

The Early History of Tolland.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TOLLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AT TOLLAND, CONN.,

On the 22d Day of August and 27th day of September, 1861.

By LOREN P. WALDO,
PRESIDENT OF SAID SOCIETY

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NOTICE.

WHEN I first commenced the preparation of the following pages, I only expected to write an address that might have occupied an hour in its reading before the Historical Society for whom I was preparing it; but I soon found the subject too extensive and interesting to be thus summarily disposed of. I accordingly enlarged my original plan somewhat, and although my time was too limited to exhaust the several topics touched upon, yet I can not but believe that enough has been done to render the numerous facts I have recorded worthy of preservation, so that they may become available to him who shall undertake to complete what I have but imperfectly begun. Most of the address was read before the Tolland County Historical Society, at two meetings convened for that purpose, and such was the interest manifested in the subject that very many expressed a strong desire to see the address in print. A proposition was made to have it published in numbers in the Tolland County Record, and I assented to an arrangement by which I supposed this would be carried into effect. I therefore set about revising the address and preparing it for publication, in doing which I availed myself of the kindness and assistance of my friend, Sidney Stanley, Esq., who has carefully compared the principal facts with records and his own memoranda, collected by the labor of years. And I would, in this place, acknowledge my obligations to him for his valuable aid in collecting and collating very much of the material contained in these pages.

Having finished the revision of the address, and the paper in whose columns it was designed to appear having suspended, I have by the advice of some of my friends, ventured to print it in a pamphlet form, at my own expense, trusting that some of the sons of Tolland whose history I have endeavored to perpetuate, will be willing to contribute something towards the expenses of publication, by buying copies for their own use. To them I cheerfully submit the work, and whatever of merit or demerit it may contain, I have some hope it will, at least, be the means of rescuing some incidents from oblivion that might otherwise have been forever lost; and if it shall awaken any interest in the subject of local history, I shall be fully compensated for the labor I have expended.

Dated at Tolland, this 10th day of December, 1861.

LOREN P. WALDO.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE TOLLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

My present purpose is to speak of the early history of the town of Tolland, and to gather up and preserve some mementos of the persons who first occupied its territory. The feeling that prompts to this duty is a sacred one and should be cherished; for while we are ruminating among the tombs of our ancestors and gathering relics of departed worth, we can not fail to be deeply impressed with the thought that the footsteps of time are fast effacing the most prominent transactions and will soon obliterate the last trace of all things earthly. We should most instinctively love to cultivate the remembrance of past events; to let our affections cluster around the memories of those departed ones whose stations we occupy; and to look forward with fervent hope to that period in our own existence when kindred spirits will commingle in one promiscuous throng. In these exercises we may learn wisdom from the experience of the illustrious dead; may profit by their spotless examples; may be encouraged to imitate their never-dying virtues;—and to follow more cheerfully in their shining track through life's stormy mazes to the haven of immortal happiness and peace.

In looking back through the long vista of years since this town was first known, we can discover no incident of thrilling interest connected with its history. We call point to no spot where the white and the red man have met in mortal combat; nor where hostile armies have sought for vengeance in the bloody encounter. We do not know that the barbarian war-fire (sic) has ever shone upon these hills; or that the savage war-whoop was ever heard in these valleys. We have no legend of the Indian's stealthy tread—of his merciless attack upon the innocent and defenceless (sic); or of our soil ever reeking with human blood. Nor can we find the footsteps of any distinguished personage upon its territory who has attracted the gaze of the world by his deeds of daring or acts of self-devotion. The history of Tolland, in short, is not calculated to interest the marvelous, nor produce wonder and astonishment in the reflecting; but like a gentle current, bears upon its quiet bosom facts worthy of our notice, and which may afford us both instruction and amusement.

The territory now called Tolland, prior to the year 1700, formed a part of the vast wilderness that covered the western continent before the track of civilization ever visited these shores, and was inhabited only by wild beasts or wilder men. The town of Mansfield was settled about this period, and as the inhabitants of that town had some connection with the people of Windsor it is probable that in their intercourse the hills of Tolland first attracted their notice. This town was originally a part of the township of Windsor, and the earliest records to be found in the town are copies of the transactions of the town of Windsor in relation to the lands included in the town of Tolland. The earliest of these records I have been able to find is under date of April 18th, 1713, at which time a committee was appointed "to layout a settlement upon the east side of Windsor upon lands formerly purchased of the Indians." This committee performed the duties assigned them and made a report of their doings commencing in these words:

"A chronicle of the acts of the committee empowered by the town of Windsor to layout a plantation from the east side of Windsor upon lands formerly purchased of the Indians, April 18, 1713. The committee went upon the land to be laid out, and laid out and bounded highways and several lots as followeth: A highway of twenty rods in breadth, and running due north upon the hill called *the meeting-house hill*, between the first furlong of lots on the said hill on the east side of the highway and the second furlong of lots on west side of the highway; and is marked out by several marked trees, and stakes and heaps of stones, and goes the same breadth and point of compass until it pass the brook that runs up out of Cedar Swamp."

