HOME LOTS OF THE FIRST SETTLERS WEST OF THE RIVER

N

NORTH RIVER

WILLIAM KERLY

INTERVALE

JOHN SMITH

RICHARD SMITH SOLD TO KERLY

WM. KERLY SEN.

LOTS

BAY ROAD

NIGHT PASTURE

N. WATERS

BROOK

JOS. ROWLANDSON

DANIEL GAINS

ROPER'S

JOHN RUGG

JOHN ROPER

GIBBON HILL

CHURCH

BURYING GROUND

JOHN PRESCOTT'S INTERVALE

JOHN JOHNSON

PHILLIP KNIGHT & DAY

JOHN MOORE

JNO. PRESCOTT'S RYE FIELD

JOHN PRESCOTT'S

GOWDALL PURCHASE

JOHN'S JUMP

JONAS FAIRBANK

THOS. SAWYER

GEORGE HILL

DANIEL GAINS

LANE

JACOB FARRAR

JOHN RIGBY

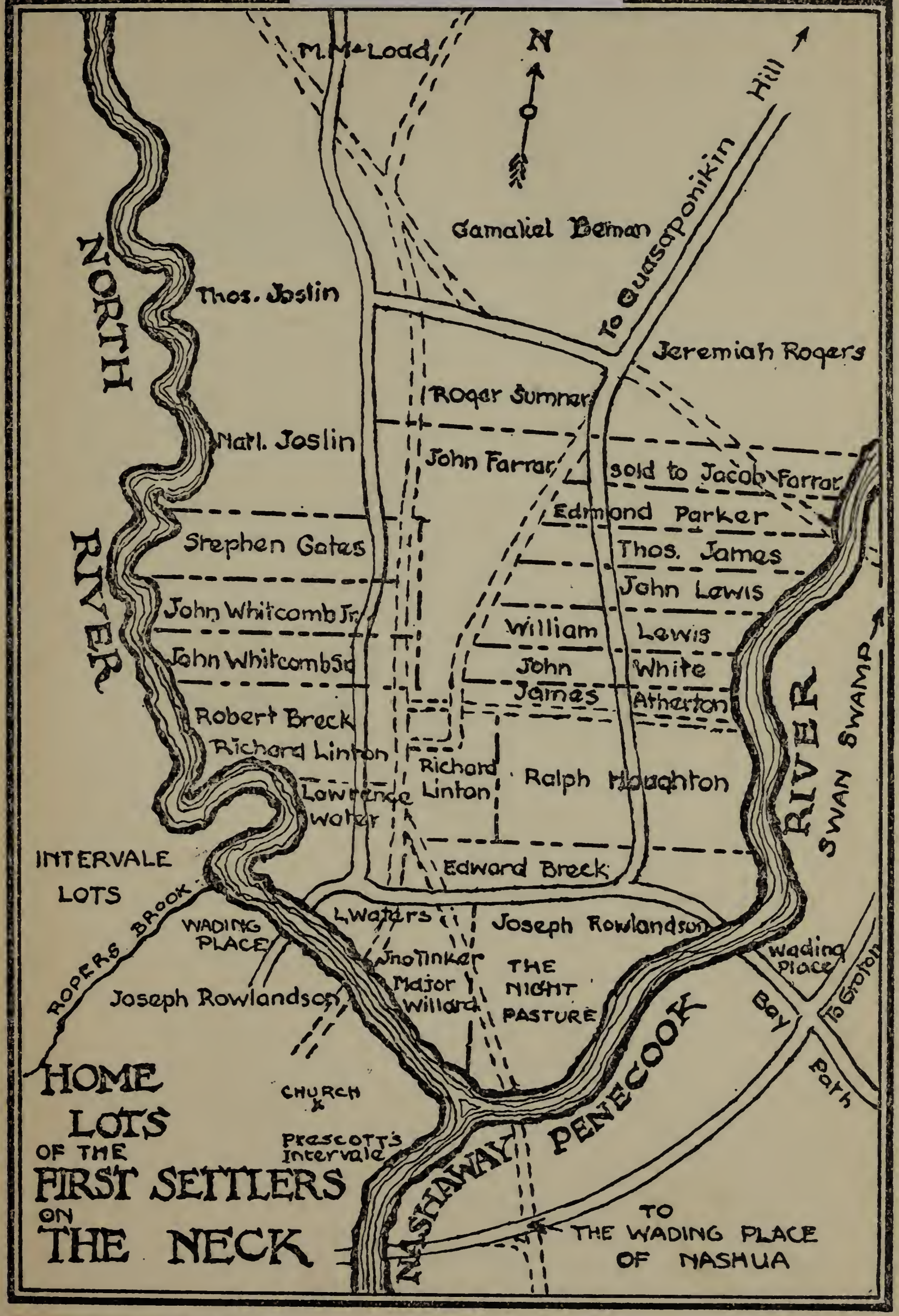
RICHARD WHEELER

JOHN HOUGHTON

DEAN'S BROOK

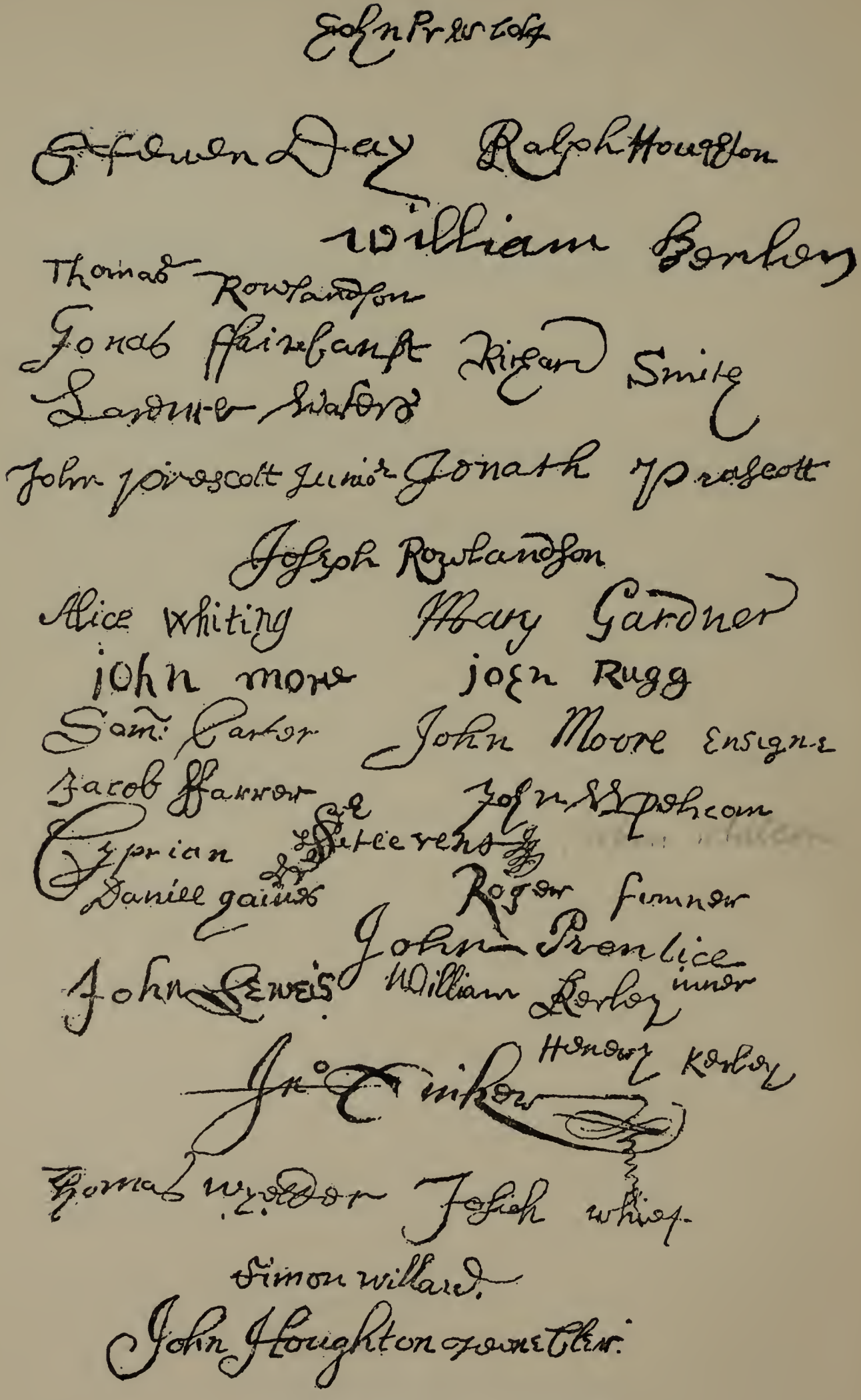
HOW GOODRIDGE

WAYNASHASSA



Gertrude F. Whitcomb

March 4. 1938



SIGNERS OF THE COVENANT

The Story of Colonial Lancaster

(MASSACHUSETTS)

BY

MARION FULLER SAFFORD

ILLUSTRATED

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Preface

This work was undertaken at the request of the School Committee and the Superintendent of the Lancaster schools. These were Mr. Herbert Reiner, Dr. Franklin Perkins and Mrs. Evelyn Hawkins Fentiman, School Committee, and Derwood Newman, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools and Principal of the High School. They felt that a book on the early history of the town was needed for use in the schools, as nothing had been written for fifty years and everything then written was out of print.

Some knowledge of the past is necessary to the understanding of the present and it is well to keep in mind the people and the events of those early days, when not only this town but a great nation was in the making.

That this work is incomplete as a history of the town is obvious. It seemed advisable to read all that was available about Lancaster and select what was most important, and put down in more or less chronological order this record of the times. The books used for reference were *Early Records* and *Military Annals of Lancaster*, and *The History of Harvard* by the Hon. Henry S. Nourse; *History of Lancaster*, by the Reverend A. P. Marvin; a short History of Lancaster taken from Joseph Willard's book printed in 1825, and numerous newspaper articles from the pen of Mr. Nourse. There was no room for reference notes but the sources of all the facts used can be shown. The historical accuracy of the book has been checked by the Reverend Frederick L. Weis, Th.D., whose patience in going over the manuscript has been inexhaustible. His suggestions have been valuable. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Charles H. Bemis, of the Editorial Staff of the Boston Evening Transcript, who edited the manuscript as soon as it was produced; to the Reverend Frederick K. Brown, whose camera produced the photographs; to Mrs. Phila Linville Staines, who carefully re-drew the maps; to Dr. W. Elmer Ekblaw of the faculty of Clark University, who edited the appendix chapter on the geology of the town. For moral support I owe much to the Honorable Herbert Parker whose appreciation of my efforts along the lines of local history has been my inspiration.

MARION FULLER SAFFORD

Lancaster, December 1, 1937

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The Story of Colonial Lancaster

CHAPTER I

The Coming of the White Men—First Steps Toward Setttement —A. D. 1643

THREE CENTURIES HAVE PASSED SINCE WHITE MEN FIRST LOOKED upon the site of old Lancaster. The territory all about us was the home of a small tribe of red men, known as the Nashaways. They were independent, although they spoke the same language as the Indians of the coast towns, which also was that of the Nipmucks, the Quabaugs, and the River Indians who dwelt to the south and west of them. In war, these Massachusetts tribes were allied against their common foes—the Mohawks and Mohegans.

Before the coming of the white men, the Nashaways had been powerful and prosperous; but wars and disease had greatly reduced their numbers. They had been visited by a dreadful pestilence, in 1612. Again, in 1633, small-pox had swept away hundreds more, leaving only a few hundreds of the former thousands, in Massachusetts. Thus, in the belief of the Pilgrims and the Puritans, a special dispensation of Providence laid open the way for chosen people of God to come into this new land, even as into Canaan of old.

There were three groups, or villages, of these Nashaway Indians: one at the eastern base of Mt. Wachusett; another on a little plateau between the two little lakes of Washacum; a third near the meeting of the two branches of the river which was called by the pioneers the "Penecook," but long since known as the Nashua. Nashaway, or Nashawog, in the Indian tongue means *the place between*, or *land in the angle made by two rivers*, and is descriptive of the locality. The central, and largest, village was at

Washacum, and there was the home of the sachem who ruled over his little empire. He seems most often to have been called Sholan, though we find him called Showanon, Nashowanon, Shaumaus, Shoniow, and Nashacowam. So, also, we find his subjects called by the names of their native villages; and the English spoke of them as Wachusetts, and Washacums, as well as Nashaways.

No one knows where these red men came from or how long they had been here; but these fertile valleys, with running streams and intervales easily cultivated, dotted with elm and walnut trees, must have been a favorite dwelling place for many ages.

The name of this Nashaway sachem, Sholan, appears often in early Colonial papers, always as the friend of the white men. John Eliot, the saintly apostle to the Indians, visited the Nashaways four times in the summer of 1648 and claimed, by his own efforts, to have converted Sholan, and many of his followers, to the Christian faith.

Among the Englishmen whom Sholan came to know in his visits to "the Bay," as Boston and its vicinity was called, was Thomas King, of Watertown, whom Sholan particularly liked. He urged King to visit him at Wachacum, and offered him generous grants of land, upon the condition that King would set up a trading post near by, where the Indians could exchange their furs and wampum for iron kettles, weapons, cloths, beads, and for novelties which had been brought from England. The Indians already had acquired a taste for rum, and although it was soon prohibited, clandestine selling of rum was carried on, and at great profit to white men. A gallon of cheap rum brought the equivalent of twenty shillings—a beaver skin.

Thomas King accepted Sholan's invitation and, as far as we know, he was the first white man to cross over the Wataquadock range which spans the horizon to the East of the town. That was in 1642. He came by the Indian trail which later was called the Bay Path.

We may imagine King, astride his horse, gazing at the scene which spread out before him from the top of Wataquadock hill.

The civilization of three hundred years has not changed this broad and beautiful landscape. To the north, King must have viewed the picturesque peaks in New Hampshire—the Temple Hills, Jo English, and the Uncanoonucks, with the sharp cone of

Monadnock rising above them. Near by, were the Pack Monadnocks, which tradition tells us were dropped off from the "pack" of the giant who brought Monadnock down out of the north. In the middle distance he saw Wachusett Mountain. The Indian name means "the Great Hill." Near by hills were Monoosnock in Leominster and Watatic in Ashburnham. In the foreground were the George Hill range and the hills in Sterling. At his feet stretched the fertile intervales, and the river, winding its way through the valley.

Although the section must have been much more heavily wooded then, we are told that it was not a wilderness. Twice each year the Indians fired the woods to free them from underbrush—the better to protect themselves from some stealthy foe, also to help in the pursuit of game. In that way the woods about their homes had come to look like huge parks, passable even for horsemen. The fertile meadows were burned bare of trees and brush-wood, and grew coarse grasses, "some as high as the shoulders." Even the austere Puritan must have been impressed with the beauty of the scene!

King's visit to Sholan resulted in the establishment of a trading post. He was a poor man, but he succeeded in interesting in the enterprise one Henry Symonds, a freemen, a capitalist, and a successful contractor living at the head of what is now North Street, in Boston. Together they bargained with Sholan. No deed of sale was ever found; but later events disclosed the fact that the purchase-price paid to the Indians was twelve pounds, for a strip of land ten miles long from north to south by eight miles wide. All of the land of Lancaster, Clinton, Bolton, Berlin and much of Harvard, Boylston and Sterling, was included in this territory. An additional grant after the turn of the century included Leominster and Sterling.

For the site of the trading post they chose a spot by the side of a little brook, at the parting of two trails; one that led to the westward towards Wachusett Mountain, the other, to the southwest towards the home of the Quabaug Indians. This latter site is on the southeastern slope of George Hill. There they erected their trucking house, the first building put up by white men in the Nashua valley. It was at the frontier. There was nothing beyond the hill which shadowed this first store save forests, and savages—and the unknown.

CHAPTER II

Compact with Sholan 1643—1647 The Trading Company

THIS FIRST TRADING COMPANY WAS SHORT-LIVED, FOR HENRY Symonds died within a year, and Thomas King lived but a few months longer.

The next proprietor was John Cowdall, a trader from Boston. Soon, however, we find that a company, of which Cowdall was a member, bought the rights to the territory, and signed a compact with Sholan. There was a provision in the deed that restricted the purchasers, or their successors, from "molesting the Indians in their hunting, fishing, or usual planting places." It was evident that it was expected that the Whites and the Indians would live together in the land, in peace and harmony.

The Nashaway Company, having signed a compact, at once began the assignment of home lots among its members and to seek legal sanction from the authorities at Boston for their undertaking. They received a favorable reply to their petition on May 19, 1644, and from that time on, the names of the co-partners appear in various records.

At the head of the list stand the names of two graduates of Cambridge University, England—Nathaniel Norcross and Robert Childe. It was expected that Reverend Nathaniel Norcross would become the pastor of the Plantation. Robert Childe was a scholar, a traveller, and an intimate friend of John Winthrop, Jr. A third partner was Stephen Day, a locksmith. He had become well known, as he had set up, at Harvard College, in 1639, the first printing press in America. Day was a strong promoter of the company's interests: he often entertained Indians and prospective planters at his home in Cambridge.

Four workers in iron were in this company: John Prescott, Harmon Garrett, John Hill, and Joseph Jenckes. They expected to find valuable ore, especially iron, in these New England hills.

The names of eleven others appear in the company's records. The partners were from various walks in life. Their first step was to send out men to build houses, store provender for wintering

cattle, enclose within a fence a "night pasture," for protection of their stock from wild animals at night and prepare the fields for grain.

Three men from Watertown, Richard Linton, his son-in-law, Lawrence Waters, a carpenter, and John Ball, were the first employed. They were given lots, and built for themselves the first dwelling houses in the Plantation. Their lands lay in the vicinity of the Lancaster railroad station.

These men were not destined to become the actual settlers of the Plantation. In his History of New England, John Winthrop wrote, in 1644, "the persons interested in the Plantation being most of them poor men, and some of them corrupt in judgment, and others profane, it went on very slowly, so that in two years they had not three houses built there and he whom they had called to be their minister left them for their delays."

In those days, to be "corrupt in judgment" or "profane" meant that these men were not members of the church.

Perhaps greed of land, and expectation of mineral wealth influenced some to join the company. However, one by one, they lost interest in the enterprise, and every member of the copartnership, save the stalwart John Prescott, deserted.

One great obstacle in the way of the settlement was the danger and difficulty of approach to the town because of the crossing the Sudbury river and marsh. The planters petitioned the Governor and Magistrates for a bridge across this river, "for transporting our persons, cattle and goods." They were granted a mere twenty pounds, and for a hundred years travellers in seasons of flood were forced to make long detours. The men in authority in Boston were not interested in the success of the enterprise. Indeed they felt little interest in Prescott, who, at the time was not a freeman, as he had not joined the church and even was supposed to be in sympathy with some of the politically unsound views of Dr. Childe. Prescott however, had taken the oath of fidelity and, without benefit of the approval of the men in authority, had assumed the place which he held throughout his long life, at the head of the community.

There is nothing to disprove that, from the first, Prescott was other than a sincere Christian——even austere in his religious views. He had sold his estate in Watertown and, packing his household goods upon horses, had set out with his family, through

the woods, by way of the long Indian trail, to establish his new home in the Nashaway Plantation. At the very outset he met with disaster which might have changed the whole story, for "he lost a horse and his lading in the Sudbury river, and a week after, his wife and children being upon another horse, were hardly saved from drowning."

Tradition tells us that Prescott's first choice of a home lot in this broad valley, was the site of the present civic center of this town. Here he planned to build his home upon the "Neck of Land," which spread out between the rivers. This would have been near the only two dwellings already erected—those of Waters and Linton. In the light of later events that lot would have proven a wiser choice, as it would not have been so easy for a surprise attack by the Indians: but the pioneers had nothing to guide them in their dealings with this hitherto unknown race of men and, at the time of settling, the Indians were very friendly.

So John Prescott sold his land in what long has been called the Center, to Ralph Houghton, and established his family at the foot of George Hill, where a beginning had been made at the trucking house, which he had bought from John Cowdall.

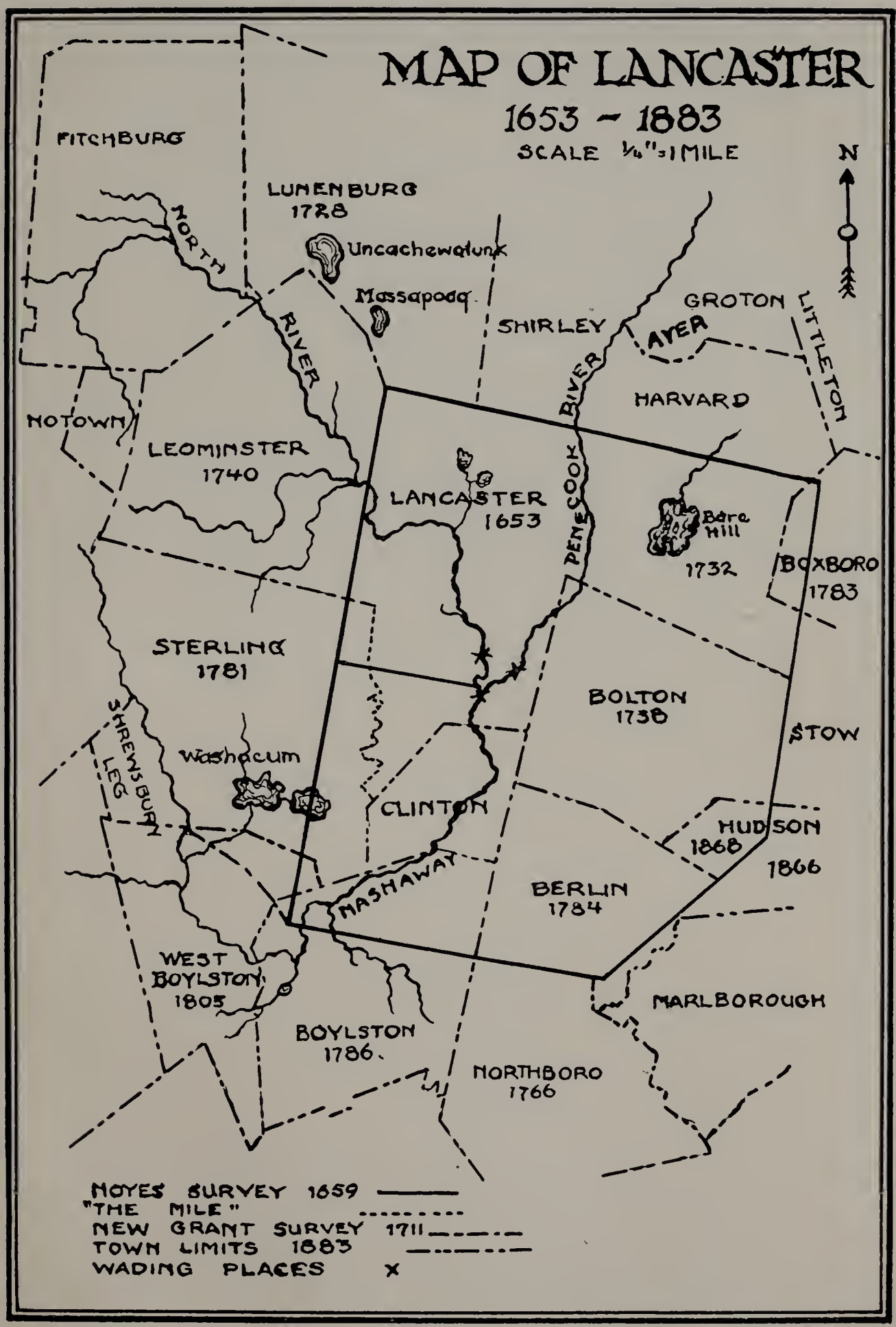
John Prescott was born in 1604, in the hamlet of Shevington, in the parish of Standish, Lancashire, England. His ancestors can be traced back in direct line to Charlemagne, in the 9th century. He married Mary Platts, at Wigan, in 1629. He is supposed to have been a soldier in England, and to have left that Country to avoid persecution. He first sailed to Barbados, in 1638, thence to Boston, in 1640. He owned one hundred twenty-six acres of land in Watertown, where he resided, and soon became interested in the Nashaway Company.

Hon. Henry S. Nourse, Historian of the Nashua Valley, gives us the following picture of this man, who was destined to become the founder of Lancaster: "We get very few glimpses of Prescott from the meager records of succeeding years, but those serve to show that he was busy, prosperous and annually honored by his neighbors with the public duties for which his sturdy integrity fitted him" * * * * "John Prescott was a rare type of man, an ideal pioneer. Not one of the famous frontiersmen, whose figures stand out so prominently in early American history, was better equipped with manly qualities that win hero worship in a new country, than the father of the Nashaway Plantation. Had Pres-

MAP OF LANCASTER

1653 – 1883

SCALE 1/4" = 1 MILE



cott, like Daniel Boone, been fortunate in the favor of contemporary historians, to perpetuate anecdotes of his daily prowess and fertility of resource, his name and romantic adventures would adorn colonial annals. Persecuted for his opinions, he went out into the wilderness to found a home and for forty years he fought, thought and wrought to make his home the center of a prosperous community."

"Having no likeness of Prescott, we must trust to tradition, which portrays a man of commanding stature, stern of mien and strong of limb, and a heart devoid of fear; great physical endurance, and unbending will. His manual skill and dexterity must have been great; his mental capacity and business energy remarkable; for we find him not only a farmer, trader, blacksmith and hunter, but a surveyor, builder of roads, bridges and mills. Prescott was a Puritan soldier, a seeker of liberty, not license: rebellious against tyranny, but no contemner of constituted authority or moral law. His neighbors and friends—John Tinker, Simon Willard and Reverend Joseph Rowlandson, doubtless exceeded him in culture, but could not surpass him in personal force, either mental or moral."

CHAPTER III

Plans for First Settlement 1650-1654

LITTLE WAS ACCOMPLISHED TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF THE PLANTATION before 1650. Gradually, as the first partners lost interest and sold their holdings, others took their places and joined the colony. Prescott's goal of a township was already in sight. As yet there was neither church nor school.

When the petition asking rights for a township went to the General Court, in 1652, it stated that there were living at Nashaway "about nine familyes." There had been born ten white children in the settlement, two to Prescott, five to Waters, two to Sawyer and one to Daniel Hudson.

The petition requested that the town "be called Prescott" in honor of their leader. The General Court at first granted this request: then someone in authority, remembering that not even a governor of the colony had been honored in this way objected to exalting this blacksmith, who was not even a freeman, and substituted an amendment which was carried, "that it shall be called henceforth 'West Towne.'" This was not an appropriate name, as Springfield was farther west, and the name was not accepted by the planters. At least then they would ask to honor their leader by remembering his home in England, and another petition went up asking that the town be called 'Lancaster.' This request was answered on the 16th of May, 1653, in a decree which stated that "the name of it be henceforth called Lancaster." The decree further set forth that, "although the first Undertakers and partners in the Plantacon of Nashaway are wholly evacuated of their claims, yet such as have contributed to the ministry and to the purchase from the Indians or any public work shall be repaid in allotment of lands, provided they make use of such lands within three years by building and planting."

Now that the Court had ratified the Indian purchase, all were required to take the oath of fidelity and to provide for the ministry. Six men were chosen to advance "the settling of the place." These men were John Prescott and Ralph Houghton, from Watertown;

Edward Breck from Dorchester, William Kerley from Sudbury, Nathaniel Hadlock from Charlestown (who died before he was settled here) and Thomas Sawyer from Rowley. These were called "prudential men," and they were ordered to "send down one able man to be sworn before some magistrate, for the constable of the plantacion."

Surely no one could call men "corrupt in judgment," whose agreements and acts of incorporation were, first of all, "for the maintainance of the ministry of God's holy word;" establishment of church land, and for "a meeting-house for the public assembling of the church and people of God;" to build a house for the minister, and to pay him. There is another article in the agreement headed "What inhabitants not to be admitted." They then agreed to "end all differences by arbitration." Furthermore, they agreed to be taxed, according to their means; and to respect the law of "equality" of men, in regard to the division of lands. It all seems, after nearly three hundred years, to have been very wise, far-sighted, and fair—aside from the matter of religious tolerance. Persecuted for their religious opinions as they had been in England, they still had no tolerance for the belief of those who differed from them, and they were determined that all who came to live in the Utopia which they had planned should accept the Puritan's religion.

It is easy, in the light of modern views, to sneer at their narrowness, and to scoff at the sentiments expressed in this covenant, which was signed by all the heads of families in the Plantation. However, it is well to consider conditions at that time, and to remember that every act of the Colonists was watched jealously in England. By their oath of loyalty they agreed to stand together. By restricting suffrage, they kept out such adventurers as flock to every new land with wild notions of government.

They needed men of character. They did not actually compel church membership, but they held up power as a prize to those who, by joining the church, became freemen.

Whatever their former station in life, or however large their worldly possessions, they must sign the agreement of equality.

It is important to notice how similar were their ideals, in planning the government of this town, to those written into the Colonial State Papers a hundred years later, and, later still, into the Constitution of the United States.

The first page of the town's records is a copy of the "Courts Grant," "At a General Court of Election held at Boston the 18th of May 1653." Its third decree is, in part, that the bounds of the town "shall be set out according to a deed of the Indian Sagamore, viz: Nashaway River at the passing over to be the Center, five miles north, five miles south, five miles east and three miles west."

The fourth article mentions by name Edward Breck, Nathaniel Hadlock, William Kerley, Thomas Sawyer, John Prescott, and Ralph Houghton as the "prudential men" to look after the affairs of the town until such time when "the Place be so fair seated with able men" that the Court shall judge it wise to give them full liberties as a township.

Only three of these men were freemen, and by the death of Hadlock they were short of a legal quorum. However, they proceeded to draw up a "covenant of laws and orders" which served for many years as a Constitution by which to administer the affairs of the town. Every man who was accepted as a citizen was required to sign this covenant. There were fifty-five signatures between 1653 and 1660.

Having completed this organization, the townsmen applied themselves to making their town into a comfortable Christian community, such as they had dreamed of establishing before they left England.

First they divided the land in generous portions for homes —twenty acres of upland for dwelling places, and twenty acres of intervale for planting. Then the meadows, as they called the natural grass lands, were divided according to their estates— four acres "wherever found in the town to each one hundred pound of estate."

The first legal town meetings were in 1654. At the first meeting "the plantacion upon legall warning assembled" confirmed the acts of the "prudential" men. At another town meeting it was voted that not more than thirty-five families should be taken into the town. The English greed of land was strong, but this short-sighted policy was short-lived.

The Christian sagamore Sholan, died during the fall of 1654. Reverend John Eliot and Mr. Increase Nowell were at once sent by the Court to urge the Indians at Washacum to elect Matthew, a nephew of Sholan, as Sholan's successor. They were successful.

No quarrel with the Indians had marred relations and the planters were anxious that the new sachem should be one who would continue the friendship. There was another chief, also in line of succession, who was dreaded on account of his drunken habits and dislike of the colonists.

Looking back over three centuries, in the light of the many tragedies which followed, it is hard to realize the friendly intimacy in which the white men and the Indians were then living, or how little the planters could then even guess the possibility of the horrors to come. They hardly would have had courage to go on.

But there was another side to the story. Some reckoning had to follow for the clandestine selling of rum and firearms to the red men, as well as for the greed and unfair dealings which made the white men hated. In the end they paid—and heavily.

THE COVENANT

We whose names are subscribed upon the receiving and acceptance of our several lands and allotments, with all appurtenances thereof, from those men who were chosen by the general court to lay out and dispose of the lands within the town of Lancaster, heretofore called by the name of Nashaway, do hereby covenant and bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and assigns, to the observing and keeping of these orders and agreements hereafter mentioned and expressed.

First, for the maintainance of the ministry of God's holy word, we do allow, covenant and agree that there be laid out, stated and established, and we do hereby estate and establish as church land, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging forever, thirty acres of upland, and forty acres of intervale land, and twelve acres of meadow, with free liberty of commons, for pasture and firewood: the said lands to be improved by the plantation, or otherwise, in such order as shall be best advised and concluded by the plantation, without rent-paying for the same, until the labors of the planters, or those who do improve the same be fully satisfied; and we do agree that the plantation, or selectmen shall determine the time how long any man shall hold and improve the said lands for the profit thereof, and then to be rented, according to the yearly value thereof, and paid in to such persons as the plantation or selectmen shall appoint, to and for the use of and towards the maintainance of the minister, pastor or teacher, for the time being, or whomsoever may be stated to preach the word of God among us. Or it may be in the choice of the minister to improve the lands himself.

And further, we do covenant and agree to build a convenient meetinghouse for the public assembling of the church and people of God to worship God, according to His holy ordinances, in the most equal and convenient place that may be advised and concluded by the plantation.

And to build a house for the minister upon the said church land.

And further we do engage and covenant every one for himself, his heirs, executors and assigns, to pay to, and for the use of the ministry abovesaid, the sum of ten shillings a year, as for and in consideration of our home lots yearly forever,—our home lots to stand engaged for the payment thereof; and what all this shall fall short of a competent maintainance, we covenant to make up by equal rate, upon the goods and other improved lands (not home lots), in such way and order as the country rate is raised. And in case of a vacancy of a minister, the maintainance arising from the church land and home lots above mentioned, shall be paid to such as shall be appointed, for the use of a school, to be as a stock; or as stock towards the maintainance of the minister, as the plantation or the selectmen shall think meetest.

And for the better promoting and setting forward of the plantation, we covenant and agree that such person or persons of us who have not inhabited this plantation heretofore, and are yet to come to build, improve and inhabit, that we will (by the will of God), come up to build, to plant land, and to inhabit at or before one whole year be passed, next after our acceptance of our allotments, or else to lose all our charges about it, and our lots to return to the plantation, and to pay five pounds for the use of the plantation.

And for the better preserving of the purity of religion and ourselves from infection of error, we covenant not to distribute allotments and to receive into the plantation as inhabitants any excommunicate, or otherwise profane and scandalous (known so to be), nor any notoriously erring against the doctrine and discipline of the churches, and the state and government of this Commonweal.

And for the better preserving of peace and love, and yet to keep the rules of justice and equity among ourselves, we covenant not to go to law one with another in actions of debt or damages, one towards another, either in name or state, but to end all such controversies among ourselves by arbitration or otherwise, except in cases capital or criminal, that sin may not go unpunished, or that the matter be above our abilities to judge of, and that it be with the consent of the plantation, or selectmen thereof.

And for the laying out, measuring and bounding of our allotments of this first division, and for and towards the satisfying of our engagements to the General Court, to make payment for purchase of the Indians, we covenant to pay ten shillings, every one of us, for our several allotments to the selectmen, or whom they may appoint to receive it.

