of a bright brindle colour, 20 years old, and is justly esteemed one of the greatest living curiosities ever exhibited."

Inserted in ink by the exhibitor in the blank spaces of the poster were two other features—"A Female Wolf, 18 months old" and "Music on a violin plaid by a blind girl". Admission was twelve and a half cents for adults, and children were admitted for half price. In the space reserved for indicating the place where the exhibit would take place had been written the name of an inn in Norwalk, which was then crossed out and the following added "At the Inn of Mr. Smith in Richfield on Thursday & Friday 30 & 31".

The year in which this collection of natural curiosities appeared in Ridgefield is not known but it was probably at about the same time that the male buffalo was shown in Hartford.

Another early poster recovered from the Keeler Tavern featured "The Majestic Animal *Columbus*, A Male Elephant, to be seen at W. Keeler's Tavern on Tuesday October 13th, (One day only). The Elephant is not only the largest and most sagacious animal in the world, but from the peculiar manner in which it takes its food and drink of every kind, with its trunk, is acknowledged to be the greatest natural curiosity ever offered to the public. He will draw a cork out of a bottle with his trunk, and manage it in such a

manner as to drink its contents. The one now offered to the curious is a Male, and the only one ever exhibited in America. He is 7 years old, and is upwards of 7 feet high; 10 feet 8 inches round the body; and 16 feet 8 inches from the end of his trunk to that of his tail . . . his ears are 2 feet and 1 inch in length."

The Elephant was to be exhibited from nine in the morning until five in the evening and the price of admission was twenty-five cents. Again the date is not known when the Elephant first came to Ridgefield, but it was during the period while William Keeler was proprietor of the Keeler Tavern, between 1815 and 1827.

Following the individual exhibit and itinerant performer came the circus in the form of the rolling show at the beginning of the 19th Century. Among the very earliest native American proprietors of a circus was a native of Ridgefield named

Aaron Turner, who became one of the most prominent business men and landowners of Danbury by the middle of the 19th Century. Very little is known about Turner's early life and circus historians until recently generally assumed that Turner was a skillful equestrian who had emigrated to the United States in 1817 with his two sons who were also trick riders. It was not until several years ago, when this writer undertook to do research for Mr. George L. Chindahl, the prominent circus historian, that new information about Turner came to light.

Aaron Turner was born in Ridgefield in 1790, the son of Mercy Hooney. In 1799 Dorcas Osborn of Ridgefield was appointed guardian of the nine year old child before the Probate Court in Danbury. The identity of the boy's father is not known. In 1804 Aaron was again brought into the court, and he again chose Mrs. Osborn to be his guardian. Mrs. Osborn owned the farm which is now known as "Rolling Hills Farm". It is located between Turner Lane and North Ridgebury Road in that section of Ridgefield which was deeded to Danbury in 1846.

Turner must have been somewhat of an adopted son to Mrs. Osborn for at the time of her death in 1826 she bequeathed to him three tracts of farm and wood land, totalling twelve acres, and all other property which she possessed excepting one bed, a pair of sheets and one blanket which she left to another person. Turner was the executor of the will under its provisions.

There is much speculation about Turner's early years in Ridgefield. Turner frequently stated that he had been a shoemaker before he became a circus proprietor, and he may have been an indentured apprentice to one of the town's many shoemakers. It is a matter of interest that he became of age in about 1811, the same year in which Nathan A. Howes, then fifteen, was walking a tight rope across the State line in Haviland Hollow. It was at about this same time that Hachaliah Bailey of Somers acquired an elephant which became famous as 'Old Bet' and exhibited her in the neighboring

towns. Soon after 1815 Nathan A Howes acquired temporary possession of Old Bet and toured the New England states exhibiting her.

Although there is no record of the date when Turner became a circus proprietor, he was unquestionably associated with the circus by 1820, for in the summer of 1823 his seven-year old son, Napoleon B. Turner, was performing as a trick rider in Price & Simpson's Circus in New York City. Some circus historians state that Turner became a partner with Nathan A Howes in about 1820 and owned his own road show in 1828.

In 1836 Phineas T. Barnum of Bethel joined Aaron Turner's circus with his Italian juggler-acrobat billed as Signor Vivalla. Barnum was hired to be ticket seller, secretary and treasurer.

During this period Turner's circus probably wintered at his Ridgebury farm which by then he had inherited from Mrs. Osborn. Old residents in the area report that in the swamp opposite the present residence there were found large casks sunken into the swamp to which were attached large rings. These were used for hobbling and watering the elephants. Although the original Osborn-Turner house is no longer standing, its foundations and chimney are clearly visible at the right of Turner Lane a short distance from the intersection. This narrow road which connects North Ridgebury Road with Dingle Ridge Road has been known as Turner Lane for more than a century.

Turner's circus was one of the most important and popular in the country. His two sons, Timothy and Napoleon B. Turner, were skilled riders. Turner's daughter, Ann, became famous as a bareback rider during the first half of the 19th Century. Napoleon B. Turner was a noted six-horse rider, while Timothy enacted the life of a sailor on horseback.

Turner's daughter married George Fox Bailey, a nephew of Hachaliah Bailey of Somers. Bailey eventually became the manager of the circus, and remained associated with his father-in-law until the latter's death.

Turner eventually settled in Danbury, where he purchased the hostelry which became known as the Turner House. The building is the present Knights of Columbus Home. In addition to the operation of his hotel, Turner became one of the most important land-owners in the community. He died on 4 February 1854 at the age of sixty-seven, and his estate was appraised by the Probate Court at forty-two thousand six hundred dollars. It consisted of about three hundred acres of farm and woodland, stocks in three banks, and an interest in the circus firm which was continued by his two sons and his son-in-law under the name of A. Turner & Co. Both of Turner's sons died within the next four years. Bailey continued in show business under various names for some time thereafter.

In his will Turner specified that

"Whereas my immediate ancestors have allotted and set apart a piece of land near my farm in the Society of Ridgebury, for a family burying ground, and whereas, certain improvements on said grounds are necessary to be made, and should I, during my

lifetime, be unable to make the same, I hereby order and direct my executors hereinafter named to build a good and substantial stone wall around the same, and to erect a good, substantial iron gate to the same—and it is my will and my wish that my body at my decease and that the bodies of all the members of my family at the time of their decease shall be decently interred in said ground and that good and decent head and foot stones be erected at the grave of each member of my family, so as to designate the grave of each member . . . ”

In spite of the most exhaustive search made of the farm and woodlands formerly owned by Turner, and of the private and public cemeteries in Ridgebury, Ridgefield, Danbury, Brewster, the Salems, and Somers, this burial plot has not been located, nor has the grave of Turner been found.

The burial ground must have been that of the family of Mrs. Dorcas Osborn, for Turner had no knowledge of his own antecedents. Barnum reported that he heard Turner say:

“Every man who has good health and common sense is capable of making a fortune, if he only resolves to do so. As a proof of it, look at me. Who am I? I don’t know who I am, or where I came from. I never had father nor mother that I know of; at all events, I must have started from the lowest depths of degradation. I never had any education; I commenced life as a shoemaker. What little I can read, I picked up myself after I was eighteen years of age; and as for writing, why the way I first learned that, was by signing my name to notes of hand! I used at first to make my mark, but being a poor devil, I had occasion to give my note so often that finally learned to write my name, and so I have got along by degrees . . . ”

Nathan A. Howes of Sodom in Putnam County, N. Y., was reported to have “walked a tight rope in Haviland Hollow” in 1811, at the age of fifteen. Several years before, a man named Hachaliah Bailey of Somers had acquired an elephant which was to achieve fame as ‘Old Bet’. Bailey’s brother was a sea captain and he wrote to Hachaliah that his ship had arrived in New York with an elephant he had purchased at an auction in London for twenty dollars. This was the second elephant to have been brought to the United States. Hachaliah Bailey was intrigued with the animal and he invested one thousand dollars in it. He moved the elephant by river sloop as far as Sing Sing and walked it the remaining distance to Somers. He had thought of utilizing the beast on his farm for ploughing, but it excited so much curiosity that he exhibited the animal for small sums in the neighboring towns. Soon after 1815 Nathan A. Howes acquired ‘temporary possession’ of Old Bet and toured New England exhibiting her. He had a canvas tent made in which the elephant was shown and he is believed to have been the first to exhibit a circus attraction under canvas in this country. Nathan had a younger brother named

Seth B. Howes who eclipsed his brother’s fame as a showman and developed

the circus technique. In 1853-54 Seth Howes became a partner with Lewis B. Lent of Somers and P. T. Barnum in the *Great American Museum and Menagerie*, and later toured in England.

June, Titus, Angevine and Company was one of the first circus shows to tour the United States. During the year 1842 this Company travelled a total of 2482 miles through six States over a period of 184 days, 151 of which were spent in travel. Performances were given in 85 towns and cities during this period.

Most of the partners in this company were business men of North Salem, N. Y. who were inspired in their enterprise by the success of such forerunners in the circus business as the Howes brothers and Aaron Turner. They banded together to form the first circus syndicate, which was known as the Zoological Institute and more familiarly in this area as "the flatfoots". Several men of Ridgefield were associated with this Company, including

Lewis June who built the house which is now the residence of Mr. John Scott on North Salem Road in Scotland District. June was a native of North Salem who had married one of the daughters of David Scott 3rd and settled in Scotland District. During the first part of the 19th Century his home was completely destroyed by fire and he moved his family next door during the period that a new house was built on the site of the original building.

Circus horses were wintered in the large barns on the June farm on North Salem Road as well as the farm next door. Local legend reports that a bear and giraffes were also quartered here at various times. Another Ridgefield family that was prominent in the early history of the circus was the

Hunt Family of upper Scotland District and Ridgebury. George V. R. Hunt, the son of David Hunt of stage line fame, travelled with the circus on several occasions as a vendor of candy and refreshments. The Hunt family kept an elephant named Bolivar on their farm and utilized it for carrying loads of grain on its back. It frequently terrified horses on the highway.

Among the farms owned by the Hunt family is the property which later became the Ridgefield School for Boys and which is now owned by Mr. Francis D. Martin; the present home of Mr. A. C. deMacCarty which was formerly the residence of Eugene G. O'Neill; and the farm now owned and operated by Mr. Niton Houlberg.

Another circus pioneer was Lewis B. Titus who lived just over the State line in North Salem, and built the house that is now the home of Mr. Gifford Cochran. Van Amburgh, the famous lion tamer, tamed lions at the Titus homestead. In the basement of the house were rings in the stone paving where the animals were chained.

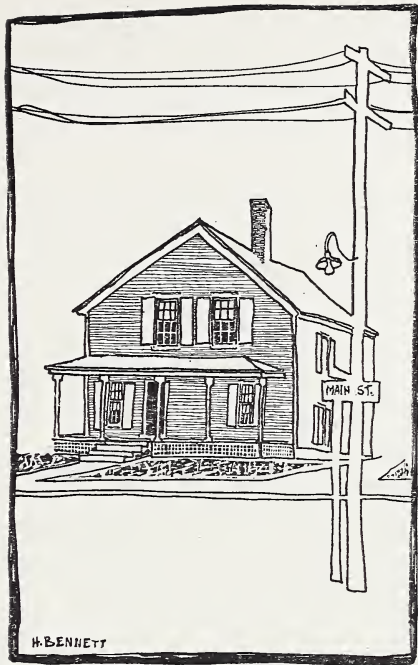


Figure 60

Chapter XI THE INDUSTRIAL EPOCH

The Change from Trade to Industry developed by gradual stages in Ridgefield as several of the trades which were practiced by the townspeople grew to more important proportions. With the inherent initiative of the Yankee, some of the tradesmen and craftsmen working at home or in small shops began to produce goods for neighboring areas in addition to the local trade. Shoemakers, for instance, practiced their trade from town to town in the adjacent area while maintaining their clients at home.

The change was a slow one, however, brought about in the period of years which followed the end of the Revolution, as the townspeople recovered from loss and deprivation, and gradually entered a period of stability that inevitably led to ambitious enterprise and the industrial era.

Reviewing the local trades and business enterprises of the first century of Ridgefield's existence, it is apparent that among the most prominent, as in any other community, were the

Mills for various purposes which were established in many districts of Ridgefield shortly after the settlement of the community. The first mills were grist mills and

Saw Mills which were strategically located on adequate waterways. Two or

more saw mills were operated from an early period in Scotland District. Ulysses Sunderland owned a saw mill in conjunction with his grist mill from about 1750. Later Hezekiah Scott operated a saw mill on Ledges Road. There were many others, most of which were operated by water power, and a few by other means.

A Treadmill was situated on Barlow Mountain Road on the premises of the Olmsted Scott homestead within sight of the North Salem Road intersection. It was operated by means of a pair of oxen hitched to the wheel. The foundations of the installation are still clearly discernable.

Grist Mills were vital to the life of the Proprietors, and the first to be established was constructed at the outlet of Lake Mamanasco by Daniel Sherwood, at the foot of Pond Road, in 1716.

The Mill Covenant made between the Proprietors and Sherwood in January 1716 continued in effect until 1779.

The first indication that a problem regarding the Sherwood mill existed, occurred when the Proprietors at a town meeting on 13 April 1761 appointed Samuel Olmsted, Samuel Smith and Stephen Smith

“ . . . to examine the records of Ridgefield Respecting y^e Grist Mill at Mamanascqua and the Covenant Relating thereto and Report their Opinion Respecting y^e same to a Meeting of y^e Town or Proprietors for further Determination Relating to sd Mill affair.”

The implication in the Town Record Book is that some discrepancy had occurred in the accounts of the mill, or in the services that were provided. On the other hand, the investigation may have resulted from the illness, later followed by the death, of Daniell Sherwood, Jr. He had succeeded his father as the town miller upon the latter's death in 1749. Possibly Daniell Sherwood, Jr. had no sons to operate the mill in his place, or his sons may have been either incapable or not inclined to continue the operation of the mill. Nothing further regarding the investigation has been found, and no reference to it appears in any of the land records for this property. Whatever the difficulty may have been, it was resolved for the time being. Daniell Sherwood, Jr. died on 17 May 1766.

However, by 1779 the mill property again reverted to the ownership of the Proprietors. The pronounced Tory sympathies of the Sherwood family may have brought about confiscation of the mill property, inasmuch as it constituted a public utility of the town. At a town meeting on 5 October 1779 a committee consisting of Samuel Olmsted, Stephen Smith, Timothy Keeler, Jr. and John Benedict was selected to sell or otherwise dispose of the mill and its water privileges. The committee executed a Mill Covenant with Benjamin Chapman of Salem, New York whereby in consideration of the same terms originally established with Sherwood, in addition to his payment of the sum of 3130 pounds and 10 shillings to the town in Continental currency, the town conveyed the Mill and its water privileges to him.



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

Fairfield Co Conn
Scale 1 2/3 Inches to the Mile.

Figure 161 Map of Ridgefield from Beers Atlas of 1867

Chapman agreed to "erect a good sufficient grist mill on the out lett of the sd Pond" and to "maintain the same and uphold it (or another in its place) always in good Rigg and order for grinding." On 27 December of the same year Chapman sold a one fourth share of the Mill to Joseph Stebbins of Ridgefield for 82 pounds 12 shillings and 6 pence and on 2 May 1781 he sold another one quarter share to Thomas Allyn Hayes of Ridgefield for 175 pounds 8 shillings New York money. On 25 September 1781 Stebbins and Hayes sold one quarter of their share of the mill to Elias Read of Norwalk for 380 pounds New York money. On 10 May 1784 Chapman sold one sixth share in the mill to Elias Read, now noted as being "of Ridgefield", and two sixth parts to John Chapman of Ridgefield. On the same date John Chapman conveyed his one third title to Elias Read by mortgage deed. A quit claim deed dated 13 November 1785 released John Chapman's one third part of the mill. For some reason the Grist Mill was destined to change hands constantly during the period that followed. On 28 March 1785 Read conveyed his two thirds share to Joseph Scofield of Stamford. On 24 November 1788 John Chapman conveyed to Elias Read the full right and title to his one third part of the mill. The previous year, 1787, Scofield had likewise transferred his two thirds share back to Read once more.

During the 19th Century the grist mill was owned and operated by a considerable number of people, including Joseph DeForest, Ezekiel Wilson, Thomas Hyatt, Theophilus Burt, Benjamin Smith, Joshua Burt, Nathan Dauchy, David Perry, Thomas and Abijah Hyatt, David Scott, Jonah Foster, Timothy and Lewis C. Hunt and John H. Wade. The present owner, the Estate of Mrs. Mary H. Solley, is the 37th owner of the property since the signing of the Mill Covenant between the Proprietors and Daniel Sherwood in 1716.

An interesting document related to the property is a bond in the amount of one hundred dollars arranged between Thomas and Abijah Hyatt with David Scott 3rd on 5 July 1817, whereby the latter conveyed to the Hyatts a one-fourth interest in the grist mill and stipulated that the Hyatts could not

" . . . at any time hereafter use or improve said Mill for the purpose of Grinding Grain of any kind, excepting Provender for Cattle or Swine, or drain the Water from the Pond known by the name of Mamanasco Pond, at any time, without special liberty first had and obtained of the said David (Scott) . . . "

Following the death of Jonah Foster, the General Assembly at Hartford granted permission at its session in May 1844 for the sale of the property. On 1 December 1849 Hezekiah Scott, the appointee of the Court of Probate, sold the Mill property to John Hall Wade of Ridgefield. It later passed through the hands of Nathan Scott, Epenetus Howe (Jr.) and William H. Ireland Howe of North Salem, who sold it in April 1865 to William J. Hoffman, Jr. of the same town. Hoffman converted the establishment into

A Paper Manufactory for the production of a rough quality wrapping pa-

per. Hoffman maintained three wagons that travelled constantly through the area collecting rags and old paper to be used for the manufacture of his product. The paper mill which he had established in Croton Falls burned and he moved to North Salem, where he operated another mill for the same purpose. This mill also burned and it was at this time that he purchased the Mamasasco grist mill. This most recent enterprise suffered the same fate as the previous ones. During one night in 1868, after the mill had been used for the manufacture of paper for about four years, the Mamasasco mill was partially destroyed by fire. The Manufactory had not been a successful enterprise even before the fire occurred and the property passed into other hands. The mill was repaired after the fire and continued in operation for a brief period before it was finally abandoned. The framework of the structure and some of the machinery can still be seen at the foot of Pond Road (*Figure 162*) According to Rev. Goodrich, a total of five grist mills were in operation in Ridgefield in 1799, and there were two fulling mills at the same time.

The Fulling Mill established by Hugh Cain in the years following the end of the Revolutionary War was located on the Norwalk River on the Topstone road, at the foot of Cain's Hill in Farmingville. In the September 29th 1794 issue of *The Farmer's Journal*, which was published in Danbury, appeared the advertisement that

"Hugh Cain, of Ridgefield, announces that he can full in the driest season, has now begun, and can continue to full, provided there should be no rain for six weeks to come. He makes all colours made in America (Scarlet excepted)."

One of the ledgers maintained by Cain during the years that he operated the mill is now owned by Mr. John White of West Lane. The volume provides interesting details about Cain's enterprise, and its relation to the inhabitants of the town.

Cain was succeeded in the operation of the mill by Elias N. and John S. Glover who expanded the enterprise to include the making of satinette, spinning of yarn and weaving of woolen cloth. They continued to operate the mill for many years. They later sold it to an English fuller named Henry F. Lawton.

The Clover Mill derived its name from the fact that clover tops were processed to extract seed, although its main function was the grinding of plaster for fertilizer and later for the grinding of corn into meal. It was located a short distance above Branchville Railroad Station between the mountains. Established by Bradley Beers, it was later operated by John Mallory and then George Abbott.

The Flour Mills operated by Joseph Taylor in the Limestone District were well patronized by the townspeople and it is of some interest that toll, instead of money, continued to be taken as in Ridgefield's first years.

A Carding Mill was operated by Ezra Smith in Limestone District on the Limestone River and another enterprise in the same area was the

Smith Mill operated by his great nephew, Samuel R. Smith, for the weaving of cloth and for the manufacture of axe handles.

The Lime Manufactory was established near Sharp Hill by Joel Gilbert at the beginning of Ridgefield's commercial period, and he operated it for many years in partnership with his son. Lime produced by the Gilberts was transported as far as Greenwich and Stamford as well as other nearby markets.

Other Lime Kilns in the town including one operated by William Selleck in Bennett's Farms district, where bricks were also produced. Two other kilns were established in Farmingville by William Lee and Phineas Chapman.

Plaster was ground by James Harvey Smith at the mill that was built on the site of the old Isaac Keeler mill at the outlet of Mamasasco Lake. Smith also operated a saw mill at this site.

Isaac Keeler's Grist Mill, which was burned by the British on their return from Tryon's raid on Danbury, is a subject of historical interest about which little has been previously published.

Isaac Keeler was born in Ridgefield in about 1715. He was the son of Joseph Keeler and the grandson of Samuel Keeler, one of the original Proprietors. In 1738 he married a cousin and settled in Ridgefield. On 30 March 1741 his father deeded to him in consideration of "love and affection" his portion of £320 and a tract of land including thirty-two acres on Mamasasco Hill, on which Isaac built his grist mill.

The title to this property is clearly defined since its first owners. The tract fell by lot to Samuel St. John during the division of property in the township among the original Proprietors. St. John exchanged it for other property with John Sturdevant between 1712 and 1721. It was acquired by Joseph Osburn on 12 March 1734 and he sold it to Joseph Keeler two weeks later.

Isaac Keeler died within a year after his mill was burned, between February and December 1778. The property was divided among his seven children, and the mill property was acquired first by Isaac Keeler, Jr. of North Salem who transferred it to his brother, Elijah, in April 1789. Elijah Keeler sold the property in 1796 to Noah Smith and it was in this interim that the Iron Works was constructed.

The Manufacture of Carriages was the first true industrial enterprise in the town. In 1800 Rev. Samuel G. Goodrich employed Jesse J. Skellinger to construct a coach for him. Skellinger had just arrived in the town and he was seeking employment at his trade of carriage maker. He set to work in Goodrich's barn on High Ridge Avenue, and he enlisted the assistance of a wheelwright and blacksmith named Thomas Hawley, to produce the iron

work for the vehicle. The carriage was completed in five months' time and it became the subject of considerable admiration and interest in the town.

Skellinger went on to work for a wagon maker named Elijah Hawley (1759-1850). The account book of "Elisha (sic) Hawley, carriage maker" for the period 1786 to 1800 is preserved in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Ressiguie & Olmstead was probably the first firm to produce carriages commercially in Ridgefield, and consisted of a partnership between Abijah Ressiguie and Chauncey Olmstead.

Ressiguie (1791-1887) was apprenticed to the carriage maker, John Watrous, at south Main Street in 1806 when he was only fifteen years of age. He had a natural bent for invention and Watrous encouraged him in his mechanical interests. Ressiguie contrived a number of labor-saving devices for his trade, and in his spare time he experimented with perpetual motion and other scientific enigmas.

After having served his apprenticeship, Ressiguie went on to establish his own business as a carriage-maker between 1810 and 1815. It was in this period that he formed a partnership with Olmstead, and the firm did a thriving local business. It was in the natural order of things that the partners would look elsewhere for greater markets and they began to produce and ship vehicles southward and westward. They supplied Orange County of New York State with hundreds of wagons of Ridgefield manufacture.

The firm's Account Book No. 2 for the period 1818 to 1825 was kept by Abijah Ressiguie in a school notebook and was prefaced by a page entitled "Prices of work for the (year) 1818" on which was listed

“painting chair body \$7 Runing work \$5—12.00
varnishing body one coat 1.25 and 1. for each coat after the first
varnishing chair runing 1.50
Painting one horse waggon plain 6. stripe the runing work 7.50
chair body 20\$ wheels 10\$ paint them 12\$ Bars 75cts to 1\$.
Shafts 5\$ to 4. Spokes 25 cts. Felloes 31 cts w. shafts 2\$
Waggon body swelled \$20 plain one \$15. painted and with
plain seats.
Woodwork and painting plain waggon 35\$. Bolsters for waggon 6.
Back axletree 75 cts. Front one 1\$. putting on back pannel \$2.
Whiffletrees 37 cts.
Putting on chair tops 14.00 making chair tops 3.00
Lining chair bodys 3\$
Waggon seats lined with cloth and lace with tops 40.00
Waggon seats lined with sheep skins & with tops 28.00

The styles produced by the firm were given such names as the Lafaett, the Yankee, and the Ressiguie Sulky. According to the accounts kept by Ressiguie, the firm produced 24 wagons of assorted types to order in 1818, 22 in 1820 and 21 in 1823.

Brush, Olmstead & Company was a later partnership formed for the purpose of manufacturing carriages for export. The partners were Platt Brush, Chauncey Olmstead, Czar Jones and Abijah Ressiguie. Presumably the date of the firm's founding was a short period after 1825, with the dissolution or re-organization of the firm of Ressiguie & Olmstead. Of the partners, Brush and Jones were woodworkers, while Ressiguie was a carriage-maker by trade. Among the well known tradesmen of the town who were employed in the manufactory or "the Big Shop", as it was popularly called, were the head blacksmith, Augustus Lyon, who headed a staff of other blacksmiths including William W. Seymour 2nd, and Eli Foote.

Jarvis Pugsley and Sylvester Smith were trimmers, Joel Benjamin was a painter, John F. Gilbert was a coach body builder, and Walter Quintard, Sereno S. Hurlbutt and William W. Seymour 1st were woodworkers.

The Big Shop in which the carriages were manufactured was situated on the site of the present Congregational Church at the corner of West Lane and Main Street. The second floor of the building was used for a meeting place where many local functions were held, and it was generally known as Jones' Hall. The architect and builder was Albin 'Boss' Jennings.

The manufactory produced light carriages to be sold in the southern States. One of the best markets for the vehicles was New Orleans and eventually the partners established a salesroom and office in that city.

The original partnership of Brush, Olmstead and Company continued until about 1875.

The Cabinet Shop which was established by Samuel Hawley and Rufus H. Pickett on the site of what later became the Bailey Inn was another important local industry. Every type of furniture of fine quality was produced. One of the firm's special products, which was extremely popular in the southern States to which it was exported, was a counting-house desk which was available in mahogany or cherry.

Pickett was an expert turner and carver and he excelled at work in mahogany.

The Rockwell Cabinet Shop operated by Thomas Rockwell on north Main Street in the present northern cottage of the Elms Inn was a successful enterprise but in no way competition for the firm of Pickett and Hawley. The building had been formerly the shop of Uriah Seymour, a shoemaker, before it was purchased by Rockwell in 1799. Later Francis A. Rockwell turned the building into a tin shop.

Ox-Carts were produced by Azariah Lee in a shop near his home on West Lane.

The Candlestick Factory was operated at first in the building which later became the Bailey Inn and then it was moved to a building which stood on the

site of the Sperry livery stable, now Young's Feed Store. Thomas Rockwell's two sons, Francis A. and John W. Rockwell, operated the factory as a partnership and produced a variety of brass and tin candlesticks, as well as hog scrapers and patent bed clothes clasps. On 16 December 1851 the United States Patent Office issued Letters Patent No. 8594, which was reissued as No. 297 on 27 February 1855, for an "Improvement in Candlesticks" which is illustrated in *Figure 56* from the published specifications. The invention consisted in the employment in candlesticks of elastic packing attached to the standard or slide in the candlestick whereby the sliding portion is supported and prevents the leaking of grease and by which means a shorter sliding socket may be used than heretofore. D represents the piece of cork or other elastic material which is supported between the two metal plates E E' by means of a bolt or rod F passing directly through them. Metallic rims project from the plates and the rim of the top plate E serves as a receptacle for the candle while the bottom protects the packing from burning or injury. The rim of the bottom plate E' fits over the edge of the hollow standard B or to a bar or spring in the candlestick and is secured by solder. In this manner the cork is held in a permanent position on the standard bar or spring and is controlled by them, so that the candle may be entirely consumed. Application for the patent was made by John W. Rockwell, his brother's assignee, and was witnessed by Hiram K. Scott and George W. Gorham.

Minor products of the factory including augers, bits, and gimlets, are described on the firm's price list shown in *Figure 57*.

Among the employees were Hepsey Northrop, Susan Benjamin, Emily Olmstead, Patrick Lannon, John Brophy, and William H. Gilbert.

The Iron Foundry in Florida District was owned and operated by Thomas Couch and Ebenezer Burr Sanford and was established during the first quarter of the 19th Century. Iron was carted from Norwalk to be cast and moulded into plowshares, hoes, railroad frogs, and ironwork for railroad cars, sleigh shoes and cogs, shafting and gearing for mills. In its time this was the only iron foundry west of the Hudson River and east of New Haven. The woodwork for the plows was turned out by Couch on a lathe, of which he was a skillful operator. In about 1820 Couch produced a cannon cast in iron which measured two and a half feet long and which had a bore of one and one half inches. Couch constructed a carriage for it and mounted it on carriage wheels, and it was successfully fired for local celebrations. During the Civil War it was fired to signalize victories of the Union Army. Edward Williams was employed as a woodworker at the Foundry.

Tanning was one of the important local enterprises of the early 19th Century and was carried on at the Tan yards in Titicus on the left bank of the Titicus River, and it continued to operate successfully for many years until the 1890's. The business was founded by Jabez Mix Gilbert. Upon his death he was succeeded by his son, Rev. Elias Gilbert, who later sold the business at auction to

David H. Valden. The business expanded under this new management and at one time Valden had over one hundred vats in operation. Farmers and butchers of the town and of the surrounding area provided the tannery with hides of steers and cows. The hides were first soaked in vats of fresh water to remove the salt with which the farmers preserved them. They were then fleshed, immersed in lime water to remove the hair, followed by the milling process. Then for six days the hides were placed in the bait. After remilling for a final cleaning, the hides were soaked for two months in oak bark liquor to tan them, then dried and split and finished. Split and grain leather was produced in Titicus and distributed to outlets throughout the country. During the Civil War one of the main markets was Chicago.

The currying shop of the Titicus tan yards is now the home of Mr. Vincent Caponera and the bark mill is located just above it on the roadside.

Luther Dauchy, another Ridgefield tanner, is not listed among the personnel employed by Gilbert and he probably operated his own tan yards during the same period.

Another tannery may have existed at an earlier date, for Rev. Samuel G. Goodrich in his description of Ridgefield in 1799 stated that

“There is a good Tan works in this town in which about 50 Vats are occupied, it has however been the custom for almost all of the farmers to tan their own leather and do many other parts of mecanichal business . . .”

A tannery was operated by Lewis Smith, father of William LeRoy Smith, on North Street at one time.

Hat Shops had their beginnings as early as the 1790's, for Goodrich stated that in the year 1799

“There is also a hatting manufactory in which 5 or 6 workmen are employed to good advantage; it furnishes the inhabitants with hats and vends abroad work to a handsom amount . . .”

One of the earliest of the Ridgefield hatters was Epenetus Howe who lived at the Titicus cross-roads in the house now owned by Mr. Ernest Conti. One of the hats which he made for a member of the Field family in Dingle Ridge is owned by his direct descendant, Mrs. Frederick E. Nelson of North Salem.

Other hatting shops existed in various parts of the town, including the shop of Samuel Olmstead in Titicus, which he maintained in the house which is now owned by Mr. Fred Williams. He employed others to work for him, including Hiram Bouton and Lockwood Gray. He specialized in the production of soft hats, a type which was not made at any of the other Ridgefield shops.

Jones, Slawson and Betts established the largest of the Ridgefield hat shops on Catoonah Street where a fine napped hat was produced which was not quite of the quality of the Knox hat. Another shop was owned by George Sears and located at the house near the brook on Barry Avenue where a

successful business in stiff napped hats was carried on. Once a week the hats produced by Sears were brought to Danbury by wagon for coloring and finishing and distributed to the Sutton factory in Mill Plain, for which most of them were made. Other hat shops of lesser size were owned by Burr Keeler on south Main Street and by Kellogg Reed and Zalmon Main on Wooster Street.

Harness Makers in the town included William Crocker in the first several decades of the 19th Century and George Keeler. Crocker was probably employed by Ressiguie & Olmstead and later by the Big Shop, and Keeler was among the Big Shop's employees. He also maintained his own shop on Main Street near the Keeler Tavern.

Among the best known of the harness makers, although of a much later period, was Linus O. Northrop, who operated a shop behind his home on Wilton Road West until his death in 1914.

Members of the Scott families in Scotland District were excellent harness makers during the 19th Century and they produced a considerable amount of fine work in this trade.

The Ridgefield Shirt Factory was operated in one portion of the Big Shop during a later period by D. Smith Sholes and Edward H. Smith, and the product bore the Ridgefield brand name. Begun in the 1870's, the factory thrived and had several locations, including the old Corner Store opposite the Congregational Church and the site of the present Fire House. Colored shirts were a specialty of the factory, which employed as many as sixty persons at one time. The chief market was New York City.

Silversmiths in Ridgefield included Simon Couch and Isaac Lewis who were employed by Charles Grumman, the proprietor of a silver plating establishment on south Main Street. Grumman specialized in the plating of hardware for harnesses and carriages produced elsewhere in Ridgefield in the first quarter of the 19th Century. Lewis came to Ridgefield from Shelton and was a skilled craftsman. He also produced silver spoons, in addition to other items of silver plating.

James Scott, Jr. of Scotland District and Gould Smith were also silversmiths during the early part of the 19th Century. Scott specialized in silver spoons and the late J. Willis Wade, a descendant, preserved for many years the Scott spoon mold. Examples of spoons made by Lewis and by Scott are extant in the town at the present time. Smith may have operated his plating business at the Pickett Shop on Market Street.

Breweries did not exist in Ridgefield at the close of the 18th Century, according to Rev. Goodrich. He stated that even the general custom which had existed formerly of making small beer for family use was almost entirely neglected in 1800 "except for the sake of the Lees to make bread." However, during the 19th Century

Distilleries were operated in several sections of the town. Hull Keeler owned a distillery in Limestone where he produced cider brandy. He purchased Harry Gilbert's grist mill near his home, where grain of all types was ground and where the specialty was buckwheat flour. Hezekiah Scott operated a distillery in Scotland District in Ledges Road, in addition to his saw mill.

A **Carpet-weaving Shop** was maintained by William Sherwood, son of Benjamin Sherwood, at his home on Main Street at the southeast corner of Governor Street opposite the Episcopal Church. He obtained three patents for improvements on carpet looms, two of them in 1830 and another in 1846. He moved to Chicago in 1850 and moved again to Beloit, Wisconsin in 1854. Three years later, in 1857, he patented a self-acting 'Lawn and Farm Gate' which was awarded a premium at the United States Fair in Chicago in 1859.

Coopers included the names of Epenetus Webb, Ebenezer Smith, Walter Hawley, William Cargin, Enoch Hawley and Jesse Boughton in 1820. According to Goodrich, at the end of the 18th Century the woodlands in the town and vicinity provided enough lumber for local needs, including the making of casks and tubs. A small quantity was exported in the form of heading staves and hoops.

Shoemaking was another of the industries which existed in Ridgefield in the 1790's, according to Rev. Goodrich, who stated that

"There are likewise two shoe and boot manufactories which will probably send abroad 5,000 pair of shoes and boots, but the materials they work are chiefly from New York or abroad . . ."

According to the 1820 Census, forty shoemakers were working at their trade in the town at that date. At one period there were twenty shoemakers on West Lane at the same time, working in the home.

One shoemaker shop was maintained by members of the Benedict family in the Benedict home now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Wohlforth on Rockwell Road. The shop was annexed to the dwelling, and many of the appliances of the trade remain in the house.

Strangely enough, no members of the Lounsbury family were listed in the 1820 Census as shoemakers, yet a number of them followed the trade with considerable success. Nathan Lounsbury of Farmingville made shoes for sale in New York. A shoe repair business was maintained by Charles Mead on Main Street in a building which was then situated in the present Post Office Block. The building was most recently remembered as the Lorna Doone Tea Room. It had originally been situated on North Street where Josiah Smith, who died in 1853, used it as his tannery office and curry house. Samuel Gilbert moved the building to the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets where it was used as a tailor shop by Joel L. Rockwell. Later William Lounsbury used the building as a shoe manufactory before he moved his business to Bridgeport. There he established a large and successful shoe factory under the firm name of William Lounsbury & Co. The old building was used as a

grocery store by Henry Mead for almost a quarter of a century, then it was utilized for various other purposes, including George Clark's toy shop, the office of Hiram K. Scott, Jr., then as a meat market, later as the A & P Store, and finally as the Lorna Doone Tea Room.

Minerals Found in Ridgefield are of infinite variety and during the 19th Century there were a number of quarries in operation in various sections of the town. Gold was discovered in several localities in Ridgefield, but never in sufficient quantity to warrant mining operations. Perhaps the best known discovery of gold was the "gold mine" of Abijah N. Fillow on the hill east of Branchville Station.

In 1878 James Dwight Dana, professor of geology at Yale University, accompanied by several others from Yale, visited Branchville to collect specimens of some of the rare minerals to be found in that locality. Professor Dana visited the Fillow mine but found it insufficient in production to warrant commercial operation.

On the same visit Dana collected samples of uraninite which is defined by Sohn as

"Also called Pitchblende. Luster pitch-like, sub-metallic, dull. Hardness 5.5. Specific gravity 9 to 9.7. Opaque. Color pitch-black. Streak olive green to brownish black. Conchoidal fracture. Brittle. Crystallizes in the isometric system. Crystals are rare. Usually found massive or botryoidal. Occurs in pegmatite and in veins. Associated with silver, lead, copper, minerals . . . Used as a commercial source of radium and uranium. Seven hundred and fifty tons of ore may yield one gram of radium salt. Five tons of uranium salts may be needed to produce one gram of radium. Its name is derived from its chemical composition."

According to Hilldebrand and Lundell's *Applied Inorganic Analysis* which was published in the 1870's,

"Uranite is found in such places as Latvia . . . and in Branchville, where it occurs in brilliant octahedrons."

Minerals found in Ridgefield include dolomite (used for building stone and as source of magnesium), forsterite, gold, hornblends, iron ore, muscovite, nacrite, orthoclase (used in porcelain manufacture), quartz, serpentine, and talc.

The Ridgefield Pegmatite Mine was extremely well known and productive in the 19th Century. It is located 1.8 miles from the traffic light and it is at the end of a dirt trail about one quarter mile beyond the residence of Mr. Thomas Walsh. It may be approached from Ramapoo Road off Barry Avenue (Route 102). Rock collectors still visit the area to find samples of beryl, apatite, platy lepidolite, quartz crystals in vugs of pegmatite, rose and smoky quartz, columbite, biotite, and manganapatite.

The Titicus Mica Quarry was in operation during a brief period in the

area off Barrack Hill Road. The approaches to the quarry have been overgrown for many years.

Stone Quarries were worked in Ridgefield by a large number of laborers at various times under the direction of Philo Bates. Among other enterprises, the stone used for the construction of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Norwalk was quarried in Ridgefield.

Mica Quarries were operated in various districts of the town in the 19th Century, because Ridgefield proved to be a fertile area for the mineral. Mica includes other minerals such as biotite, lepidolite, and muscovite but they all have the same characteristic structure in that they are hydrous silicates which may be split into very thin sheets which are used in electric insulation, for fireproof materials and as a lubricant. One of the most prominent mica quarries that was operated successfully and on a large scale during the second half of the 19th Century was located on the estate of the late Mr. Seth Low Pierpont.

The Branchville Mica Quarry was of considerable importance for its production of the very valuable isinglas and asbestos in wartime. There have been a number of quarries in the section which have been productive during various periods. Late in the 19th Century the same quarries were exploited again by such firms as the Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company and the Silex Mills who ground the quartz in the abandoned quarries into powder to be used in paints and for other uses.

Minerals Produced in Branchville include albite, amblygonite, apatite (used for gems and for fertilizer), autunite, beryl (source of beryllium), some forms used as gems, (biotite, bismuth, used in medicine, inks, glass, low fusing alloys), calcite (source of mortar and lime), chabazite, chloropana, cleavelandite, columbite (source of columbium and tantalum), cymatolite, cyrtolite, demourite, dickinsonite, eosporite, eucryptite, fairfieldite, feldspar, fillowite (named after A. N. Fillow of Branchville who first worked the deposit), garnet, gummite, heulandite, hornblende, hureaulite, killinite, kunzite, lithiophilite (used for lithium salts), manganapatite, manganocolumbite, margarodite, mica, microcline, microlite, montmorillonite, muscovite, natrophilite, orthoclase, perthite, plagioclase, purpurite, pyrite, pyroxene, quartz, rose quartz, smoky quartz, reddingite, rhodochrosite, sphalerite, spodumene, staurolite, stillbite, torbernite, tourmaline, triplite, triploidite, uraconite, uraninite, vivianite.

The Ridgefield Agricultural Society sponsored an Annual Fair and Cattle Show in Ridgefield which was a major annual event from 1858 until 1881. It was held on the Fair Grounds, which were situated on Wilton Road West at approximately opposite Olmstead Lane. When the Annual Fair was first organized it was a one-day event held at the corner of Main and Gilbert

Streets. Later it was held on Governor Street. Buildings to house the event were finally erected and the Fair was held at the Wilton Road site until it was discontinued in 1881. The structures were then dismantled and the materials used to construct the Sperry Garage on Catoonah Street. The usual fruit, grain and poultry exhibits were featured as well as a cattle show with working oxen, milch cows, heifers, fattened cattle and steers, and there was a trotting race which brought many visitors. Commercial exhibits of household appliances, clothing, and many other items took space with displays of agricultural equipment (*Figure 59*).

Catoonah Building Association of Ridgefield in 1859 was under the direction of Russell B. Perry as president and Hiram K. Scott as secretary. One share of the capital stock made out to Zalmon S. Main dated 29 July 1859 specified that it was equivalent to one hundred dollars, the sum total of which had been paid.

Masonic Hall was built on a tract of land measuring fifty-two feet deep and twenty-five feet wide on Main Street, which was deeded to the Lodge by Isaac Olmstead 3rd for the consideration of twenty dollars. Olmstead had been one of the charter members of the organization.

On 5 October 1835 the town voted to purchase the 44 shares of interest in the Masonic Hall that were held by Walter and Keeler Dauchy, and all other shares that might be obtained, for the amount of two hundred fifty dollars.

On 19 August 1876 the town voted to quit-claim any interest in the building and property to the Masonic Society for the consideration of one hundred dollars.

Masonic Hall was one of the buildings destroyed in the Great Fire of 1895.

“View From East Ridge” was a perspective drawing made in 1853 by Charles Kelsey, a vacationing artist who was staying at the Keeler Tavern. The skillful drawing was reproduced commercially and many copies were sold in Ridgefield. The print was available in black and white, tinted in light blue, and tinted in green. The drawing depicted the town of Ridgefield in topographical perspective from a point on the southern end of East Ridge. All of the important landmarks of the town are clearly visible, (*Figure 58*).

The First Soda Fountain in Ridgefield was installed by Hiram K. Scott in the drug store which he established in 1853. The store was a variety store where drugs, toiletries, hardware and other items were sold, prescriptions were filled, and where the post office was located. Scott was a notable figure in his time, having served for 28 years as postmaster, 37 years as town clerk, as judge of probate for 39 years, and local druggist for over half a century. For eight years the store included Ridgefield’s first bank as part of its services.

Scott’s store was located in a wooden frame building on the site of the

present H. P. Bissell Company. During the period following the Civil War Scott installed what may be considered to have been the first soda fountain, from which he dispensed root beer in stone bottles.

Scott sold the store to Harvey P. Bissell in 1895, four months before it was destroyed by the Great Fire. The present structure was built on the same location and Bissell reopened the drug store under his own name in 1896. A feature of the new store was a soda fountain with ice cream. The business was sold in 1928 by Mr. Bissell to his partner, James C. Kelley. Later Mr. Edgar C. Rapp became Kelley's partner. It is now owned and operated by Mrs. Cornelius S. Lee, Jr.

Elijah Hawley, the carriage maker, was the son of Thomas Hawley 2nd and Keziah Scribner Hawley. He was born on 28 January 1783 and he died at the age of eighty-six in 1869. His grandfather was the Rev. Thomas Hawley, the first Congregational minister who came to Ridgefield soon after its settlement. Elijah built the large dwelling on Main Street at the corner of Branchville Road. It is now the residence of Miss Emily Buch, who purchased it in 1932. Hawley served the town as Selectman. His brother was

William Hawley (1785-1863) who was a partner for many years with Lt. Joshua King in the operation of the store which was known as King & Dole. For more than forty years Hawley was the leading merchant in the community. On 24 December 1807 he married Catherine, the daughter of Lt. King and for the greater part of his life he made his home in the house on Main Street on the west side of the old churchyard, which is better known as the Egelston residence. Frances Neill Hawley Egelston, the youngest of his eleven children, maintained her residence in the ancestral home for many years.

Jesse Smith Bradley, Sr. (1782-1833), the coach maker, was the eighth and youngest son of Colonel Philip Burr Bradley. Jesse S. Bradley, Sr. married the daughter of Dr. Amos Baker.

The Glenburgh Mills and Chemical Works were owned and operated by Dr. Nehemiah Perry, Sr. of Ridgefield during the Civil War period and the decades that followed. He was succeeded by his son, Samuel Perry, who continued the mill after the founder's death. The mill was situated in Georgetown in a stone building four stories high.

Dr. Perry produced a variety of wares in the mill, including ground pure spices, shoe polishes, dyes, non-explosive burning fluid and medicines. He compounded and concocted many remedies which he produced in the mill and made available to the public. Among these were a cough remedy, substitute tobacco, liniments and fever powders as well as many others.

Dr. Perry's Ridgefield residence on south Main Street was known as Hope Cottage. It later became the property of Mr. and Mrs. T. Gaillard Thomas and is now owned by Mr. Joseph H. Donnelly.

The First Ridgefield Band was organized in 1838 with three bugles, three trumpets, five clarinets, three trombones, two French horns, an ophecleide and a snare drum. The leader was William Grumman and the director was Richard Dunning of Wilton, who instructed the members, played the bugle and composed music. The band played in neighboring towns and travelled as far as Stamford.

In 1848 the band presented a minstrel show, with the financial assistance of Joshua I. King. Additional instruments were added to the band a few years later.

In 1861 seven members of the band enlisted as musicians in the army. The band reorganized in 1874 under the leadership of Aaron G. H. Hurlbutt. In 1880 a band room was acquired on Bailey Avenue and during this period the band became very active and successful.

In 1901 the band was re-established once more as the Oreneca Band and continued in existence to the end of World War I.

The American Flag Company was formed on 5 July 1851 by Judson Hawley and Captain Aaron G. Higgins, the uncle of Sereno S. Hurlbutt. After his retirement from a career at sea, he settled in Ridgefield and operated a small store on part of the Hurlbutt property. According to the subscription list of the company, the subscribers agreed to pay to Lewis H. Bailey sums ranging from one to three dollars to defray the expense of an American flag which was to be jointly and proportionately owned by said subscribers and which was to be displayed at a site selected by mutual agreement. The cost for the flag, rope, mast and other expenses was \$28.63 and the amount collected by subscription was thirty-three dollars. The flag, which measured ten by fourteen feet, was erected on a mast placed on a large sycamore tree in front of the residence of Francis A. Rockwell. It was later removed to a flag-pole on the barn of

Hurlbutt's Market, which was established at the corner of Main and Market Streets by David Hurlbutt (1801-1858) during the first half of the 19th Century. Hurlbutt was by training a hatter and later became a butcher. He built his market on property purchased from Joshua I. King, who was a close friend. Hurlbutt first built the homestead, which is now the residence of Mrs. Van Allen Shields, at the corner of Main and Market Streets. Then he built his market on the premises some three or four rods removed from Main Street. Later on Hurlbutt was one of the founders of

The Ice Business which was owned and operated by Hurlbutt in partnership with Joshua I. King, Rufus H. Pickett, Henry Smith 2nd, Judson Hawley, Irad Hawley, and Samuel Lobdell. Hurlbutt dammed up the brook on the easterly side of Market Street and he cut ice from the pond created by the flooding of the brook. Hurlbutt died on 20 November 1858 from a wound he received in the head from the horn of a struggling cow he was

about to butcher. Even before his death the market had been taken over by his son,

Sereno Stuart Hurlbutt (1825-1904), who had attended the private school at the former Goodrich residence on High Ridge, which was then taught by Hugh S. Banks. Later young Hurlbutt attended the school taught by Samuel Sidney St. John. He was apprenticed in the carpentry trade under Albin Jennings and at one time was a partner in the carriage manufactory firm of Brush, Olmstead & Co. Later Sereno Hurlbutt became a clerk in the Rockwell candlestick factory. He served Ridgefield as Collector of Taxes from 1885 until his death.