Then follows a record of seventeen lots of land containing forty acres each, laid out on each side of this highway,—eight of them being on the east side of the highway, bounding west upon it, and nine lots being on the west side of the same, bounding east upon it. These lots were each forty rods in width and one hundred and sixty rods in length, being forty rods upon the highway and extending one hundred and sixty rods in rear from the same. One of the lots on the east side of the highway is bounded north on the brook, which is no doubt the stream that runs up out of Cedar Swamp. The lots on the east side were

numbered from one to eight inclusive, and were granted by the committee to Samuel Pinney, Jr., Hezekiah Porter, Sergt. Henry Wolcott, Joseph Porter, Nathan Gillett, and Samuel Forward. Those on the west side were numbered from one to nine inclusive, and were granted to Enoch Loomis, Cornelius Birge, Simon Wolcott, Jr., Joshua Loomis, Sergt. Henry Wolcott, Noah Grant, Joseph Rockwell, Jr., Thomas Grant, and Josiah Rockwell. The first and sixth lots on the east side of the highway do not appear to have been assigned to any one.

It has been a matter of some inquiry where this first highway was located, for it is evident that its location was intended to establish the center of the new town. From the record we learn that it was "twenty rods in breadth," and ran "due north upon the hill called meeting-house hill, between the first furlong of lots on the said hill on the east side of the highway, and the second furlong of lots on the west side of the highway," and that it goes the same breadth and point of "compass until it pass the brook that runs up out of Cedar Swamp." Here we have the point of compass—"due north,"—the width of the road—"twenty rods,"—the name of the hill where located—"meeting-house hill,"—and its northern terminus—"the brook that runs up out of Cedar Swamp." Now is there any locality that will answer this description? Some persons have supposed that the village of Tolland is located on this highway. The street, they say, runs nearly north and south, sufficiently to answer the description "*due north*;" that it is, or was before trespassed upon and shorn of its primeval capaciousness, nearly of the requisite width; that it is the only eminence in town that can be justly called meeting-house hill, for no other hill was ever honored with an edifice of this character, and the stream of water north of the village, known as "Spencer brook," is the brook that was described as running up out of Cedar Swamp. But a little attention will satisfy the casual observer that the present village could not have been the locality described in this record. For the course of the street is not "*due north*," but several degrees to the west of north, and before we come to Spencer brook it is north-east. Nor was the street ever twenty rods wide, during its whole length, nor is there any evidence that it was ever called "meeting-house hill." It must be borne in mind that this record was made April 18, 1713, more than two years before the charter or the town was granted, and before its locality or extent could be known. The town of Coventry was incorporated in 1711, but its northern boundary was not then established, as we shall hereafter have occasion to see; and hence the proper place for the center of the contemplated new township must of necessity then have been a matter of speculation. It is true, our ancestors in locating a township first sought for an eligible location for a meeting-house, and an indispensable requisite for such location was high land. True to these instincts, the committee that located the first road in Tolland, and laid off the first lots to settlers, commenced upon the highest ground that then was supposed to be nearest the center of the contemplated town. As I have already said, the north line of the town of Coventry was then unknown, but was then and for many years thereafter claimed by the Windsor men to be one mile further south than it was finally found to be. There can therefore be no doubt that the first location of highways and lots in Tolland was made upon Grant's hill, and not upon the hill where the village is now located. This locality answers the description in the record. The course of the road now on Grant's hill is generally north and south, and it crosses the brook that runs up out of Cedar Swamp, and the only such brook in Tolland. The name "meeting house hill," was doubtless given to it because it was intended for the center of the new town, which could not even be regarded as a town without containing a meeting-house. But we are able to make this thing certain by the following facts which are conclusive upon this point. The record before spoken of shows that several lots of forty acres each were, by the committee who laid out this road, located on each side of it, and were granted to particular individuals. The survey of one of those lots is in these words, copied from the record aforesaid;—

The seventh lot is by the committee bounded east by the "highway; south on the sixth lot; west on undivided lands; north on the eighth lot; and containing forty acres, being in breadth forty rods north and south, and runs from the street one hundred and sixty rods west. This lot is by the committee granted to Joseph Rockwell, Jun."