And whereas lots are now laid out, for the most part, equally to rich and poor, partly to keep the town from scattering too far, and partly out of charity, and respect to men of meaner estate, yet that equality (which is the rule of God), may be observed, we covenant and agree that in a second division, and so through all other divisions of land, the matter shall be drawn as near to equality according to men's estates, as we are able to do, that he which hath now more than his estate deserveth, in home lots and interval lots, shall have so much less; and he that hath now less than his estate deserveth, shall have so much more. And that we may the better keep due proportion, we covenant and agree thus to account of men's estates, viz., ten pounds a head for every person, and all other goods by due value, and to proportion to every ten pounds, three acres of land—two of upland and one of interval—and we give a year's liberty to every man to bring in his estate.

Yet nevertheless, it is to be understood that we do not hereby prejudice or bar the plantation from accommodating any man by gift of land (which properly are not allotments); but we do reserve that in the free power of the plantation as occasion may hereafter be offered. And in case the planter's estate be low, that he can claim nothing in other divisions, yet it is to be understood that he shall enjoy all the land of the first division.

And further we covenant that if any planter does desire to have his proportion in the second division, it shall be granted.

And further we covenant to lay out meadow lands according to the present estates of the planters with respect to be had to remoteness or nearness,—of that which is remote, to give the more, and of that which is near, to give the less.

And concerning the thirty acres of upland, and forty acres of interval above granted as church land, it is agreed and concluded to lie bounded by John Prescott's ditch upon the south, and the North river, over against Lawrence Waters upon the north, and so ranging along westward.

And for the preventing of inconveniences, and the more peaceable issuing of the business about building of a meetinghouse, it is considered and concluded as the most equal place, that the meetinghouse be builded as near to the church land and to the neck of land as it can be without any notable inconvenience.

And it is also agreed that in all parts and quarters of the town, where sundry lots do lie together, they shall be fenced by a common fence, according to proportion of acres by every planter, and yet not to bar any man from particular and private inclosure at his pleasure.

CHAPTER IV

1654

The Prudential Men Need Help—A Minister is Settled—John Prescott Builds a Gristmill—A Survey of Town Bounds is Made.

THE PRUDENTIAL MEN FOUND THEIR TASK OF RUNNING AFFAIRS of the town neither easy nor pleasant, and they disagreed among themselves. At the beginning, the plan of settlement was for two groups of house lots, about a mile apart, with the North river and the intervales lying between. Although the divisions of land were made by casting lots, much bickering arose, and hard feelings resulted. It is said that family traits, long evident in generations to follow, then began to appear.

In the covenant it was agreed "to end all differences by arbitration" and, notwithstanding the fact that seven new families had come to town, the Prudential Men agreed to invite three men as arbitrators from outside towns. These men chosen were Major Simon Willard, of Concord, Captain Edward Johnson, of Woburn, and Thomas Danforth of Cambridge. They met in April 1656 at John Prescott's house and settled, by their "determinacions," twenty-four mooted questions. The settlements made by these commissioners are recorded.

The minister's salary was fixed at fifty pounds a year.

The first county road was laid out—a way to Concord. This road began near the cross roads in South Lancaster and ran northerly to the first church, which stood on the highest ground in what is now the middle cemetery, passing on down the hill to the shallows in the North River, a few rods above the Sprague bridge. Thence it followed very nearly the present road to the Neck corner, then turned south over the Penecook river to the Bay Path or Sudbury Road.

Town meetings usually were held on training days. Every able-bodied male between the ages of sixteen and sixty was obliged to be present for drill on these occasions. There were eight of these

training days each year, usually on Saturdays. The warnings for a town meeting were given to each voter, by the constable in person, or from house to house.

Well might the Nashaway Planters have wished to honor their neighbor by naming the township for him, for no sooner had the organization of the town been secured than we see John Prescott turning his attention to a new enterprise—the building of a corn mill. Up to this time grain had been carried to a Watertown mill, or else ground by hard labor in a hand quirn, or parched and then "brayed" in a mortar as the Indians did it, or softened with lye, hulled, and crushed. It must have given great pleasure to every man, woman and child—for the children had to do their share—to sign the following agreement: "This witnesseth that we the inhabitants of Lancaster for his encouragement in so good a work for the behoofe of our Towne**********do freely give, grant, enfeoffe, & confirme unto the said John Prescott, thirty acres of intervale land lying upon the North river**********and ten acres of land adjoyneing the mill: and forty acres of Land on the Southeast of the mill brooke**********in such place as the said John Prescott shall choose**********his heyeres and assignes forever." Moreover, they promised to lend him five pounds, in current money, for one year, for the buying of irons for the mill, and not to tax the mill for seven years "first finishing and setting the said mill to worke."

A "memorandum" records an important event—"Jno Prescott finished his mill, & began to grind corne the 23rd day of the 3 mo, 1654."

This "so good a work" was but the beginning of Prescott's long and useful service. The site of Prescott's mill was on the brook just below the old factory, near the foot of Water street in Clinton. Then it was reached by the "mill path" from the homestead at the foot of George Hill. Prescott's watermill was built only twenty years later than the oldest water mill in New England. Soon Prescott built a new home near the mill.

Having agreed in the Covenant to establish Church lands, to build a meeting house in a convenient place, to build a house for the minister upon the church land, to pay ten shillings a year toward the minister's salary and, finally, to hire a minister, the citizens of the town prepared to carry out their plans.

To this little church in the wilderness they called Reverend

Joseph Rowlandson, then twenty-two years old and just out of Harvard College, the only graduate of the class of 1652. In spite of the fact that he had barely escaped the whipping-post for a college prank—the writing and posting upon Ispwich Meeting-house of some doggerel verses, which the authorities had called a "scandalous libell"—he seems to have won at once the love and respect of his flock, and to have asserted his dignity in matters of church discipline.

His father and mother came to Lancaster with him. The father, Thomas Rowlandson, died in 1657 and his widow, Bridget, mother of the minister, married the next year William Kerley, Sr. and lived until 1662.

Within two years of his coming the young minister had married Mary White, a daughter of his richest parishioner, and had taken her home to the parsonage, built for him in a central position between the two villages, on the knoll to the southeast of what is now known as Thayer's pond.

The site chosen for the meeting house was a short distance southeast of the parsonage, on the highest ground in the present Middle cemetery; and a long narrow knoll, since separated by the railroad, was set apart for a burial ground.

The minister's salary was a heavy burden upon his flock—so few and so poor—and there seems to have been some delay in payment, for suddenly it became known that a messenger had come from Billerica "to fetch Master Rowlandson away." Immediately the town fathers met at the now complete meeting-house, and, finding that Master Rowlandson had decided to go to Billerica, "they debated at some length upon his resolve." Finally, they voted unanimously to invite him "to abide and settle amongst them in the worke of the ministrie," and to allow him fifty pounds a year, one half in wheat, and the rest in "other good curant pay." They also agreed to give him the dwelling house which he lived in as his own, and some land, east, west, and north of his house for "an orchard, garden, yards, pasture and the like."

Mr. Rowlandson accepted their offer and thanked them, promising to abide with them "in the best manor." He had begun to preach in 1654, but was not ordained until 1660.

We have no way of knowing what this first house for public worship, or the first parsonage, looked like. They must have been constructed of logs or hewn timbers, stone and clay; for Prescott's

saw-mill was not in operation when they were built. Without doubt it was the best house in the settlement, for the Puritan's reverence for "the cloth" was always apparent.

The Rowlandsons had four children. The first, Mary, died at the age of three. A second Mary was born later, also another daughter, Sarah. Their only son was Joseph, born in 1661.

A few glimpses of their family life we get from Mrs. Rowlandson's book, written in after years, but there is little in the recorded facts to cast light upon the doings of the women in the town. We know that the women and children herded the sheep and cattle in the daytime, and at night drove them into the "night pasture." With few conveniences, they must have been very busy providing food for their large families.

The General Court had decreed in 1653 that the bounds of the town should be laid out "according to a deede of the Indian sagamore."

The services of the two men designated by the court to carry out the decree could not be obtained, so consent was given for employment of Ensign Thomas Noyes of Sudbury. The measurements were made by carrying a chain, and an "allowance" was made for the sag of the chain—about one rod in thirty. Job Whitcomb and young Jacob Farrar were chosen to carry the chain.

The survey was not made until nearly six years after the decree; then thirteen years elapsed before it had formal approval. Thomas Noyes was an experienced surveyor, and his survey is explicit, but it was not run on an exact east-and-west or north-and-south line. "The wading place of the Nashaway" must have been very near the meeting of the waters of the north and south branches of the river. The middle of a north and south line through the old township would be close by it, and it is little more than three miles from the original western boundary. Historians practically agree that the shallows very near the Atherton bridge was the point from which Noyes started his survey.

CHAPTER V

1654—1657

First Justice of the Peace, John Tinker—Major Simon Willard—John Prescott's Saw-mill.

THE FIRST PAGES OF LANCASTER'S OLDEST RECORDS ARE IN THE quaint handwriting of Master John Tinker, who acted as scribe for the Prudential Men. He was made a freeman in 1654, and was one of the town's first selectmen. He seems to have been entrusted with a large part in the management of the town's affairs. When, in 1655, a petition went up for "Groton a new plantation**********formerly known by the name of Petapawag," Tinker joined the petitioners, and, in the grant, was appointed one of the selectmen of that town. He was at that time and afterwards an Indian trader, buying from the native hunters, beaver, otter, and other furs then abundant in the neighborhood. That he paid for a part of them in "strong waters" is shown in a court record for 1655, when he was fined ten shillings "for selling now & then a gill****to the Indians," contrary to law.

He seems, to have divided his time for a year or two, between Lancaster and Groton, for in 1658 he paid eight pounds for his license as a trader "of Nashaway and Groaten for ye year." But Lancaster wanted him. They gave him twenty acres in a good central location described as "Gibson's Hill," in Lancaster now covered by the Nathaniel Thayer mansion. He purchased from Richard Smith the original house and lot of Lawrence Waters, across the North river. Thus he owned the land upon the river — what is now the Unitarian parsonage—and the hill to the south of it, covering in all about forty acres. He also bought a house and lot next to Prescott's home on the slope of George hill.

Only John Tinker and Reverend Joseph Rowlandson shared the honor of "Mr." prefixed to their names. This would show that Tinker was either a graduate of some university, or had held a high social position in England. He was honored and prosperous. He seems to have suffered from poor health. He may be considered

Lancaster's first Justice of the Peace, for he was given special authority in 1658, to perform marriage ceremonies.

For some unknown reason Master Tinker sold his Lancaster estate and removed to Connecticut. We find him returning to Pequid, now New London, in 1659, where he won respect and distinction, and where, at the height of his career, he died in 1662. The esteem in which he was held there is shown in the fact that the expenses of his illness and funeral were paid from the state treasury.

Tinker's Lancaster property now passed into the hands of Major Simon Willard. By vote of selectmen of the town in 1658, this honorable gentleman who had been appointed by the General Court to the committee of three, to help administer the affairs of the town—was invited very cordially "to come to inhabit amongst us." Major Willard's name heads the list of those who petitioned the General Court in 1663 for independence from outside help and advice, and the right to manage their own affairs. The Court did not get around to grant the request for nearly ten years; and during that time, and for many years thereafter Major Willard continued to act as counselor.

Lancaster was very generous in making land grants to Major Willard. He took up his residence here in 1658, acquired the rights of John Tinker, and probably resided on the Waters lot. A grant of 500 acres, now included in the town of Ayer, then called Nonacoicus, was given him in payment of a debt by a Pautucket Sagamore. There were other tracts in Still River and near Bear Hill in Harvard, still in the possession of Major Willard's descendants. Families claiming descent from this honorable gentlemen are spread over the United States, and once a year they assemble to pay him tribute.

Major Simon Willard was born in Horsemonden, Kent, England, in 1605. The record of his birth can be seen in the village church there. He came to New England with his first wife, Mary Sharpe, and daughter Mary, in 1634, and settled in Concord, where he resided until he was invited to take up his residence in Lancaster. Before coming to Lancaster he had attained the highest rank then recognized in military grades, that of Sergeant-major. He had three wives and seventeen children.

Upon the marriage of his daughter Mary to Cyprian Stevens in 1672, Major Willard deeded his Lancaster home and lands to

his son-in-law, and moved to Nonacoicus (Ayer). His sons, Simon and Henry, lived upon the Still River farms. The lands in that part of the town's territory, at different times granted to Major Willard covered around 500 acres, in addition to the Nonacoicus farm.

The Willard home in Lancaster must have been of ample proportions to have accommodated his large family, to have enabled him to entertain as a magistrate, also to be used as a garrison and military headquarters. We know that it must have been a substantial structure, either of brick or stone, as it was partially blown up when it was abandoned, in 1676, which would not have been necessary had it been of wood.

Since this place was the chief garrison it probably was surrounded by a stockade. Its site is now marked by a stone monument. Pieces of old brick still are turned up in the garden beyond. The location is one of the lovely spots in Lancaster, and before the forbidding wall of the railroad bed obstructed the view to the south, must have taken in a charming landscape away to "the meeting of the waters." Here Major Willard made his home for thirteen years. Often he was called away by his duties as a military officer, as Counselor, and in "Keeping County Courts." With John Prescott he shared the honors of "first citizen" of old Lancaster.

"At a training" in 1658, we find Goodman Prescott again coming forward with a new proposition—"for the good of the towne." This time he offers to set up a saw mill, and desires the town to grant in return, to him and his heirs forever, a parcel of land, lying near to his water-mill, containing 120 acres, more or less, and he further asks that he be freed from "rates" upon such land, saws, and saw mill, for a stated period of time. Whatever he asked seemed always to be granted freely by the town, and in 1659, he was given permission "to fall pines on the Comons to supply his sawmill."

There is neither picture nor description of any house in Lancaster before the destruction of the town in 1676. All we have to go by are descriptions of houses built in other parts of the state at that time. It is probable that up to the time of Prescott's saw mill, the houses were crude, one-story structures of hewn timbers with a big central chimney of stone or of clay spread over logs. Probably some roofs were thatched, after the English custom, as

thatching tools were mentioned in inventories of the time. All nails or hardware used in construction were made by hand. Paint was unknown. When Prescott's mill began to furnish boards, the houses probably were made in the styles then common in other Massachusetts towns, of which either engravings or descriptions have been preserved.

Often these houses were of two stories in front, with a roof which sloped to a single low story in the rear; and sometimes the second story projected a foot or two over the lower. There was an occasional house with gambrel roof, and always the huge central chimney. Sometimes the walls were lined with brick, or flat stones, to make them bullet proof. Doors were unpaneled; each had the heavy wooden latch, and a string which could be pushed out through a hole to one wishing to open from the outside. Windows were square holes in the walls, covered by a board shutter. Later on there were little panes of greenish glass, held in the sash with lead.

The last house in Lancaster known to have had such tiny panes stood where the Thurston House now stands at the parting of the two ways to Sterling. The last log house probably was that of a mulatto blacksmith, and stood on the west end of the Rigby road, on the old road to Boylston.

When frame houses were built the timbers were very heavy—commonly of oak—boarded, then covered with "clove boards," as clapboards were called, which, with staves, also shingles, were cut out by hand with a tool called a "froe."

With Prescott's saw mill in operation a new epoch in house-building must have started in the town. All we know about the Rowlandson's house is that it had a "flanker" and a "leanter." One of the garrisons had "gates," and another a "watch box" and a "parade."

We also read of "gates in the common field."

Daniel Hudson, a brick-maker and mason was here in 1651, but what work he did we have no way of knowing.

CHAPTER VI

1657—1670

The Book of Lands—Town Roads—Treatment of Undesirable Persons

INTERESTING TO NOTE ARE SEVERAL ORDERS OF THE SELECTMEN of Lancaster recorded in 1657, including one for having "the highways amply recorded for posterity." Another directs that some men be deputed annually at town meeting to review all the highways for common use in and about the town.

The Book of Lands, dating from this time, is the only town book that contains records made between the massacre of 1676 and 1716. The original volume is missing, but a transcript was made in 1763, by Caleb Wilder, then proprietors' clerk.

All the early allotments, special grants, and divisions of land are recorded in The Book of Lands, begun by Ralph Houghton, clerk, in 1856, by order of the Arbitrators. In this book are the records upon which all of the titles to real estate in Lancaster, Clinton, Bolton and Berlin, and many of those in Harvard, Boylston, Sterling and Leominster, and the northern part of West Boylston are founded. Even a corner of both Boxboro and Hudson are found over the line of Lancaster's grant to Harvard and to Bolton.

The roads laid out by the pioneers are about the most nearly permanent memorials of their achievements. Three times the civic center of the town has changed; but the earliest roads, with some straightening and much grading were much the same as those in use today. We could wish that they had been more explicit in giving names to these roads. In some cases they had no names. As all the land in what is now the center of the town was called "the Neck," the bridge connecting the villages was at first called the "Neck bridge" but today that would not be understood. It has since been called Sprague bridge, and Vose bridge, for two honorable gentlemen who long occupied the house nearby now known as the Lancaster Unitarian parsonage.

About Halfway Between "Maplehurst" and "Hillside"

"For the site of the trading post they chose a spot by the side of a little brook, at the parting of two trails; one that led to the westward towards Wachusett Mountain, the other, to the southwest towards the home of the Quabog Indians."

Perhaps the Ponikin bridge is the first to bear a nearly permanent name, and even that was "Quasaponikin." That district was mentioned first in the division of the meadow lands in 1655. The contraction "Ponikin" does not appear until 1718.

The first road, or Lancaster's present Main Street, turned east above the Neck bridge, which was then several rods upstream from its present location. The street from this point to the North Village ran west of the present line of houses. The road leading to the North Village cemetery and beyond was laid out "as a way to Quasaponikin medow."

Another was the present Neck Road, laid out as "a way to Quasaponikin Hill."

A way was made "to the mill" which ran from the first county road to John Prescott's mill site at the west end of Water Street in Clinton. Even after a hundred years that now busy street was but a mill path.

What is now known as the Back Road, extending along the eastern base of George Hill range, made a direct course towards the Washacum ponds.

"A way to the plum trees and Groten" was first laid in the broad intervales near the Still River and the Plum trees Meadows which were in Harvard. On account of frequent damage by freshets that road necessarily was moved to the higher ground of the present road to Harvard. The old road bed was used again for a short distance during the World War, in 1918 when the German Prison Camp, No. 1, was located on the intervale north of the Seven Bridge Road.

The road from South Lancaster street over the Atherton Bridge was much the same as today, but a portion of it, east of the river, ran through the intervales of the Nashua and Still rivers. This was changed many years ago.

The average width for these roads seems to have been five rods on the highway, two rods in the intervales, and in some cases "as wide as may be."

At times short roads have been laid out by the town to accommodate certain industries or whims of individuals. Many of these have been discontinued.

A few new roads have been built to shorten distances, such as the so-called "new road" to Clinton, though now nearing a half century of use. However the main arteries of travel have changed little in 300 years.

The selectmen met at John Tinker's home one Monday in May, 1659, and repealed the vote which restricted the number of inhabitants to thirty-five families. They had decided that as many more families might be taken in as residents "as may be meetly accommodated, provided they are such as are acceptable." There was not much chance of "undesirables" getting past the watchful eyes of the selectmen and of the counselors, for newcomers must be "worthy of acceptance according to the Committee appointment."

There are documents which show the methods used for ridding the town of people undesirable because they were poor. Such a case was that of one William Lincoln, who was found unwelcome in 1661. He received the following message: "For William Lincorn be it known unto you*********for as much as you have proved yourself an intruder into this town of Lancaster without consent, contrary to order, therefore in his Majesties name you are required to withdraw yourself and family, and to depart the town forthwith, in regard the townsmen utterly disclaim you as an inhabitant. *********The penalty of your intruding yourself into the town is twenty shillings per month, which will be a burden it may be too heavy for you to bear though procured by yourself." William Lincoln remained however, and never became a public charge.

In another case accusations were brought against George Newby "for high-handed contempt for God's word; reproaches of the minister and profane neglect of God's public worship on the Lord's day, and high-handed debauching." The documents in this case include two penitent petitions from Newby; but the sentence was that he should receive twenty stripes on his naked body and give bonds of twenty pounds for his appearance at court in Cambridge.

Such were their methods of trying for the goal they had set for themselves. On the whole they were God-fearing, honest people, working for better conditions and education for their children, and for some degree of comfort in their own old age.

That there were scandals in and out of the church is true, as it is true of any story of humanity. Such stories have come down to us and added zest to many an old tale; but Lancaster was probably no worse than any of the towns about. It grew and prospered.

In the quaint hand writing and original spelling of Master

Tinker, translated into modern style, we read: "And the town (is) in some silence at least, and we hope in good preparation to after peace, yet it is hard to repel the boilings and breaking forth of some persons difficult to please, and some petty differences will arise amongst us, provide what we can to the contrary." This was written in 1658.

All of this goes to show that human nature and town meetings have not changed much in 300 years, for we know that there are still "boilings" to be repressed, and people who are "difficult to please."

But the days had come when "some silence," at least was enjoyed, and for several years the town's affairs moved along in a quiet way under the excellent council of Major Willard and his colleagues, and the selectmen, who worked together in great harmony.

CHAPTER VII

Paving the Way to Diasaster 1670-1675

HISTORIANS AGREE IN DRAWING A PICTURE OF PEACE AND prosperity in the Valley as the fateful year of 1675 drew on. At the 200th anniversary of the founding of the town in 1853, the historian, Joseph Willard, a descendant of the noted Maj. Simon Willard, was the speaker of the day. He told of the prosperous condition of the town at this time; of the early marriages and rapid increase both by births and new settlers; of the respect for the minister. He spoke of the deaths of fifteen of the earliest planters and mentioned their names: Thomas Rowlandson, father of the minister, Thomas James, Thomas Joslin, John Whitcomb, Stephen Gates, John Tinker, Edward Breck, Richard Linton, Thomas Wilder, Stephen Day, Philip Knight, John Smith, William Kerley, William Lewis and John White.

The Planters' sons had married the daughters of their neighbors, and the number of births had far exceeded the deaths. At this time the first of the pioneers, John Prescott, had thirty-five grand-children, nearly all living within sight of the trucking house lot. Their homes were still in two groups of about equal numbers; one group on the "Neck," near the river, the other extending along the slope towards George Hill; John Prescott and two of his sons had moved a mile away, along the path which led to their grist and saw mills. John Moore and James Butler had built upon Wataquadock Hill.

Drawing upon his own imagination, Mr. Willard enters the humble dwellings and pictures their home life. He fancies the older men, after a busy day, gathered at some home, talking over events of their early lives in England, and of their adventures in crossing and founding new homes; of arguments about town politics, and of such festive occasions as raisings, huskings and paring-bees. He adds; "Thus in quiet they would pursue the even tenor of their ways, fearing nothing so much as danger to their sheep folds from the prowling wild beasts, or the failure of their crops through the irregularities of the season."

But there was even then, lurking in ambush, a foe much more to be dreaded than any wild beast.

There is little to show in any of the records that there was in the minds of the settlers at that time any fear of the Indians. The feeble condition of the Indians of the Nashaway and Nipmuck tribes, and of their distance from any strong allies was known. There were converts to Christianity among them, and the white men believed they could be trusted. Then, too, the Englishmen were becoming more confident of their own powers, especially since they had united in a confederation with Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven Colonies. What they did not take into consideration was, the change that had come in the attitude of the Indians toward the white men.

There was no longer a friendly sachem, like Sholan. In his place was Sagamore Sam, who hated the white men—grown so dominating and scornful—and whose one desire was to drive them from the land.

The Indians were quick to feel insults. One can but read in the books written at the time that the white men treated the red men with such scorn and contempt as could not have been felt for any beast. The Indians were considered hardly human, neither were they granted any of the rights which had been promised in the agreement. The white men could not understand the workings of the Indian mind, nor have any patience with the "heathen" customs. The red men, too, were superstitious, and afraid of what they could not understand. Perhaps even today we might find it a little hard to believe there was a love of beauty and high aspirations in the skulls beneath their painted faces. We might find it hard to choose between meeting a wild animal or an Indian warrior, wrapped in the skins of wild animals, or wearing a loincloth—his body greased, his face painted vermilion or with one side white, his hair stuck full of long bright feathers—carrying in his hand a tomahawk and scalping knife. Perhaps we would like the warwhoops and powwows no better than did the simple minded colonists—for they believed such noises could come only from devils incarnate.

Then again the Englishmen seemed to be unaware that through their own greed, they were furnishing the Indians with weapons. To be sure there was a man appointed by the government to regulate traffic in furs. The sale of rum to the Indians was forbidden

by law. Nevertheless, one gun would buy many furs. A quart of rum would bring to an unscrupulous trader big return in value. Such traffic was a sure road to wealth, and some found that it was not to be resisted.

So little attention was paid to the laws, and so little was done to enforce them, that slowly and steadily, the Indians were armed with white men's guns. Some of the red men became expert shots, and they were as cunning as foxes.

It seems incredible that the settlers could have failed to see that the day was coming when those guns would be turned upon themselves. They knew that the Indians drank rum only to get drunk; to enjoy the passion and the fury it arouses. The white men must have known that the "fire-water" would intensify the savagery in the Indian natures and increase the menace.

The Indians knew their own weakness, but they felt that the land was their rightful possession. The attitude of the white men had become intolerable. They were driving the red men away from "their pleasant places by the sea." Knowing they were scorned and hated, the Indians smarted under the sting of outrageous insults.

Worse, far worse, was the dread of becoming slaves to the white men. To Indians death was much to be preferred. The desire for revenge became a passion: they resolved to banish the hated Englishmen from the land. The Indians had been shown how to do this when the white men put an end to the Pequot tribe, on the borders of Connecticut. Apt pupils in cunning, strategem and slaughter were the Indians!

Another grievance: when the Mohawks had made a devastating raid upon the Indians friendly to the Settlers, the white neighbors had refused help; and when the Nashaways, Nipmucks, and their allies retaliated in a raid upon the Mohawks, in 1669, again the English stood aloof. These raids greatly reduced the numbers of the Nashaway tribe. They were not likely to forget the kind of neighbors the white men had shown themselves to be. Determination to avenge these slights was their one ambition, and was undertaken with the fury and the passion of their savage natures.

A great change came over the Valley of the Nashaway in the spring of 1675. Rumors were heard that the Indian chief, Philip of Pokanoket, Sachem of the Wampanoags, was seeking to overcome tribal differences and to join all the tribes to battle against

the English. Agents were sent out from Lancaster to find out if these rumors were true but they brought back only tales of renewed pledges of friendship from the older chiefs.

As the rumors persisted, Ephraim Curtis, long familiar with Indian wiles, volunteered to go into the woods on a scouting trip. Curtis returned in July with the alarming news that even then the tribes were mustering for war: that Shoshanin and Monoco, leading the Nashaways, were already with Philip. No one knew that the Nashaways had left their homes at Washacum until King Philip's War had begun.

It was then that Governor Leverett and the Council became aroused sufficiently to send a mounted troop to deal with the savages but, showing how little he realized the situation, the Governor added "If *necessary*, to endeavor to reduce them by force of arms."

CHAPTER VIII

The Indians Strike Their First Blow 1675

WHAT IS KNOWN AS KING PHILIP'S WAR HAD BEGUN IN THE Plymouth Colony, but was spreading rapidly to the north and west.

Major Simon Willard and his men rode away to meet the enemy on the morning of August 4, 1675. Hearing that Brookfield was beseiged he hastened to give assistance there, reaching the garrison that night. He remained in the vicinity of Brookfield for a month, and during that time the wily foe struck at Lancaster and Groton.

Major Willard was warned that "One-eyed John" Monoco and Shoshanin, with a band of Indians, were in the neighborhood of Lancaster. Immediately he despatched Captain Moseley with a company of dragoons to pursue the foe. Only too well the Indians knew every inch of the territory and, at the approach of troops, could disappear into the swamps.

In this way Captain Mosely passed them by, and, arriving in Lancaster on the evening of August 15, 1675, found nothing to cause alarm. The next day he pressed on to Groton and Chelmsford, whence reports had come of an attack.

This was the Indians' opportunity. In the rear of their pursuers they slipped in and made their first disastrous attack upon Lancaster on August 22. "A harvest of blood followed where folly had planted."

The first intimation of an attack came with the dreaded war-whoop. It was on a Sunday afternoon. Monoco led the attack. He gave no quarter to man, woman or child.

The scene was near what is now the North Village Cemetery. The victims were Mordecai MacLoud, his wife Lydia, and his two small children; Jacob Farrar, Joseph Wheeler, George Bennett and William Flagg. All were scalped and their bodies terribly mangled. The buildings were burned. All the livestock was plundered.

No longer was there peace in the valley. Dread, fear and gloom prevailed. Realizing now how inadequate were the defenses, steps were taken at once to strengthen the fortifications.

There were three garrisons: one at Prescott's Mills, at the south end of the town, now in Clinton; one at the Sawyers garrison in South Lancaster, and a third at Cyprian Stevens' in the center. The minister's house was partly fortified, and was across the north branch of the river, within gunshot of the Stevens garrison. A lone pine tree marks the spot.

A successful attack was made in December by the English soldiers of three colonies—Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut—for the purpose of breaking down the power of Philip among the Narragansetts. When the news that Canonchet's fort had been taken, and that men, women and children belonging to the various tribes in the fort were lying in heaps upon the ground, some hope came to the hearts of the settlers in Lancaster. It was short-lived. Soon rumors came that 500 stout warriors had escaped from the Narragansett country and had joined Philip in his winter quarters in the western part of the state.

The early part of that winter had been unusually severe; snow was deep in the woods. Worn with fatigue from the campaign in the Narragansett country, and suffering from shortage of food, the soldiers had returned to their homes to recruit. Thus the whole frontier was left unprotected and exposed to savage onslaught.

Matters became worse as a great thaw came, and the snow disappeared, making the forest trails again passable. Stories of approaching danger were heard and, as the weary winter dragged on, fears and forebodings could not be quieted. Work was rushed to strenghten the defenses. Outlying farms were abandoned at night and the people swarmed to the garrisons.

There were at this time five villages of "praying Indians" as those who had been converted to Christianity were called. The nearest to the Lancaster settlement was the village of Nashoba, now Littleton. The attitude of the colonists towards the Christian red men varied. There is no doubt that the brightest among the tribes had been quick to see the advantage to themselves, resulting in the change of attitude, once they accepted the Englishman's God. Equally obvious was the advantage taken by the white men to trick the Indians with presents and promises, to get them to spy upon their own people. Nor is there doubt that some of these red men proved true friends to the English, and furnished invaluable service as scouts. No white man did more for the colonists than a "praying Indian" named Quinapaug, alias James

Wiser, whose bravery and fidelity would have saved Lancaster, had his warnings been heeded.

Quinapaug and another Indian, named Job Kattenanit, were selected by the chief military officer of the state—Major Gookin—to visit the Indian camps in the western part of the state, and bring back a report of the numbers, condition, and plans of the enemy. The journey of eighty miles was full of peril, but these two men started out on snowshoes for the camp at Menameset, new New Braintree, on the 30th day of December, 1675, with only a little "parcht meal" for sustenance. They were armed only with knives and hatchets. These scouts were distrusted and their lives were threatened by some of the hostile Indians, and but for the intervention of a powerful friend, they would have been slain. James was known to Monoco. They had fought together in the Mohawk war, and had been friends many years. So Monoco took James into his own wigwam. This protection made it possible for Quinapaug to accomplish his mission and to carry to the Governor and Council full details of the plans of the sagamores.

Hearing that Philip was about to visit the tribes gathered there for war, and, knowing that he would be obliged to meet Philip if he tarried longer, James made his escape. He arrived in Boston on January 24, 1676. From the Nipnet outposts he brought back the news that an onslaught was to be made upon Lancaster, Groton, Marlboro, Sudbury and Medfield: that the first thing planned was to destroy the bridge at Lancaster and thus hinder the settlers from flight or from receiving assistance: that the time set for the slaughter was "about twenty days from Wednesday last."

It seems incredible, but the fact remains that, having sent Quinapaug to gather this information, accomplished with so much heroism on his part, the Governor and his Council did nothing whatever to ward off the blow. Less than two weeks before, a body of troops, who had been in pursuit of the fleeing Narragansetts, had been withdrawn to Boston on account of food shortage in the camp. These troops easily could have been billeted in the garrisons of the threatened towns. Absolutely nothing was done to meet the emergency.

Meanwhile rumors of the approaching attack had reached Lancaster, and some of the leading citizens, with the minister, Mr. Rowlandson and the chief military officer, Henry Kerley

went to Boston to stir up the authorities and beg for aid. It was too late.

The other scout, Job Kattenanit, about ten o'clock on the night of the 9th of February, half dead with fatigue, fell before Major Gookin's door in Cambridge and confirmed every word that Quinapaug had spoken. Job had traveled night and day to cover the eighty miles from the enemy's camp to Boston, in order to warn the English of their danger.

Now the Governor and his Council *were* stirred to action. Again it was too late. Death stalked down the beautiful valley with tomahawk and scalping knife.

CHAPTER IX

The Massacre of 1675/6

DAY DAWNED ON THE TENTH OF FEBRUARY, 1675/6, UPON THE most tragic event in the history of Lancaster. The people were gathered in the three garrisons, and in the partly fortified house of the minister, awaiting—they knew not what! The crackling of flames was heard. They looked out to find fires raging in all directions, set in five places at once.

Mr. Rowlandson and Lt. Kerley had not returned from seeking aid in Boston. The attack was centered on the house of the minister. Well might Mrs. Rowlandson write, "Now is the dreadful hour come, that I have often heard of—but now mine eyes see it—and quickly it was the dolefulest day that ever mine eyes saw."

The assault, made about sunrise, was led by Shoshanin and Monoco of the Nashaways, Muttaump of Quabaug, Quinnaipin, a Narragansett sachem, and a brother-in-law of Philip; and probably Pakashoag and Matoonas of the Nipmucks. Sewall, in his diary speaks of Maliompe as "the general at Lancaster." Sagamore Sam and "One-Eyed John" planned the attack.

In every part of the town buildings outside the stockades were set on fire and soon became one general holocaust. The first slaughter was at the least protected garrison—the Rowlandson house. There was no stockade and its rear flankers were unfinished, therefore useless.

The Indians hauled a cart, loaded with hemp and flax, from the barn and pushed it against a lean-to in the rear, then set it on fire. Some heroic men rushed from the house and put out the fire, but it was re-kindled.

Within that dwelling were forty-five persons. They had to choose quickly between being burned alive or rushing out into the hands of the savages.

Soon more than forty people—an eighth of the Town's whole population—were driven before the roaring flames, to death or into captivity. The warwhoops of the savages mixed with the

shrieks of the women and children and the groans of the wounded and the dying. Mrs. Rowlandson wrote in her narrative:

"Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others wallowing in their blood, and the house on fire over our heads, and the bloody heathen ready to knock us in the head if we stirred out.****But out we must go, the fire increasing, and coming along behind us, roaring, and the Indians gaping before us with their guns, spears and hatchets to devour us.****The bullets flying thick, one went through my side, and the same through the bowels and hand of my dear child in my arms. Thus were we butchered by these merciless heathen, standing amazed with blood running down to our heels.