Among other enterprises in the community during its industrial period must be included

The First Lumber Yard in Ridgefield which was owned and operated by Keeler Dauchy (1801-1887), the son of Jacob Dauchy II. He lived on the site of the present rectory of St. Stephen's Church, which was formerly situated close to the sidewalk.

Dauchy kept a store near the present Gristede's Market and during the same period he established the first lumber yard. The lumber was brought to South Norwalk in boats, then carted by teams to Ridgefield since the Branch of the railroad was not built until 1870.

Dauchy's store was moved to Catoonah Street on the corner opposite the Methodist Church where it was used as a dwelling for many years, until it was removed by Ernest Scott to make room for a more modern building. The house was taken down in sections and rebuilt on its present location near the Ivy Hill railroad crossing, where it later became the home of Benjamin F. Keeler.

The First Bookseller in the town, Charles Wesley Slawson (1833- ?) lived on North Street on what was later the main portion of Stonecrest Farm. He farmed the land which had previously belonged to his father, Lewis Slawson, who was by trade a cooper of great skill. Charles Wesley Slawson was distinguished by a ruddy countenance and long beard and he supplemented the needs of his farm by selling books to the inhabitants.

The Titicus Store, which has continued in constant operation as a general store for residents of the Titicus District for more than a century, was first established by Samuel S. Olmstead who served as Selectman in 1839 and 1840 and later as Town Treasurer. In 1856 he sold the store to Hiram Olmstead Nash (1811-1867), a tanner, shoemaker and farmer by trade, who lived on North Salem Road in the house which was later owned successively in recent years by the late Thomas Boyd, and Mr. Ted Shane. The house had been built by Olmstead, who had exchanged this property for H. O. Nash's farm on North Street. Hiram O. Nash later operated the store in partnership with his son, John Dempster Nash, who became the first postmaster of Titicus District. The store continues in operation under the ownership of Mr. Max Seeman.

The Confederate Bell on the front lawn of the Community Center was originally set on a pedestal in the park at the rear of the same premises by the former owner, Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury.

The bell was cast in 1845 by the Buckeye Brass Foundry of Cincinnati, Ohio, according to an inscription which appears upon it. The bell was collected by the Confederates during the Civil War with other scrap metal to be used for casting into a cannon. The collection of scrap metal was captured by Colonel Alexander Warner, the commander of a Connecticut unit, and at the time the bell bore a painted inscription "This bell is to be melted into a cannon—may it kill a thousand Yankees!"

Colonel Warner was intrigued by the bell and purchased it from the Federal military authorities and shipped it to his home in Connecticut. Later he presented it to Governor Lounsbury.

The bell was rung on the occasion of the signing of the armistice at the end of World War I, and it was rung again in September 1945 at the conclusion of hostilities of World War II. (*Figure 61*).



Figure 69 Tap Room of Keeler Tavern

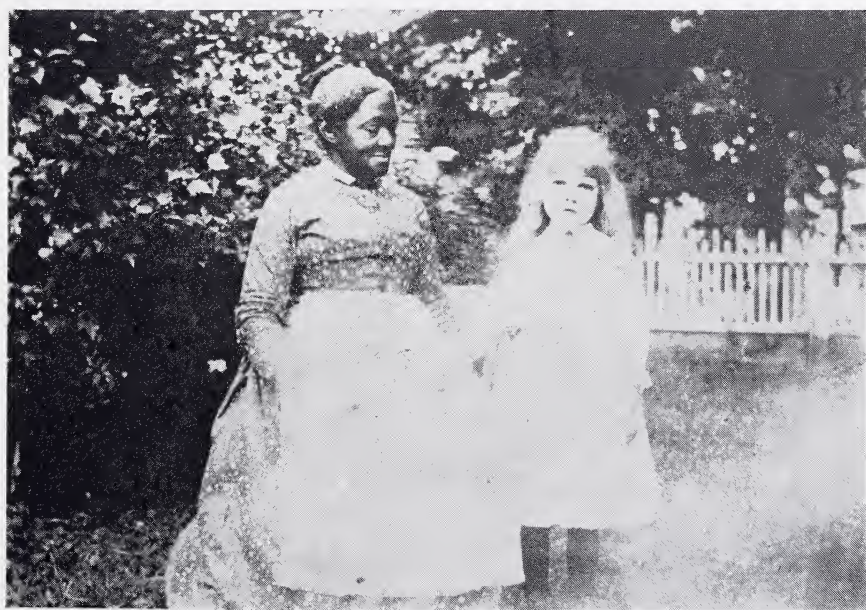


Figure 71 The late Miss Anna Ressiguie with Phyllis Dubois



Figure 72 Captain Nehemiah Keeler Tavern in Ridgebury
(Now home of Dr. Florence Powdermaker)



Figure 73 Home of Dr. and Mrs. Robert O. Dubois before restoration

GIDEON GRANGER, *POST-MASTER-GENERAL*

OF THE

United States of America,

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, *GREETING:*

Know Ye, That confiding in the Integrity, Ability and Punctuality of Timothy Keeler, Esq. of Ridgefield in the State of Connecticut — I Do Appoint him a Deputy Post-Master, and authorize him to execute the Duties of that Office at Ridgefield aforesaid — according to the Laws of the United States, and such Regulations conformable thereto, as he shall receive from me: **To Hold** the said Office of Deputy Post-Master, with all the Powers, Privileges and Emoluments to the same belonging, during the Pleasure of the Post-Master-General of the United States, for the Time being.

In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my Hand, and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed, at Washington City, the *third* — day of *May* — in the year of our Lord one Thousand eight Hundred and *Five*, and of the Independence of the United States the *Twenty seventh* —

Gideon Granger

Figure 74 Postmaster's Commission issued to Timothy Keeler, Jr. in 1805



Figure 76

Home of Miss Ann Smith on Catoonah Street. Small annex at left was formerly the post office

The following persons are indebted for letters

July 23, 1812	Saml Williams	\$0.12 1/2	Samuel Stillins	- - -	16		
Oct 16, 1812	Shaddis Seymour	X 17	23 Saml Stillins for Down	X 15			
March 5, 1814	Philetus Philips	- X 10	July 20, 1814	Saml Stillins	- - -	18 1/2	
Aug 27	Dennis Hull	- X 10	July 20	to part	- - -	19	
Sept 8	Josiah Smith	- 17	July 20	Mary	- - -	18 1/2	
18	Norick Seymour	X 12 1/2	July 20	Saml Stillins	- - -	X 18 1/2	
18	Norick Seymour	X 12 1/2	July 17	Southam Stillins	- - -	X 16	
Oct 3	Shaddis Scott	- X 12 1/2	" 21	Henry Lee	- - -	16	
Nov 23	Walter Smith	- 10	" 21	House	- - -	X 37	
Dec 3	Abraham Lockwood	X 12 1/2	March 7	Samson Lewis	- - -	25 1/2	
6	Elijah Kuler	- 10	" 14	Calab Groomon	- - -	X 18 1/2	
21	Lewis Hoyt	- 10	" 21	Burman & Kuler 2 nd	- - -	25 1/2	
Feb 16, 1815	Shaddis Obmsted	X 15	" 21	Black & Bush	- - -	X 10	
Jan 28	Lewis Obmsted	- X 12 1/2	Apr 22	Isaac Obmsted	- - -	X 25 1/2	
Feb 27	Saml Obmsted	- X 15	March 21	Thomas W. G. G. G.	- - -	15	
April 8	Jos Scott for Mahat. Sim	X 25 1/2	30	Alba Gilbert	- - -	12 1/2	
22	Jos Harris	- X 15		Cyra Bennett	- - -	19 1/2	
May 6	Samuel Obmsted	X 16		Jos Smith & John	- - -	25	
11	Lewis Perry	- - -	May 2	David Perry	- - -	17	
23	Williams Smith	- 12	22	James Kuler	- - -	10	
25	Chauncy Bouton	- 15		Isaac Lewis	- - -	X 17	
27	Calab Groomon	- 30		Nick & Mash	- - -	X 12 1/2	
8	Walter Smith	- part X 6		Nick & Mash	- - -	X 12 1/2	
22	Cyra Smith 2 nd part	X 30	June 3	Conrad	- - -	X 10	
Shaddis Scott	- - -	X 30	10	Isaac Lewis	- - -	18 1/2	
July 8	Nick Perry	- - X 18 1/2	20	Jos & Bradley	- - -	X 12 1/2	
Shaddis Kuler for paper	X 65		27	Jos Smith & Esq	- - -	X 18 1/2	
Aug 2	Jos Smith Esq	- X 18 1/2		Nathan Danby	- - -	X 11	
John Mills	- to part X 17		July 6	Nathan Danby	- - -	X 30	
24	Calab Groomon	- 12	July 6	Jos & Bradley	- - -	18 1/2	
Jos Bouton & Coles	- 12 1/2			Calab Groomon	- - -	10	
Sept 9	Nathan Danby	- X 15		Daniel Bouton (Cooper)	- - -	X 12 1/2	
16	Calab Groomon	- 15		13	Josiah Bennett	- - -	X 12 1/2
Nick & Mash	- X 26 1/2			Aug 8	Samson Kuler 2 nd	- - -	10
Sept 13	Thomas Scott	X 25 1/2		17	Calab Groomon	- - -	X 18 1/2
Oct 16	Calab Smith	- X 25 1/2			Samson Kuler	- - -	X 10
Nov 11	Thomas Scott to part	12 1/2			Wm. Hawley	- - -	X 10
18	Chauncy Obmsted	X 25 1/2					
Thomas Scott	- X 25 1/2						
30	Calab Hawley to part	X 4					

Figure 75 Post Office Record of 1812 Indebtedness for Letters



CHARLES A. WICKLIFFE,

POSTMASTER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

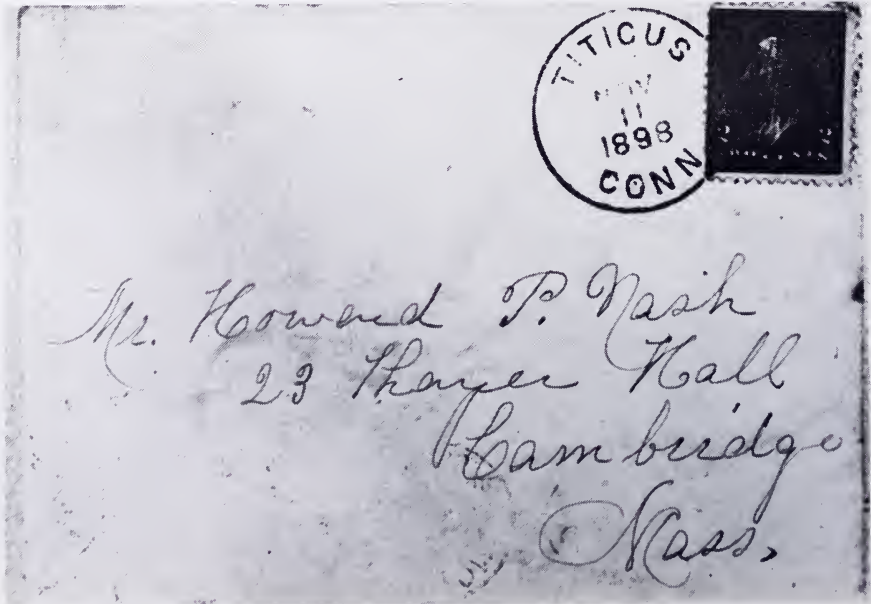
Whereas, I on the 22nd day of July 1841, David Scott was appointed Postmaster at Scott's Ridge in the County of Fairfield, State of Connecticut and whereas he did on the 2nd day of August 1841, execute a Bond, and has taken the Oath of Office, as required by law

NOW, KNOW YE, That, confiding in the integrity, ability, and punctuality of the said David Scott I do commission him a POSTMASTER, authorized to execute the duties of that office at Scott's Ridge aforesaid, according to the LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES, and the Regulations of the Post Office Department: TO HOLD the said office of POSTMASTER, with all the powers, privileges, and emoluments to the same belonging, during the pleasure of the Postmaster General of the United States.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the Post Office Department to be affixed, at Washington City, the 6th day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, and of the Independence of the United States the Fifty-sixth.

C. Wickliffe

Figure 77 Postmaster's Commission issued to David Scott 3rd for Scotland District in 1841



Mr. Howard P. Nash
23 Thayer Hall
Cambridge
Mass.

Figure 78 Titicus District Postmark

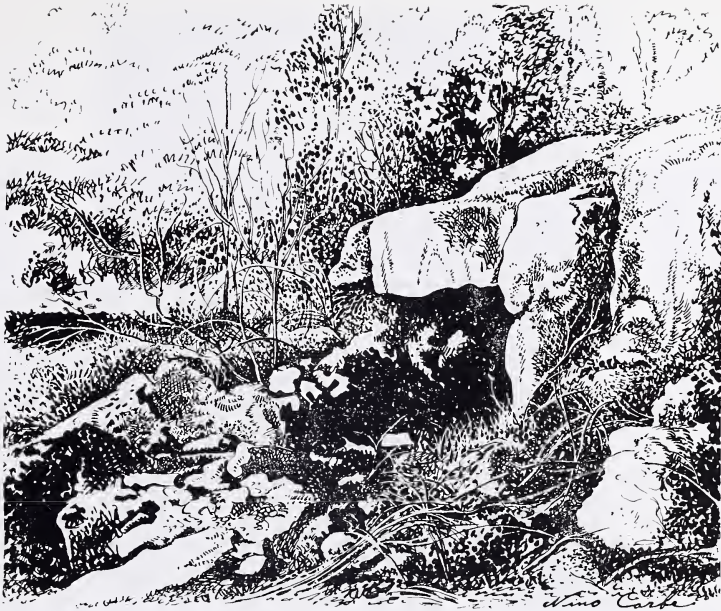


Figure 80 Sarah Bishop's Cave

New York Nov 26
1856

O Dear Sir,

I have sent by Express,
this day, 2 copies of my new work,
Recollections of a Lifetime - in 2 vols.
One is for you, which please accept;
the other is for John King, which
please deliver.

You will find a large number of details
about Polygamy & the people, but I
fear it if you discover any errors,
be so kind as to point them out to me.

The publishers desire one copy,
that if some one can be found, who will
take 25 copies, or upwards, they will
be sent at 1/2 a copy (for London)
the retail price being 1/3. Their address
is Mellor, Orton & Whalley, 25
Paul Row, Street York.

My best wishes to your family.
A. D. G. only
S. G. Goodrich

Figure 81 Letter from S. G. Goodrich to Abijah Ressiguie dated 26 Nov. 1856



Figure 82 Rev. Samuel Griswold Goodrich



Figure 84 Portrait of Fanny Crosby

in the capacity of Justice
Page - 1

A Statistical account of Ridgefield
 drawn up by the Rev. Samuel Goodrich, from
 materials furnished by a number of his parish-
 ioners. - New-bern, November 1800.

The Town of Ridgefield was located in a corner of the
 Inhabitants of the Towns of Milford and Norwich by the general Assembly
 of the State of Connecticut the 13th of May, D. 1745. - to purchase a piece
 of land from the year 1744 and is called the old settlement. The north
 east part of the present township containing 20000 acres was
 called the New Settlement and was obtained as a grant or patent from the Gen-
 eral Assembly the 21st of June, A. 1731. The first settlement was purchased
 of the Natives at Sunday times. The first purchase was made in 1708 the
 recommendation of 2000 - Gatoenah (the father). Mogaocomich-
 hawhamawore. Natancha, and Casawehin. One purchase was
 made for 2000 - A. 1710 of Oroncha, chief of the
 A. 1721 of S. C. of Saccore, Sabie, Saranuncha. One the 21st of June
 A. 1729 of Apphornecker, Mose, Sam, and Ammon. One on the 10th of
 Dec. 1719 of the pepper. Mchias, Seeb, Sashoy, Keshucanpo, Saganashoy,
 Mawachin, Mawcati and captain Jacob. One 28th of Feb. 1725 of
 for S. W. B. of Sapanneck, Captain. Memon, Cicca, Old Mose and
 young Mose. One 14th of Dec. 1729 for S. B. S. of Betty, Seeb, Sashoy
 and Mawquacose; and lastly, one on the 6th day of Dec. 1744
 of Sapanneck and his sons for a valuable farm viz of Sapanneck,
 Mose, Jones, Sashoy and Beans.

The consequences of the exchange made by this State with the State
 of New York in 1788 for part of their land and a considerable part of it is now
 called the old lot, one mile and half in width the whole length of the settlement
 but the rest of the town Ridgefield. The whole town now contains but little
 of the original purchase the former Old County and Ridgefield. It is now in
 a part from the State in the common name of Copper. The first land
 was in 1700 and Ridgefield in the town about 1700.

Figure 83 Title page of manuscript history of Ridgefield by Rev. S. G. Goodrich 1800



Figure 85 The Leather Man



Figure 86 George Washington Gilbert and the family homestead

PROCLAMATION !

WHEREAS, the people of the town of Ridgefield by unanimous vote elected me Hayward of said town, and having had hurled at me in the discharge of my duty (which I will perform to the best of my ability according to law, without fear, favor or partiality,) the threats of my life, of being driven from the town, tared and feathered and cowhided by women, I invite the following class to my house between the hours of 2 and 4 o'clock P. M., on the 21st of June.



All law-breakers—all that wish to violate the laws—all vile epithet users—all slanders—all back-biters—all evil disposed persons—all thieves—all rum-drinkers—all drunkards, when the following questions will be debated:

1. Can a Hog grunt. 2. Does a Hog wear buttons. 3. Can a Hog squeal. 4. Can a Duck swim. And the important question! Does a Goose wear feathers.



The members present will select their Chairman who will decide the above important questions, after which the Hayward will make a speech, and invite all present to take a drink.

HALCYON GILBERT BAILEY,
Hayward of the Town of Ridgefield.

Figure 87



Figure 89 Main Building of the Elms Inn



Figure 90 Oreneca Inn



Figure 91 Wind Mill on Governor Phineas E. Lounsbury's Estate—Now Veterans Memorial Park



Figure 92 Main Street after the Great Fire of 1895



Figure 93 Train Wreck on Ridgefield Branch Line 17 April 1905



Figure 94 The Town Farm
(Built by James Scott 2nd, now residence of Mr. George H. Underhill)



Figure 95 The First Automobile owned in Ridgefield



Figure 96 West side of Main Street, now Scott Block



Figure 97 Perry's Market showing Elmer Leeson in doorway

Sp. 1170

LICENSE.

Granted Sept. 11, 1862.
Expires Sept. 11, 1863.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This License is granted to H. O. Nash & Son of the Town of Ridgefield in the county of Fairfield and State of Connecticut to carry on the business or occupation of Retail Dealers at H. Ridgefield Conn. in the aforementioned county, and they having paid the tax of Five dollars therefor, conformably to the provisions of an act entitled "An act to provide internal revenue to support the government and to pay interest on the public debt," approved July 1, 1862.

This License to be in force until the first day of September 1863, provided the said H. O. Nash & Son shall conform to the requirements of said act, and of such other act or acts as are now or may hereafter be in this behalf enacted.

Given under my hand and seal at Ridgeport the Tenth day of December A. D. 1862.

David W. H. [Signature]
Collector of the Revenue Collection District
in the State of Connecticut

Figure 98 Retail Dealers' License issued to H. O. Nash & Son 1862

(No Model.)

E. G. HOYT,
Cider Press.

No. 236,592

Patented Jan. 11, 1881

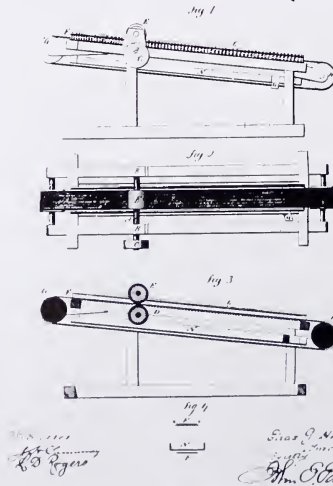


Figure 99 Cider Press patented by E. G. Hoyt of Ridgefield in 1881

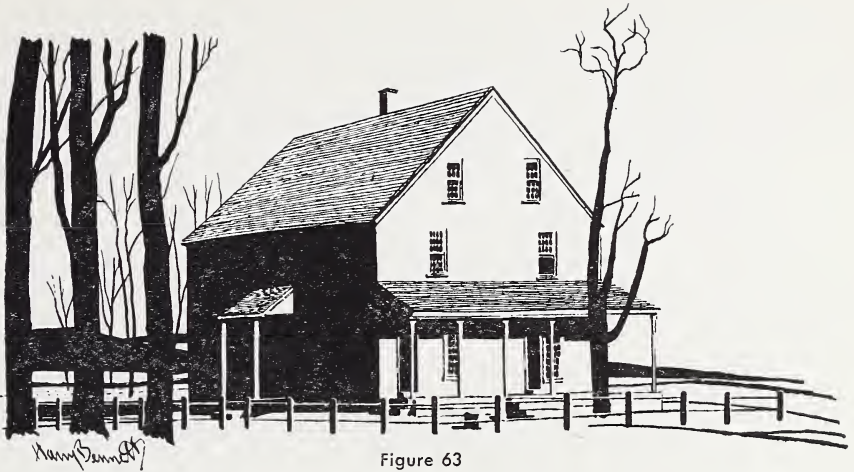


Figure 63

Chapter XII

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Facilities for communication and transportation are vital necessities to the existence of any community. Accordingly, the Proprietors of Ridgefield gave immediate consideration to the

Laying Out of Roads throughout the new settlement, and as early as 1 April 1714 it was recorded that

“This Town Meeting by a major vote do make choice of Ebenezer Smith and James Benedict for their Committee to rectifie highways, where they shall be found needful to be rectified to take from mens land Land where there is need, and to make it up to them again, as well as they can to suit them.”

More than twenty-five roads were laid out in 1721 and 1722, including Main Street. At a Town Meeting on 26 December 1721 Main Street was laid out

“Beginning with y^e Town Street and from the North Side of Benjamin Stebbins home lott, down to the South Side of Mr. Hawley’s home lott, or to y^e Meeting House yard is eight rods in weadth, East and West exact measure.”

Catoonah Street was laid out at the same time and was five and a half rods wide at the Main Street or easterly end and six rods at the westerly termination.

In 1722 the highway to connect with the Bedford Road was constructed as far as West Mountain.

As early as 1713 the town of Norwalk expressed a desire to have a road to Ridgefield. A committee consisting of Joseph Platt, John Raymond and James Stewart was selected on 16 December 1713

“ . . . to make a settlement of a highway or road to Ridgefield,

if the committee of Ridgefield can agree; and doth fully empower said committee to make restitution to such persons that said highway may take land from within the limits of Norwalk Township."

It was not until 1723 that Ridgefield appears to have taken any decisive action in the matter. However, on 20 December 1723 a Ridgefield town meeting voted " . . . that y^e Rhode to Norwalk pass over y^e bald hill, where it was laid out by y^e jury."

The Sugar Hollow section of the road between Ridgefield and Danbury was surveyed in 1796 at the same time that a survey was made of the damage to Danbury inhabitants by Tryon's raid. The road was built in 1812 by Sturges Selleck, who owned Maplewood Farm. A toll gate was operated on the turnpike on a narrow section near Bradley's Pond. The toll gate was presumably installed to collect funds for Selleck's reimbursement.

The establishment of a stagecoach line between Ridgefield and the Branchville Station of the Danbury-Norwalk Road in the 19th Century made it imperative to ameliorate the existing highway which formerly followed what is now known as Old Branchville Road. A town meeting held 23 May 1851 appointed a committee including David Hunt, Philip Northrop, Lewis Sherwood, Edward Williams and Jacob Haviland to lay out a more convenient road. In June of the following year the present Branchville Road was laid out from the residence of Mr. I. J. Bochory to Branchville and subscriptions were collected to help defray the costs of the project.

Ridgefield was connected with major points outside its confines by several stage lines that were established at different times. The earliest of these was

The New York to Boston Stage Line which passed through Ridgefield and existed since the 18th Century. The main stop in Ridgefield was the Keeler Tavern, but there may have been others within the limits of the township. At one time the route of the stage proceeded from Main Street north along the lane across Orange Ridge above the Cornen residence through Farmingville and Limestone by Taylor's Corners over Pickett's Ridge emerging at West Redding. Each passenger was allowed fourteen pounds of baggage. West Lane was the route followed to reach the turnpike which connected with New York. Over the New York line was one of the old milestones marked "80 to H".

The Danbury-New York Stage stopped at Ridgefield three days a week en route to Danbury—every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. It started out in New York with six horses and left two of them in White Plains if the passenger load had thinned sufficiently. Two more horses would be dropped at North Castle. The stage left New York at four o'clock in the morning and reached the Keeler Tavern at about six in the evening. The stage also stopped at the Tavern on its return trip from Danbury to New York—every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The passenger fare was \$2.90 from New York to Ridgefield and fifty-five cents from Ridgefield to Danbury.

The Ridgebury-Norwalk Stage Line was established by David Hunt by 1836. Prior to that date Hunt operated a mail route on horseback from Danbury to Stamford and from Ridgefield to Peekskill once a week. He was paid one hundred dollars a year for this service. Hunt's coach was built in Redding by members of the Sanford family. The stage left Hunt's home at two-thirty in the morning. George V. R. Hunt, David's son, called for passengers from Mill Plain, Miry Brook, Danbury and other points on the day before departure and brought them to the Hunt homestead (now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel M. McKeon) where they spent the night and departed on the stage early the following morning, after having breakfast. Four horses were used for the stage. The horses would be exchanged at the point of arrival for another foursome which would be ready for the return journey, (*Figure 62*).

George V. R. Hunt often drove his father's stage and while waiting to make the return trip from Norwalk, he would take the boat into New York. There he once met someone seeking seamstresses. Young Hunt developed a flourishing business by picking up shirt material which was cut in New York, and bringing it to Ridgefield and adjacent towns to be sewn at home. His first assignment was a half-dozen shirts, but by the time that he terminated this enterprise after the Civil War, he was providing work for over one thousand sewing women.

The Ridgefield to Stamford Stage Line was operated for a period of time by Henry Whitney Hunt from his home in Scotland District to Stamford. Hunt lived in the farmhouse owned by Mr. Francis D. Martin on the North Salem Road.

Old Stage Stops included Titicus Store at the crossroads. One of the old milestones was formerly located just south of the store. When the State Highway Department improved the highway in the 1920's the stone was removed to save it from relic hunters. The stone has since disappeared.

The present residence of Mr. Richard R. H. Beck was at one time a stop on the stage line, and local legend reports that travelers were lodged overnight as well as provided with meals in the house. This stagecoach stop may have been the original "Tackora Lodge". However, none of the deeds for this property include any reference to its use as a public house.

Barlow Mountain Road was once part of the highway used by the old stage line which passed along what is now a woodland road.

The Ridgefield to Branchville Stage was operated by Henry Whitlock from 1852, when the Danbury to Norwalk Railroad was built, to 1870, when the Branchville to Ridgefield branch was added. Whitlock had earlier achieved some note. As a boy of twelve he had driven a stage from Danbury to Norwalk and back again with four horses. Whitlock used his old coach to transport passengers and mail from Ridgefield to Branchville Station and back again. He was succeeded in his business by his son, Morris B. Whitlock.

The right-of-way of the railroad through Branchville was purchased from Sherman Beers, who originally owned the land where the Branchville Station and yard are located. At first a part of his house was used as the station and waiting room and it was stipulated in his deed of sale that he was to be the station agent. Other land was purchased by the railroad from Stephen Jones and Elisha Gilbert. It was not specified in the deeds that *all* trains must stop at Branchville, as had been the case in Wilton. The property for the Farmingville cut-off was donated by Theron G. Hoyt who was then living on the Ben Lee property on the easterly side of the cut-off.

The Ridgefield Branch Railroad from the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad to Ridgefield was begun on 20 April 1870. Three months later, on 18 July 1870, the first train travelled over it to Ridgefield, with Lawrence J. Briggs at the throttle.

In about 1894 the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad bought out the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad and operated the branch under the name of the Ridgefield and New York Railroad.

Passenger service was eventually discontinued because of lack of a sufficient volume of business, and the train from Branchville to Ridgefield made its last run on 8 August 1925.

Inns and Taverns were necessary adjuncts to transportation, a fact that was clearly realized by the Proprietors from the first years of the town's settlement. The Tavern Keeper was chosen by the Proprietors at town meetings. The person appointed would, in addition to his normal trade or occupation, be equipped to provide food and shelter for the occasional travelers that visited the town on their way to other points.

The First Tavern Keeper, who was appointed in 1715, was Richard Osburn who lived at approximately the corner of Market and Main Streets. His wife died in 1719 and her gravestone is one of the two markers remaining in the Old Cemetery at South Main Street. Osburn lived to be one hundred and two years of age.

The Second Tavern Keeper was appointed by the Proprietors at a town meeting on 8 December 1718. Ebenezer Smith, formerly of Milford, who had become the 26th Proprietor on 22 April 1709, was selected for the position. Travelers were accomodated at his homestead at the northern corner of Main and Prospect Streets, where the library now stands.

Ebenezer Smith and his descendants apparently continued to maintain a hostelry at their home throughout the 18th Century, for an account book owned in the family indicated that meals and shelter were provided since 1719.

The Smith Tavern was built on the site of the Smith homestead in 1797 by Amos Smith, who had inherited the property in direct line. The Tavern was an important center in the town and shared with the Keeler Tavern the

function of providing a center for community activities. Amos Smith, perhaps in an effort to furnish even more to the comfort and nourishment of the traveler, established a cider mill on his property at the foot of the hill on what is now Prospect Street.

A large room on the second floor of the Smith Tavern served many purposes. It was utilized for church parties, community dances, as a court room and as the meeting hall for local organizations.

It was in the upper room or ballroom of the Smith Tavern that the first meeting of Jerusalem Lodge No. 49 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons was held on the evening of 26 November 1808.

It was the headquarters of the Union Society of Ridgefield, and an interesting little card which recently came to light is an invitation to Mr. Ralph Ressigues to attend the Union Ball at A. Smith's Ballroom, which would begin at five o'clock in the afternoon on 3 December 1812. The invitation was signed by four members of the Union Society, viz., I. Perry, I. Smith, R. Randall and S. Stebbins, Jr.

The Tavern property remained in the Smith family without interruption until it was sold by Miss Evelyn Smith in July 1900, and the Old Tavern was removed to make room for the construction of the new Library.

The Smith Tavern is illustrated in *Figure 64* and a rare view of its interior is shown in *Figure 65*. Smith's hostelry was rivaled and overshadowed by the tavern of Timothy Keeler, Jr., which was situated at the opposite end of Main Street.

The Keeler Tavern is unquestionably the most important historic building now in existence in Ridgefield. According to early records found in the Tavern and carefully preserved by the late Mr. Cass Gilbert and his family, the Tavern was purchased by Timothy Keeler Jun^r from David Hoyt on 30 August 1769. The original deed specified that for the sum of one hundred forty-five pounds lawful money, Hoyt sold to Keeler

“ . . . A Certain piece of Land Lying in s^d Ridgefield near y^e Meeting House, in Quantity about Six Acres & a half & twenty Rods, be the same more or less with y^e Dwelling House & Barn standing thereon, s^d Land is Bounded West by y^e Town Street, South by y^e Land of Benjamin Hoyt in part, & in part by Common Land, East by Common Land & North by Land belonging to y^e heirs of Benⁿ Keeler Dec^d . . . ”

The boundaries sufficiently identify the property even to the present day. Young Timothy Keeler, Jr. was a bachelor who had just reached the age of twenty-one on 21 May 1769. The property was an important one, and according to all available records, the house was fairly new, having been built between 1760 and 1766. A previous date of 1748 has been quoted in other works, but there seems to be no basis for it. When Keeler purchased it, the house served as a dwelling only, and did not become a tavern until later.

On 6 December 1770 Keeler married Esther Kellogg of Norwalk, and their first child, a boy named David, was born on 17 April 1772. It was in this year that Keeler apparently decided to convert his home into a tavern, because the first entry in his record books is dated October 1772.

The young bride had brought with her to her new home in Ridgefield a Negro slave child named Betty, whom she had purchased in Norwalk as an infant only fourteen months old, from William Johnson for the sum of twelve pounds New York money. The bill of sale dated 10 April 1769 is preserved among the Keeler Tavern Papers.

During the first few years after they opened the hostelry to the public, the young couple established themselves in the town. Gradually the Tavern became the community center. First of all, it was ideally situated on the direct line of travel from New York to Boston, and it was the first stop on the way, where single riders and coachers could change horses and passengers find refreshment.

The Tavern sign which swung in front of the building was an important landmark for travelers. It would be of interest to learn what Keeler chose as the original symbol for his hostelry. The Tavern sign which is illustrated here in *Figure 67*, and which is well known from its illustration in previous publications, is undoubtedly the original sign which Keeler had made for his Tavern and which he proudly attached by a stick to the crotch of the elm tree which grew in front of the house. A careful study of one side of the sign shows that under the painted figure of the rider there is faintly discernible an oval frame, which unquestionably enclosed a portrait. Considering the date of the Tavern's opening, 1772, it seems very likely that the portrait would have been that of King George III, which was among the most popular symbols for public houses in New England. Upon Ridgefield's endorsement of the patriotic cause five years after he opened his Tavern to the public, Keeler—who was among the town's foremost patriots—undoubtedly had his sign hastily repainted with a more appropriate device to erase the now unpopular visage of the King. The simplified symbol of a rider became a well known landmark and it was repainted several times, as indicated by the four dates which are marked on the sign, including 1794, 1818.

The first volume of Keeler's record book provides a valuable record of the nature and volume of the Tavern's business from the beginning. The very first entry is dated "November y^e 4th 1772" and records the sale of two quarts of molasses for 1 shilling 4 pence to David Hoyt, (*Figure 70*).

Although the Keeler Tavern Papers form a collection of considerable size and variety, the Tavern Registers are not included among them. An extensive search has failed thus far to reveal their existence. They may have been retained by Miss Anna Ressiguie when she sold the property in 1907 and she may have taken them with her to Norwalk. The Registers would pro-

vide an extremely valuable record because the New York-Boston stage line, which stopped at the Keeler Tavern, found Ridgefield to be an attractive respite on the journey for private travelers as well as the horses. During the period following the Revolution many

Notable Personalities visited the hostelry, including the first Postmaster General, Timothy Pickering, the first Secretary of the Treasury, Oliver Wolcott, and Governor John Treadwell of Connecticut. According to Goodrich, Jerome Bonaparte and his young American bride, Miss Elizabeth Patterson, stopped at the Tavern in 1804, an event which created great excitement in the town.

During the Revolution, Keeler was a member of the company of Captain Isaac Hines, who gave the alarm at Fairfield, Bedford and Norwalk in 1779. He was a prominent patriot in the town and during the Battle of Ridgefield his Tavern was the target of the British cannon because it had been reported that Keeler and other patriots were making bullets there. After the Ridgefield engagement, Keeler's name was included among the petitioners for compensation of loss caused by the British in the amount of 78 pounds 14 shillings, a sizeable sum which, in addition to the damage by cannonading to the Tavern, must have included loss of clothing and provisions, and possibly of cattle.

The years following the Revolution were active ones for the Keeler Tavern, and the increasing number of travelers and the consequent greater volume of business was reflected in the fact that Keeler hired a blacksmith to be in permanent attendance. Often two blacksmiths were employed by Keeler at the same time. A number of these Blacksmith Agreements occur in the Tavern records, and the terms are of interest. The agreement with Josiah Lane, dated 10 April 1794, is typical and reads in part as follows:

“ . . . I the said Josiah Lane do Covenant and agree to work with him the said Timothy Keeler for the term of Six Months at the Black Smith Business or any other Business as Occation may require for the sum of Seven Dollars and a half per Month and I the said Timothy Keeler Jun^r. do hereby Covenant and agree to pay to him the said Josiah Lane the said sum of Seven Dollars and a half per month, for the said Term of six months provided the said Lane be faithfull in the Business, Charge and oversight of the Black smith Shop and Business thereof, while attending on ye same, and furthermore the said Josiah Lane am to make up all lost Days Occationed by Sickness or other ways . . . ”

Notations were made by Keeler on each such agreement regarding the day that the blacksmith began to work and the days lost for sickness and other causes. In the case of one of the blacksmiths, a man named Simeon Warren who was hired on 8 May 1794 to supplement the services of Josiah Lane, Keeler noted that he had begun work on the 6th of May and had been absent two days to Madison, was sick one-half day at one time and two days at another and that he had lost 2 days in “Gen^l Training”, probably in the Ridgefield Militia.

Keeler's Agreement with Lane differed from others that he had made. Warren was hired for the usual term of six months "at any Business in y^e Black smith Shop or on y^e barn as may best suit him y^e said Keeler for the Sum of Six Dollars per month in trade out of Store (at least the one half of said Wages) . . ."

Keeler lent himself to every form of service that the town required. A page in his account books revealed that from July 1790 to 3 May 1794 he was employed by one Peter Byvanik (or Byranik) on behalf of the latter's relative, Evert Byvanik. Keeler went to Fairfield to bail Evert out of gaol for the sum of 12 shillings and advanced cash to the paroled prisoner. Keeler attended Superior Court, paid court fees for services of writs and for copies of same, and wrote letters. Keeler attended County Court on a petition for a new trial in 1792 and traveled to Danbury, Redding and New York "on the business of the Execution". He paid cash to Sheriff Wildman to stop the execution and the final entry on 3 May 1795 is "to bill Cost obtained by Esq. Benedict on his death". No record of the criminal case appears in the town records.

The Keeler Tavern was probably the major center of community entertainment. The wall between two of the bedrooms on the upper floor over the mail room was hinged and the entire wall with doorway was raised and supported by counterweights to enable the two rooms to be made into a single large ballroom for dances. Built into the wall of one of these rooms was an oval triangular niche, designed for the storage of tricorn hats while the dance was in progress.

Timothy Keeler, Jr.'s Last Will was made out on 26 March 1812 and, in addition to providing a most interesting revelation of the man, it serves also to describe the disposition of his properties, which were considerable at the time of his death. The text reads as follows:

"In the name of Almyty God Amen. this 26th day of March 1812 I Timothy Keeler of Ridgefield in the District of Danbury in Fairfield County & State of Connecticut considering the awfull and distressing sickness that prevails, my own liability to Death and being through the Goodness of God of a sound disposing mind and memory and desirous to set my House in Order do for that purpose make and Ordain this my last will and Testament, in the Manner following (viz.) First of all I give and recommend My Immortal Soul to Almyty God, who gave it hoping for Acceptance with him, and Eternal life in the world to come Through the Merits of My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ And my Body to the Dust to be bury^d at the discesion of my Executors to be hereinafter Named believing in the Ressurection from the Dead.—And in regard to the worldly goods and Estate that it hath pleased God graciously to bless Me with (that I shall Die disposed of) I hereby Give, Bequeath and dispose thereof in the Manner following—Imprimis I hereby order my Executors to pay All my Just and Righteous debts, and my Funeral charges to be paid in a convenient time after my decease.—Itim—I hereby give and bequeath unto my well beloved wife Esther the one third part of my Moveable Estate (if

she should outlive Me) to be disposed of at her discretion.—Item I hereby give and bequeath the residue and remainder of my Estate unto my Children David, Walter and William; Mary, Sarah, Anne & my Grand Children of my Deceased Daughter Esther by name Phebe Mariah and Esther Ann to them and each of them respectively and to heirs and assigns forever to be divided amongst them in the following Rule, viz. to each of my said sons two tenths parts thereof to each of my said daughters one tenth thereof and to my said grand Daughters one tenth part thereof to be equally divided between them. Item—I hereby order all advancements by me made to any and every of my children or to my deceased daughter Esther to be accounted to them, and to their children respectively as parts of their respective shares parts or portions of my Estate.—Lastly I do hereby nominate appoint Ordain and fully empower my sons David, Walter and William, to be the Executors of this my Will and I do hereby Order them to cause the same to faithfully fullfiled and I do every part and Particular thereof; hereby revoking all former Wills and Testaments by me made. I hereby declare this and this only to be my last Will and Testament. Signed, Sealed and pronounced and declared in the hearing and presence of Matthew Olmsted, Thaddeus Keeler 2^d, Maville Keeler.

Timothy Keeler (seal)”

Timothy Keeler, Jr. died in 1815. One of his two surviving sons, William Keeler, succeeded him as proprietor of the Keeler Tavern and as Postmaster of Ridgefield, until William's death in 20 October 1827 at the age of forty-two. William's sister Anna, who had worked with him in the operation of the Tavern, married Abijah Ressiguie on 1 February 1829 and together they continued to keep the hostelry open to the public. Ressiguie died in 1887 at the age of ninety-seven.

Militia Headquarters in Ridgefield may have been maintained in the Keeler Tavern during the latter part of the Revolutionary War and for a period of time thereafter, as indicated by the records of the Tavern. Among these are copies of Regimental Orders dated Ridgefield 22 July 1794, in which it is stipulated that in accordance with Brigade Orders received, it was directed that a detachment be collected from the 34th Regiment to include 8 sergeants, 8 corporals, 2 drummers, 2 fifiers and 84 privates and their names be submitted to the Adjutant. The Orders go on to add that

“The Col. Flatters himself that no arguments are Necessary on the present Occasion to Influence the Officers and Soldiers of the present Detachment to Accept with Cheerfulness the Service Assign'd them, the Honour of being first to defend the Lives, Liberty and Property of their Countrymen must be Objects of the first Magnitude to every Patriotic Soldier. We therefore rest Assured there will be no Necessity of resorting to an Expedient which ever ought to be last. Among Freemen (That of Draughting), but that in every Comp^y there will be found a Sufficient Number who will Voluntarily Enlist themselves for the present detachment. Such a spirit will demonstrate to the Mercenary Despots of Europe (who

are reduced to the Necessity of Raking Dock Yards, Prison Ships and Almshouses and even Kidnapping Boys to fill these) that sons of Liberty the American Militia are always ready to Oppose them when ever they may Attempt to invade their Rights. May the present occasion Answer a more valuable purpose than Any Army in the Field.—

By Order

Richard H. Fitch, Adjutant”

In addition to the two main hostelrys in the town of Ridgefield, other **Inns and Taverns of Ridgebury District** were maintained long before the Revolutionary War.

Among the first Proprietors of Ridgefield was Samuel Keeler of Norwalk. Of his several sons, only Jonah (1690-1767) settled in Ridgefield and another son, Samuel Keeler 2nd (1716-1781) made his home in Ridgebury. The latter received 160 acres of land valued at £370 under the terms of his father's will.

Samuel Keeler 2nd had four sons, two of whom became tavern keepers in Ridgebury District. The oldest son was Samuel Keeler 3rd, who was born in Ridgebury on 23 June 1737 and married Abiah Benedict in 1761. At about the time of his marriage, or within a short period thereafter, he established a hotel which became known in the Revolutionary War period as

Ensign Samuel Keeler's Tavern, and was situated on the westerly side of Ridgebury Street about two hundred yards north of the Congregational Church. It was specified to be the last house south of the Burying Ground. The building stood near the roadside in front of the present residence of Mr. George E. Clum.

It was at this hostelry that General George Washington stopped with his party on the night of 19 September 1780 on his journey through Connecticut, accompanied by Lafayette, Knox, Hamilton, and de Gouvion, according to local legend. Although Washington's party spent the evening at the Tavern, local tradition relates that the Commander-in-chief and Lafayette were quietly conducted down the street to the home of one of Keeler's relatives, Dr. David Burr, for sleeping accommodations, while the remainder of the party slept at the Tavern. Another version related that Washington and Lafayette were taken to the home of the landlord's relatives named DeForest.

In the following year Ensign Samuel Keeler's Tavern served as the headquarters of the Comte de Rochambeau and his staff when the French troops stopped in Ridgebury on their march from Newtown. They reached Ridgebury on 1 July 1781, Rochambeau's birthday, and it is assumed that a birthday celebration was held for the Comte by the members of his staff at the Tavern. The hostelry is marked on the maps prepared by the French staff geographer and surveyor, Alexandre Berthier, and labeled "Ensign Sheeler's Tavern".

The Tavern continued under Keeler's management until his death in 1811. The building is no longer in existence, having been destroyed or removed at some time in the 19th Century. The property passed through many

hands and was owned at various times by Gamaliel Northrop Benedict, and the Rundle, Washburn and Kleber families, before it was acquired by Mr. Clum.

Much confusion has existed concerning the hostelry of Ensign Samuel Keeler, which was on the southerly side of the Ridgebury burying ground on Ridgebury Street, and

The Nehemiah Keeler Tavern which was owned and operated by Captain Nehemiah Keeler during or shortly after the end of the Revolutionary War. Captain Nehemiah Keeler was the son of Samuel Keeler 2nd and a brother of Ensign Samuel Keeler. He was born in Ridgebury on 24 July 1753 and he married Eleanor Rockwell in 1772. Although he served in the Revolutionary War with a captain's commission, no record of his military service is readily available. He died in 1838.

The building in which Nehemiah maintained his tavern was already in existence several decades before his birth and may have been built by his grandfather, Jonah Keeler, who settled in Ridgefield in 1713. The date ascribed to the Tavern is circa 1725.

The building is large, of two and a half storeys, with a peaked roof, a bricked stone chimney and a foundation of old stone. The original windows were replaced long ago by modern fenestration, and the doorway is of a later vintage, possibly of a century ago. (*Figure 72*).

Until recently the interior featured the original mouldings and woodwork and the standard hostelry fittings of two centuries ago. Nicks in the bar room indicated where a bartender kept an account of those who owed him for refreshment. The original hardware which remained in the interior until quite recently is also dispersed.

The house remained in the Keeler family for several generations, until it was sold by Colonel Nehemiah Keeler 3rd to Jeremiah Desmond. In 1948 it was purchased from the Desmond family by Dr. Florence Powdermaker, who has made it her home. The only remnant of its hostelry days is one of the wrought iron eyelets in the ceiling of a bedroom. These eyelets were used to string wires on which draperies were hung to divide the rooms into separate compartments for overnight travelers on those occasions when the tavern was crowded.

On the northerly side of the Tavern was another structure which stood at the roadside. This building was in the form of a large porte-cochere enclosed on all sides, with the main door twenty-four feet wide through which a stagecoach could be driven. It enabled the passengers to mount or dismount without exposure to inclement weather and it was sufficiently large to enclose a large stagecoach and its horses. This building was moved by a previous owner from its original location to a site beyond the house, and remodeled into a barn.

The Doolittle Tavern was another stopping place for stage coach travel

in Ridgebury during the Revolutionary War period. It is believed to have been owned and operated by Captain Ichabod Doolittle, who was probably one of the twelve children of Joseph and Abigail (Rockwell) Doolittle who settled in Ridgebury after their marriage in 1757. Ichabod Doolittle organized the 7th Company of the Fifth Regiment commanded by Colonel David Waterbury. Doolittle's commission was issued 1 May 1775 and he was discharged in November of the same year, probably as a result of sickness incurred during his period of service. There is almost no information about Doolittle and his position in the community or about the hostelry that he operated in Ridgebury.

A site marked "Doolittle T" is shown on No. 43-D of the Erskine-DeWitt Maps prepared for General Washington in 1779-1780, but no indication is found in local records that such a tavern existed. However, the label on the Erskine-DeWitt maps is quite clear and a penned notation added that "From here a course of S 17/6 E cuts the Steeple of Ridgefield M H (meeting house)". The Doolittle Tavern, according to this source, was situated at the point where the road makes a sharp turn, adjacent to the entrance to the property of the Connecticut Land Company.

The Rockwell Inn was owned and operated in Ridgebury prior to the beginning of the Revolutionary War by Abraham Rockwell. The Inn was located near the summit of Ridgebury Hill. One claim states that the Inn was originally the dwelling which later became the residence of Floyd K. Hunt and in more recent times of John Kehoe, and which was destroyed by fire in 1927. According to the Erskine-DeWitt maps, however, the Inn was the building which is now the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Robert O. DuBois. The Rockwell family originally owned the entire tract of land which included the former Kehoe house, and the properties of Mrs. Charles F. Palmer, Dr. Robert O. DuBois and Mr. Joseph Dlhly. The pre-Revolutionary hostelry is clearly marked on Erskine-DeWitt Map No. 43-D with the legend "Rockwell T" ('T' representing the word 'Tavern') and the measured distance places it exactly on the site of the DuBois residence, which is shown in *Figure 73* before restoration. An old red house which was situated a short distance to the north of this building was demolished many years ago and the foundation filled in. It was originally a Rockwell homestead and later was a tenant house to the DuBois property, which was formerly owned by Gilbert B. Burr.