The sixth lot described in this record was by this committee granted to Noah Grant, and the eighth to Thomas Grant.

On the first book of records of lands of the town of Tolland, at page seventy-nine, I find a record of a deed of land from Joseph Rockwell of Windsor, in the county of Hartford, to John Abbott, of Andover, in the county of Essex and commonwealth of Massachusetts, blacksmith; dated March 14,

1719-20, which land in said deed is described as follows:

" My dwelling house and house lot in the township of Tolland, said lot containing forty acres, being forty rods in breadth, and one hundred and threescore rods in length, be it more or less, butting and bounding west upon my own land lately set out to me by the committee of the town of Tolland in our first division of laud, together with all the divisions of lands appertaining to or belonging to said home lot, of forty acres, bounding easterly on the town highway, and south on the home-lot of Noah Grant, and north by lands firstly belonging to Thomas Grant, Jun., of Windsor, but now in possession of Nathaniel Wallis."

John Abbott the first was the great grandfather of Mrs. Sally Bliss, the wife and afterwards the widow of John Bliss, Esq., late of Tolland, deceased. It is a traditionary fact in the family of Mr. Abbott, who is now lineally represented in Tolland in the person of Mrs. Lucius S. Fuller, that he came from Andover, Essex county, Mass., to the town of Tolland in 1720; that he bought lands of Joseph Rockwell of Windsor, that he lived in Tolland from 1720 to the day of his death, Nov.25, 1779, then in the eighty-fifth year of his age; and that he owned the farm and lived in the house lately owned and occupied by Alfred Young, now in the possession and occupancy of James A. Brown, situated on Grant's hill. It follows that the place now occupied by Mr. James A. Brown was the place where John Abbott lived and died; was by him purchased of Joseph Rockwell, to whom the same was granted by the committee who located the first road in Tolland on meeting-house hill, and that this place is bounded easterly on that road. The meeting-house hill, named in the first record in Tolland, is now Grant's hill.

This committee made other locations and allotments of lands on the 3d day of March, and 6th day of April, 1714, which were also duly recorded,—a copy of this record was taken from the records of Windsor, August 6, 1719, certified by the committee, Matthew Allyn, Roger Wolcott, and Timothy Thrall, and was recorded in the records of lands in the town of Tolland, November 19, 1719. The entry in Tolland records is certified as follows: " November 19, 1719. I, Joseph Benton, received the foregoing record and accordingly it was recorded by me. Joseph Benton, town clerk."

The first movement towards an act of incorporation for the town was made in the year 1713. The earliest record is under date of May 9, 1713, and is in the words and figures following, viz.:
" To the Honorable the General Assembly in Hartford, May 14, 1713.

The petition of us the subscribers humbly showeth: That whereas your petitioners being inhabitants of this colony, and the descendants of those that have for a long time contributed to the support of the same, being through the numerous increase of our families much straitened for want of land whereon to make improvement and get our livelihood; and being encouraged by your honors' wonted goodness to encourage the settling of plantations in the waste lands within the colony, and having viewed a township of laud on the east side of the great river, ordered by the town of Windsor and the heirs of Mr. Thomas Burnham, deceased, to be settled into a plantation bounded as in their agreement doth fully appear; — many of us having already been out with the committee and taken up lots in the same, and shall with those that are desirous to settle with us, speedily settle a fair town there if the government discourage us not; we therefore humbly pray your honors would grant that a township may be made of said land, and that they may be patented to and holden by such inhabitants as shall be admitted by the committee appointed by the town of Windsor, and heirs of Mr. Thomas Burnham, deceased, and your petitioners shall ever pray." Dated, May 9, 1713.

This petition is signed by the following persons, viz.:

Baker, Joseph	Grant, Samuel	Porter, Nathaniel
Barber, Benjamin	Grant, Noah	Porter, Joseph
Birge, Cornelius	Grant, Nathaniel	Rockwell, Joseph
Bissell, Josiah	Gridley, John	Rockwell, Samuel
Chapman, Henry	Hoskins, Anthony	Stiles, Thomas
Chapman, Simon	Holcomb, Benaiah	Stiles, Henry, Jr.
Cook, Nathaniel	Huntington, John	Skinner, Joseph
Cook, Ebenezer	Loomer, H.	Stoughton, Israel
Cook, Daniel	Loomis, Stephen	Smith, Philip

Drake, Nathaniel	Loomis, Ichabod	Wolcott, Roger
Eno, John	Loomis, David	Watson, Nathaniel
Ellsworth, Samuel	Loomis, Joshua	Wolcott, Charles
Edgar, Thomas	Marshall, Samuel	Wolcott, Henry
Eggleston, Thomas	Mills, Jedidiah	Willes, Joshua, Sen.
Farnsworth, Joseph	Phelps, Joseph	Willes, John
Gillett, Cornelius	Phelps, William	Willes, Joshua
Gaylord, Jonas	Pinney, Humphrey	Willes, Samuel
Griswold, Daniel, Jr.	Pinney, Jonathan	Warren, Robert
Gillett, Nathaniel, Jr.	Pinney, Nathaniel	Loomis, Daniel.
Griswold, Thomas	Porter, Daniel	59 in all.