"The Indians laid hold of us, pulling me one way and the children another, and said 'Come, go along with us.' I told them they would kill me. They answered if I were willing to go along with them, they would not hurt me. Oh the doleful sight that now was to behold at this house. 'Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolation he has made in the earth.'

"There was one who was chopped into the head with a hatchet, and stripped naked, and yet was crawling up and down. It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood—like a company of sheep torn by wolves—all of them stripped naked by a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting and insulting.****Yet the Lord by His almighty power preserved a number of us from death, for there were twenty-four of us taken alive and carried away captive."

We get most of our knowledge of the events of that dreadful day from "The Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson," a little book first printed in 1682. Of that first printing no copy is known to exist, and only one or two copies are known of other early editions. These bring a great price. Few books of its time had so many editions as this pathetic story written by a comparatively uneducated woman of Lancaster. It is the record of her experiences in captivity, of her physical sufferings, borne so patiently, and of her great sorrow over the death of her little daughter Sarah, shot in the mother's arms and carried, in a dying condition, for days.

Throughout the narrative Mrs. Rowlandson shows unfaltering faith in the wisdom and mercy of God.

Mrs. Rowlandson tells of only thirty-seven persons, but probably reckoned only those whose homes were in Lancaster. There were known to have been five soldiers stationed in the garrison.

Reliable authorities give fifty-five as the number who fell that day. John Ball who, for some unknown reason, had remained in his home on George Hill, was killed, as were his wife and baby. His two older children were carried away, captives.

At John Prescott's garrison, in the extreme south end of the town, his grandson, Ephraim Sawyer was killed. Five were killed at the garrison in South Lancaster. Three of them were shot by Indians who climbed to the roof of a barn. They were Richard Wheeler, Jonas and Joshua Fairbanks.

Henry Farrar and another man were caught while on an errand outside of the garrison, and scalped. Following is a list of those known to have been victims of the Indians.

Killed in Rowlandson Garrison

Ensign John Divoll.
Josiah Divoll, son of John, aged 7.
Daniel Gains.
Abraham Joslin, aged 26.
John MacLoud.
Thomas Rowlandson, nephew of the minister, aged 19.
John Kettle, aged 36.
John Kettle, Jr.
Joseph Kettle, son of John, aged 10.
Mrs. Elizabeth Kerley, wife of Lieut. Henry.
William Kerley, son of Lieut. Henry, aged 17.
Joseph Kerley, son of Lieut. Henry, aged 7.
Mrs. Priscilla Roper, wife of Ephraim.
Priscilla, child of Ephraim Roper, aged 3.

Carried captive from the Rowlandson Garrison

Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, wife of the minister, ransomed.
Mary Rowlandson, daughter of the minister, aged 10, ransomed.
Sarah Rowlandson, daughter of the minister, aged 6, wounded, died Feb. 18.
Joseph Rowlandson, son of the minister, aged 13, ransomed.
Mrs. Hannah Divoll, wife of Ensign John, ransomed.

John Divoll, son of Ensign John, aged 12, died captive?
William Divoll, son of Ensign John, aged 4, ransomed.
Hannah Divoll, daughter of Ensign John, aged 9, died captive?
Mrs. Ann Joslin, wife of Abraham, killed in captivity.
Beatrice, daughter of Abraham, killed in captivity.
Joseph Joslin, brother of Abraham, aged 16.
Henry Kerley, son of Lieut. Henry, aged 18.
Hannah Kerley, daughter of Lieut. Henry, aged 13.
Mary Kerley, daughter of Lieut. Henry, aged 10.
Martha Kerley, daughter of Lieut. Henry, aged 4.
A child—Kerley, name and age unknown.
Mrs. Elizabeth Kettle, wife of John, ransomed.
Sarah Kettle, daughter of John, aged 14, escaped.
Jonathan Kettle, son of John, aged 5.
A daughter of John Kettle.
Ephraim Roper, in some miraculous way, made his escape, and sped away towards Marlboro, seeking help.
A soldier, George Harrington, was slain the next day, near Prescott's mills, and John Roper killed a few days later. As reliable authorities give the total number killed as fifty-five, the names of seven remain unknown.

The other garrisons successfully resisted the attack. Partly because the Indians were so eager to share the day's spoils they became scattered on both sides of the river, nearer the minister's garrison, so that fewer were left to continue the attacks.

CHAPTER X

Help Sent too Late

Meantime authorities in Boston were thoroughly aroused. When Job Kattenanit (the Scout) arrived at Major Gookins' with the report confirmed that the Indians would be at Lancaster the next day, a post-rider was sent hurriedly to order what soldiers there were at Concord and Marlboro to the aid of Lancaster.

It was at dawn on the day of the massacre that the rider reached Marlboro. Captain Wadsworth, on duty there with about forty men, started in great haste for Lancaster, ten miles away; but the troopers did not arrive in time to be of any assistance. Avoiding an ambush laid on the main road, Captain Wadsworth marched his troops safely to the garrison—house of Cyprian Stevens just across the north branch of the river.

The Indians had taken their terror-stricken prisoners to the summit of George Hill, where the night was passed in celebrating their triumph, and feasting upon the loot from the farm-yards.

Mrs. Rowlandson wrote, "This was the dolefulest night that ever my eyes saw. Oh the roaring and singing and dancing and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell." A stone called the "Rowlandson rock" marks the place on George Hill where Mrs. Rowlandson passed that first night. She asked permission to stay in an empty house nearby, but was not allowed to do so. Probably it was the trucking house, vacant since the Prescotts had moved near the mills.

The mounted companies of soldiers arrived the next day. They drove away the savages who then were plundering in the debris. That day also Mr. Rowlandson and Lt. Kerley returned to find the minister's wife and children carried away into captivity, Lt. Kerley's wife and two children slain, and five of his children taken captive.

Such of the surviving inhabitants as had means to get to friends or relatives in the Bay towns soon made their escape. Those who were left crowded into the garrison houses of Thomas Sawyer,

and Cyprian Stevens. With them, eighteen soldiers had been stationed as a guard. But the situation was desperate. Indians lurked in ambush all about them. Their farm animals were gone, their barns were burned. It was winter. Provisions were low. Humbly expressing their condition in a letter to Governor Leverett and Council that "our state is very deplorable" they asked that a guard of men and carts be sent to remove them to places of safety nearer Boston. This letter written by Cyprian Stevens is in the Massachusetts archives. The letter said "we are sorrowful to leave this place, but hopeless to keep it unless maintained by the country."

It was a pitiful state of affairs, and "sorrowful to leave" must have expressed very mildly their state of mind. Over twenty-five years of hard work to establish their homes was gone in a single day.

The name "John Prescott Senr" stands at the head of the list of the signers from the south garrison. He asks for twenty carts "the settlers having widows and many fatherless children among them." The blow fell heavily upon Prescott, now aged and feeble, the rest of his life's work gone for naught.

Major Willard, on the 26th of March, sent a troop of forty horse-men, with carts, to carry the survivors and what they could take of their goods and provisions to Concord. There they separated to other towns, wherever they could find lodging.

Then the Indians finished their burning and plunder. Probably during this time the church was fired. They left nothing standing in what is now Lancaster. On Wattaquadock Hill in Bolton two houses were left. The valley of the Nashua, stained with blood, and blackened by fire, was now a silent and desolate ruin, and for four years following the massacre so remained.

CHAPTER XI

Raids Extended to Other Settlements—Mrs. Rowlandson's Ransom—1676-1680

ELATED BY THEIR SUCCESS, THE INDIANS MADE RAID UPON RAID, and carried destruction into all the outlying towns. Many of the villages were abandoned and the settlers gathered in the Bay towns. Even the citizens of Boston were alarmed at reports that the Indians were planning to attack them.

Smarting under defeat, every fresh massacre made white men the more determined to wipe out the hated red men. The English were quick to learn the cunning of Indian warfare and to adopt the Indian methods and, eventually, to outwit the savages.

The struggle soon became one for existence on both sides. The Indians, although they had been successful in carrying death and destruction into the homes of the white men, nevertheless, were having a very hard time. Unable to get a regular supply of food, they were often near starvation between successful raids. Then, the old tribal jealousies and distrust were creeping in, especially after the capture and death of Canonchet, head sachem of the Narragansetts. Canonchet was master mind in the confederation of the tribes. Philip was bloodthirsty and revengeful, but he had no great hold upon his subjects, nor did he exhibit any great personal bravery.

Philip left the camp on the Connecticut river above Northfield in the late spring, and started back with the Nashaways towards their hunting grounds around Mt. Wachusett. Quinnaipin and some of the Narragansetts were with Philip, as well as that most important captive, Mrs. Rowlandson, who had been made to act as servant to the squaw sachem, Weetamoo, one of the three wives of Quinnaipin. It was expected that a great sum would be paid by Mr. Rowlandson for his wife's ransom.

Philip was opposed to bargaining with the English for the ransom of the captives but no heed was paid to him, and word was sent to Boston that the Indians were ready to negotiate. Then Governor Leverett ordered Major Gookin to go to Deer Island

in Boston harbor, where Indian captives were held, and bring back one or two Indians, who, for a reward, would go to the enemy and bargain for the redemption of the captives. Not one of the Indians would go; so nothing further was done for a time.

Mr. Rowlandson interested John Hoar, of Concord, a man who had won the respect of the Indians. Probably through his influence, an Indian from the same town, named Tom Doublet, alias Nepponet, volunteered to carry a message into the enemy's camp.

Nepponet was "fitted and furnished for this enterprise" and set out upon his journey on the third of April 1676. He returned in nine days with an answer from two sagamores demanding that two men be sent. So Nepponet was sent a second time and with him went Peter Tatatiquinea, alias Conway. They brought back a second letter from the chiefs, written by James Printer, an Indian who had passed sixteen years' apprenticeship in Samuel Green's printing office in Cambridge. The original letter is in the Massachusetts Archives, but no copy is known of the letter which the Indians carried on this second trip. In reply the Indians asked that Mr. Rowlandson and Mr. Kettle come and get their wives, but evaded any reply about the rest of the captives. A sharp reproof was sent in the third letter and a demand that a plain and direct answer be returned by Tom and Peter.

Mr. Hoar went with the messengers on this third venture, and took with him twenty pounds in money and goods raised by friends of Mr. Rowlandson in Boston. This mission was successful, and on the second day of May, Mrs. Rowlandson was freed from her captivity. Escorted by Mr. Hoar and the two scouts, she left the camp near Mt. Washusett, overjoyed at her release from captivity. A huge boulder, suitably inscribed, marks the spot in Princeton where Mr. John Hoar effected the ransom of Mrs. Rowlandson. The land was bought by Mr. Hoar's descendants and the stone was inscribed to commemorate the event. Of her return Mrs. Rowlandson wrote: "About the sun going down, Mr. Hoar and myself and the two Indians came to Lancaster and a solemn sight it was to me. There had I lived many comfortable years amongst my relations and neighbors, and now not one Christian to be seen nor one house left standing."

They passed the night at a deserted farmhouse, probably on the trail to Marlboro, and the next morning went on to Concord,

where Mrs. Rowlandson met her brother, Josiah White, and her brother-in-law, Lt. Henry Kerley, who inquired where his wife was. He had returned from Boston on the day of the massacre and had buried his wife without recognizing her charred remains. They went on to Boston that afternoon where Mr. Rowlandson awaited her.

CHAPTER XII

Recovery of Captives—Punishment of Indians—1676

TOM DOUBLET AND SETH PERRY WERE SENT THE NEXT DAY, with a letter "for the sagamores about Wachusett, Philip, John, Sam, Washaken, Old Queen and Ponhom," demanding terms for the release of all the English captives at once. A verbal answer was sent to this letter, and the Governor appointed Jonathan Prescott to arrange for a meeting with the sagamores. A letter written eight years later is recorded in the Massachusetts Archives, which tells that the sachems met the representatives of the English between Concord and Groton, and that arrangements were made for payment of ransom for some of the captives. From other sources we find that nine captives were freed without ransom.

From the records of this meeting we learn that after eight years it was decided that some attention should be paid to the request of Tom Doublet for remuneration for all the difficult and hazardous journeys he made to and from the enemy's camp in behalf of the captives. Jonathan Prescott suggested giving him thirty or forty shillings, but the Council ordered that the state treasurer give him "two coates"—a niggardly recompense for all he had accomplished, especially when the ransoms had been paid in pounds.

In Drake's "Biography and History of the Indians of North America" there are printed letters coming from Shoshanin who had said "if the English would first beg peace of him, he would let them have peace, but that he would never ask it of them." By summer time, however he was thoroughly humbled, especially after Capt. Henchman, guided by Tom Doublet, had surprised thirty-six Indians fishing at Washacum, of whom seven were killed and the rest taken captive. Among the latter were the wives and sons of Muttaump and Shoshanin. This severe blow brought entreaties for a covenant of peace. The council replied that the treacherous persons who had brought on the war must not expect to have their lives spared, but that those who had been drawn into the war, and acted only as soldiers, would have their lives spared if they promised to give up arms and live peaceably.

Finally, worn out with privations and hopeless, the sachems came in at Cocheco (Dover, New Hampshire) in September and gave themselves up. Philip and Quinnaipin had fled back to their tribal haunts when they found that their allies were weakening.

The Diary of Samuel Sewall has the following significant entry; "1676 Sept. 26. Tuesday Sagamore Sam & Daniel Goble is drawn in a cart upon bed cloaths to execution*******One eyed John, Maliompe Sagamore of Quabaug, General at Lancaster & Jethro (the father) walk to the gallows." Daniel Goble was one of four English soldiers who, in August, had surprised and murdered three Indian women and three children near Hurtlebury Hill in Concord. With him were Stephen Goble, Daniel Hoar and Nathaniel Wilder; the last was one of the most promising young men of Lancaster. The stern hand of the law reached them and the four were sentenced to death.

The victims in this case were "two squaws, wives of two Christian Indian soldiers, the one named Andrew Pittime, the Captain of the Indian Company, and the other his sister, wife to Swagon alias Thomas Speen." Their bodies were found "not far from one another, some shot through, others their brains beat out with hatchets."

At the trial it was proven that Nathaniel Wilder and Daniel Hoar were guilty of "being present and seeing the act done and consenting" yet did not take part in the murders. For them the sentence of death was remitted upon payment of prison charges and a heavy fine of ten pounds apiece—half to go towards payment of witnesses and half to the two Indians who prosecuted the white men.

The Goble brothers were the ring leaders in the attack and were hanged on the same day with the captive Indian chiefs who planned and carried out the destruction of Lancaster.

Refugees from Lancaster were scattered far and wide in their exile. Most of them had friends or relatives in the eastern towns. Reverend Joseph Rowlandson went to Wethersfield, Conn. as successor to Reverend Gershom Bulkeley and died there in 1678.

The Prescotts, Hudsons and some of the Sawyers were at Concord; the Wilders, Willards, Houghtons, Waters, and Ropers were in Charlestown; the Farrars, at Woburn; the Whitcombs, at Scituate; the Lewises, Beamans, Rogers, Sumners, and Athertons, at Dorchester.

Now that the savages had been subdued, their leaders hanged, the fears of the colonists were quieted, and they began to look longingly towards their deserted homes. They had "gone through many straits and difficulties" but were anxious to begin over again.

There seems to have been nothing to warrant the belief that the valley was safe from savage attack, yet seventeen or eighteen families joined in a petition to the General Court for permission to build the plantation again, and asked that they be exempted from "country rates" for a few years. At the head of the list of petitioners was the name of the earliest pioneer, John Prescott. His coat of arms bore the legend, "He conquers who endures or bears."

CHAPTER XIII

Rebuilding the Town—1680-1690

AMONG THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO HAD SIGNED THE COVENANT we find that of Ralph Houghton, "clerk of the writs" from 1656 to 1682. Although the first pages of the oldest records were written by John Tinker, who acted as scribe for the first prudential managers, Ralph Houghton seems to have had entire charge of the town's business for more than thirty years. His last entries in the town book were made in 1670, but his signature is attached to the records until the year of the massacre; and again upon the resettlement in 1680 and 1681. A yellow and torn leaf from the original records, in Ralph Houghton's handwriting, is all that remains.

If any records were kept during the abandonment and resettlement of the town, and on until 1700, no trace of them exists. Therefore all the story of the rebuilding of Lancaster has come from County and State archives, from records of other towns and from newspapers, as well as from manuscripts in private collections.

An order was sent out by the General Court in 1679 that the places deserted on account of the Indian wars should not again be inhabited until the people first should make application to the Governor and the General Court.

In compliance with this order Lancaster's petition was sent in and, according to the Middlesex files, a committee of three men was appointed by the Court "to settle ye rebuilding of Lanchaster." Those men were Capt. Prentice, Deacon Stone, and Corporal Wm. Bond. When and where the meetings took place was not recorded; but there were births recorded here in 1679 and 1680.

John Prescott died in 1681. He gave to his eldest son, John, his house and lot, and his saw and grist mills, which shows that the elder John already had reestablished his home and was at work again helping to rebuild the town. At his death John Prescott, Sr. owned about 700 acres of land. Three hundred of these acres

lay about Washacum ponds, including what is now Sterling camp grounds: he owned a long strip of land in South Lancaster, extending from the summit of George Hill to the meeting of the rivers. His land and buildings in Clinton covered the sites of nearly all the present big factories and the business section of the town. In spite of these large holdings the value of his estate at his death was but £330. Prescott's land and mills at Nonacoicus (Ayer) were willed to his son Jonas. Just how the rest of the estate was divided among the numerous descendants can not now be told, for there were nine children and fifty grandchildren. For five generations the family name of John Prescott was passed down. There are many who claim descent from Prescott now living in Lancaster, but no longer any family by that name in the town.

The work of rebuilding Lancaster went on slowly during four years. The "deputies" from outside again consented to a proposition that once more all persons and estates should be taxed "in due proportions;" and that steps should be taken to rebuild the church and to secure a permanent minister. During the seven years that the town was without a minister "divers gentlemen" preached here.

Among the names of these gentlemen we find Samuel Carter, a son of Reverend Thomas Carter of Woburn. This Samuel Carter bought the Henry Kerley lands on George Hill, in 1688—the lands long since known as Valley Farm. He was settled later in Groton, and died there in 1693. His widow, Eunice Brooks Carter, married John Kendall of Woburn, the progenitor of many descendants in Sterling and Leominster, bearing the Kendall name.

The Carter sons, John, Samuel and Thomas, lived on the paternal estate and their heirs continued to live there until many acres in that section were purchased by the Thayer brothers about 1885. There are still Carter descendants in Lancaster, but none bearing the family name, though the Carters once rivalled in numbers the Willards and Wilders.

Despite all their hardships and their poverty, the people of Lancaster had the courage to invite a minister to settle among them in 1688. At first he was engaged to preach "on probation," but two years later he was asked "to settle in the ministry," and having accepted, was soon ordained. This was Reverend John Whiting who had graduated from Harvard College in 1685, and was twenty-six years of age when he came here. He was the second

son of Reverend Samuel Whiting, minister of Billerica for fifty-five years. His wife was Alice Cook of Cambridge.

When the Whitings were invited to come here, the town voted to build a parsonage, and at a town meeting in 1690, it was voted that the town should make a conveyance of the house and land to the minister. Tradition tells us this was done in the following manner: "The voters and others in large numbers assembled at the house, walked through the rooms, and after a pleasant and thorough inspection, passed out of the doors and formally gave possession to their minister." Then there was "a feast of fat things and the voice of song and prayer." The house was set in the beautiful location, now (in 1936) the grounds of the Bigelow estate in South Lancaster.

Besides this gift, the town "enlarged his accommodations" by the purchase of a piece of intervale land on the west side of the river near the Atherton bridge, which they gave to Mr. Whiting. This house was still standing in the early part of the last century. Mrs. Sally Sawyer Case, who died in 1890, at the age of 101 years, lived in this house as a girl. She described it as a large, unpainted, two-story mansion, facing the south, its rear roof sloping down to within a few feet of the ground. A row of huge buttonwood trees lined the path which led to the road towards the Old Common, then the chief highway. The trees have disappeared long since, but an old well, which supplied the house with water, still marks the location of the house.

It is probable that there was little increase in population in the first ten years of rebuilding the town. Some of the former planters had found permanent homes in other towns and sold their holdings here. New settlers began taking up new claims in the outlying districts to the east. The country still was in an unsettled state.

In 1688 William and Mary came to the throne in England, Dr. Increase Mather had returned from London with a new Charter—an important event in the history of the Commonwealth. The new royal governor was Sir William Phips. He had been named by Dr. Mather as most acceptable for governor because of his hearty sympathy with the colonists. England, however, was at war with France, and this brought the colonists into the fray.

Governor Phips conducted an unsuccessful, even disastrous

expedition against Canada, in which Lancaster men were enlisted. This excursion was the first of many in which Lancaster soldiers took part in the next hundred years, fighting for the King of England. They were poorly paid: in fact it was fifty years later that land grants were made to the heirs of five Lancaster soldiers who fought in this expedition. They were Joseph Atherton, John Pope, Jonathan Fairbank, Samuel Wheeler and Timothy Wheelock. One of Phips captains was Benjamin Willard of Lancaster. These men were needed at home, for all the outlying towns again were threatened by the savages.

Lancaster was much alarmed. Still on the frontier, its militia was without officers; its garrisons were incomplete. A party of hunters had seen great numbers of Indians gathering around Wachusett. Only too well the settlers knew the red men's intentions and remembered the terrors and cruelties in Philip's war.

Not one family of the Nashaways now remained within the limits of old Lancaster or in the haunts of the tribe about Washacum or Wachusett. Most of the Nashaway warriors had perished, slain in battle or by being hanged. Their squaws and children had been sold as slaves to sugar planters in the Bermudas.

Some Christian Indians lived at Natick or Nashoba. Occasionally an Indian boy or girl lived as bond servant in some farmer's family. A few had found refuge with the Penecooks in New Hampshire, or with one of the New York tribes. Some were nomads, wandering from one tribe to another. But they had not forgotten the home of their fathers, nor had their hatred lessened, nor their desire for revenge. So in the ten years of King Philip's war, the French never lacked guides to direct them to the weakest point in each frontier town.

CHAPTER XIV

Fear of Raids—A New Attack—1690-1697

As fear of attack spread through the town, still smarting under the blows of the massacre of 1676, many of the citizens prepared to leave for safer quarters. Then the General Court passed a special act forbidding removal from outlying towns under severe penalty. One town named in the act was Lancaster.

In order to live it was necessary for the men and boys to work all day in the fields, and this ill fitted them to watch, every second night, against a surprise attack. From past experience they knew they could expect little help from Boston; but there was no way of escape and with the wisdom and heroism which was characteristic, they assembled in town meeting and worked out their plans. They nominated Thomas Wilder for lieutenant and John Moore for ensign, and asked for confirmation at Boston. They appointed Ralph Houghton to serve with the Council on the town's behalf when occasion should require, and they asked for twenty soldiers to be sent, well equipped with arms and ammunition, to scout about the woods and observe the enemy's movements and protect the settlers from surprise attacks.

Assistance was asked from Maj. Thomas Henchman, then in command of all the forces in this section and, in April of 1692, he addressed the "Honoured Court," calling attention to the extreme danger and need of assistance in Lancaster and the towns about, that daily were expecting invasion by the savages and "groaning under the burden they lay under from want of soldiers from the Bay parts."

There were now eight garrisons in Lancaster. These could protect about fifty families in case of attack, from which it is inferred there were about two hundred seventy five inhabitants at that time.

The garrisons were located at the extreme ends of the town, in the newer allotments for homes which had been made since the rebuilding of the town had begun: Henry Willard's, eight men, at Still River; Ensign John Moore's, eight men, on Wata-

quadock Hill; Lieut. Thomas Wilder's, thirteen men, on Bride-cake Plain, as the Old Common was then called; Josiah White's, ten men, upon the east side of the Neck; Philip Goss's, nine men, near the bridge over the north branch of the river; Thomas Sawyer's, eleven men, in the center of South Lancaster; Nathaniel Wilder's, eight men, at the old trucking-house site on George Hill; Ephraim Roper's, seven men, a little to the north of Wilders.

It was impossible for the people to stay in the garrisons during the day, as the labor of farm and home must go on. The outlying houses were unfortified, and although the men were never far away from their guns, they often were far from their homes.

The first blow was struck in July 1692, when a small band of Indians surprised the family of Peter Joslin, while he was absent in the field. His home was on the west side of the road leading from the Center to the North Village. Mrs. Joslin, Mrs. Hannah Whitcomb, who was a widow, and three young children of Mr. and Mrs. Joslin were killed. Elizabeth Howe, a young sister of Mrs. Joslin, and Peter, six years old, son of the Joslins, were taken captive. The boy later was killed by his captors.

There is a tradition that Elizabeth Howe was singing at her spinningwheel when the Indians entered; that they admired her so much that they took her away with them. She was ransomed after four years of captivity, and returned, at the age of twenty. She married Thomas Keyes, in 1698.

Things came to such a pass, and the people of the town were so worn out with poverty and fear, "not knowing how to get either food or clothing for themselves or families" that Jonathan Houghton addressed a petition to the Governor and Council at Boston, on behalf of the inhabitants of the town of Lancaster, begging consideration of their condition and asking for a "considerable allowance" for money spent in building and repairing the garrisons. In answer to this petition the House of Representatives voted to allow them £20—"for encouragement."

On a Sunday in the autumn of 1695, Abraham Wheeler was mortally wounded while on his way to his home near the river from the Sawyer garrison. In this state of continual suspense and fear the people passed weary days and nights for two years before the next blow fell. It was on a September day in 1697. The men were working in their fields or at their homes and the garrison gates were open. A band of Indians dashed from the forests

upon the western part of the town. Their plan was to assault the garrison of Thomas Sawyer, but a strange occurrence changed their plans. Jabez Fairbanks was riding from his own house to the garrison and dashed at full speed through the open gates. The Indians, thinking that they had been discovered, turned upon those working in the fields and in the defenceless houses, attacking the families of Ephraim Roper, the widow of John Rugg, Jonathan Fairbanks, John Scate and Daniel Hudson, murdering, capturing, or wounding nearly all of them, then burned their houses and barns.

The Indians came upon the minister, Rev. John Whiting, returning from the fields about noon, and attempted to take him captive: but "he chose rather to fight to the last." He was killed and scalped.

Nineteen settlers were killed that day; eight were taken captive, but of these, five eventually returned; two others, badly wounded, recovered. Those who were killed, besides the minister, were Daniel Hudson, his wife and two grandchildren; John Scate and wife; Mrs. Hannah Rugg, who was a widow and daughter of John Prescott, also her son Joseph Rugg, his wife and three children; Jonathan Fairbank, his daughter and son; Ephraim Roper, his wife and daughter Elizabeth.

Two daughters of Daniel Hudson were captured and one or both were slain. Those who eventually returned were Mrs. Mary Fairbank, Ephraim Roper, Jr., a son of the Ephraim who was slain, Mary Glazier, and a son of John Scates. The fate of the widow Tabitha Wheeler is unknown, and a captive girl, Hannah Rugg, had not returned fifteen years later.

Ephraim Roper was the same man who escaped from the Rowlandson garrison in the massacre of 1676, and was a son of John Roper, killed that year. Hannah was his second wife and was the widow of that Stephen Goble who was hanged for the murder of Indian women and children in the excitement that followed the massacres.

Captain Thomas Brown pursued the enemy with a party of fifty men for two days, but there is no record of any losses by the Indians.

Again the valley of the Nashaway was deep in gloom. The people were wholly discouraged and disheartened. They were forbidden to leave. Their garrisons were inadequate and there

was no money. Their minister had been slain. Their courage was almost gone.

Again Lancaster appealed to the authorities for more soldiers for their garrisons, for aid in securing a minister, and for exemption from taxes. Once more £20 was bestowed upon them by the English authorities in Boston, whose indifference towards these settlers, their privations and sufferings, becomes more and more apparent as time goes on.

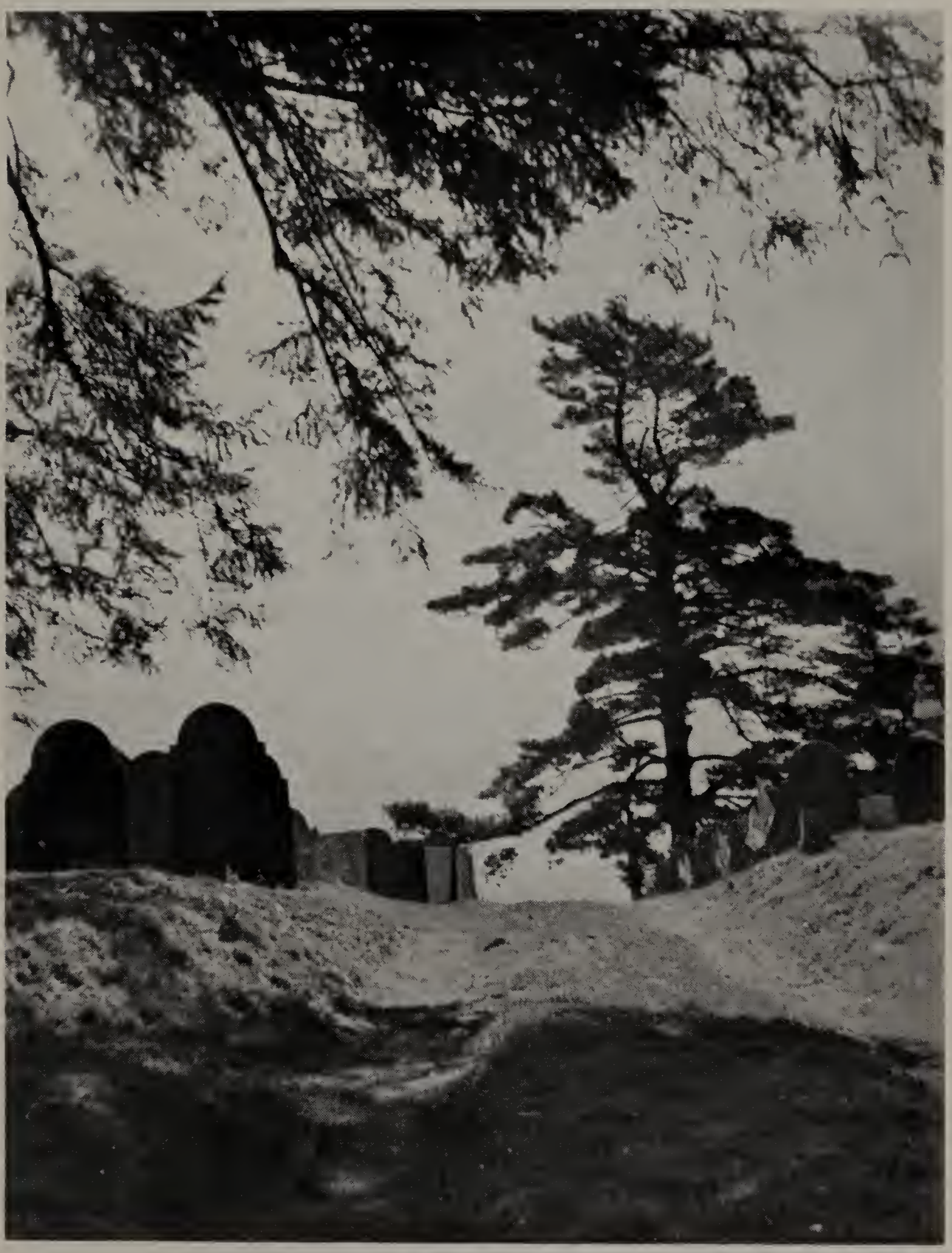
CHAPTER XV

French and Indian Attacks—1697-1704

Obviously, the locations on the west of the town were the ones most likely to a surprise attack. As one bloody raid after another destroyed the homes of the earliest settlers, new home lots were chosen east of the river. Some of those who had settled on George Hill and the Neck abandoned their home lots for new sites upon their "second division" lands on the high lands to the east, where the natural lookouts gave a clear view towards the hiding places of the hated enemy, and of the smoke rising from their campfires. At Still River, around the Willard garrison, the sons and grandsons of the pioneers were taking up lots. Henry Willard was the fourth son of Maj. Simon, and had nine sons, all of whom married. Most of them spent their lives within the old town bounds. Joshua Atherton had a hundred acres extending down the west slope of Still River hill to the Nashaway river. John Priest and John Warner had special grants of thirty acres on the easterly side of Bear Hill. Bridecake Plain was a nearer location and soon attracted the grandsons of the pioneers as a place for homes. Upon Wadaquadock hill and to the east there were three garrisons. Homes were springing up to the east of Prescott's mills. Soon after the turn of the century there were in all eleven garrisons. These included seventy-six families, or a population of about 425, of which two-thirds now lived east of the rivers.

For this widely scattered population there was but one church and one inn. The inn was kept by Nathaniel Wilder and was on George Hill, where he had held a license "to sell beer, ale, cider, rum, etc.," for twenty years.

After the tragic death of Rev. John Whiting the church was four years without a pastor, and during that time had temporary supplies. Then Andrew Gardner, a Harvard graduate of the class of 1696, was invited to preach; and in September of the year 1701, he accepted a call to become the settled pastor. At this time a change was made whereby all inhabitants were taxed to pay the



Site of the First Two Meetinghouses
Both Destroyed by the Indians

minister, being assessed as for other taxes. Mr. Gardner at once was given the house and lands of his predecessor, Rev. Mr. Whiting, which his widow had sold to the town for £60. The state treasury gave £20 towards the payment of a minister.

Again black clouds were hovering upon the horizon, and again the blow fell west of the rivers. A large force of French and Indians, under "Monsieur Boocore" had planned to destroy Northampton. When they found that place prepared for attack, part returned to Canada, but about four hundred rallied for an attack upon eastern towns and, on Monday, July 31, 1704, fell upon Lancaster. The first attack, as usual, was made upon the garrison on George Hill, where Lieutenant Nathaniel Wilder was mortally wounded. Re-enforcements came promptly, under Capt. Tyng and Capt. Howe, and the enemy was driven off with heavy losses. Three of our soldiers were killed. The enemy lost a French officer, which enraged them, and in revenge they burned the meetinghouse, and destroyed many cattle and outbuildings. The dwellings of Ephraim Wilder, Samuel Carter and Thomas Ross upon George Hill were burned as was the home of Philip Goss, upon the site of the Rowlandson garrison.

Bands of hostile Indians continued to prowl around the settlement and every year surprised some farmer at his work in the fields or some lone traveler upon the road. Every man kept his musket close at hand, even on his way to church, and every man of military age took his turn with the scouting parties sent out to look for signs of the enemy.

This was an anxious and unprofitable time. The expense of keeping up the garrisons, the time lost in scouting, inability properly to plant or harvest the crops, all told upon the finances and the nerves of the people. Mothers, sick with fear over the safety of their children, had little to encourage them in daily tasks.