According to a story often related by Rockwell's daughter, Lucy Rockwell Boughton (1783-1864), when her father learned that the British forces were marching from Danbury towards Ridgebury, he anticipated that they would set fire to the houses on their route of march. Hitching his oxen to his cart, he loaded it with his most valuable and most necessary articles. Placing his wife and his child in the cart, he drove into the neighboring woods and hid with them until the British had passed through the Ledges.

According to this story, the British engaged in a severe skirmish on the

hill a few rods from his house and several of the British soldiers were killed. After the invaders had continued their march towards Ridgefield, Rockwell returned to his home and found to his surprise that it was still standing.

The dwelling had been pillaged and the soldiers had removed a number of articles, chiefly food, but had done no damage.

Lynes Tavern in Ridgebury was located near the crest of Ridgebury Street on the easterly side near the recent Bates or Merritt residence. It was owned and operated by Benjamin Lynes (1759-1840) who lived in or near the inn. In 1808 an assessment of \$25 was levied against "Benjamin Lynes, Innkeeper" according to "*A True List of the Polls and Rateable estate of that part of the town of Ridgefield Lying in Ridgebury Society rateable by law on the 20th day of August A.D. 1808*". Neither the dwelling or inn is standing and the present dwelling on the site was built by his son, William Maltbie Lynes, in 1858.

When Benjamin Lynes was a boy of eighteen he was captured by the British in or near Redding during Tryon's raid on Danbury, and he was forced to accompany the British army for a distance of several miles towards Danbury. Then, because of his apparent youth, he was released. Lynes later served in the Revolutionary War. After the cessation of hostilities he bought a farm in Ridgebury and established a store near his home. On 23 November 1786 he married Sarah, the daughter of Daniel Coley, and it was probably soon thereafter that he opened his inn to the public. The Coleys had moved to Ridgebury from Fairfield, and purchased the house and land of Nathan Sherwood in 1763. Later Lynes and his family moved into the Coley house, which is now the residence of Captain and Mrs. Clifford Zieger.

Ridgebury was unquestionably a thirsty region for still another hostelry in the tiny community was

The Fairchild Inn which was owned and operated by Abraham Fairchild near his home in that part of Ridgebury that was ceded to Danbury in 1846. Little is known about this establishment other than the fact that Fairchild was listed as an innkeeper and taxed in the amount of \$25 because of his occupation, according to the tax list of Ridgebury Society of August 1808.

The Post Office was almost as important to the life of the community as the means and facilities for travel and transport. During the earliest period of Ridgefield's history, mail was delivered to and from the new settlement by riders on horseback. The need for communication at that time was not as important as it became with the town's commercial and industrial growth. Mail was often transmitted by the hands of travellers passing from one point to the other, or by other inhabitants visiting neighboring communities on errands.

Although the first Federal Post Office was established in 1791, it is likely that a post office existed in the town prior to the beginning of the

Revolutionary War. No record of its establishment has yet come to light and it must be presumed that if it existed it was maintained in conjunction with either the Smith lodging house or the Keeler Tavern, the points at which the stage lines made their stops in the community.

The First Federal Post Office in Ridgefield was established by an Act of the Second Congress of 24 October 1791, by authority of the first Federal Postmaster General, Timothy Pickering. A copy of the Act, handbooks of regulations for the guidance of the postmasters, and circulars signed by Pickering are preserved among the papers found in the Keeler Tavern.

The first United States Postmaster in Ridgefield was Colonel Philip Burr Bradley, who served from 1792 until 1805. Colonel Timothy Pickering visited Ridgefield and stayed at the Keeler Tavern, according to contemporary accounts, and it is possible that the visit was official, for the purpose of inspecting the post office, which was maintained in the front room of the Keeler Tavern from 1792 until about 1830.

Bradley was succeeded in the position of postmaster by Timothy Keeler, Jr., who continued in that office until his death in 1815.

On 24 April 1805 Gideon Granger, who had succeeded Pickering as Postmaster General, advised Timothy Keeler, Jr. of his appointment to succeed Bradley, and the formal Postmaster's Commission issued to Keeler was dated 3 May 1805 (*Figure 74*). A comprehensive collection of the records of the first Ridgefield Post Office was recently presented to the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association by Miss Emily Gilbert. Among these are the record books listing persons indebted for postage, and records showing the volume of mail for the period during which the post office was maintained in the Tavern (*Figure 75*).

Upon the death of Timothy Keeler in 1815, his son, William Keeler, succeeded him as proprietor of the Tavern and also as the Postmaster of Ridgefield. He continued in this office until his death in 1827. The identity of his successor is not known.

A schedule of the mails to and from the New York City Post Office was issued by the New York Postmaster on 1 January 1805 which was posted in the Keeler Tavern, listed mails to and from Ridgefield under the caption *Danbury and Litchfield Mail*.

During the first half of the 19th Century, the mail was carried twice a week each way by stage from Peekskill to Ridgefield through Yorktown, Somers, Salem Center and North Salem. An interesting document relating to this mail route is an agreement between Benjamin B. Gray of North Salem with Charles Cable of the same town in which Cable agreed to carry the United States Mail on the route described twice each week each way ". . . in a Pleasure Carriage agreeable to a contract made by said Gray with the Postmaster General". The contract, which was dated 18 February 1839 was

to extend until 30 June 1841, subject to all regulations and alterations of the Postmaster General. For the service Cable was to receive sixty dollars for each quarter year of service.

District Post Offices were established in each of the Districts of the town during the first half of the 19th Century and existed for a relatively limited period of time.

In Ridgebury a post office was maintained by Thomas St. John who served as district postmaster from 1835 until his death in 1848.

A post office was maintained at Cooper Station for many years while that railroad station was in existence.

On 22 July 1841 David Scott 2nd was commissioned "Postmaster of Scott's Ridge in the County of Fairfield, State of Connecticut" according to a commission shown in *Figure 77*, which was issued by Charles A. Wickliffe, the Postmaster General, on 6 April 1842. On 2 August 1841 Scott had executed the bond which was required for the appointment. He remained in office until 1845. The Scott's Ridge post office may have been maintained in David Scott's home which was later the residence of Hamilton B. Scott opposite the intersection of North Salem Road and the northerly entrance to Tackora Trail. This building, which was believed to have been built in 1810 by David Scott 3rd, is well remembered in the community because of the sign "Tackora Lodge 1810" which was nailed over the door.

The late Hamilton B. Scott is reported to have stated that he "had found the sign somewhere" and the original Tackora Lodge may have been the home of Elias Read, the storekeeper, now the residence of Mr. Richard H. Beck. If so, the post office was maintained at the Read house, which was also reported to have been a stop on the stage line. A photograph of the David Scott house, which was taken during or after the Civil War and shows Samuel Scott, the son of David B. Scott (*Figure 136*), does not show the Tackora Lodge sign over the doorway and lends credence to the possibility that it might have been added by Hamilton B. Scott late in the 19th Century.

In Limestone District Edwin Taylor served as postmaster in the post office that was located near the mills.

In Titicus District John Dempster Nash (1838-1902) was the first postmaster. In 1856 J. D. Nash went into partnership with his father, H. O. Nash, Jr. From 1875 until 1901 he operated the store in partnership with Milan H. Mead of North Street.

When the Titicus post office was combined with the main Post Office in Ridgefield, an agreement was made in writing and signed between the postal authorities and the inhabitants of Titicus District whereby they were to receive a second mail daily in compensation. This arrangement was to be maintained until a district post office could be restored to Titicus. The Post Office adhered to this arrangement until recently when the Postmaster General or-

dered a cutback in services. A copy of the agreement could not be found, and the inhabitants of Titicus were reduced to the single daily delivery that was provided to the rest of the town.

Each of the district post offices had their own cancellations. *Figure 78* illustrates cancellations of the Titicus post office, from the collection of Mr. Karl S. Nash.

Another district post office was maintained in Branchville. Its first Postmaster was William W. Beers who also served as the station agent of the Norwalk-Danbury Railroad from its establishment in 1852 until his death in 1879.

There are no records to show the location of the Ridgefield Post Office after its removal from the Keeler Tavern in about 1830 and its location is not shown on the maps of 1856 and 1867.

However, one of the early sites of the Post Office is reputed to be the annex built onto the home of Miss Ann Smith (*Figure 76*) which was situated on the premises of Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Crouchley, Jr. on Catoonah Street. When the Smith house was demolished, the annex was preserved and moved to the rear of the Crouchley dwelling, where it is presently in use as a tool shed.

Another building in which the post office was maintained until after the Battle of Bull Run in 1861, was the store of K. Dauchy.

The post office was later moved to the premises of Albert N. Thomas who kept a store where the Ernest Scott block is now situated.

In 1875 the post office was situated in the grocery and drug store of Hiram K. Scott on the present site of the H. P. Bissell Company. Colonel Scott served as postmaster of Ridgefield from 1849 to 1886.

Between 1893 and 1901 the post office was transferred to the Ridgefield Savings Bank, where D. Smith Sholes acted as bank treasurer and postmaster. He succeeded Scott as postmaster and kept the appointment until 1893. William C. Barhite became postmaster in 1893. In 1901 the post office was moved to the Barhite Block and remained in that location until 1922, when it was moved to the new Ernest Scott Block, during the tenure of George L. Rockwell, Sr.

In 1901 Rural Free Delivery was introduced in Ridgefield, which was one of the first towns in which it was established. In 1925 village delivery was instituted.

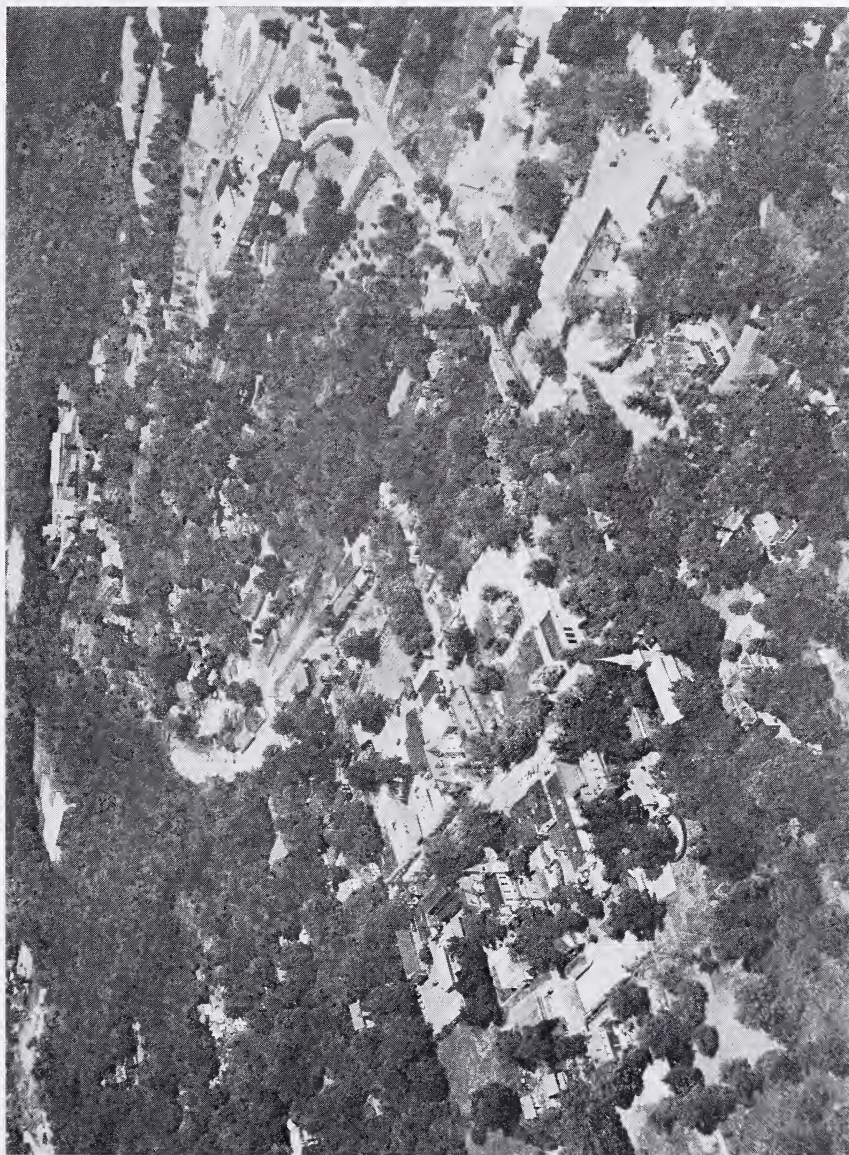


Figure 100 Air View of Ridgefield Today



Figure 101 Schlumberger Well Surveying Corporation—Ridgefield Research Center



Figure 102 The New England Institute for Medical Research



Figure 103 C G S Laboratories, Inc.

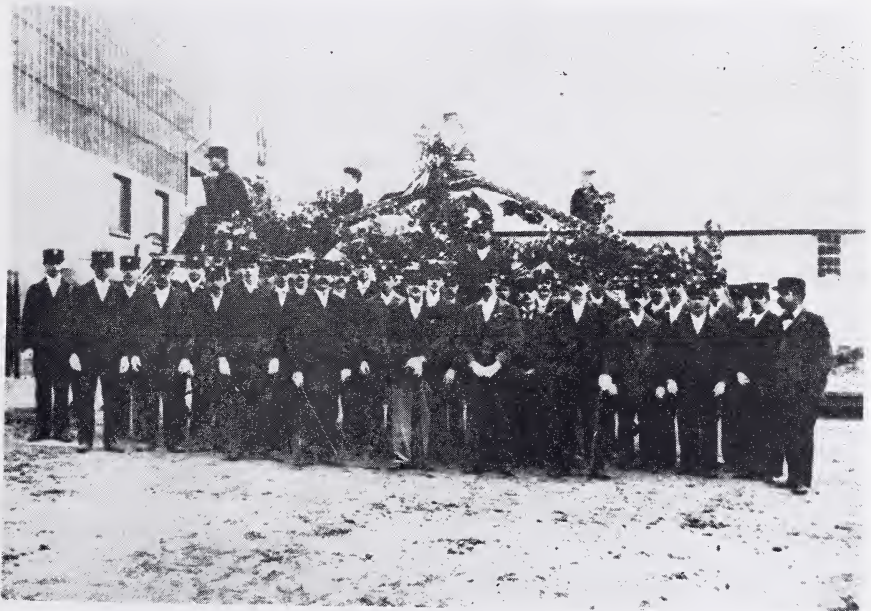


Figure 106 First Fire Department

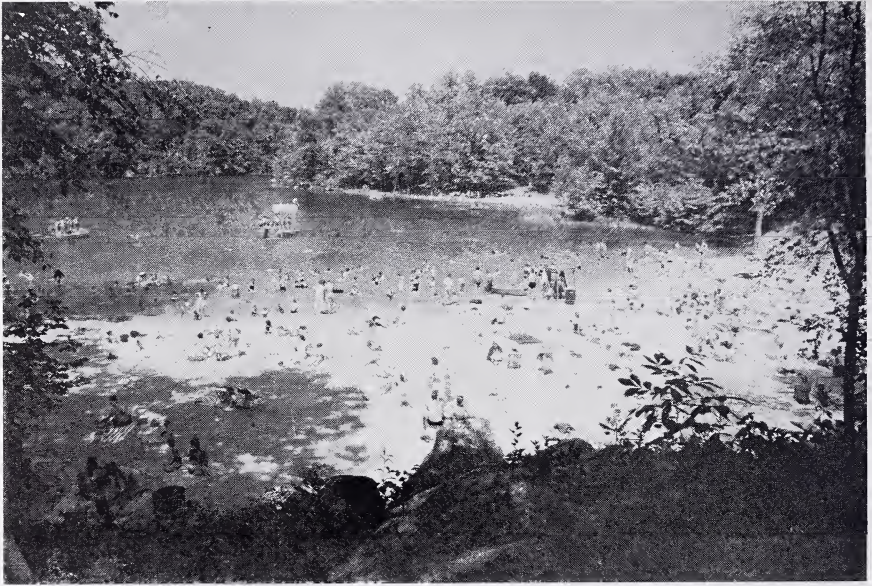


Figure 107 Great Pond Bathing Beach



Figure 108 Early View of Herald Tribune Life Camp in Branchville in 1880s



Figure 109 The Ridgefield Library

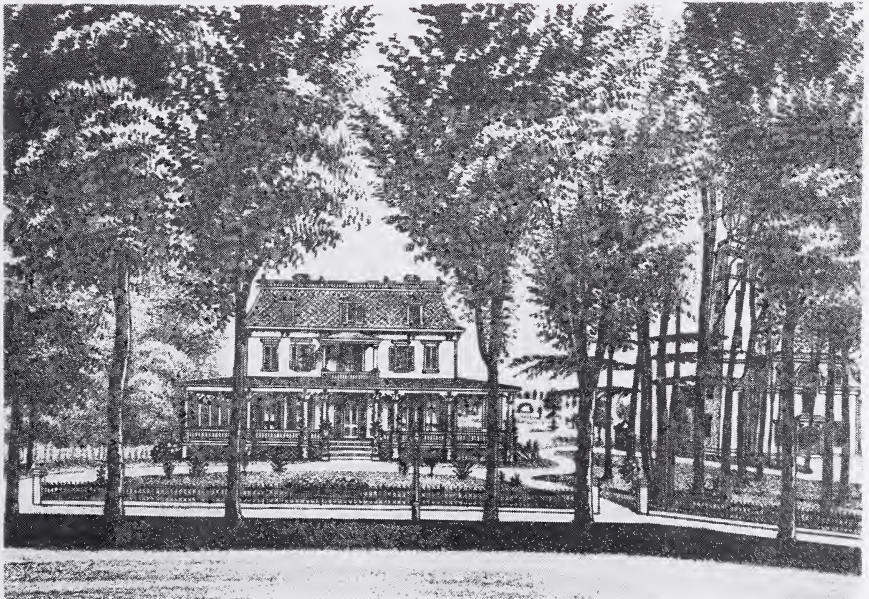


Figure 111 "Grove Lawn"—Residence of Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury
Now the Community Center



Figure 113 The Community Center—Formerly the residence of Governor Phineas E. Lounsbury

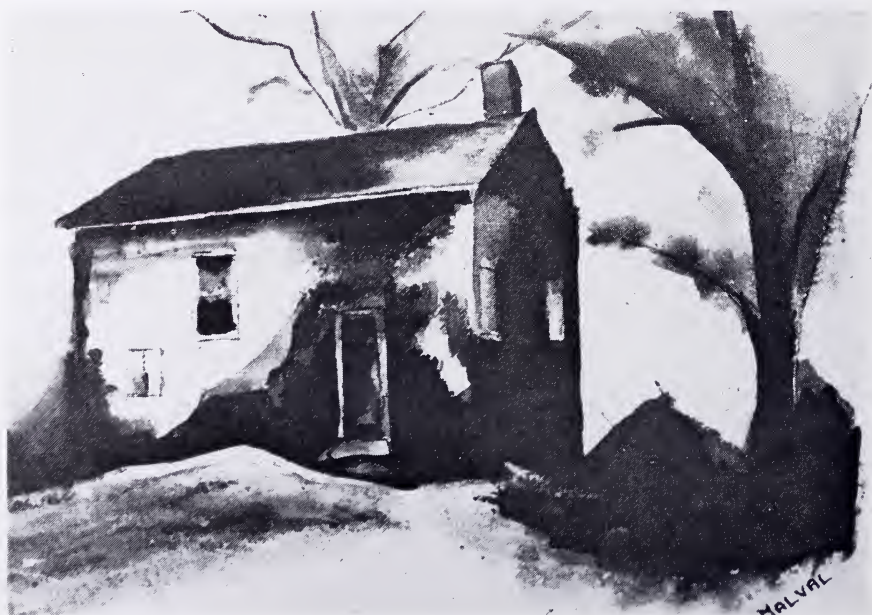


Figure 116 Bennetts Farm District School—circa 1745-60

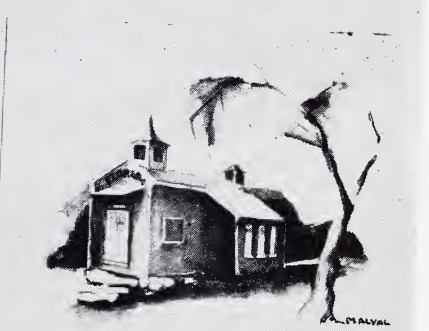
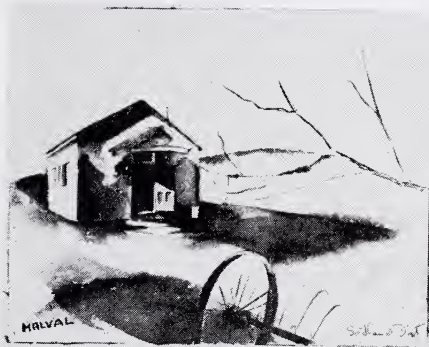


Figure 115 Early District Schools



Figure 117 South Ridgebury Schoolhouse



Figure 118 Titicus School—circa 1909



Figure 120 Congregational Meeting House



Figure 121 The Creamery Building in about 1900
Believed to have formerly been the Congregational Meeting House



Figure 122 The Congregational Church



Figure 123 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

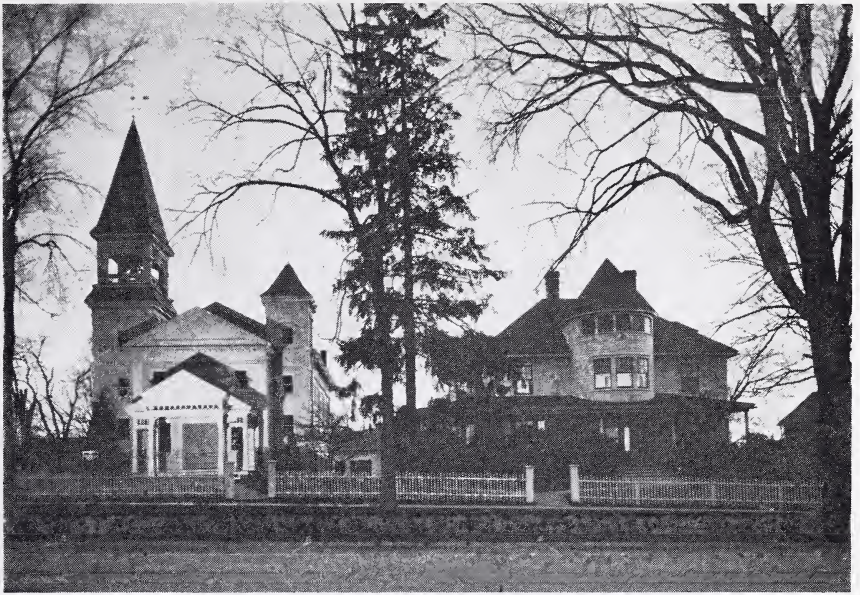


Figure 124 The Jesse Lee Memorial Methodist Church



Mr. and Mrs. James Brophy, Ridgefield's Pioneer Catholics, in whose House the first Mass was celebrated.

Figure 125 Mr. and Mrs. James Brophy—First Roman Catholic family in Ridgefield



Figure 125a First Roman Catholic Church—Built 1879



Figure 126 Interior of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

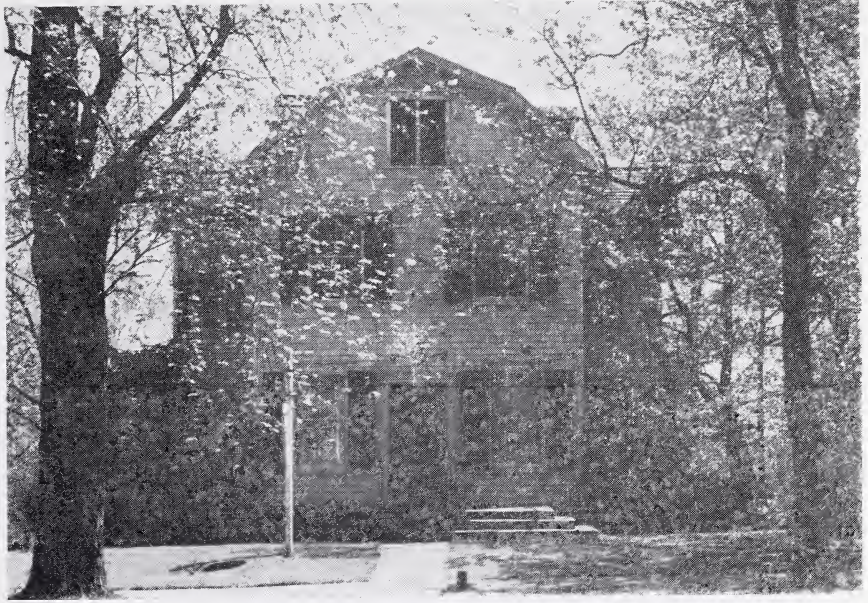


Figure 127 The Christian Science Reading Room—The upper part of the structure was the original store of King & Dole established 1783, later known as "Old Hundred"



Figure 128 The Congregational Church of Ridgebury

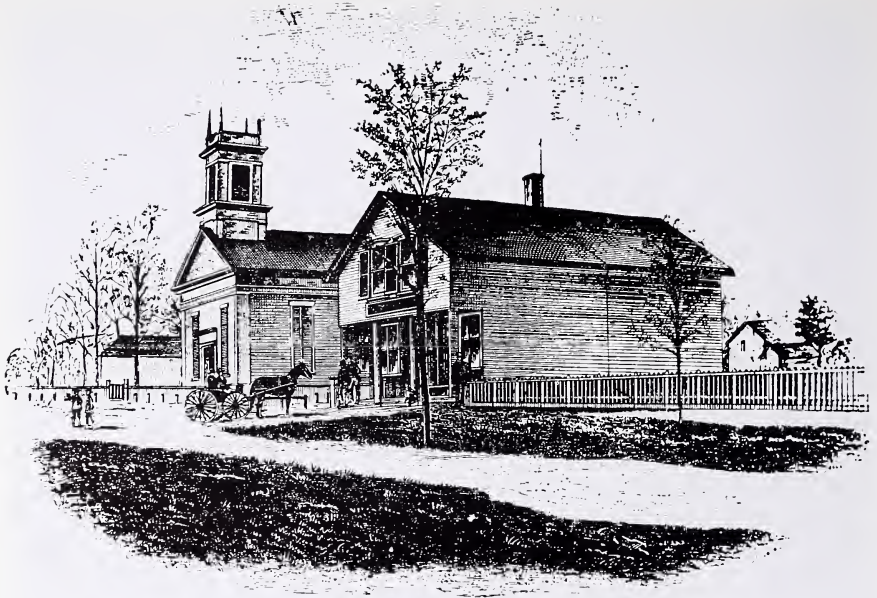


Figure 129 Congregational Church and Store—Ridgebury District

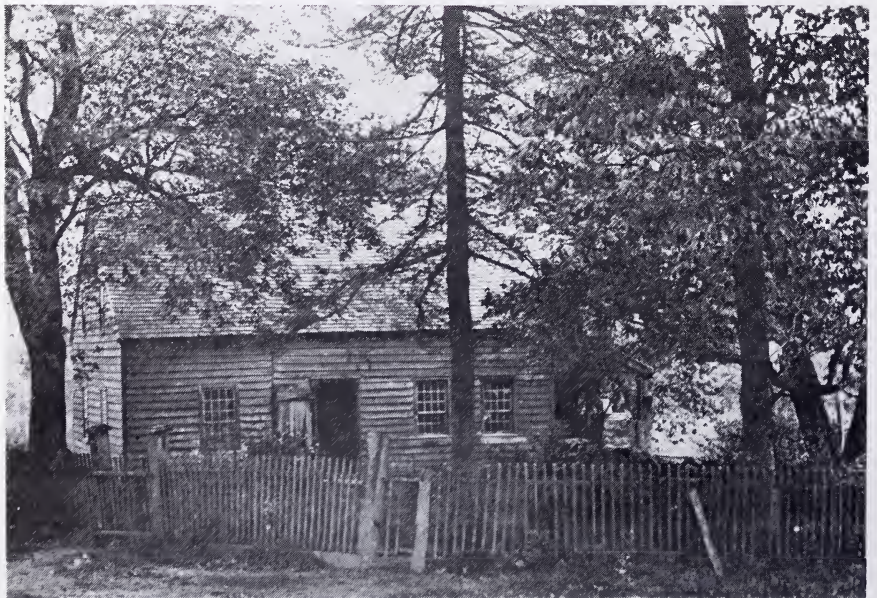


Figure 131 Former Benedict Homestead on south Main Street



Figure 132a Home of Zebulon S. Main



Figure 132b Epenetus Howe Homestead



Figure 133 Joel Gilbert's Lime Manufactory—Now residence of Mrs. Peil on Ramapoo Road



Figure 134 Rev. Thomas Hawley Homestead 1713-14
Now residence of Miss M. Frances Trainor

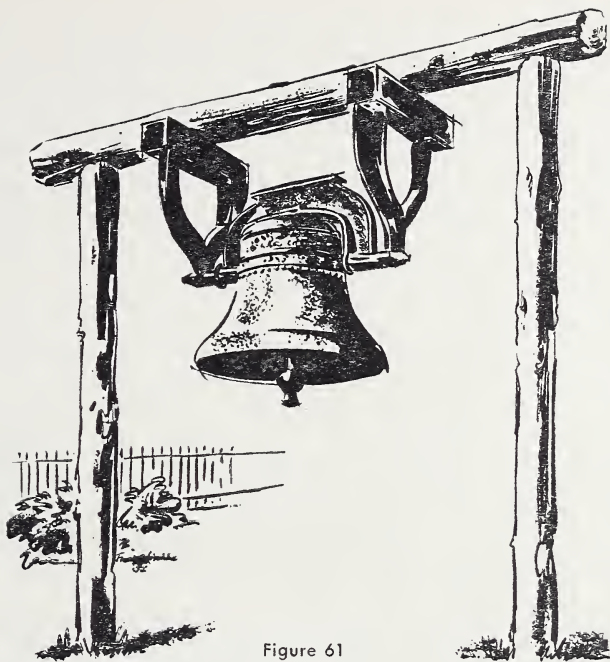


Figure 61

Chapter XIII

THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War affected Ridgefield as much as it did any other New England town, and no time was lost in expressing loyalties and sending volunteers to the field of action. A town meeting was held on 4 May 1861 to provide for the families of those who might volunteer and to take any other action in connection with the war that might be necessary. The resolutions that were formulated at that meeting stand out strongly as among the most inspired statements that have ever issued from a civic body, and merit quotation in full:

“On motion, it was voted that the following Preamble and Resolutions be, and they are hereby, adopted, viz:

‘Whereas, The people of the United States, within the Union, and under their own Government, have for three quarters of a century enjoyed an unparalleled prosperity and progress, for the continuance of which the Constitution of the United States is the perpetual guaranty; and

‘Whereas, An armed rebellion now threatens the very existence of that Government, seizing the forts, arsenals, navy-yards, vessels, and hospitals which belong to the people of the United States, and consummating its crime by firing upon the flag of the nation, the glorious symbol of our unity, our liberty, and our general welfare;

‘Resolved, That it was the duty of all persons in the country to resort to the peaceful and legal means of redress provided by

the Constitution, and that when, instead of so doing, they took up arms and organized resistance to the Government of the country, they struck at the very heart of organized civil society.

‘Resolved, That the Government of the United States has properly sought by every kind of forbearance to avoid the sad necessity of asserting its authority by force of arms; but that it is at length manifest to the whole world that it must subdue or be subdued.

‘Resolved, That in forcibly maintaining that authority everywhere within its dominions, and at every cost, the Government wages no war of conquest, but simply does its duty, expecting every citizen to do the same, and to take care that the doom of the rebels and traitors, who would ruin the most beneficent government in the world, and so destroy the hope of free popular institutions forever, shall be swift, sudden, and overwhelming.

‘Resolved, That when the supreme authority of the Government of the people of the United States shall have been completely established, we, with all other good citizens, will cheerfully cooperate in any measures that may be taken in accordance with the Constitution fully to consider and lawfully to redress all grievances that may anywhere be shown to exist, yielding ourselves, and expecting all others to yield to the will of the whole people constitutionally expressed.

‘Resolved, That we, loyal citizens of Ridgefield, hereby before God and men, take the oath of fidelity to the sacred flag of our country, and to the cause of popular liberty and constitutional government, which that flag represents, pledging ourselves to each other that by the love we bear our native land, and our unfaltering faith in the principles of our government, we will transmit to our children, unimpaired, the great heritage of blessings we have received from our fathers.’”

In August 1862 the town voted to pay each volunteer who enlisted the sum of two hundred dollars as bounty for the support of their families and to single men the same amount was to be paid in installments of twenty-five dollars each month, until the quota of seventy-seven volunteers required from the town of Ridgefield had enlisted. The Town Treasurer was authorized to borrow on the credit of the Town to the amount of sixteen thousand dollars for the purpose of paying the bounties that may have been voted.

At a meeting on 28 February 1863 it was voted to issue bonds for the payment of expenses and liabilities incurred. These bonds were to be issued by authority of an Act of the General Assembly of Connecticut. The bonds, which bore the date 1 April 1863, were made payable to the bearer at the option of the purchaser with interest at a rate of six per cent. The bonds were issued in sums ranging from fifty to five hundred dollars.

Two hundred nine men from Ridgefield served in the Civil War. This number includes those who had enlisted elsewhere and later made Ridgefield their home, and those who had enlisted from Ridgefield and later moved elsewhere. The Edwin D. Pickett Post No. 64 of the Grand Army was maintained in Ridgefield until the number of surviving veterans dwindled to only several.

Among the regiments represented by volunteers from Ridgefield were the Seventeenth Regiment, Companies C and G, the Twenty-Third Regiment, the First Heavy Artillery, the Second Heavy Artillery, and the Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Infantry.



Figure 79

Chapter XIV NINETEENTH CENTURY PERSONALITIES

Although Ridgefield did not become the home of artistic and literary notables until the resort era in the 20th Century, there were nevertheless a number of famous personalities in the community at various times during the 19th Century. Some of them were notable, some notorious, and all of them noteworthy. Among these must be included

Sarah Bishop, a romantic figure who belonged to the closing years of the Revolutionary War period. Very little was known about her origins, and she has been mentioned by only one or two contemporary writers. Most published references to Sarah Bishop have been borrowed from the account which was published by Samuel G. Goodrich in his "*Recollections of A Lifetime*", in which he described several visits he made to her.

Sarah Bishop came to Ridgefield from her home on Long Island, during the last few years of the Revolutionary War. Tradition relates that her father's house had been burned by the British and that "she was made the victim of one of those demoniacal acts, which in peace are compensated by the gibbet".

She made her home in a natural cave on the face of West Mountain on the property now owned by Mrs. Sarah Bulkley Randolph, near the North

Salem town line. From her cave she had a fine view of Long Island and it is presumed that this may have guided the selection of the site of her abode.

She made periodic visits into the community and called at one or two houses in the town. On these visits she discarded the rags she habitually wore for one of the several dresses of relatively fine quality which she had preserved from her past.

According to the account of a visit made to the hermitess by a reporter of a Poughkeepsie newspaper in 1804, Sarah Bishop's cave overlooked Long Pond and was situated on a precipice in a clearing of about half an acre in area. The woman appeared like a wild and timid animal and she was dressed in a shapeless mass of rags. She raised beans, cucumbers and potatoes in the clearing and several peach trees were also noted. A wild grape vine had been trained and had become very productive. A natural spring nearby furnished good drinking water.

The interior of the cave was just large enough for one person and she had no bed except the bare rock floor of the cave, and it was apparent that she sometimes built a fire in the corner of the room. (*Figure 80*).

The only utensils that were visible were a pewter basin and a gourd shell. She ate little meat and in the summertime she subsisted almost completely on berries, nuts and roots.

Sarah Bishop died in 1810. During a winter night while walking about the area she fell near the cave and perished from the cold. Her body was discovered by several local residents. She was buried in an unmarked grave in the June Cemetery in North Salem. Old residents of North Salem related that Sarah Bishop had been very friendly with "the Smith family" in that town, and it was believed that she had been buried in or near the Smith family plot.

Sarah Bishop figured as the central character in a novel by Dr. Maurice Enright of Ridgefield which was entitled "*The Ridgefield Tavern*" (A Romance of Sarah Bishop, Hermitess During the American Revolution)". The novel was illustrated by Katherine Enright, the author's relative, and it was published in 1908 by the Eagle Book and Job Printing Company of Brooklyn.

Samuel Griswold Goodrich, Jr., who achieved literary fame under the pseudonym of "Peter Parley", wrote and published many books for children. He also produced moralistic works of instruction in fiction form which were extremely popular throughout the world during the 19th Century.

He was the son and namesake of Reverend Samuel Griswold Goodrich, the sixth of ten children. He was born on 9 August 1793 at the first Goodrich residence at the corner of West and Golf Lanes. The dwelling and other buildings disappeared many years ago but the foundations are still clearly visible.

When young Samuel was four years old the family moved to a new residence which had just been built on High Ridge, which is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Preston Bassett.

Samuel Goodrich attended school from the age of six at the little red schoolhouse on West Lane. He recalled that his first teacher was Aunt Delight Benedict and two years later he was taught by Lewis Olmsted.

In the fall of 1808 Samuel Goodrich obtained employment in Danbury as a clerk in the store owned and operated by his brother-in-law, Amos Cooke. Three years later he moved to Hartford where he worked in a dry goods store. In 1813 he enlisted in the coast artillery for service in the War of 1812 and was stationed in New London and Groton.

Samuel's uncle, Chauncey Goodrich, was a Senator from Connecticut and during this period Samuel often visited him and met many important persons. For a period of time in 1814 he moved into his uncle's house in Hartford. He accompanied his uncle on visits to New York City, Saratoga and other points, and at one time he settled down long enough to undertake the manufacture of pocketbooks, an enterprise that was doomed to failure.

In 1816 he entered into partnership with a friend, George Sheldon, in a publishing venture. Sheldon died within a year and young Goodrich was forced to continue the publishing business by himself for the next four years.

He had married in the interim, and when his wife died in about 1821 he found himself in poor health and a widower with an infant daughter. Goodrich took his daughter to Europe with him in 1823 and he produced his first book, *Parley's Tales of the Sea*, while he was in Europe.

After Goodrich's return to the United States in 1824 he moved to Boston to engage in the publishing business for the publication of his own works, with considerable success.

Many imitators adopted his form and his name and reaped great profit from both, especially in England. Goodrich's own works ran into millions of copies and he profited to a great degree directly from their sale. Among his better known works are included *Tales of Peter Parley About America* (1827), *Outcast and Other Poems* (1836), *Peter Parley's Historical Compendium* (1853), *Recollections of a Lifetime* (1856), *A Thousand and One Stories* (1858), and his *Illustrated Natural History of the Animal Kingdom* which was issued in 1859, the year before his death.

Under President Fillmore, Goodrich was appointed Consul at Paris, a post which he filled in a most satisfactory manner. When Pierce succeeded to the Presidency, however, Goodrich was recalled in spite of the protests of many of his supporters. Upon his return to his native country he gave up his home in New York and settled in Southbury, Connecticut. He died on 7 May 1860 while visiting his brother.

The work which is best known to residents of Ridgefield is Goodrich's *Recollections of a Lifetime* which included a considerable amount of autobiographical material about his life in Ridgefield, and which has served every local historian as a source on every aspect of Ridgefield's history.

A letter from Samuel G. Goodrich to Abijah Ressiguie, which is illus-

trated in *Figure 81*, was recently discovered among the Keeler Tavern Papers. The letter was dated 26 November 1856 and stated that

“I have sent by Express, this day, 2 copies of my new work, *Recollections of a Lifetime*—in 2 vols. One is for you, which please accept; the other is for Joshua King, which please deliver.

You will find a large mass of details about Ridgefield & the people, past & present. If you discover any errors, be so kind as to point them out to me.

The publishers desire me to say, that if some one can be found, who will take 25 copies or upwards, they will be sent at \$2 a copy (for 2 volumes) the retail price being \$3. Their address is *Miller Orton & Mulligan*, 25 Park Row, New York.

My best respects to your family.

Yrs truly,
S. G. Goodrich.”

A. Ressiguie Esq.

The addressee, Abijah Ressiguie, was the owner of the Keeler Tavern and was mentioned in the *Recollections*.

Three other members of the Goodrich family are of interest. The first of these is

Reverend Samuel G. Goodrich, the father of “Peter Parley”, who served the Congregational Church for many years (*Figure 82*). In 1800 he wrote a short history of the town under the title *A Statistical Account of Ridgefield, in the County of Fairfield, drawn up by Rev. S. G. Goodrich from minutes furnished by a number of his parishoners, November 1800*. This work was never published in the minister’s lifetime, but it was issued as a booklet in 1954 by the Acorn Society of Connecticut. The original manuscript of 22 pages is in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society. The first page is illustrated in *Figure 83*.

Charles Augustus Goodrich (1790-1846) was one of “Peter Parley’s” older brothers. At considerable financial sacrifice, Reverend Goodrich sent his son to Yale to prepare for the ministry. In 1816 Charles became a colleague of the First Congregational Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, but his political and religious views made him the subject of a violent controversy. As a consequence, in 1820 he asked to be dismissed. He continued to do a limited amount of preaching and he became active in state politics, but the main interest of his later life was writing. Among his works was his *History of the United States of America* which appeared in 1822, and was re-issued in one hundred fifty editions.

Frank Abbott Goodrich was the son of “Peter Parley” by a second marriage. After graduation from Harvard he joined his father in France and became interested in writing. His first work to be published was a series of letters relating to the French court which appeared under the pseudonym of “Dick Tinto” in the *New York Times*. After his return to New York in 1855 he became interested in the theatre and devoted the next decade to working

with various playwrights in the production and adaptation of plays in New York.

Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915) was born in the little town of Southeast in Putnam County, New York on 24 March 1820, the daughter of John and Mercy Crosby. She became totally blind at the age of six weeks and never recovered her sight. The family moved to Ridgefield when she was nine years old. She remained in the town for about four years.

In her memoirs Fanny Crosby described the years of her childhood that she spent in Ridgefield. When her parents moved to the town from the Quaker settlement at Southeast, they lived in the home of Mrs. Hawley, now owned by Miss Emily Buch, opposite the Village Green. Fanny sang in the choir of the Presbyterian meeting house and she recalled that she did not attend the services at the Methodist Church until she was twelve years old.

Fanny Crosby's preoccupation with the music of the church began when as a little girl a neighbor read the Bible to her at every opportunity. Fanny was able to memorize long passages. At nine she was able to recite the Pentateuch with the exception of Leviticus, as well as the Four Gospels.

When Fanny was fifteen she was placed in the Institution for the Blind in New York City where she remained for twenty-three years. An apt pupil, she made great progress in her studies and in 1847 she was appointed instructor, teaching English grammar, Greek, Roman and American History.

During the summer of 1852 while she was still in the Institution she wrote several songs for George F. Root. These included some that became widely known, such as *Honeysuckle Glen*, *Hazel Dell*, *Rosalie*, *The Prairie Flower*, *Proud World*, *Goodbye, I'm Going Home*, *There's Music in the Air*, and *Safe In the Arms of Jesus*.

During this period she also wrote the words of the cantatas *Pilgrim Fathers* and *The Flower Queen*. Previous to this time she had published two volumes of poems, the first of which was entitled *The Blind Girl, and Other Poems*, published in 1844. In 1849 she published the second volume entitled *Monterey and Other Poems*, and a third volume was to follow later under the title *A Wreath of Columbia Flowers*.

During her years at the Institution Fanny met many notables including Presidents Tyler and Van Buren and Henry Clay, as well as General Winfield Scott.

She was converted to the Methodist Episcopal faith in November 1850 in New York City. On 5 March 1858 Fanny married a blind musician named Alexander Van Alstyne and left the Institution to make a home of her own.

The first of Fanny's many Sunday School hymns was written in the Ponton Hotel on Franklin Street in New York City in 1864. The opening lines of this first hymn were

"We are going, we are going,
To a home beyond the sea."

Following the publication of this first attempt by William Bradbury, Fanny Crosby produced an estimated total of nearly six thousand hymns, of which about 3800 were published by Bradbury's firm and by his successors, Bigelow & Main.

In spite of her lifelong affliction, Fanny Crosby (*Figure 84*) was a happy person, guided through life by the words of the first poem which she had written in 1828, when she was eight years old:

“O what a happy soul I am,
Although I cannot see;
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't.
To weep or sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, nor I won't.”

The Leather Man was the subject of a mystery that remains unsolved to this day. Dressed in an unusual costume consisting of crudely fashioned leather cap with a visor, a patchwork suit created from dozens of pieces of black leather of varied shapes and sizes laced coarsely together with leather thongs half an inch wide, leather moccasins and leather mittens, this strange traveler was neither a peddler nor a beggar. He could easily have been the inspiration of the old nursery rhyme:

“One misty, moisty morning,
When cloudy was the weather,
I chanced to meet an old man
Clothed all in leather.”

For a period of twenty-seven years, from 1862 to 1889, the Leather Man (*Figure 85*) traveled a circuit of 366 miles through Connecticut and New York completing it approximately once a month, or more accurately, about every thirty-four days, and arriving at a given point on his route at the same time on each round. He started at Harwinton, Connecticut and traveled a distance of 240 miles in Connecticut and 126 miles in adjoining counties of New York State, averaging about twelve miles a day. He was a familiar figure in Ridgefield as well as other towns along his route and natives could predict the day and the hour of his appearance in their community.

It is said that he never smiled and he rarely spoke, even to acknowledge kindness shown to him. When he did speak it was in broken English and in a gentle tone. He was believed to be trilingual, speaking French, German and English. That was only conjecture, however, for there was none who knew for certain. He seemed particularly pleased when he was addressed in French and in his pack he carried a prayer book in French which was printed in 1814. Around his neck he wore a tiny crucifix. Once he was seen reading a newspaper in English.

It was inevitable that the Leather Man would become the subject of romantic explanations invented to account for his strange way of life. The

most appealing version was, of course, that disappointment in love caused his lonely wandering. According to this version, the old Leather Man was Jules Bourglay, the son of a woodcarver of Lyons who worked in the leather trade. He had fallen in love with his employer's daughter and planned to marry her. A business error for which he was responsible, however, not only ruined his employer but spoiled his own chance to wed the girl. It is said that when she married a rival for her hand, Bourglay's mind became unhinged and he was placed in an institution for a brief period. When he was released he disappeared and it was not until much later that he was accidentally discovered in this country. Although his relatives tried to compel him to return to France, Bourglay refused and continued his circuit of Connecticut and New York, a self-imposed penance. It is related that he had received a small legacy from a relative in France, which he deposited in a bank in Portchester, New York and from which he drew funds from time to time. However, this story was later claimed by a lady of Philadelphia to have been plagiarized from a fictional work which she had produced before the old Leather Man's death, and that the romantic account was pure fiction.

Another account of the Leather Man claimed that he was a Negro fugitive from justice. It related that he was a member of a band of white and colored men who made their headquarters at a "thieves kitchen" known as the Barkhamptonstead Lighthouse near New Hartford. This hangout was called a light house only because there was always a light to be seen in the resort until it was finally raided by the authorities. This tale seems to have little basis.

About one year before his death the Leather Man was taken to a hospital by the Connecticut Humane Society for treatment of cancer of the lip. He was found dead in a cave on the George Dell farm near Ossining, New York in March 1889. The old Leather Man last visited Ridgefield about 1884.

George Washington Gilbert, the hermit of Ivy Hill, (*Figure 86*) was one of Ridgefield's familiar landmarks until his death in 1924. Gilbert lived in Florida District in a very old house that had been built by one of his ancestors. When this building literally fell apart from neglect, Colonel Edward M. Knox, a neighbor, built a little cottage for Gilbert nearby which featured a very large fireplace. The house was jammed with the old man's memorabilia and the furniture of his ancestors. The most important of his belongings was the sword which his grandfather, David Gilbert, was reputed to have taken from a Hessian soldier at the Battle of Monmouth. The hermit often posed with this sword, and after his death it was placed in the collection of the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association. Another of Gilbert's favorite possessions, which was famous in this area, was a natural stone which was eroded to resemble the profile of Queen Victoria. What eventually became of this stone is not known.