The next movement was at the General Assembly in May, 1715, when the following petition was presented:

" To the Honorable the General Assembly sitting at Hartford, May 12, 1715: The petition of the town of Windsor humbly showeth:—That your petitioners did in the year 1686, purchase of the Indians certain lands on the east side of Windsor; and since the town has immeasurably increased and many inhabitants forced to seek after new settlements, and the town did in conjunction with the heirs of Mr. Thomas Burnham release their claims to said lands unto such sober inhabitants as should orderly settle on the same, paying only the prime cost; and therefore several sober and religious persons viewing the same, are very desirous to settle the same, *and several families are already there*, giving a fair prospect of a likely town—if this Honorable Assembly would graciously grant a town there, and the land to be holden by such as shall orderly settle ou the same: which we pray this Honorable Assembly would graciously do: and we beg leave further to move them thereto by the following considerations:

1. The Assembly hath hitherto done the like on like occasions, and it hath been found the best way to settle the country quietly;—

2. Our purchase was improved before his Majesty for obtaining the colony patent, and he by it moved thereby to grant the lands to the colony:—Therefore we pressing the same arguments to the Assembly, hope to find the same favor;—

3. It is most reasonable the ancient inhabitants who have supported the colony should by the government be allowed to settle the lands before strangers and without paying excessive prices to all pretenders, which hath led us into all imaginable confusion already.

And your petitioners shall ever pray."

"At a town meeting in Windsor, March 21, 1714-15—It was voted: that the above written petition should be preferred to the General Assembly in May with their desire it may be granted. Test, John Moore, Register."

This petition is now on file in the archives of the state at Hartford, and at the Assembly in May, 1715, the following resolution was passed.

" And it is further resolved by this Assembly upon the petition of Windsor men that they shall, after the regulation of Coventry according to the foregoing act of this Assembly, have a township of six miles square laid out to them which shall be called Tolland, bounded on the south with Coventry, and east with Willimantic river; and in case the claimers mentioned in the preceding act shall pay in proportion to what is in the said act settled with respect to Coventry, and also by their inhabitants therein seated by Windsor committee as in the aforesaid act is provided for the like quantity of land, the said inhabitants settled by Windsor committee to pay all the charges of laying out and settling the said land,—that a quitclaim of this governments claim shall also be in like manner executed by the Governor and Secretary and delivered to the claimers, for the claim of this government for so much of the said township as shall fall within the bounds of the said claimers. And it is further resolved that a quitclaim of this governments right shall also be executed in like manner by the Governor and Secretary to Col. Matthew Allyn, and

Roger Wolcott Esqr., Timothy Thrall and John Ellsworth all of Windsor, in trust for themselves and such others as shall by them be admitted to settle in said township, for all that part of said township *that lieth without the bounds of said proprietors claims as aforesaid*. Provided the said Allyn and others do pay to the public treasury of this colony for the said land in proportion to what is in this act before stated in respect of Coventry; and it is further provided that none of the claims in the foregoing act shall be construed to oblige any of the aforesaid inhabitants seated on any of the said lands, who have procured the claims of the said proprietors and have instruments under their hands to show for the same, and it is also to be understood and it is hereby resolved that the said proprietors if need be, shall give further and better assurance to the said inhabitants to whom the said proprietors have sold their claims and received the money for the same. Provided also, that the above mentioned claimers do or shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid into the colony treasury the aforesaid sum or sums on or before the 15th day of May next, or else they shall not claim the benefit of this act, any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding."

By this resolution, the Windsor men became entitled to a township six miles square, to be bounded. south on Coventry, and east on Willimantic river, and to be called Tolland. The fee of this territory was to be vested in Matthew Allyn, Roger Wolcott, Timothy Thrall and John Ellsworth in trust for themselves, and for such others as should by them be admitted to settle in the township. These gentlemen, it will be perceived, were the committee who located the first highway, and made the first allotments in Tolland, April 18, 1718. These trustees, on the 11th day of May, 1719, conveyed by deed of that date, the north part of Tolland to fifty-one persons named in said deed; the portion of land conveyed in said deed was described as follows:—

“Bounded south on a line east and west at the south end of Shenups pond, east on Willimantic river, and is to be in length from Willimantic river west six miles, and in breadth is from said line drawn east and west at the south end of Shenups pond so far north as to make the six miles from Coventry north bounds.”