Fathers and sons at work in the fields never knew when they might be shot from ambush, or what they might find when they returned to their homes. The strength and courage given them to carry on seems little short of miraculous. Their Puritan belief was that the more they suffered in this world the more sure they could be of corresponding joys in the world to come. Then great will be their reward.

The parsonage at the crossroads in South Lancaster escaped destruction at the time of the burning of the second meetinghouse.

However, a great grief came to the parish, when a tragic occurrence cut short the life of the young minister.

The Indians had been doing great mischief in the outlying districts, and had been seen lurking within the boundaries of the town. The citizens were dreading a fresh attack. Scouting parties had gone out from the minister's garrison on that second day in October. They returned at nightfall, tired with watching and tramping. The minister "being a very careful as well as courageous man, concluded to watch that night by himself," and give his scouts a much needed rest. He took up his post in the little watch house over one of the flankers. Late in the night he started down out of the upper flanker, presumably to warm himself. Samuel Prescott was the sentinel on duty that night. He saw and challenged the minister, mistaking him for an Indian spy. He challenged again, then, thinking he received no reply, he fired a fatal shot into the breast of the minister.

Rev. Mr. Gardner regained consciousness and asked who fired the shot; and upon being told the circumstances, declared he knew it to be entirely unintentional, and begged his people to forgive Prescott, as he had already done. He lived but a few hours.

Samuel Prescott was entirely exonerated but could not bear up under his burden of regret. His own house was across the street, too near the scene of his mistake for comfort. He soon sold his house to the new minister who succeeded Rev. Mr. Gardner and moved to Concord.

CHAPTER XVI

Meetinghouse Controversies—1704-1707

Rev. John Prentice succeeded to the ministry of the parish, coming from Newton. The next year he married Mrs. Mary Gardner, the widow of his predecessor.

With the coming of Mr. Prentice the series of long pastorates began for which this parish has been noted: his ministry ended with his life, forty-three years later.

As the second meetinghouse had been destroyed by the savages, services were held for a few years in the parsonage. Again the people of Lancaster were facing the building of a house for worship.

The older people were in favor of rebuilding on the old site. Not so the younger generation. The center of population was changing and Bride Cake Plain was fast becoming a popular section for homes. This name was first spoken of in the records of a town meeting in 1704, and retained that name for a hundred years before the "Common" which we now call "Old," was fenced in.

Bolton and Harvard still were a part of the mother town, and their people attended service every Sunday. In fact, two-thirds of the citizens of Lancaster now lived east of the rivers. After the burning of the second meeting-house in 1704, £40 had been granted by the general Court towards the building of a new one. The money was to be paid upon the erection of the frame. At a town meeting it was voted to place the new building on the east side of the river, on Bride Cake Plain and the frame accordingly was set up. The new location raised a storm of disapproval in the town.

The argument for relocating the church on the old spot was set out in the following statement:

> Your petitioners dwell on the west side of the river, fronting towards the enemy, and having suffered very much, and are diminished in their numbers, several heads of families having been cut off within these few years, and when the enemy were there about seventeen or eighteen months ago they burned down the meetinghouse, which always stood on the west side of the river. Now so it is, that those inhabitants who dwell on the east side of the rivers use all their endeavors to have the meetinghouse

built on this side, whereas the meetinghouse ground, and the ministerial land and meadow are both on the other west side and moreover should the meetinghouse be built on the east side the enemy might come when the inhabitants are at meeting and destroy the whole western part and seize the bridge, so that nobody should be able to resist them, but the meetinghouse being built upon the exposed side——as it used to be——the inhabitants are a guard to the other side as well as to themselves.

This "other side" had something to say. In a short time they sent in a petition to "His Excellency, Joseph Dudley, Esq., Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief" in which, at great length, they gave an account of the discussion. They gave as their reasons for wanting the church built on the east side of the river that "the very thing cared for in the first covenant and agreement of the plantation" was "about a meetinghouse, that it might be sett in the most equall and convenient place that may be advised by them:" and again, that "having lost already burnt on that side therefore think it not prudence to build there againe, it being apprehended a very dangerous place." They added that there were "neere two thirds of them that live on the east side of the river, and neere two thirds of all public charges are borne by them." They prayed the "Great and General Assembly to put a final end to this affair which has been very troublesome and expensive."

Another argument which the people living on the west side of the river might have used was the position of the bridges. There were but two; one over each branch of the river. Unless they used wading places or canoes, people living north and west of the river must follow the roundabout road to reach the "Plain."

The governor appointed four men from outside the town to look over the situation and advise as to which side was to be preferred. Then this committee disagreed——two were for each side——so that nothing was done.

Then it was ordered that both sides should be represented at a hearing before the General Court in Boston. After the hearing the decision was for the west side, "where the old Meetinghouse stood, and has been twice before built"—but there was a comment attached—"Read and not agreed."

In June 1706 the petitioners got the decision for the east side but this again was set aside. The frame for the church which had been set up before the controversy waxed hot was by this time "considerably damnified by the weather."

Finally John Houghton sent in a petition for the east-side inhabitants. It was read before the House of Representatives of which he was a member. There is no doubt that his influence brought about a decision, as he was then and for years to come, one of the prominent men of the town.

The majority had its way. The petition was granted by the House and signed by the Governor. The "damnified" frame was covered in by Robert Houghton and his assistants. After a long season of bickering, peace reigned once more in the parish. Thomas Wilder gave the land across the road for a church yard and burial ground.

It must have been a trying time for the young minister, preaching in the inadequate parsonage to a divided and excited parish. He probably had some difficulty in holding his people together, but he held their esteem and lived to see his church enlarged, and later rebuilt in another location, and ended his days in their service. Holding the parish together was an easier matter in those days than now for the Law stepped in to help. All were compelled to attend church on Sunday. Absence from services soon brought a visit of investigation, and "in His Majesties name" delinquents were given warnings to appear on the following Sabbath, or give good reasons for being absent.

John Houghton, whose letter decided the Court in favor of the new location, was a son of the John Houghton who set up his home here in 1653. He married Mary Farrar, who lived in "Narrow Lane." They had set up in housekeeping on Bridecake Plain, on the south side of the road, opposite the present grounds of the State Industrial School. Lieutenant Houghton was conveyancer, inn keeper, justice, selectman, and served as town clerk for ten years. He is the first man mentioned in any records as a schoolmaster. After fifty-two years of married life, having become a widower, he married at the age of seventy-five Hannah Wilder aged seventy-two. At the time of his death a Boston newspaper, the Evening Post, made the following statement in his obituary notice: "He hath left a numerous offspring. There are now living of his children, seven; of his grandchildren, fifty-four; of his great-grandchildren, seventy-three; in all, one hundred and thirty-four." It is not to be wondered at that the name of Houghton was prominent in town annals for the next century and more.

CHAPTER XVII

More Indian Raids—1707-1710—Petition for the Additional Grant

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, LANCASTER'S SECOND MILL WAS built at the waters of Goodrich Brook, in the district known as Deershorns, but earlier still as "Sly Corner."

Thomas Sawyer, a grandson of John Prescott, inherited much of his grandfather Prescott's enterprise. He built the mill in 1699. When, in 1705, the Indians made another successful raid upon the town, Thomas Sawyer, his son Elias, and John Bigelow, a carpenter from Marlboro, were captured by the savages and carried away to Canada. The elder Sawyer was tied to a stake for death by torture. He was rescued by a friar who held a key before the Indians and told them that unless they loosed their captive he would unlock the doors of Purgatory and cast them all into the flames. This was thought to have been a ruse on the part of the French governor to save the captive for his own purposes, for soon he employed Sawyer and his companions to build a saw-mill on the Chamblay river—the first saw-mill in Canada.

Then the elder Sawyer was allowed to return to his home, but the son was kept for a time to operate the mill and to instruct others in the sawyer's art.

When finally allowed to go home, Elias Sawyer brought, with other things, a curiously glazed plate of red earthen ware, which was handed down from generation to generation. It finally was given to the Lancaster library, by the will of Ellsworth Sawyer, the last male descendant of that line.

The 18th century had just opened when three enterprising young men of Lancaster bargained with George Tahanto, Indian sagamore, for land lying between the west end of their township and the Wachusett Hills. Ensign John Moore, John Houghton and Nathaniel Wilder had made what might be called a "down payment" of forty-three shillings, and later had paid in part and bonded the rest of eighteen pounds to the Indians. In return Tahanto had agreed to surrender lands and meadows adjoining the

westward line and running as far north as the northern boundary of Lancaster. To the south it bordered for the most part upon the "Nashuah river," and bore westerly towards Wachusett. Tahanto promised to procure an order from the General Court for the allowance and confirmation of the sale, and to mark out the bounds and make deeds and conveyances within four months.

The petition for the "additional grant" went up with a request that a committee should be appointed "to go upon and take a view of the land petitioned for" and make a report to the next session of the Court. The committee appointed consisted of Col. Tyng, Major Thomas Brown and Captain James Minott.

No action seems to have been taken by this committee until ten years had passed, but these far-sighted young men had opened the way for the beginning of what is now the city of Leominster. They were descendants of the pioneers, and doubtless were imbued with the same spirit of adventure, the same love of acquiring land and of becoming self dependent.

In the light of quick succeeding events this delay was fortunate for the wooded hills to the north and west constituted a menace for several years.

The land was sought as recompense for losses in the French and Indian wars.

Because the western side of the town had been the scene of conflict so often, the east and north-east sections were becoming more and more favored for the new homes of the succeeding generations, and fast growing families were shaping little villages, which, within the next generation, were to separate from the mother town, to become the townships of Harvard, Bolton, and Berlin.

At the time of the erection of the new meetinghouse in 1707, letters from the petitioners show that no Indian atrocities had been committed upon the soil occupied by these townships, which, of itself, must have been a strong argument for their selection as sites for homes.

Then, as to the parish meetinghouse where all were compelled to attend worship in winter and summer alike: it was many miles from the north and east boundaries of the town, from Bear Hill, from Quasaponikin and Wataquadock.

Some went to meeting on horse back, with wife or daughter on pillion; but most were afoot, the men with guns on their should-

ers. It was not to be wondered at that their minds often turned towards the time when they would have a nearer church and schools for their children. Letters show that school attendance was much interrupted because mothers feared for the safety of their children.

Parties of hostile Indians had been seen hovering about the town, when on the 16th of July, 1707, news came that they had killed Jonathan White, a lad of fifteen, a brother of Capt. John White. In the Boston News Letter an account of the attack says "Thirteen Indians on the frontier surprised two men at their labor in the meadows at Marlborough"*****that they took them both alive and also that they took a woman whom they killed. One of the captives got away and gave the alarm. About twenty men, joined by twenty more from Lancaster, pursued and came up with the enemy, whose numbers had increased to thirty-six. When overtaken the Indians barbarously murdered the captive. In the skirmish which followed the English lost two men and two were wounded. The dead were Richard Singleterry and John Farrar, the latter born in Lancaster. His father had been killed in the massacre of 1676. Ephraim Wilder and Samuel Stevens were wounded severely. The captive who was "barbarously murdered" was Jonathan Wilder, a brother to the Ephraim who was wounded.

The place where the skirmish took place was in the northwest corner of Sterling and to this day is called the Indian Fight.

The report tells of the capture and killing of at least ten or twelve of the Indians, as there were tracks of that many having been dragged away. Twenty-four of the Indians' packs were captured.

For a year or two soldiers were kept in the town to help to defend it. An Indian servant of the Wilders was the last person killed by the red men. He was working in a field on George Hill on August 5, 1710, with Nathaniel Wilder, who was wounded at the same time. The next year twenty-one soldiers were stationed in the town, which seems very much like "locking the barn after the horse was stolen." King William's war was over before the French and Indians made this disastrous attack upon Lancaster; but the news that peace had been declared had not yet reached this side of the ocean.

A short three years intervened before the colonists were again drawn into War, and from 1701 to 1713 they were again in arms for King and country.

The selectmen of Lancaster were summoned in 1710 to appear in court to answer for want of a schoolmaster. Their answer was that they had appointed John Houghton at a town meeting, that he was actually engaged in the work and had been formerly engaged in instructing some in writing. They added that they were "under dangerous circumstances" and that it was very hazardous sending the children to school—"living so scattering." They assured the Court that not only to comply with the law, but for their own benefit, they were willing to do all that could be done. The Court accepted this explanation and placed the case on file.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Scar Bridge Road—Renewal of the Church Covenant 1708

AT PRESCOTT'S MILLS NO LOSS OF LIFE OR PROPERTY IS RECORDED in the massacre by the Indians in 1697, nor in the attack by the French and Indians, in 1704. This was one of the six fortified posts in the town. At the time of the latter attack there were but three families and two soldiers at this garrison. The heads of the families were the second John Prescott, his two grown sons, John and Ebenezer, and John Keyes, a weaver.

For half a century there were but three families in that location. While the town was spreading out to the north and east, and even with an eye to new settlements to the west, Prescott's mills had harbored but three families. Most of the region about the Prescott garrison was covered with dense pine forests. It is interesting to note that, as early as 1703, legislation was required to prevent the destruction of trees by those who collected turpentine. Gathering turpentine had became an important industry in New England and the product was exported to Great Britain.

The three ponds in this section of the town now Clinton bore the same names as they do today. They are mentioned in documents of this period: Clamshell, 1697; Moss or Mossy, in 1702; Sandy, about 1702.

Soon after the rebuilding of Lancaster began, in 1686, a petition was presented at town meeting "for a way to Goodman Prescott's Corne-mill, to ly over the River at the Scar." This was the second town road laid out within Clinton bounds. It was primarily for the use of the people of Stow, Marlboro and Sudbury, who had access to no grist and saw-mill nearer than Prescotts'.

Although this was a much-used public way for more than fifty years, few signs of it can be found today. There a few traces of the abutments of what was probably a slab bridge built by John Prescott, in 1718. This highway came down the hill not far from the scar known as Emerson's Bank, and over a bridge near the pumping station on North High Street, Clinton.

At the time of the ordination of Reverend John Prentice in

1708, the Church Covenant was renewed, and records of baptisms and admissions to the church were kept. Twenty years later minutes of church meetings were recorded. The old book with words worn from the edges of the leaves is in the writing of Mr. Prentice and to it is signed his name. Written below are the names of seven members of his church: Thomas Wilder, John Houghton, Josiah Whetcomb, John Wilder, Jeremiah Willson, John Rugg, Jonathan Moor. Twenty-nine other names were signed from time to time as people became members. Many of the parish seem not to have signed the Covenant.

The seventh article in the Covenant would seem to be enough to warrant a real Utopia. It reads:

> We also bind ourselves to walk in love one toward another endeavoring our mutual edification, visiting, exhorting, comforting, as occasion serveth, and warning any brother or sister which offendeth, not divulging private offences irregularly, but heedfully following the precepts laid down for church dealing Matth. XVIII: 15, 16, 17. While forgiving all that do manifest unto the Judgement of Charity that they truly repent their miscarriages.

In the other six articles they pledge themselves to a most orthodox course of conduct and even to bring up their families to such use of orthodox catechisms that true religion will be maintained in their families "while we live, yea and among such as shall live when we are dead & gone."

CHAPTER XIX

Bridges a Source of Trouble—1711

GOVERNOR DUDLEY ORDERED THE INSPECTION OF ALL GARRISONS in this neighborhood in 1711, and it is probable that the first census was taken then. The report showed 27 garrisons within the towns borders, housing 83 families and 111 "inhabitants," which must have meant heads of families, as the total was "458 souls."

By an old law of 1647, any town harboring 100 families should set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to "instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university," and in 1715 we find the town's selectmen appearing in the Middlesex Court to answer "for want of a grammar school." Again we find the case dismissed upon the payment of a fee when Capt. Joslin and Hooker Osgood, speaking for the selectmen assured the Court that they had procured the services of young Mr. Pierpont, of Roxbury, a graduate of Harvard College, but that he "is fallen under indisposition of Body by reason of sickness" and that they "expect him speedily."

This action shows that there were now 100 families in the town. Owing to the widely scattered homes, school was kept part of the year "on the Neck," and another part in Still River.

The next schoolmaster mentioned is Samuel Stow, of Marlborough, a Harvard graduate, who was paid £40 a year. The ministers salary was raised from £75 to £85 a year.

At a special town meeting in 1718, Lancaster considered rebuilding the Neck bridge. This is the first mention of any crossing of the main river save by wading places or canoes. Probably there had been some rude structure of slabs. This new bridge was ordered to have five trestles and to be thirteen feet wide, and was called "ye great bridge." Thirty-five pounds was appropriated for its erection.

For the next 150 years the bridges of the town were a constant source of expense and trouble. As the population grew, and outlying districts were settled, eight bridges were needed to reach

them and every year caused expense. The old Neck bridge never remained in good repair. Frequent freshets carried the poorly constructed spans down stream. Sometimes the location was changed in effort to find better foundation. Not until late in the last century was there an iron bridge constructed. The first such was the present Atherton bridge, built in 1870.

A volume could be filled with the town's actions upon repairs, replacements, and construction—from the time when the towns people first gathered at a jollification that celebrated the raising of "the great bridge" in 1718, through all the periods of spring freshets and ice jams, when one bridge after another was carried down stream, often to help dislodge the one next below, to the time the supposedly permanent structures were built by skilled modern engineers.

CHAPTER XX

Rapid Extension of Settlements—1711-1720

RECORDS OF THIS PERIOD ARE FILLED WITH PETITIONS FOR additional grants of land for services rendered the town; for lengthening and straightening of highways to accommodate new houses, for setting up gates in the highway. Some of the reports accepted and recorded by the town might well have been in a foreign language if they were to have been of use to anyone except to those who owned the land. An example in the original spelling, as recorded in 1715, is as follows: "Layed out to ye Right of Muclode takeing in ye swamp to the Harrises as it is now marked John Benits Corner being a little pine & so Runs to a popler takeing in a smal Corner of land to Ebenezer Harris & from thence it Runes to a Red Oke, one the east side ye way & so runs to a white oke & so to another white oke & so to Ebenezer Beman's Corner."

The town now was advancing more rapidly than ever before. It was a period free from Indian raids and the farmers had been able to attend to their work with less interruption.

Two more saw-mills had been built: one upon the North branch of the river by Samuel Bennett; the other on Wataquadock brook, on the road to Marlboro.

The "additional grant" first asked for in 1701, confirmed in 1711, really was added and confirmed to the town of Lancaster, as part of the township in 1714. However, it was not paid for by the town, as a whole, but by subscription, and forty acres of the best ground was alloted to each share.

In laying out of new townships to the westward in 1720 it was claimed that the committee surveying this grant had allowed more land to Lancaster than the terms of the purchase warranted. After a year of wrangling the bounds were fixed by the court as they had been marked by the Indian grantors. Out of this territory was made not only Leominster, but Sterling and a large part of Boylston and West Boylston.

Gamaliel Beaman headed a movement about this time to set

up new homes among the hills in the region north of the Washacum lakes—called Woonksechocksett by the Indians. With their corner stones they also laid the foundation of that part of the town called Chocksett, eventually Sterling.

Many Houghtons, Wilders, Carters, Sawyers and others, nearly all grandsons of the early proprietors, had taken up their homes in the valley of the north branch of the Nashaway, and being at so great a distance from church and schools looked toward an independent township, which was to become Leominster. But not yet, for Harvard and Bolton were first in the field.

Around the more important garrisons these little villages had grown and, except that all must gather at one common meeting-house on the Sabbath, and must carry their grist to Prescott's mills, they were quite independent of the mother town. Lancaster was no longer a border town. New frontiers had sprung up. It was now the wealthiest town in the county. In ten years its population had doubled, and it had a strong voice in all county affairs.

There were four licensed innholders. These were located at Still River, on the Neck, on George Hill and in South Lancaster.

When the services of a doctor were required to set a broken limb, or in case of an alarming illness, Jonathan Prescott was called from Concord, and galloped up with his saddlebag of drugs. He charged but a small fee. In less serious cases Doctor Mary Whitcomb administered herbs at home. "Doctress Whitcomb" was here as early as 1700. She studied the "profession" with the Indians, with whom she was once a captive, and acquired a knowledge of "simples" from them. She was well liked and had a wide practice as there was no other of the "faculty" nearer than Concord.

From £50 to £60 a year was allowed for "scooling." Edward Broughton was schoolmaster. He taught a few weeks at a time, according to the taxes contributed—on the Neck, at Still River or Bear Hill, and on Wataquadock. A year or two later it became the custom to employ young Harvard College graduates as teachers for short terms.

The orchards of the town had become famous, and much of the fruit was converted into cider. It found a ready sale in Boston and in the new towns, though much of it was used at home. Cider was considered a necessity at all public functions, such as raisings and huskings. When Captain Jonas Houghton, the Lancaster

surveyor was employed to lay out a road along the north side of Wachusett, the contract test was that it should be "so feasable as to carry comfortably, with four oxen, four barrels of cider at once."

They were still warning undesirable persons out of town in 1717, when one Robert Hues was ordered "to depart out of ye bounds of limits of said Lancaster," as shown by the Middlesex Court Files.

The town fathers from the first had planned for "common" land to be used alike by all. There must have been back of this the English idea of a "village green" for, as the center of the town changed from one side of the river to the other, each time allowance was made for a stated common.

The first Common was the "night pasture" which was fenced in for the protection of the cattle, horses, goats, sheep and swine of the planter, and took in the land east of the house of Lawrence Waters to the river on two sides, and to the highway to the east Neck for a northern boundary. Several years later, when an allotment of land was made to the first minister, it was voted to take it from "the night pasture, within the fence that was formerly set up by the copartners." Joseph Rowlandson, the minister's son, sold his father's estate and, in time the "night pasture" was divided among many owners. A lot was laid out, as early as 1654, on the north side of the highway that bounded the night pasture to "Ly in common" for the plantation. This little common is still the property of the town though cut by two highways. The part which lies in the triangle between Main Street and Center Bridge road was enclosed, years ago, within a high hedge of arbor vitae.

When this little common was laid out it was voted that no second division of land should be made to any planter within the compass of two miles of this spot. Another order decreed that no person should cut any timber on the Common, under penalty of the law.

CHAPTER XXI

An Illiterate and Wilful Town Clerk—The Meetinghouse Enlarged in 1725

After the third meetinghouse was built—on Bridecake Plain—a common was needed for that part of the town near the new center. A training-field "to lie common" was secured in 1718. It covered three acres "by the highway near Justice Houghton's barn." This field lay to the east of the church, opposite what is now the State Industrial School grounds. By mischance no deed was secured for this lot, so that, in the course of time, an heir of the man from whom it was bought refused to give the town a deed for it. The man who later purchased it fenced in the lot, and the Common ceased to be, and began to be referred to as "the Old Common."

Joseph Wilder, son of the second Thomas Wilder, was now proprietors' clerk, an office which he held for forty years; from 1716 to 1757. It is possible that he had been clerk at some previous time but, if so, the records are missing. He became town clerk in 1737 also, and held the office for seven years. He must have been a man of great native force for he held these offices by common consent, in spite of the fact that his penmanship was so poor as to be hardly legible especially in his later years, when he wrote with a palsied hand. He was illiterate, his spelling was very poor. Punctuation he ignored altogether. His wife was Lucy Gardner, a sister of the former minister of the parish, Rev. Andrew Gardner.

Joseph Wilder was deacon in the Lancaster church for forty-two years. He was noted for his sound common sense and integrity. His most noticeable trait was tenacity of purpose—an inherited trait which he, in turn, handed down and caused the family to be known as the "willful Wilders" for many generations. He was representative to the General Court at three sessions. When Worcester county was formed in 1731, he was appointed judge and held the office of chief justice at his death.

There is a tradition that Lancaster might have been the shire town of Worcester County but for the narrow minded opposition

of this Judge Wilder. Lancaster was then the oldest town and had become the most populous and the wealthiest in the county. Many were in favor of locating the county offices here.

Judge Wilder would not give his consent. His reasons were that shire towns were "apt to be infested with gamblers, horse jockeys and drunkards" and that the morals of the town should not be sacrificed to increase its numbers and its wealth.

By some, his decision was considered the cause of the loss of a golden opportunity which could never be regained. By others, it was thought to have been the hand of Providence instrumental in keeping the town as it was.

At his death, at the age of 74, in March, 1757, Judge Wilder was succeeded by his son, Colonel Caleb, as clerk of the proprietors. Another son, Colonel Joseph, became town clerk, deacon, and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. These two sons were engaged in manufacture of potash and pearlash, and became rich. The great iron boiler used by them for many years, later was a watering trough by the side of the main road from Lancaster to Bolton.

Colonel Caleb Wilder erected a Stately brick house on the grounds of what is now the State Industrial School. This building was destroyed by a fire, set by inmates of the school, half a century ago.

In an old memorandum of Judge Joseph Wilder's was found "an accompt of Cyder made in the ye 1728"—616 barrels. Sixty one barrels were for the minister, Reverend John Prentice. Cider was sold at that time for from four to six shillings a barrel. The historian, Henry S. Nourse, says that cider was "a liquid so abundant that the flow would have kept full a respectable brooklet."

In another page the old memorandum book gives a list of innkeepers' charges: for an "ordination dinner," 3s. 6d; for an ordinary dinner, one half that sum. Casual lodging for one person for a night was 4d; for a horse for twenty-four hours, 6d; for a yoke of oxen, a penny or two more than for a horse. As this road was a part of the old Bay Path, Bride Cake Plain had important taverns on this main line of traffic.

There is a tradition that Judge Wilder set out many elm trees beside the road past his house and the Atherton Bridge road, many of which grew to great size, and were standing within the memory of people now living.

The Wilder lands took in all the grounds now covered by the State Industrial School, and more. Two centuries of care and cultivation have given this section of the town an atmosphere of old England.

It had become necessary to enlarge the meetinghouse by 1725, though many were in favor of building a new one. The location was not then near what had come to be the center of population, and there was much agitation and discussion about dividing the town. Finally it was decided to add twenty feet to the length of the church at a cost of £100; an additional sum of £40, was granted later.

When the work was completed in 1727, a committee of nine men was chosen to "seat" (apportion seats in) the enlarged house, according to rank—based upon family, property or office of the members. It is said that resultant jealousies and heart burnings lasted through succeeding generations.

Mrs. Prentice, the minister's wife, was given "the pew at the foot or next to the pulpit stairs." It was voted that "thirteen men be seated in the body of seats"; ten men in the front gallery, and twelve men in a seat in the side gallery. Also that "it be left to the committee to seat aged persons as they shall think convenient and decent." Thus the life of the church went on for a few years in the enlarged building but, before the death of Rev. Mr. Prentice a new church became a necessity. The "damnified" building was then torn down and the lumber was used in school buildings.

There was a movement at this time to form a new county from certain towns of Suffolk and Middlesex counties. Lancaster was much interested and chose James Wilder and Jonathan Houghton to act for the town. There is a tradition that it was expected that there would be two shire towns in this new county, and that Lancaster would be one of them, as it was the wealthiest, the oldest and the largest of the fourteen towns set off to form Worcester county. The honor of first county treasurer went to Jonathan Houghton of Lancaster, and Joseph Wilder was made judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

CHAPTER XXII

Raids on the Indians—Bounty for Scalps—Lovewell's War—1722-1726

LANCASTER WAS NOT INVADED DURING THE TIME OF "LOVEWELL'S war"—1722–1726—although records of that time show that the citizens lived in constant fear of attack. The names of five men from Lancaster appear upon the muster roll, in the first year of that war.

Lieutenant Jabez Fairbanks sent a letter to the Honorable William Dummer, in the following year, informing him that fifteen able-bodied men from Lancaster had enlisted with men from Groton and Dunstable, ready to go upon the march as scouts.

Jabez Fairbanks was a grandson of John Prescott. His father, Jonas Fairbank, and his brothers, Joshua and Jonas, were slain in the earlier Indian wars. It is not strange that men with such family traditions were eager to range the woods and guard the towns. Moreover, a great inducement to volunteers was the enactment of 1722, offering volunteer scouts a reward of £100 for the scalp of any male Indian over twelve years of age; and half that amount for an Indian woman or child, scalped or unscalped.

Captain John White of Lancaster was associated with Captain Lovewell, and was famous as an Indian fighter. He lived on the east side of the Neck. He died in the service. His widow received £100 "in consideration of the good service done this province by her late husband."

There are numerous journals relating the hardships and difficulties of carrying the war into the enemy's country. One episode is referred to as "At killing of them 10 Indians," in February, 1724. Captain White's journal records killing bears and "divers rattlesnakes which pestere us very much in our march" and also of getting a "black moose." He records heavy rains day after day, and great heat which caused much sickness among his men. The days that found the men very sick and weak they traveled but seven or eight miles: at other times nineteen or twenty miles.

Captain White was a blacksmith and, for a single year, 1717 was a licensed innholder. An old shop stood many years on the land of the late N. C. Hawkins where it was said to have been used as a smithy since the days of Captain White, a grandson of the pioneer bearing the same name.

This Captain White was considered a great hero when, on March 10, 1725, he marched through Boston at the head of his sixty rangers, mostly from Lancaster, displaying ten scalps. They were taken in the night surprise of a party of hostile Indians near the source of the Salmon river in New Hampshire, and were worth £1000 bounty. He was well off for his times, leaving an estate of £1220. He left eight children.

In the Massachusetts archives there are several letters to Lieutenant Governor William Dummer from another Lancaster man, Captain Samuel Willard. He was a grandson of Major Simon Willard, and a son of Henry, who lived on the large Still River farm. Having inherited this farm and considerable property, Captain Samuel Willard bought the homestead of his grandfather, the "night pasture" adjoining, and the land of Edward Breck,—in all seventy-six acres. He is supposed to have built and lived in the large house near the railroad crossing just north of the Lancaster station, where three generations of his descendants succeeded him.

Captain Samuel Willard's military career began in Lovewell's war when he led two companies of about ninety men each, to and from the headwaters of the Saco and Pemigewasset rivers—a march of 500 miles. His letters tell of hardships and privations endured on the march through a pathless wilderness. There are a number of entries which read: "We lay still by reason of Rain." At other times, when tracking the Indians, the journal records that the scouts marched twenty-four miles in a day. He was the first to explore the region around the White Mountains.

Captain Josiah Willard, a brother of Captain Samuel, commanded a company in this expedition. He removed to Turkey Hills (Lunenburg), and became a colonel in the French and Indian war. Indian guides were used on this expedition, as "Jo the Mohawk" is mentioned, also "Nessa Gawney" an interpreter.

Although both Captain Lovewell and Captain White were killed, the rangers drove the Indians back into the fastnesses of the

forests and inflicted heavy losses upon the savages, destroying their strongholds.

The soldiers did not forget the fertile valleys and beautiful rivers and lakes they had seen in New Hampshire, and soon many of them returned there to build log cabins and open up homesteads in the new country.

CHAPTER XXIII

Country Life Around 1730

ALTHOUGH WE SPEAK OF LANCASTER AT THIS TIME AS THE wealthiest town in Worcester county, compared to modern standards life was very simple. There is an adage that "hard work is happiness" and, if this be half true, our yeoman ancestry should have been happy. These men worked from sunrise to sunset, never idle except on the Sabbath, from the first day that the frost was out of the ground, making it possible for the farmer to handle a plow, until the ground froze again in the fall. All were rich in acres of land, but all were poor as to ready money, household goods, or any kind of labor saving devices; yet there were no paupers and no loafers.

Some farmers were skilled in mechanical crafts at which they worked, in addition to carrying on their farms. All were handy with tools and were what might be called "Jacks-at-all-trades." And so they plowed, planted, hoed, hayed and reaped their harvests.

The long winter season was not a time of leisure. It had its special labors—the butchering, the salting of meat, the curing and smoking of hams and shoulders, the making of sausages and head cheese, trying out tallow and lard, and pickling souse and tripe. Corn had to be shelled by scraping the ears on the edge of an iron shovel on which the boy or man doing the shelling sat. Wheat, barley and oats were threshed with flails upon the barn floor, then sifted and winnowed by hand, on some windy day.

After each drifting snowstorm every man and boy, and all the teams in town, were expected to share the work of breaking out the roads, and when the snows had fallen in the woodland, every boy who could swing an ax helped his father cut and load ox sledges with logs and fire wood. Yards were piled as high as the eaves of the houses with wood which, in time, was cut into backlogs, forelogs, and chunks for the fireplace, and for ovenwood, kindling, light wood and chips. The choicest longer logs were hauled to the sawmill to be cut into boards to be used for repairs

about the farm buildings—the sawyer taking half for his pay. Cuts from young chestnut trees were split for fencing rails and posts, many of which were needed, for fences around the grain fields had to be "horse-high, bull-proof and hog tight."

Swine were allowed to run at large, and cattle and horses grazed unattended along the highways. Stones were so numerous on the hills that, in time, stone walls took the place of rail fences. The best of the white pine butts were sawn into bolts or "rived" for shingles, by hand.

Straight hickory sticks and choice pieces of ash and white oak were saved to be fashioned into sled stakes, whipstocks, handles for hoes, shovels, forks, ax helves and plow handles, on winter evenings or when the days were stormy. Then, too, there were oxbows, cart tongues, hoops, and scores of other useful articles to be fashioned. All this work was done slowly by hand. The tools used were jackknife, ax, saw and drawshave.

Each farmer was required to deliver one prime load of wood at the minister's door. It was the age of wooden ware. The daily meals were eaten from wooden bowls and trenchers. The milk vessels were all of wood. Doors were held by big wooden latches, strong enough to bar the door if the latchstring were pulled in.

The cooper was one of the busiest men, for all looked to him for barrels for cider and beer, for dye tubs, malt vats, cheese vats and churns; for dry measures, firkins and buckets.

Pewter, tin and potter's ware were scarce and expensive—some few pieces had been brought over from England and were heirlooms; but the dish turner, with his rude lathe, turned out cherry and maple trenchers, bowls, trays, spoons, mortars and pestles, dippers and drinking cups for every day use.

Furniture was of the simplest design and was made mostly at home. By the chimney usually there stood a settle, made with a high back to ward off drafts. Usually the best bed was in the parlor and was of feathers. For common use the beds were made of coarse wool and were called "flock" beds. Beneath these were ticks, stuffed with straw or corn husks. A great chest held the family supply of linen. A clock was a rare possession. Noon marks on the kitchen floor to show when the sun was at its height, told the good wife when it was time to blow the horn for dinner. There were a few hour glasses, usually one in the pulpit to keep the minister from preaching less than an hour.

Every family made candles and soap as regularly as butter and cheese were made. The chief illumination was from the blaze of pine knots. These were separated into little slivers. They were so full of resin or pitch that they gave a brilliant, but unsteady light. Never was the fire on the hearth allowed to die out, for there were no matches. Every night, the last one to bed heaped the embers against the backlog, and covered them deep with ashes, ready to kindle the next day's fire. If a family lost its fire some one must get live coals or a burning brand from the nearest neighbor's —no matter how far away it might be.