Gilbert was born on 1 July 1847 and died 5 January 1924. According to

his own account, he became a hermit following the death of the girl he had planned to marry. He lived on a minimum budget of about thirty cents a week, according to reports. He was invariably dressed in a cotton shirt, old overalls attached by suspenders, and an old straw hat, and he was usually barefoot. On 5 January 1924 a neighbor, who looked in on him, found him dead of overexposure.

Halcyon Gilbert Bailey was a well known personality of the Ridgebury District during the major part of the 19th Century. He was born on Dingle Ridge Road in the family homestead on 25 August 1828, the son of Gilbert Bailey. The old house, which has been in the family's possession since 1745, is at present the superintendent's cottage on Eight Bells Farm.

Halcyon Bailey married one of the daughters of Lyman Keeler of Ridgebury. He lived in Ridgebury most of his life.

The unusual document illustrated in *Figure 87* purports to be a proclamation by Bailey as the Hayward of Ridgefield. The poster may have been produced as a prank inasmuch as Bailey was noted for his mischievous disposition. The document is of particular interest, regardless of whether it was produced officially or in fun, because it revives a word that has long been obsolete in the English language.

A "Hayward" is defined in the older dictionaries as "a person appointed to guard the hedges and hence to keep cattle from doing them injury; an officer charged with the confinement of stray animals to keep them from doing damage." Whether the town of Ridgefield or the Ridgebury District appointed haywards in the 19th Century is not known because no mention of them has been found in the town records. The services of such an official would have been required in the 18th Century when animals were allowed to roam unconfined.

Bailey died on 5 October 1883 at the age of fifty-five years.



Figure 88

Chapter XV THE RESORT ERA

Ridgefield in 1855 was already undergoing a basic change, as evidenced in the writings of Samuel G. Goodrich (Peter Parley) who described his visit to the town during that year in a letter to his brother. Many of the inhabitants had become quite affluent by the middle of the 19th Century and some had amassed substantial wealth. The population had reached its zenith in conjunction with the available employment in the area. It was a quiet little town with everyone in his place and a place for everyone.

Summer Residents were an occasional feature in Ridgefield even then, for members of some of the old influential families that lived in New York or elsewhere in the State returned to Ridgefield to spend the summer in the old family homes. The first of these were the King, Hawley and Ingersoll families.

Among the changes reported by Goodrich on his return to the town were the new and larger houses that replaced the old dwellings he remembered, the conversion of swamps into meadows, the control of waterways and the clearing of woodland areas. On Main Street most of the old colonial houses had disappeared and new sumptuous residences bordered the street. The plain and primitive character of the town had been converted to one of elegance and neatness.

The First Judge of Probate in Ridgefield was Harvey Smith (1792-1864). He was the first person appointed to this office when the Probate District of Ridgefield was established in 1841. Smith was a civil engineer by profession.

He was in charge of building the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad and served as its superintendent for many years.

As Ridgefield developed gradually from an industrial into a resort town following the end of the Civil War, more and more of the wealthy society from New York City found the pleasant little community a perfect summer residence. At first many who later built homes in Ridgefield visited for briefer periods and stayed at the local hostelrys. In time the increasing need for accommodations led to the establishment of more hotel facilities.

Elm Shade Cottages was the first of Ridgefield's hotels to cater to the resort trade that began to discover Ridgefield. It was opened to lodgers in 1860 by its owner, John Rockwell, a descendant of Thomas Hawley Rockwell, who had built the main dwelling on the premises. Prior to this time the only inn or hotel was the Keeler Tavern, which was operated by Abijah Ressiguie. Rockwell's enterprise has continued in operation under the name of *The Elms* and it is now owned and operated by Mr. John Scala.

Bailey Inn was situated on the present premises of Dr. Joseph S. Bell on south Main Street. The building was originally the cabinet-making factory of Hawley & Pickett prior to the Civil War. Later in the 19th Century when the firm was dissolved, the building was separated into two parts. The southern section was moved to the premises of the King family, which is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fielding V. Jackson. This building was made into the Rockwell Candlestick and Tin Factory which was later destroyed by fire.

The northern half of the building remained in place and was converted into a community meeting hall for social and civic functions. It was known locally as "Tammany Hall" because of the political parties which selected it as the center for its events.

Later it was used as a tenement house and finally it was converted into an inn to accommodate summer visitors. The Bailey Inn was a popular hostelry during the resort era of the town until it was finally demolished in 1919.

Harvey K. Smith (1813-1887) established another early hotel on Main Street on what was recently known as the Oreneca Lot or the Odd Fellows property. This was presumably the same establishment on the same site which was later known as

The Dyckman House when it was operated as an inn by members of the Dyckman family during the 1880s. In 1887 the inn was purchased by James F. Thompson, who renamed it the Thompson House and continued it in operation until 20 June 1890, when it was purchased by J. O. Poole who changed the name once more, this time to the Ridgefield Inn.

Six years later it came under the management of Mrs. Sidney Ruggles (formerly Miss Lydia Bouton of West Mountain) and she changed the name of the establishment again to Oreneca Inn. Under the management of Mrs.

Ruggles the inn flourished and featured accommodations for permanent guests as well as rooms and meals for transients. In 1899 the inn changed hands again, and finally in 1903 it was purchased by S. S. Denton. Denton moved the building through the meadows to High Ridge, where it became his home. It is now St. Mary's Convent.

The First Train Service to Ridgefield was instrumental to a great degree in converting the community into a summer resort. The first rail was laid on the Ridgefield branch of the Danbury & Norwalk Railroad on 20 April 1870 at the lower switch just below the Branchville Station. The first train made the trip to Ridgefield from Branchville on 18 July, bedecked with lilac and ground pine, with Lawrence J. Briggs at the throttle and Smith Gilbert as fireman. The first station agent in Ridgefield was Albert N. Thomas and Benjamin F. Howe was the first brakeman.

Within a few decades more and more of the wealthy society people from New York discovered Ridgefield and built palatial "summer cottages" for their use during the summer season and on weekends.

High Ridge was one of the first and perhaps the most important areas for development at the beginning of the resort era. It was J. Howard King that formulated the plan of converting High Ridge into real estate for division and development in the early 1890s. Prior to this time the tract consisted of open fields with a wonderful view. King sold the property, and the great summer homes, many of which still exist, were built on the improved land, creating the nucleus which grew rapidly into a summer resort.

Some of the most important of the summer residences were built on High Ridge. Here was to be found the mansion of the publisher, Charles Henry Holt, which is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. Herbert Parm. To the south is the spacious home built by another publisher, Mr. E. P. Dutton. Mr. Lucius Bigelow, music publisher and partner in the firm of Bigelow & Main that published much of the music of Miss Fanny Crosby, purchased the former Dr. Adams residence. This dwelling was originally the home of Colonel Philip Burr Bradley, and was situated at the corner of Main and Gilbert Streets. Mr. Bigelow remodeled the house extensively. It is now the home of his daughter, Mrs. Edward L. Ballard.

Another of the important homes of this period was "Nutholme", which had been built facing Peaceable Street by Mr. Francis M. Bacon, and was later purchased by the late Mr. George Doubleday.

Downsbury Manor was among the larger cottages constructed for summer residents. It was built as the home of Colonel Edward M. Knox on Ivy Hill Road, and it was completed in 1901. The wealthy hat manufacturer from New York had patterned his summer place after the English estate of the same name on the Isle of Wight. One of Knox's friends was Mark Twain, who often visited him in Ridgefield.

The early summer residents provided work for the inhabitants of the town and in a general way the community survived because of their presence in Ridgefield. By the same token, the summer residents took a considerable interest in the community and served it in many ways. Their names are found on the boards of directors of the banks, in the church organizations, and every effort to procure improved public utilities was sponsored by them.

The Town Sewage System became an accomplished fact because twelve of the town's summer residents met at the Hotel Manhattan in New York and adopted a resolution for this improvement, which they forwarded to the selectmen. Two and a half years later, when the borough was established as a separate taxing unit, the town sewer was completed.

Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury, a native son, retired from active politics in 1896 and returned to Ridgefield where he built his imposing mansion which he called "Grovelawn". This residence is now familiarly known as the Community Center and is owned by the town. The mansion was designed after the Connecticut State Building at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The premises were fabulous in their time, with a windmill, a greenhouse, a private water supply piped from High Ridge, a bowling alley, and many other features. A staff of fourteen persons were employed in the mansion and twelve others on the grounds.

Governor Phineas Lounsbury was the son of Nathan Lounsbury of Ridgefield. He attended local schools as a boy. At sixteen he went to New York where he studied the wholesale shoe business and later organized the firm of Lounsbury Brothers in partnership with his brother, George. The firm manufactured shoes for men and women.

In 1874 Lounsbury became the representative from Ridgefield to the State Legislature. From this appointment he returned to New York to become president of the Merchant's Exchange National Bank. Then followed a period of combined business and politics with the result that he emerged as the Governor of Connecticut.

George E. Lounsbury, his older brother, first taught school in Ridgefield and was a minister of the Episcopal Church until he was forced to retire from the ministry by illness. In 1867 he founded the shoe and boot manufacturing firm of Lounsbury, Mathewson & Company, and it was not until 1894 that he entered politics. He served as State Senator for several terms and in 1898 he was nominated for Governor of the State. After serving a term in office, Lounsbury retired and returned to Ridgefield, where he became the first president of the First National Bank and Trust Company.

Other outstanding figures of the business world who built summer residences or permanent homes in Ridgefield contributed to Ridgefield's development as a resort town. Among them must be included the names of Dr. Newton M. Schaeffer, renowned orthopedic surgeon; George M. Olcott; William

S. Hawk; Dr. William F. Cushman; James Morris; Allen S. Apgar; Henry K. McHarg; David S. Egleston; Professor James Crafts; A. Newbold Morris; Colonel Louis D. Conley; and Honorable B. Ogden Chisolm.

The Town Hall served the community as the center for all of its civic and social functions from 1896 until 1939. The present building was completed on 21 November 1896 at a cost of sixteen thousand dollars. It was designed by Philip Sunderland of Danbury and financed by a group of fifteen Ridgefield summer residents and patrons.

The present building replaced the second Town Hall which had been built in 1876 at a cost of almost six thousand dollars and which was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1895.

The Town Hall was remodeled in 1950 and 1951 and is now used exclusively to accommodate the offices of the town.

The Masonic Daily Mirror was a four-page newspaper which was published every day during the Ridgefield Fair. Two pages were devoted exclusively to advertisements of the local merchants, and of the remaining two pages only three columns were reserved for news and non-commercial material. The issue for 4 September 1889 (Vol. I No. 3) truly reflects, like a mirror, the character of the town through the advertisements of the local merchants, which included

Charles B. Northrop, Carpenter and Builder.

L. H. Davis, "Master Mechanic in his line. Patronize him."

Nash & Hoyt, Carpenters & Builders (Charles S. Nash and Will F. Hoyt).

E. W. Hibbart, Fish! fruit and vegetables, "only first class goods."

D. Smith Gage, Undertaking in all its Branches. General Furniture Store.

Mrs. Cyrus Green, Fall Opening of Millinery . . . Main Street.

I. Osborn & Co., Dealers in all kinds of Pine and Hard Wood Lumber, timber, shingles, lath sash . . .

Ridgefield Inn, Main Street, Ridgefield. J. O. Poole, Prop.

Joseph W. Hibbart, Round Lake Ice. Also Gravel furnished for walks.

Baxter's Livery Stable, rear of Ridgefield Inn. D. Crosby Baxter, Prop.

Charles H. Stevens, Main Street Bakery and Confectionery.

M. B. Whitlock's Livery Stables, Catoonah Street. "Careful drivers always furnished."

John F. Gilbert, Carriage Making in all its branches. Factory at Big Shop . . . New and second hand carriages for sale.

Hiram K. Scott, Licensed Druggist. Pure drugs, medicines, fine grocers, Stationery, etc. Main Street.

SHOLES, "will give you 'Fits' in Shirts!"

Hiram K. Scott, Notary Public, Post Office Building, Ridgefield.

S. F. Main, Hot air furnaces, steam and hot water heaters, stoves, plumbing and tinning in all branches.

F. C. Lee, Dealer in Coal and Wood. Yard north of Depot.

Seymour & Barhite, "can always be relied on to sell Dry Goods, Groceries, Canned Goods, Flour Feed and Grain at Rock Bottom Prices. We lead but never follow."

"Fair-ites, when you desire to get a Refreshing Glass of Soda, Leave the many attractions of Ridgefield Hall for a moment and step into

S. D. Keeler's Just across the street. We sell besides choice Dry Goods, Groceries, Provisions, Canned Goods, etc."

The First Photographer in Ridgefield was Josef Hartmann who maintained a photographic studio on Main Street for over forty years. The late Mr. Hartmann worked for Havee Studio in Stamford before moving with his family to Ridgefield in the early 1890s. His first studio was in the S. D. Keeler building which is now Gristede's. He moved into the new Bedient & Mead building at the corner of Main Street and Bailey Avenue in 1896, after the Great Fire, and continued in that location until his retirement in 1938 because of illness.

John the Chinaman, as he was known locally, was probably the first professional laundry established in the town. The Chinese laundry was situated in the building on the site of the present Ridgefield Savings Bank and was established shortly before 1896. John, who was a popular figure in the town, was said to have worked for forty years to save enough money to return to his home in China. He finally accumulated sufficient funds for the journey, but it was reported that he was robbed on his way through San Francisco and disappeared, possibly a victim of foul play.

The First Bicycle Shop may have been the establishment owned and operated by George A. Lewis of Danbury on Bailey Avenue, in the building that adjoined the present office of the Ridgefield Press. In addition to selling and repairing bicycles, Lewis also sold phonograph records of the cylinder type.

It is related that in 1899 an elderly lady staying at the Elms Inn for the summer often came into the shop to purchase the latest phonograph records. On one occasion she noted the less than satisfactory condition of the shop and encouraged the young man to make some attempt to improve the premises. Lewis made a casual reply that he would be pleased to do so—if he had the money of Hetty Green, for instance. The lady enjoyed the remark considerably, because she was in fact Hetty Green, the famous millionairess. She did not offer to furnish the necessary funds, however. The shop was later acquired by Tappan, who had worked for Lewis as a clerk.

Disasters including flood, fire, and snow marked the 19th Century in Ridgefield. The first major disaster that took place in the town was

The Titicus Flood which occurred in September 1868 and was caused by the bursting of the dam on New pond. The dam had been constructed for Aaron B. and William H. Gilbert by Andrew and Lyman Searles for the purpose of storing water for the operation of the Gilbert mill in Titicus. A torrential rain caused the dam to break and a great torrent of water flooded the area below, tearing away various buildings and damaging property. However, there was no loss of life, and the greatest degree of damage occurred at the tannery.

The Blizzard of 1888 covered the town with two feet of snow between 11 March and 13 March 1888. The town was isolated from the outside world for four days while high winds banked the snow as deep as twenty feet. Ridgefield has experienced snow storms that may have been even more serious in more recent years, but modern snow removal equipment has made the restoration of communication and transportation a relatively simple matter.

The Great Fire of 1895 left thirteen businesses homeless, destroyed ten buildings, and caused damage exceeding one hundred thousand dollars. The cause of the blaze was never determined but it started in the undertaking and furniture store of Bedient & Mead at the corner of Main Street and Bailey Avenue. It was discovered by Louis Joffee and Josef Hartmann and several other pedestrians at about nine o'clock Sunday evening, on 9 December 1895. From the Bedient & Mead store the fire spread rapidly to the adjoining Western Union telegraph office and to the general store operated by Barhite & Valden. The dwelling of Robert Wilson which was next in line was saved after considerable effort. The Town Hall as well as the wooden block occupied by the store of Peter McGlynn and several apartments above it caught fire at almost the same time. As the night progressed the Masonic Hall, which included the plant of the Ridgefield Press and the Reynolds barber shop also perished. On Bailey Avenue the fire leaped the street to the Fogarty hardware store and the livery stables of Hiram K. Scott, Jr.

Dynamiting was attempted by Ebenezer W. Keeler to destroy the burning Masonic Hall in order to curtail the spread of the blaze. Next to catch fire was the E. W. Hibbart residence adjacent to the Masonic Hall, followed by the Hibbert & Sherwood market building, which also housed the telephone office and the Willis Gilbert cigar store as well as Louis Joffee's tailor shop and Conrad Rocklein's barber shop.

Although assistance had been asked from the Danbury fire department during the earlier stage of the fire, no help was forthcoming until three o'clock the following morning. The Scott building was next to be destroyed. In addition to the buildings that were reduced to a total loss, a number of other stores and dwellings in the vicinity were threatened. Many of them caught

fire again and again but were saved by the diligent efforts of the villagers who worked all through the night to save their town.

The 1905 Train Wreck occurred near Coffey's Crossing on Ivy Hill Road and resulted in the death of the engineer, William Horan. As the 8:20 train from Ridgefield to Branchville passed the curve and approached the power plant at the crossing with the engine and tender at the head of the train and running backwards to ease the train down the grade, the engine and tender became disconnected. The tender was rammed twice by the engine, jumped the tracks and turned over along the bank. Horan was pinned under the cab and suffered severe burns from the steam. His leg was broken and a foot was crushed, and he died at the scene of the accident. Other members of the crew and several passengers suffered minor cuts and bruises. The accident occurred on 17 April 1905.

The Town Farm was operated by the town as a home for its indigent inhabitants between 1882 and 1949. In 1882 the town purchased the former James Scott 2nd property in Scotland District, which included a farmhouse and farm buildings and thirty-four acres of land, for \$4500 from its current owner, Lewis A. Reed. The property was first operated as a Town Farm by a Mr. Stevens, then by Mr. and Mrs. Smith Remington until 1899. Mr. and Mrs. William R. Wilson succeeded to the management in that year and continued until Mr. and Mrs. Fred Young undertook the management of the Farm in 1915. In 1931 Mr. Joseph Young succeeded his father as manager upon the latter's death and he continued to conduct the Farm until it was sold in 1949 for \$17,000.

The farmhouse was built by James Scott 2nd, probably in the last several decades of the 18th Century. It was one of the original Scott homes which gave the name of Scott's Ridge to the district. The property remained in the Scott family for many generations. Hiram K. Scott, former postmaster, town clerk and storekeeper, was born in the house in 1882. It remained his home until he sold it to Reed in 1865.

As the end of the 19th Century approached, Ridgefield underwent a number of changes. Modernization was rapidly taking place with the introduction of public utilities

The Town Sewer System was among the first improvements initiated during the turn of the century. By April 1901 the need for a sewer system had become urgent and work on the project was begun in the same year, and completed by June 1902.

It was for the installation of the town sewer and water systems that the first Italian immigrants were brought to Ridgefield, sponsored by H. B. Anderson. When the water and sewer projects had been completed, Anderson employed the Italian laborers to build roads for

The Port of Missing Men, which was to be a second Tuxedo Park which Henry B. Anderson planned to develop on a tract of 1750 acres which he purchased at the turn of the century. The property was situated one-third in Connecticut and two-thirds in New York State on Titicus Mountain.

Ten miles of private roads were constructed on the property and an inn was built. In 1907 Mrs. Ida Smith was employed as its first manager. The inn was named "*The Port of Missing Men*", a name borrowed from the title of a current best seller by Meredith B. Nicholson.

During the first two years that the inn was open to the public, more than twenty thousand persons signed the guest book, with visitors coming from Canada, several foreign countries and every state in the Union.

The inn was of the ranch style of architecture, built on the edge of Titicus Mountain, with an unparalleled view through large rows of windows and glass-enclosed porches. The building was finally demolished about 1946 and the property has since been divided for building development.

The transition of Ridgefield to a resort town brought with it considerable modernization. Many changes were brought about by some of the new residents, chiefly in the form of modern facilities and utilities. Notable examples included

Gas Lighting which was introduced in Ridgefield at the beginning of the 20th Century when the Ridgefield Illuminating Company was formed. A four-inch gas main was installed from the Company's offices on Bailey Avenue up into Main Street and along West Lane. Private homes along the route were illuminated by the system, as well as the Town Hall and several stores. The firm soon went out of business for financial reasons and it was succeeded by

Electric Power furnished by the Ridgefield Electric Company which was organized in Ridgefield in 1906 by H. B. Anderson. He was president of the firm and thirty or forty summer residents of the town became stockholders. The purpose of the company was to provide power for the Ridgefield Water Supply Company's new pumping station at Round Pond, as well as for the home of the stockholders. The electric installations were built by the contracting firm of Bellman and Sanders in 1906 and included two coal-burning steam engines which operated an electric generator on Ivy Hill Road. The electric lines ran along Main Street to Catoonah Street, along Danbury Road, and as far as the pumping station on West Mountain.

Street lights first appeared in 1907, and by 1908 there were ninety users of the services. The company was bought by the Associated Gas and Electric Company, then became a part of the Litchfield Light and Power Company, and, finally, in 1943 it was purchased by the Connecticut Light and Power Company.

Water Supply was provided to the town by the Ridgefield Water Supply Company in the first several years of the 20th Century. Service was first

furnished on 13 June 1900 from a supply formed by a group of springs on West Mountain. In 1902 H. B. Anderson acquired the company and added Round Pond as a source of supply.

The First Automobile in Ridgefield is believed to have been owned by Dr. Russell W. Lowe, M.D. The vehicle was a Stanley Steamer and was already in operation in May 1901. He exchanged his car every year and it was noted that in 1904 the new model was capable of a speed of 35 miles per hour.

Other early owners were Samuel S. Denton and Harvey P. Bissell. Within a year or so a number of vehicles were being operated in the town.

The first certificate of registration in Ridgefield was issued by the newly formed Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles to Frank S. Hurlbutt and George I. Johnson for a one cylinder Rambler runabout in 1903.

The First Telephone Service was brought into Ridgefield by the beginning of autumn in 1891, after the greatest opposition yet encountered by the company. The office had a single switchboard and 27 subscribers and was forced to close in 1894 for lack of subscription.

A telephone office was reopened in 1895 by the Southern New England Telephone Company with 57 subscribers. In 1907 it was voted in the town to have a cable installed on Main Street on the electric power poles. By 1909 three operators were required for the increased number of subscribers, which totaled almost four hundred, and the office was moved to Governor Street. The new common battery system was installed in 1913.

The First Watch Repairer and Jewelry Store in Ridgefield was established by Francis D. Martin on 3 July 1911. His first shop consisted of a watchmaker's bench placed in the front window of the plumbing shop of McGlynn & Ryan. Prior to this time there were no establishments for the sale of jewelry or for the repair of clocks and watches in the community. Mr. Martin continued in the jewelry business for forty years. In 1935 his establishment was considered by the trade to be the finest country jewelry store in America.

The First Movies came to Ridgefield at the turn of the century and the first notice that is found of a showing appeared in the Ridgefield Press relating to the second appearance of moving pictures at the Town Hall by the Edison Projectoscope Company in 1902. The features at this showing included the funeral of President McKinley and a travelogue.

Town Hall Photoplays was the next attempt to bring movies to the town, followed by a similar enterprise at the parish house of St. Stephen's Church about 1920.

During the same period the American Legion in Ridgefield ventured into the showing of movies in order to raise funds for their organization, and with the cooperation of Mr. Arthur J. Carnall and Mr. Arthur Ferry, who had

pioneered the previous ventures, photoplays were presented by the Legion in the Town Hall on Wednesdays and Saturdays with considerable success.

The present Ridgefield Playhouse was a project initiated in 1938 and presented its first performance on 26 March 1940.

The Watering Trough is another pleasant reminder of Ridgefield's past as a summer resort. The trough, which is now situated at the intersection of West Lane and Olmstead Lane, was first placed at the triangle of Main and Catoonah Streets from some time after 1912 until 1922, when it was removed to the crossroads at Titicus. When repairs were made to Titicus Bridge following the flood of 1955, the trough was removed and installed in its latest location.

Troughs were located at various points throughout the town for the refreshment of horses. The earliest one consisted of hollowed out logs sometimes fed by springs, placed near the roadside and at intersections. The town paid a modicum to the property owners who maintained them.

A short time before the turn of the century a wooden watering trough was placed at the green at the intersection of Main and Catoonah Streets. This was replaced by an iron trough in 1912, paid for by the horse show fund. The trough is now used as a decorative feature on the lawn of the Community Center.

The new watering trough which is now at West Lane was the gift of the late John Ames Mitchell, cartoonist and former editor of "*Life*", who made Ridgefield his home during this period.

World War I cast its shadow before the United States entered into the conflict. Accordingly, a census of available men and materials in the state of Connecticut was compiled by legislative act. Fourteen citizens from Ridgefield were selected to prepare this information and the census that was taken revealed that there were a few more than one thousand male residents over eighteen years of age in Ridgefield. In May 1917 the local Registration Board for the Selective Draft was organized and in the following month three hundred men registered for the draft within the town. Others were already serving with the French Army.

Connecticut Home Guard, Platoon No. 1 was formed on 18 May 1917 under the direction of Captain Clarence Judson of Danbury with 2nd Lieutenant David Workman, 1st Sergeant William Creagh, and Sergeant Joseph Zwerlein. The platoon was under the command of Lt. Arthur D. Wood until he went overseas in the regular Army. He was succeeded by Rev. John M. Deyo as 1st Lt. in charge. There were forty-five members.

Liberty Loans were generously subscribed in the town as follows: first loan—\$96,000; second loan—\$148,000; third loan—\$204,000; fourth loan—\$366,400; fifth loan—\$303,400, making a total of \$1,117,800.00 as

Ridgefield's subscription, which was approximately \$690,000.00 over the quota.

Casualties of World War I in Ridgefield included Private First Class William J. Cumming, who died in a hospital at Vittel, France. He was the first man to enlist from Ridgefield; Private Robert Dunlop who died at Camp Wadsworth; Everett Ray Seymour who was killed in action near Fere-en-Tardenois in France on 29 July 1918; Carlo Scaglia who was killed in action on 5 September 1918.

One hundred seventy-one men from Ridgefield served in World War I, including those who enlisted from Ridgefield and moved elsewhere, and those who entered service elsewhere and later moved to the town.

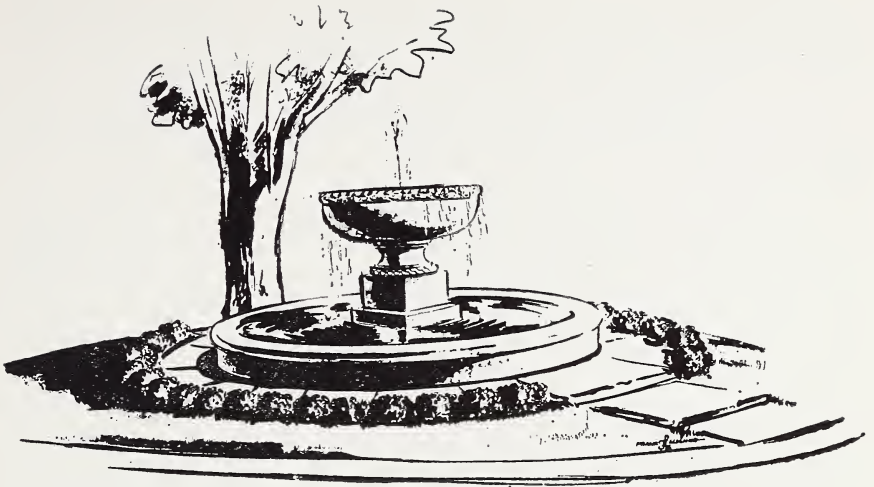


Figure 96a

Chapter XVI

HAVEN OF THE ART WORLD

Members of the art world discovered Ridgefield late in the 19th Century with the result that during the next several decades the community witnessed an influx of leading figures in every branch of the fine arts. They found the town an ideal location for summer residence or permanent homes because of its accessible seclusion.

Among the first of the artists to make their homes in Ridgefield was *Frederick Remington*, who died suddenly here in 1909. *George Henry Smillie*, a water-colorist and member of the National Academy of Design, lived on Main Street in the present residence of Dr. Inkster for many years. Among his landscapes which hung in numerous collections in this country and in Europe are many Ridgefield scenes. *J. Alden Weir* made his home in Branchville and produced many paintings of Ridgefield scenes which have found a permanent place in art collections. *Edwin H. Blashfield*, the American painter of genre, portraits and murals, and who decorated the central dome of the Library of Congress as well as various State Capitol buildings, made Ridgefield his home. *Frederic Dielman*, well known artist and director of Cooper Union Art School, became a member of the first group of artists to settle in the town. Still another was *Mahonri Young*, a grandson of the Mormon leader, Brigham Young. Among his best known works are the Sea Gull Monument in Salt Lake City and the Hopi and Apache Indian groups at the American Museum of Natural History. Mr. Young continued to make Ridgefield his permanent home until his death recently.

Among the authors who lived in Ridgefield were *Melbert B. Cary*, author of "Backstage"; *Thomas Boyd*, author of "Simon Girty" and "Through

The Wheat"; *Anne Parish* (Mrs. Josiah Titzell), author of many novels including "An Unclouded Star"; *James Lane Allen*, who produced "Kentucky Cardinal"; and *Irving Batcheller*, who wrote "A Man For The Ages".

Eugene O'Neill lived in Scotland District for a few years and wrote several of his plays in Ridgefield, including "Desire Under The Elms" and "The Fountain".

John Ames Mitchell, well known editor and author of the 19th Century, lived on West Lane for a number of years until his death in 1918. He presented the town with a stone watering trough, which was placed at the intersection of Main and Catoonah Streets, was moved to Titicus Corners in 1922, and is now at the intersection of West and Olmstead Lanes, as shown in *Figure 105*.

In addition to the publishers already mentioned who lived in Ridgefield, residences were maintained in the town by several others, including *Henry Holt*, founder of the firm which bore his name, *Thomas H. Beck* of the former Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, and *Robert P. Scripps* of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain.

In the field of music, Ridgefield residents of the era included *Miss Elizabeth Quaile*, co-author of the Diller-Quaile instruction books; the late *William Matheus Sullivan* who was intimately connected with the musical world as an attorney; and the world renowned soprano, *Miss Geraldine Farrar*, who resides on New Street at the present time.

In the field of architecture, the late *Mr. Cass Gilbert* was pre-eminent as an architect. He was the designer of the Woolworth Building in New York, the Supreme Court Building in Washington, and many others. *Mr. Gilbert* purchased the Keeler Tavern in 1907 and maintained it as his home until his death.

In the dramatic field, the late *Mr. Walter Hampden*, who was one of the world's foremost Shakespearean actors, was a well known resident of the town for more than a quarter of a century.

Part Four

THE MODERN PERIOD



Figure 99a

Chapter XVII

PRESENT INDUSTRIES

With the end of the first quarter of the 20th Century, the resort era was already on the wane. With the discontinuation of train service in 1925, the influx of summer residents was over, although many figures in the world of the arts continued to make Ridgefield their permanent home. The years of the depression tended to reduce the town once again to the status of its colonial period when it was completely self-sufficient.

With the outbreak of World War II, however, a new epoch began to open up for the town. Light industry was seeking areas outside of the overcrowded cities for the location of their new factories and installations. Fairfield County was one of the most ideally situated locations for this purpose.

The first industry to establish itself in Ridgefield was Electro-Mechanical Research, Inc. which purchased and converted the former Crosby Smith residence into an electronics laboratory in 1946. The laboratory remained in Ridgefield for more than a decade. Within the past several years it began a program of considerable expansion, adding other buildings as the need for space increased. Finally, in 1957, the laboratory moved its installation, including its key personnel, to Florida where clerical employees were more readily available.

Schlumberger Well Surveying Corporation, which is associated with Electro-Mechanical Research, Inc., established its Ridgefield Research Center in 1948. A tract of land on Old Quarry Road was purchased by the Corpora-

tion from Mr. Francis D. Martin, and the present laboratory building was erected.

The purpose of the Center is the establishment of a long range research program for the purpose of keeping the Corporation in the forefront of agencies providing services in the well logging field for the oil industry. Schlumberger has made considerable contributions to the location of petroleum producing formations pierced by the drill. Included among the branches of science that are studied at the Research Center for possible application to the well logging field are electronics, physical chemistry, mathematics, geophysics, and nuclear physics. An instrument group has been established as part of the Center to study the industrial applications of new lines of analytical instrumentation.

The Center is divided into three departments, including Research, Publications and Interpretation. The Research Department includes scientists who have training in the fields of physics, chemistry, mathematics, electronics and mechanical engineering. They are assisted by trained technicians in the various branches of research.

The Schlumberger Well Surveying Corporation has profited considerably from the research contributions of its Ridgefield Research Center in providing efficient service to the oil industry.

The New England Institute for Medical Research was organized in 1954 by a group of scientists from the faculties of several universities. The group was brought together by the same desire—to establish a center in which doctors trained in medicine and biology could combine their skills with scientists specializing in the various branches of the physical sciences to produce basic research on problems in medicine.

Ridgefield's proximity to facilities in New York and New Haven, coupled with its quiet beauty, made it the ideal selection for the establishment of the research center. An existing modern concrete structure on Grove Street was adapted to accommodate laboratories for work in nuclear chemistry, physiology, organic chemistry, microbiology and biophysics, in addition to offices, instrument rooms, seminar and conference rooms, as well as a comprehensive library.

In addition to its technical and office staff, the New England Institute employs a staff of scientists holding doctoral degrees in medicine, physics, biophysics, microbiology, and physiology. The work of the Center includes basic research on medical problems occurring in such major diseases as cancer, heart disease, mental disease, among others.

The New England Institute is a non-profit organization which is supported by gifts and grants from health and philanthropic foundations, government agencies, corporations and individuals. The results of its research are made available by means of publication in recognized medical and scientific journals. The facilities of the Institute are available to physicians in the area who

are working on research projects. Post-doctoral and pre-doctoral fellows from universities throughout the country work and study at the Institute.

The New England Institute occasionally sponsors conferences and symposia for the promotion of an interchange of scientific knowledge among secondary high school teachers, industrial scientists and similar groups. It also serves as a headquarters for an international society of scientists engaged in research on the reticuloendothelial cell system and publishes a Bulletin for that group.

CGS Laboratories, Inc. is engaged in the development and manufacture of quality electronic equipment. It is the newest of the engineering and light industry activities to find a home in Ridgefield, and it occupies the former premises of the Outpost Nurseries offices near the intersection of Routes 7 and 35.

The company is named with the initials of Mr. Carl G. Sontheimer, who operated a consulting service on a personal and home laboratory basis since 1946. By late 1947 the consulting business had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to move to larger quarters and at this time the enterprise was incorporated under the present name. Its quarters were again outgrown in 1950 and the Laboratories moved to a new site at 391 Ludlow Street in Stamford. When these premises again became too small, plans were made for a new 25,000 square foot building in Ridgefield to house its engineering and light manufacturing activities.

CGS Laboratories, Inc. pioneered in the application of automation to the communications industry with its line of TRAK Communication Products. This equipment make substantial contributions to communications accuracy and reliability by the application of electronics to functions ordinarily performed by human operations.

Among the more outstanding products of the Laboratories is the TRAK Morse-to-Teleprinter Code Converter. This is a revolutionary type of all-electronic computer which receives Morse code and automatically types it out as printed page copy without the assistance of a human operator.

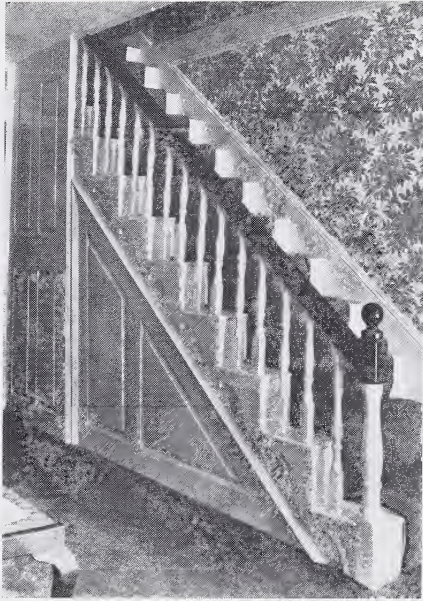


Figure 135 Original staircase in homestead of Rev. Thomas Hawley

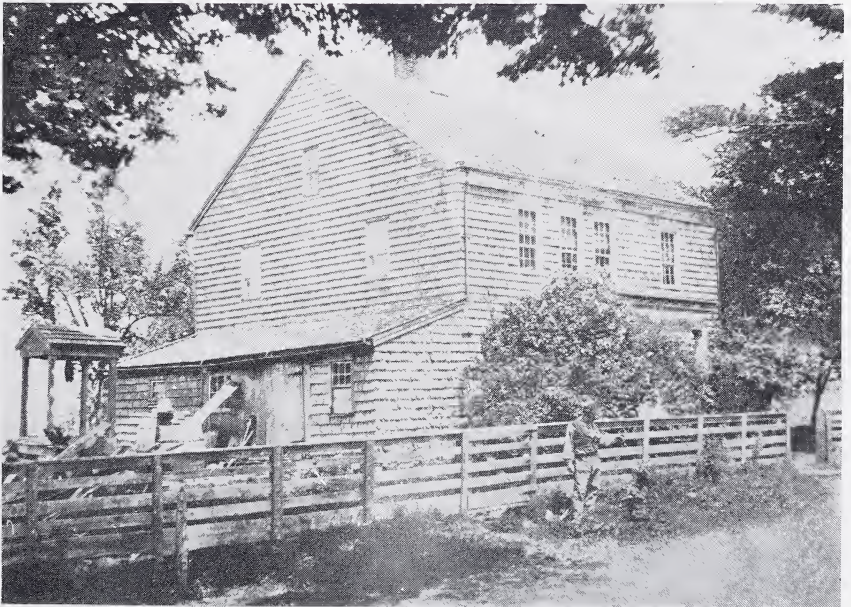


Figure 136 "Tackora Lodge 1810"—David Scott House



Figure 137 "The Pink House" of the Keeler family in Ridgebury built 1712-13



Figure 138 The Stebbins House



Figure 139 Home of Isaac Keeler built circa 1734
Now residence of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Durant

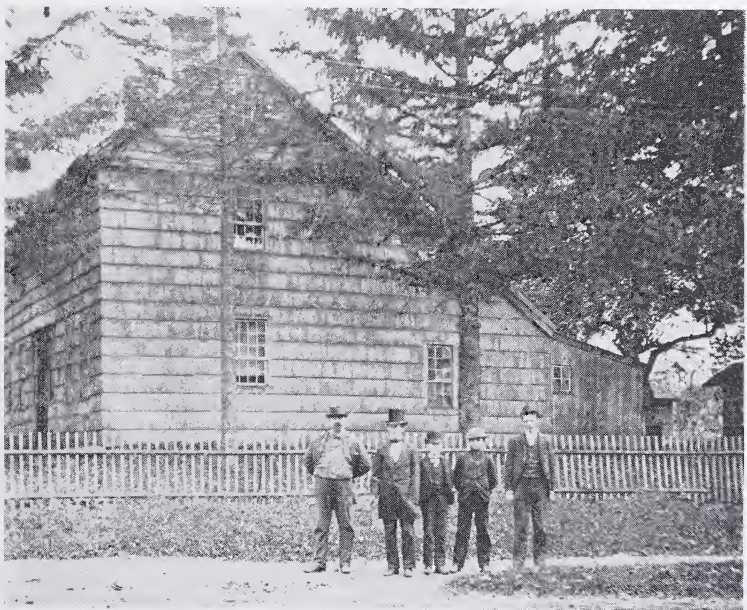


Figure 140 Nathan Scott Homestead built on Lot 13—Moved to Catoonah Street in 1922



Figure 141 M. Stanley Scott House



Figure 142 T. Olmstead Scott House



Figure 143 Hezekiah Scott House



Figure 144 Former Benedict Cobbler Shop

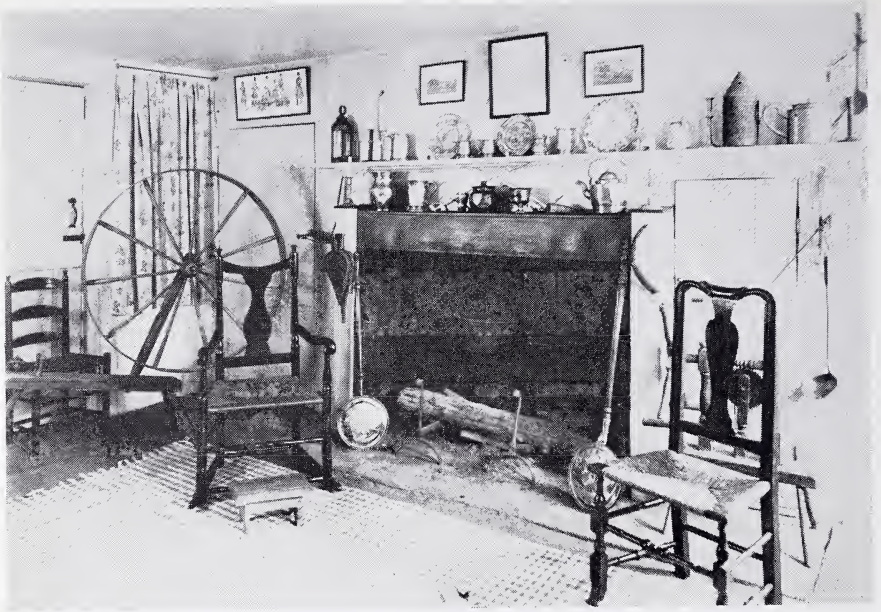


Figure 145 Kitchen of Keeler Tavern



Figure 146 The Pulling-Dyckman House



Figure 147 Kitchen of Pulling-Dyckman House—Now residence of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Cashman



Figure 148 Capt. Henry Whitney House



Figure 149 House of Albin Jennings built 1816—before remodelled into Outpost Inn



Figure 162 Grist Mill at Outlet of Lake Mamasasco
Original mill built by Daniell Sherwood in 1716



Figure 151 J. Seymour House at West Lane Intersection—Now residence of Miss Elizabeth Hull



Figure 152 Early Olmstead House—circa 1750
Now residence of Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Lischke

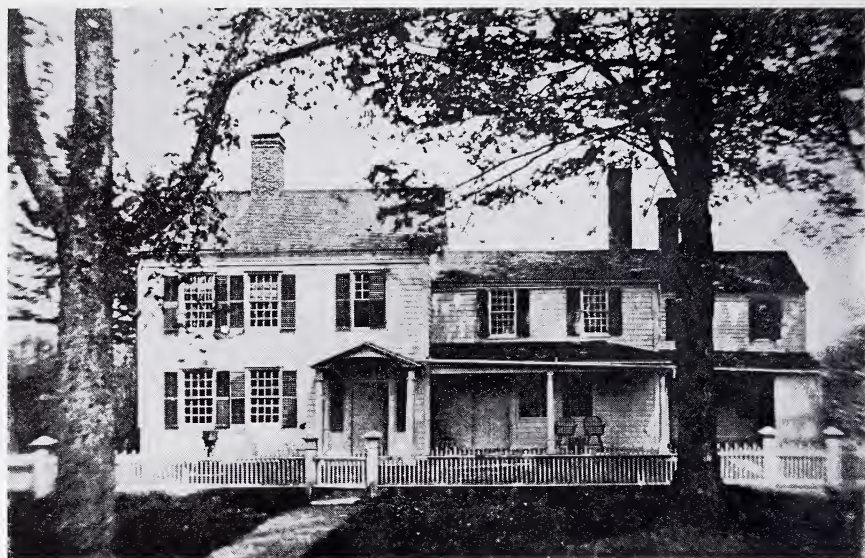


Figure 153 Czar Jones House on south Main Street

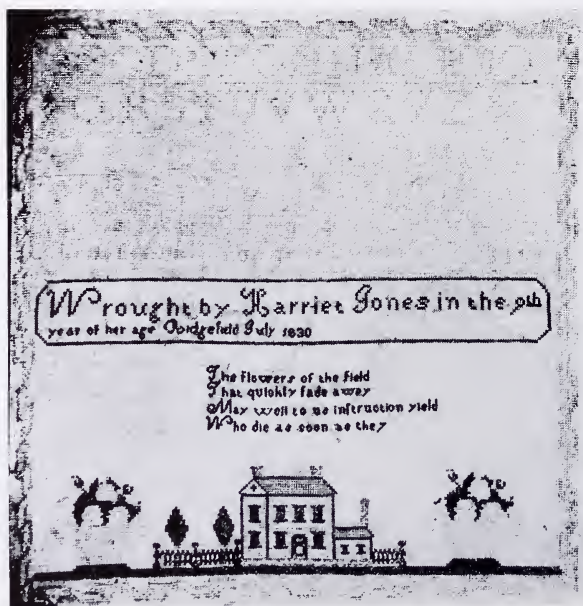


Figure 154 Harriet Jones' Sampler showing Czar Jones House in 1830

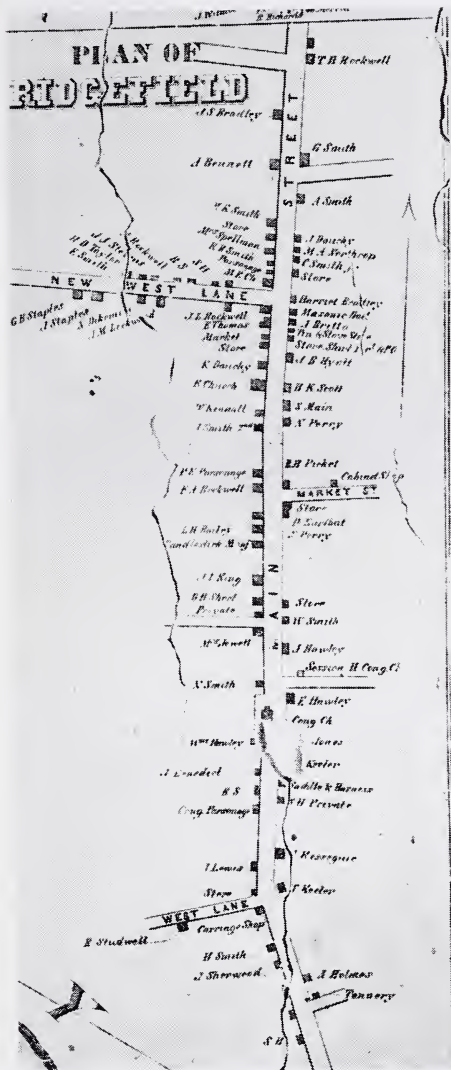


Figure 159a Main Street of Ridgefield
—Clark's Map of Fairfield County 1856

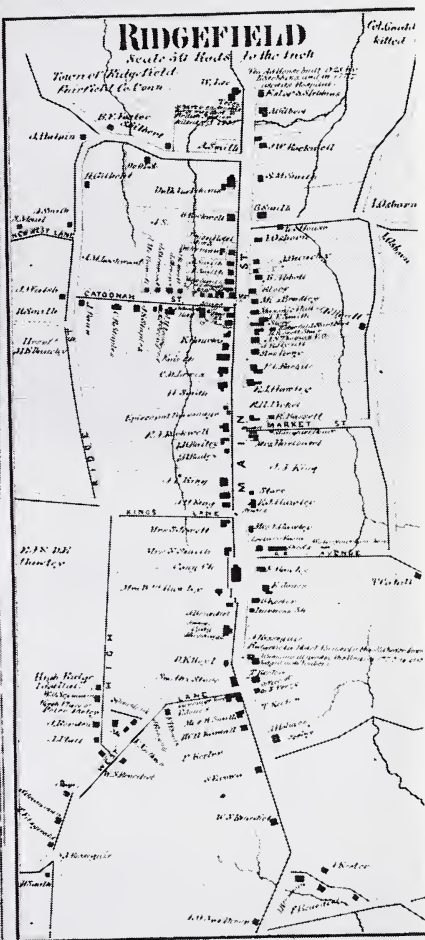


Figure 159b Detailed Map of Main
Street 1867—From Beer's Atlas

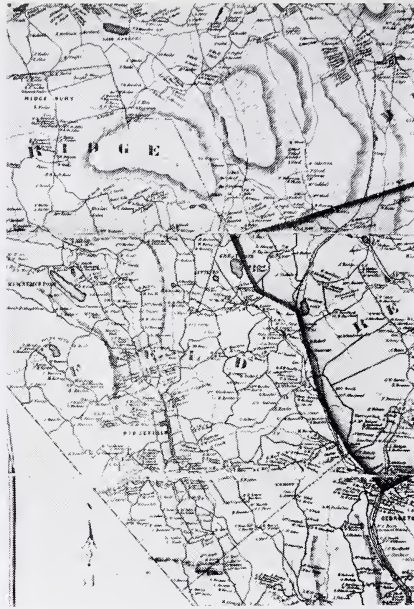
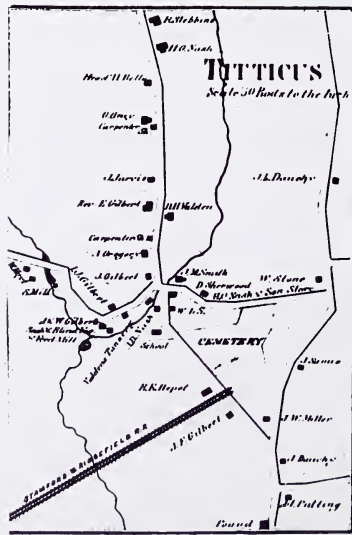


Figure 158 The Town of Ridgefield as shown on Clark's Map of Fairfield County 1856



TITICUS DIRECTORY.