The following are the names of the grantees in this deed:

Baker,	Eaton, Daniel	Paulk, Samuel
Benton, Samuel, Sen,	Ellsworth, Jonathan	Potter, Hezekiah
Benton, Samuel, Jun.	Ellsworth, John	Potter, Daniel
Benton, Joseph, Sen.	Forward, Samuel	Rockwell, Samuel
Benton, Joseph, Jun.	Gillett, Nathan	Royce, Joseph
Birge, Cornelius	Grant, Noah	Rockwell, Joseph, Jun.
Bissell, Ephraim's heirs	Grant, Nathaniel	Stearns, Shubael
Birge, Joseph	Hatch, Joseph	Stoughton, Thomas
Brace, Stephen	Hinsdale, Barnabas	Taylor, Nathaniel
Cook, Daniel	Huntington, Christopher	Tucker, Ephraim
Coy, Samuel	Huntington, John	Utley, Samuel
Chapman, Simon	Loomis, Enoch	Wolcott, Henry
Caswell, Matthew	Loomis, Moses	Wolcott, Simon
Drake, Joseph	Loomis, Joshua	Wallis, Nathaniel
Ellis, Thomas	Nye, Ebenezer	West, Samuel
Emmons, Peter	Pinney, Samuel	Willes, Joshua
Eaton, William	Peck, Joseph	Whipple, Thomas.

I can not find any record of the original title of the southern part of the town before the year 1718, of which I shall by and by speak. There can be no doubt it was, by some conveyance, vested in the committee who commenced making the allotments in April, 1713. The petition of the town of Windsor contains an allegation that the town did “in the year 1636 purchase of the Indians certain lands on the east side of Windsor,” and “did in conjunction with the heirs of Mr. Thomas Burnham, release their claims to said lands unto such sober inhabitants as should orderly settle the same;” which clearly

evinces the fact that some portion of the territory contained in the proposed township had already been the subject of a conveyance. And the resolution of the General Assembly authorized the conveyance to Matthew Allyn and his associates only so much of the land that was within the six miles square "*that lieth without the bounds of said proprietors claims as aforesaid.*" It is therefore obvious that the title to the south part of Tolland was originally derived from the Indians, and it was the source of bitter controversies during the early settlement of the town. From what tribe of Indians this title was obtained, does not appear. Before the settlement at Windsor in 1633, the territory now embraced in the State of Connecticut was inhabited and probably owned by several small Indian tribes. But the boundaries between these tribes were never very well defined, and indeed, in some instances, different tribes claimed the same land, and the early settlers not unfrequently received deeds of the same land from different sachems or Indian chiefs. That portion of Connecticut situated east of Connecticut river was inhabited and owned by the following Indian tribes, to wit: The Pequots, who were located between the Niantic and Paucatuc rivers, and extending from the shore back into the country. The Mohegans, supposed to be a branch of the Pequots, whose principal town was between New London and Norwich, but whose territory extended north into the southern part of Tolland county. The Nehantics of Lyme, and the Podunks of East Windsor and East Hartford. The Nipmucs of Massachusetts had a few sparse settlements in the northern portion of Tolland and Windham counties. The town of Windsor, on the west side of the river, was subject to the Tunxis, a tribe that inhabited the valley of Farmington river. As I have said, it nowhere appears from which of these tribes the settlers at Windsor purchased lands on the east side of Windsor in 1636, for it is probable that the Mohegans, the Podunks, and the Nipmucs might have each claimed the territory. Whatever may have been the claims of others, it is certain the Mohegans regarded a portion of the territory now included within the boundaries of Tolland as their own, and hence we find that one of their sachems named Joshua, as early as the year 1675, undertook to dispose of it by will,—as by the following extract from the record of it will appear.

" Item. I give and bequeath all that tract of land lying from the mountain in sight of Hartford northward to a pond called Shenups, east to Willimantic river, south by said river, west by Hartford bounds, (except three hundred acres already sold to Major John Talcott, and two hundred acres to Capt. Thomas Bull, and according to a draught or map drawn and subscribed with my own hand, bearing date with these presents,) viz.: to Mr. James Richards, Mr. Samuel Wyllys, Capt. Thomas. Bull, Mr. Joseph Haynes, Mr. Richard Lord, Major John Talcott, Mr. John Allyn, Mr. Ebenezer Way, Bartholomew Barrett, Nicholas Olmsted, Henry Hayward, Mr. Joseph Fitch, Thomas Burnham, and William Pitkin, to be equally divided amongst them, into so many parts as there are persons, and also Nathaniel Willett to have an equal proportion amongst them. Dated at Pettupaug 29 Feb. 1675. Compared Feb. 8, 1686. John Allyn, Secy."