All journeys were made either upon foot or on horseback. Often on the stout farm horse a pillion was fastened behind the saddle to carry a woman rider. Most wedding journeys were made in such fashion. A young couple, after being "published" for a fortnight on the meetinghouse door, rode thus upon one horse to the minister or magistrate, and returned as man and wife. Usually a new small home was built upon a piece of land from the paternal estate—a marriage portion to the bridegroom. It was customary for the groom to furnish the iron utensils around the fireside. The village blacksmith turned out trammels, cobirons, branders, toasting forks, and tongs. The settle, and a table, also the big linen chest were turned out by the local carpenter, and with a few necessary dishes for the cooking and serving of meals completed the groom's portion.

The bride's dowry consisted of a cow, her spinning-wheel, a "flock" bed, and the store of sheets, pillow cases, blankets, quilts and rugs which she had been working upon in anticipation of this happy day. For "best" wear she had an extra "serge gown" and a "say apron" besides a "satinesco petticoate," an extra "linsey woolsey petticoate," and over all "a red serge hood and mantle." She was lucky if some of her numerous relations gave her an iron pot, a brass kettle, a skillet, an iron porringer or two, or such heirlooms as a set of pewter plates and spoons, or a few dishes of common crockery.

In the evenings, by the firelight, the young husband made brooms of birch twigs or fashioned rude baskets of splint, and tools and utensils of wood. The young wife worked at her spinning-wheel or busily plied her knitting-needles. Godliness, cleanliness and industry were their home atmosphere.

Although there was plenty, the food of the farmer's family

was plain fare. The staples were bean porridge, brown bread, hominy, hasty pudding, pork, salt beef, salt fish and fresh fish. There were vegetables in their season. Molasses and honey were used for sweetening, as sugar was scarce and expensive. A cone of white sugar, weighing from eight to ten pounds and wrapped in purple paper, was an average yearly supply for a family. These purple paper wrappings were saved with care and used in dyeing yarn.

Potatoes were not yet in common use. Wheat, rye, oats, barley, peas, parsnips, carrots, onions and hops had been brought from England, and from the mother country also were brought apples, pears, cherries and quinces. From the Indians the settlers had got pumpkins, squashes, maize and beans.

It was discovered early that the hills around Harvard and Bolton were peculiarly adapted to fruit culture, and that such fruits, brought from England, improved greatly in size and flavor.

Tobacco was raised for domestic use, and the good wife was as fond of her cob pipe as was her husband. Mrs. Rowlandson, the wife of the minister, many years before had told in her narrative how "bewitching" was the habit of smoking. She added that it was a great waste of time, and that she had resolved to give up the habit.

One man left, among other provisions in his will, that his wife was to have twenty pounds of tobacco to be provided yearly by her sons.

In the inventories of the goods of "first citizens" once in a while we find such luxuries as "a silver cup," an "oval table" or a looking-glass.

In the forest wolves, wildcats and bears were numerous, and the farmers were driven to despair by their nightly raids upon pigs, lambs and calves. Catamounts were not rare, and the town paid a bounty on the head of a wolf, wildcat or lynx. A substantial reward was offered for the extermination of raccoons, foxes, gray squirrels and muskrats: they were considered vermin.

The pioneers had no lime for their houses, but about this period, 1730, the Whitcombs established lime kilns in the northeast corner of Bolton, and Fairbank and Houghton started others in the southeast section of Harvard. Laths and plaster then took the place of the sheathed walls and ceilings in the houses, and the high wainscoating of the earlier period. The shape of the

houses had changed little, and the two-storied front, with huge central chimney, and the roof sloping at the back to within eight or ten feet from the ground was the customary shape. The chief timbers for the frames were of hewn oak. Over the rough boarding was laid a second covering of thin lapped sheathing, "claved" from logs. Such claved boards soon came to be called clapboards.

The windows were small panes of greenish leaded glass, which let in but little light even in the brightest part of the day. In the museum of the Lancaster library there is an old window taken from the old Thurston house at the parting of the ways towards Sterling. The house was torn down around 1840, and was the last in town to have such windows.

Whenever possible, heavy wooden pins were used in construction, for nails were made by hand, were expensive and were bought by number—not by weight.

There were no porches to the houses, and the only projections of any kind were an occasional second story built out slightly beyond the lower story. There was no paint either within or without the house. There were often elm trees for shade; lilac bushes beside the door; some cinnamon roses and a few herbs, and usually a picturesque wellsweep that completed a homelike picture.

Fashions for both sexes were simple and unchanging. The clothing was literally grown on the farm—both flax and wool. The spinning, weaving, dyeing, cutting and sewing were done with the thought and the hope that the garment would outlive its owner. Much fine work went into the garments, and although all sewing was done by hand, no pains were spared to conceal the stitches. There is in Lancaster today much fine sewing that was done over a century ago.

There was much sociability and neighborhood visiting, because the folk were wholly dependant upon each other for company. There was no Christmas celebration—that was considered pagan: there were no balls, no card parties: but there were quilting parties, husking bees, sheep-shearings, and apple paring bees, each followed by a bountiful supper. The great feast day of the year was Thanksgiving.

On the Sabbath the call to church was by beating a drum. There was a horse block at the door for the women to alight. The men and the women sat apart, and the boys had benches in the gallery, with a tything-man who had long rod to rap them with,

if they misbehaved or went to sleep; and it was easy to go to sleep when the sermon and the prayer each lasted an hour. There was no instrumental music; one of the deacons gave the pitch for the tune and read the hymn line by line, before the singing began. The tunes used in regular succession were York, Hackney, Windsor, and St. Mary.

CHAPTER XXIV

1730—Harvard Seeks Independence—Other Towns Follow

LANCASTER'S NEAREST NEIGHBOR ON THE NORTH WAS THE township of Groton, of which the present town of Ayer was a part. Road connecting the two towns was laid out to follow the course of the river, but, in 1673, owing to the annual freshets which often made it impassable; a joint committee from the two towns had relocated it upon higher grounds in much the same course in use today. Between the two towns, Groton and Lancaster, this highway crossed a strip of land that was not claimed by either town. It stretched the whole seven miles along the southern boundary of Groton, and was but two-thirds of a mile wide. Together with other unappropriated lands to the east, this "No-man's-land" was given to establish the town of Stow, and soon came to be known as Stow Leg. The district known as "Shabokin," which now is used as a rifle range by Fort Devens was a part of Stow Leg. Here still may be found cellar holes marking the location of early homes.

It had been a known fact for several years that the householders east of the Nashaway river were planning to secede from the mother town at the earliest opportunity. The time came with the controversy over enlarging the meetinghouse, in 1728. That all-important center—the meetinghouse—was not large enough to accommodate the fast growing population, and, although it had been enlarged, greatly, the voters who were ambitious to establish a new township saw to it that money was not forthcoming to make it sufficiently ample.

The voters living around Bear Hill voiced their plans at town-meeting in May, 1730, asking for "Setting off a part of ye Town of Lancaster" sufficient for a township with "that part of Stow and Groton whose inhabitants have agreed and covenanted with the petitioners."

The voters of Stow and Groton were approached with a similar proposition at the same time. Lancaster and Stow voted not to allow the petition. Groton was willing to accede within certain

limits, one being that "No part of the Town on the West Side of the Nashua River" be taken.

Nothing daunted, the secessionists carried their petition to the House of Representatives, with the result that an "Honourable Board" was appointed to repair to the lands petitioned for, and view their situation and circumstances.

Lancaster remained firmly opposed to separation, but tried to compromise by offering to build two meetinghouses in places considered most suitable to accommodate the whole town.

The first plan was to cut off the whole northern third of the old township of Lancaster. The citizens living west of the river in that section bitterly opposed being set off as part of the new town. All the householders around Wataquadock and to the south of that hill also were opposed to the plan, for they were biding their time to propose a township of their own. Their remonstrance was presented by "John Beaman and ten others, Inhabitants of the Southwest part of the Northeast quarter of the old Township of Lancaster."

Six of the nine petitioners from Groton bore the surname Farnsworth, the others were Davis, Robbins and Stone. There were ten petitioners from Stow Leg. Of the forty-four petitioners from Lancaster six were named Atherton; four were Houghtons; six were Willards; one each, Fairbanks and Whitcomb, three Wrights and four Whitneys. All these names proclaim their pioneer ancestry.

There were concessions on all sides, and compromises about the boundaries. Stow persistently opposed but the peculiar situation of the "Leg" made its opposition seem unreasonable to the Board and, in the short space of two years, the act of incorporation for the new township was approved and published on June 17, 1732.

No name was given to the town in the bill, but later "Harvard" was inserted in the handwriting of Secretary Josiah Willard, whose father had been acting president of the university at Cambridge from 1701—1707. There seems to have been no local reason for the name.

Stow had lost only that part of the Leg which lay east of the Nashua river. Groton had given the southern part of its area which lay east of the river, which was also the dividing line for Lancaster, but the mother town had given an area of about eighteen square miles—more than twice as much as Groton gave.

The first town meetings in Harvard were in a building about a third of a mile north of the present Common, where, it is believed, church services had been held for a time, before 1732. It now was deemed desirable to have a new house of worship, and a solemn fast was observed in September, 1732, as a first step, to be followed by building a church and selecting a pastor.

The land chosen for the site was common, the property of the Lancaster proprietors, and was known as "Meeting House Plain." A committee was appointed to petition Lancaster to grant to Harvard about thirty acres of this common land for a meeting-house, for a training-field, for a burying-field "and other Public uses."

The mother town, having done all she could to prevent the separation, seems now to have accepted the situation and so, quite generously, gave the desired land, which once covered a much larger area than the present Common, church grounds and cemetery in Harvard. This friendly gesture seems to have cemented the peaceful relations which have existed since between the towns.

Encouraged by the fact that they had escaped being included in the town of Harvard, the residents of "the southwest part of the northeast quarter" of Lancaster soon began to prepare their presentation of plans for their own township. They wanted all the land east of the rivers not taken by Harvard. About a dozen householders in the southwest corner of the town petitioned for a separate organization at the same time as did the citizens around Wataquadock, in May, 1733.

Both requests were repulsed sternly; but some attempt was made to soften the decree by an offer to build three new meeting-houses, to accommodate the widely scattered population. That did not satisfy the petitioners. Every year some new petition went before the state legislature for dismemberment of Lancaster. Town meetings were frequent and bitter. The old mother town was far from happy over the proposed separations. The "children" were determined to break away.

An act creating the new town, given the Lancashire name of Bolton was passed in June, 1738, its western boundary running four miles east of the western boundary of the original grant, and parallel with it. Out of this area of about thirty-five square miles, Berlin, and a part of Hudson have been taken.

The section in the southwest corner of Lancaster was known

by the Indian name Woonksechocksett, comprising the region north of Washacum pond. This soon became shortened to Chocksett. The people in that precinct were growing more numerous year by year, and, headed by Gamaliel Beaman, pressed their demand for separation.

Further to please the people in the Second Precinct, the lumber taken from the demolished meetinghouse on the Old Common was used for three new schoolhouses—one on the opposite side of the road near the meetinghouse on the Neck; one near the Chocksett meetinghouse; a third nearly opposite the present schoolhouse at Deershorns. Each of them was eighteen by twenty-four feet, with seven foot studding.

The north part of Shrewsbury was set off as a precinct in 1742, and Lancaster then gave up about five square miles more at its southern boundary, which, forty years later, became Boylston.

Another attempt was made in 1747, to sever a portion of the northeast corner of the town by Henry Haskell with other residents of Harvard, Groton and Stow. This was unsuccessful.

The part of Stow Leg west of the river was given to Shirley when that district was authorized in 1753 and Lancaster's bounds were not changed.

The traditions of the three towns and two precincts which were formed from Lancaster's territory, in the ten years between 1732 and 1742, are alike. All share with the mother town the heritage of all the toil, the sacrifice, the bravery and heroism, of its pioneer ancestry. All could boast of the deeds of daring and the hardships endured in encounters with wild beasts and with the savages. All shared the good that had come to them in these later years of prosperity and freedom from war and, while each town looked forward to its own civic advancement, each and all were joined in the common cause of promoting the good of their state and country. All at this time were loyal to the King of England, and might have remained so had the policy of the old country been considered fair.

The Site of the Third Meetinghouse

After three years of wrangling, this meetinghouse was built in 1721 upon Bridebake Plain on the "east side" of the rivers. The picture is taken from the graveyard across the road.

The Site of Lancaster's Fourth Meetinghouse and the Little Common (Marked by Memorial Stone)

The road leading away in the distance was the first road out of town.

CHAPTER XXV

Two New Meetinghouses—1742-1744

NUMEROUS GRANDSONS OF LANCASTER'S PIONEERS HAD SETTLED in the valley of the North river, on the lands of the "Additional Grant." These families of Houghtons, Wilders, Carters and Sawyers were even farther from the meetinghouse and were more numerous than the residents of "Chocksett." They presented a petition for separation in 1737; then shrewdly joined with the mother town to defeat the separation of Chocksett, in order to gain consent for their own proposal. The ruse was successful and, in 1740, twenty-six square miles was set off with the name of another old English town—Leominster.

With the exception of the one farm of Thomas Houghton in the northwest corner of the old town, all the land given to Leominster was a part of the "Additional Grant" and did not alter materially the original bounds of Lancaster.

The Chocksett people did not give up, and finally the mother town consented to a separation provided the new town would assume the support, for all time, of the bridge over the south branch of the river, known as Atherton's bridge. This was not at all acceptable to the Chocksett people. They saw no reason for burdening themselves in this way when they were high and dry, above all danger of floods. So what was known as the "Chocksett war" raged on for two more years, when, in 1742, Lancaster voted to build them a separate meetinghouse as well as to build a new one for herself.

The house of worship for the Chocksett Precinct was built "near Ridge Hill," and the first service was held in it in November, 1742.

Again a legislative committee was called upon to decide the location. Chocksett was called the Second Precinct, and £200 was voted for its church, while £400 was allowed for the home church—this time built upon the Neck, at the top of Schoolhouse Hill, on the land kept "common" by the town. The spot is marked by a boulder at the south end of the main street to South Lancaster, at the top of the hill.

The following description of the new meetinghouse on the Neck is taken from a description by Hon. H. S. Nourse:—

The new First Church building was nearly square in plan, being about fifty-five by forty-five feet, with entrance doors in the middle of the north, east and south sides. Across the same three sides were galleries to which stairs led from the side-aisles. One of these was assigned to men exclusively, the opposite one to women. Special seats apart were for "negroes." Directly before, and forming a part of the pulpit, was a deacon's seat. On a part of the floor the wealthier families were permitted to build family pews at their own cost. These were square, mostly about six feet by five, ranged along the walls from the pulpit, while in the center of the floor, on either side of a central aisle were long seats, the female part of the congregation occupying one side, the male the other. The pews were "dignified," the size and position of each marking pretty well the wealth and social rank of its owner in the community. The sequence of the first families in 1744 appears nearly this: Rev. John Prentice, Deacon Josiah White, Colonel Samuel Willard, Captain John Bennett, Hon. Joseph Wilder, John Carter, Thomas Wilder, etc.

CHAPTER XXVI

Fifteen Years of Peace—1725-1740

A LULL IN ACTIVE WARFARE CAME TO LANCASTER MEN BETWEEN the end of Lovewell's War and the beginning of what is known as "King George's" war. Before 1725 the men of the town never had been far from their guns and at all times were ready to fight the ever menacing savage foe. Protecting their homes and the lives of their families had been their uppermost thought even long after the last actual onslaught by the Indians. They had been so busy in the protection of their own homes that, with their hard struggle to rebuild their town, there had been few to volunteer their services in other fields.

During the fifteen years of peace which followed 1725 the town was concerned in adjusting its affairs to meet the new conditions caused by the setting off of Harvard, Bolton and Leominster, and the practical separation, when Sterling was made a separate precinct.

Strange as it may seem, the town showed little sign of suffering from these divisions. To be sure the discussions and "precinct strategy," when each prospective township joined the mother town to help defeat the aims of the other aspirants for autonomy, made town meetings frequent and lively.

The "Chocksett War," as it concerned the setting off of Sterling was bitterest of all, especially after the granting of new charters to the three towns to the east. So the setting off of the district as a second precinct was a compromise, which lasted nearly half a century.

But the Chocksett residents, headed by Gamaliel Beaman, never gave up the fight. Even though they were temporarily appeased by the allotment of their own church and schoolhouse, they carried the struggle for complete separation into the next generation.

Although Lancaster had lost more than half its area by the land grants to Harvard, Bolton, Berlin and Leominster, its gains

by births, and by newcomers from other towns, had made up the loss of inhabitants.

Rev. John Prentice, the dignified and scholarly pastor of the parish, was not without honor outside of his own town, for he was selected to deliver the Election Sermon at Boston, May 28, 1735. The town was growing in wealth as well as in numbers and there were other men important politically and socially in the town.

The wealthiest citizen of the town was Colonel Samuel Willard. He was a grandson of Major Simon Willard and son of Henry. He was the highest military officer of this district for twenty-five years, and for ten years was Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He had won a reputation as an able and popular commander with the rangers in Lovewell's war. He sold his paternal estate on the Still River side of the town, in 1727, and built the house still standing near the railroad crossing on the Neck Road in the Center. He was one of the townsmen chosen to serve on the committee for opposing the separation of Harvard. He seems to have inherited the place in public esteem so long held by his paternal grandfather, Major Simon Willard.

An important person, who perhaps might have been appointed the first judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1731, except for his great age and his growing blindness, was Justice John Houghton. Although eighty years of age at that time, he was mentally and physically alert. His service as town clerk covered forty years, and he was moderator, selectman and assessor at various times. His penmanship was careful and distinct as became the town's earliest schoolmaster. John Houghton was also of pioneer ancestry and had married Mary Farrar. They set up their home on Bridecake Plain, opposite the State Industrial School. After becoming a widower at the age of seventy-five and fifty-two years of married life, John Houghton married Hannah Wilder, aged seventy-two. In the record of his death in the Boston Post for Monday, February 14, 1737, the last sentence is,—"There are now living of his children 7, of his grandchildren, 54, and of his Great Grandchildren 73, in all 134."

A number of important families naturally transferred their allegiance to the new townships and some important people moved to other towns, notably Edward Hartwell, who removed to Lunenburg and was, for many years, its most prominent citizen, serving as representative for that town after he was eighty years

old. He was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1750, and lived to the great age of ninety seven years.

After fifteen years of peace and prosperity, the war drums sounded again, and a recruiting officer went from house to house seeking volunteers in Lancaster. England had forced war upon Spain by a commercial policy which denied to Spain the right to search upon the seas, and held for herself a monopoly of the slave trade in Africa and the enormous gains from smuggling and man-stealing ventures. England also demanded free trade from other powers, but denied it to her own North American colonies. Under the pretense of championing free commerce, England called upon her colonies to aid in an attack upon the Spanish strongholds in the West Indies. Massachusetts was required to furnish a regiment to join the forces of Vice-admiral Edward Vernon. For some reason only four of ten expected captains' commissions were received. One of these went to John Prescott of Concord, a direct descendant of John Prescott of Lancaster, whose name he bore. The historian, Joseph Willard, claims a large enlistment—nearly a twenty-fifth of the whole quota of the Commonwealth, and states that "there were eighteen or nineteen in this expedition who belonged to Lancaster; none of them lived to return." Jonathan Houghton of Lancaster was one of Prescott's lieutenants.

Dr. William Douglass, in his Summary, states that the expedition cost the province £7000, and says that "of the 500 men sent out from Massachusetts Bay not exceeding 50 returned." Many of the men were victims of a pestilence during the siege of Carthagena, and when the defeated army was withdrawn to Jamaica, many more fell victim of the disease. Neither history nor tradition has told the story of the deeds or sufferings of the Lancaster volunteers in this unnecessary and unrighteous venture. But the love of king and country was so inbred in these colonists that service was a paramount duty at that time.

CHAPTER XXVII

King George's War—1744-1749

England and France became involved in a war over the Austrian succession in 1744, and both countries looked to their colonies in the New World for support. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were undivided at that time and were called Acadia, and although it had been a British possession since 1710 its inhabitants were nearly all French Catholics; and the Islands, including Cape Breton, were still retained by the French.

When war was declared between the two countries the news reached Cape Breton three weeks before it got to Boston. The French took advantage of this and, in a surprise attack, captured Canseau, and took the inhabitants as prisoners to Louisburg fortress. Acadia was practically defenseless, so, having captured it, the next step would be to attack the New England coast. All New England shipping was at stake, as well as the invaluable codfisheries, and the coast was ill prepared to withstand any attack which they feared was being planned in the supposedly impregnable fortresses of Louisburg and Quebec.

William Shirley was then governor of Massachusetts. He was considered "gifted with great political sagacity." He clearly saw that only by the capture of Louisburg could any measure of security be insured New England. At great cost to the French, this fortress had been perfected in all the defenses then known to military art. Six months' provisions were stored back of the hundred and more heavy caliber guns mounted in the batteries. An English officer, familiar with the works, wrote that any army attacking them would have the same prospect of success "as the Devils might have in storming Heaven." Some of the prisoners taken at Canseau, when exchanged, had brought back descriptions of the fortifications, and of supposed vulnerable points in its defenses.

Governor Shirley was not dismayed and succeeded in arousing great enthusiasm, accompanied with such great religious fervor

that the expedition is said to have resembled a crusade of the Middle Ages.

With all possible speed, and in great secrecy 3,250 men of Massachusetts, with 820 men from Connecticut and New Hampshire, were assembled for the expedition in two months time. They sailed from Boston on the 24th of March, 1745, leaving behind the message "Pray for us and we will fight for you."

Besides that of Sir William Pepperell, Esq., commander-in-chief of the land forces, there were five infantry regiments led from Massachusetts. The Worcester County regiment, known as the Fourth Massachusetts, was under the command of Lancaster's able soldier, Col. Samuel Willard, who, as we know, had been a popular officer in Lovewell's War, and had been at the head of the militia in times of peace. His acceptance of his appointment at the head of the regiment is preserved in the Pepperell Papers, but no rolls of the regiment exist, and the names of our townsmen who volunteered are unknown. It is stated that there were probably fully fifty who went from here.

The troops arrived before Louisburg on the thirteenth of April "less than four thousand men, unused to war, undisciplined, and that had never seen a siege in their lives," landed on a dangerous coast, dragged their siege guns over rocky hills and through morasses, surrounded the fortifications with their batteries and by sheer audacity compelled surrender on the 17th of June, 1745—a day to be made more memorable thirty years later at Bunker Hill.

The English Admiral, Peter Warren, was present with his fleet but did not fire a single gun during the siege. The glory really belonged to the men of New England but the prizes of war—more than a million pounds—*all* went to the King's navy and into the King's chest. The soldiers from the colonies waited three years before even their expenses were paid, and then the money was paid not as a debt due, but as a gracious gift from his majesty, the King.

When the news of victory reached Boston, New York and Philadelphia there was great rejoicing. Huge bonfires were kindled. There was a general celebration.

The severe climate and toil of the siege had told severely upon these hardy men and the number of victims of disease was far greater than of those killed in action. Just how many men from

Lancaster died is unknown. The two sons of Col. Samuel Willard survived and soon after were promoted: Abijah, to be captain-lieutenant of the first company, and Levi, to be ensign. The former was twenty-one years of age, and Levi, eighteen.

In spite of the great rejoicing over the capture of Louisburg, New England, in the year following, was in a continual state of unrest. It was known that France had fitted out an armada, headed by forty warships under the Duc d'Anville, to ravage the New England coast.

Over six thousand of our militia were stationed at Boston, and, with all possible speed, rebuilt and garrisoned what few forts there were along the New England coast. Knowing full well the weakness of their defenses, they none the less resolutely awaited, in dread suspense, the coming of their powerful enemy from France.

But the God of battles was on the side of the colonists, in spite of the fact that the mother country made no move to protect them from impending ruin. A great storm arose at sea, lashed and tore the French fleet and scattered it; many of the sailors and soldiers died from disease; and, in September, the Admiral, d'Anville died. New England was spared.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Indian Raids on a New Frontier—1740

IT SOON BECAME APPARENT TO LANCASTER'S CAPABLE MILITARY officer, Col. Samuel Willard, that the frontier settlements were in great danger from Indian raids. Anxious to prepare against such attacks, Col. Willard addressed a "memorial" to the governor, William Shirley, in the early part of April, 1748, informing him that the frontier towns to the west of Lancaster were in grave peril from Indian onslaught, with insufficient garrisons and men. He begged that scouts be appointed to maintain a constant watch "back of these towns," to defend them. As usual, the Governor paid no attention to the letter.

Three months later the dreaded attack came—first upon what is now Ashby. A half-civilized Indian, named Surdody, led a band of eighty savages in a raid upon the lonely garrison of John Fitch, a carpenter. Two soldiers, Blodgett and Jennings, stationed in the garrison, were slain; and Fitch, with his wife and five children were carried away.

Col. Willard immediately ordered out troops under the command of Capt. Ephraim Wilder, Jr., of Lancaster, with various companies of militia from surrounding towns, to go in pursuit. Without doubt the Indians would have been captured but the pursuit was given up when a note, which Fitch had pinned to a tree, was found. He urged the pursuers to give up any attempt at rescue as the savages had said they would kill their prisoners at once if attacked by the rangers. Fitch and his five children returned in safety the year following, but his wife died on the journey home.

Again Col. Willard wrote to the Governor and his Council mentioning six frontier towns for which there were a total of but sixty-two soldiers and nineteen town scouts, which, he said, was "by no means sufficient to guard them."

By cunning and strategy, French leaders in Canada had won as allies the more savage Indians. Some of the French peasants had married squaws. Presents and promises of bounty, appealed to the Indians' well-known love of finery, which, with promise

of rich reward, made them eager, often under French leaders, to pillage and plunder the English frontier settlements. Bands of painted savages were equipped and went out to murder, burn and plunder. These cunning, swift-footed fiends would skulk around some lonely cabin, watch for a chance to surprise its owner, quickly scalp him, and drive his wife and children before them back through the trackless forests into Canada, themselves laden with all the spoils they could gather. Then in Montreal or Quebec they would receive the promised bounty and ransom money.

Again it had become necessary to keep parties of rangers constantly on the watch.

The frontier now was above Lunenburg and Leominster to the north, and west of Petersham. Col. Willard ordered out a company of men to go "into the woods" under the command of Capt. Jonathan Whitney. These men were from Bolton and Harvard. A company of twenty was led from Lunenburg by Captain John Willard, and a smaller scouting party from Leominster was headed by Captain Jonathan White. Repeated accounts of shooting, and of Indian tracks kept these rangers on the alert throughout that year—1748.

Colonel Josiah Willard of Lunenburg was in command of "the Truck House above Northfield commonly called Fort Dummer" as he wrote of it in 1740. He and his kindred owned the site and the lands about it. The little garrison was manned by less than a dozen men, and these were nearly all Willards or of families connected with them by marriage. Fort Dummer began to figure as a strategic position, along with Charlestown No. 4 in New Hampshire and Fort Massachusetts in 1748. In July of that year a party of thirteen was waylaid by Indians near Fort Dummer, and only three escaped.

One of the few stories that have come down to us is that of a time when the Indians nearly captured this fort by a ruse, as follows. "The side of Chesterfield mountain, opposite the fort, was covered with dense woods, with opening intervals. One day an Indian, disguised as a bear, was seen on the hillside, and the occupants of the fort were tempted to cross the river and pursue him. Bruin, seeing them approach, withdrew gradually up the mountain, while his comrades were watching to make a rush for the fort; and it is said that the trick was discovered just in time to foil the enemy."

In the Massachusetts Archives is found a letter from Matthew Wyman, of Lancaster, to the Governor, telling of his capture and bondage in Canada, where he was kept from June to October, and robbed of his gun and a "Hat worth 5s." He tells of the distress and impoverishment of his family and asks for "some Relief." Eight pounds in money and a gun were voted the petitioner, and a few years later he is found again fighting for his majesty the King.

All the sacrifices and the bravery of new England men went for naught, for while the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle brought a semblance of peace between the French and the English, all that had been taken from the French, by the same treaty was restored to them.

These lessons were sinking deep into the souls of the New England men. They were not unmindful that England never had concerned herself over the attacks of the Indians upon their homes nor offered help when, in dread suspense, the New England colonies were in danger from the attack by the French. The only reward for distinguished service went to William Pepperell, who was knighted. Col. Willard's sons were in constant peril. Their only reward was promotion. It was almost impossible to get pay for actual service, and as for bounty, that all went into the coffers of the king.

The lack of a sound currency greatly embarrassed business at this time. The colonists had become impoverished by wars and taxes, and something that might be called the "first depression" was bearing down upon them. The people of Massachusetts were trying the experiment of using paper money. The only measure for wealth was ownership of acres and cattle. Life to the majority was a struggle for shelter, food and raiment. It was the custom for tax payers to "work out" their taxes upon the highways under the supervision of surveyors. The paper currency was worth less than a third of its face value, so a summer day's wage for an able bodied man was then about twenty cents: a winter day's pay was fourteen cents. Finally the British Government sent money for a part of the expense that had been incurred in the capture of Louisburg, and other expeditions. Upon the receipt of about £180 sterling, the notes of the colonies were cancelled and specie began to circulate. A land bank company was established in 1741, and loaned bills of credit on security of real estate; but they had no funds for redeeming them, and the banks had

to fail. There was not sufficient silver and gold in the country to redeem outstanding bills. In commenting upon this financial crisis, in his History of Lancaster, Rev. A. P. Marvin says "Every new generation seems to need a terrible experience to learn the plain fact that a paper promise to pay is worthless unless based upon ample ability to redeem itself, on demand, with gold or silver."

If fighting for the King brought no other reward, it at least taught the colonists self dependence and gave them confidence in their own strength which so soon was to be needed in a conflict as yet undreamed—the War for Independence.

CHAPTER XXIX

End of the Ministry of Reverend John Prentice—Reverend Timothy Harrington Succeeds Him—1748

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM, NEW ENGLAND MEN BEGAN TO CHANGE in personal appearance. Their mode of living and their diet told a different story in their faces. They were no longer like their English forbears. The English diet had been beef, beer and wheat. Theirs had become pork, cider and corn, which produced less brawn but more muscle. Their struggle with the severe climate and their heavy farm work kept them lean. We begin now to see the "raw-boned Yankees"—taller, more active, nimbler of wit than their English contemporaries. Existing conditions were giving them a clearer insight into their own problems and preparing them to work out their own salvation.

Lancaster surrendered about five square miles more from the southern end of her territory when, in 1742, a part of Shrewsbury was set off as a separate precinct, later to become the town of Boylston. A few years later an attempt was made to take away still more territory at the north end of the town. Fourteen residents then joined citizens of Harvard, Groton and Stow, in 1747, hoping to form a township. It was proposed to take two or three square miles in the northeast corner of the town.

The attempt failed, and when the district of Shirley finally was authorized, in 1753, the bounds of Lancaster were not disturbed. While still belonging to this town, this district, called Shabikin is now under the control of the United States government as an outpost of Fort Devens.

A counter attempt to join Lancaster was made by the residents of a strip of land belonging to Shrewsbury, called the Leg, in 1748. Permission was not granted by the General Court at the time, but twenty years later such addition was made to the town.

The first of the town's long pastorates closed in 1748, when after forty-three years of service, Rev. John Prentice died. Tradition tells us that his father, along with Capt. Thomas Prentice,

had been members of the bodyguard of Oliver Cromwell, in England.

Mr. Prentice graduated from Harvard College in 1700. Soon after coming to Lancaster he married the widow of his predecessor, Rev. Andrew Gardner. Thus he came into possession of the parsonage which the town had built, first for Rev. John Whiting, whose widow had resold to the town, so that it had passed to Mr. Gardner.

The house is described as a large, unpainted, two-story mansion, fronting south. A double row of huge buttonwood trees led down to the main road. At the back of the house the roof sloped to within a few feet of the ground. Nearby was a well, with a huge well-sweep, which remained until near the close of the last century. The location was known for many years as "the ministerial lands" and was at the corner, on the east side of the Main Street, and the road leading to George Hill, in South Lancaster. For a half a century it has been known as "Fairlawn," the estate of the late E. V. R. Thayer.

With his own funds Reverend Mr. Prentice bought the house and lands diagonally across the way to the east, once the home of the unfortunate Samuel Prescott, who, heartbroken over his unintentional killing of the minister, Mr. Gardner, had left Lancaster. This estate went to the eldest son, Dr. Stanton Prentice, for many years a physician of this town.

Upon the death of his first wife, Reverend Mr. Prentice had married a widow, Mrs. Prudence Foster Swan. By the first marriage there were seven children, by the second marriage three.

At this time the minister of any rural town, where, supposedly, there was no distinction in rank, was not only an autocrat but an aristocrat; and was so with full knowledge and consent of his parish. Even in his dress he was set above the common people by the cloth and the cut of his garments. He wore a powdered wig and a cocked hat. At his knees long silken stockings met the breeches, where they were fastened with gold or silver buckles. At the neck were finely stitched white neck bands, and at his wrists were ruffles of the same sheer linen.

No matter how rich any parishioner might be, the minister and his wife were socially above him. The parson was a majority in the church, and his was often the deciding vote in town meeting. He accepted this exalted position with becoming dignity, insisting on it, if necessary.

His children inherited this position as a birth right and "the minister's son" and "the parson's daughter" were admitted to high social standing, as if by divine right.

The family of Reverend John Prentice helped not a little to establish an aristocracy in the towns around. The eldest son, Dr. Stanton, married twice. His wives were sisters, women of great beauty and accomplishments, daughters of Samuel Jennison of Groton. They bore him sixteen children.

A daughter, Mary Prentice, married Rev. Job Cushing. Two of her sons became Doctors of Divinity and another son, Thomas Parkman Cushing, founded Cushing Academy, in Ashburnham.

Another daughter, Rebecca Prentice, married Rev. John Mellen, the first minister of the second precinct, soon to become Sterling and her son was Judge Mellen of Portland, Maine.

Relief Prentice married Rev. John Rogers, of Leominster. All of these with the progeny of the divine's other six children added many names to the social register of New England.

In spite of her exalted social position, the minister's wife eked out his small salary by keeping what would be called today a small drygoods shop, in a small building near her house.

Rev. John Prentice is described as a man of severe and dignified appearance, thoroughly liberal in his style of preaching. While he was kindly and held in high esteem, he lost no time in bringing offenders to justice: for instance Jesse Wheeler, was convicted by the court for "planting corn upon the Sabbath day," and fined fifteen shillings to be used for the poor of the parish.

Following the pastorate of Mr. Prentice, Rev. Timothy Harrington was invited to settle here. He had graduated from Harvard College and for a short time had preached at Lower Ashuelot, a town which had been abandoned in the Indian raids of the year before. He was installed here in November, 1748.