Gilbert & Brother, Sash and Blind Factory, Feed and Cider Mill.
 Gray, Geo., Carpenter and House Joiner.
 Gregory, Geo., " "
 Wash & Son, Dealers in Dry Goods and Groceries.
 Valden, D. H. Tanner and Dealer in Leather.

Figure 160 Detail of Titicus District—from Beer's Atlas of 1867

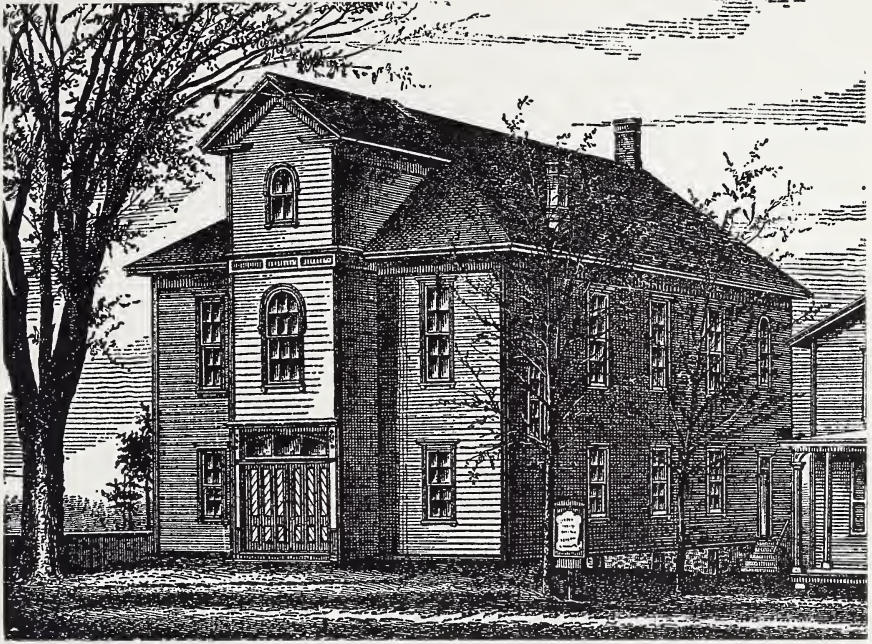


Figure 104

Chapter XVIII

THE TOWN'S GOVERNMENT

Ridgefield's First Government was by the Congregational Society when the town was originally settled. By 1712 a group of Proprietors consisting of twelve 'principal men' or *Selectmen* were chosen to be the administrators of the community, under the Moderator, whose modern counterpart is the *First Selectman*. In the course of time the number of Selectmen in Ridgefield was reduced from twelve to three, while in larger communities as many as five Selectmen are still elected.

The General Statutes of the State of Connecticut provide the basic government authority of the community. The major part of the present governmental authority of Ridgefield is derived from Special Act No. 246 which was passed in the General Assembly at Hartford in 1921, and which was accepted by Ridgefield in town meeting on 11 May 1921. This is popularly known as the "Village Charter", which defines the boundaries of the town, the powers of its officials, and delineates the difference between Town and Village for the purpose of taxation and municipal service.

Two Representatives are sent to the General Assembly at Hartford by Ridgefield. The town belongs to the 24th Senatorial District, which elects one State Senator. Other towns in the same district include Sherman, Redding, Brookfield, Bethel, Danbury and New Fairfield.

The Town Meeting is the final authority and ultimate power of the community. The call for a town meeting is issued by the Selectmen and must be posted on the Town Signboard and in the local newspaper a sufficient period of time before the meeting is held. A call for a special town meeting must be issued by the Selectmen within five days after they have received a petition, signed by twenty or more qualified voters, asking for such a meeting. At each town meeting the moderator is elected as the first order of business.

The Annual Town Meeting is called on the first Monday of October each year to receive reports from town officials and to conduct and vote on any business except the budget that may be outlined in the call.

The Town Budget Meeting is held annually in May.

The Board of Selectmen consists of a bipartisan Board of three members who are elected biennially by the voters. The primary function of the Board is the daily administration of the community, and includes the maintenance of roads and highways, the making of by-laws, ordinances and rules of the town. According to the Town Charter, the Board is empowered to "make, amend, repeal, and enforce by-laws" for various purposes without consultation with the Town Meeting. The Selectmen may assess for sewers and sidewalks, receive petitions and make arrangements for town meetings, and issue certain permits and licenses. It also supervises the distribution of State welfare funds made available for the care of the sick, of the indigent, of the elderly, and of needy children. In conjunction with the registrar of voters and the Town Clerk the Selectmen admit voters. The First Selectman is Chairman of the Board of Finance and of the Park Commission.

The Board of Finance consists of seven members who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen from both political parties for terms of three years. The First Selectman acts as Chairman of the Board and has no vote except in the case of a tie. The Board's duties consist of the preparation of the Annual Town Budget and the submission of the Budget to the Annual Town Meeting for its approval. Three of the seven members of the Board must be residents of the Village. The Budget may be reduced but never raised by the Town Meeting. Immediately after the Town Meeting for this purpose has been held, a Village Meeting takes place to vote on the Village Budget which is prepared and submitted by the Board.

The Tax Rate is established by the Board of Finance on the basis of the proposed budget, the cash on hand, and the completed Grand List at the inception of the fiscal year. The Board authorizes transfers to and from approved appropriations within the limitations of the budget, as the Board of Education may do within its own budget.

The Board of Assessors evaluates all of the properties owned in the town for tax purposes for the compilation of a Grand List.

One Assessor and two assistants are employed by the town on a full time basis to maintain a current list of property as required by State law, and direct the conducting of the re-evaluations at intervals of ten years.

In addition to the member serving full time, the Board includes two part-time members. State Statutes require that a property be appraised by at least two members of the Board, so that property is accordingly assessed on the basis of the Board's majority. Members are elected for four-year terms, at alternate biennial elections.

Assessments are based upon ownership of property as of October first of the year preceding the setting of the tax rate. In Ridgefield assessments on buildings are determined on the basis of 1945 reproduction costs for labor and material, plus appreciation and minus depreciation. Land value maps are provided by re-evaluation firms (the latest being issued in 1951) and values of land are based on classification of various types and usage. In the Village value is based on front footage. Land values in outlying sections are based on front acre plots.

The Tax Abstract is a complete assessment list of all properties taxable in the town and it is filed by the Assessors with the Town Clerk at the completion of their study on January 31st each year. This Abstract provides the basis for the computation of the tax rate. The Village List which forms part of the Abstract is prepared on the same basis.

Tax Collections are made on a quarterly basis and the taxes are paid to the Town Tax Collector, who is elected for a two-year term of office. Any taxes not paid within thirty days of due date are considered delinquent and are subject to interest at $\frac{1}{2}\%$ per month.

Real estate is the main source of revenue for the town, since it carries all but one and a half million dollars of the town's assessment. The Motor Vehicle Department Registry automatically notifies the Board of Assessors of all vehicle registrations, but all other taxable personal property must be declared in person by the owner at the Assessor's office.

The Board of Tax Review consists of three members who are elected for four-year terms. Two members are elected in one year's election, and the third member is elected in the following year's election, in order that the terms of service may be staggered. The members of the Board meet to hear and pass on appeals from property assessments established by the Board of Assessors.

The Tax Collector maintains a separate office in the Town Hall for the billing of taxes to property owners in accordance with the Board of Assessors' evaluation, and to receive payments of same.

The Town Treasurer receives monies collected by the Tax Collector and disburses funds by order of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Educa-

tion for the payment of the town's obligations. The Treasurer is usually elected agent for the Town Deposit Fund which is utilized for educational purposes. The term of office is two years.

The Town Clerk is elected for a term of two years, and is responsible for the filing and recording of all deeds and records, keeping minutes of all Town Meetings, swearing in of new voters and officials. The Town Clerk is also responsible for the handling of kennel and dog registrations.

The Zoning Commission consists of five members appointed by the Selectmen. They are responsible for the enactment of zoning regulations and for ensuring that all new buildings conform to the Zoning Regulations. The Commission issues permits for construction.

The Zoning Board of Appeals includes five members who are elected. They meet periodically for the purpose of hearing and deciding upon petitions for variance from the established Zoning Regulations. Decisions are based on careful study of the problems involved. Members are elected for terms of two years on a staggered basis.

The Town Election is held on the first Monday in October of odd-numbered years, for the purpose of choosing all elected officers for two-year terms unless terms of office are otherwise specified.

The Dog Warden is appointed. He is responsible for catching stray animals and he is required to maintain a pound where such animals may be confined for specific periods of time.

The Tree Warden is appointed to maintain all trees on town property and rights of way.

The Justice Court consists of a Trial Justice, or Judge, an Alternate Trial Justice, a Prosecuting Grand Juror and an Alternate Prosecuting Grand Juror. They hold sessions of court when necessity arises. These officials are appointed biennially from the twelve elected Justices of the Peace and the six elected Grand Jurors of the town. The Justice Court has jurisdiction over criminal offenses committed in Ridgefield which are punishable by fines up to one hundred dollars, or jail terms of up to sixty days or both. It also rules on cases involving damages of not more than one hundred dollars.

The Probate Court settles estates of persons who die within the township. It also has jurisdiction over legal matters pertaining to adoptions and commitment of the insane to private or public institutions, the appointment of guardians for minors, the protection of minors and their property, and it is also responsible for the establishment of trusts for minors. The Probate Judge is elected every four years.

The Small Claims Court was first established in January 1953 and forms part of the Justice Court of Ridgefield. It provides a means for local busi-

nessmen to collect overdue accounts without the necessity for hiring legal counsel. The court has jurisdiction on claims limited to two hundred fifty dollars.

Danbury Traffic Court is the only one of its type in the State of Connecticut and exists for the purpose of hearing all traffic violation cases at regular sessions. Ridgefield is one of the seven towns under its jurisdiction.

The Court of Common Pleas, which holds regular sessions at Bridgeport and sometimes in Danbury, hears appeals from decisions of the Justice Court. Civil suits of a serious nature involving residents of Ridgefield are brought before this court, as well as criminal cases originating in Ridgefield which are punishable by fines of more than one hundred dollars.

The Superior Court for Fairfield County holds sessions alternately in Bridgeport and in Danbury and hears civil cases involving suits of five thousand dollars or more, appeals from decisions made by the Court of Common Pleas, and criminal cases originating in Ridgefield that may be punishable by fines of more than one hundred dollars.

The Caucus System creates party Town Committees which are elected by Republicans and Democrats at their respective party caucuses. A slate of candidates for town officers is presented to the voters by each Town Committee at a caucus which is held prior to each town or State election. Voters may also make nominations from the floor during the caucus. The names of the nominees selected are included on the ballot and voted upon at the following biennial election. On certain occasions a challenge primary may be held.

Electors must qualify by being citizens of the United States, twenty-one years of age or older, a resident of the town for a period of not less than six months and of the State for not less than one year, of good moral character, and able to read English. A naturalized citizen must present naturalization papers when qualifying. An elector must take the oath prescribed by law, and no person who is an idiot or otherwise declared incompetent may be admitted.

The Board of Admission of Electors in each town in the State gives notice of the time and place of each session for the admission of electors by publication in a newspaper of said town and posting the same notice on the signboard of the town at least three days before each session. The notice must include the requirement that applicants who are naturalized citizens must present a certificate of naturalization. An applicant who acquired United States citizenship by birth abroad to a citizen parent or derived citizenship through the naturalization of a parent or spouse, must likewise present a certificate of citizenship or a passport issued to him on or after 1 January 1948.

Registrars of Voters are elected at biennial town elections and include one

member from each party to serve for a term of two years. Their duties are to keep the registration lists correct and current, attend meetings of the Board for Admission of Electors to take party enrollment, and to appoint moderators and election day workers. The Registrars check voting lists on election days, count votes, hold sessions for the enrollment of caucus lists, and make a yearly check of voters.

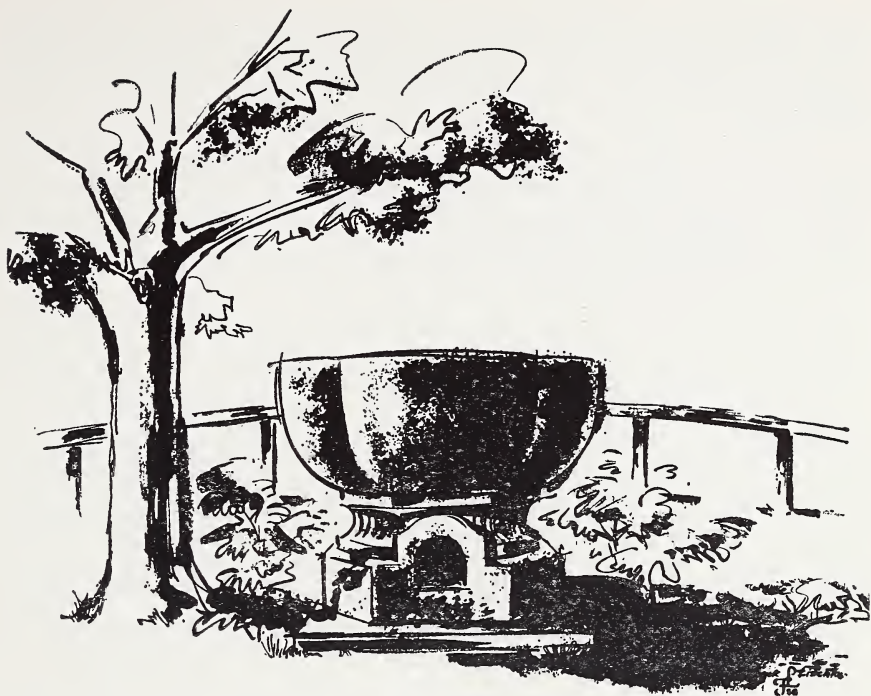


Figure 105

Chapter XIX

THE TOWN'S SERVICES

Technically speaking, the town's services include those facilities which the town provides for its inhabitants at the direction and expense of the town government. However, many of the utilities which serve the town are privately owned, or are of a volunteer nature, or part of a State or Federal organization. Accordingly, the following pages include those services which are maintained exclusively for the benefit of the townspeople regardless of sponsorship. First to be considered are the public utilities, which include

Electricity which is furnished to every part of the town by the Connecticut Light and Power Company. The Company's office at Norwalk is responsible for installation, inspection and service of this area.

Telephone Service in Ridgefield is maintained by the Southern New England Telephone Company, with a plant on Catoonah Street and the company's branch office on West Street in Danbury. Installation, inspection, maintenance and other services are furnished from the Danbury office.

The Water Supply to the village and a small area adjacent to it is provided by the Ridgefield Water Supply Company, a corporation operating under State regulations and responsible to the Public Utilities Commissioner.

The water is supplied from Round Pond, which is a spring-fed lake on West Mountain, from which the water is pumped to a standpipe on an area sufficiently elevated to provide satisfactory pressure for distribution to the customers.

Samples of the water are tested at the pumping station and in the laboratories of the State Board of Health in Hartford at regular intervals as well as on unscheduled examinations. The water supply is metered and charged to the subscriber at a set fee per one hundred cubic feet consumed, in addition to a service charge.

Street Maintenance is accomplished under the supervision of the Board of Selectmen. Lighting, cleaning and repair of the streets, and placing of signs are the responsibilities of the Selectmen. The expenses of street building and maintenance are financed partly by the town and partly by the State. The reconstruction and oiling of roads is undertaken with funds provided by the State which allocates a sum, the amount of which is contingent on the mileage of dirt roads in the town.

The Town Dump was established as the result of action taken by the Garden Club. The Board of Selectmen appoints a custodian who is responsible for the proper operation of this facility.

The Ridgefield Fire Department had its beginnings shortly after the Great Fire of 1895, when the Fire District was organized on 4 April 1896. The District included the village area in which several residents volunteered to be on call when needed. For the purpose of eventually establishing a town water supply, a borough government was proposed in February 1897 but was rejected for lack of funds to put the bill through the legislature. The borough government was finally passed in 1901 and remained effective the following two decades until 1921.

The Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department was organized in April 1897 with about seventy young men who volunteered their services. J. W. Fogarty was the first foreman of the Engine Company, and George I. Abbott was the first foreman of the Hook and Ladder Company.

Paid fire and police departments were first established in the 1930s.

At first the fire fighting equipment was housed in the basement of the Town Hall. In 1908 the Fire House was constructed on Catoonah Street.

At the present time, the Volunteer Fire Department is manned by approximately fifty active members who volunteer their services. The Fire House is staffed by four paid firemen who work eight-hour shifts to cover the entire twenty-four hour day. One of these is the Fire Chief who works relief shifts and is on duty on the days off duty of the other three paid firemen.

Under the Chief are nine line officers, who are always available for duty and who are experienced in the use of the apparatus. Nine others are Fire

Police who are in charge of traffic in troubled areas and who keep order during fires so that the volunteers can work without hindrance. Firemen drill once monthly during the winter and twice each month during the summer. In addition to drills, a general or business meeting of the Department members is held each month.

The Department is equipped with six trucks. The newest of these was made possible by Civil Defense recently at a cost of twelve thousand dollars. It is equipped with the most modern devices and apparatus for all emergencies. The fleet includes two Seagrave trucks, and one of the vehicles in the fleet has a five thousand watt generator which was built by the firemen themselves. If a serious power failure occurred, this truck would be able to generate sufficient electricity to light most of the village area.

At such times as the paid firemen on duty must be away from the Fire House, the Emergency Telephone is automatically answered at the State Police Barracks. Inasmuch as this telephone is used only for incoming calls, the line is busy only if another call is being received simultaneously. In such instances when the Emergency Telephone is busy, calls may be directed to the State Police barracks, and a radio call for help will be immediately sent out. The Fire trucks are equipped with radio telephones which enable each truck to communicate with each other, and with the local and State Police.

A Free Ambulance Service is operated by the Volunteer Fire Department for the residents of the community, and it is frequently used. The ambulance is provided with the most modern equipment, including two portable resuscitators and one that is built into the ambulance.

Fire Permits must be obtained in person from the Fire Warden for permission to engage in the burning of grass or leaves.

The Fire Insurance Rating of the town is average or better in comparison with that of other towns in Connecticut. The New England fire insurance rating places Ridgefield in 7th Class on specifically rated property and Grade D for minimum rates on dwellings and house property.

The Town Police Department functions under a Police Commissioner and consists of the Police Chief and five officers, all with Civil Service status who may be removed from their appointed office only by show of cause. New officers may be appointed on the basis of competitive examinations of applicants who are residents between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five years of age. New officers receive four weeks of training at the Police School in Westport.

A single police car, equipped with two-way radio, is used for patrol and for answering calls. The officer on duty may be reached by one of the three telephones for the purpose, which are located at the Police Department, the Selectmen's Office and the Fire House. In the rare event that the officer on

duty cannot be reached, the State Police Barracks should be telephoned. The State Police assist the Town Police whenever necessary.

The Town Police Department handles between eighty and ninety calls per month, including accident cases, assistance on ambulance service, general service calls.

Although the town of Ridgefield has no jail house, four modern cells are available at the State Police Barracks if needed.

The Ridgefield Town Police Department maintains headquarters in the basement of the Town Hall, and the officers serve eight-hour shifts in rotation. The staff is under the jurisdiction of the Ridgefield Police Commission, which consists of a body of five men selected by the voters. The Commission appoints special constables and administers the Department.

The Health Officer of Ridgefield is a medical doctor recommended by the Selectmen and appointed by the State of Connecticut. He is responsible for all matters relating to the public health of the community, and his duties include reporting of all infectious diseases, the establishment of quarantines, investigation of complaints, inspection of all food sold, and enforcement of the sanitation code.

The District Nursing Association was organized in 1914 to promote the general health of the community and provide nursing services as required, to assist in social service work, aid and assist the Health Officer, and assist in the school health program. Any resident may receive care and assistance from the District Nurse at the request of a licensed physician. In a recent year assistance by the District Nurse was provided to nine hundred thirty-three cases which involved a total of four thousand eight hundred and twenty-three visits. In the same period the work of the District Nurse in the school system included a general health check of eleven hundred eighty-two children, eleven hundred thirty-nine vision and hearing tests, nine hundred ninety individual health inspections for emergency care and dressings to prevent the spread of contagion, and classroom health talks. The District Nurse assisted the school physician with five hundred ninety-six physical examinations, provided lunches, etc. for the needy children at school, and sponsored a branch of the Future Nurses of America in the High School. Sixty children received dental treatment.

A Public School Nurse-Teacher is employed since 1958 in the Ridgefield Public Schools on a full time basis to work in connection with the District Nurse and do some class work as well.

The Well Child Conference was initiated about 1937 under the cooperative sponsorship of the Mothers Club and the Parent-Teachers Association, with doctors that were sponsored by the State. In 1954 its connection with the State was severed and it continued to operate under the same local sponsorship with the donated services of the local physicians.

The clinic was established to maintain a check on all children from six months to school age. The records are automatically transferred to the school when a child is enrolled. Examinations are held every month with the assistance of the District Nursing Association and the chairmen of the Parent-Teachers Association and the Mothers Club.

Public Welfare is administered by the Board of Selectmen and utilizes funds of which two-thirds are furnished by the State and one-third by the Town. The fund is administered by the First Selectman with the advice of the District Nurse.

The care of children becomes the responsibility of the State. Cases of juvenile delinquency are the responsibility of the Juvenile Court of Bridgeport. Aid for the Blind is provided by the State and administered by the First Selectman.

Commitment to State institutions is accomplished through the local Judge of Probate and countersigned by the Governor of Connecticut. The families of patients pay costs, occasionally with assistance from the State budget for this purpose. The Town finances only the indigent cases.

Sanitation is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen, and the Board is responsible for the laying of sewers and their inspection and upkeep, as well as for the appointment of a Supervisor and periodic inspection of the Town Dump.

The State Police Barracks in Ridgefield was the first such installation in the State of Connecticut, brought about by a reorganization of the State Police Department in 1921. The first location of the Ridgefield Barracks was on West Lane, and in 1927 it was moved to the present location.

The Ridgefield Barracks has jurisdiction in twelve nearby towns in an area bounded on the north and south by the Kent Town Line to the Norwalk Town Line and east and west by the New York State Line to the Housatonic River between Newtown and Southbury.

The State Police in Ridgefield cooperate with and assist the Ridgefield Town Police whenever possible. The personnel stationed at the Barracks include two sergeants, one police woman, five resident officers and fourteen non-resident officers, two civil dispatchers, one clerk, one chef and one custodian.

Civil Defense was organized during World War II under the supervision of the United States Government. The Director cooperates with the Selectmen in providing assistance in time of need, and during alerts.

Fifty per cent of the cost of equipment is provided by Federal funds and the Town furnishes the balance. To date the Civil Defense organization in Ridgefield has acquired a rescue truck which is kept at the Fire House, three sirens located at strategic points in the town, two generators, one of which

provides emergency power at the Fire House and another which is mounted on a truck as a mobile unit for use wherever it might be required.

The Ground Observer Corps was organized early in World War II. A post was established on East Ridge for the maintenance of a twenty-four hour watch until the termination of the War. With the beginning of the Korean War, the Corps was reactivated by the U. S. Air Force and a station was established on the former site with a direct telephonic connection to the Military Filter Center in White Plains. In 1955 the Board of Finance allocated funds for the construction of a new observation tower on East Ridge. The Corps was later de-activated.

The Auxiliary Police are volunteers who have been trained by State and Town Police and have completed a Red Cross First Aid course. The Auxiliary Police help to direct traffic on Main Street during periods of congestion, such as Sunday mornings, and it may be called upon by the Town Police for assistance as required.

The Park Commission of Ridgefield was organized and approved by the town at a meeting which took place on 12 May 1947. Six members were appointed to serve terms of four years, and three members were appointed from each party. The First Selectman, although not a member, is the ex-officio Chairman and presides at all meetings.

The Commission is responsible for the care of the streets, rubbish containers, cultivation of trees and shrubs, the maintenance of special areas, such as traffic triangles, the Cass Gilbert Fountain, the first cemetery site, and related projects. Miss Anne S. Richardson, perhaps more than any other person, has worked unremittingly for the continuation and sponsorship of these services to the town.

Great Pond Bathing Beach is a recreation center which was provided to the town largely through the efforts of Mr. Francis D. Martin, in June 1954. Prior to this time Ridgefield had no suitable bathing or swimming facilities. After the selection of Great Pond as the most likely area to fit the purpose, the cooperation was obtained of the Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Company of Georgetown, who controlled the water rights. The Company furnished a lease for the land along the lakeside for a period of twenty-five years. An option on the adjoining seventeen acres of land was obtained so that the beach area was protected and at the same time a suitable area for parking could be provided.

The beach was created completely through volunteered services and donations. After tons of rock were blasted from the bottom of the lake, one thousand cubic yards of gravel were added and graded, to which one thousand yards of sand were added under the water level.

The contours of the site had to be modified and the outlet of the Pond

was changed. Trees were removed and fill was added in some areas in order to make a suitable beach. Many thousands of yards of fine sand were trucked in to surface the beach area around the Pond. Facilities for the public included benches and seven outdoor fireplaces.

The beach is supported by donations from the people of Ridgefield. Three lifeguards, one policeman and a caretaker are on duty at all times while the beach is open to the public. The grounds are maintained with the greatest care and certain restrictions regarding the prohibition of pets, glass of any kind, and dispersal of rubbish have helped to keep the area in excellent condition. Great Pond is fed by natural springs and achieves a depth of as much as sixty-five feet in some places. Crowds numbering as many as twenty-five hundred persons at one time use the beach constantly during the summer season.

Farmingville Park consists of a tract of land situated at the corner of Farmingville and New Roads opposite the Lee property. Formerly part of the Lockwood Farm, it was most recently owned by Lawrence L. Aldrich of Ridgefield, who presented it as a gift to the town of Ridgefield in June 1958 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the town. The tract is set aside to be used exclusively as a public park and playground for the residents of the town, under the supervision and maintenance of the Park Commission.

The Village Improvement Society was established on 22 September 1899 with fourteen charter members, for the purpose stated in its title, the improvement and physical beautification of the town. Among the Society's enterprises was the planting and maintenance of about a dozen traffic triangles, the acquisition of a watering trough opposite the Town Hall, and the lighting of the Congregational Church area. Long before the town facilities provided for snow removal, the Society cleared the streets of snow after every storm for two years.

In 1915 the Village Improvement Society asked for assistance of the Garden Club in its work and operation. This resulted in the formation of

The Village Improvement Committee which has assumed the responsibility for the protection of old trees on village streets and the planting of new trees to replace those that are lost.

The Ridgefield Garden Club was organized 9 June 1904 at the home of Mrs. Albert H. Storer. Mrs. Storer was elected the first president and other charter officers included Mrs. George P. Ingersoll, Mrs. A Barton Hepburn, Mrs. Cass Gilbert and Mrs. Howard L. Thomas.

The purpose of the Club was defined to be the promotion of the art of gardening, the furtherance of the planting of small gardens, the provision of practical assistance to its members and the encouragement of experimentation. In addition to its initial program as defined, the Club has added a campaign for the civic improvement and physical beautification of the town.

The Club is justly proud of some of its projects on behalf of the town. These have included successful agitation for the establishment of a public dump; the creation of the Pre-School in Ridgefield, which was the first of its kind in the United States, and maintained at the Club's expense before its upkeep was undertaken by the town.

The Garden Club has been active in World Wars I and II. In World War I it established a land army and sponsored the raising of garden crops, and it undertook the maintenance of a community cannery in both wars for the utilization of produce from local gardens.

A conservation committee of the Club works closely with the schools to furnish speakers and films for the classes, in the sponsorship of gardening projects, and it supplies published material on conservation as well as encouragement of summer conservation workshops.

The Caudatowa Garden Club was sponsored by the late Miss Edna Schoyer in the 1930s to provide a means for younger people who wished to join a garden club and devote some study to gardening. The first president was Mrs. Fielding V. Jackson. At the present time the Club has a total membership of sixty-five members, including three honorary and twelve associate members.

The many civic projects in which the Caudatowa Garden Club has engaged include the plantings at the Girl Scout Camp, the Town Hall, the Branchville Railroad Station, the former Titicus Fountain, and the Cass Gilbert Fountain on West Lane. The Club has provided supplementary funds to the science department of Ridgefield High School for research on local flora, and it has produced several flower shows of interest to the community.

Recently it has initiated a supply of plants for indoor gardening, cut flowers, etc. to the Fairfield State Hospital. Among other activities in which the Club engages is the furnishing of fresh flower arrangements to the Ridgefield Library each week.

The Horticultural Society was organized in 1926 for the exchange of ideas and mutual assistance on gardening problems, at the suggestion of Andrew Morrison. The first meetings were held in various greenhouses on private estates and later in public halls. In 1927 the Society held its first flower show at the Congregational Church house, a feature which has been continued annually except during the war years.

The Ridgefield Library is maintained by the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association in the E. W. Morris Memorial building which is situated at the northerly corner of Main and Prospect Streets.

The first library in Ridgefield had one hundred fifty volumes and was established as early as 1795. Half a century later a circulating library, which was privately organized by Hiram K. Scott, provided for the lending of books for minimum rental fees based on the cost of the books. The value of the book was to be left as a deposit by strangers.

The first step in the direction of forming a public library was taken on 16 October 1871 with the establishment of the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association by a group of twelve persons who met in the office of Dr. William S. Todd. The members assessed themselves the sum of three dollars a year for the purchase of books which were sold at the end of the year. The proceeds, augmented by dues, were used for the purchase of new books. This arrangement continued for the first six years. On the two following years the old books were stored and Mrs. Ebenezer Keeler was instrumental in having the books utilized to form a nucleus for a public library.

On 3 December 1880 the Ridgefield Public Library Association was formed, by-laws formulated, and meetings were held twice weekly in the Town Hall. In 1882 the name of the organization was changed to Ridgefield Library, Inc., but it never became effective.

A building exclusively for the use of the Library was provided in 1883 by Phineas C. Lounsbury. This building was on Bailey Avenue and had formerly housed the first telegraph office. After it had been vacated by the Library, it was used as the first telephone office when it was moved to its present location on Governor Street. It is now the office of the Ridgefield Water Supply Company.

One of the first librarians was Miss Jennie Smith who served in that capacity from 1899 for the succeeding twenty-five years. The Dewey Decimal System of cataloging was instituted shortly after Miss Smith was employed. It was installed by Miss Smith and Miss Mary Olcott, who worked together to catalog the 2,956 volumes in the Library's collection by the new method.

Additional space became necessary as a result of the library's popularity in the community, and in 1900 an option was taken on the present property from Miss Evelyn Smith and purchased soon after. The present building was designed by Raleigh C. Gildersleeve for James N. Morris, who built the Library in 1901 in memory of his deceased wife, Elizabeth W. Morris.

Library hours are from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. daily except Sunday, with two librarians in attendance in the adult section and one librarian for the students' section.

Books may be borrowed for a nominal subscription paid annually. Records may also be borrowed from the Buhrman Memorial Record Lending Library which was established in 1957. The Library has a collection of approximately forty thousand books and maintains a high rating as a research library. Any book requested, if not available, will be obtained from other libraries for the subscriber's use for a nominal handling fee.

The students' section, which is on the basement floor, is open daily from 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and on Saturdays from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon and again from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. The students' section is made available without charge to all school children in Ridgefield. The Board of Education provides a small remuneration to the Library for this service. A Children's

Story Hour is provided twice a month on Saturday mornings during the school year for children from three to six years of age.

The Library is under the direction of an Executive Board of Directors which is responsible for the finances and policy of the Library. A Library Committee of ladies is responsible for the maintenance of the physical installation and of the book collection.

The Ridgefield Savings Bank was organized in 1871 by a group of local merchants and businessmen. It was opened to the public on 12 August 1871 with an office in the store of Bailey and Gage, which was situated in the building known as "Old Hundred".

The first president was Dr. Daniel L. Adams. Peter P. Cornen was vice president; Edward H. Smith was second vice president; and Lewis H. Bailey was secretary and treasurer.

The first pass book was issued to Jacob L. Dauchy. For many years the bank moved from one location to another: between 1884 and 1892 it was housed in Scott's Drug Store; then in the north store of the Keeler Block, now Gristede's; and in 1900 it moved into an office in the Town Hall. New premises were sought once more in 1922 and the bank was moved to the Ernest Scott Block in the section that is now the Ridgefield News Store.

During the eight years that the bank was located in the Keeler Block, George E. Benedict served as postmaster and bank clerk.

In 1930 a new bank building was completed on property purchased from Mrs. William H. Griffith, and the bank was installed in its present permanent quarters. At that time it had less than two and a half million dollars in total assets, while the present total assets exceed ten million dollars. In 1930 the Ridgefield Savings Bank had approximately one million dollars in mortgage loans on homes, and mortgage loans at present total more than six and one-half million dollars. In 1957 the bank paid about one-quarter of a million dollars in dividends to its five thousand savings account holders.

The First National Bank and Trust Company opened for business on 1 May 1900 in an office in the Town Hall. It shared the same counters and personnel of the Ridgefield Savings Bank. The initial depositor was James H. Perry of Perry's Market and the first day's records show that more than two thousand dollars of business was transacted.

The first officers were George E. Lounsbury, president; George M. Olcott, vice president; D. Smith Sholes, cashier; George E. Benedict and Archibald V. Davis, clerks. George M. Olcott succeeded ex-Governor Lounsbury as president upon the latter's death in 1904. Mr. Olcott's efforts were successful in the construction of the present bank building in 1911 on land purchased from Phineas C. Lounsbury. Two additions have been made to the building. The first one was built in 1918 and a second addition was made in 1951. Within the past several years additional property has been purchased on Governor Street for future expansion.

The bank was established in 1900 with a minimum capital that was less than \$25,000. By 1918 the capital had been increased to \$50,000. In 1941 the bank had one and one-quarter million dollars on deposit and \$67,000 in commercial loans. Today it has more than eight million dollars on deposit and over three million dollars in commercial loans, and a staff of twenty-five employees.

The Georgetown-Redding Branch was established on 15 July 1957 with approximately one million dollars on reserve.

The Ridgefield Press is the only newspaper published in the community. The paper was first issued as a monthly publication consisting of four pages each approximately four by five inches in size. It was established by D. Crosby Baxter on 13 February 1875 in the basement of his home which was situated where the Martin Block now stands. A circulation of five hundred copies was claimed for the first issue, which was produced on a Kelsey hand press, and the subscription price was seventy-five cents a year. The first subscriber was W. W. Seymour, the great-great-grandfather of the present editor, Karl S. Nash. On 1 April 1876 the newspaper became a weekly with the name which it still bears, "*The Ridgefield Press*". The price was raised to one dollar and twenty-five cents a year and the paper expanded to eight pages, six of which were ready-printed in New York. At first the publication experienced difficult times and in 1877 Baxter advertised that he would take garden and farm produce in payment for subscriptions. In 1878 the price of subscription was raised to one dollar fifty cents.

In 1880 Fred W. Leek became editor, and in November of the same year Charles W. Lee became the publisher and proprietor. In February 1882 Lee sold to W. W. Whiting. The latter's untimely death at the age of twenty-nine left the paper in the hands of Dr. William S. Todd, a local physician, and in 1886 Dr. Todd formed the Ridgefield Press Printing Company with seven other citizens.

E. C. Bross was engaged in 1887 to operate the newspaper, and in 1893 he expanded the size of the page to seven columns. During this period the presses were located in the old Masonic Hall Building. When the Great Fire of 1895 spread through the town, the Hall was completely destroyed, including the Press plant. The paper did not miss an issue, however, and moved into the new Masonic Hall when it was completed. A number of editors followed in the wake of Whiting and Bross until in 1937 it was acquired by the present editor, Karl S. Nash, and his brother, John W. Nash.

The first typesetting machine was installed in the 1920s and more modern equipment was added during the next decade. In 1938 the plant was moved to the present premises on Bailey Avenue.

Although the paper has been the property of various owners during the course of its existence, it has never been allied with any specific political party. When former Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury—a Republican—was the owner

"I want to know," said a creditor fiercely, "when you are going to pay me what you owe me. I give it up replied the debtor, ask me something easy."

Girls, don't attempt to make beds. An Omaha girl broke her back the other day in trying to perform such a feat.

The season approaches when the bald man wants to find out if his neighbor is going to have a big wood pile, and if he is near sighted.

If you want to know whether a young man is a fool or not put him in a wagon and give him a ride, if he is a fool, he will commence to yell and blackguard the people as he passes them.

Amazing Bargains in Dry Goods and Groceries At H. K. Scott's.

STOVES! STOVES! A FULL ASSORTMENT OF RODS, ZINC, SHOVELS, KNIVES AND FORKS, PLATED GOODS, ETC AT

S. J. BARLOW'S

BAILEY & GAGE

HAVE A SPLENDID LOT OF CARPETS NEAT AND REALLY BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS, AT LOW FIGURES. GIVE THEM A CALL

BAXTER

KEEPS FISH, OYSTERS & CLAMS

WALSH & McILLYNN, BLACKSMITHS.

PARTICULAR ATTENTION Paid to HORSE SHOEING. HORSES WITH TENDER FEET SHOD WITH CARE. REPAIRING OF ALL KINDS PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.

SEYMOUR & CO.

HAVE JUST RECEIVED A LOT OF choice teas which they offer cheap. **GOLDSMITH MAID BEATEN BY BREAD MADE FROM THEIR \$9 FLOUR.**

GEORGE ABBOTT HAS ON HAND A LARGE STOCK OF **BOOTS & SHOES**

NASH, AT TITICUS, KEEPS DRY GOODS AND GROCERIES. GIVE HIM A CALL.

MRS.

A. A. SMITH CAN SUIT YOU IN MILLINERY AND FANCY GOODS.

SOMETHING WORTHY OF THOUGHT THE BEST OF GOODS AT THE LOWEST PRICES AT THE CORNER STORE

Figure 110 First issue of Baxter's Monthly

in the early decades of the 20th Century, he discovered one day that a liquor advertisement had been used against his orders. He thereupon sold the paper immediately to Samuel Keeler—a Democrat.

In 1950 the Ridgefield Press marked the occasion of its 75th anniversary with a special Diamond Jubilee issue which presented a history of Ridgefield for the period of the newspaper's existence.

The editors of The Ridgefield Press have been the following: D. Crosby Baxter (1875-1880); Fred W. Leek (1880); Charles W. Lee (1881-1882); William W. Whiting (1882-1884); Charles W. Lee (1884-1886); Ed C. Bross (1886-1889); Livingstone Russell (1889-1901); David W. Workman (1901); William A. White (1901-1904); S. Claude O'Connor and David W. Workman (1904-1923); David W. Workman (1923-1932); John A. Thayer (1932-1937); Karl S. Nash (1937-1948); David D. Gearhart and Karl S. Nash (1948-).

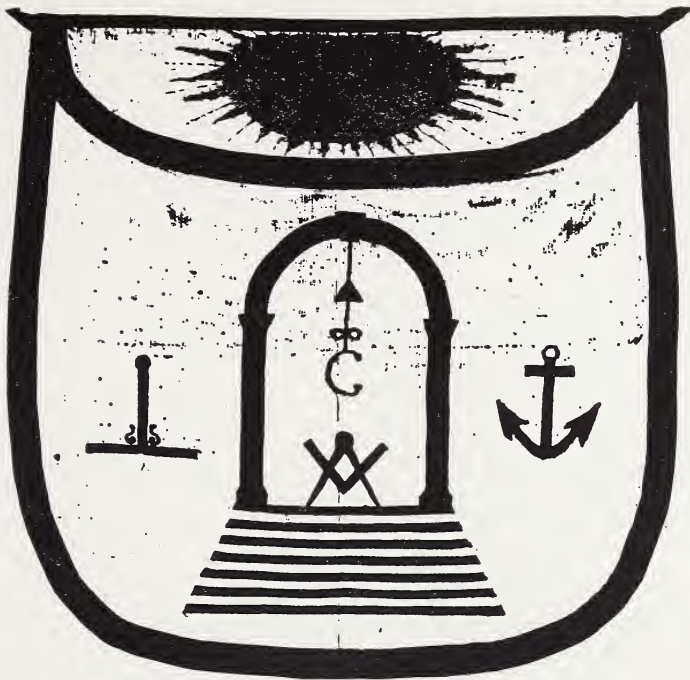


Figure 112

Chapter XX

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

There are more than sixty-five active fraternal and other clubs and organizations in Ridgefield in 1958. The greater number of these are completely local in origin and purpose while others are branches of state or national organizations.

In order to preserve the completely chronological character of this work, the most important groups are listed by order of date of their founding, and a comprehensive list of all organizations in the town is included. The earliest of these which survives to the present time is

Jerusalem Lodge 49, A.F. and A.M., which was granted a charter on 25 October 1808. The first meeting was held 26 November at Smith's Tavern. Two years later meetings were held in the house of Eleazor Waterous, which was located at the corner of Main and Governor Streets and in 1816 they returned to Smith's Tavern, which they used for a meeting place for the following year, until the new Masonic Hall was ready for occupancy. The original hall was destroyed in the fire of 1895. The present structure was built on the same site in 1896.

The charter members included Daniel Bouton, Daniel Jones, J. Mead, Lewis Hoyt, John Waterous, Joshua King, S. S. Kelling and Philip Bradley.

The first officers elected at the initial meeting in November were Daniel Jones, Worshipful Master; Daniel Bouton, Senior Warden; Philip Bradley, Senior Warden; Joshua King, Treasurer; Benjamin Smith, Secretary; John Waterous Jr., Senior Deacon; Lot Forrester, Tyler.

One of the most notable members of the organization was Abijah Ressiguie, proprietor of the Keeler Tavern, who had the distinction of being the oldest United States Master in point of service. Ressiguie became a member on 13 October 1812. At the time of his death in 1887 he had been a member for 75 years.

A ceremonial apron found in the Keeler Tavern, which is illustrated in *Figure 112* dates from an early period of the Lodge's existence.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Pilgrim Lodge No. 46, was established in Ridgefield on 11 June 1847, at a meeting held by candlelight in the Masonic Hall. The first Noble Grand was James Scott 2nd, the Vice Grand was Augustus Lyon. Lewis H. Bailey was the Secretary and the Treasurer was Sereno S. Hurlbutt. Other charter members included Joseph Pugsley, Francis Meeker, and Daniel Lovejoy.

The Masonic Hall continued to serve as the meeting place for the Lodge until it was destroyed by the Great Fire. Meetings were held thereafter in Hartmann's Photographic Studio, the Big Shop, S. D. Keeler's grocery store, and the Hurlbutt kitchen. When the new Masonic Hall was built it again became the center for the Lodge functions.

In 1924 the Lodge purchased the property of the former Harvey H. Smith Tavern on Main Street. Four years later, on Thanksgiving Day 1928, ground was broken for Odd Fellows Hall. In 1956 the Hall was sold and the Lodge purchased and located their quarters in a building of the former Freund residence on Main Street.

The Lodge is a mutual benefit organization which has weekly meetings as well as elaborate functions at various times of the year. The organization has produced and made available many public entertainments for the inhabitants of Ridgefield.

Mary Rebekah Lodge No. 51, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was installed 14 April 1905 in Masonic Hall, as an affiliate of the Pilgrim Lodge No. 46. The name Mary was chosen to designate the local organization because of the preponderance of the name among the charter members. The first Noble Grand was Mrs. Mary Robinson, Mrs. Mary Keeler was the first Vice Grand, Miss Fannie S. Gilbert, secretary and Mrs. Mary M. Gilbert, treasurer. There were eighty-one charter members.

The Knights of Columbus, Marquette Council No. 245 was organized 29 June 1897 with Peter McGlynn as the first Grand Knight, James F. Kennedy as the Deputy Grand Knight, James A. Mullen, Recording Secretary; James E. Ryan, Financial Secretary; John Brophy, Chancellor; Michael T. McGlynn, Treasurer; James T. Mitchell, Warden; Edward F. Barrett, Lecturer.

There were twenty-two charter members. The first meeting was held in the Old St. Mary's Church at the foot of Catoonah Street. Later the Council moved its headquarters to the new St. Mary's Clubhouse where all meetings and functions were held until 1949, when the Council purchased a building and property on Wilton Road.

Reverend Richard E. Shortell, pastor of St. Mary's was instrumental in the initial formation of the local council and he assisted also on the committee which selected the name of the council.

Sunshine Society Branch 39 of Ridgefield was founded in October 1900 by Mrs. George E. Lounsbury and a friend from Stamford, as a branch of the International Sunshine Society. Its designated purpose was to bring comfort and cheer into the lives of shut-ins. The first president was Miss Harriet May Hoyt and the first meetings were held in the parsonage of the Methodist Church. In 1901 packages of Christmas candy and fruit were provided for the inmates of the Town Farm, and the custom has continued to the present in the form of Christmas boxes, which are given each year.

The Society was chartered as the Ridgefield Branch No. 39 on the petition of the local 108 members on 6 October 1914. Money for the purposes of the Society is raised by entertainments which are presented for the public.

Order of the Eastern Star, Mamasasco Chapter No. 62 was organized 13 November 1905 and a charter was granted to the group on 30 January 1907. The first meeting was held in the Masonic Hall and among the first officers were Mrs. Mary M. Gilbert, Worthy Matron and George G. Scott, Worthy Patron.

National Grange, Patrons of Husbandry, formed a Ridgefield Chapter on 21 December 1906 with 23 charter members. Albert C. Innis was chosen to be the first Master, at the organizing meeting held in Masonic Hall.

The Italian-American Mutual Aid Society was organized on 20 November 1913 as the Italian-American Political Club, Incorporated. The name was changed by a majority vote at a meeting held 25 November 1915 to the "Italian American Citizens Political Club and Mutual Aid Society of Ridgefield, Connecticut, Incorporated". On 14 January 1926 the name was again revised to "Italian-American Mutual Aid Society" (I.A.M.A.S.) the name by which it continues to be known. In 1926 the Society purchased land on Prospect Street and built a hall which was first opened for its functions on 29 January 1927.

The organizing committee of the charter members included Orlando Santarelli, organizer; Edoardo Gresser, corresponding secretary; Fiori Baldi, financial secretary; Giosue Roberti, treasurer; Domenico Manzo, Clemente Pasquariello, and Augusto Bertotti, keepers.

The Italian-American Ladies Mutual Aid Society was established on

2 July 1934 as an independent organization, associated with the Italian-American Mutual Aid Society, for women from eighteen to fifty years of age. The first officers were Mrs. Ernest Brunetti, president; Mrs. Harry Giardini, vice president; Mrs. Marino Mancini, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Biagio Feduzi, financial secretary and Mrs. Dominic Fossi, treasurer.

The American Red Cross organized a branch in Ridgefield at a public meeting held on 28 November 1917 under the direction of Mrs. Frederic E. Lewis. Mrs. Lewis was elected the first chairman and it was then voted to make Ridgefield a branch of the Danbury Chapter, which had been organized in 1910. A standing committee for Civilian Relief Welfare was appointed for the assistance to soldiers' families.

By the spring of 1918 volunteers of the local branch were making surgical dressings and sewing at St. Stephen's Parish House.

With the outbreak of World War II the Red Cross went into action once more with an initial meeting held on 20 October 1939 in St. Stephen's Parish House. In 1941 quarters were established in the Masonic Hall and later in the auditorium of the Town Hall. Miss Alpha Ballard organized a Junior Red Cross among the school children.