This will describes that portion of the town of Tolland not included in the deed of Matthew Allyn and others, and is that part of the town where the first surveys were made by the proprietors' committee. I have no evidence that this tract of land was ever divided among the legatees according to the provisions of the will, and probably it never was. The Thomas Burnham named in this will, was doubtless the Thomas Burnham whose heirs united with the town of Windsor in releasing their claims to the territory of Tolland "unto such sober inhabitants as should orderly settle the same," and hence the first settlers had whatever right was vested in Windsor by virtue of their purchase of the Indians in 1636, and also the right Thomas Burnham acquired under the will of Joshua. But the legatees of Joshua were dissatisfied with the action of the first settlers, and prosecuted them for trespassing upon their rights. The settlers resisted this claim of the legatees, and made it one common cause, defraying all necessary expenses from the common treasury of the proprietors of the township. The first suit was commenced in April, 1724, by one Joseph Baker against one Shubael Stearns. In September, 1724, the proprietors, at a meeting held for that purpose, appointed Francis West, Daniel Eaton, and Shubael Stearn a committee to agree with the claimants, " with power to go to the General Court at New Haven." It appears that this committee attended the General Court at New Haven, where a committee was appointed "to treat with the proprietors of Tolland." This controversy was of great importance to the proprietors, and no doubt very seriously affected the early settlement of the town. It extended to a very large portion of the land

included in their charter and went to the validity of their title. After various conferences between the committees above named, the matter was finally compromised, and the General Assembly, at its session in October, 1724, passed an act that the proprietors of Tolland should pay to the legatees of Joshua at the rate of six pounds per allotment, or three shillings per acre for the land, and that the legatees should release all their title to said lands. This action of the General Court was not acceptable to the legatees and they seemed unwilling thus to give up their claims;—and as late as October, 1728, or four years after the decision of the General Court above-mentioned, other suits were commenced upon the same claims. The proprietors held a meeting, October 28, 1678, and chose a committee consisting of Dea. Francis West, Capt. Hope Lathrop, Lieut. John Huntington, Sergeant Samuel Benton. and Sergeant **Samuel Chapman**, "to go to the legatees of Joshua and in the name and behalf of the proprietors to take a quitclaim deed of all their claims to the lands in Tolland." They also solemnly obligated themselves "to pay all such sums as said committee should be compelled to pay in the business of their office." This committee promptly attended to the business assigned them, and in a few months obtained proper conveyances from the legatees of Joshua which put an end to this expensive and important controversy.

It is a matter of some doubt at what precise time the first settlement was made in Tolland. The opinion generally prevails that the first permanent settlement was in 1715, but I am satisfied it was at an earlier date. It is certain that roads were laid out, and allotments of lands made to individuals in April, 1713. Tradition informs us that the persons who executed this work provided themselves with a temporary home, under a large shelving rock, now situated on the west side of the highway, leading to Bolton, near the north bank of the brook that runs across the road this side of the present residence of Alden B. Crandall. The walls of the dwelling, as well as the roof, being of stone, it received the name of Stoney house; and this gave name to the brook that runs by it, which is in the early records of the town called Stoney house brook. While it is probable that the residence of persons at this place was temporary, yet there are several facts tending to show that permanent settlements were commenced in about 1713. The petition to the General Assembly for an act of incorporation, dated May 9, 1713, alleges that many of the petitioners "have been out with the committee and have taken up lots in the same; and shall with those that are desirous to settle with us *speedily* settle a fair town there," &c. The petition of the town of Windsor for the same object, alleges "that several families are already there, giving a fair prospect of a likely town," &c. This petition is dated March 21, 1714-15. The resolution of the General Assembly under date of May, 1715, speaks of the inhabitants thereon seated by the Windsor committee;—from all which it is evident there must have been settlements in Tolland before May, 1715. And further, in the records of the marriages, births and deaths in the town, we find the records of several births in Tolland, prior to May, 1715. The earliest of them is that of Amy Hatch, a daughter of Joseph Hatch, who was born October 10, 1713. Margaret Pack, a daughter of Joseph Pack, was born January 7, 1715; Joseph Hatch, son of Joseph Hatch before mentioned, and as tradition says the first male child born in Tolland, was born Sept. 12, 1715. Joseph Pack had land assigned him in the early allotments, and his name and that of Joseph Hatch are among the earliest upon the records. From these facts I am confident the first settlement in Tolland must have been made in the year 1713.