CHAPTER XXX

The Centennial Year—1753

THE SETTLERS IN THE NORTH WEST PART OF WORCESTER COUNTY had grown so discouraged, and were so fearful of being attacked and slain that many had deserted their homes and returned to the more eastern towns whence they had migrated. What is now Ashburnham, then called Dorchester-Canada, had been confirmed as a township in 1736, and had a church, a saw-mill, and at least two fortified houses; but fear of the savage foe drove all the inhabitants out, and soon not an occupied dwelling was left. The town was utterly deserted until after 1750. The French hated their English neighbors more than ever. Bands of Indian allies now and then were equipped and sent out to burn plunder and scalp along the border, and then return to receive a bounty, in spite of pretended peace.

Lancaster, now was so far from the frontier that it was considered safe from Indian invasion, and the great advantages of its location were well known. The population was increasing rapidly by the addition of several families, formerly from the Bay towns, and many names were added to the voting list.

There were still plenty of wild animals in this region, for as late as 1732, a Lancaster hunter was paid a bounty for five wolves and sixteen wildcats. The provincial law offered a reward for the destruction of raccoons, gray squirrels and muskrats, also foxes: all these were numerous enough to be considered vermin. Passenger pigeons were also plentiful, and were snared by the hundreds and eaten. About this time steps were taken to prevent the killing of deer, out of season, and there after "deer reeves" were among the town officers annually chosen.

The year 1749 was noted for a great drought. Almost no rain fell after the melting of the snow until the sixth of July. Springs and brooks dried up; many of the trees in the forests dropped their leaves, and soon were killed; the early crops were destroyed and much of the grass was dried up in the great heat. The privation and disappointment of this blow to their farms added to the gloomy

certainty of impending war must have preyed upon the spirits of the people, but their minds were intent upon the great question of right and the struggle for liberty.

Lancaster celebrated her one hundredth birthday in the parish meetinghouse on May 28, 1753. The pastor, Reverend Timothy Harrington preached a "century sermon" which was printed in a pamphlet of twenty-nine pages. The early annals of the town were given in condensed form, while half the pages were devoted to the history of the Jews and the details of the various sieges of Jerusalem. It has always been a matter of regret to historians that the minister had not filled these pages with reminiscences of those earlier days of which no town or church records tell the story, or of the pitiful sacrifice of Lancaster youth at Carthagena, or the brave deeds of Colonel Willard's regiment in the siege of Louisburg.

The town was free from internal dissension, as the second Precinct was satisfied temporarily with its own church and its young pastor, Rev. John Mellen, who soon was considered one of the ablest clergymen of his day.

The redemption of paper currency had eased the financial depression, but life at its best was simple. The heavy carts and farm wagons had to answer for means of travel, for in Lancaster in this year, tax was paid to the Province upon but three chaises, while the younger towns recently set off, had neither chaise nor chair.

Generous provision was made for schools. Rev. Josiah Swan, a son of Mrs. Prentice, was generally the teacher of the school in the center of the town, from 1747 to 1760, while Rev. Josiah Brown was schoolmaster at Chocksett for as many years. For the third school the teachers were successively: Stephen Frost, Edward Bass, Joseph Palmer, Moses Hemmenway and Samuel Locke—all Harvard graduates—the last named a resident of the town, afterwards president of Harvard College.

No new census of the town was taken until ten years later, but the population in the centennial year is estimated from an existing tax list to be about 1,500 persons.

CHAPTER XXXI

Lancaster's Part in the Conquest of Canada—1754-1755

SEVEN YEARS OF PEACE HAD PASSED, BUT IN 1754 THE BRITISH colonies prepared for a struggle to settle, once for all, the fate of the rival civilizations. The mother countries did not declare war until two years later, but frequent collisions upon the frontiers foretold a desperate struggle.

Again Louisburg had become a standing menace to the commerce of New England. The Puritans were pushing their preparations with all possible speed. All the old forts were being strengthened and, during the fall of 1754, Capt. Gershom Flagg, commanding several mechanics and carpenters from Lancaster, worked upon the construction of Fort Halifax, on the Kennebec River, in Maine. To the western frontier Ensign John May led out thirteen soldiers to join Col. Israel Williams. Other men of the town were on the eastern front, in the regiment of Col. John Winslow.

The French had extended a line of forts and blockhouses from the Ohio river to the mouth of the St. Lawrence. They claimed, by right of discovery, the Mississippi and its tributaries to their sources in the Alleghanies, and were preparing to make their claim good. They had strengthened their fortresses, from the Acadian forts at the head of the Bay of Fundy, all along the way.

Four great expeditions were planned in 1755 against this French line of occupation, and four Colonial and British armies were sent out. Lancaster was represented in two—that against Crown Point, in New York, and the Acadian Campaign.

Lancaster had lost her veteran military commander by the death of Colonel Samuel Willard in 1752. His place was taken by his three sons, each one becoming a colonel.

The eldest son bore his father's name; and in the expedition against Crown Point this Samuel Willard was commissioned to raise a regiment of 800 men. John Whitcomb, of Bolton, was second in command. Shortly after joining his army, Col. Willard

was stricken with a fever at Lake George and died, in his thirty-sixth year. Whitcomb was promoted to the command. In the regiment were seven men from Lancaster, including two lieutenants, Hezekiah Whitcomb and William Richardson, Jr. Lieut. Benjamin Wilder led a troop of cavalry—thirty three volunteers from the neighborhood, but the majority of Lancaster men, fifty-one in number fought in the regiment of Col. Ruggles under three Lancaster captains—Joseph and Asa Whitcomb and Benjamin Ballard. These three companies were in the bloody battle of September 8, known as "the morning fight" at Lake George. In spite of the mismanagement of the commander-in-chief, the undisciplined but brave New England soldiers were victorious in what had seemed likely to be defeat. The regiment suffered severely and on that day, ten of the fifty-one from Lancaster were killed or mortally wounded.

Many others were the victims of camp fevers and other diseases, and in the fall, dragged themselves homeward through the wilderness, or were brought on horseback by easy stages. Petitions for repayment, preserved in the Massachusetts archives, show some of the experiences of these patriots: Aaron Dresser writes, "I was taken sick at the Camp and was unable to Travil and Brought Down to Albaney In a wagon and Remaind sick at Albaney thre wekes and thre Days and then was unable to travil on foot and was forst to Hire a man and Horse to Carry me homward." For the cost of the journey "which ye man was 15 Days a performing I being so weke" he asks £5–18s–6d. Other petitions mention candles, boarding, nurses, doctors' bills and horse hire, and two widows ask an allowance for "Nussing and Billiting" as well as "Doctring."

This first Crown Point expedition was fruitless, except for the experience and confidence in their own officers it gave to the soldiers of New England.

The story of the campaign is one of mismanagement, delay and inefficiency on the part of the British officers. Their treatment of the Colonial officers and men was breeding hatred, and contempt as well, in the New England men, and it was hard for them to fight with a will under officers so incompetent, so unfair, and so grasping——so pompous and so lazy.

Campaign after campaign was planned but all were fruitless. The disheartened New England men spent their winters either

in camp or in their homes, knowing that with the coming of spring it must all be gone through again; and always with the fear that the French would follow up their victories with invasion of the colonies.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Acadian Expedition—1755

THE ACADIAN CAMPAIGN, IN WHICH LANCASTER MEN TOOK PART was the second expedition of the four planned against the French. It was even more inglorious than that against Crown Point, but it is famous in song and story. Lancaster's part never had had the prominence it deserves. Few people know it was a Lancaster man into whose unwilling hands was placed the order to banish the French from the regions bordering on the Bay of Fundy and the isthmus connecting New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Nearly two centuries have passed

> "since the burning of Grand Pré,
> When on the falling tide the freighted vessels departed,
> Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into exile,
> Exile without end, and without an example in story."

The poet Longfellow tells the story in "Evangeline."

Two thousand men embarked from Boston on the 20th of May, 1755, under Colonel John Winslow. Of this number one company of 105 men, allotted to the 2nd Battalion, was organized and officered by Lancaster men. These were: Capt. Abijah Willard, Lieut. Joshua Willard, Second Lieut. Moses Haskell, Ensign Caleb Willard. They were assigned to a sloop called "Victory." This company took part in the capture of Beau Sejour.

Captain Abijah Willard and his brother Joshua were sons of the elder Colonel Samuel Willard and brothers of the Colonel Samuel who had died a short time before. The King's officer in command, Lieut. Col. Moncton, chose Capt. Abijah to lead a detachment to Tatmagouche. Apparently Capt. Willard won the favor of Col. Moncton for, on August 5th, he was given command of 250 men, with sealed orders to go to the head of Minas Bay. A party of Regulars from the English army was to join them at some point in advance. Capt. Willard knew full well that the British officer, though of inferior rank, would assume command over him. He refused to accept the position and submit to such indignity. Then Col. Moncton gave written instructions to support

Capt. Willard's authority. We are told that when they were joined by the English Regulars the British officer "was something Blank to think a New England Captain should Take Command of a Capt. Lt. of the Regulars," and immediately he said he was "much Fatigued with his Traveling so much and desired to have the Liberty of Coming on to Cobequid." Capt. Willard refused to relieve him.

The claim that a royal commission entitled a British officer to precedence over every Provincial of the same grade was a constant source of bitterness and strife. No matter what the army record or the length of service of the New England men, a soldier of the same rank fresh from England and with no experience in the new country had, up to this time, not only precedence, but apparently the right to ridicule and insult the Provincial officers.

The "Orderly Book" of Capt. Willard is now in possession of the Willard family. It contains a journal kept by him from April 9, 1755 to January 6, 1756. In this journal are recorded the following events:

"We killed the Chief Indian a Sagamore from the Island of Saint Johns which are known by the name of Mickmack, he lived about 5 hours after he was Shott and behaved as bold as any man Could Do till he Died but wanted Rum and Sider which we gave him till he Died, he was shott through the Bodey just below his Ribs, he was supposed to be 6 feet and two inches and very Large bon'd but very poor."

Capt. Willard's march along the shore of Minas Bay came near ending in disaster. He had been going along the beach; the banks were steep and nearly one hundred feet in height. Suddenly the roaring of the tide coming louder and louder attracted his attention, and at the same time a Frenchman shouted to the company to run for their lives. The "Journal" gives the following account of the near-tragedy, due to the noted high tides of the Bay of Fundy:

I ordered the party to Return back as fast as they Could; the men being frighted Traveled as fast as possible. We was oblige to Travell 2 miles before we could escape the tide and before we Got to the upland where we could get up the Banks was obliege to waid in the Rear up to their middles and Just escape being washed away and when come to this case sum of the men very much fatigued and att this place by the best observation the tides rise 80 foot.

When the expedition reached Tatmagouchie, obeying his instructions, Captain Willard opened the secret orders with which he had been entrusted. To his amazement he found a command to burn all the houses on the road to the Bay of Verts. He immediately proceeded to carry out his orders.

He ordered all the inhabitants of the district to assemble, and when they had come they were surrounded by the English soldiers, and Captain Willard addressed them. According to his journal, though not according to his manner of spelling as will be seen in his account of being overtaken by the tides, he "told them that they must go with me to Fort Cumberland and burn all their buildings, which made them look very sober and dejected. One of the French asked me for what reason, for he said he had never taken up arms against the English since they had the fight at Minas.—I told him they was rebellious—in harboring the Indians from Saint John's Island to go to the English settlements in New England and Nova Scotia, and find them provisions and ammunition which they answered me and said they was obliged to, or the Indians would kill them. I told them that if they had been true, they might have been protected by the English; and I told them they might carry their families with them if they thought best; and upon that they asked me for to have the liberty to go to the island of Saint John's but I soon answered them that it did not lie in my power to do it.—They asked me liberty for two hours to consult whether they thought best to carry their families. I granted them the liberty, and after they had consulted with each other they sent for me and they made this reply that they had chose to leave their families, which I readily granted for I did not want the trouble of the women and children.—This afternoon I ordered the whole to be drawn up in a body and bid the Frenchmen march off, and set fire to their buildings and left the women and children to take care of themselves, with great lamentation, which I must confess it seemed something shocking." Something shocking, indeed! Pillage and destruction, women widowed and children made fatherless and left behind amid the smoking ruins of their homes without shelter, food, or clothing.

Capt. Willard marched back to Fort Cumberland, where Col. Moncton, much pleased with his conduct of the affair, invited him to supper in his tent.

But this was not the end of the story, dismissed so lightly by Lancaster's captain.

> The mills of the gods grind slowly
> But they grind exceeding small.

Victorious in his expedition, praised by military authorities for his conduct of the affair Capt. Willard little realized that while seven thousand French neutrals, from Massachusetts Bay to Georgia, were grieving for their lost Acadia, fate was spinning a web, which, in a little more than twenty years, would take him back to Nova Scotia—a fugitive, branded as a tory and a traitor—his name a reproach among his lifelong neighbors, his property confiscated—back to Nova Scotia—never to return, but doomed so long as he lived to look westward with yearning heart towards his elm-shaded home in Lancaster.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Acadian Refugees in Lancaster, Crown Point, Lake George and Ticonderoga—1756-1759

MASSACHUSETTS WAS ORDERED TO CARE FOR ONE THOUSAND OF these "French neutrals," as they were called. Three families—twenty persons—were apportioned to Lancaster. These were: Benoni Melanson, his wife Mary, and seven children; Geoffry Benway, his wife Abigail, and four children; Theal Foree, his wife Abigail, and three daughters. The Foree family were soon transferred to the town of Harvard.

These exiles arrived here in February, 1756. The accounts for their support were regularly rendered by the selectmen until 1761. They were destitute, sickly, and apparently unable to support themselves. They were placed around among the farmers of the town, some in one family, some in another—homesick, grief-stricken, speaking a different language, holding a different religion. It is to be feared that they received scant sympathy from their strait-laced and austere Puritan keepers.

When these unhappy people had been in this section two years, they suddenly disappeared from their habitations. Made reckless by homesickness, they fled to the Atlantic coast, in February, 1761, in the vain hope that they might find some way to get back to the basin of Minas. They appeared at Weymouth, and when questioned by the authorities, admitted they had come from Lancaster. Melanson complained of the treatment of the Lancaster authorities, but no ground was found for the complaint. When about to be returned to Lancaster, Melanson asked permission to leave two of his sons in Weymouth, as they were fishermen.

They were soon back in the town which they had left, and later the Melanson family was divided among Lunenburg, Leominster and Hardwick. The Benways remained in Lancaster. In the end we find them petitioning to be sent to France, and their names disappear from the records. It is probable that some of the Melanson family married and settled in this section, where there are still people of that name. One well may believe that

it could not have been easy for these people to live in the same town with the man who had driven them from their homes and country.

Captain Abijah Willard, in the meantime, had returned to his comfortable home in Lancaster, held in high esteem by the King's military authorities. He received a letter from his late commander, John Winslow, in May, 1756, authorizing him to raise a company of men to make another expedition against the enemy. For some unknown reason, he did not go, but his place was taken by two other men of Lancaster: William Richardson went as purchasing agent, and Hezekiah Gates as quartermaster's assistant.

War had been declared between France and England. Early in the spring the Provincial forces assembled at Albany to await the arrival of General Joseph Abercrombie to assume command in renewal of the campaign against Crown Point. General Abercrombie did not reach Albany until late in June. Then he, in turn, awaited the coming of his superior officer, Earl Loudon, general-in-chief by royal commission, who got there late in July——so late that all preparations made by the provinces were rendered useless. The expedition did not move from the base of supplies.

Another year ended with nothing accomplished towards the goal of complete conquest of the French and Indians, the only hope for a lasting peace. The New England captains wished they might be left to plan and carry on their own campaigns without British interference. The arrogance of the civil officials and the inefficiency of the military officers disgusted them. Had they but known it there was a sure reward in the self-confidence and experience they were gaining to fit them for what was yet to come, the War for Independence.

The next year was even more discouraging, when in August, 1757, Fort William Henry, at the head of Lake George, was surrendered. A force of nine thousand French and Indians under the Marquis Montcalm surrounded the fortress. The Massachusetts men resisted the attack for six days of hard fighting. Then, upon promise from the French general that the troops with their arms and personal belongings should be safely escorted to the Hudson, they surrendered. This promise Montcalm was not able to fulfill. The savages broke through all restraint, plundered the baggage of the soldiers, retreating under Colonel Joseph Frye, and then began a massacre in order to tear spoils from the

bodies of their victims. Col. Frye and those of his command who escaped lost everything but their lives. No muster-rolls of these men has been found. A few names of those who enlisted in 1757 are preserved in the lists of those who were captured at Fort William Henry.

The turn in the tide came at last, when, in the following summer, 1758, Sir William Pitt was given almost dictatorial powers over the whole situation. He at once adopted a conciliatory policy in his treatment of the American colonies. He repaid them for the expense they had been under in preparation for the contests against the French. He promised to protect them from the greed and arrogance and injustice of the British officials. He recognized their commissions as giving equal military rank, and relieved them from the insults they had received constantly from British officers.

The lazy general-in-chief, Loudoun, was retired.

This treatment inspired fresh confidence and courage in the colonists and when twenty thousand men, the flower of the British army, were sent to join the fray, under the command of General Wolfe and Lord Howe, the enthusiasm of the Yankee soldiers rose high. Lancaster and other towns were not behind in the zeal with which they gathered their troops, and entered upon the campaign of 1758.

Sir William Pitt's policy was that a vigorous assault should be made along the whole frontier. The first attack was towards the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. At least seventy-three men from Lancaster are known to have enlisted, and the adjoining towns swelled the lists of the 7,000 men furnished for the central column of attack by Massachusetts—assigned to the capture of Ticonderoga. The ruling spirit in the attack was Lord George Augustus Howe, who had become a great favorite with the colonial soldiers. Unfortunately he was killed in a preliminary skirmish and his place was taken by the nominal commander of the army, Abercrombie, who managed the attack so badly that Montcalm was again victorious.

During the battle of Ticonderoga Lancaster men were detailed as a rear guard at the saw-mills, where they threw up earthworks. Later they worked at rebuilding and repairing the military roads between Saratoga and Albany. They marched home in November.

Forty-five men of Lancaster were enrolled in the spring of the

next year. Others from Harvard, Bolton, and Lunenburg swelled the number to 142 under the command of Col. Oliver Wilder, and awaited orders. Col. Abijah Willard again appears upon the scene in this spring of 1759. He commanded a regiment of eighteen companies from all parts of the commonwealth. Each company numbered fifty, rank and file.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Colonel Willard's Orderly Book—The End of the War
1759—1762

Col. Willard again kept an "orderly book" as he had in the Acadian campaign. Unfortunately it closes four days before the march on Ticonderoga began. However, Lemuel Wood of Boxford kept a diary during the campaigns of 1759—1760, and from it we get some account of the doing of Lancaster men. They were in camp at Lake George during June and July, 1759, drilling and at practice in firing. From these sources we learn that Col. Willard sentenced two sergeants back to the ranks "for not going to hear prayers." For theft of tools, Abraham Austin, captain of the wagons, was condemned "to receive thirty lashes with a cat-of-nine-tails, at the head of each of the four Regular Battallions and the seven Provincial Regiments in Camp and deemed unworthy of ever Serving in the Army again." Ten of his teamsters, who connived at the theft, were to be marched around the camp to witness the punishment upon Austin, and then marched back to Saratoga to bring the stolen tools back to camp.

While Col. Willard was severe and exacting, he was solicitous for the well-being of his men. He ordered that "every Tent shall have one side Turned up every Fair Day from eight in the morning until ten——it being much for the health of the men. Likewise that every sick man have his hands feet and leggs washed in warm water and carefully dried every other day."

In the meantime Lord Amherst was making careful preparations for the advance upon French forts which was to be made late in July. Then Ticonderoga and Crown Point were taken with little resistance. Niagara had already surrendered to Sir William Johnson.

In this campaign of 1759, Capt. Thomas Beman, with twenty-two other men of Lancaster, served in Col. Willard's command, and forty-five Lancaster men served under Capt. Aaron Willard and Capt. James Reed. Three of the number died during the campaign.

Lord Amherst dallied again in his plans for pushing northward up Lake Champlain, and in the meantime Gen. Wolfe had immortalized himself at Quebec. All New England joined in a thanksgiving for his victory and mourned him as their benefactor.

In the middle of October Amherst's newly built fleet cleared Lake Champlain of the French. Soon the frosts of winter sent the Lancaster men home to their own firesides, to recount their experiences upon the frontier and prepare for the spring campaign in 1760, which was to prove a decisive one.

For six months more General Amherst studied over his plans for a combined movement by all his forces, upon Montreal. Early in the spring Col. Willard, Col. Whitcomb, and Col. Ruggles were in the field with their men. In this campaign Col. Willard's adjutant was Samuel Ward, of Worcester, a man who was later to become an honored citizen of Lancaster for the rest of his life, and whose home here is still preserved by his heirs. Levi Willard is recorded as "sutler" of the regiment and John Miller of Milton acted as chaplain. One company was chiefly of men of Lancaster and the neighboring towns, and served from April to December. The lists of men from Lancaster who served in this campaign numbers at least eighty-five names.

It was the tenth of August before our regiments advanced under Col. William Haviland. They laid siege to the Isle aux Nois, on the 28th, only to find that the enemy had fled in the night, through the swamps. Quickly pursuing, Col. Haviland gave orders that none of the inhabitants in the invaded country be plundered or ill-used: that milk, butter, or any provisions should be regularly paid for; and that the inhabitants be encouraged by good usage to remain in their villages, to prevent them from joining the French army. Whoever should be found disobeying these orders would be hanged. It was much to expect of these men of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Almost every one of them had suffered, or had friends who had suffered, at the hands of the savages who spared neither women nor children. It speaks well for our soldiers that while they were quartered in the hamlets of their enemies, Captain Haviland openly commended them for having so strictly obeyed his orders. He said that the good effects were obvious, and that hundreds had delivered themselves up.

General Amherst, on the 8th of September, announced that

the troops of France in Canada had laid down their arms and submitted to the Dominion of Great Britain. The men from Massachusetts were marching back to Crown Point on the 10th. There, to their disgust, they were kept for two months longer to extend and complete fortifications and barracks. Grumbling and discontented, they could see no reason for being kept longer in this western wilderness.

Finally, in November, Col. Willard and Col. Whitcomb marched their troops through the woods, across Vermont to Charlestown No. 4, and thence to Lancaster where they arrived about the first of December.

There is no record of the celebration which attended their home-coming; but from their pulpits the ministers had praised them and noted the universal joy of victory.

The war had lasted six years. Two years followed before the treaty of Paris confirmed the conquest of Canada by England. During that time the forts at Halifax and Crown Point were guarded by New England men, among whom, in 1761, were twenty-five men from Lancaster at Crown Point and fifteen men at Halifax. These were two years of peace for the colonies.

Rev. Mr. Mellen, the minister of the Second Precinct recorded the deaths of nineteen men in his parish. No list was kept in the First Parish records, but the known deaths here numbered fourteen.

The men of Lancaster and the towns which had so recently been set off from her territory, together with men from Lunenburg, Stow and Fitchburg, and even the western towns of Westminster and Ashburnham, had fought through the long six years side by side, like one family; and the records tell no tales of petty jealousies or discords. They fought a brave fight for a thankless monarch, but gained experience which was soon to help them, when they again united in a common cause.

CHAPTER XXXV

Town Annals Around 1766

With the coming of peace in the land and the practical certainty that danger from savage attack was over, a new spirit seems to have pervaded the town. Harvests were abundant and a general and joyous thanksgiving went up throughout the land.

There was however, in the minds of the men of Lancaster, no thought of allowing themselves to become rusty in the use of firearms or to go unprepared to defend themselves. As soon as the war was over, the second regiment of militia in Worcester county was organized, and was called the Lancaster regiment. Joseph Wilder was Colonel; and John Carter was Major and Captain of the second company; Caleb Wilder was Captain of the third company. Other officers were John White, Joseph White, Elisha Sawyer, Elijah Houghton, Nathaniel Sawyer, Nathaniel Wilson; Jonathan Wilder is listed as "cornet"; James Carter, quartermaster, and Hezekiah Gates captain of a Lancaster troop. It will be noticed that nearly all the names are those of the descendants of the early planters. Other companies in the regiment were officered by men of Harvard and Lunenburg, Bolton, Leominster, and Westminster.

John Carter became colonel of the regiment in 1766. The next year a Fitchburg company was added: also a second Bolton, a second Leominster, and a fourth Lancaster company.

The regiment consisted of sixteen infantry companies, and two mounted troops in 1771, as follows: Lancaster, four companies; Lunenburg, Harvard, Bolton, Leominster and Westminster, each two companies; Fitchburg, one; Ashburnham, one. The first troop was from Lancaster, Harvard and Bolton; the second from Lunenburg, Leominster and Fitchburg.

All the officers of the Lancaster companies resigned their commissions three years later, as demanded by the county convention; and in the new elections younger men took their places. Their names do not appear in the continental service, and but three of them are in the rolls of the Lexington alarm.

We have been following the men of Lancaster through the years

of the struggle for the conquest of Canada, and now we may return to review what has been happening at home.

The first colonial census was taken in 1764, and gave Lancaster 1999 inhabitants, living in 328 families and 301 houses. Of these, 935 were over sixteen, 1037 were under sixteen. Twenty-six colored persons and one Indian are classed separately. The population in the four new towns originally included in the Lancaster grants was 4801. There were but seventeen towns in the whole state with a larger population and ten of these were in Essex county, around Salem, where the Puritans had settled in 1628. It was the largest town in Worcester county, and was the business center for the new towns which were springing up to the west. Industries were thriving: on Bride Cake Plain, Levi and Caleb Wilder were manufacturing great quantities of potash and pearlash; the slate quarry in the north part of the town was worked, and not far from there was a furnace for the casting of hollow ware; the cooper was one of the busiest men. Ephraim Carter had a tannery at the foot of George Hill; Peter Thurston had a hat shop in the South village, called New Boston. Micah Harthan had a fulling mill and Thomas Grant a loom.

The census shows that agriculture was the almost universal occupation of the people and that every farmer had his flock of sheep, there being nearly 4000 sheep in the town. It was considered a patriotic duty to cultivate hemp and flax, and the knitting needles were never idle while the spinning wheel hummed by every fireside.

The supply of beef, mutton and pork, upon the hoof was much greater than the local need and great quantities of surplus food were for sale. Almost ten bushels of grain, mostly Indian corn, were harvested for each man, woman and child of the population. The prices given for some of the commodities, found in old bills are amusing. Pork was sold at six pence, salt beef at three pence, mutton at two pence, cheese at four pence and butter at eight pence, a pound; corn meal at three shillings, beans at six shillings, potatoes at one shilling four pence a bushel. Barrels in which to carry provisions were made for less than a shilling apiece and cider was little more than seven shillings a barrel.

Pay for a man and horse carrying clothing to Cambridge was six shillings for the trip.

Just what was the status of the twenty-six colored persons in the census list is not known. Slavery was unpopular in Massa-

chusetts, but there were at least six "servants for life" as they were called, in Lancaster in 1771. In the parish records are recorded the deaths of "Molly" and "Dinah," Negro servants of "Timo. Harrington," and "Rhoda," Negro servant of "Dr. Stanton Prentice." Both free Negroes and slaves fought in the Revolution and at least fourteen colored men are accredited to Lancaster.

The two doctors of the town, Dr. Stanton Prentice and Dr. John Dunsmoor, trotted from house to house, their saddle-bags filled with aloes, jalap, rhubarb and calomel, and administered blistering and bleeding. In every attic, were hung bunches of boneset, sarsaparilla and mints while mustard, wormwood, saffron, tansy and fennel were cultivated for the cure of minor ailments; and ailing children were sometimes given homemade doses of snail-water or emulsion of earthworms. Some women in each neighborhood had reputations for skillful nursing and knowledge of the uses of roots and herbs, and were often consulted, especially when children were ill. Even the minister sometimes gave drastic doses of drugs when called to pray over the sick. Often, by the time the physician was called, everything else had been tried. Trained nurses were unknown and neighborly kindness furnished "watchers" in serious illness and even "undertakers" when all was over for the patient. Up to the beginning of the present century there have always been certain persons in Lancaster, both men and women, who were called upon to "watch" with the sick.

In spite of the great waste of life in the wars, the growth of the town had been steady. The large and controlling majority was of direct descendants of the first proprietors, and gave character to the town. But several men of political and social influence had brought their large families here since the turn of the century and, by marriage with the members of the early families had tied themselves to the town. Among these names long prominent in town affairs we find Osgood, Fletcher, Whitney, Locke, Wyman, Ballard, and Thurston. All of these names have now disappeared from the voting lists. The town had two doctors, father and son, the Dunsmoors. The elder came about 1740, and the son, Dr. William Dunsmoor, whose mother was of Prescott and Sawyer descent, attained great political prominence and was a leader in the revolutionary faction of this neighborhood.

Among the newcomers was Captain Samuel Ward, before mentioned as holding a commission in the French and Indian War.

He purchased an ancient house and lot upon the northwest corner of the main road to South Lancaster and the George Hill road, and opposite his business partner, Levi Willard. On the opposite corner, this firm set up a store which became the widest known of any in the region. The senior partner, Mr. Willard, sometimes went to England to buy goods. Captain Ward was not only a man of unusual business ability, but had rare intellectual powers, and excellent judgment. He shunned all official positions, but soon became a conservative leader in the town.

The "first citizen," Rev. Timothy Harrington, had been settled, before the war for the conquest of Canada began, and was destined to see, in his forty-seven years as pastor, more changes in town and national affairs than had yet been experienced.

Unlike his predecessors, Mr. Harrington was married and had two children when he came here. Of several other children born in Lancaster, four lived to maturity; others died in infancy. The mother of his children was Anna Harrington, a cousin, from Lexington; after her death, and quite late in life, he married the widow of Rev. Mr. Bridge, of Framingham.

Mr. Harrington has the distinction of having formed a society of young men for mutual improvement which, so far unquestioned, was the first "Young Men's Christian Association" in the country. There was a long list of articles for the control and advancement of its members. To this list were inscribed the names of twenty-eight young men, all prominent in town affairs. Few people are aware that this internationally known organization had its beginnings in the little parish of Lancaster.

With the coming of Mr. Harrington, in 1748, the location of the parish parsonages changed from the early "ministerial lands" at the crossroads in South Lancaster to a point nearer the first garrisoned house of the Rev. Joseph Rowlandson. An old wellsweep still stands on the lawn of the Nathaniel Thayer estate where the new parsonage, destined to cover two forty-seven year pastorates, was built for Mr. Harrington, and where his colleague and successor, Rev. Nathaniel Thayer lived. This house shows in its construction the improvements in architecture over houses of the earlier period.

During the first twenty years of his ministry this pastor so endeared himself to his people that their devotion and loyalty carried him through the trying times to come. Great changes were

taking place in religious thought and expression. There was a revolt against clerical councils; and the divine right of the majority was declared higher than the divine right of a king. A bitter controversy was raging in the little parish in Bolton. Leominster and Sterling were divided among themselves over the relative power of the church and the clergy but Mr. Harrington's parish remained staunch in loyalty to him, and came through without a break.

We can have but little idea of the bitterness of the controversy which was going on in the churches of New England for a score of years after 1760.

Many of the clergy had departed from the doctrines of Calvin, which had been the standard of faith, handed down from parent to child for all generations since the first settlement of New England. It took great moral courage to come out openly for a new doctrine. The people were not prepared for the sudden change of faith. Most of the clergy in this vicinity who declared their belief in the teachings of Arminius were dismissed from their parishes. Mr. Harrington, although fully an Arminian, adopted a temporizing course, which while displeasing many of his parish, carried him through without dismissal.

There seems to have been no trouble in the Harvard parish. Mr. Mellen, who had been for thirty-four years the minister of the second precinct, Chocksett, was dismissed, but continued to hold meetings with his followers at his own house, and at the schoolhouse, for a number of years. It is said of him that he probably stood at the head of the clergy in the country. His conduct through this trying ordeal was so admirable that many who had been his bitterest foes became his friends.

There was, however, no stemming the tide of change. The increase in general knowledge, a widening intercourse with the world, and especially the study of the law, which had been taken up by many men—all were helping to fit them to take the lead in the politics of the towns. Pastor and people were soon turning the whole current of their thought into one channel—"the arbitrary exactions of parliament"; and political discussions were preparing the way for national independence.

There was some dissension in the parish when the new version of the Psalms was introduced; and again when instrumental music first was used. One man openly "shook his head" when a pitch-pipe was sounded, and one walked out of meeting. The worst they

did was to absent themselves from Communion. In course of time they were made to see the error of their ways, and after apologizing, were reinstated.

Gradually there had come about a change in dress, social habits and domestic life. The town had prospered. No longer do we find the best bed in the parlor, nor lack of any sort of decoration in the homes. No longer only the parson wore a wig or powdered his hair, nor was he the only one to display knee-buckles, and fine linen at neck and wrists. Cocked hats for the men, and hoops and laces and high-heeled satin shoes adorned the ladies. Curiously enough there was still a stinted supply of household utensils, even in families that were well-to-do.

Books were still too costly to be numerous, but the inventories of estate of the period show that every family possessed a few, mostly on religious subjects.

Education had been hindered by the great expense incurred in preparation of the wars, but the old custom had continued of hiring some college graduate to teach a grammar school two terms in each year. Among these teachers was Joseph Warren, 1759-1760 later to become the president of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts; to serve at the battle of Lexington; to be made Major-general of the Massachusetts forces in 1775; and later to give his life at the battle of Bunker Hill, where he served as volunteer aid.

The teacher for the parish school from 1762 to 1764 was Joseph Willard, afterwards president of Harvard College; and at this time a Lancaster boy, struggling for an education which, ten years later was to fit him to be president of the same college, was Samuel Locke. His first position was in the two-term school in his own town, while studying under Rev. Mr. Harrington, who eked out his meager salary by teaching the classics.

As to transportation in the town at this time, nearest was the Concord stage coach which set out from Concord on Tuesday and Friday mornings at seven o'clock. Silent Wilde, or his partner, Isaac Church, started on horseback from Boston on Mondays and passed through Lancaster on his way to Rutland and Deerfield, carrying mail once a week. In these days, when we get news of what has already happened tomorrow in China, it seems hard to believe that it took five days to get news from Boston to New York; and the best of good news travelled no farther than fifty miles in twenty-four hours.

The mail from Worcester, via Shrewsbury and Lancaster to Londonderry, New Hampshire, was carried by one Joshua Thomas, who advertised to take his pay for services in produce and paper-rags. Delivery of mail to all who lived away from these routes depended upon the courtesy of the neighbors. When a postal system independent of royal authority was first established in 1777 under Benjamin Franklin, and for twenty years after, the nearest post office to Lancaster was Cambridge, and later Worcester. In fact there were but twenty-eight post offices in the whole country in 1776.

Joshua Houghton, on horseback, served the town as express messenger, and continued through the war of the Revolution.

That interesting subject, the weather, was of even more importance to the farmers than at the present day, as there were less means of coping with it. But floods and droughts were forgotten when, in 1755, came the famous New England earthquake. The tremors were heaviest along the Nashua valley, and excitement ran high. Great consternation was felt, and the clergy found in it a rebuke from heaven which was pressed home in no uncertain terms to residents of the valley.