In addition to sewing and knitting projects for the soldiers overseas, the Red Cross took charge of the blood bank. The New York Donor Service visited Ridgefield eleven times between 1942 and 1945. A total of 1887 pints of blood were donated by 735 Ridgefield citizens during the course of the war.

A nurses' aides department was established with thirty-five volunteer workers, and performed valuable service. With the completion of its war work in March 1946 the local branch of the Red Cross returned to its peacetime basis. This now includes Disaster Relief, Home Service, and assistance in the Connecticut Regional Blood Program.

The American Legion Everett Ray Seymour Post No. 78 was organized in Ridgefield on 20 August 1920 and named for the first Ridgefield soldier to lose his life in Europe in World War I. The first commander of the Post was the late Joseph A. Roach, and the first meetings were held on the top floor of the Martin Block shortly after the building was completed. At the present time the Post leases the former Titicus schoolhouse from the town for a rental fee of one dollar per year.

The American Legion is a national organization of war veterans which concerns itself primarily with affairs and events involving its members. The basic purpose of the Legion is to keep Americanism alive.

The Legion's program includes the promotion of good government and good schools, the sponsorship of essay contests in the schools, of Boy Scout troops, and of baseball and basketball teams and other youth activities. It provides for the drum and bugle corps of the Sons of the Legion, and also undertakes the care of sick and disabled veterans and of their families.

The Legion has devoted its effort to the assistance of afflicted or wounded comrades in government health institutions.

Soon after World War I the local post started a movement for the construction of a War Memorial. This was dedicated 4 July 1925 and is situated opposite the junction of Main Street and Branchville Road.

The Last Man's Club was established in March 1938. All members are required to attend its annual dinner meeting until there are no survivors.

The American Legion Auxiliary was established on 1 November 1923 and formally organized on 5 November 1924, with the late Mrs. James Cummings as its first president. Its original purpose was to assist the Legion in the sale of poppies, the proceeds of which went to the aid of hospitalized veterans. Since its organization, however, it has expanded its activities to include many other worthwhile enterprises.

The League of Women Voters was organized 23 February 1921 with Mrs. E. J. Reed as its first president. Basically, it continued the work of the Equal Franchise League which was discontinued when all women of the United States were enfranchised.

The basic purpose of the League from its beginning was to foster education of the people on the subject of citizenship. The organization has worked for zoning and planning since 1925, among other activities. The League has made a comprehensive study of the Ridgefield public school system, with particular emphasis on the transportation, recreation, installations and other aspects. It has devoted considerable attention to the study of the protective and health services of the town and it has made special efforts to provide unbiased information for voters of all parties.

For several years the League has sponsored visits by classes of the High School to the U. N. Headquarters in New York. The League has financed the trips, provided preliminary briefing by means of films and speakers and has furnished chaperons during the trips from its own ranks.

The Ridgefield Boy's Club, Inc. was organized in 1936 by eleven public-minded ladies of Ridgefield in an effort "to aid and assist youth in its preparation for a fuller and complete life, and to aid in the rehabilitation of youth both morally and physically."

The home of the Club is the former Loder boarding-house on Governor Street. In spite of the limitations of the premises, the Club has maintained a yearly enrollment of over one hundred boys.

Much of the success of the organization has been due to Ralph Crouchley, its director since 1942. In spite of an unsuitable building and a limited budget, the project has flourished under his management of the club and his influence on the boys therein enrolled.

Activities of the Club are divided into several categories. A certain build-

ing program consists of a woodworking shop, library, billiard and ping-pong rooms, model airplane classes and photography.

An outdoor play court with provisions for basketball forms part of the installation. During the winter seasons the Ridgefield Boys Club, Inc. competes with junior high schools in neighboring towns. In 1953 they were finalists in the Jr. Gold Medal Basketball Tournament in Danbury.

Since 1938 day camps featuring swimming have been in operation, and it is estimated that an average of fifty boys each year are taught the fundamentals of swimming at the camps. Various locations which have been used including Peach Lake, Roberts' Pond, Hayes' Pond, Rippowan, Goldsmiths' Pond and the Ridgefield Manor Estates.

Overnight camping trips are undertaken each season to Camp Rippowan on the estate of Mrs. Sarah Bulkley Randolph. Courses for special training for the boys are held under the auspices of the State Police Barracks. The local unit is a member organization of the Boys' Clubs of America.

The American Women's Volunteer Service, Motor Transport Service, was organized in Ridgefield early in 1941. The group worked with the Ridgefield Branch of the American Red Cross. It furnished transportation for donors at the Blood Banks, provided means of travel for workers volunteering for the Community Canning Center. The Service also provided foods and produce to be canned.

The transportation services furnished by the group included driving service men to veterans hospitals and other destinations, driving for the Parent-Teachers Association and for the Girl Scouts, undertaking the driving of patients under the jurisdiction of the District Nursing Association to Connecticut and New York hospitals for treatments.

The group provided assistance to the Danbury Hospital, worked with the Army Air Force Materiel Command in New Haven and assisted in the formation of a A. W. V. S. unit there. All expenses of the Ridgefield unit were paid with money raised by the members by means of social events for the public. Valuable work was done by the group during Bond Rallies, in addition to its other endeavors.

The Ridgefield Community Center was organized and is maintained by the Ridgefield Veterans Memorial Community Association which was established in November 1953. It was voted at a town meeting to lease the former Lounsbury property now owned by the town to be used as a Community Center. A lease was given to the Association for a period of twenty-five years at a fee of one dollar per year. Following the group's incorporation, the building was renovated, repainted and furnished with funds raised by subscription. In the summer of the following year a recreational director was engaged.

The facilities of the Center are available to all residents of the town by means of individual or family memberships. Many study courses are offered

for token tuition fees. These include Italian language lessons, cooking, golf, short story writing, dog training and sewing. Instruction in French language is offered free of charge to adults and children. Other activities of the Center include a choral group, a workshop, a rifle club, a drama club and a Toy Clinic. A special program entitled "Adventures in Art" is provided without charge for children. Other juvenile activities include ballet and social dancing, a cooperative nursery for pre-school children, and a Teen-Age Canteen for the older group is maintained separately although under the supervision of a staff.

A Board of Directors of fifteen members manage the Center and its activities by means of the Office of the Recreational Director. Members of the Board serve a three-year term of office.

The Nutmeg Club is a social group affiliated with the Center and it sponsors dances each season for the members and their guests. The Science Club presents a series of illustrated lectures by prominent local scientists for adults and school children without charge.

A Summer Day Camp is operated during part of each summer under the supervision of the Recreational Director. Special parties at Christmas and Easter are provided for the children of the town without cost.

The Center is supported by membership dues, rental fees for the use of the premises by private parties, clubs and other groups, tuition fees for the special courses, and voluntary donations from the townspeople. Almost five thousand persons availed themselves of the Community Center's facilities in 1957.

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS IN RIDGEFIELD

American Womens Volunteer Service
American Legion, Everett Ray Seymour Post No. 78
American Legion Auxiliary
American Red Cross
Antiques Club
Boy Scouts of America
Branchville Civic Association
Cana Club
Caudatowa Garden Club
Children's Service of Connecticut
Civilian Defense
Confraternity of Catholic Women
Contractors' Association
Couples Club
Community Home Owners Association
District Nursing Association
Eight Lakes Estates Association
Fairfield County Farm Bureau
Girl Scouts of America
Great Pond Club

Great Pond Holding Corporation
Homemakers' Group of the Farm Bureau
Holy Name Society
Italian-American Mutual Aid Society
Italian-American Mutual Aid Society Auxiliary
Jerusalem Lodge, A.F. and A.M.
Labor Unions
Last Man's Club
League of Women Voters
Lewis Committee
Lions Club
Little League
Lakeland Hills Associations
Marquette Council K. of C.
Mary Rebekah Lodge, I.O.O.F.
Mental Health
Mothers Club
National Grange
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Order of Eastern Star (Mamasasco Chapter)
P. E. O. Sisterhood
Parent-Teachers Association
Pilgrim Lodge (I.O.O.F.)
Peatt Park Association
Ridgefield Boys' Club, Inc.
Ridgefield Lakes Association
Ridgefield Library and Historical Association
Ridgefield Veterans Park Memorial Community Association
Ridgefield Garden Club
Ridgefield Horticultural Society
Ridgefield Ramapoo Rifle and Revolver Club
Ridgefield Teen Age Canteen
Rosary Society
Rotary Club
Silver Spring Country Club
Skywives Association
St. Mary's Mothers Club
Stonecrest Association
St. Mary's Retreat Group
Sunshine Society
Thrift Shop Committee
Women's Republican Club
Womens Town Club



Figure 114

Chapter XXI SCHOOLS

School Districts were established for the first time by a town meeting on 14 December 1767. In 1773 it was voted that each member of the School Committee should warn the inhabitants of his District to meet for the purpose of selecting the schoolmaster for their district. At the same meeting it was voted that “. . . the district up at Titicus have Liberty to keep their school at the house near to James Smith’s, or at any place said District shall agree upon.”

In 1784 two half Districts were added to the five School Districts already in existence and in these the schools were maintained only for the period of six weeks each year.

The Independent School House was built in 1786, although construction had been begun at an earlier date. On 10 April the town voted to give the present Town House to the “Proprietors of the Frame set up for a School House near ye Dwelling house of Jeremiah Wilson” with the stipulation that the resulting structure was to be made available for meetings of the Town Proprietors, First Society, and Freemen, and that seating facilities were to be provided for the purpose. This arrangement was agreeable to the School Proprietors. Among the members of the group were Jacob Smith Jr., Silas Hull and the Widow Clemence Smith. School was taught in this building by Samuel Stebbins for more than thirty years. The building was situated near Main Street just south of the Community Center.

The Little Red School House at the intersection of West Lane stands on a triangular piece of ground at the junction of four roads, as was the custom in the 18th Century. It is described with some detail in the works of Samuel G. Goodrich, who attended classes there at the very beginning of the 19th Century.

At that time the building consisted of unpainted clapboards on a wooden frame, with the inner walls plastered. The interior was divided into two sections, with a small entry set off within the double door. This served to keep the cold out of the schoolroom when the door was opened, and provided space for the children's outer clothing and boots. A large chimney of fieldstone and mortar was built at the far end with a fireplace that was six feet wide and four feet deep.

The benches consisted of slabs, cut from the rounded exterior of a log, which were useless for other purposes. They were mounted on four supports or legs of wood set into auger holes.

The main part of the school was built in about 1750. At some later date the chimney and fireplace were removed and the schoolroom extended to the present dimension. An iron stove was installed for heating the structure, and during the last period of its use, the stove was located in the center of the schoolroom.

Bennett's Farms and Limestone Schools were built in about 1742 and in that year these two districts were freed from the town school tax with the stipulation that "a good sufficient woman school" be maintained among them. The Bennett's Farms School, which was recently sold, is second only to the West Lane School in interest, and was constructed during the same period.

The Titicus School was constructed in about 1760 or 1761 and continued as a single room building until late in the 19th Century, when the wing was added at the rear. Until that time eight grades were taught in the one room. Prior to its construction, the children in this area attended school at the upper end of Main Street.

In 1761 the five schools maintained in the town were situated at the Town House, West Lane, Limestone, Titicus and Florida District. The locations were described at a town meeting held 28 December 1761 as

" . . . the house near John Northrops Jr., one at the Town House, one at the house near Benjn Stebbins Jr, one at Limestone; and one near Platt's Mill . . . "

The schools were maintained for a three-month period provided that a sufficient number of scholars at each school made the arrangement feasible. A tax of three farthings on the pound was levied to defray the expense, and John Smith Jr. was chosen Collector of the Society Rate. A year later it was voted that " . . . there shall be 25 Scholars to attend each School in the Society one Day with the other as long as the Schools are continued."

At a meeting of the School Visitors of the First Society in Ridgefield in December 1808 it was unanimously voted that the following men were qualified according to law to teach school in the several districts in which they were employed and that they were approved by the meeting:

Morris Hull, Abel Pulling, David Edwards, Henry Pickett, Samuel Ressiguie, Erastus Smith, Hezekiah Scott, Nathan Olmstead, and Nicholas Olmsted.

Joshua King, Jeremiah Mead and William Keeler were designated to be members of a committee to examine the master that might be employed in the 10th School District.

Samuel Ressiguie, one of the schoolmasters noted above, was probably a brother of Abijah Ressiguie, who operated the Keeler Tavern after the death of his father-in-law, the original proprietor. On 17 April 1810 Samuel Ressiguie was offered a position in Eastchester in lieu of one in Purchase, N. Y. which had been already filled.

On 14 October 1811 the residents of the 4th School District in Ridgefield held a meeting and agreed to have a school kept in that District during the winter months. They unanimously voted to employ Ressiguie as the master and asked him to submit his lowest terms. Apparently he had taught school in the District before. The 4th School District then as now was probably Titicus.

By the end of the 18th Century Ridgefield was divided into two separate School Societies, one for the township, and a second one for the Ridgebury district. A document which reveals some general information on the subject of schools during the first decade of the 19th Century is "A True Return of the Society List of the School Societies (and parts of Societies) in the Town of Ridgefield for the Year 1808" which forms part of the collection of the Ridgefield Library and Historical Association:

First School Society	\$35,644.65
Second School Society being a part of Society	16,072.67
	<u>\$51,717.32</u>
Amount of First School Society	\$35,644.65
Add for Polls exempt for being equipped and doing Military Duty, according to Law —	
55 Polls—Adults, at \$60	3300.00
11 Minor Polls at \$30	330.00
	<u>\$39,274.65</u>
Amount of Second School Society being a part of Society	16,072.67
Add for Polls exempt for being equipped and doing Military Duty according to Law —	
22 Polls—Adults at \$60	1320.00
7 Minor Polls at \$30	210.00
	<u>\$17,602.67</u>

Scotland District School was in existence by 1799 but the exact date of

its first establishment is not known. It may have been established by order of the town meeting of 14 December 1784 for the district defined as the area

“ . . . to begin at the River Westerly of John Waters Barn to run Northerly on the East side of Gideon Scotts Dwelling House, to Ridgebury Line then Westerly along said line to the State line, then Southerly along said State line to the North West corner of the Second District, then Easterly along the North line thereof, to the River where it begun to be called the third District.”

Later Scott's Ridge was defined to be the 1st School District and it remained such as long as the school districts existed.

The first school house was located at the intersection of the North Salem Road and the northern entrance to Tackora Trail. The school was taught by members of the Scott family, including David Scott and Samuel Scott.

In 1815 David Scott 3rd was the Collector of the School Tax in Scott's Ridge, which was even then known as the 1st School District. According to a document recently discovered, David Scott 3rd by authority of the State of Connecticut was ordered to levy and collect a tax in accordance with the agreement made on 5 January 1814 by the members of the first school district “for defraying the Necessary charges for building a new Schoolhouse in said district”. The tax was to be collected from each of the property owners in the district and was set at three cents on the Dollar, based on the Tax List of 1813. The order further specified that

“ . . . if any person or persons shall Neglect or refuse to make payment of the Sum or Sums whereat he or they are respectively Assessed and set in said List, to Distrain the Goods or Chattels of Such person or persons and the same disposed of as the Law Directs, returning the overplus (if any be) unto the owner or owners, and for want of Goods or Chattels whereon to make distress, you are to take the Body or Bodies of person or persons, so refusing, and him or them commit unto the Keeper of the Gaol in Danbury in Fairfield County within the said Prison, who is hereby commanded to safely keep him or them until he or they pay and satisfy the said Sum or Sums . . . together with your Fees . . . ”

Whether extreme measures became necessary is not indicated, but the schoolhouse was built on the southerly corner of the property of Mrs. Vincent Bedini on the east side of the highway, opposite Mamanasco Road.

According to local legend, the necessity for building a new school in Scott's Ridge resulted from a controversy between the Scott family and the Howe and Hunt families who lived at the upper end of Scotland District. Tradition relates that the Howe and Hunt families became dissatisfied with the schooling provided by the member of the Scott family who was schoolmaster at the Scotland District Schoolhouse. Whether the dissatisfaction resulted from the fact that he was not sufficiently progressive, or perhaps too progressive, is not reported. The Howe and Hunt families registered their disapproval by building a school of their own, located near the rock on the eastern side of the highway opposite the former Whitney Hunt farmhouse at the entrance to

the property of Mr. Francis D. Martin. The Scott families who represented the population of the lower end of Scotland District, retaliated by building a new schoolhouse of their own on the site designated, for the accommodation of the children of the Scott families and their relations. These included the Burts, June and Hyatt families, among others. The upper school was eventually separated and designated as School District 13.

The two schools continued in competition for a period of years until after 1849. It is possible that the order of David Scott, Collector of the School Tax, may have been phrased in such stringent language in order to bring pressure on the Howes and the Hunts to contribute to the building of a new school for mutual use. However, a list of the School Rate for the summer of 1826, which includes the names of all the children registered in the Scotland District School, does not include any member of the Hunt and Howe families, and it must be presumed that the two schools continued in operation for more than a decade.

Eventually, the schoolhouse at the upper end of the district was abandoned or removed, and the new Scotland schoolhouse on the Bedini property was moved to the site of the original school at the Tackora Trail intersection. The original school building was moved across the street to the premises of the schoolteacher, where it served as a woodshed for more than a century. The building finally disintegrated within the past few years. (*Figure 114*).

The so-called new Scotland school continued in existence until district schools were closed. Within the past ten years it was moved and converted into a dwelling by one of its former pupils.

The School Rate for the 1st School District at Scott's Ridge included schooling for twelve weeks in the summer of 1826. The original receipt signed by Samuel Stebbins is now the property of Mr. Douglas Main. The receipt listed the names of all the twenty-four families including members of the Scott, Burt, Foster, Hyatt, June, Harvis, Mills, Partrick, Roberts, Smith, Seymour, Valden and Hoyt families. It listed the days of attendance and the rate opposite each name based on attendance. The salary of the schoolmaster appeared to be \$1.25 a week, repairs to the schoolhouse including "broom, putty and glass" cost 52 cents. Public money allotted by the town was ten dollars for the period, leaving a balance of \$5.52 to be collected. This was divided into the days of attendance for all scholars, which totalled 869½ days.

The Later Division in School Districts included fourteen districts, which were designated as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1—Scotland | 8—Whipstick |
| 2—Bennett's Farms | 9—Flat Rock |
| 3—Limestone | 10—Branchville |
| 4—Titicus | 11—Florida |
| 5—West Mountain | 12—Farmingville |
| 6—Center | 13—North Ridgebury |
| 7—West Lane | 14—South Ridgebury |

Center School was located on a triangle of land which formerly existed at the intersection of Main and Catoonah Streets. This school was later removed to premises on Catoonah Street, where the Fire House now stands, and used as a paint shop by Silas Hull.

After the Center School was removed from the triangle, classes were held in the basement of the old Methodist Church. During the winter of 1854-55 Charles Gulick conducted other classes in the same basement.

In 1847 the old Center schoolhouse was moved from its location on Catoonah Street to West Lane, where it was converted into a dwelling by Crosby Benedict. According to one version, the old schoolhouse had first been converted into a house while it was on Catoonah Street by Ezra Smith.

Later the Center School was established on Bailey Avenue. In 1882 Governor Phineas C. Lounsbury donated the land and funds for the construction of the New Bailey Avenue School. Within a short period the premises became inadequate, and a new school became necessary. Dr. William H. Allee was instrumental in making this possible, and land was donated for a building to be erected on East Ridge, where the present school stands, in 1912. A building committee was organized and in 1914 the cornerstone for the new building was laid. In the following year the town voted to establish a high school, which was housed in the Bailey Avenue building. Its growth made more space essential, and the present High School Building was constructed and opened for use in 1926.

Private Schools in the town included a school maintained by the Rev. Samuel Goodrich in his home on High Ridge Avenue during the first decade of the 19th Century.

During a later period a private school was maintained in the same building by Professor Hugh S. Banks. In about the middle of the 19th Century the High Ridge Institute was operated as a school by Hon. William O. Seymour.

Prof. Lee Edmond established a private school for boys, chiefly from out of town and New York City in particular, in Florida District, near the site of the Florida Station. This was a college preparatory school and the students came by stage coach for the most part.

Dr. David Short, who was pastor of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, maintained a private school in his own home at the corner of Main Street and King Lane shortly after his arrival to the parish in 1845. Following his resignation in 1846, he continued his school and some of his old students related that the boys were frequently allowed to visit the old candlestick factory situated north of the school.

A boarding school for girls was kept at the Keeler Tavern in the 1850s, and later another school for girls was kept at East Ridge by the Misses Vinton. In 1905 the school of the Misses Vinton moved to Pomfret.

In 1903 the Nash Private School was established on North Main Street

in the Nash Apartments by Howard and Marion Nash, for children through high school age.

In 1907 Dr. Roland J. Mulford established the Ridgefield School for Boys in Ridgefield at the Ridgefield Inn, which was situated on Main Street at the corner of the property now owned by Mrs. Theodore C. Jessup. The school was operated during the winter months, and in the summer period the building was used for an Inn. In 1911 a large parcel of land in north Scotland District was purchased and a new school building was erected. The school was then moved to its new permanent location. The site was a 115 acre tract on the eastern slope of Titicus Mountain, and it is now owned by Mr. Francis D. Martin. The school continued in operation until 1938.

Present School Facilities in Ridgefield include the Veterans Park School, the East Ridge School and the Ridgefield High School. The Veterans Park School was built in 1952 as an elementary school to replace the Kindergarten at the Bailey Avenue School and to alleviate congested conditions at the East Ridge School. An addition was built in 1957 for the expansion of facilities.

The East Ridge School was completed in 1915 and was added to and remodelled in 1925 and 1939. The Ridgefield High School forms part of the same installation. In the fall of 1957 the enrollment in Ridgefield public schools was 1349 pupils, having more than doubled within a decade. The Ridgefield public schools operate under the direction of

The Ridgefield Board of Education which acts as a policy-forming body for local procedures which are not in conflict with State laws of education. The board consists of nine members elected in a bipartisan election, who are responsible for making the schools meet the community's needs.

Within the provisions of the State law, the Board determines the policy of transportation. It is a matter of interest that approximately sixty per cent of the pupils require bus transportation. The Board supervises the operation of the school cafeterias and the maintenance of the physical installations.

In addition to the supervision of the physical aspects of the educational institutions, the Board submits recommendations for curriculum changes, and it plans and works for the expansion of the services and facilities of the schools, and attempts to improve the quality of the teaching staff and methods in use.

The Superintendent of Schools is selected by the School Board. The Board may also select principals, teachers and other personnel required for the operation of the schools, or it may delegate the selection of such personnel to the Superintendent. Salaries of all personnel are fixed by the Board. The State requires that only State-certified teachers may be employed. The Superintendent is hired by the Board for a term not to exceed three years, and he may be re-hired after that period. His duties are to represent the Board as its executive and administrative agent. The principals of the elementary schools and of the high school supervise the daily classroom work of the teachers and serve in the capacity of administrators of their respective schools.

The State Board of Education reserves for itself a police power over schools, particularly in regard to safety and health regulations. It enforces State laws regarding education. State laws require that all schools within the State teach civil government and American History at certain grade levels, and that at all levels the school teach health, hygiene and the evil effects of tobacco and liquor. The State Board issues certificates to teachers in Ridgefield public schools in the same manner as the State Medical Board certifies doctors in medical practice. The State Board provides consultative services for local schools as required and requested, and it also administers State aid towards financing the operation of the schools, the transportation of pupils and payment of construction bonds, which lowers the amount that needs to be collected from local taxation.

School Appropriations represent about two-thirds of the total town budget. Seventy per cent of the school expenditures result from instructional services and four per cent is allotted for general control, including the salaries of the Superintendent and administrative assistant.

The local School Board receives estimates from the department heads and teachers for their needs during the coming fiscal year, to which are added estimates of teachers' salaries, transportation costs, and the costs of maintenance and operation of the physical installations. The total of these figures is submitted to the Board of Finance in the spring for the review and modification of this budget before it is presented to the town for its approval at the annual Budget Town Meeting.

St. Mary's Parochial School is situated on a tract of a little less than five acres at the corner of Barry and High Ridge Avenues. The land was purchased in March 1954 from Mr. Louis Baker. Work on the building was begun within a few months.

St. Mary's Clubhouse was used as a temporary school building while construction was in progress, with three grades being taught there.

The school was completed and dedicated on 2 June 1956 by Most Reverend Lawrence J. Shehan, D.D., Bishop of Bridgeport.

The building is of the split level design with eight classrooms and facilities for a total of four hundred students. The building was designed by Francis H. S. Mayers and the sculpture and art work was produced by Mr. Frederick Shrady, an internationally known sculptor who lives in Ridgefield.

The school is administered under the pastor of St. Mary's Parish by a staff of the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross, who came to Ridgefield from the province of Our Lady of Princeton at Princeton, New Jersey in 1953.

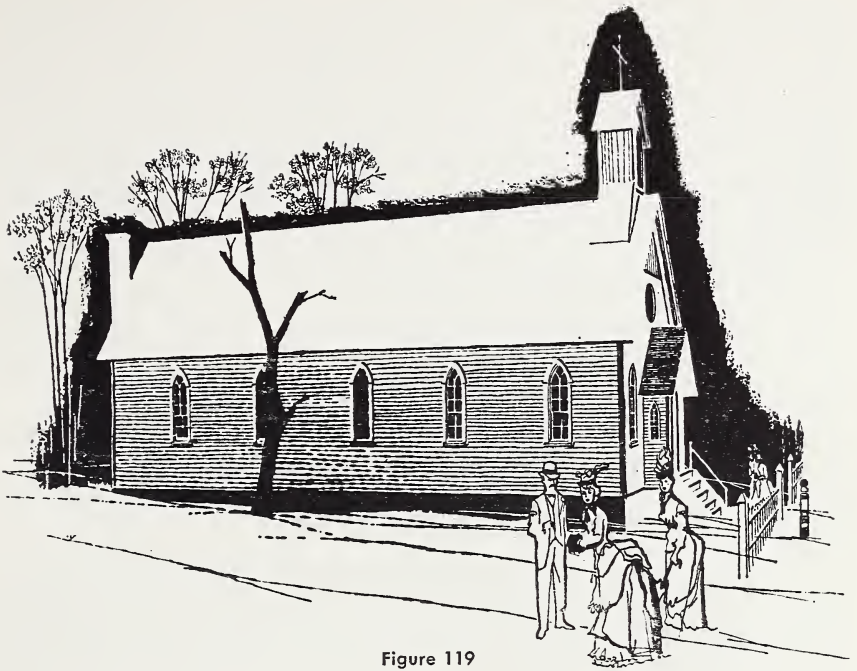


Figure 119

Chapter XXII CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

The Congregational Church was organized in Ridgefield in 1712, within four years after the purchase of the land from the Indians. In October 1712 the General Assembly at Hartford ordered that all lands in the township be proportionately taxed for four years towards the settling and maintaining of the ministry in the town.

In 1713 the first minister, Rev. Thomas Hawley, came to Ridgefield to make his home. In 1714 the General Assembly granted

“ . . . unto the Inhabitants in the Town of Ridgefield to imbody into Church Estate and settle an orthodox minister among them,” and in that year Rev. Hawley officially became the first pastor, and continued in that capacity until his death in 1738. He was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll who was settled in the position in August 1739.

For the first fifty years of the existence of the First Congregational Society, its records were kept as part of the town records, showing the close relationship that existed between the Church and State in that period. Church business was done in town meetings by the proprietors, and the minister served as the Town Clerk.

Church services during the town's first decade were held in a small building on the Green which served as the Town House and school-house.

The First Congregational Meeting House was not built until 1724. On 19 December 1723 the proprietors at a town meeting "voted unanimously . . . That a meeting house be built." This was the first constructive action towards having a church building in the settlement. The new meeting house was to measure forty feet long by thirty feet wide, and the measurement between sill and plate was specified to be twenty-eight feet. However, in November of the following year the measurements were revised to be forty-six feet long, thirty-four feet wide, and twenty feet between sill and plate.

According to a meeting of the proprietors, the building was to be set north and south adjacent to the corner of the church-yard which adjoined on the property of Ensign Benedict. The building was to be roofed with two foot chestnut shingles and pine boards for the doors. The new building continued in use for about seventy-five years.

Meanwhile on 13 December 1725 the salary of the minister was set at seventy pounds for three years, and at the end of three years the sum of ten pounds was to be advanced and added until it amounted to one hundred pounds, the amount at which his salary was to continue.

Some years passed before the first church was completed. In September 1726 it was voted to raise the amount of one hundred forty-seven pounds and nine shillings for the completion of the building, and five years later, in 1731, the town voted that seats be provided at the town's expense.

In 1765 the question arose as to whether the meeting house should be repaired or replaced by a new one. On 1 January 1766 the proprietors resolved to build a new meeting house within the limits of the Society and to make application to the County Court to fix a place and grant a one penny tax to defray the charges of fixing the location. The site selected by the Court was not satisfactory, for the parishoners voted two to one at a meeting held the following year that the building should be in the Meeting House Yard.

In 1768 the question of the new meeting house was still unresolved, for at a meeting it was recorded that "The question being put to the meeting whether they build a meeting house at the stake set by the County committee. Resolved, in the negative by a great majority, also whether they would build in the meeting house yard which was resolved in the affirmative by a majority of more than 2 to 1."

Three more years passed before decisive action was taken. Finally in 1771 it was voted to repair the old meeting house by subscription and at the town meeting of 1 May 1771 it was voted to proceed with the construction of a new meeting house, which was specified to be fifty-eight feet in length, forty feet wide and with twenty-four foot posts, and said structure was to have a steeple. The cautious Proprietors voted in the following August to have the meeting house raised gratis or without cost. However, if this was not possible, they voted that help could be hired.

The Second Congregational Meeting House which has been voted in

1771 was finally completed in 1800, in the month of March. In 1783 Benjamin Smith and Captain David Olmstead were added to the supervisory committee. Thirty-one pews were installed on the floor of the church and there were eighteen more in the galleries.

Among the interesting records of the church are deeds of sale of the pews among the parishoners. On 1 January 1801, for instance, Nathan F. Kellogg sold a one-twelfth part of his pew to Enos Tuttle for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents, while on 27 May 1800 David Olmstead sold his entire gallery pew to Thomas Rockwell for three dollars. On 4 December 1801, the Society's committee in charge of selling pews sold to Thaddeus Keeler and Jeremiah Mead a gallery pew for nine dollars and eighty-four cents.

In December 1800 John Keeler was paid three dollars and fifty cents for having swept out the meeting house during the past year. In December 1803 the bell was cast anew at a cost of twenty dollars and sixty-five cents, collected in dues from the members of the Society.

In 1796 it was voted to pay the minister in United States money, for the first time:

“Voted that this society will give the Rev. S. G. Goodrich the sum of \$383.333 for his ministerial labors the past year.”

This amount was raised by a tax of two cents on the dollar in the list of 1797. This tax list recorded that the value of the taxable property of the richest man in the Society at that time was \$225.375.

At some time after the first decade of the church's existence, it was noted that the steeple was leaning back towards the roof, and in 1815, a meeting of the members voted that it was unsafe and should be taken down. In 1817 the new steeple was erected. When the posts of the new steeple were nearly in place, the iron hook to which the pulleys were attached broke off, and the framework fell. The damage to the framework was repaired and installed properly on the following day.

Provision was made in the church for music and the front seats on all three sides of the church were designed for the seating of musicians. In December 1827 Harvey Betts agreed to teach singing and to sing as often as was considered necessary on Sunday evenings for a period of from three to six months of the year at a fee of one dollar per evening

“ . . . and also to attend regularly on the Sabbath at all other times throughout the year (sickness & excepted) for twenty five cents per day for taking the lead in singing.”

Alterations to the church were made in 1833 with a rearrangement of the interior, and in 1841 the exterior was renovated. (*Figure 120*).

The Present Congregational Church was completed in 1888 and the old meeting house was abandoned. The last services in the old building were held on 15 July 1888. Three days later dedication services were held in the new stone church. (*Figure 122*).

The new building was constructed of granite quarried in the Ridgefield

area. It was built on the site of the Big Shop or Carriage Manufactory. Aaron Wallace of Farmingville, an outstanding stone mason, executed the masonry. The property had been donated to the church by the late Henry K. McHarg. The adjacent property, on which the church-house now stands, was acquired by the parish in 1916, from the former Ridgefield Club.

The Old Meeting House, after its abandonment in 1888, was purchased by the late Mr. Samuel S. Denton who had headed the building committee for the new structure. It is believed that Mr. Denton moved the meeting-house from the Green to property which he owned on Creamery Lane. The building was converted into a tenement building for housing part of Ridgefield's immigrant population during the first several decades of the 20th Century. In 1942 the building was purchased by the Goodwill Community Church. Although the building has suffered considerable mutilation during the alterations made to it during the past half century or more, certain features of the old meeting-house are still recognizable, and a number of the old windows of 24 panes are still in use. (*Figure 121*).

The Episcopal Church, or Church of England, had its beginnings in Ridgefield in about 1725, with occasional services at which the Rev. Samuel Johnson of Stratford officiated. Three years later he was succeeded in this work by Rev. Henry Caner of Fairfield, and the latter's brother, Rev. Richard Caner of Norwalk. There were about twenty families of that denomination in the community in that period. Among others who attended to the needs of Ridgefield's Episcopal families was Rev. John Beach of Newtown who served the local congregation from about 1735. He reported to the Society of London that the Episcopal families of Ridgefield esteemed the Church of England and desired a church of their own.

The Rev. Joseph Lamson, who was assistant to Rev. James Wetmore of Rye, officiated in Ridgefield in connection with his parishes in North Castle and Bedford. Rev. Lamson visited Ridgefield from 1744 until 1747, and possibly until 1762. Rev. Richard S. Clark succeeded him in about 1764 and held services in connection with the parishes of Ridgebury and Salem.

Rev. Epenetus Townsend took charge of services at Ridgefield in connection with Ridgebury and Salem in 1768 and continued in this capacity until 1776. Following the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the vote of the Town of Ridgefield late in that year to support the Continental Congress, Townsend left Ridgefield. He was a self-acknowledged Tory and he preached sermons against the patriotic rebellion. One story relates that he moved to New York City, where he received an appointment as chaplain to a British regiment. When the battalion was ordered to Halifax in 1779 Townsend accompanied the troops and sailed with his family in one of the vessels. The ship was wrecked in a severe storm, and all lives were lost.

Another version stated that Townsend was arrested by the Committee of

Safety because of his Tory activities and because of the sermons he directed against the patriots. After imprisonment at Fishkill, he was sent to Long Island, which was then British territory. The British authorities permitted him to sail for Nova Scotia with his family. En route the ship was wrecked in a storm at sea and all passengers and crew perished. This latter version is the more likely inasmuch as there is preserved Townsend's letter to the secretary of the Venable Society, dated June 1777, which reads in part:

"From the first existence of the present rebellion I could give the Honourable Society no account of my conduct with respect to public affairs, because my distance from New York, and the excessive vigilance of the Rebel committees in getting and examining all letters, rendered such a step dangerous. But being now, by God's good providence, banished from among the rebels for my loyalty to his Majesty, I think it my duty to give the Society a short account of my conduct . . .

I did everything in my power, by preaching, reading Homilies against rebellion, and by conversation, to give my Parish and others a just idea of the sacred obligations laid upon us by Christianity . . .

In May 1776, I was called before the Rebel Committee of Courtland's Manor, who invited me to join their association: upon which I told them freely that I esteemed their resistance of his Majesty's authority to be repugnant to the precepts of the Gospel and therefore could not give it my countenance.

I continued the services of the Church for three Sundays after the Declaration of Independence by the Congress . . .

On the 21st October, I was made a prisoner and sent to the Court at Fishkill, as an enemy to the Independence of America, where I was kept on parole through the winter, at my own expense, which was very great . . .

. . . On the 31st of March (1777), in consequence of my refusing the oath of allegiance to the State of New York, I received an order to depart within eight days, with my family, apparel, and household furniture, to some place in possession of the King's troops, in penalty of my being confined in close jail, and otherwise treated as an open enemy of the State. With this order I readily complied, and after procuring a flag from a Rebel General, to transport my family and furniture to Long Island, I set out . . .

On the 11th of April, we landed on Long Island, with hearts full of gratitude to God, for having at length delivered us from the malice and cruelty of the Rebels.

Epenetus Townsend."

All of the clergy who visited Ridgefield prior to the Revolutionary War were missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and received an annual stipend of twenty pounds, plus a tax collected from among the people of the parish for the missionary's support. Among the early collectors of the Ministerial Rate in Ridgefield were John Smith and Samuel Smith in 1744.

The first church building for the Church of England had been erected in Ridgefield in about 1740 on the site granted by the Proprietors of the Town

for that purpose at a meeting held 4 January 1739. It was located somewhat south of the present church building, and defined as

“ . . . a certain spot of land in said Town Street, on the front of that home lot that was formerly John Sturtevant's deceased; the west sill bounded within three feet of the line or front of said lot; which said spot or piece of ground is to be in extent, thirty-six feet north and south; and east and west, twenty-six feet.”

The original building remained standing until after the end of the Revolution. Although damaged by fire at the hands of the British and rendered unfit for services, it had not been totally destroyed.

In October 1784 it was voted among the parishioners to demolish the old building and build a new church which was to be 40 feet long, 30 feet wide and 18 feet posts, slightly southerly of the former building. The old building was removed by a committee consisting of Benjamin Hoyt, Ezekiel Wilson, Thaddeus Sturges and Jonathan Whitlock. The same committee was placed in charge of building the new structure. In September 1785 Lieutenant Benjamin Smith deeded a piece of ground to the church for the building. This is now the church yard, and upon which part of the present structure stands.

The small parish experienced considerable difficulty in collecting funds for the building of a new church, for the recent war had caused many hardships. Accordingly, produce and goods were accepted in lieu of money, including shingles and boards to be used in the construction of the church. The church was not furnished until 1791. In 1794 the building of a pulpit was commissioned, and in 1799 the remainder of the pews were added. In 1819 the church underwent alterations and a steeple was placed at the south end.

In 1820 the parish petitioned the General Assembly at Hartford for remuneration of damages done to the church by the British inasmuch as the former building had been used for Continental stores, but the petition was dismissed.

The church was officially named St. Stephen's and consecrated by Bishop Brownell on 12 November 1831, and as part of that ceremony he confirmed 52 persons.

Early in 1841 the parish voted to erect a new and larger church. Isaac Jones donated a piece of ground at the rear of the church lot, and the cornerstone of the new church was laid in August. The new church was completed in the following year.

The next several decades witnessed various improvements being made in the new edifice, such as the addition of a new bell in 1851, and of a chancel and other alterations in 1857.

The first parsonage or rectory was built in 1838 on one acre of ground donated by Colonel Philip Burr Bradley. This later became the home of Gould Rockwell, and a new rectory was built opposite the entrance to Market Street. In 1888 the parish acquired the property on which the present rectory is built.

The present church was built in 1915 and dedicated on 30 May 1916 by

Bishop Brewster. In the same year the present rectory was constructed, and the former building was moved to Catoonah Street. (*Figure 123*).

The Methodist Church in Ridgefield had its beginnings in 1787 when Rev. Cornelius Cook conducted a meeting in Ridgefield, twenty one years after Methodism had been introduced into the United States from England.

On 26 June 1789 Jesse Lee, a native of Virginia, was sent to the so-called Stamford Circuit by the first Methodist Conference in New York. His third sermon in Connecticut was preached in Ridgefield, in the Independent School House on the Veterans Park grounds.

In January 1790 the first Class was formed in Ridgefield, which was the third such Class in New England. The members consisted of Ichabod Wheeler and Daniel Keeler and their wives and it took place at the Wheeler home near Taylor's Mill in Limestone District, where meetings continued to be held.

Other early meeting places were on North Street in 1805 and on Main Street in 1807. The kitchen of Dr. Amos Baker, and the homes of Thomas Hyatt and Jabez Gilbert were used from 1807 to 1826. The Hyatt homestead is now the home of Mrs. Vincent Bedini on North Salem Road.

The first Methodist Episcopal Church was erected in 1826 at the fork of the roads leading to North Street and Titicus District, at the corner of the cemetery where the Lounsbury plot was later situated.

The old meeting house remained at the end of the cemetery until 1894. After the church abandoned it, the building was subsequently used as a tenement. It was finally sold at public auction to D. Crosby Baxter, who demolished it.

The first settled pastor in Ridgefield was the Rev. Parmelee Chamberlain. He was settled here in 1836 with a parish of 118 members. In 1838 Rev. Chamberlain left for another parish and he was replaced by Rev. Thomas Sparks. In the same year the site of the present church was purchased, on the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets.

In 1841 a new church was built on the site purchased, and located much nearer to the street than the present structure. In 1883 the church was moved back to its present location, a cornerstone was laid, and a new facade was added. The church was re-dedicated as the Jesse Lee Memorial Church. (*Figure 124*).

The First Roman Catholic Services in Ridgefield may have been held in the summer of 1779 on Barrack Hill, at the cavalry camp of the Partisan Legion under Colonel Charles Armand. The Legion consisted of approximately one hundred sixty cavalry and infantry troops. They were almost exclusively of French nationality.

The Mass was unquestionably celebrated also on 2 July 1781 in the advance camp and in the main camp of the French troops under Comte de Rochambeau who stopped in Ridgebury on that date. Chaplains were attached to each of the four regiments and included Abbe Claude Robin, who was chap-

lain of the Soissonnais Regiment. The other regiments were served by the Abbes Gluson, Lacy and St. Pierre. It is possible that services were held also on the day of the arrival of the French troops in Ridgebury on Sunday, 1 July 1781.

The Roman Catholic Church was located at the foot of Catoonah Street in an old frame building originally constructed for secular use.

The first Roman Catholic on record in Ridgefield was Alexander de Ressiguie, a relative of Abijah Ressiguie, who later became proprietor of the Keeler Tavern.

The first Roman Catholic family on record was that of James Brophy, (*Figure 125a*) who arrived in Ridgefield to make his permanent home on Thanksgiving Day, 30 November 1848. Soon other Catholic families came until a Catholic congregation of about fifty to seventy-five persons existed in the town. These included members of the Kelly, McGlynn, Murphy, Cahill and other families.

The first Catholic priest to visit Ridgefield was Father Thomas Ryan, the first pastor in Danbury. While en route from Norwalk to Danbury he visited the Brophy home. Finding two Brophy relatives near death, he administered last rites.

The first Catholic services were held in Ridgefield by Father Michael O'Farrell of Danbury, who came to celebrate Mass once a month. Father O'Farrell visited the Brophy home on Saturday nights to hear confessions and he celebrated Mass the following Sunday morning at about eight o'clock, and then returned to Danbury.

Father John Smith succeeded Father O'Farrell, and Father Peter O'Kelley and Father Thomas Drea came after him. During the early period Mass was celebrated in one of the several Roman Catholic homes. When the increasing size of the congregation made this no longer feasible, the old Town Hall was hired for services. The congregation paid a fee of five dollars each time for its use.

On 23 November 1867 a piece of ground with an old frame building on the south side of lower Catoonah Street was purchased for nine hundred seventy-five dollars from George R. Scofield by James Enright and James Walsh, acting as agents for the congregation. Services were held in the building for a year, until it was demolished by fire in September 1868, when the candlestick factory on the adjoining lot was burned.

For the nine years that followed, Mass was again celebrated in the homes of the individual Catholic families. During this period small sums of money were contributed by the parishioners for the construction of a new church. In about 1879 a small church was built on the property of the parish and dedicated 5 October 1879. The enterprise was under the direction of Father Martin A. Lawlor, rector of St. Peter's Church in Danbury. The collector of funds for the committee was Thomas McGlynn.

In about 1878 Ridgefield was made a mission to Georgetown parish of which Father Thaddeus Walsh was pastor.

In 1879-1880 Father Walsh moved to Ridgefield and kept Georgetown as a mission. He lived in Georgetown in 1880-1881 while the church was being built there, and resumed residence in Ridgefield in 1881 until his death in 1886.

During Father Walsh's pastorate, St. Mary's Cemetery was purchased in August 1882, and it was blessed on 13 October 1883, by Bishop McMahon of Hartford.

Father Patrick Byrne was Father Walsh's successor in 1886 until his resignation in 1892. During this period the church was enlarged, and the parish increased in number.

Rev. Joseph O'Keefe succeeded Father Byrne in 1892 but was forced to retire from the pastorate in his first year because of ill health. Meanwhile, however, a fund of \$535 was established for the purchase of land to be used as the site of a new church and rectory.

Rev. Richard E. Shortell was transferred to Ridgefield from Danbury on 30 May 1893 to succeed Father O'Keefe. In September 1893 the present grounds of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church were purchased from Jacob M. Lockwood for \$2750 and in March 1894 the construction of the rectory was begun.

During the period between 1879 and 1894 various quarters were used for the rectory. Father Shortell lived in a cottage on the Ward estate at first until the present Rectory at 40 Catoonah Street was completed in 1894.

The present church was begun in May 1896 and on 4 July the cornerstone was laid at a special ceremony, with Right Reverend Bishop Tierney officiating. The edifice was completed and dedicated on 5 July 1897. (*Figure 126*).

On 12 September 1901 the bell of the church was blessed by Bishop Tierney and it tolled for the first time on the occasion of President McKinley's death.

The clubhouse was completed by 30 May 1907. An addition of property to St. Mary's Cemetery was made on 1 June 1924.

The old church at the foot of Catoonah Street was sold by the parish on 19 September 1904 for three thousand dollars and after being moved to the rear of the lot it was converted into a blacksmith shop. It was later used as a plumbing shop and still exists on the original premises.

The Holy Ghost Fathers purchased the Cheesman property on East Ridge early in 1922 for the establishment of a Novitiate in connection with the Mission Seminary of Ferndale in West Norwalk. The Novitiate was placed in charge of Reverend Father Frederick T. Hoeger, C.S.Sp.

The First Christian Science Meeting was held in Ridgefield in 1902, when

the town was visited by a Christian Science practitioner who leased a house for the summer.

Regular services began in 1919 in the Dana house on the corner of High Ridge and Remington Road. Services were continued during the fall and winter in the home of one of the members.

Rooms for the Society were rented in 1920 over the grocery store of S. D. Keeler on Main Street. A reading room, a room for services and a Sunday School room were leased in the present Ernest Scott block when it was completed.

By-laws for the Society were drawn up in 1923 and on 24 March 1924 the Christian Science Society of Ridgefield was established as a branch of the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ Scientist of Boston, with nineteen members. In that year the first Christian Science lecture was delivered in Ridgefield, at the Town Hall.

In 1928 the Society purchased property and the building on south Main Street from the late Richard A. Jackson. The building was "Old Hundred", formerly the store of King and Dole. (*Figure 127*).

In September 1943 the Society conformed to the requirements of a church and it became the first Church of Christ Scientist of Ridgefield.

The Goodwill Community Church was established in Ridgefield following its first meeting held 5 March 1941 in the chapel of the First Congregational Church. The congregation consisted of a group of Negro citizens led by Rev. John P. Ball.

After several meetings, 34 persons pledged their support to the mission, and the group grew constantly in number and in support.

In 1942 the Goodwill Community Church purchased the Old Creamery building and the parcel of land on which it stands from the late Mr. S. S. Denton, and on the second Sunday in May of that year the new church was dedicated.

On 27 June 1948 the congregation held a mortgage-burning ceremony to celebrate their complete ownership of the church property.

The Congregational Church of Ridgebury is believed to have had its beginnings in the "New Patent Meeting House" as early as 1738. However, it was not until January 1769 that the congregation was organized, with eighteen members.

The first settled pastor was Rev. Samuel Camp, who was voted an annual salary of seventy-five pounds and a sum of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling for his settlement, to be paid in three annual installments. Mr. Camp served as pastor for thirty-five years, until 1804, when he was obliged to resign. He continued to live in Ridgebury until his death in March 1813.

There was no settled pastor following Mr. Camp until 1821, when Rev. Nathan Burton was installed. He continued to serve in that capacity until

1841. He had previously been a deacon of the Ridgebury Church from 1813 until he became its pastor.

In June 1843 Rev. Zalmon Burr of Westport was installed and he was succeeded by Rev. Martin Dudley.

Among the early records of the church are the baptismal records maintained by Mr. Camp, indicating that thirty-five children of members of the church were baptized from 1769 to 1799.