There is no positive evidence that the territory within the limits of Tolland was ever occupied by the Indians, other than for hunting and fishing. Formerly our ponds and streams were stored with excellent fish, and our forests were filled with a great variety of wild game, which during certain portions of the year invited the attention of the savage inhabitants occupying the land near the sea-shore. I have myself heard some of the aged people say, they had seen shad and salmon caught in large quantities in Willimantic river, between Tolland and Willington, and so plentifully were salmon caught, that fishermen had a standing rule that they would not sell a certain number of shad to one person unless he would take a certain quantity of salmon. The Indians in their summer visits to this town, found it necessary or convenient to erect wigwams or Indian huts,—traces of which in the western part of the town, on lands lately owned by Mr. Ephraim West and Mr. Timothy Benton, were visible within the recollection of some of our oldest inhabitants. A few families may have occupied these huts, but they left the town before its first settlement and none of the red men have ever dwelt here since. We have but few objects to which any Indian name was ever known to be attached. The Indians gave the name of Wangombog to a large portion of country in the southern part of Tolland county, adjacent to the large pond known by this name, situated in the town of Coventry. A portion of the town of Tolland was within

the territory called Wangombog, and several of the early deeds recorded in Tolland, describe the land conveyed as situated in Wangombog. The same name is given to the locality of the land conveyed in the will of Joshua, before mentioned. The pond on the west side of Tolland, was by the Indians called Shenipset, which by an easy corruption is now pronounced Snipsic. This word is variously spelled in the old records—sometimes Shenipset, Shenaps, Shenips.

The small stream running east of the village was by the Indians called Skungamug—the corruption of which is Skunkamug or Skunkermug—sometimes in the old records written Scungamuck. These Indian names, though less euphonious than some of our more modern ones, I hope will be perpetuated. Indeed, I entertain some doubt whether they will sound any more harsh in the ears of our posterity than Ball Hill, Sugar Hill, Buff Cap, Goose Lane, or Cedar Swamp—all of which are the recognized modern names of well-known localities.

As I have already intimated, there was early a difficulty about the true location of the north line of the town of Coventry. The Windsor proprietors, under date of May 14, 1716, petitioned for a "final settlement with the legatees of Joshua; for setting of bounds with the town of Coventry, concerning which there is much difficulty;" also, "that we may have privilege to choose a town clerk and other officers as the law directs." This petition purports to be the petition "of us the subscribers, inhabitants of Tolland," and was negatived by the Assembly. The following are the names of the petitioners, to wit:

Baker, Joseph	Ellis, Thomas	Stearns, Shubael
Benton, Joseph	Grant, Nathaniel	Willes, Joshua
Birge, Cornelius	Loomis, Joshua	Wolcott, Henry
Benton, Samuel	Mather, Joseph	Taylor, Nathaniel.
Bradley, George	Porter, Hezekiah	16 in all
Bissell, Ephraim	Porter, Joseph	

In May, 1718, a petition was presented to the General Assembly, as follows, to wit: "A petition of us the subscribers, inhabitants of Tolland, relative to Coventry lands."

Signed by the following persons:

Baker, Joseph	Loomis, Joshua	Slafter, Joseph
Birge, Cornelius	Loomis, Enoch	Slafter, Antony
Benton, Joseph	Nye, Ebenezer	Stimpson, James
Benton, Daniel	Pack, Joseph	Stoughton, Thomas
Cook, Daniel	Porter, Hezekiah	Taylor, Nathaniel
Drake, Joseph	Porter, Joseph	Willes, Joshua
Eaton, William	Rice, Joseph	Wolcott, Simon
Grant, Noah	Rockwell, Joseph	25 in all.
Hatch, Joseph	Stearns, Shubael	

I am unable to ascertain at what time the line between Tolland and Coventry was finally settled, but I have no doubt it was done before 1720, in which year a committee appointed by the General Assembly, located the town of Tolland and defined its boundaries. The following is a copy of their report:

"This may certify whom it may concern, that we, James Wadsworth and John Hall, on this day of October, A. D. 1720, being assisted by Thomas Kimberly, surveyor and in company with sundry men of the town of Tolland, did pursuant to an act of the General Assembly of this colony, held at Hartford May 12, 1720, survey and layout the north and west bounds of the town of Tolland; and for that end we went to the north-east corner of the town of Coventry; and from thence due north (by the needle of the instrument,) six miles, at the end whereof to wit, in an east line by the needle, at or on the west bank of Willimantic river, we erected a heap of stones for the north-east corner of the township of Tolland, and marked a red oak tree on the south side with the letter T; and from thence ran upon a point west (by the needle,) six miles seventeen rods and thirteen links to a white oak tree marked and a heap of stones about it, standing on the southerly side of a hill, which tree is the north-west corner boundary of said Tolland; and from the said tree to run south, five degrees west to Coventry north-west corner;—the land contained within the said town lines, and the said river which is the east bounds or said town is of the contents of six miles square. The chainmen were under oath as the law directed.