Then in the year following a terrible epidemic of dysentery followed, and the death rate was high, especially among children. It visited the village of Chocksett, now Sterling, where one in each twenty inhabitants died within eight weeks: there were hardly enough well people to care for the sick and dying. By many it was thought that the scourge had some occult connection with the earthquake, but only the clergy felt at liberty to proclaim the real cause, which, according to them, was "to call sinners to repentance."

The county road through Lancaster from Worcester to Groton was laid out in 1757. As far as possible it followed the river and was three rods wide. To the north it followed the old Lancaster and Groton highway, through Harvard.

An addition was made to the town's territory when, in 1768 a tract at its southwestern corner about three miles long by one and one half miles wide, was added. This tract was known as "Shrewsbury Leg." At the time it contained about twelve families but is now the site of the village of Oakdale, in the town of West Boylston.

This apparently was a season of calm and prosperity. Still, smouldering below the surface of the calm, was the memory of the insolence of the officers of the royal troops. The old soldiers had not

forgotten the needless bloodshed and long delays caused by the inefficiency of the English generals set over them. The repeated withdrawings of charter rights on the part of the British ministry was driving the colonists to a point where their seven-year course in warfare, for the first time would be profitable.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Town Meetings

THE STORY OF ALL THE LANCASTRIAN TOWNS, UNTIL WELL INTO the eighteenth century, is the story of Englishmen living in America. While they were hard at work establishing a system of self government which would meet their own requirements, they never forgot that they were subjects of the English king. Their loyalty was proved abundantly in all the wars for the king, from the expedition under Vernon to the Caribbean sea—from which no man returned —to the long drawn out war, which ended in the conquest of Canada.

They came to this new land of their own free will, and for years suffered poverty and depression without complaint. They never had drawn a single pound from the treasury of Great Britain. Their appeals for help to withstand the attacks from the Indians in those early years, had met supreme indifference on the part of the King's representatives in Boston. The jealousy felt in the mother country towards the colonies, and the evident intention of the Crown to keep them in complete subjection, was shown in every move.

Having come through at last with a definite and satisfactory plan of self government, the colonists could see no reason why they should not provide for their own interests, or why they should be deprived of their rights as Englishmen.

Charter governments had been granted by the crown in different years, and under them the New England colonists exercised the powers of civil government. To them, these charters were sacred and solemn compacts between themselves and the king; and when he tried to recall the charters, a new defiance sprung up. The people, jealous of their liberty, were ready now to defend it.

The years of the eighteenth century tell the story of the preparation for the stand they took, which enabled them to demand recognition as self-governing colonists. This caused the Revolution.

From those earliest days when the planters met to sign a covenant for "the ordering and disposing of the plantation at Nashaway," the stage upon which was enacted all the scenes which finally

led to the ordering and disposing of a township in a free and independent commonwealth, was town meeting. The town was the political unit, received its charter from the state Legislature, elected its own officers, and managed its local affairs in its own way. In New England, the county was a corporation which existed for judicial rather than political purposes.

The historian, Joseph Willard, who wrote his History of Lancaster while many who took part in the Revolution were still living, said, "Possibly all are not aware how much was accomplished by towns, as such; how many sacrifices were made in every way, to help on the cherished undertaking———and those miniature republics, the towns, so singular a feature of the body politic, gave to New England, weight and importance." He adds that at these meetings political discussion was preparing the way for national independence.

Town meetings in Lancaster were held alternately in the Center and in Chocksett,—five miles apart. Capt. Hezekiah Gates, who lived half way between the two precincts, usually acted as moderator. From an old town meeting record in the Chocksett district, although written after this precinct had obtained a majority and, by throwing out the town officers in the old parish, had incorporated into a town by the name of Sterling, we take the following regulations of town meetings:

Art. 1.—To take a seat and sit.
Art. 2.—To proceed to business at the hour appointed in the warrant.
Art. 3.—To rise and address the Moderator with hats off when we wish to speak and sit down when done speaking.
Art. 4.—That we will not presume to speak when one is orderly speaking before us.
Art. 5.—That we will not interrupt by attempting to converse, or transact private business when assembled for public.
Art. 6.—That the law respecting the Moderator's duty shall be read at the opening of every town-meeting, if requisited.
Art. 7.—That the Moderator shall exercise the powers vested in him by law, and that we will strictly obey.
Art. 8.—That the above articles shall be copied in a large, legible hand and brought in by the Clerk at the opening of every town-meeting and hung up in open view of the town.

Mr. Willard states that the action of the second precinct was not well pleasing to the inhabitants of the old parish, because the

"Second Precinct" was "unwilling to aid in the support of the French neutrals, the bridges, and poor, to which the whole town was liable." It is, however, a very good example of what could be accomplished in town meetings. He adds however, that after one year, the "Pharaohs" were willing "to let the people go" and that feelings of good will and kindness were "indulged towards each other," after 1781.

Years after the step from town meeting to Continental Congress had been taken, Daniel Webster, in the Massachusetts Convention of 1820, paid the following tribute to town meetings:

> The voice of Otis and of Adams in Faneuil Hall, found its full and true echo in the little councils of the interior towns: and, if within the Continental Congress patriotism shone more conspicuously, it did not there exist more truly, nor burn more fervently; it did not render the day more anxious, nor the night more sleepless; it sent up no more ardent prayer to God for succor; and it put forth in no greater degree the fullness of its effort, and the energy of its whole soul and spirit, in the common cause, than it did in the small assemblies of the towns.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Rumors of War—1765
Looking Forward to Independence

AN EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE IN THE YEAR BEFORE THE FRENCH WAR, to unite the colonies for common protection and safety, but proved far from satisfactory, and the representative from Lancaster was instructed at town meeting "to oppose all plans of a general or partial union, that shall anywise encroach upon the rights and liberties of the people."

After Parliament attempted to collect internal taxes through the Stamp Act of 1765, open revolt was seen on every hand. The Sons of Liberty organized for resistance. A liberty pole was raised in every village; liberty songs were sung on the street. Patriotic remonstrances and petitions were sent to the British ministry, only to be met with contempt. Although the Stamp Act was repealed in the following year, it did not calm the citizens of Lancaster and the surrounding towns: and when, two years later, ships of war were sent to Boston harbor, to intimidate the people, "patriotic frenzy inspired the people to open revolt."

Town meetings seethed with passionate appeals to patriotic citizens. Organized rebellion could be restrained no longer.

All historians of Lancaster applaud the resolutions passed in a town meeting of January, 1773, which express the noble sentiments phrased in the Declaration of Independence three and one-half years later. They were:

1.—Resolved, That this and every other Town in this Province have an undoubted Right to meet together and consult upon all matters interesting to them when and so often as they shall judge fit; and it is more especially their Duty so to do when any infringement is made upon their Civil or Religious Liberties.

2.—Resolved, That the raising of a Revenue in the Colonies, without their Consent, either by themselves or their Representatives, is an Infringement of that Right which every Freeman has to dispose of his own Property.

3.—Resolved, That the granting a Salary to his Excellency the Governor of this Province out of the Revenue unconstitutionally raised from us is an Innovation of a very alarming tendency.

4.—Resolved, That it is of the highest Importance to the security of Liberty, Life and Property that the public Administration of Justice should be pure and impartial, and that the Judge should be free from every Bias, either in Favour of the Crown or the Subject.

5.—Resolved, That the absolute Dependency of the Judges of the Superior Court of this Province upon the Crown for their support, would if it should ever take Place have the strongest Tendancy to bias the Minds of the Judges and would weaken our Confidence in them.

6.—Resolved, That the Extension of the Power of the Court of Vice-Admiralty to its present enormous Degree is a great Grievance and deprives the Subject in many instances of that noble Privelege of Englishmen, Trials by Juries.

7.—Resolved, That the Proceedings of this Town be transmitted to the Town of Boston.

Dr. William Dunsmoor,
John Prescott,
Josiah Kendall,
Ebenezer Allen,
Nathaniel Wyman,
Joseph White,
Aaron Sawyer,

Committee for Grievances.

Daniel Robbins, Town Clerk.

Dr. Dunsmoor, Prescott and Sawyer were descendants of John Prescott, the founder of Lancaster, and proved themselves worthy of their inheritance.

These resolves were published in the Boston *Gazette* for May 17, 1773.

The town of Harvard expressed similar views at a town meeting held in February, of the same year, 1773, and the report of a committee of seven was read at the annual meeting in March which set forth at some length the towns' regret that the steps were made necessary, but the avowal that they were not to be intimidated into "a compliance with measures repugnant to the Liberties" they had a right to claim. Descendants of John Prescott, whose families had taken up land in the section "east of the rivers" framed this document.

When the Port of Boston was blocked in 1774, a Committee of Correspondence for the county was formed with seven members from Lancaster, all representative men, who acted with the men appointed in the other towns in the county, to keep the public informed and to act quickly in any emergency. At two town

meetings in September of 1774, it was voted to raise volunteers, to buy guns and ammunition, and to send Dr. William Dunsmoor to a proposed Provincial Congress to be held at Concord.

Lancaster was represented at this first Provincial Congress by Captain Asa Whitcomb and Dr. Dunsmoor; Leominster, by Thomas Legate and Israel Nichols; Bolton, by Captain Samuel Baker and Ephraim Baker; Harvard, by Reverend Joseph Wheeler. The latter read a letter to the convention in which he said that while they were attempting to save themselves from slavery, they should "also take into consideration the state and circumstances of the Negro Slaves in this Province." While they were not called "slaves" here at the time, there were several Negroes "belonging to" certain families in Lancaster, Harvard and Bolton.

At a meeting of the "Freeholders and other Inhabitants" of Lancaster late in 1774, Dr. William Dunsmoor, Capt. Hezekiah Gates and Capt. Asa Whitcomb were chosen to draw up an association for "nonconsumption of goods." For a long time patriotic citizens had been denying themselves luxuries which were heavily taxed, but perhaps hardest of all the calls for self-denial was to do without tea. All sorts of substitutes were tried to replace "the baneful herb," as it was called. A drink called "hyperion" was made from the dried leaves of the raspberry. The flowers of sassafras, garden herbs and mints were dried, and used to satisfy the craving for tea. To possess real tea soon became a crime against the country. As the days of open warfare drew near, imported sweets and spices became so costly that housewives were kept busy making substitutes. Cornstalks were ground and boiled down, and the juice then pressed out made a substitute for molasses, and there was still maple sugar and honey. Cinnamon, nutmegs, and ginger were no longer to be had, but sassafras bark, caraway and coriander seed were used to supply this want. Salt often became scarce, but for that there was no substitute. Coffee was more easily substituted by parched grains, but in no way made up for the imported teas which had become a passion with many. A considerable quantity of real tea was secretly smuggled in. The diaries of the time, especially of ladies like Abigail Adams, show how hard it was for them to get along without tea.

The temper of the times is shown in the action of the Provincial Assembly in Worcester, in August, 1774, when the committees of correspondence, and delegates from several Worcester County

towns assembled at the house of Mrs. Mary Sternes. Lancaster was represented by Dr. Dunsmoor, Deacon David Wilder, Capt. Samuel Ward, Capt. Asa Whitcomb, Capt. Hezekiah Gates, Aaron Sawyer, John Prescott and Ephraim Sawyer. Harvard was represented by Reverend Joseph Wheeler; Bolton by Capt. Samuel Baker and Lieut. Jonathan Holman. Leominster had no delegate present. Capt. Ward and Lieut. Holman were on a committee of ten who presented patriotic resolves, which were passed.

They upheld the action of a panel of fifteen jurymen, who the April before, had answered a summons of the superior court by refusing to serve should Chief Justice Peter Oliver take his seat in court. He had refused to give up his salary received from the royal treasury, and now General Gage had threatened to send British troops to protect the royalist officials.

In answer to this threat, 6000 armed men, under their military leaders gathered on Worcester green, ready to meet the British troops. Capt. Asa Whitcomb of Lancaster, was one of a committee of three who waited upon the justices to get their signatures to a declaration already agreed to by the judges. These justices, along with forty-three royalists of Worcester, were marched between two lines of the armed men there gathered, while the recantation which they had signed was read. Of these justices, Joseph Wilder, Abel Willard and Ezra Houghton were from Lancaster. The services of such officials of the court as had not made themselves too much hated were retained, and with the help of Capt. Ward, chairman of a committee of nine, these arranged ways to prevent any delay in court proceedings.

The organization of militia was the work of the convention in September, 1774. Seven Worcester County regiments were made up. The third, or Lancaster, regiment included companies from Lancaster, Bolton, Harvard, Leominster, Lunenburg, Fitchburg, Ashburnham and Westminster. All commissions then held were resigned and there was a new election of line officers. The company officers then elected the field officers. These New England regiments were voluntary associations of equals who enlisted for patriotic duty for a few months. From the colonel down, all officers were elected by the votes of their neighbors, and popularity with the mass of the people was necessary to gain a captaincy. Naturally under such circumstances, discipline was lax, and the greatest familiarity existed between soldiers and officers.

The first attempt at any sort of uniform for Massachusetts soldiers was in 1755, when, in addition to their monthly pay it was resolved to add "a coat for a uniform be given to each of the non-commissioned officers and privates, as soon as the state of the province will permit it." Later on, 13000 such coats were ordered for the army, each town being required to furnish its share. Lancaster had to pay for 116 coats.

It was ordered that a certificate be sewn on the inside of each coat, giving the name of the town that furnished it, the names of the weaver of the cloth, and the maker of the garment; but nothing was said about the name of the wearer—a much more important piece of information for the purpose of identification.

Even the officers rarely wore a distinguishing uniform by which they could be known, until later on, when General Washington required them to wear cockades in their hats. Then, field officers wore red cockades, captains wore yellow, and subalterns, green. Sergeants wore a red stripe on the shoulder and corporals, a green stripe.

As for pay, each soldier was allowed a penny a mile for actual marching, going and returning. Captains received thirty shillings a week; first lieutenants, twenty shillings; an ensign or a second lieutenant, seventeen shillings six pence; corporals, eleven shillings and privates, ten shillings, this last being $2.50 a week.

Their rations were meager: either a pound of salt fish, beef, or three quarters of a pound of pork. For drink they had one pint of milk, and a choice of either a quart of spruce beer or cider per day. A week's rations of other foods was three pints of peas or beans, a half pint of rice, or one pint of Indian meal and a pint of molasses. Money not used as specified was called "sauce money" in settling their accounts.

Every soldier was required to carry a gun, a bayonet, a blanket and knapsack, a cutting sword or hatchet, a jacknife, six flints, forty bullets, one hundred buckshot, a powder horn and powder, some tow for wadding and a wooden canteen holding a quart. All these articles were to be furnished at their own expense, unless a man was too poor to pay for them; in that case the town must do it.

Both powder and lead were scarce, and many a patriotic housewife melted down her pewter platters. Even the leaded sashes in windows were taken out to be turned into bullets.

Going to war in "ordinary" clothes in that day meant going in

what today would seem "extraordinary" clothes, according to descriptions of men advertised as deserters. One "James Bridge" of Bolton was described as "having a large head of hair almost black and very long which is commonly cued with a black ribband, and wearing an old blue surtout, cloth-colored coat and jacket, and a pair of cotton breeches, and two shirts, tow and linen." Other combinations described were, "a blue coat, red waistcoat, blue breeches: a sad red coat, pale blue vest and dark brown thick-set breeches"; "a blue coat, faced with red and bound with yellow"; "a lightish colored cloth great coat and short sailor's jacket, leather breeches and white yarn stockings." Ordinarily, plain, homespun clothes were worn.

The militia companies were called "training bands" and included all the male population of the towns between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five. Of these about one third, selected because of their skill in the use of arms, were called "minute men," and were supposed to be ready for active service at the shortest notice. Otherwise they did not differ from ordinary troops, for all were now equipped and ready to fight. There was a tacit understanding, however, that the British must make the first move.

Their faces were set towards the goal of IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE, and their sentiments were expressed in the following terms:

> Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient suffrance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of Government.

Such were the sentiments that prompted the towns instructions "that there be one hundred men raised as volunteers, to be ready at a minute's warning to turn out in any emergency." These "minute men," and all the other soldiers were now ready to fight to the last drop of blood to defend their rights.

An Englishman's Idea of King Philip

From Drake's *History of the North American Indian*, published in 1851.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Lancaster Loyalists

THE PATRIOTIC FRENZY WHICH WAS DRIVING THE COLONISTS INTO what has been called by historians "the most premature and rash of all the great rebellions in history" left no chance of escape for those men whose principles and honest convictions were against war. Such were branded at once as Tories, a word which, for generations, meant traitors.

Wise old men who had spent their lives in the service of God and the King of England were loth now to turn against the king and their mother country. They knew the colonies were being treated unjustly and resented it as much as the rest, but they knew too, that men high in authority in England were fighting for the cause of the colonies. They believed the wrongs could be righted without war. They believed also that revolt would be downright suicide and that all would be lost in war with the powerful mother country.

These men were neither cowards nor weaklings, but battle-scarred men who had given the best of their lives to the service of the king, also to the building up of their own communities. This counted nothing in their favor. They had no private right to an opinion or a course of action, among their "liberty-loving" neighbors.

When a quick decision was forced upon these conservatives in April of 1775, many, seeing that war was inevitable, joined the cause of the patriots. Others, highly intellectual and honorable men, too, went quickly over to the King's side. It is believed that if the first bloodshed had been quieted, many of these men would have come over to the patriot's cause. Englishmen ever since have been willing to acknowledge that the king blundered to his own loss and defeat, when, by any sort of justice he might have kept his colonies.

However, at this time any who did not come out and openly declare themselves patriots, had their names put upon a "black

list" and by the town's order, were investigated and made to appear at town meeting for questioning.

Among the names of those written upon the "black list" was that of the beloved minister of the town, Rev. Timothy Harrington. For thirty years he had prayed "God bless our good King George," and it was not strange that sometimes his lips would frame the usual words: but there is a tradition that if he made this slip he would immediately add; "thou knowest, O Lord, we mean George Washington."

Joseph Willard, in his History of Lancaster, describes a dramatic scene in a Lancaster town meeting, when the venerable clergyman faced his accusers. He bared his breast before his people and exclaimed, "strike, strike here, with your daggers; I am a true friend to my country." Afterwards he retracted certain objectionable statements which he had made, and declared that they were made "before ye 19th of April, 1775." Mr. Harrington's name speedily was removed from the black list, and in the eighteen years of his ministry which followed, he was treated with increased consideration and honor, and his broad views of a national independence, based upon civil and religious liberty, finally won, over prejudice and intolerance.

At the head of those who were acknowledged loyalists, were the three great-grandsons of Maj. Simon Willard, the Puritan pioneer commander of a hundred years before. These three men were outstanding men in the town, and were connected by marriage with other important Royalist families.

The eldest, Col. Abijah Willard, had lived quietly at home after his part in the Conquest of Canada, and had spent his time in managing his large estates which were not confined to Lancaster. He had large land interests in Billerica and in Connecticut. He had just passed his fiftieth year. He was the richest man in town, a gentleman of stately manners and great dignity, a thoroughly trained soldier and an able manager of affairs. He lived in the house inherited from his father Col. Samuel Willard, which still stands west of the railroad crossing on the road to the Neck, where he entertained in great style for that time. He kept six horses, which in itself was a sign of great wealth.

All his efforts were against immediate war, but it is believed that had circumstances not found him away from home on the morning of April 19, 1775, he might have gone over to the patriot's cause.

On that morning he was on his way on horse back, his saddlebags filled with seeds for planting his farm near Boston, when he was turned aside by the swarming of Minutemen on their way to Concord. He never saw Lancaster again. After reaching Boston he went over to the British, but refused to fight against his countrymen, even when offered a Colonel's commission in the British army. However, he later joined the royal forces and acted as commissary, and in that capacity was a great help to the Crown. Late in the war, along with others known as "the fifty-five," he demanded from England large grants of land in Canada. He settled about ten miles northwest of Saint John, New Brunswick, where he established a village which he named Lancaster, in memory of his native town.

For several years he was an important member of the Provincial Council. He died there, though always turned with longing towards his native town. His family had joined him in New Brunswick, but after his death returned to Lancaster and recovered their old home, and thenceforth received a pension from the British Government. The son, Samuel, lived to the age of ninety-six years, and the widowed daughter, Mrs. Anna Goodhue, lived to be ninety-five. This family, widely known, were very refined, educated and most hospitable people. Years after they had all died, a heavy gold ring of beautiful workmanship was plowed up in a furrow of land which belonged to this estate, which without doubt, was presented to Col. Abijah Willard as a bearer at the funeral of the commander of the expedition which captured Louisburg in 1744. It bore the inscription "Sir William Pepperell Bart. OB. 6 July, 1759. AEt. 63." It was customary to present bearers of that day with a ring, a scarf and a pair of gloves.

There is no doubt that by his desertion from the patriots' cause Lancaster lost her outstanding soldier and officer. Had he been on the Patriot side, he would have brought great honor to his town. Lancaster people could hold themselves partly to blame. Today he would be considered a "conscientious objector" or a pacifist. At least he would not be exiled, this man who stood out so conspicuously as a leader of men, who had fought so many hard fights for his country. But perhaps there is in the minds of many the thought that he, who in carrying out the orders of the king at Tatmagouchie, and thus violating every law of human justice in his treatment of the Acadians, could expect no justice for himself.

His banishment and exile to New Brunswick, his yearning always to return to his Lancaster home is a sad picture; a sad and inglorious end to a life that in early manhood and in middle age had been so promising and so distinguished; a man who would have brought glory and honor to himself. Not fighting with them he refused to fight against them. For such a man it must have been a heart-breaking exile.

Levi Willard, three years younger than Col. Abijah, held the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Colonial army, was a Justice of the peace, and with his brother-in-law, Capt. Samuel Ward, owned the largest store in Worcester County. He was known to be a Loyalist at heart, but was in broken health and died before summer of the fateful 1775.

His son, Levi, Jr., graduated from Harvard College in June of that year, joined his uncle Abijah in Boston, then went to England, where he lived for ten years—finally returning to this country.

Captain Samuel Ward, whose policy was known to be against immediate war, cast his lot in with the Patriots, when war came.

The third brother, Abel Willard, was so brilliant and so popular that, in spite of his Loyalist opinions, he might have remained here unharmed. He was an intimate friend of the leading statesman of the Revolution, John Adams, who is said to have visited at the Willard home in Lancaster. But for some reason he sought refuge in Boston, and quick-following even made it impossible for him to return. Finally, with others, he was banished from the country. He went to live in London, where, under the stress of his trouble, his health gave way, and he died within three years.

The estates of the Willards were confiscated, along with those of other "Dangerous persons." Among these were Solomon Houghton, Joseph Moore, Joseph House, Samuel Stearns, Daniel Allen, Ezra Houghton and Moses Gerrish.

For years after the Revolution there was no greater disgrace for a family than to be branded as "Tories." There was no room in that day for difference of opinion, age, or circumstance. Time has changed all that, and public sympathy is on the side of these men, proscribed and banished from homes that had been fought and bled for, by themselves as well as their ancestors for no other reason than a difference of opinion as to how the desired independence could be gained, and that without bloodshed. Historians of

today are finding much more culpable conduct in the acts of many of the supposedly staunchest patriots.

In the surrounding towns those of Tory sympathies were careful to conciliate the Committee of Safety. In Harvard no citizen was classed as an active Tory, although it was suspected that some had dealings with certain officers in Gage's army, who by the fortunes of war were quartered there as prisoners.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The Lexington Alarm 1775

THE BRITISH COMMANDER, GENERAL GAGE WAS IN BOSTON, watching and waiting while the Patriots were making all haste with their preparations for war. Munitions were collected and stored at various points for safety, and Lancaster was one of the towns selected for a depot.

The colonels of the two Lancaster regiments were the brothers, John and Asa Whitcomb, direct descendants of the original proprietor, John Whitcomb. They had been left orphans when very young, and when they grew to manhood the court had assigned to John the ancestral estate in the east side of Bolton, and to Asa lands upon Wickapekit brook in the second precinct, soon to become Sterling. Both, as we have seen, served as scouts in 1748. John held the rank of Colonel in the first Crown Point expedition, and served three years. Asa was captain of a company in 1755 and 1758, and had taken an active part in the acts of the state legislature. Both were deacons in their precincts, and both were able and respected men.

The colonel-elect of the Lancaster regiment of Minute Men was this John Whitcomb of Bolton. A regiment was composed of ten companies in the eight-months service of 1775. Each company consisted of fifty-nine privates, two musicians, four corporals, four sergeants, one ensign, a lieutenant and a captain. Later on a continental regiment was made up of eight companies of ninety men each.

The Lancaster regiment was among the first filled. The staff officers were drawn from the best soldiers in the surrounding towns, as well as Lancaster. In Col. Asa Whitcomb's regiment were: Lieutenant-Colonel Josiah Whitney of Harvard, Major Josiah Carter of Leominster, Major John Rand of Westminster, Adjutant Eliakim Atherton of Bolton, and Quartermaster Jeremiah Laughton of Harvard.

When Paul Revere's ride ended at Concord, a mounted courier took a fresh horse and galloped through Bolton to Lancaster to

spread the news that the "red-coats" were on the march from Boston. Here he obtained a fresh mount and was hardly out of sight carrying the dread but expected news to more western towns, before musket shots, drums and the "fourpounder" field pieces spread the alarm. Then, under six company leaders, two hundred fifty seven resolute men swarmed from farm and shop and marched down the Bay Road, anxious to meet the invaders. They marched to Cambridge, and, as it is recorded that "General Whitcomb was in this day's battle," it is possible that some part of his regiment of Minute Men arrived in time to take some part in the fight.

A mounted company was known as the "Lancaster Troop," which was under the command of Capt. Thomas Gates, of Lancaster, as it had been a few years earlier commanded by his father, Captain Hezekiah Gates. Father and son kept a tavern known far and wide as Gates Tavern at the parting of the ways to Sterling in the Deershorn district, and which later came to be known as the Thurston homestead when, by inheritance, it came into the possession of Gates Thurston.

This mounted company kept up its organization and attended muster until 1825. Joseph Willard, writing his History of Lancaster, mentions by name six men then living who were in the troop. Five men from Harvard were in this troop, and four companies—164 men—are credited to Harvard in the Lexington Alarm rolls. Captain Sawyer and most of his company were from the second precinct, Sterling.

Three companies—ninety-nine men marched from Leominster, and their names show that many of them were lineal descendants of the Lancaster pioneers. Two of these companies under Capt. David Wilder, and Capt. John Joslin were Minute Men in Col. John Whitcomb's regiment. Three companies marched from Bolton, including the Berlin district;—one hundred twenty-seven men.

The companies remained at Cambridge about two weeks, but many of the men returned to their homes some days sooner. About one in three then enlisted in the provincial service for the remaining months of 1775.

CHAPTER XL

Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston 1775

THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS REASSEMBLED AT WATERTOWN, IN order to be near the camps, and quickly arranged for all the scanty military stores to be placed in and about Cambridge. This removed from Lancaster the store of supplies which had been consigned to the town. These were, besides infantry ammunition, one company of matrosses, two iron three-pounder cannon, with thirty-three rounds each of grape, canister and round shot; two medicine chests and 150 tents.

Massachusetts resolved to raise an army of 13000 men, and it was hoped that the other colonies would raise this number to 30000 men. Enlistments began at once, and Col. Asa Whitcomb's regiment was soon in camp, with Lancaster's full quota—two companies of recruits.

Colonel John Whitcomb had received a deserved promotion and, on February 15, 1775, was made a General. Still greater honor came to him when, on June 15th, he was elected "first major-general of the Massachusetts army." The next day, Joseph Warren was chosen "second major-general." As the latter had previously taught school in Lancaster it is quite likely the two men were known to each other.

On the day of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Gen. Whitcomb was detained in Cambridge, being held in reserve at Lechmere Point, where the commander-in-chief had expected the first attack would be made. So Gen. Warren took charge in the famous battle, and was its chief martyr.

Thereupon Gen. Whitcomb was commissioned major-general of Massachusetts forces, by the President of Congress. He next was commissioned brigadier-general in the continental army; and Gen. Washington announced his intention of ordering Gen. Whitcomb to assume command of all forces in Massachusetts. John Whitcomb, however, returned the commission "desiring to be excused on account of age and a diffidence of not being able to answer the expectations of Congress." In appreciation of his military services

and his ability, he was then chosen a member of the Council, and served with honor there for four years, and added to the respect and confidence in which he was held. An unpretentious stone in Bolton's oldest burial-ground marks his grave, but his epitaph gives no hint of his high military honors.

The Lancaster regiment was again among the first to complete the required ten companies of fifty-nine each, rank and file; and in the latter part of May, Col. Asa Whitcomb reported eleven companies encamped at Cambridge, 560 volunteers. The field and staff officers under Col. Whitcomb were, Lieutenant-Colonel, Josiah Whitney of Harvard; Major, Ephraim Sawyer of Lancaster; Adjutant, Jeremiah Gage of Westminster; Quartermaster, Jeremiah Laughton of Harvard; Surgeon, William Dunsmoor of Lancaster; Surgeon's Mate, Moses Barnard of Harvard. Eliakim Atherton of Bolton, was appointed a deputy commissary of the Province. Under the several captains, Haskell's and Richardson's companies were mostly of Lancaster; Burt's and Davis' of Harvard; Longley's of Bolton and Shirley; Hasting's of Bolton; Wilder's of Leominster and Ashburnham; Fuller's of Lunenburg; Bemis' of Westminster; Cranson's of Marlboro; and Well's of Greenfield.

According to official returns, the regiment lost five killed, eight wounded, and two missing in the battle of Bunker Hill. While there is no official report of the exact number of Lancaster men at the front in this battle there seems to be good authority for claiming at least a hundred men. There is said to be a tradition among old Lancaster families that one or more companies of soldiers were crossing the Neck towards the battle ground when the retreat began; and that others had gone early to reenforce Prescott's command. Later petitions for aid show that Capt. Burt's Harvard company and Capt. Hasting's Bolton company were in the fight, and Capt. Wilder's Leominster company also was engaged.

Capt. Andrew Haskell distinguished himself that day, and he would have been promoted except for certain private traits which kept him out of line. Judging from records of those who died, or were discharged after that day, it seems probable that Longley's, Davis' and Bemis' commands were also in action.

Upon the organization of the army for the siege of Boston, the Lancaster regiment—the largest of the twenty-six Massachusetts regiments engaged—was placed in a brigade with Rhode Island troops, under Gen. Nathaniel Greene, and formed a part of the

Second division, under Gen. Charles Lee. The regiment joined the brigade on July 28, and was stationed on Prospect Hill. There were few tents, and each squad constructed a rude shelter of turf, stone, boards, bricks or turf. An officer of the command wrote that the whole army consisted of less than 15000 militia "without a shade of uniformity in its organization, pay, dress, arms or exercise, destitute of subordination or discipline, and fluctuating from day to day as the caprice of the men inclined them to absent themselves or to rejoin their colors." Gen. Greene is credited with having the neatest encampment and the best disciplined brigade in the patriot lines. This army of brave men held Boston in close siege for ten months, with less than twenty rounds of powder per man; and finally drove the British officer, Sir William Howe, to take refuge in the fleet, leaving Boston on St. Patrick's Day.

In the meantime some of the Lancaster soldiers were transferred to other branches of the service. Several soldiers went with Arnold and Montgomery, for the attack on Quebec. Two or three were wounded and captured in that disaster. Others were transferred to the "artillery train." Some soldiers of the Lancaster towns served under other regimental commanders, as the muster-rolls show.

General Washington entrusted an expedition to investigate the military condition and the attitude of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia to special commissioners, Aaron Willard of Lancaster, and Moses Child. It was thought that the Acadians were on the side of the American cause. Upon reaching the province, in November 1775, the commissioners learned that they were liable to arrest as spies. They lost courage and returned with the meager information, gathered from hearsay, that the defenses of the province were inadequate, and that the people "would engage in the common cause of America, could they be protected." There was no military action taken.

Just a century before, in 1676, when all these Lancastrian towns were one, and savage tribes swept down from Wachusett to murder and plunder, the settlers sought shelter in the bay towns. Now, 5000 people from the Bay towns, suffering from insults, and conditions arising from siege, were seeking shelter and food, and Lancaster and the surrounding towns had opportunity to repay, in bountiful measure.

The Provincial Congress assigned 539 of the poor people of

Boston to Worcester County; and of these Lancaster was to provide for 103. Bolton was allotted forty-eight, Harvard fifty, and Leominster thirty-eight. After the burning of Charlestown thirty more exiles were added to Lancaster's quota. No list of the exiles was kept, but it is known that the actual number of those who sought refuge here was far greater than the allotment. Few references to them are found, but some became attached to their place of exile and remained permanently.

Among those who remained in Lancaster was a lame boy of fifteen years, whose proudest possession was a letter of recommendation from his great-uncle, Benjamin Franklin, for whom he had been clerk and accountant. He was Josiah Flagg, destined to become a prominent citizen and for thirty-four years—1800 to 1836—town clerk of Lancaster. In his old age he often was called upon to tell the story of the hardships endured in boyhood in Revolutionary days.

Another refugee was John Newman, a maker of clocks and watches, who set up a shop near the store of Capt. Ward in South Lancaster. There two generations of his descendants carried on his trade and made steel tools, also they did excellent repair work for all the country around.

Not all the refugees were poor, or of the working class. One bought a farm upon the east side of the Neck, a part of the confiscated property of Col. Abijah Willard. This was Daniel Waldo, whose daughter Martha became the bride of the future Gov. Levi Lincoln, of Worcester.

Another Boston merchant, Edmund Quincy, came here to reside with his daughter, the wife of Sheriff William Greenleaf. Another daughter was the wife of Governor John Hancock. Many of Quincy's letters to Governor Hancock, and other noted patriots, are in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, but they contain little of local interest.

Still another Boston merchant, who had a hat shop on Washington street in Boston, was Nathaniel Balch. His name is prominent in the war committees of Lancaster in 1776. He became the inseparable companion of Governor Hancock, and his original wit won him more than local renown.

Towards the close of the siege of Boston, on March 9, 1776, Dr. Enoch Dole of Lancaster was killed by a cannon ball on Dorchester Heights.

The needy families of those in the service, and those who had been made widows and orphans by the fortunes of war, were regularly cared for by the town fathers, and the State refunded the money thus spent. Each town in Massachusetts was assessed for its proportionate share of the clothing needed by the soldiers. Shoes, shirts, stockings, etc., were apportioned by number to each community.

Colonel Asa Whitcomb's regiment was transferred to Roxbury, where it occupied the mansion known as Governor Shirley's residence. The regiment was present at Dorchester Heights and helped to relieve the 5000 men who, in one night, had thrown up two redoubts. Upon these the British troops turned all their available artillery, but to no purpose; and then waited reenforcement from Gen. Howe. During the day, the patriots enlarged and strengthened their fort, and, according to the records of the surgeon's mate, James Thatcher, each man was anxious for the approach of the enemy; each man knew his place, and was "resolute to execute his duty." Thatcher also wrote, "His Excellency General Washington is present, animating and encouraging the soldiers."