The present church property was purchased in October 1762 from John Whitlock, for the only consideration of “. . . the love and respect I have and do bear unto said Discenting Society of Ridgebury”. Prior to this date the congregation met in the original meeting house of the New Patent, as Ridgebury was called. It was located on the southerly apex of the triangle in Ridgebury Street on the cross roads which ran in an eastern direction a short distance south of the triangle.

On 23 August 1768 the congregation voted to construct a new church measuring forty-six by thirty-six feet inside, to face the east and to be completed by July 1769. Part of the old structure was utilized for the new building, and moved to the new location. For the first several decades wooden benches were used instead of pews. There was no stove to heat the building, and the walls were unplastered.

The church was repaired in 1816 and again in 1834. In 1838 the interior was refurnished. Finally, in 1851 the old church was taken down and replaced by the present structure. (*Figure 128*).

The Episcopal Church in Ridgebury was a mission station of Fairfield prior to 1731, just as the Oblong and Ridgefield were missions of the same parish of Fairfield.

Services were held in the Episcopal Church at the northerly apex of the triangle at the lower end of Ridgebury Street. The date of its construction is not known.

Rev. Richard S. Clark served the parish from 1764 to 1767 and was succeeded by Rev. Epenetus Townsend in May 1768. He served both Salem and Ridgefield until 1776, when he departed from Ridgefield at the beginning of hostilities.

The graveyard was south of the church and local tradition relates that many of the gravestones were removed and dumped in for fill around the house of John Ord which was built within the triangle.

During the Revolutionary War no services were held in Ridgefield. They were resumed during the period of Rev. Dr. David Perry's rectorship of the Episcopal Church in Ridgefield. As of September 1789 the Ridgebury parish voted to pay a tax of two pence on the pound on the list of the Society to Dr. Perry as long as he continued to serve them, and with the provision that the Society consented to have Dr. Perry go to Ridgebury one quarter of the time. The consent of the Society was withdrawn in 1790, and the old church

fell into disuse. After remaining empty and unused for the next two decades, it was torn down in 1810. The cemetery remained in the triangle until very recent years, when the few remaining stones and graves were removed to another burial area.

Cemeteries are usual and necessary adjuncts to churches in New England, and Ridgefield has a fair representation of burial grounds. Eighteen cemeteries are still in existence and recognizable as such within the confines of the township. Several others are known to have existed, but have not been found. The first cemetery in the town was

The First Burying Ground set aside at the southernmost end of the main street when the town was first established. Only two original stones remain and the site is otherwise marked by a monument installed by the town in 1922. The next oldest burial ground is

The Ridgebury Cemetery which was established in 1743, and includes the marked graves of fourteen important residents of the district who served in the Revolutionary War, in addition to many other graves in its several sections.

The Titicus Cemetery was the next to be added by majority vote at a town meeting held on 27 January 1835. It is situated adjacent to Maple Shade Street. It is probably the most important of Ridgefield's old cemeteries and includes the marked graves of fifty-two Revolutionary War veterans.

Mapleshade Cemetery is situated next to the Titicus Cemetery between Maple Shade Street and North Salem Road. It was laid out in 1850. To the north of it is

Scott's Cemetery, previously known as Gage's Cemetery, which was laid out in 1876. It adjoins the burial ground known separately as

The Hurlbutt Cemetery which consists of a small strip of land and which was laid out before 1860.

Another burial ground which is separately defined in the same general area is

The Lounsbury-Rockwell Cemetery which was established in 1894 and comprises the property at the apex of North Salem Road and North Street. The newest of the several burial grounds that are combined into this general area is

Fairlawn Cemetery which extends as far as the Titicus Store and was laid out in 1909. The six cemeteries described above combine to form one large tract located between Maple Shade and North Streets and North Salem Road. A short distance away along North Street is

St. Mary's Cemetery which was established in 1882. Within recent years a large tract of land was added at the easterly end to be developed as required.

There are a number of old family burial grounds in the town which have long been discontinued but which are still maintained and reserved as cemeteries. Among these are

The Smith Cemetery which is situated at the northern end of Scotland District on the west side of the road somewhat north of the residence of Mrs. Walter Hampden. This was formerly the property of Jeremiah Smith. At one time a Revolutionary War soldier named Peter Finch lived in this house. The cemetery is bisected by the New York State line. Originally the burial ground of the Smith family, it was long abandoned and none of the gravestones remain.

Selleck Cemetery is situated in the Bennetts Farms area and included about a dozen gravestones of descendants of the Benjamin Selleck family as well as others.

The Seymour Cemetery on Olmstead Lane was reserved exclusively for the burial of members of the family, and was abandoned many years ago. There are about fifteen stones in the burial ground.

The Smith Cemetery on West Lane on the premises of the Della Bovi property is another old family cemetery and includes about fourteen gravestones.

The Davis Cemetery is located on Silver Spring Road near the Ridgefield-Wilton town line and has about two dozen lettered markers dating from the 19th Century.

The Beers Cemetery is situated at the top of Branchville hill and was originally maintained by the Beers family of Branchville. There are about twenty stones within its confines.

Branchville Cemetery is a short distance from Branchville Railroad Station and is one of the larger cemeteries outside the Ridgefield area.

The Old Florida Cemetery is perhaps the smallest, having only five lettered stones at the present time. It is located north of the road leading to the railroad tracks from the state road intersection. Among the gravestones is one marked "Sergt. Hugh Cain" a veteran of the Revolutionary War. The larger part of the graves were removed from this cemetery in about 1837 to

The New Florida Cemetery which is situated on the easterly side of the state road from Branchville to Farmingville. This area was laid out in about 1835 and now contains between fifty and sixty stones. Veterans of the Revolutionary War buried in this cemetery include only the names of Thomas Couch and Hezekiah Hawley.

In addition to the eighteen known cemeteries in Ridgefield, there is still at least one other which has not yet been found, and which was located at the extreme end of Ridgebury District. It is believed that this family burial plot, which was on the property owned by the circus proprietor, Aaron Turner, was used as late as the 1850s for the burial of Turner and members of his family.

Part Five

PERSONS AND PLACES



Figure 130

Chapter XXIII

OLD HOUSES OF RIDGEFIELD

One of the most rewarding studies that could be made in Ridgefield would be of the early houses that are still in existence, albeit remodelled and modernized in many instances. Unfortunately, records of the early builders of the town are no longer available and in only a few instances are even the identities of the original owners known. The methods of construction as a result of which the houses have survived so successfully for two centuries and more, are often disguised or destroyed by later additions or remodelling.

Much of the history of any community is in its earliest buildings. Information about the builders and the original owners, data of the materials and methods employed because of the limitations of the materials and tools of the period, as well as the identity of those who used the buildings in later periods, would provide a unique story of the community. However, it can never be told, for most of it is lost in the vanished memories of those who have passed on into the mists of time.

Among the most interesting of the early homes of Ridgefield are many that have been demolished deliberately or by the elements even before the memory of persons living today. Of some of these brief records remain in the form of drawings or photographs and sometimes in written descriptions which have been preserved.

One example is the Benedict homestead which was situated on south Main Street on the westerly corner immediately before the turn into Wilton Road West. The house, which is illustrated in *Figure 131*, was a particularly fine example of early Ridgefield architecture. This one and a half story dwelling incorporated the early features of the great central chimney, the clapboarding

in front and rear, and double hung sash with twelve lights over eight. It was the homestead of one of the two Benedict brothers who were among the first Proprietors.

Another interesting old house was the Main homestead at the southerly boundary of Scotland District. This dwelling was torn down a number of years ago but is worthy of note for its interesting architectural features. It was originally another of the Scott homesteads, probably built for one of the daughters in the Scott family. It remained the home of the Scotts and its collateral branches, the Platts and the Mains, until it was demolished.

Another hazard encountered by the architectural historian is the removal of houses from the original location to another. An example of this practice is the old cobbler's shop on West Lane which was mentioned in Goodrich's "*Recollections of a Lifetime*". This building stood near the present site of the Casa-More Store. It was removed some years ago to Silver Spring Road, where it is now the home of Mrs. Carl Franken.

Another instance is the old house of Eleazar Watrous, which is remembered by some as the home of Dr. W. S. Todd, and which was situated at the corner of Main and Governor Streets. When the new street was cut through in about 1888, the house was moved to East High Ridge, and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. James T. Mitchell, Jr.

Several other examples come readily to mind. The present home of Mr. and Mrs. J. McElwee at the southerly intersection of North Salem Road and Tackora Trail was originally one of the Scott homesteads. It was situated on the premises now owned by Mr. David B. Weiss at the corner of North Salem Road and Mamasasco Road, and it was moved more than half a century ago by D. Crosby Baxter. The little store which stands at the same intersection and is also owned by Mr. and Mrs. McElwee, was moved to its present location by D. Crosby Baxter from Ridgebury. It was formerly the old Clark Keeler homestead situated at the corner of Ridgebury Road opposite the entrance to Reagan Road. The original foundations are clearly discernible on the premises of Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Machlin, close to the roadside. The little store was conducted for many years by Baxter, until his retirement, as the Lakeview Store.

Still another problem in the study of old houses is remodelling. Quite often the entire character of an old dwelling is changed beyond recognition, often intentionally and sometimes because of necessity. One instance of a house which has been considerably, but tastefully, remodelled is the Joel Gilbert homestead on Ramapoo Road near Sharp Hill, which is illustrated in *Figure 133*. The chimney base in the cellar bears the date "1818" carved upon it, which could be indicative of the date when the house was built, or possibly when the chimney was repaired. When the present owner, Mrs. Eleanor Peil, purchased the property a few years ago, the house had fallen into a state of extreme disrepair and considerable restoration was necessary.

Gilbert, the original owner, conducted an important lime manufactory

on his premises during the first part of the 19th Century in partnership with his son. Lime produced by the Gilberts was shipped as far as Stamford and other points. Several kilns and ovens existed on the grounds until recently, and evidences of their construction are still clearly visible.

Much more data is available to the architectural antiquarian about some of Ridgefield's other old houses, however. The following collection of studies are representative, and indicative of the comprehensive work that could be compiled.

The establishment of the date of construction of an old house is difficult and often impossible. Except in the very few instances where documentary evidence exists, the date must be approximated, and based on several guiding elements, of which the most important are the style of the building, and the materials and methods of construction.

Quite often a builder used methods and features of an older style in a later period, but in at least part of such construction there will be contemporary innovations which can be discerned by the willing eye.

There is a natural inclination to place the date of an old dwelling as early as possible, and this often leads to confusion in the dating of other, similar houses. Although this tendency is particularly distressing to the antiquarian, it is invariably a benevolent error, whether it be committed deliberately or unwittingly, for it proves beyond question that the owner loves his house, thus excusing many faults.

The houses described in the pages that follow have been selected on the basis of general interest, and availability of data. There are many more dwellings in Ridgefield that may be fully as interesting and deserving of description, which could not be included because of lack of information.

The Hawley Homestead at the northerly corner of Main Street and Branchville Road was built on Proprietors' Lot No. 5 which had been reserved for the minister in the original division made in 1708.

This house is the oldest existing dwelling in the village and is now the residence of Miss M. Frances Trainor. The dwelling is believed to have been built in 1713 or 1714 by a carpenter named Joseph Hawley, and is situated sixteen feet from the street. It was built as the home of Rev. Thomas Hawley, Ridgefield's first minister who arrived in Ridgefield in 1713.

This wooden dwelling has a gambrel roof with three small dormers, each fitted with the 12-light sash of the early 18th Century. After considerable controversy among architectural historians, it is conceded that the dormers are original and not added at a later date. This is further borne out by evidence of three dormers on the back of the house as well, which were removed when the present kitchen was added in about 1760. These rear dormers were identical in placement and style to the ones on the front side of the building.

The house is two and a half stories in height with two brick chimneys, having stone bases, built through the ridge board. The distance between them

at the top is approximately 25 feet. The house is constructed on an old stone foundation, which is extremely thick. The sides of the building are covered by old hand hewn shingles. A bay window has been added at the southerly end during a relatively modern period.

On the front side of the house there are four windows on the first floor with twelve panes in each sash. The three windows on the second floor are fitted with twelve panes in the upper sashes and eight in the lower. The panes are 6 x 8 inch throughout. The windows have good proportions. Shutters are fitted to the first floor windows, and are distinguished by very narrow stiles.

The front doorway is panelled, with two pane lights on each side of the opening.

The interior of the house presents a number of interesting features. The panelled doors of the two front bedrooms on the upper floor are painted in a most unusual manner to resemble wood grain, possibly walnut. The tradition in the Hawley family is that they were decorated in this manner in an early period by an Indian who lived in the town and who was a painter by trade. The graining was done in vegetable colors which he prepared himself. Rev. Hawley originally contracted with the Indian to decorate all of the doors in this manner, but the Indian became sick and was unable to do more than the two doors which still exist.

A beam in the south front corner of the living room near the entrance porch is charred. This was revealed when the timber was exposed during alterations being made by a recent owner. The tradition is that during the Revolution, presumably the Battle of Ridgefield, the patriots set fire to the house believing that Hawley was a Tory, but that they were dissuaded before too much damage was done and the fire was extinguished. Another version states that the house was fired by the British at the time of the Battle of Ridgefield, but that the patriots discovered the fire in time and put out the flames before the house was seriously damaged. Some skepticism is introduced to the legend by the fact that the charring is on the inner side of the beam, indicating that the fire which scarred it originated within the dwelling, not outside it.

In the northeast bedroom on the second story the walls are covered with a wallpaper of a very early period. Each owner has taken special precautions to preserve the paper, and it remains to this day as a memorial to the careful housekeeping of the house's occupants through the centuries.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature about this house is the persistent legend that it has a secret door somewhere in its interior. It is likely that this door is the one leading from the present dining room to the cellar. It is built flush with the wall and is disguised in part by wainscoting and by wall paper so that its presence is not immediately apparent. The present dining room was originally the kitchen of the dwelling, and the presence of the passage to the cellar in this location is a logical one. When a new kitchen was added in about 1760 to the house, and the old kitchen was converted into a dining

room, it would have been the natural inclination of the owner to disguise the entrance to the cellar. On the other hand, there may be another secret exit dating from Revolutionary War times or before that has not come to the attention of the last several owners.

The Hawley homestead was purchased from the last members of the original family, Miss Sarah and Mr. Henry Hawley, by Mrs. D. Lucille Lockwood in about 1912. It remained her home for many years, and after she sold it in the 1940s, it was subsequently owned by several others.

An exterior feature of the homestead is the old boxwood garden dating from an early period which retains much of its Colonial charm.

The Hawley homestead, as well as the Keeler Tavern, were described and illustrated in an article by Frank A. Wallis entitled "New Amsterdam and Its Hinterland" which appeared in *The Architectural Forum* in April 1929.

The Hawley house is registered as part of the collection of Historic American Buildings in the Fine Arts Division of the Library of Congress, and blue prints of the house were prepared under the W. P. A. and are on file. (*Figure 134*). A photographic detail of the stairway from the files of the Library of Congress is illustrated in *Figure 135*.

The Pink House on North Ridgebury Street at the intersection with Shadow Lake Road, is undoubtedly one of the two oldest houses in Ridgefield. This fine ancient type of salt box with added wood shed at one end of the roof, has an overhang and the salt box verge boards. It was built between 1712 and 1714. It is of particular interest because it has not been subjected to remodeling at any time and remains virtually unchanged from the day it was built. Until recently, it was in a fairly good state of preservation. (*Figure 137*).

The house has a central chimney of stone which is topped with brick, and the building rests on the original stone foundation. There are five windows on the second floor front and four windows on the first floor. The sash are fitted with six by eight panes. The door is panelled, with two panels at the top, a large panel in the center and two smaller panels at the bottom. The door lights at either side of the door have narrow panes, six by eight.

The exterior is covered with tough long shingles which are of chestnut riven by hand and painted pink. The house was always painted in this color, within the memory of the oldest living residents of the area.

The antiquity of the interior is far greater than that of any other house in the Ridgefield area. There is a unusual stairway with a rather crude hand-made newel post. Six steps with high risers connect the first to the second floor with another step to a landing where the stairway turns.

The second floor is divided into four rooms, two of which are very large bedrooms in the front of the building. A smaller bedroom is at the rear and there is also a second small room opening from one of the bedrooms. This was

a smoke room where hams, bacon and dried beef were smoked in the winter, from a fire made with corn cobs and hickory chips.

The house was probably built by Jonah Keeler (1690-1767), the son of Samuel Keeler of Norwalk who was one of the first Proprietors. In 1713 Jonah Keeler married Ruth Smith and settled in Ridgefield, presumably in the Pink House which he is believed to have built at the time of his marriage. The only one of his sons to settle in Ridgebury was Samuel Keeler (1716-1781) who inherited 160 acres of land valued at three hundred seventy pounds by his father's will. The Pink House was probably a part of this property, and it may have been his home until his death, at which time it passed to his son, Captain Nehemiah Keeler (1753-1838). The house and property remained in the Keeler family, and at the present time it is owned by Mr. N. Lyman Keeler, who lives next door.

The Stebbins House was one of the most important landmarks in the town until it was demolished in 1892. It had formed part of the barricade during the Battle of Ridgefield, and the wounded soldiers were brought into the parlor where their wounds were dressed by Miss Anna Stebbins, the daughter of the owner. For many generations tourists came to see the bullet-scarred walls and the bloodstained floors of the west room which were reminders of the conflict which took place around it.

The first owner and builder of the Stebbins house was Benjamin Stebbins of Northampton, Massachusetts. He had come to Ridgefield in the wake of a former neighbor in Northampton, the Rev. Thomas Hawley. Stebbins was a tanner by trade, and his services were welcomed in the little settlement. At the end of the Town Street was an area of uncleared land with ledges and steep precipices. It is said that since none of the Proprietors cared to claim it for themselves, they allowed Stebbins to have the tract without charge.

Stebbins proceeded to build a home after clearing the land, and the dwelling was completed in 1727. Meanwhile, since his arrival in Ridgefield in 1714 and during the time that his new home was under construction, it was quite probable that he built and lived in a hut on the premises. When the new house was completed, it was reported to be the finest then in existence in the town, (*Figure 138*).

Stebbins located his new home on an old road, which at that time went from west to east among the rocky knolls from Titicus Road. A few years after the new house was built, the road became a continuation of Main Street and was connected to the lane which transversed the property.

During the Battle of Ridgefield the Stebbins house served as the easterly end of the fortifications. The house was saved from destruction by the British because one of Stebbins' sons, Josiah, was a Tory who had acted as a guide for the British forces on their march to Ridgefield from Danbury.

The original garden was situated northeast of the house, and flower beds was maintained on either side of the front walk to the street. The original

cowpath along which General Arnold reportedly made his escape is now the main pathway from the house to the tea-terrace.

The Stebbins house remained standing and in the possession of the Stebbins family until 1892, when it was razed by the new owner, the late Mr. George M. Olcott, to make room for the present mansion. However, memorabilia of the historic old salt box house has been preserved in the Olcott mansion to the present time. The location of the foundation is marked by the old hearthstone which is carved with the date 1727 and which now serves as the entrance to the gate house near the second terrace. Among the relics of the old battle-scarred house which have been saved by Miss Mary Olcott are the buttery door having a leather covered peep-hole which was punctured by a bullet from the conflict, and which still retains a spent bullet lodged in the wood; an old Colonial cupboard and fire-irons which formed part of the old dwelling, as well as British buttons, coins and bayonets which have been dug up from the premises. The British and American soldiers who died in the engagement were buried in the grounds within the wall behind the commemorative stone, which was designed and erected to their memory by Miss Olcott. The expressive inscription on this marker, (*Figure 28*), which is so well known, states that:

*In Defense of American Independence
at the Battle of Ridgefield
April 27, 1777
Died
Eight Patriots
Who Were Laid in These Grounds
Companioned by
Sixteen British Soldiers
Living Their Enemies, Dying, Their Guests
"In Honour of Service and Sacrifice
This Memorial is Placed
For the Strengthening of Hearts".*

The Olmstead Homestead which is the third house on the right side of Olmstead Lane from West Lane, has been the home of Mrs. M. Estelle Benjamin and her family for almost forty years. The two and a half story dwelling was built on a foundation of rough field stone, long before the beginning of the Revolutionary War. The exact date is not known. The house may have been built for one of the Olmsteads by John Smith, but definite information is not presently available.

The original house was about 24 feet square, with the first floor divided into four rooms. A large room on the southerly side measures twelve by eighteen feet and in the southeast corner is an enclosed stairway to the second floor. On the westerly side there is a smaller room which was used as a pantry or food closet. On the northern side of the first floor were two smaller rooms, now combined into one. One of these rooms was nine by fourteen feet and the other was about ten by twelve feet. A large stone chimney was situated

in the center of the house between the rooms on the northern end and the large room on the south.

The stone chimney is about six by eight feet in size, with a large fireplace built into it for the larger room on the south side, which was originally the kitchen, and a smaller fireplace for the two rooms on the north. The chimney foundation in the cellar is about six by nine feet laid dry of medium-sized field stone with occasional short oak timbers laid into the corners as binders. Above the first floor ceiling the chimney is drawn in to about three and a half feet square and continues in this dimension to the second floor ceiling from which it emerges through the roof at a size of about two and a half by three and a half feet. The inside measurements of the chimney are twenty by thirty inches. No mortar was used except for the section of the chimney from the second floor ceiling to the top of the chimney. Clay was used in place of mortar to make the chimney fireproof from the first floor level to the second floor ceiling.

The large fireplace in the room on the south side of the house has an old Dutch oven on the right side to be used for baking, with a closet of stone immediately below it. Two more small closets are built around the chimney, one of which is over the mantel and the other in the small front hallway. The mantel piece is about six feet high with a six inch shelf with a single piece of hand hewn moulding beneath it. The mantel extends to a width of about eight and a half feet to cover the brick oven and the stone closet. A fieldstone hearth about two feet wide extends the entire width of the fireplace for eight feet.

The smaller fireplace in the north side is about three feet wide and two and a half feet high, with a depth of about fourteen inches. The hearthstone is modern and measures sixteen inches in width by four feet in length.

The main timbers or corner posts are hand hewn oak about eight inches by eight inches with girts or connecting timbers about six by eight inches mortised and tenoned into the posts and fastened with oak pins. The floor timbers on the first floor are of hand hewn oak and chestnut measuring six by six inches and laid into sills by tenon on timbers dropped into a box or slip mortise in the sill about four by four inches.

The plates on top which support the rafters are of hand hewn oak and measure six by six inches, mortised and tenoned on top of the posts and fastened with oak pins. The rafters are about five inches square of hand hewn oak notched into the plate at the bottom and fastened with oak pins driven down from the top side into the plate to hold it in place.

The timbers of the second floor are also of oak, measuring three inches in thickness by seven inches in depth and evidently sawed by an old-fashioned jig saw at a mill.

The studding is two by three inch oak mortised into the sill at the bottom with some girts above it to eliminate the necessity for nails. The lath is predominantly of chestnut, split in some sections of the house and sawed in others.

The house stands on its original foundation built with large stones at the bottom and smaller ones near the top, laid up dry. It measures from fourteen to sixteen inches in thickness.

The exterior of the house was originally covered with pine boards measuring about seven-eighths inch thick and ten inches wide of parallel thickness with no bevel and laid one over the other with a lap of one and a half inches.

The roof was originally finished with a birge board nailed edgewise on the outside of the gable and rafters over the clapboarding. The roof shingles were nailed into the top edge of it. The original birge boards were one by six or one by seven inches, and have been replaced at a later date by a modern twelve inch cornice.

The window frames are made of chestnut timber about four by four inches rebated out on the inside for the sash to run into, and mortised and tenoned and pinned with wooden pins at the corners. The windows are furnished with the original sash, which were hand made, and measured one and one-eighths inch in thickness. The panes are six by eight inches, and there are six lights in each of the upper and lower sash.

The floor boards of the first floor were seven-eighths inches in thickness and about ten inches in width, fastened with hand wrought nails. The floors on the second level are covered with boards of sawed chestnut and range in width from sixteen to twenty-four inches, fastened in place with hand-wrought nails.

The doors in the house are batten doors constructed with boards about one inch in thickness and ranging from six to sixteen inches in width, varying with the overall size of the door. They are fastened with one inch battens about eight inches wide with hand wrought iron nails driven through and clinched over on the opposite side. The wrought iron hinges and thumb latches are original.

The stairway to the second floor is located at the southeasterly end of the former kitchen and is enclosed by a partition of pine boards, each of which is about one inch in thickness and from ten to sixteen inches in width. They are hand planed, and assembled by tongue and groove.

In about 1900 a modern one-story addition was constructed at the rear of the house to include a kitchen and spare bedroom. At about the same period a glass-enclosed porch was added on the southerly side of the dwelling.

The foregoing data is based on a compilation made by the late Mr. Charles W. Benjamin and furnishes details of a house which is the prototype of colonial construction in Ridgefield, (*Figure 130*), and which has remained remarkably unchanged through the centuries.

The Olmstead homestead witnessed the march of some of the British soldiers along West Lane to their encampment. It may have been the home of Captain David Olmstead, which was reputedly saved from possible pillage and burning by a red petticoat.

The Isaac Keeler Homestead on the North Salem Road was probably built between March and September in 1734 by Joseph Keeler, although the possibility exists that it may have been built within the preceding decade.

Joseph Keeler was born in Norwalk in 1684, the son of Samuel Keeler, Sr., one of the original Proprietors. On 4 May 1722 he was granted a tract of fourteen acres of land on "Mamasco Hill" by the Proprietors. Ten years later, on 12 March 1734, he acquired an adjoining tract of ten acres from Joseph Osborn. Immediately following this purchase Keeler, who was then fifty years of age, built a dwelling, which is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Durant. The house was already in existence on 30 September 1734, for on that date five acres of the land Keeler had acquired from Osborn were taken by order of the Proprietors "in order for straightening ye highway from ye east side to ye west side of Mamasco Hill so far as to Joseph Keeler's house on said hill". On the same date the Proprietors granted Keeler another portion of land east of his house in compensation.

In 1741 Keeler deeded to his son, Isaac Keeler, a tract of thirty acres as "320 pounds of his portion" and the latter built a grist mill on the stream which flowed through the property from Lake Mamasco. Following the death of Joseph Keeler in 1757, the homestead and property was inherited by his son, Isaac Keeler. It was in this house that the miller was living when the British burned his mills. On 25 February 1778 Isaac Keeler deeded his dwelling with three acres to his son Elijah Keeler, but retained "the Mill Place and ponding" where his mill had been destroyed. Four millstones recovered from the old mill are used for decorative purposes on the premises of the homestead at the present time.

On 29 January 1796 Elijah Keeler sold his home and part of his property to Elnathan Hawley and Noah Smith of Stamford and within the same year Hawley transferred his interest by quit claim to Smith. Smith and his descendants retained possession of the house and land for the next one hundred twenty-eight years, until 1924.

Several additions have been made to the original house at two different periods. The salt box roof was raised and the character of its exterior has been considerably changed. Nevertheless it deserves a place among the oldest houses of Ridgefield. (*Figure 139*).

The Nathan Scott House at No. 5 Catoonah Street is among the several oldest dwellings in Ridgefield, but it is rarely listed among the historic buildings of the community. (*Figure 140*).

This is a salt box dwelling two stories high, with the back built up and having two birge boards. It has the single central original dry stone chimney bricked outside the roof. A second chimney was added at a much later date. The present foundation is of stone and new, and the house is generally in fine condition.

On the first story front there are four windows each having twelve panes

above and six below. The window frames are rabbetted. There are five windows in the second story, and windows at each end of the attic have four panes over four. The doorway has side lights with twelve panes by eight.

The house is covered with hand split shingles thirty inches long. The beams in the cellar are all hand hewn and drop mortised. One of the features of the interior is a staircase which rises from directly inside the front door. The floors are covered with oak boards of great width.

The house is stated to have been built in 1713 by David Scott 1st on Lot No. 13, which included the property on the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets. This Lot was drawn by Jonathan Stevens during the first lottery held in Norwalk. He died before he could move to Ridgefield. The property was sold by his widowed mother to David Scott 1st in 1712, and he built the house within the year that followed. He was the first of the Scotts to move to Ridgefield and the founder of the old Scott families of the town.

In 1922 the house was moved from the corner of Main and Catoonah Streets to its present location to make room for the new business block which was being constructed by a descendant, Mr. Ernest Scott.

This house has previously been described as the home built by Nathan Dauchy in about 1800, and which later served as the home of Russell Jones, Joel L. Rockwell, William Lounsbury, Henry Mead and Hiram K. Scott, Jr. More recent studies of the building indicate that the house is of a much earlier period, and it may be assumed with a fair degree of certainty that it was in existence long before Dauchy moved into it.

The M. Stanley Scott House was situated at the intersection of Ledges Road and Barlow Mountain Road in Scotland District, (*Figure 141*) and was one of the most interesting dwellings in the District. It was torn down by the late Seth Low Pierrepont within the last two decades.

The house was of the salt box type two and a half stories in height, with the deep slope cut off. The roof rose to a sharp peak, and was shingled. During recent times only one of the two original chimneys remained. The house was built on a foundation of rough stone. It was built with an overhang, and had been remodelled for the addition of dormers on the second story.

The sides were shingled and the front door in the center was no longer the original entrance. There were two windows on the first floor at the front with eight panes by twelve.

One of the features of the interior which had been noted by local historians was the stairway which was situated between kitchen and living room in a peculiar manner with an unusual newel post.

The house was built on a thirty acre farm which was owned by the Scott family since 1722 except for a brief period of two years. There is no record of the date when the house was built but it was long before the Revolutionary War as evidenced by its architectural features. It is believed by members of

the Scott family that this dwelling was the original Scott homestead in Scotland District and is somewhat earlier in date than the Olmstead Scott house.

According to family records, the first owner of the M. Stanley Scott house was David Scott 2nd, (1727-1809) who presumably built it. It descended to his youngest son, Gould Scott. Burr Scott, the son of Gould Scott, inherited the homestead and sold it in 1862 to George Washington Brown who retained possession of it for the brief period of two years. In 1864 James Scott 3rd purchased the property and from him it descended first to his son, M. Stanley Scott, and then to his grand-daughter, Miss Louisa Scott.

In about 1934 it was purchased by the realty firm of Prince & Ripley of Bronxville and sold to the late Seth Low Pierrepont. At the time of its last sale the house was furnished with valuable antiques, including a handloom on which Scott ancestors had once woven rugs for their homes.

One of the Scott descendants in Scotland District, George Wade, was well known in the community as a porch builder during the Civil War era. Many of the houses in Scotland and Titicus Districts featured porches which he added during this period. The porch on the M. Stanley Scott house was added by Wade.

Hezekiah Scott, of the fourth generation of the family, often related that he had been told that the house was fifty years old at the time of the Battle of Ridgefield, which would date it in the 1720s.

The Olmstead Scott House situated at the corner of Barlow Mountain Road and North Salem Road is one of the original Scott homesteads in Scotland District.

The original owner, and presumably the builder, of the dwelling was James Scott 2nd, the father of Olmstead Scott, and it was built a decade or two prior to the Revolutionary War. The house is of the salt box type of two and a half stories, with the deep slope cut off in the rear. The roof has a sharp angle with lean-to added at a later date. There is a central chimney of stone in the cellar and bricked above. There is no overhang. The foundation is a very old one. The fenestration on the street side, or gable end, includes four windows on double frames. The present entrance doorway was formerly a side entrance and has been restored, with a new door added. The original entrance was from the side of Barlow Mountain Road, which was the more important of the thoroughfares when the house was constructed.

On the grounds north of this dwelling the British troops encamped for lunch on their retreat from Danbury on 27 April 1777, and it was on this site that General Wooster surprised them, resulting in the first skirmish of the Battle of Ridgefield. Cows belonging to the several Scott families and others were butchered and roasted in the lot on the northerly side of this dwelling.

On the northwest of the house near the Barlow Mountain Road may still be seen the original foundation of the tread mill that was operated with a pair

of oxen for making flour by the Scott family. This house is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Jackson. (*Figure 142*).

The Hezekiah Scott House which is part of the estate of the late Seth Low Pierrepont and which is at present the home of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Cashman, is believed to have been built before the Revolutionary War by one of the sons of David Scott 1st. It is situated at the intersection of Ledges Road and Barlow Mountain Road and is a salt box having the deep slope cut off, with a shingled sharp-peaked roof. The house is two and a half stories in height with an overhang and with only one of its original two chimneys. Two windows in the second story have been remodelled for the addition of dormers.

Fenestration includes two windows on the first floor with two frames of 6 x 8 panes with twelve panes over eight. The doorway at the center of the front side is evidently not original. The sides are shingled.

The stairway rises in a peculiar manner from the living room and kitchen and is distinguished by an unique newel post.

The house was the lifelong home of Hezekiah Scott, a weaver who also operated a distillery on the brook near his home. This brook is still known at the present time as Uncle Kiah's Brook. Hezekiah's distillery was noted for the quality of whiskey and cider brandy which he produced. He also owned and operated a sawmill some distance north of his dwelling on the same stream.

Hezekiah Scott was a colorful figure in the community and he remembered, and often related, having voted in every administration from Madison to Hayes inclusive. He was born on Christmas Day, 25 December 1789, and he died at the age of eighty-seven in 1879, three weeks after having voted for Hayes.

Whether the house was built by Hezekiah's father, James Scott 2nd, or by one of his uncles, is not known. (*Figure 143*).

The Benedict Cobbler's Shop, which has been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Wohlforth since they purchased it on Thanksgiving Day 1931, is believed to have been constructed during the first half of the 18th Century, possibly for one of the sons of the two Benedicts who were among Ridgefield's first Proprietors. Located on Rockwell Road near its junction with Perry Lane, the house provides an interesting example of one of the old tradesmen's homes, where the workshop was adjacent to the dwelling. (*Figure 144*).

The house was originally of a salt box shape of one and a half stories, with a large central stone chimney laid dry. The building was deliberately situated on the southern slope of a hill to provide additional warmth in winter. The three fireplaces which form part of the main chimney are in splendid condition of operation and provide sufficient heat during even the worst winter weather without modern conveniences.

The large room opening from the present front door, and which is now a living room, was the original kitchen. In this room the fireplace is very large

with the old bricks in good condition, as well as the Dutch ovens which form part of it.

The stairs which are near the kitchen door rise very steeply and are completely enclosed. There are three other rooms on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second or 'half' story. There is no attic, but a square opening in the ceiling permits entry into a storage space.

The rooms of the first floor have ceilings about seven feet from the floor. The plaster is of the old type made with hair and shell in a thick layer.

The upstairs rooms have floors covered by oak boards, very wide and of random sizes.

The windows have small sash proportionate with the size of the house with nine panes over six, six over six and three over three, with many of the old panes intact.

At present the exterior is clapboarded and painted white in front and red in the rear, in the manner described by Samuel Goodrich in his *Recollections of a Lifetime*.

The cobbler shop was built adjacent to the house and was joined to form part of a single building by the present owners. Originally it was a separate two-story building measuring sixteen and a half feet in length and twelve and a half feet wide. The shop was maintained in the lower ground floor which is built into the bank on the north side. The Benedict cobbler's bench and a large collection of tools have been preserved with the house.

The house was the home of the Benedict family for a century or more, and was used for the making of shoes until the property was sold by the last member of the family to engage in the trade.

The property was acquired from the Pender family in the 1920s by the late Cass Gilbert and remodelled into its present form before it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Wohlforth in 1931.

The Keeler Tavern is located at 25 Main Street on the left side just before the intersection of Main Street and West Lane Road. It is believed to have been built between 1760 and 1766 by David Hoyt. It was purchased from Hoyt by Timothy Keeler, Jr. in 1769. It was first opened to the public as a tavern in October 1772.

The Tavern is a building of two and a half stories with gambrel roofs with a railing, and the gable end facing the street. There is a central chimney with a number of fireplaces. Some of the stones in the fireplaces are as much as ten feet in length.

The building is generally fitted with windows having six by eight panes that are extremely old. Some of the windows are shuttered. There is an overhang, with wooden gutters and leaders. The doorway is very old with very old hardware, and the old benches at the entrance are original.

Approximately a hundred years ago a kitchen was added to the south end of the building. A narrow brick chimney which rises to a height of about twenty two feet was added at this time.

The tavern sign originally swung from a pole inserted through the crotch of a large elm in front of the building.

A unique feature is the northeast corner post of oak in which is imbedded a cannon ball fired by the British during the battle of Ridgefield.

The present front door is situated on the side that was originally the rear of the house, and opens into the first kitchen—a low room with two summer beams. The fireplace has been rebuilt into a narrower form with brick, and the two outer piers are encased in wood with a second or lower mantel shelf between them. When the second kitchen was built in the ell, in about 1794, this earlier kitchen was converted into the taproom of the tavern (*Figure 69*). On the west side of this room was located the first Ridgefield Post Office, and the marks of the sorting boxes can still be discerned on the staircase wall now facing the door.

The kitchen of the tavern in the first story ell, (*Figure 145*) which was added in about 1794, has a fireplace that is larger but otherwise similar to the one previously described in the taproom.

The northeast room has a relatively wide cased summer beam. The excellent Adams mantel on the fireplace in this room is a recent addition. The northwest room is quite similar but panelled.

On the north side of the building is a porch which is of early date. The stairs have open stringers with fine turned balusters and narrow handrail which is deeply moulded, and a square post. There is raised panelling underneath and simple scrollwork.

Two of the three dormers on the south side of the building are an addition of the past eighty or ninety years. The oldest known photograph of the Tavern, which is illustrated in *Figure 66*, dating from approximately the Civil War era, shows the building with a single dormer before remodelling.

Many of the original furnishings were preserved by the late Mr. Cass Gilbert, and some of these are worthy of special note. The tall case clock encased in pine which stood at the right of the fireplace in the taproom was made and signed by John Whitear of Fairfield, Connecticut before 1773. There were two clockmakers bearing the name, father and son. John Whitear Jr. was born in 1738 and became his father's apprentice. He later succeeded him in business after his father's death in 1762. John Jr. produced tall case clocks with eight day brass movements made to order. He died in 1773.

The clock was probably purchased directly from Whitear Jr. in Fairfield before 1773 either by the original owner of the building, David Hoyt, or it was obtained by Keeler at about the time that he purchased the building. The clock was undoubtedly originally installed in the front room and later moved

into the taproom for the guidance of travellers in about 1794. It was at this time that the case was cut to fit the low ceiling of this room.

Another interesting item is a pewter tankard which stood on the mantel of the Tavern and which was inscribed with the initials E. K. These were the initials of Keeler's bride, Esther Kellogg, and a small foot bench in the same room had the same initials carved into its top.

On the upper floor the partition wall between two bedrooms is made of wood and constructed in such a way that it is hinged at the top and fastened at the floor with hooks. It can be unhooked and raised out of the way by counterweights in order to combine the two rooms into one for dances.

An unusual feature in one bedroom is a deep arched niche built into one of the plastered walls. It was specially constructed to accommodate the tricorn hats of the gentlemen that came to the Tavern, and remains intact to this day.

The Pulling-Dykman House on Barlow Mountain Road, which is now the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Cashman, is an outstanding example of painstakingly accurate restoration. Although the date of construction and the identity of the original owner have not as yet been fully established, the dwelling was built some time before the middle of the 18th Century by a member of the Scott family. (*Figure 146*).

The exterior has the typical clapboarded front and rear with shingled sides. Fenestration includes restored front windows of nine panes over six while the older sash on the rear of the building have twelve panes over eight. The large side panes on either side of the doorway may have been added at a later date when a wing one and a half stories in height was added to the rear. Subsequently the Pulling family, who were among the later owners, raised the roof of the wing to provide a larger chamber for the accommodation of a married daughter, Lucretia and her husband, a man named Dyckman.

One of the most interesting features of the old house is the huge central chimney. A fireplace in the south room is seven feet wide with a rear oven of a type discontinued after about 1750. No crane was used and the cooking pots were suspended from chains which hung from the throat. The original chains were discovered on the premises and restored. The chimney is surrounded by fireplaces in three other rooms. The chimney foundation is of field stone laid dry with occasional short oak timbers laid into the corners as binders.

A kitchen in the later wing has a large but shallow fireplace with side ovens of later date. A fine hearth was discovered under a layer of cement which had apparently been added at a later period to bring the hearth level flush with the floorboards. (*Figure 147*).

Among other features worth noting are interior partitions of feather-edge wide boards, a fine panelled fireplace wall in the northwest parlor, a built-in

corner cupboard in the dining room, very deep reveals on the side windows, indicating unusually thick walls, and a visible flying buttress type of support in one of the upper rooms. Supporting studs are formed from trees rough cut and shaped and placed with the larger part at the top to provide greater support for the wide outer beams.

Wide plank flooring exists in its original condition throughout the house. The outer sheathing is made of oak planks placed vertically. The interior walls were plastered to the trim to present an interesting effect.

The doors of the second floor are tongue-and-grooved board battens. Panelled doors are used on the first floor.

The Captain Whitney House at the intersection of Bennetts Farm Road and Ridgebury Street (*Figure 148*) has been known by the names of the many owners who have lived there. At the present time it is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel M. McKeon.

The house was built for Captain Henry Whitney, a soldier in the Revolutionary War. On a stone under the front porch is carved the date 1782 and it is presumed that the older portion of the present residence was built at that time. Just south of the present dwelling was the original Whitney house and vestiges of the old cellar and the well could be distinguished as late as 1931. At some distance in the fields about a quarter of a mile from Mr. McKeon's house was a dwelling which had been built on a flat rock, which was the home of Benjamin Palmer in 1835.

The original owner of the present residence, Captain Henry Whitney, was a tanner. He enlisted in the Militia in May 1775 and served in Captain Ichabod Doolittle's 7th Company. He was later in the 5th Regiment and in 1771 he was appointed an ensign with the 16th Regiment. In 1781 he received a Captain's commission with the same regiment. When the French troops visited Ridgebury in July 1781, it was reported that soldiers of the advance camp, which was located in the great wide field across the road, came to the springs on the Whitney homestead for water. The legend adds that a number of frogs were caught in the process, to the delight of the soldiers.

Whitney's daughter Clarissa married David Hunt, an enterprising young man who established a stage line from Ridgebury to Norwalk in 1836. The homestead was the station of departure and George V. R. Hunt, Whitney's grandson, collected passengers from Danbury, Mill Plain and other points and brought them to the Whitney house. There they might spend the night and after breakfast the stage would depart at 2:30 A.M. punctually.

George V. R. Hunt continued to own the property as late as 1867. It was acquired in about 1887 by the late Samuel A. Coe, a native of Brewster and a veteran of the Civil War. In August 1933 the property was sold to Miss Sarah J. Clark of New York City and it was finally acquired by Mr. and Mrs. McKeon in 1937. The house has been enlarged with several additions

constructed in recent years but the original portion has not undergone any considerable change.

The Jennings House, which was purchased from the Cornen family by the late Colonel Louis D. Conley, was built in 1816 by Albin Jennings, a carpenter from Weston.

Jennings had come to Ridgefield in 1812 to build a new house for Jacob Dauchy. While engaged on this project, Jennings fell in love with Polly, Dauchy's attractive young daughter, the sixth of ten children. Polly was only nineteen at the time and her parents considered her to be too young for marriage. Jennings pressed his suit but the elder Dauchys stipulated that he would have to wait four years before Polly would be permitted to marry. The young carpenter was philosophic about the matter and agreed to wait. He continued to work in the area and in 1816 he again asked for Polly's hand. The parents, no doubt impressed by the young carpenter's patience, gave their approval. Polly was presumably agreeable as well.

Having waited four years, Jennings felt that a few months more would do no harm. He proceeded to build a new house on the Danbury Road diagonally opposite the dwelling he had constructed for the Dauchy family. When it was completed Polly and Albin were married and moved into their new home. Later they moved to the Dauchy house, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Jennings was among the oldest men in Ridgefield when he died in 1887.

The Jennings house was purchased by Peter Cornen. After his death it was inherited by nephews, who sold it to Col. Conley. In 1928 Col. Conley remodelled the dwelling into an inn and it was opened to the public as the Outpost Inn. (*Figure 149*).

Jennings built many houses in Ridgefield during the first half of the 19th Century. Among others were the George Keeler house which later became the home of Mrs. Wallace T. Jones, the "Big Shop" which housed the carriage manufactory, the Colonel Joseph Fields house on Dingle Ridge in North Salem, and the Finch homestead in the same area.

The Cornen House which formerly stood at the corner of Danbury and Farmingville Roads was built by Peter Cornen in 1854 upon his return to Connecticut from the Gold Rush. Cornen constructed the house in the style of the Spanish homes which he had seen while crossing the isthmus of Panama on his way to the California gold fields. At the time that the dwelling was erected it was so unusual in this area that many people came from neighboring towns to see the strange house. Cornen was a man of great affluence and it is said that he made two fortunes in his lifetime. He was estimated to be worth over a million dollars at one time. He was a pioneer in the oil well field and he spent a considerable part of his money and time improving the section of Danbury Road where he lived. By trade he had originally been a cabinetmaker and ships chandler.

The Peter Parley House is situated at the southern end of High Ridge at the junction with Parley Lane, and it is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Preston Bassett. The two and a half story dwelling was built in 1797 for the Reverend Samuel Goodrich, the third minister of the Congregational Church. Local legend relates that on Christmas Day 1796 all the able-bodied men of the Church gathered at the site of the proposed dwelling and took part in a cellar-excavation bee. The frame house was constructed during the spring of 1797, utilizing hand-hewn timbers, the main ones of which measured ten inches by ten inches, pegged together with wooden ternails. The exterior was covered with clapboarding. Samuel G. Goodrich, Jr. related that the front of the house was painted white, while the sides and rear were painted red for reasons of economy.

Fenestration originally included four windows on the first floor and four windows on the second floor on the front side of the building, with the main entrance doorway placed in the center with a covered entrance porch. Several additions were noted at the left side of the building, which were probably constructed at later periods and which exist to this day. At the front was a long one-story addition, made without provision for heat, attached to another addition which was two stories in height with a chimney.

A single central chimney, built in the manner of the period, served the original part of the house, and has been rebuilt.

After 1878 the main entrance was moved from the center of the front to the extreme left corner, where it still remains.

During the period that Reverend Goodrich lived in his new house, he engaged in several enterprises to supplement his meagre income of four hundred dollars a year. The minister turned to farming and he raised grain and flax on the premises, which extended at the rear of High Ridge to what is now Ridgefield Estates. The flax and wool were spun and woven in the attic of the house by members of the family. Sheep, cows, horses and chickens were kept in an effort to add to his income.

Another enterprise in which Reverend Goodrich engaged was a school for boys, which could best be described as a college preparatory school. The minister taught Latin and Greek to boys who were preparing for Yale College in the south room of the dwelling, which was used as the schoolroom.

In spite of the many alterations which have been made to the building through the course of the years, it remains among the most historically interesting of the houses of Ridgefield.

The Colen House on East Wilton Road is a two and a quarter story dwelling of a later period. It was built between 1810 and 1830 in a simplified Greek Revival style with a strong resemblance to New York State architecture in that the attic floor is approximately two feet below the end girts and plates.

The house is built on a stone foundation with granite facings on the street sides only. The exterior was originally of wide clapboards but part of this siding has been covered with Victorian shingles.

There is a central chimney with three fireplaces, the one in the old kitchen having the original Dutch oven. The base of the chimney is of field-stone laid dry.

The timbers of the building are of chestnut, and the floors are of oak and of pine.

When the house was restored by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Colen, several interesting features were added. An old shed attached at the rear of the house was converted into a breakfast room. The door of a cupboard built into this room was originally part of the Tappan-Reves house in Litchfield, which was noted as being the oldest law school in the United States.

An early raised-field panelled wall was installed in the parlor at the same time. The panelling dates from the first quarter of the 18th Century and was removed from a house in Tolland, Mass. The same room has a barrel-back corner cupboard of the same period with carved clover-leaf shelves.

The Epenetus Howe House at the Titicus crossroads is especially deserving of mention among the community's oldest and most historic dwellings. *Figure 132b* illustrates the building, which is remarkably well preserved. The original floors, old plastered walls and ceilings, doors, trim and hardware are intact in most instances. Although modifications in the interests of comfort have been made by the present owner, Mr. Ernest Conti, during the forty years he has lived in it, the changes were added over existing features without destroying them. The old fireplaces are covered over with wood, for instance, and can be uncovered and restored to their original condition without difficulty.

There are two large chimneys, one at each gable end of the two and a half story building. Starting with massive piers of large stones in the cellar, the chimneys are constructed of fieldstones laid dry to outside the roof in both instances. Clay was used to seal the chinks in the upper levels. Because of the considerable slope of the chimneys from the first floor level, there are large openings at either side to the attic.