A true copy of record. (Signed,) JAMES WADSWORTH.

Examined by Hez. Wyllys, Sec'y. JOHN HALL."

From this certificate it is very evident that the north line of Coventry was substantially settled before October, 1720, and became the basis of the action of the above-named committee in locating the north and west lines of the town of Tolland. But there were subsequent negotiations between these towns upon this subject. The towns of Coventry and Tolland appointed a committee of three from each town to agree about the dividing line, and they were empowered to make a final issue and determination of the lines between the towns. This committee consisted of Samuel Parker, Joseph Strong and Thomas Root, of Coventry; and Joseph Hatch, Daniel Eaton and Noah Grant, of Tolland, and met on the 6th day of February, 1722, and agreed that the dividing line between the two towns should be the line run by Capt. James Wadsworth, Capt. John Hall, and Mr. Kimberly, and that the same should thereafter be perambulated according to law. They further agreed, "that Francis West and Joseph Benton, being in Coventry, might pay their public dues in Tolland, with three acres of land a-piece about their houses, and counted inhabitants of Tolland, as if Tolland had took them in; they and their heirs and assigns living on the three acres of land where their houses now stand." Francis West found it impracticable to reside in one town and exercise town privileges in another, and he very soon removed his house from Coventry to Tolland. This house is the one lately occupied by Billaky Snow, now deceased.

It would seem that the settlement with the legatees of Joshua, and the establishment of the line between the towns of Coventry and Tolland, might sufficiently quiet all conflicting claims and remove all doubts respecting the corporate powers of the town or Tolland and the title or its inhabitants to the territory within the limits of its charter. But lest there might be some defect in the previous proceedings, or some omission which might cause further difficulties, the town procured from the General Assembly, at its session in New Haven, October, 1728, the passage of a resolution confirming and establishing every thing that had been previously done. This resolution, after reciting the resolution of May 12, 1715, recognizes the survey made by Messrs. Wadsworth and Hall in 1720, and also the deed to the proprietors of Tolland, dated May 11, 1719, and then declares that the proprietors "held the lands of the said township as one entire propriety; and that all the said proprietors shall have equal interest and benefit by force of the patent by the said assembly granted to be executed to the said proprietors in usual form."

In pursuance with this resolution a patent was issued by the Governor, countersigned by the Secretary of State, dated the 2d day of Nov., 1728, in and by which all the powers, privileges and franchises before granted to the Windsor men, were ratified and confirmed, and the title to the land within the boundaries of the town as described by the survey of Messrs. Wadsworth and Hall, was fully, clearly, absolutely given, granted, ratified and confirmed unto Henry Wolcott, Stephen Steel, Francis West, together with the rest of the proprietors of the town; and to their heirs and assigns, and such as should thereafter legally succeed to, and represent them forever in such proportion as they the said proprietors, partners and settlers, or any or them respectively had right in, or were lawfully possessed of the same. Also authorizing and empowering said proprietors and inhabitants of said town, from time to time, and at all times forever thereafter, to exercise and enjoy all such rights, powers, privileges and franchises in and among themselves, as were given, granted, allowed and exercised and enjoyed by and amongst the proprietors of other towns of the colony, according to the common approved custom and observance; and guaranteeing to said grantees, their heirs and assigns legally representing them, "a good, pure, perfect, absolute and indefeasible estate of inheritance, in fee simple, in the lands described, to be holden of his majesty his heirs and successors, as of his majesty's manor of East Greenwich in the county of Kent in the Kingdom of England, in free and common socage, and not in capite nor by knight service, yielding therefor and paying unto our sovereign lord king George, his heirs and successors forever, one fifth part of all ore of gold and silver, which from time to time and at all times forever thereafter, shall be there gotten, had or obtained in lieu of all services, duties and demands whatsoever."

NOTE. Socage, is a tenure by any certain and determinate service. It is of two kinds—Free socage, and villein socage. Free socage is when the services are not only certain but honorable. Villien socage is where the services, though certain, are of a degraded nature. The tenure by which the lands granted in the foregoing patent were holden, was one-fifth part of all ore of gold and silver found within the limits of the town. This was both certain and honorable, and in the absence of these precious metals will never be a great burden to the inhabitants of that town.