There is evidence that the roof at the front side of the building was raised during an early period, possibly immediately after the Revolution. At the same time some changes were evidently made in the fenestration of the front side of the house, and a wide open porch on masonry wall may have been added at this time. The porch was not covered over and enclosed until relatively recent times. The exterior of the building was originally clapboarded. Shingles replaced the original clapboards during the last two decades.

The majority of the doors in the house are batten doors, most of them having the two wide boards. There are several doors on the first floor having raised field panels on one side and flush panels on the other. These are hung with elaborately wrought hinges of an early epoch.

A fine corner cupboard with plastered dome was removed from the kitchen within recent years and dismantled. The shelves were curved and carved, and the cupboard doors were made with raised field panels and finely

designed hinges. The old plaster, which is intact on almost all the walls and ceilings, was brought flush to the doors and window trim throughout.

The house was probably constructed not later than 1725 or 1730. It was acquired by Epenetus Howe in about 1763, the year he moved to Ridgefield from South Salem. He married Sarah, the daughter of Vivus Dauchy, and established himself as a hatter in the community.

With the beginning of the Revolutionary War there must have been considerable family conflict, for Howe was a prominent Tory while the Dauchy family was numbered among the town's foremost patriots.

The old house undoubtedly had a Tory-hole concealed within its walls, but a recent search did not reveal it. However, there are several features in the building which would have provided adequate hiding places.

No record is immediately available regarding the owners of the house who followed the Howe family. It was owned by Mary Hannah Gilbert, the wife of James Gilbert, prior to her death in 1868, and it was later inherited by a daughter.

In addition to its historical associations, the Howe house is noteworthy for its excellent state of preservation and its many existing original features—a condition infrequently encountered among the old houses of Ridgefield.

An Olmstead House which was built by a member of the second generation of the Olmstead family on Olmstead Lane is shown in *Figure 152*. Built in about 1750, this house displays marked similarities in construction with the Olmstead Homestead owned by Mrs. M. Estelle Benjamin a short distance away.

When Mrs. Flora Kidder Haggard, a recent owner, undertook its restoration, she preserved many of the original features of the dwelling. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lischke.

The J. Seymour House on Silver Spring Road, which is now the home of Mrs. Abernathy Hull and Miss Elizabeth A. Hull, is another dwelling that probably dates from the 18th Century. A century ago, when the house was already old, it was the home of J. Seymour, and at one time it was owned by the Bennett family. In 1934 the property was purchased by the late Mr. Cass Gilbert and the dwelling was restored under his direction. *Figure 151* illustrates the house as it appeared in 1934 before restoration. Among its outstanding original features is a magnificent mantel of unusual workmanship.

The Czar Jones House on Main Street is filled with historical associations. It was the home of Czar Jones, one of the outstanding personalities in the community at the beginning of the 19th Century. Jones served in the War of 1812 and he was a woodworker by trade. He became associated with the partnership of Brush, Olmstead and Company in the manufacture of carriages. The house later became the home of his son, Ebenezer Jones III, who also

played an important part in local affairs. An early view of the house is shown in *Figure 153*.

Figure 154 illustrates a sampler executed by Harriet Jones in 1830, when she was nine years of age. The sampler includes in its design a view of the house as it appeared in that era, and it is to be noted that the years added several wings and other modifications. The sampler illustrated is one of a pair made by Harriet Jones which are owned by Mr. Walter St. John Benedict, a descendant.

The old houses which have been described are only a few of the number that exists in the community which are deserving of study. In common with the old houses of any community they have survived as expressions of the life of the people who lived along the highway of the community's progress during the past two and a half centuries of its existence.



Figure 155

Chapter XXIV THE HISTORIANS OF RIDGEFIELD

Several histories of Ridgefield have been published within the past one hundred and fifty years. The first of these was written by

Rev. Samuel G. Goodrich who served as minister of the Congregational Church in Ridgefield from 6 July 1786 to 22 January 1811. The Rev. Goodrich compiled a short work which he entitled "*A Statistical Account of Ridgefield, in the County of Fairfield, drawn up by Rev. Samuel Goodrich from Minutes furnished by a number of his parishioners, A.D. 1800*". (Figure 32).

The little history consisted of twenty-two manuscript pages, the first and title page of which is illustrated in *Figure 33*. It was never published during its author's lifetime and for many years the manuscript was preserved in the collection of the Wadsworth Athenaeum at Hartford. At the present time the manuscript is owned by the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford. In 1954 the Acorn Club of Connecticut published the work in Hartford as a bound pamphlet with the title "*Ridgefield In 1800*".

This first record provides an extremely valuable account of life in the community at the time and includes data which has not been available from any other source.

Interestingly enough, the second history of the community was produced by the son of the first historian,

Samuel G. Goodrich, who was more familiarly known in the literary world as "Peter Parley". In addition to his many books for children, he wrote his autobiography entitled "*Recollections of a Lifetime*" which was published by Miller, Orton & Mulligan in New York. This extensive work was primarily an account of Goodrich's early years spent in Ridgefield and provided an intimate glimpse into life in the community in the first half of the 19th Century.

Another work, which related to Ridgefield only briefly, was John Warner Barber's "*Connecticut Historical Collections*" which was published in New Haven in 1836. One of the finest histories of the town was written by

Rev. Daniel W. Teller with the title "*The History of Ridgefield, Conn.*" Rev. Teller served as pastor of the Congregational Church in Ridgefield from 1 February 1871 to October 1880. The small volume was published by T. Donovan of Danbury in 1878. In spite of the limitations of the size of the book, Rev. Teller presented a succinct and well-written account of the town since its purchase and settlement to his own period. After leaving Ridgefield for a parish in Sherburne, New York in 1880, Rev. Teller moved on to Fredonia, New York where he died on 23 March 1894. His body was returned to Ridgefield and interred in the Titicus Cemetery.

Another work which included Ridgefield's history was "*The History of Fairfield County*" compiled by D. Hamilton Hurd and published in Philadelphia in 1881. A considerable amount of space is devoted to the community of Ridgefield, but it is apparent that much of it was based on other published sources.

In 1906 another short history was published, which is now little known. This was prepared and produced by

The Village Improvement Society and the book related primarily to the projects and history of the Society, which had been founded a few years before. Material about the Battle of Ridgefield, the gardens of the community and several historical subjects was also included.

A small paper-bound booklet, which was distributed for advertising purposes, contained one of the most complete although condensed accounts of the story of Ridgefield. Its author was

Allan Nevins, who produced it in the early 1920s, when he was a student visiting Ridgefield. The little work was sponsored by the Elms Inn, and it was printed by Edwin Rudge of Mount Vernon, New York. It was entitled "*An Historical Sketch of Ridgefield*" and is believed to have been the first published work of the author. Later Nevins went on to achieve considerable fame as one of the outstanding historians in the United States. He published many works on American history, two of which were awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Nevins was Professor of American History at Columbia University from 1931

until 1958, at which time he retired to accept a new position at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

A few years after the appearance of the little book by Professor Nevins, a comprehensive history of the community was published by

George L. Rockwell, Sr. with the title "*The History of Ridgefield, Connecticut*". The work was privately printed in Hartford in 1927 by Case, Lockwood & Brainard in an edition of fifteen hundred copies, thirty of which were originally reserved for the author. Later twenty of these were released for distribution. The work is a monument to the many years of diligent research and painstaking study which the late Mr. Rockwell devoted to the project. He was collecting data for the work as early as thirty-five years before its publication. He left no avenue unexplored, and considerable effort went into correspondence, personal interviews, examination of old records, and the study of countless tombstones. The value of the work has increased with the years. The expansion of the town within the thirty years since the volume was produced has increased the demand while the number of copies available has always been at a minimum, and sold at a premium.

The late Mr. Rockwell kept an interesting record of the materials that were utilized to produce the edition of fifteen hundred copies of his history. According to his notes, the edition consumed one and one-quarter tons of paper for the pages set in type, and three tons of type metal were required. Twenty-five pounds of ink were used. One quarter ton of coated paper was used for the illustrations. One hundred square yards of deluxe vellum went into the binding of the standard edition and 300 square feet of leather, or a total of forty skins, were required for the binding of the deluxe copies. Fourteen hundred pieces of pure gold leaf were used for the stamping of the covers and spines. A total of five hundred pounds of heavy binders' board were required to make the covers.

George Lounsbury Rockwell was born 20 January 1869 in New Haven, a descendant of Jonathan Rockwell, one of the first Proprietors of Ridgefield. As a boy he came to Farmingville to live with an uncle and his grandmother and he attended the local schools. In 1888 he went to work with the firm of Lounsbury, Mathewson & Co., shoe manufacturers, of which his uncle was the founder. Young Rockwell worked with the firm for twenty-two years. He was a partner in the firm during sixteen years of this period.

In 1904 Mr. Rockwell was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. He was elected to the Legislature for three terms. In 1910 he was appointed United States Deputy Consulate General at Montreal and moved to Canada with his family in 1911. He served as a member of the Putnam Park Commission in 1909. He was prominent in local affairs as well, having served as a member of the Board of Finance when it was first established, and held office as Town Treasurer and Justice of the Peace. He is best remembered as Postmaster of Ridgefield, in which capacity he served from

1912 to 1916 and again from 1924 to 1935. Mr. Rockwell died on 27 May 1947 at the age of seventy-eight, after a full and fruitful life.

Following Mr. Rockwell's comprehensive work no history was attempted until

The Ridgefield Press produced a "Diamond Jubilee Issue" in 1950 on the occasion of its 75th year of existence. The mammoth issue of one hundred twelve pages appeared on 30 November 1950 in seven sections. It was distributed to all of the subscribers and made available for news-stand sale as well. A special run was made on coated paper and bound for sale to commemorate the event, and copies of this special edition are becoming scarce items. The special issue was a unique project in that it was devoted exclusively to the history of Ridgefield as contemporaneously related in the pages of the newspaper during its seventy-five years of existence.



Figure 156

Chapter XXV PLACE NAMES

Aokkeels is the aboriginal name of Little Pond, at the northernmost boundary of the First Purchase.

Asoquatah is the original Indian name for West Mountain, which ranges from 900 to 960 feet above sea level.

Aspen Ledges was the popular name for the Ledges on Asproom Mountain which form a natural boundary between Scotland and Ridgebury Districts. Also known in early deeds as "Asproom Ledges."

Bailey Avenue was named after Lewis H. Bailey (1819-99) who first opened this thoroughfare for the purpose of building stores and residences. After having become a partner in the firm of Hawley & Bailey, he opened the Bailey Inn as a hostelry.

Barlow Mountain, also called Sugar Loaf Mountain, was named for the blacksmith John Barlow who lived near the summit and maintained a blacksmith shop near the highway called Barlow Mountain Road.

Barrack Hill was named for the cavalry barracks of Colonel Armand's Partisan Legion which were located at the top of the hill on the premises now part of the Bridewell property, opposite the entrance to the old West Mountain Road.

Bung Town is that section of Scotland District between Pond Road and the entrance to the George Washington Highway. There are two derivations of the name. One is recounted under the story of the Battle of Ridgefield. Another legend relates that the name was derived from the visit paid to the grist mill of Isaac Keeler by a small child who accompanied his father with grain to be ground at the mill. Never having heard a mill in operation at such close proximity, the child was frightened. After they had returned home, the child excitedly related what he had seen to his mother. He described the terrible noise that rang out incessantly Bung! Bung! Bung! Bung! as the mill ground the grain, and the story on being retold gave the section its name.

Burt's Pond was a local name for Mamanasco Lake and was so named because of the several Burt families who lived on its shores.

Cain's Hill in Farmingville District was named for Hugh Cain who operated a fulling mill on the Norwalk River at the foot of this hill in the 1790s.

Caudatowa was the original name given to Ridgefield by the Ramapoo Indians. The word meant "high land."

Clayholes was the name given to the land on the northerly side of Gilbert Street at the Main Street intersection. Clay was dug from holes in this previously swampy area and the boys of the town would skate on the ice which formed over the excavations in winter. The holes were filled in during the 1860s.

Connecticut is derived from the Indian name 'Quinnehtuckgut' meaning "long tidal river place".

Cooper Station was named for the cooper shop which was operated for many years on the site.

Copp's Mountain is the name by which the present Stonecrest Mountain was formerly known. Named after John Copp, the first town register and one of the first viewers of the First Purchase.

Copp's Hill Road extends from one end of Stonecrest Mountain or Copp's Mountain, and named for John Copp.

Couch's Station was located in Florida District between Branchville and Sanford Stations. It was named after Thomas Couch, who with his brother-in-law, Ebenezer Burr Sanford, operated the Iron Foundry during the 19th Century.

Cushman Lane was the name later given to Lovers Lane because of the family named Cushman that lived in the home now owned by Mrs. C. Hamersly Carpenter, which adjoined its entrance from Main Street.

Foote's Hill is the name once given to the continuation of Main Street from the entrance to Miss Mary Olcott's residence to Pound Street. It derived its name from Eli Foote, a village blacksmith, who maintained his shop between the present residence of the late Dr. E. J. Wagner and Mrs. J. J. Pierrepont. The shop was operated by Foote during the period prior to the Civil War.

Florida District was so named since pre-Revolutionary times but no explanation for the name has been found.

Gilbert Street was named for Abner Gilbert who built the present residence of Mrs. J. J. Pierrepont in 1812 and maintained a store on the premises south of the dwelling. The store was operated in partnership with his brother-in-law, Richard Randall. It was established under the name of Richard Randall & Co. but later the store bore only his own name. Gilbert owned the land to the corner of Gilbert Street adjoining the Bradley premises.

George Washington Highway proceeds from North Salem Road through

the Ledges into Ridgebury Street to the Danbury Town Line. It was recently named to commemorate the fact that it was travelled by General Washington with his staff on his route from Peekskill to Hartford in September 1780.

Governor Street was originally a farm lane to East Ridge. It was named by and for Phineas C. Lounsbury, former Governor of Connecticut, who built his mansion on his extensive property which bordered the new street on its southerly side. The old house of Eleazar Watrous, which later served as the home of Dr. W. S. Todd, originally was situated on the corner of Main and Governor Streets. When the new street was cut through in 1888, the house was moved to East High Ridge Avenue, where it is now the home of James T. Mitchell, Jr.

Haviland Road was named for the Haviland farm which was located in this area. Isaac Haviland operated a store at Lockwoods Corner.

King's Lane is a minor thoroughfare extending westward from Main Street to connect with High Ridge Avenue. It was named for the family of Joshua King whose residence was situated on the northerly side of the street.

Lakeview Lane was the name by which the present Tackora Trail to Lake Mamasasco was known. The present name was adopted in relatively recent times.

Limestone District was named for the mineral that abounded so profusely in that area and which was used locally and exploited for commercial purposes.

Lovers Lane was the name originally given to the lane which connects Main Street with Perry Lane and Branchville Road and which is now known as Rockwell Road.

Main Street's continuation to the north passed in front of the old Stebbins house in an easterly direction to avoid the ledges on the present site of the residence of Mrs. J. J. Pierrepont. The street turned left on the slope below the residence of Miss Mary Olcott and passed approximately through the barway of her premises crossing the present Main Street in a westerly direction to connect with Pound Street. The road followed Pound Street for a short distance and turned again to the right behind the Stevens residence, continuing more or less parallel to the highway behind the line of houses fronting the highway, to emerge on North Salem Road halfway down Titicus hill. The present continuation of Main Street was cut through later, and lowered in grade by cutting through the ledges when the road was widened again in 1912.

Mamasasco Lake derived its name from the Indian word 'Mamasquag' meaning "grassy pond". It is also written 'Mamasquogg, Mummenusquash'. Grassy islands once rose in the lake during the spring season and receded in the autumn. The phenomenon has been witnessed even to recent times.

Market Street extends easterly from Main Street to East Ridge. It has existed

from before 1856 with the same name, which it received from the presence of the Hurlbutt Market near its junction with Main Street.

Mopus was the Indian name for the stream which flows through Spring Valley in Ridgebury District and empties into the Titicus River.

Ned's Mountain derives its name from a Negro man named Ned who lived in the area. Four Negro families made their homes on Ned's Mountain Road during the 19th Century.

New West Lane was the name by which the present Catoonah Street was known in 1856 and later. The name was changed to the present one by 1867, and the name "New West Lane" was then given to the street which is now known as Barry Avenue.

North Street was originally known as Skunk Lane because many of the residents in that area ate skunk meat, which was reported to be of good flavor when properly prepared. Skunks were commonly eaten during the pre-Revolutionary War period.

Norrin's Ridge Road departed from immediately in front of the Albin Jennings house (now Outpost Inn) and proceeded due east to Farmingville and cut across to Limekiln Road. It is no longer used. It is believed that the name was derived from 'Oreneca', the name of the Ramapoo sachem also known as Tackora.

Railroad Avenue was the name by which the present Branchville Road was known. The name was given to this road after 1850 when the Branchville Station of the Danbury-Norwalk Railroad was established. It was changed to its present name after 1870, when the branch line to Ridgefield was added.

Ridgefield was spelled "Ridgfield" by the first Proprietors and by the inhabitants of the community until the Revolutionary War Period. From that time on the letter "e" was added to form "Ridgefield", the form now being used.

Ridgefield, Washington is a town in the state of Washington that was named after Ridgefield, Conn. The little town of Ridgefield, Wash. has a population of less than one thousand inhabitants. It is situated in Clarke County along the Columbia River on the Oregon state boundary. It lies on the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad between Portland and Seattle. The town was founded by the Reverend Aaron Ladner Lindsley, D.D., a Presbyterian minister, and it was named by his sons who were among its settlers. Rev. Lindsley was born on 4 March 1817 in Troy, New York. After attending several colleges in the state, he prepared for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and at Princeton. He was ordained in 1846 and was first assigned to Prairieville (now Waukesha) Wisconsin in the same year. After assisting in the founding of Carroll College he did missionary work at Port Washington, Michigan and then he moved to South Salem, New York.

Lindsley arrived in South Salem, New York in June 1852 and spent sixteen years as head of its Presbyterian Church. A repeated invitation from the First Church of Portland, Oregon led Rev. Lindsley to move westward again, in 1868.

In Portland Rev. Lindsley found a wide field for his endeavors and in addition to his own parish work, he devoted himself to the missionary field in which there had been little or no previous activity. He conferred with General Howard and Secretary Seward, who were familiar with the country. Dr. Lindsley began to establish missions in the Territory, sending teachers and preachers into the wilderness. At first there were no funds for this enterprise and Dr. Lindsley undertook to pay the expenses from his own income. Later the burden was assumed by the Board. He devoted his attention particularly to the religious and physical needs of the Nez Perce Indians of the Northwest. In the thirty-three years that Dr. Lindsley spent in the Pacific Northwest, he organized twenty-two churches, established a number of missions among the Indians of Idaho and Washington State, and founded evangelical missions in Alaska.

During the last five years of his life, Dr. Lindsley was Professor of Practical Theology at the San Francisco Theological Seminary. He died at the age of seventy-four on 12 August 1891 in Portland, as the result of a runaway accident that occurred just after he had finished conducting services in his church.

When the little missionary community in the wilderness of Clarke County along the Columbia River was being established, Dr. Lindsley's two sons, George and Addison, were among the original settlers. When a name for the community was being selected, it was their suggestion that it be called "Ridgefield" in memory of the pleasant little town in Connecticut which they remembered from their childhood when their father was minister of the South Salem Presbyterian Church.

On 8 July 1953 when the dial telephone system was installed in Ridgefield, Washington, the first call to be made over the new system was to Ridgefield, Connecticut, and greetings were exchanged between the towns to commemorate the occasion.

Rockwell Road is the present name of the former Lover's Lane. The name was changed by the late Mr. George L. Rockwell at some time after 1931.

Nesopack—Indian name for Great Pond.

Scott's Ridge was named for the many Scott families who made their homes in this section of Titicus Mountain. The name was later changed to Scotland District. Members of the Scott family built every one of the old houses from the present Underhill residence to the property of Mr. Douglas Main, where Scotland District ended, on the easterly side of North Salem Road, and from the corner of Tackora Trail to the same southern boundary.

Sherwood Road derived its name from the first miller, Daniel Sherwood, who operated the first grist mill at the outlet of Lake Mamasasco, and his descendants who built several of the old houses in this section.

Silver Spring Road received its name from the spring of fresh water that has existed since early in the town's history. The spring is one of the most remarkable purity. It was described by Rev. Goodrich in 1800 as "Silver Spring", the name which it still bears.

Titicus is the name of a river and of a district. It is derived from the Indian name Mutighticoos, which may have meant "Buffalo Creek", inasmuch as this is another name by which the stream was known. "Metiticus" is another form of the word which is commonly found. The Titicus River flows through the Titicus Valley and empties into the Croton River.

Turner Lane in Ridgebury was named for its principal resident, Aaron Turner of circus fame, who inherited the farm of Mrs. Dorcas Osborn, and owned almost all of the property on both sides of the lane, to its junction with Dingle Ridge Road.

Wooster Street which connects North Salem Road with North Street was named in the 19th Century in honor of the American general who was fatally wounded a short distance away.

Chapter XXVI
TOWN OFFICIALS

Population of Ridgefield

1756 — 1115	1850 — 2237
1774 — 1708	1860 — 2213
1782 — 1697	1870 — 1919
1790 — 1947	1880 — 2028
1800 — 2025	1890 — 2235
1810 — 2103	1900 — 2626
1820 — 2301	1910 — 3118
1830 — 2305	1920 — 2707
1840 — 2474	

Town Clerks

John Copp—1708-1714
Thomas Hawley—1714-1735
Timothy Keeler—1735-1747
Stephen Smith—1747-1785
Benjamin Smith—1785-1800
Samuel Stebbins—1800-1836
Nathan Smith—1836-1852
Hiram K. Scott—1852-1861
Lewis H. Bailey—1861-1862
Henry Smith, 2nd—1862-1863
Albert N. Thomas—1863-1867
Elijah L. Thomas—1867-1872
Hiram K. Scott—1872-1909
Hiram K. Scott, Jr.—Nov. 15, 1909-Jan. 3, 1910
Cyrus A. Cornen, Jr.—1910-1916
Roland L. Gilbert—June 28, 1916-Oct. 2, 1916
George G. Knapp—1916-Sept. 16, 1924
George G. Scott—Sept. 17, 1924-
Ruth M. Hurzeler—

Town Treasurers

Stephen Smith—1746-1785
Benjamin Smith—1785-1797
Nathan Smith—1797-1802
Thaddeus Keeler, 2nd—1802-1803
Nathan Smith—1803-1810
William Hawley—1810-1812
Jonathan Keeler—1812-1813
Thaddeus Keeler, 2nd—1813-1817
Richard Randall—1817-1836
Thaddeus Keeler, 2nd—1836-1837
Smith B. Keeler—1837-1842
Keeler Dauchy—1842-1852
Charles Smith, Jr.—1852-1857
Samuel S. Olmstead—1857-1858
George W. Gorham—1858-1861
Ebenezer Jones—1861-1872
Lewis H. Bailey—1872-1874
Lewis C. Seymour—1874-1901
George L. Rockwell—1901
Frederick W. Olmstead—1901-1909
Cyrus A. Cornen, Jr.—1909-1910
George G. Knapp—1910-1917
Jesse L. Benedict—1917-1956
Octavius J. Carboni—1956-

Chapter XXVII
VETERANS OF THE WARS

French and Indian War

Bennett, Gabriel
Dauchy, Vivus
Dikeman, Stephen
Follet, George
Gilbert, Hezekiah
Hawley, Ebenezer
Hawley, John, Jr.
Hawley, Nathan, Jr.
Hoyt, Nathan

Ingersoll, Rev. Jonathan
Nickerson, Eliphaz
Osburn, Jeremiah
Ressiguie, James
Seely, Silvenus
Smith, Nathan
Stebbins, Joseph
Tonge, James

Revolutionary War

Ambrose, Patrick
Baker, Dr. Amos
Baker, Bartholomew
Baker, Seth
Baldwin, John
Barnes, James
Barns, John
Beers, Daniel
Beers, Stephen
Benedict, Abijah
Benedict, Daniel
Benedict, Darius
Benedict, Gamaliel
Benedict, Jesse
Benedict, John
Bennett, Benjamin
Bennett, Gabriel
Bennett, Isaac
Bennett, John
Bennett, Trowbridge
Betts, Abraham
Betts, James
Boughton, Thomas
Bouton, Hezekiah
Bouton, Seth
Bradley, Col. Philip Burr
Bradley, Samuel
Brown, Lucus
Brown, Solomon

Brush, Gilbert
Burns, James
Burrirt, Wakeman
Butler, John
Cain, Hugh
Canfield, Daniel
Coley, Daniel
Collins, Dennis
Comstock, Aaron
Comstock, Major Samuel
Condrick, John
Craw, Ammon
Craw, Reuben
Crow, Edward
Cummins, William
Darling, Joseph
Dauchy, Jeremiah
Dean, Daniel
Dean, Jeremiah
DeForest, Capt. Elihu
DeForest, Samuel
DeForest, Uriah
Dennison, John
Disbrow, Levi
Doge, William
Dole, James
Doolittle, Capt. Ichabod
Downs, Benjamin
Edmond, Robert

Edmonds, William	Joice, John
Fairbanks, Samuel	Kafin, Lt. (probably Keeler)
Finch, Peter	Keeler, Aaron
Fleet, William	Keeler, Benjamin
Folliet, James	Keeler, Jabez
Forrester, Arthur	Keeler, Jeremiah
Foster, Capt. Jonah	Keeler, John
Fowler, Benjamin	Keeler, Levi
Frank, Mical	Keeler, Lewis
Gilbert, David	Keeler, Lockwood
Gilbert, Elisha	Keeler, Matthew
Gilbert, John	Keeler, Nathan
Gilbert, Moses	Keeler, Paul, Jr.
Hall, David	Keeler, Thaddeus
Hamblin, Barnabas	Keeler, Thomas
Hard, Stephen	Keeler, Timothy
Hawley, Ebenezer	Keeler, Timothy, 2nd
Hawley, Elijah	Keeler, Uriah
Hawley, Elisha	Ellis, Peter (Kellis)
Hawley, Ezekiel	Kellogg, Daniel
Hawley, Hezekiah	Kellogg, Elijah
Hawley, Joseph	Kellogg, Nathan
Hawley, Talcott	King, Joshua
Hawley, Thomas	Lavake, David
Hayes, John	Leason, James
Hine, Capt. Isaac	Lee, Seth
Hine, Jared	Lee, William
Hine, Newton	Lincoln, Elisha
Hitchcock, John	Lobdell, Uriel
Holmes, Samuel	Lusey, James
Hoyt, Ebenezer	Marvin, Uriah
Hubbell, Salmon	Mead, Ezra
Hull, Aaron	Mead, Jeremiah
Hull, Silas	Mead, Matthew
Hurlbutt, Lt. Daniel	Mead, Thomas
Hutchinson, Thomas	Meeker, Stephen
Hyatt, Alvin	Mitchell, William
Hyatt, Thomas, 2nd	Mooney, Absalom
Jacklin, Ebenezer	Mooney, John
Jacklin, Lewis	Morris, John
Jackson, Daniel	Morris, Hial
Jackson, Joseph	Mott, Archibald
Jackson, Reuben	Nash, Abraham
Janes, Elijah	Nash, Ezra
Jarvis, Thomas	Nash, Isaiah

Nash, Jacob	Resseguie, Alexander
Nash, Jonathan	Resseguie, Jacob
Nash, Riah	Resseguie, James
Newman, Jonathan	Riggs, Daniel
Newton, William	Roberts, John
Nichols, James	Rockwell, Jabez
Nickerson, Barrack	Rockwell, James
Nickerson, Eliphaz	Rockwell, John
Northrop, Aaron	Rockwell, Silas
Northrop, Abijah	Rockwell, Thaddeus
Northrop, Benajah	Rockwell, Theodore
Northrop, Benjamin	Rockwell, William
Northrop, Capt. Gamaliel	Rumsay, John
Northrop, James	Sagur, Thomas
Northrop, Josiah	St. John, David
Northrop, Matthew	St. John, Capt. John
Northrop, Nathaniel	St. John, Thomas
Northrop, Stephen	Scott, David
Olmsted, Daniel	Scott, Gideon
Olmsted, Capt. David	Scott, James
Olmsted, Ebenezer	Scott, William
Olmsted, Enoch	Scribner, Asa
Olmsted, Isaac	Sears, Joseph
Olmsted, Jered	Sears, Capt. Knowles
Olmsted, Jeremiah	Seeley, Sylvanus
Olmsted, Joseph	Seymour, Abijah
Olmsted, Matthew	Shaw, Joseph
Olmsted, Nehemiah	Sherwood, Benjamin
Olmsted, Samuel	Sherwood, Nehemiah
Olmsted, Stephen	Sherwood, Phineas
Osborn, Daniel	Smith, Azariah
Osborn, Gammaliel	Smith, Benjamin
Osborn, Jeremiah	Smith, Daniel
Osborn, Josiah	Smith, Elijah
Osborn, Joseph	Smith, Hezekiah
Parsons, Abraham	Smith, Jacob, Jr.
Parsons, Bartholomew	Smith, Jacob, 2nd
Partrick, James	Smith, Job
Perry, Elisha	Smith, John
Platt, William	Smith, Joseph
Price, Ebenezer	Smith, Lewis
Pulling, Abel	Smith, Nathan
Read, Zalmon	Smith, Nehemiah
Remington, Stephen	Smith, Samuel
Resseguie, Abraham	Smith, Samuel, 3rd

Stanton, James
Stebbins, Joseph
Stebbins, Samuel
Stebbins, Thomas
Sterling, Nathaniel
Stillman, Stephen
Stockham, Justus
Street, John
Stuart, Albert
Sturgis, Thaddeus
Taylor, Josiah
Thomas, John
Trowbridge, Joseph
Tuttle, Aaron
Tuttle, Peter
Warren, Michael
Wason, Thomas
Waterous, Eleazer
Waterous, Lieut. John

Weed, Elijah
Weeks, Micajah
Weeks, Zophar
White, Charles
White, Israel
Whitlock, Hezekiah
Whitlock, Robert
Whitlock, Thaddeus
Whitney, Ezekiel
Whitney, Capt. Henry
Whitney, Josiah
Whitney, Thomas
Williams, Henry
Wilson, Ezekiel
Wilson, Robert
Wilson, Thomas
Woodbridge, Thomas
Wran, Solomon

War of 1812

Boughton, Major
Dauchy, Walter
Dykeman, Josiah
Hawley, Ebenezer
Hawley, Irad
Hull, Burr

Jones, James
Keeler, Adoniram
Rich, Harvey
Saint John, Zina
Smith, Ezra
Whitlock, Thaddeus

Seminole War—1835 to 1842

Elsa, James

Dean, William L.

Mexican War—1847-1848

Holland, John

Porter, John

Civil War

Austin, David
Austin, Hiram
Austin, Jacob
Avent, William
Avery, W. Charles
Avery, Tredwell
Avery, William
Bahring, Ernest
Banker, George W.

Banks, Horace O.
Barker, William E.
Bates, Francis H.
Baxter, Samuel B.
Beers, Charles
Benedict, Charles H.
Benjamin, Cyrus M.
Bennett, Alfred
Bentley, Benjamin

Betts, Charles H.	Edmonds, John D.
Betts, William H.	Enright, James
Boyle, Richard	Farvour, Robert
Bradley, Daniel B.	Finch, Nelson A.
Brinkerhoff, Benjamin F.	Foote, Gaius St. John
Brothwell, William E.	Fox, Aaron
Brower, George W.	Fox, Casper
Brown, Franklin	Fry, John G.
Brown, James P.	Gage, Edwin B.
Brown, Jefferson	Gage, Rhomanza
Brown, Nehemiah	Gage, Selah
Brown, Charles F.	Gibbons, Edward
Burke, Michael	Gilbert, Charles
Burns, John	Gilbert, Charles F.
Burr, Daniel Dibble	Gilbert, Edwin B.
Burt, Caleb	Gilbert, George
Burt, Charles I.	Gilbert, John (long John)
Burt, Capt. Francis E.	Gilbert, Smith
Burt, Stephen	Gilbert, William
Canfield, Sylvester C.	Godfrey, George F.
Carney, Lawrence	Godfrey, Sylvester
Casey, William E.	Grannis, John H.
Coe, Henry	Gray, George
Coe, Samuel A.	Gregory, David
Compton, Joseph	Grumann, Frederick A.
Cook, John	Hall, Ezra S.
Costello, Michael	Harrington, John H.
Couch, Nathan	Hawkins, Joseph
Creedan, William	Hendricks, David
Dann, Levi	Holmes, John W.
Dauchy, Jacob Legrand	Howe, Benjamin F.
Davis, Albert N.	Hoyt, John W.
Davis, George	Hoyt, Warren
Davis, Hiram	Hubbell, Franklin
Davis, James W.	Hull, Silas
Davis, Madison	Jarvis, John J.
Dayton, Joseph	Jemmison, William
DeForest, Sylvester	Jennings, Charles E.
Degeneres, Charles	Jennings, William H.
Devins, George	John, Frederick
Dickins, Charles H.	Johnson, Peter
Dove, Daniel G.	Johnson, Samuel J.
Sykeman, Nirum	Johnson, William L.
Edmonds, Elias Hull	Jones, William M.
Edmond, Ezra Lee	Judd, Horace Q.

Juergens, Theodore	Osborn, Peter M.
Keeler, Edgar	Ostman, Frank
Keeler, Eli J.	Payne, Thomas
Keeler, Henry	Phelan, Samuel S.
Keeler, Henry W.	Pickett, Edwin D.
Keeler, Ira	Platt, Alfred
Keeler, Oscar H.	Platt, Charles
Keeler, Rufus D.	Platt, George
Keeler, Smith	Prichard, William
Klinefelter, Jeremiah	Rasco, Charles B.
Knapp, Henry	Rasco, James H.
Knepp, Lewis	Raymond, Amos
Lannon, Patrick	Reed, Edwin R.
Leary, John	Regan, Patrick
Lee, Aaron W.	Rhan, Charles A.
Les, Joit	Rich, Alfred
Lloyd, Michael	Rich, Jared
Lockwood, Andrew	Roche, James T.
Lockwood, William H.	Rowley, John
Loder, William C.	Ruff, Anthony
Lounsbury, Mrs. Nathan (Delia)	Ruggles, Elbert
Lounsbury, Phineas C.	Ruggles, Sidney B.
McBride, John	Scofield, Orrin K.
McConnell, John	Scot, John
Maher, Dennis	Searles, Andrew J.
Main, James C.	Selleck, Ebenezer
Mead, Benjamin L.	Seymour, Francis E.
Mead, Jeremiah O.	Sherwood, Daniel
Mead, Rufus N.	Smith, Allen
Mead, Smith	Smith, Andrew V. S.
Merritt, William M.	Smith, Charles, Jr.
Miller, Henry	Smith, David Edson
Mills, Solomon	Smith, Frederick L.
Moffatt, Edward	Smith, Sherman H.
Monroe, Alsop L.	Smith, William H.
Monroe, William	Stebbins, William
Murphy, James 2nd	Stevens, George W.
Nelson, Joseph	Stevens, Levi B.
Nickerson, Benjamin V.	Sturges, Frederick L.
Northrop, John	Thomas, John L.
Northrop, David, 3rd	Ulmer, Charles A.
Northrop, John J.	Van Scoy, John A.
Oakley, Miles	Viely, John
Odell, James B.	Walters, John M.
Olmstead, Marcus T.	Ward, John

Warren, Rufus
Weed, William A.
While, Edwin P.
Whitlock, Joseph S.
Whitlock, Nephi
Williams, Hawley

Williams, Joseph
Williams, Sydney
Williams, Sylvester
Wilson, Peter
Wood, George L.

Mexican Border War

Bissell, Robert P.
Cushman, William R.
Gilbert, Cass, Jr.
Haven, George G., Jr.
Hubbard, John W.

Kelly, Thomas
Panzer, Earl W.
Riggs, George, Jr.
Scott, George, Jr.
Johnson, Oscar F.

Spanish-American War

Creagh, William
Dowling, John
Eilenstein, Arthur F.
King, Rufus H., Jr.

Lang, Edward F.
Mantell, George E.
Sweeney, James D.

World War I

Abbott, Louis A.
Abbott, Muriel
Allen, Edwin Muir
Ancona, Joseph
Ancona, Frank
Avery, Clarence Edward
Bailey, James Howard
Banks, Clifford
Barrett, Walter Fuller
Bates, Frederick Taylor
Bates, Harry Cornwall
Bedini, Francesco John
Bedini, Pasquale
Bennett, Allen George
Bissell, Robert P.
Bloomer, George N.
Brady, Andrew Francis
Brady, James J.
Brown, John H.
Brown, Benjamin
Brundage, Robert Mills
Brunetti, Ernesto Alexander
Bruschi, Luigi

Bryon, Rudolph
Bulkley, J. Ogden
Camp, Arnold Roy
Carnall, Arthur James
Carpenter, Samuel E., Jr.
Casey, Charles E.
Christopher, John F.
Connell, John A.
Coughlin, John F.
Cumming, Henry McGregor
Cumming, William J.
Dottori, Ciro
Davis, Fred H.
Davis, Frederick Washburn
Davis, Paul
Dunlop, Robert
Ellwell, John H.
Fallamal, Harry
Flatisher, Paul
Franceschini, Edward
Francis, Theodore E.
Giambarolomei, Guiseppe
Gilbert, Cass, Jr.

Gilbert, George
 Gillum, Harold Steele
 Gray, Edward R.
 Gustafson, Carl
 Haight, Alden Lessey
 Haight, John F.
 Haight, Robert Edward
 Havens, George G., Jr.
 Hartmann, Werner
 Hendricks, Robert B.
 Hull, Harry E.
 Hubbard, John W.
 Hyer, David
 Ingersoll, Colin M.
 Ingersoll, Jonathan
 Jacob, Sereno T.
 Jessup, Theodore C.
 Johnson, Carl Arvid
 Johnson, Oscar F.
 Johnson, Victor
 Johnson, William
 Jones, Howard N.
 Keefe, Bartholomew
 Keefe, Edward A.
 Keeler, Harold Y.
 Keeler, Robert R.
 Kelly, John Cornelius
 Kelly, Thomas E.
 Kiernan, Leo G.
 Kilday, Duncan M.
 Kilday, William M.
 King, Mary A.
 King, Rufus H.
 Knapp, Joseph F.
 Knoche, Charles Robert
 Knoche, Edward J.
 Langbehn, Henry
 Lavatori, Silvestro
 Leary, Frederick J.
 Leary, Philip Silas
 Lewis, Reginald M.
 Lewis, Waldsworth R.
 Light, Howard E.
 Little, Morris
 Lobdell, Edward C.
 Lockwood, Daniel, Jr.
 Lockwood, Edward C.
 Lowe, Gilbert Ranney
 Lowe, Russell Walter
 Lown, Harvey B.
 Lunt, Frederick F.
 Lynch, Hampton
 Lynch, Russell
 Lynch, Simpson
 Mahoney, John J.
 Marconi, Rudolph
 McAdams, James A.
 McCarthy, John J.
 McCarthy, Robert Emmett
 McCoy, Charles E.
 McGlynn, William P.
 Mead, Charles Lester
 Mead, Louis F.
 Meissner, Joseph
 Montanari, Mariano
 Minnerly, Frank
 Moore, John Leslie
 Morgani, Giovanni Silvio
 Morrisroe, John J.
 Nally, Leonard
 Neth, Charles W., Jr.
 Northrop, Linus
 Noyes, Edgar Wayland
 Nunzarro, S.
 Oberheisser, Fred C.
 Oldham, Rev. John L.
 Olmstead, Clayton L.
 Osborn, Richard Couch
 O'Shea, Daniel
 O'Shea, Dennis
 Paccadolmi, Michele
 Paddock, Thomas C.
 Paminando, Constanzo
 Panzer, Earl W.
 Peatt, William T.
 Petroni, Gino
 Piantinelli, Severino
 Pierrepont, Seth Low
 Potter, Lawrence
 Preuss, William A.

Raymond, Clyde DeWitt
Reif, John
Reif, Louis E.
Ricardo, Guiseppe
Richardson, Robert E., Jr.
Ritch, Lester
Roach, Edward M.
Roach, Joseph A.
Rux, Fritz E.
Rux, Gustave C.
Sanford, John C.
Sanford, Horace
Scaglia, Carlo
Schneider, Benjamin H.
Schork, Frederick
Scott, Thomas Milton
Seymour, Everett Ray
Seymour, Rudolph

Shelton, Allen Wellington
Smith, Hawley E.
Smith, James Q.
Smith, John W.
Stevens, Alfred W.
Stevens, Carlton Ross
Talbot, Adrian B.
Talbot, John A.
Tulipani, Julius
Venus, Charles Patrick
Venus, John T.
Vergoni, Mario
Waterbury, Andrew F.
Weinberger, William
Williams, Fred J.
Williams, Walter Moore
Wilson, Fred J.

Casualties of World War II include the following men from Ridgefield who lost their lives in the war:

Robert Nichols Blume
AR 2/c William Patterson
Bell
Pfc James Birarelli
S/Sgt. Charles Cogswell
Ernest Farrell
Pfc. Armando Frulla
Flt. Off. Grosvenor Gilbert
Sgt. William Henry Hall, Jr.

John Evald Nelson
Pfc. Geno Polverari
Lt. Walter Rose
Capt. Meinhard Scherf
Sgt. Harold W. Scott
Pvt. Howard Sears
Paul Ullman
Lt. Thomas A. Ward
Pvt. Harvey J. Webster

World War II

Acton, James M., Jr.
Albonizio, Patrick N.
Allen, William Walker
Amos, Isadore L.
Ancona, Nazzareno A.
Ancona, Philip C.
Andrews, Charles S.
Auer, Gloria
Auer, Warren P.
Auleta, Alfred J.
Bacchiochi, James A.
Baker, John H., Jr.

Baker, Glenn S.
Baldasserini, Gino L.
Baldasserini, Paul V. (Baker)
Banks, Clifford W.
Barker, Frederick M.
Barnes, George W.
Barnholt, Harvey R.
Barrett, Herbert S.
Bartolucci, Enzo
Barzetti, Henry E., Jr.
Barzetti, Nicholas
Bassett, Francis J.

Bates, George S.
 Batesole, Richard E.
 Baumann, Charles R.
 Baxter, John E.
 Baxter, Woodford R.
 Bedini, Dominic
 Bedini, Ferdinand Bruno
 Bedini, George A.
 Bedini, Silvio A.
 Beers, Orrin A.
 Beers, William F.
 Belardinelli, Charles C.
 Bellagamba, James V.
 Benedict, Mary F.
 Bennett, Harry R.
 Berquist, Philip E.
 Bickman, Sam
 Binin, Earl H.
 Bitcon, Donald S.
 Blackman, John P.
 Blackmar, Ralph B.
 Bland, Mark
 Bliss, Charles R.
 Bloomer, George, Jr.
 Bodnar, Charles J.
 Bodnar, Mildred (Johnson)
 Bolden, Earl E.
 Bollas, George
 Bolling, William W.
 Bonitati, Eugene
 Bonsignore, Ignazio
 Bouton, Donald S.
 Bowen, George, Jr.
 Bowen, Helen (Babcock)
 Brady, Thomas
 Branchini, Aldo
 Bride, Matthew J., Jr.
 Brinkerhoff, Dericksen M.
 Broadhurst, David A.
 Brown, Richard
 Browse, George W.
 Bruciati, Ero A.
 Brundage, Lawrence N.
 Brunetti, Dante R.
 Brunetti, Joseph
 Bryers, Jerome J.
 Buccitti, Enrico
 Buhrman, Albert J., Jr.
 Burr, Edward H., Jr.
 Buttendorf, Warren A.
 Califano, Joseph T.
 Campbell, George J.
 Campbell, James K.
 Caponera, Vincent G.
 Carboni, Deno J.
 Carboni, Fausto J.
 Carboni, Joseph
 Carboni, Olinto
 Carboni, Vascinto
 Carini, Dominic
 Carini, John B.
 Carini, John J.
 Carlsen, Laurence
 Carr, Philip
 Carroll, Edward E.
 Casagrande, Jeo
 Casagrande, Peter L.
 Casagrande, Peter Paul
 Casagrande, Rudolph
 Casagrande, Virginio J.
 Cashman, Francis W.
 Cassavechia, Alteo
 Cassavechia, Anthony
 Cassavechia, Jolindo
 Cassavechia, Quinto P.
 Cauxx, Harold L.
 Cehak, Rudolph
 Chandler, Theodore
 Ciaverelli, John
 Ciavarelli, Thomas M.
 Ciavarelli, Vincent F.
 Ciechon, Joseph
 Cirone, Tony P.
 Ciuccoli, Altero S.
 Ciuccoli, Nello
 Ciuccoli, William B.
 Clapp, David C.
 Clark, Frank W.
 Coddington, Kenneth K.
 Coffin, John Gordon

Cogswell, Frederick R.
 Cogswell, Jack D.
 Cole, Edward L.
 Coleman, S. Denton
 Coles, Charles
 Conley, Richard E.
 Conroy, Thomas, Jr.
 Contessa, Joseph R.
 Coogan, Theodore H.
 Cooper, Graydon P.
 Corrie, John G.
 Costanzi, James L.
 Cote, Armand G.
 Cox, Ralph E.
 Craig, Norman D.
 Cranston, John J., Jr.
 Croce, Jack A.
 Cronin, Eugene J., Jr.
 Crouchley, Charles D., Jr.
 Crucitti, Andrew R.
 Cruger, Dudley R.
 Cuddy, William H.
 Cummings, Louis G.
 D'Addario, Dominic A.
 Dain, Frank M., III
 Daniels, A. Faye S.
 Daniels, Vernon R.
 DeBenigno, John J.
 December, Joseph
 DeForest, Lester
 Delany, Edward B.
 Delbiondo, Alfred W.
 Delbiondo, Anthony J.
 Delbiondo, Louis A.
 DeLuca, Albert M.
 DeLuca, Dominic
 DeLuca, Peter A.
 deMaCarty, Adolf C.
 DeMyttennaere, Charles
 DeNyke, Virgil E., Jr.
 Devendorf, George H.
 Dickenson, John L.
 Dickenson, George S., Jr.
 DiOrio, James V.
 Dodd, Eric
 Donigian, Arthur A.
 Donigian, Dorothy N.
 Doty, Donald A.
 Dowling, John E.
 Drew, John W., Jr.
 Duffy, George C.
 Duncan, John D.
 Duncan, Stuart
 Dunleavy, Joseph F.
 Duvall, Charles E.
 Dyer, John F., Jr.
 Dyke, Curtis T., Jr.
 Dyke, George C.
 Earle, Richard G.
 Eberts, Warren E.
 Elliott, Charles W.
 Erickson, Albert J.
 Evans, Elmer M.
 Evans, Walter E.
 Fackler, Bernard E.
 Farrar, Richard A.
 Feduzi, Louis B.
 Felker, Elizabeth
 Ferguson, Elbert T., Jr.
 Ferguson, Milton T.
 Ferris, Milton G.
 Finan, Bernard J.
 Finney, Robert W.
 Fiore, Nicholas J.
 Fischeletti, Daniel J.
 Flynn, Charles R.
 Forcelli, James
 Forcelli, John P.
 Forsythe, Thomas, Jr.
 Fortin, Albert L.
 Fortin, Richard
 Fossi, Robert L.
 Fowler, Donald T.
 Frade, Joseph A.
 Franceschini, Siero
 Franks, Rene E.
 Frano, Joseph J.
 Fraser, Robert, Jr.
 Frattini, Arthur J.
 Freer, Edward C.

Freer, John M.
 Freivogel, Richard
 Frulla, Eugene J.
 Frulla, George J.
 Frulla, Mario J.
 Fuller, Allan W.
 Gabbianelli, Peter F.
 Gable, Roger M.
 Gaeta, Albert J.
 Gaeta, Anthony J.
 Gainer, William K.
 Gasparino, Albert M.
 Gay, Francis L.
 Gemza, Joseph J.
 Gerli, Francis
 Giambartolomei, Americo
 Giambartolomei, Vincent
 Giardini, Dino
 Gilbert, Victor
 Gillum, Frederick
 Gippert, Bernard C.
 Goldsmith, Clifford H.
 Gonzalez, Edwardo T. V.
 Goodwin, F. Abbott
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Figure 157

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