Again a storm at sea brought help to the New England men, as it had done when the colonists had awaited in dread suspense an attack from the French in 1746. Now, a fierce easterly gale lashed the waters of Boston Harbor, and made an attack by General Gage's heavily laden boats impossible. Again the God of Battles was on the side of the colonists, and the end of the long siege was at hand.

Colonel Whitcomb's regiment was one of three detailed to garrison Boston, lest the enemy return for an unexpected attack; and on March 20, it was greeted by a joyful welcome when it entered the town. Comfortable quarters were assigned to the soldiers in unoccupied houses. Small-pox was raging, and the army surgeons were kept busy inoculating the men. Death took a heavy toll from this disease and from camp fevers.

An expedition under Col. Whitcomb embarked from Long Wharf on the night of June 13, and planted a battery on Long Island, in Boston harbor, during the night. In the early morning the battery opened fire on the vessels of the surprised Commodore Banks, and drove him to a hasty retreat.

The chief acts of the Revolutionary war, after the first year were outside of New England; but men of the Lancaster regiment

are found in the lists of those left in the defense of Boston and Rhode Island, and among the guards over prisoners of war at Cambridge and at Rutland.

The Declaration of Independence was proclaimed formally from the State House balcony in Boston on July 18, 1776 and thirteen companies of soldiers, partly from Colonel Asa Whitcomb's command, paraded on King Street in Boston, with a section of artillery which fired a salute of thirteen guns. With colors flying, and fife and drum inspiring the soldiers, the regiment marched off on August 7, for Ticonderoga, New York. There it passed the winter, strengthening the fort and awaiting a British attack.

There, the Northern soldiers were thrown with the Southern patriots and they instinctively disliked each other almost as intensely as they both hated the "lobsters" as they called the British regulars. The Northern officers, from colonel down, were men in the same walk in life, and were elected by the votes of their neighbors. A man, to gain a captaincy, had to be popular with the mass of the people, and social standing counted for nothing. The New England regiment was an association of equals, who volunteered for patriotic duty for a short period at a time. Although they were brave, intelligent, and patriotic, their discipline was of the loosest.

The southern army was on an entirely different plane. The officers, usually gentlemen by birth and education, were used to deference. They were on no terms of equality with their men, and naturally felt nothing but scorn for the social equality of the Northern army, whom they called "Yankees." The Northerners retaliated by calling the Southern patriots "Buckskins" and "Macaronies."

Colonel Asa Whitcomb was described by one of his own men as "a serious, good man, but is more conversant with the economy of domestic life than the etiquette practiced in camp." For instance, each officer was entitled to the services of a private soldier, and a regimental commander, to two men. Colonel Whitcomb chose his own sons for this service, and when one of them wanted to earn a little extra money by working at his trade of shoemaking, the colonel allowed him to set up his cobbler's bench in the room used for regimental headquarters.

This enraged officers of other organizations, and was at the bottom of a disgraceful scene. A lieutenant-colonel in Wayne's

regiment rushed in one night, half crazed with drink, and smashed the cobbler's bench, knocked Colonel Whitcomb down, and ended by calling out some of his own battalion to take part in the riot. Colonel Whitcomb was obliged to return home before the complaint which he entered against this Col. Cragie came to trial, but the Southern officer settled the matter in a most diplomatic fashion. He sent some soldiers into the woods to shoot a fat bear, with which he made a feast, and invited Col. Whitcomb and his officers to dine. The good natured Col. Whitcomb accepted the invitation being ready to overlook the insult.

Colonel Whitcomb had been one of the wealthiest farmers in the town of Lancaster, a deacon in the Second Precinct, and an ever popular man. He was an ardent patriot, and a brave and experienced soldier, but too good-hearted and gentle to make a good disciplinarian. When the time came to consolidate the Provincial regiments, a number of officers were discharged, and Gen. Washington and Gen. Greene decided upon Colonel Whitcomb as one who could be spared. Whitcomb's men resented this, and refused to reenlist under another commander. Then Col. Whitcomb himself chided them for their lack of patriotism, and offered to enlist as a private with them. When Gen. Washington heard of this he was much touched, and in special orders, reinstated Col. Whitcomb and complimented him upon his unselfish devotion to the cause. Col. Whitcomb returned to his farm in Sterling in April, 1777. His military career was over. He had become much impoverished during the war, and sold his large farm and moved to Princeton. He represented that town in the legislature, and in 1804, died there at the age of eighty-four years.

CHAPTER XLI

Concerning Finances 1775

FOR A LONG TIME GENERAL WASHINGTON HAD BEEN CONVINCED that the system of short enlistments popular in New England, and at first favored through dread of a standing army, were not only an inconvenience but a serious menace. The martial spirit was weakening, and he saw that the patriot ranks must be filled permanently and that a rigid discipline must be established. Every effort was put forward to get regular troops to enlist for three years, or during the war. Twenty dollars' bounty, a suit of clothes each year, and 100 acres of land were offered to each soldier as an inducement to volunteer. The army was reorganized into eighty-eight battalions of infantry, of 680 men each. One-sixth of the whole number to be raised was expected from Massachusetts. Enlistments were discouragingly slow towards raising one man in every seven for service, and special bounties were offered by the selectmen of the towns. Substitutes often were hired for a whole or part time duty in the Continental service. Occasionally a Negro's services were sold by his master to fight for the country.

The names of Lancaster soldiers and of those from all the nearby towns are found in the rolls of the army during all the most trying years of the war. An imperfect list gives the names of nearly 600 who served, and proves that nearly every male citizen must have served at some period, and that fully one-fourth of them were kept constantly in the army. The scant records give the names of thirty Lancaster soldiers who gave their lives between the battle of Bunker Hill and the close of 1779.

The wives and daughters bravely took up the work of the men in the fields, in addition to their accustomed duties, and courageously cared for the needy. They denied themselves all luxuries, and, with undaunted faith in the outcome, carried on in their homes.

Besides the calls upon the militia for troops to go into battle there was need for constant guard duty within the State. The prisoners of war from the English regiments of General Burgoyne

were removed to Rutland from Cambridge, which was thought to be too easily accessible if the British should attempt a surprise attack from Newport, Rhode Island, for their release. Many of the guards thus employed were boys, old men, or those unfit for field service.

The name of two only appear, who volunteered for service in the privateers which did service on the coast. Their deaths were recorded by Reverend Timothy Harrington:

Joseph Wilder, Junr. of ye small pox at sea.
Joseph Phelps, died of his wounds in a sea fight.

The imperfect roster of soldiers is an honorable one. So close was the connection of families in the villages that had grown out of Lancaster, and so universal the use of the same family names, such as John, Jonathan, Jacob and Joseph, that it has been hard to distinguish the different branches of a family. The rolls very often failed to mention any place of residence. All the towns met the call and their men served honorably. The Marquis de Chastellux, traveling through New England in 1780, said, "Among the men I have met with above twenty years of age, of whatever condition, I have not found two who have not borne arms, heard the whistling of balls, and even received some wounds."

At the convention for forming the State constitution held at Cambridge in September 1779, Lancaster was represented by Dr. William Dunsmoor, Captain Ephraim Wilder and Captain William Putnam.

At various times during the war paroled prisoners were quartered in and about Lancaster, and sometimes they got into difficulties with the local authorities, especially when the prisoners were British officers. Two of those officers were quartered in Still River. Captain Edward Barron of the King's own Regiment had been so disabled that he could take exercise only on horseback. With him was Surgeon Walter Cullen of the 72d Foot, Royal Invincibles. All went well until the officers rode away beyond the Harvard limits, and were absent two or three nights. The committees of Safety and Correspondence in Harvard, Lancaster and Bolton quickly committed them to the over-crowded and unclean Worcester jail, where they soon begged to be returned to Still River. When released however, they were sent to Newburyport. The papers in the case do not tell where these British officers had spent

their "leave" but perhaps it was in Lunenburg where five Highland officers were held, who often disturbed their rustic neighbors with their carousals, as they would "visit the public house and sometimes stay very late at night." These were threatened with transfer to the jail at Taunton.

In a journal kept by James Stevens of Andover an account is written of the transfer of thirty-four prisoners, from Cambridge to Worcester. The prisoners were twenty-two British regulars taken in an attack upon Light House Island and twelve Tories. The first night of the march the prisoners were put in the jail in Concord, and their second night was passed in Lancaster, where "the town's people stood sentry over them." As they marched through the towns, the Tories carried their hats under their arms and when they reached Worcester, they were taken to the prison and the "Tories went into the dungeon."

At least fourteen colored men appear in the Revolutionary muster rolls as having served from Lancaster. Both the Continental and Provincial councils forbade the enlistment of this race, but when it was found that the royalists were employing them General Washington authorized the services of Negroes in the militia, and after that time they are found in both armies, both in the North and South.

Hardly less of a hardship than the war was the scarcity of money, and the ever diminishing value of what currency was in circulation. Massachusetts had been in a comfortable financial condition at the beginning of the Revolution, with sufficient gold and silver currency, coined abroad, to answer her needs. Coins were clipped to the point where traders must keep scales to find their value, and forty dollars of paper money were required in exchange for one of silver.

In the British camps counterfeit money was manufactured which so deceived the people that even honest and respectable merchants innocently received, and passed on, forged currency. Even the towns took in, through tax money, so much of the worthless script that an article appeared in the warrant for the town meeting in March, 1778, to see if the town would allow good money to replace the counterfeit in the town's treasury.

A new issue of bills was made in 1780, but by the following year that had become worthless. A system of barter was resorted to, as in pioneer days. Even in hiring soldiers, payment to be made

upon discharge was made not in cash, but in calves or some other commodity. In Harvard in the call of 1781, sixteen "three year men" were promised pay for services partly in cash, and the rest in "eighteen head of three year old Horned Cattle."

Speculators soon raised the prices of even the most ordinary articles to such height that the towns were ordered by the General Court to choose a committee to act with the selectmen in fixing the prices, for all time, upon staple goods, and other charges. In the town records there is an interesting list of the prices fixed by the patriotic officials at the time, who unfortunately did not take in the well known consideration of supply and demand. Among the articles named in this very long list are a few, selected at random which seem ridiculous today, such as

lamb under six months old 2d per pound;
milk in the winter 2d per quart;
wood good & green delivered at the buyers door eight feet long six shillings per cord;
dinner roast and boiled one shilling;
lodging one night 3½ d;
To keeping and boarding, a man 7 days finding washing and lodging, six shillings.

A true copy of these prices, signed by eleven town fathers, was examined and entered into the town records by William Greenleaf, town clerk.

Of course this attempt to fix prices, based upon no financial security, met the usual fate; and it often became necessary to convene both in towns and county conventions to attempt a readjustment. By 1779 the continental currency had reached so low a point in value that the commissaries no longer could purchase sufficient food for the army. Congress then required each State to supply its proportionate share. Warrants were sent out for town meetings to see what could be done to meet this demand. The account of moneys assessed on the town of Lancaster in 1780 included a town rate of £165,000 "old emission." But the committee chosen proceeded to raise the necessary funds and bought their full quota of 36,494 pounds of beef, as ordered by the General Court.

Massachusetts from the first had required each town to furnish the clothing required by the soldiers according to its financial

status, and the assessment for clothing in 1780 for the army was as follows:

Lancaster	40	pairs of shoes,	41	shirts,	26	pairs of hose,	17	blankets.
Bolton	18	do.	15	do.	20	do.	0	do.
Harvard	28	do.	10	do.	27	do.	0.	do.
Leominster	22	do.	22	do.	22	do.	11	do.

The next year Lancaster was required to supply sixty of each of the same articles of clothing. Not always had the town waited to be assessed for clothing for, in February 1778, when news finally reached them that the snows of Valley Forge were stained with the blood of the feet of half-clad soldiers, town meeting had not waited to have an ordered requisition but immediately voted that the selectmen and a committee collect the necessary clothing and had paid men to transport it to the soldiers.

Those who suffered most from the depreciation of the currency were the clergy, teachers, and others who depended upon salaries, and an account of Lancaster's first donation party was given in the Worcester Spy for July 15, 1779:

> A respectable number of ladies in the first parish in Lancaster assembled at the pastor's and presented him with 208 skeins of linen yarn and other valuable donations; and in the evening a worthy number of gentlemen assembled also and in wool and cash presented to the amount of 239 dollars; all which were gratefully accepted by the said pastor.

One of the traits most openly "jeered" by the southern soldiers was the stinginess of the "Yankees," but when it came to doing their part in such crises, the "Yankees" were neither slow to act, nor stingy, though perhaps some private hoarding had been done before the need came.

In every war the women of Lancaster and its group of towns have met the call and worked industriously to do their part, and although the spinning wheel no longer is in use, the knitting needles clicked as busily in the World War as in the days of the Revolution, and generous donations to the cause have been the rule and not the exception.

The following list of the graves of Revolutionary soldiers in Lancaster burial grounds was prepared by the late John C. L. Clark of Lancaster, who wrote that the list "is, and always must remain incomplete. It is certain that there are many unmarked

resting places of men who fought in the War for Independence, and these there is now no way to locate."

Old Cemetery

Cyrus Fairbank, died Feb. 28, 1801, aged 63.
Jonathan Phillips, died July 20, 1780, aged 44.
Ephraim Wyman, died Feb. 17, 1780, in his 30th year.

Old Common Cemetery

(Capt.) Timothy Whiting, died Jan. 12, 1826, aged 67.
Jonathan Wilder, died Jan. 13, 1836, aged 80.
Levi Wilder, died Jan. 5, 1793, aged 42.

Middle Cemetery

Jonathan Barnard, died March 5, 1824, aged 60.
Joseph Beaman, died April 7, 1813, aged 72. (Served through much of the war. Another Joseph Beaman of Lancaster responded to the Lexington alarm.)
Josiah Bowers, died Nov. 30, 1836, aged 84.
Elias Emerson, died June 16, 1835, aged 76.
Joshua Fletcher, died Nov. 14, 1814, aged 90.
Capt. Thomas Gates, died Dec. 27, 1814, aged 79. (Commanded the "Lancaster Troop.")
Eber Goddard, died May 26, 1835.
James Goodwin, died Sept. 8, 1831, aged 90.
Capt. Daniel Goss (Sen.), died Dec. 10, 1809, aged 69.
David Hosley, died July 5, 1802, aged 59.
Samuel Joslyn, died Feb. 15, 1826, aged 88.
John Maynard, died Jan. 21, 1823, aged 70.
Joel Osgood, died Nov. 7, 1821, aged 75.
Aaron Rugg, died July 6, 1810, aged 50 yrs., 11 mo.
Elisha Rugg, died Jan. 7, 1805, aged 49.
John Sargeant, died April 1, 1822, aged 73.
Seth Sargeant, died Nov. 28, 1830, aged 77.
John Thurston, died Dec. 7, 1838, aged 84.
Peter Thurston, died Dec. 22, 1812, aged 73.
Joseph White, died July 1, 1806, aged 55.
John Whiting, died Sept. 3, 1810, aged 50.
(A memorial stone only) Col. Whiting is buried at Washington, D. C.
Jonathan Whitney, died Nov. 20, 1802, aged 66.
William Wilder, died March 20, 1816, aged 61.

North Cemetery

Leonard Farwell, died Oct. 19, 1822, aged 62.
Aaron Johnson, died Feb. 6, 1820, aged 79.

CHAPTER XLII

Surrender at Yorktown
Shays' Rebellion
1781—1787

STILL THE TERRIBLE MILL OF WAR GROUND ON. WORD CAME OF one disaster after another on the battlefields, which had now been removed to the southern states. The army was greatly reduced in numbers; was half-clad, half-fed and despondent. Congress had lost its credit, and the paper currency in circulation was valueless. Only disappointment had come from the alliance with France, and everywhere the dejected people were suffering privation and distress. The military authorities, grim and determined, went on with their recruiting and drafting, however slowly, and every means—even lottery—was resorted to, in order to fill the quota for the Continental army.

Nearly all the regiments in which the soldiers of this district were fighting took part in battles that resulted in the surrender of Burgoyne; and for the rest of their term were generally stationed along the Hudson River. We know but little of the story of these men who offered their lives for their country's freedom. Few fell in battle and no record of wounds was kept upon the rolls. But we know that they did their duty and with honor throughout the duration of the war.

As if the New England people were not already suffering about all that was humanly possible, Nature took a hand at their trial and the "hard winter" of 1779—1780 descended upon them. Snow lay deep over the country and the cold was intense. Walls and fences were completely buried, and for weeks no roads were broken out in the villages. No traveling except upon snow-shoes was possible; and only in this way were they able to draw hand sleds to carry the grain to and from the mills to be ground for bread.

At last, when spring came, consternation was spread throughout the state by the "dark day," of May 19, 1780. A little before noon daylight faded out, candles had to be lighted, fowls went to roost, bats came out, and the chill of despair settled down upon these

Puritans who believed it to be a visitation of an offended Providence.

Finally the surrender of General Cornwallis, at Yorktown, Virginia in October, 1781, brought the long struggle to a close. The priceless heritage, the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for which they had fought for nearly seven years, was theirs. The glad tidings which set the bells ringing in all the towns, as fast as news then traveled reached Lancaster in about a week, coming by vessel to Newport, Rhode Island.

A month after the surrender, the victory was celebrated here on November 19, with a day of great feasting and rejoicing. A procession marched through the principal streets of the town, preceded by an advance guard, field piece, and band of music with American colors flying, then went to the Sun Tavern, where an "elegant dinner" was provided for them, after which thirteen toasts were drunk, each being followed by a discharge of the field piece and three cheers.

This celebration was the first of many to follow, but when the date of annual commemoration became the Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, local celebration of the surrender of Yorktown took the form of a yearly sham battle in which men from the neighboring towns took part, and with an unlimited supply of gingerbread and spruce beer, amused themselves in great style. These "Cornwallis" celebrations were carried on up to 1855, when the "time-worn farce" was re-enacted on Burditt Hill in Clinton. At that time, uniformed companies of militia were present from Berlin, Clinton, Groton, Leominster, Lancaster, Marlboro, Oakdale, Sterling, West Boylston and Westminster. The uniformed companies included a tribe of Indians from Berlin.

Modern historians lay the long delay of success on the part of the patriots, to treachery of certain American representatives at the Court of England, or to dilly-dallying by those who were conducting negotiations with France. In spite of all difficulties the American republic was destined to become one of the great powers of the world. It seems the more wonderful when we remember that at the beginning of the war, the colonies were not even united except in the common cause of liberty and for a government of the people and by the people.

Then came the aftermath such as follows all wars. Upon the

heels of the revolution came that counting of the cost. Massachusetts found herself weighed down with a debt of nearly 15,000 dollars. It was decided to raise revenue by direct taxation; but the people already had suffered too much to take lightly any increased burden, which, as always, fell heaviest upon the farmers and the men in small trades. There had been much hoarding of gold, by those in high places.

The farmers filled their barns but found it difficult to barter their crops for even the commonest articles of clothing. In contrast, the wives and daughters of the lawyers and merchants were wearing foreign silks and laces. Unemployment, discontent, and disappointment that the war had not fulfilled the promise to make all men free and equal, was trying men's souls. The chief grievances complained of, were that the governor's salary was too high; that the senate was too aristocratic; that the lawyers were extortionate; that taxes were too high.

These grievances drove the people to action. County conventions were held, but failed to satisfy or pacify the demands of the common people; and an insurrection was staged in the western part of the State, known as "Shays' Rebellion." This was the outcome of many smaller demonstrations of defiance of authority, which had been going on for five years. During that time nothing had availed to quiet the unrest. A weak legislature had failed to meet the situation. The government had dealt as lightly as possible with the malcontents, realizing that many of their hardships were real, and many of their actions were due to misunderstanding and ignorance.

When, in 1787, James Bowdoin became governor, his prudent policy was to put forth the strong arm of the commonwealth and stop all riotings with military action if necessary.

The adage that "where there is smoke there must be some fire" comes to mind in reading the tales of the encounters between those high in authority and the common people. An example is shown in the following incident—Colonel William Greenleaf of Lancaster was sheriff of the county. He had read the riot act from the courthouse steps in Worcester on November 22, 1786, and had addressed an armed mob, assembled to prevent the sitting of the Court of General Sessions. A voice from the mob cried that one of their grievances was the Colonel himself and his exorbitant fees. Colonel Greenleaf's answer was: "If you deem my fees for execution oppres-

sive, gentlemen, you need not wait longer for redress; I will hang you all for nothing, with the greatest pleasure." Hardly a conciliatory attitude! Probably there were many such actions which drove the insurgents on.

Daniel Shays had been a patriot soldier. He was an ensign at the battle of Bunker Hill, and had been made a captain in the Continental army. He had been willing to fight through the long years of the war but was now anxious to see that freedom and equality, for which they had fought, carried out in the State's policy. As free citizens of a democracy they were unwilling to bear the hardships not endured by the upper classes. Shays undertook to "regulate" affairs and placed himself at the head of 1000 insurgents and attempted to prevent the session of the Supreme Court at Springfield; but was driven off by the militia.

In the meantime, the towns had decided to put down such insurrections once for all, and volunteers were called to suppress, by force of arms if necessary, such unlawful proceedings. Lancaster was the rendezvous for the troops from the eastern part of the state and on January 24, 1787, five hundred men, forming a regiment and commanded by Colonel Ephraim Stearns, marched to Worcester and joined the other State troops assembled there under General Benjamin Lincoln. Among these volunteers were fifty or sixty men who had borne commissions, even to commanding a regiment, in the Continental army—now enlisted as privates, to restore law and order.

The next day the regiment marched to Springfield where Shays had attempted to capture the arsenal with a company now swelled to 2000. Upon the approach of the militia, Shays retreated to Pelham, and then to Petersham, when he found that Gen. Lincoln had led his forces to Hadley.

With Colonel Stearns' regiment in advance, Gen. Lincoln started in pursuit, at eight o'clock, in the evening of February 13, 1786. It was thirty miles from Hadley to Petersham over a very hilly country. From the record of one who suffered on that never-to-be-forgotten march we take the following vivid description:

We left immediately, late as it was. The weather was comfortably warm, but by eleven o'clock in the night the wind changed to the northwest, blew furiously, accompanied by a violent wind and snow-squall and became intolerably cold. The snow was deep, though a fine sleigh path would have made it good traveling, had it not been that our artillery was in front with wheels so much

wider than the path that the road was filled with loose snow, which rendered the traveling as uncomfortable as can well be imagined. We reached Petersham about sunrise next morning, tired, hungry, and frozen, having traveled in the course of the night thirty miles, the hardest march that I ever endured. I found myself badly frost-bitten, and found but two in my company who were not more or less frozen.

Shays, being informed that Gen. Lincoln was close in his rear, thought it best to leave town, and so rapid were his movements that many left their provisions, and some on the fire preparing for breakfast. Our quartermaster had gone in front of us to look out for houses to lodge in, so when we reached the main street we had only to take possession of such as we were appointed to, some of which were occupied by Shays' men, who soon left and gave us a peaceable entrance. Never were a good fire and breakfast enjoyed more highly by any set of men.

The sufferings of the soldiers that terrible night still echo down the years! Many were frozen to the knees, and suffered for it for years to come. To the hardiest soldier, that night's experience was something to be remembered for life.

Shays and his "regulators" were taken completely by surprise, and fled in all directions. Insurrections were at an end. It was really a happy ending for all concerned, for General Shepard is said to have told one of his soldiers that at no time in his life was he called upon to perform so painful a duty as when he ordered good aim to be taken at Shays' men, many of whom had fought at his side and stood with him through the most trying scenes of the war. They all knew that he was a brave soldier and officer, and they were glad not to be compelled to fire upon him and his mistaken followers, as enemies.

Shays fled to Vermont where he remained for a year. He was pardoned, and returned to his home in Pelham; but afterwards removed to the state of New York, where he became a Revolutionary pensioner. One hundred and fifty of his followers who were captured were forgiven, and no one was punished for sedition.

An old epigram which plays upon the word chaise, in use at the time, but spelled "shays," is this:

Says sober Will, "Well, Shays has fled,
And peace returns to bless our days."
"Indeed," cries Ned, "I always said
He'd prove, at last, a full-back Shays;
And those turned over and undone,
Call him a worthless Shays to run. —Ward.

Three years later Alexander Hamilton launched his sound financial policy for the United States, and the debts incurred by each state were assumed by the national government. Taxes were lightened, trade was revived, new manufactures were introduced. Many who had lost their property migrated to the Ohio valley, where they took up land grants. The complaints of the people were silenced and when spring came in 1787, peace reigned in the land.

CHAPTER XLIII

More of Mother Lancaster's Children Come of Age

TERRITORIALLY THE TOWNSHIP OF LANCASTER WAS SO LARGE THAT the small groups which had gathered in various sections had found it impossible to get to the center to attend church, town meetings and schools. The outcome was the establishment of these small groups into self-governing political units.

At the close of the Revolution, as we have seen, three such units were well established. Harvard, Bolton and Leominster were rounding the half century mark, and now Sterling had joined them.

This "second Precinct" had fought through three generations for separation, and now by outvoting the mother town had gained it in 1781. At last the people living on Sterling's five hills would no longer be taxed for Lancaster's eight bridges—long and often a source of great expense.

Except for a strip of land about a mile wide and known as "the Mile," the territory upon which Sterling grew was not a part of Sholan's grant to Lancaster, but was largely a part of the "Additional Grant," which had been purchased from George Tahanto, nephew of Sholan, in 1701. Still more territory was added to the "second precinct" when a strip of land of irregular shape, known as "Shrewsbury Leg," was divided between Sterling and West Boylston.

The town was settled by families of Lancastrian origin. Gamaliel Beaman's and numerous Sawyer families had been there from the first, and these, with Osgoods and Houghtons, Willards, Wilders and Ruggs carried on the Lancaster tradition. When they married the women of these families gave their maiden names to their sons.

A family by the name of Burpee came from Rowley in 1775 and settled on what became "Rowley Hill" about two miles west of the Center. The Burpee descendants have always been prominent in Sterling.

The numerous Kendalls, who also named a hill to the southeast of the Center, were descended from Reverend Thomas Carter of Lancaster and Woburn, by marriage.

Now Sterling far exceeded the old town in numbers of horses, oxen and other cattle, sheep and swine, and, too, in mowing and meadow acres. By the census of 1784, Sterling had 440 polls to Lancaster's 307, and five more dwellings than the mother town. No weakling, this new offspring!

Boylston had practically run her own affairs since 1743. It covered a part of both Lancaster and Shrewsbury. Now the struggle began for independence from both towns. Lancaster gave up a strip of land a mile and a half wide at her southeast corner in 1780, and established the line which is today Boylston's northern boundary. Six years later Shrewsbury granted her land and Boylston became an independent township, in 1786.

The first permanent settlements in Boylston were upon that part of the town's land which had been granted by Lancaster, and the settlers were descendants of Thomas Sawyer and Mary Prescott. They built a corn mill on the Nashua river probably as early as 1705. Around this mill grew the settlement known as Sawyers Mills for nearly two centuries until by the building of the Wachusett Dam it was flooded over. These people were decidedly "of Lancaster" by birth and tradition, and Lieut. Aaron Sawyer, the brave soldier who figured so prominently in Lancaster's part in the Revolution, was the first Town Clerk of Boylston.

The Ball family, probably the second to settle in Boylston, went from Lancaster. They were descended from John Ball, who with his wife Elizabeth and their infant child had been slain by the Indians in 1676, and two other children of theirs had been carried into captivity. The original farm in Boylston remained in the Ball family down to the present century.

The Bennett family was also from old Lancaster, and had figured in the massacre of 1676, when George Bennett, a grandson of that Richard Linton who built the first house in Lancaster, was killed. Bennett left a widow and five little children, of whom Samuel, born in 1665, settled in Boylston territory.

By the census of 1790 the new town of Boylston was given a population of 841.

Before Boylston was well on her way, her "first precinct" was looking for independence and clamoring for a part of her territory also some from Sterling and Holden. This was first "the precinct" and afterwards the town of West Boylston.

Here the Bigelow families had long been prominent. They were

descended from the John Bigelow who was carried away captive to Canada in 1705, with Thomas Sawyer, Jr., and his son Elias, and who, when about to be burned at the stake by their captors, were rescued by a friar. For their ransom the younger Sawyer agreed to remain for a year and build the Canadians a saw-mill—the first in that country—and teach them the sawyer's art, for they were sawyers by trade as well as by name.

Another precinct was clamoring for independence at the south end of Bolton. The ecclesiastical war which had been raging in Bolton hastened the desire of those in this section to become independent, and when the "South Parish" of Bolton was allowed to become a separate precinct, in 1778, the new town of Berlin was virtually established. Among the families from Lancaster who settled here was that of Captain Edward Johnson, one of the three supervisors of Lancaster's affairs in the early days of the plantation, and for 150 years this family was active in Berlin affairs. Here, too, were thriving branches of the Carter, Sawyer, Houghton and Wilder family trees.

As divisions and subdivision of territory were made, and lines changed, small settlements of people belonging to two or three towns, sprang up. Around the boundary stone which divided the lines of Berlin, Boylston and Lancaster, and including farms in each town, grew the settlement known as "Six Nations." Philip Larkin and his sons were owners of several hundred acres in what is known as Larkinville. The Larkins were Irish, and it is said that the father migrated to Baltimore, where there were others of the Roman Catholic faith; but his sons remained on the old farm. The other families of "Six Nations" were the Wilders, Carters and Sawyers, from England; Andrew McWain, from Scotland; Louis Conquerette, from France, also a family called Hitty; Daniel and Frederick Albert, from Holland. The sixth was the family of John Canouse, a Hessian deserter from the captive army of Burgoyne.

The children from these families attended school in what was known as the "Six Nations Schoolhouse," which eventually was moved to its present location on the north side of Charlotte Street in South Lancaster.

To the west of Boylston was the tract known as "Shrewsbury Leg" which belonged in turn to Shrewsbury, Lancaster, Sterling, Boylston and West Boylston. Farms in parts of this section were in turn a part of the five towns.

After Boylston had been taken off, what remained at the south end of old Lancaster was the settlement known as "the Mills," where, since the days of the pioneer Prescott, various branches of his family had lived. But few other families had settled in the neighborhood, for Lancaster had given John Prescott many square miles of territory in acknowledgment of his public services. His lands covered most of the present business center, and much of the mill property, in what is now Clinton. The second John Prescott extended these lands to the westward, and they were owned in succession by a third and a fourth John. The fifth John also held the Homestead. He died childless.

A few farms had been cleared and homesteads set up on the roads leading westward, but all about to the southeast and south were the original dense pine forests. The few families were quite near to the center of the mother town, and the period covered by this story shows little growth in population at the Mills.

At the death of the fifth John Prescott, in 1791, there began a subdivision of this vast estate. The Prescotts and their kinsfolk, the Sawyers, sold the ancestral lands to a succession of new owners, many of them from nearby towns. Then the Burdetts, Lowes, Rices, Harrises, mostly from Leominster and Boylston, brought in the comb industry. Within fifty years the "Mills" became Millville, then Clintonville and, in sixty years, the town of Clinton, second in importance and size of the Lancastrian towns.

It is much to be regretted that Clinton did not bear the Prescott name, so long and so honorably associated with its beginning. Little attention was paid in that day to the musical Indian names long in use in the neighborhood. Today such a name would probably be chosen instead of the name of a hotel in New York, where the industrial heads of the town found comfortable lodging.

Lancaster, Leominster and Bolton harked back to old English towns for names; Harvard, for no known reason, took the name of the Charlestown clergyman; Sterling was named for the Scotch earl who fought for American independence, but misspelled, as his name was "Stirling." Berlin took the name of the German city without giving it the correct accent; and Boylston took the name of Dr. Zabdiel Boylston, at the time famous for his work of inoculating for smallpox. When the second precinct of Boylston came into its own, with a wealth of local Indian names to choose from, "West Boylston" was chosen.

And so old Lancaster was left—still centering around the point from which the first surveys were made. Her youngest child, Clinton of the future, was not yet even a village, but the seven other towns which had gained their independence were still tied to the mother town by strong family attachments, and it is said that there was much visiting among the clans in those early days when Leominster was a days journey from old Boylston.

Just as the pioneers were Englishmen living in America, so the people living in these new townships were Lancastrians, independent of the mother town, but connected by strong family ties. In the Revolutionary war, where soldiers from all these parishes were in the same regiment, given names were so often repeated in the various branches of the family tree, that there were often several men with the same name in one company. As an example, twenty-two soldiers by the name of Wilder, all descendants from the pioneer, Thomas, served from Lancaster: there were nearly as many Carters, Willards, Houghtons, Sawyers, Beamans, Whites. At the close of the war a great exodus started, and carried many of these family names into new territory, especially to Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

An interesting example of this swarming of pioneer families is found in the descendants of Thomas Wilder, who came from England in 1639, and settled first in Charlestown and Hingham, then in 1659 at Lancaster. One son remained in Hingham where he carried on the name. The other three sons married in Lancaster: two established their homes on Bridecake Plain, and the third on George Hill, at the homestead. When it came to the third generation, besides several who remained in Lancaster, there was John, of Petersham; Jonas, of Bolton; Josiah and Jonathan, of Sterling; William of Bolton; Aholiab and Bezaleel, of Shutesbury; and David, of Leominster. Samuel, John, Abel and Jacob carried the family name into Vermont. Jonathan, of the same generation as David, had eleven sons, nine of whom grew to manhood and carried the names Jonathan, David, John, Luke, Cephas, Prescott, Lewis, Henry and Frederick. All had large families. Then there were numerous daughters, who, by marriage into other pioneer families, had many children by the given name of Wilder.

CHAPTER XLIV

The Lancastrian Towns at the Close of the Revolution

AT THE CLOSE OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WAR ALL OF THE NEW parishes were in straitened circumstances; but with the courage which carried them through to independence, they now started on a period of greater prosperity than they had experienced. It took time and labor, but they gave both.

Harvard, the oldest "daughter" was now fifty years old, in 1782. At the outbreak of the Revolution the population was 1,315. Of these 338 were males above sixteen years of age, "likewise two aged Negro men."

From the first, apples and peaches had been grown in Harvard and a new era in prosperity in small fruit culture and export was at hand. Thousands of barrels of apples were sent yearly to Liverpool, England. Harvard was furnishing gravestones for the countryside for miles around. All the blue slate so much seen in the old cemeteries came from the slate quarries on Pin Hill, where it was cut in wedges and then split and finished, even to the "weeping-willow" or "blissful cherub" ornament. This industry was carried on until marble and granite stones became more popular.

Harvard has had a remarkable record for carrying on the independent, progressive, sturdy traits and habits of its pioneers, many of them descendants of John Prescott and Major Simon Willard of Lancaster.

Bolton, having left the mother town in 1738 was marking a half century. Her population at the close of the war was 856. Bolton's contribution to the neighboring towns was the product of her famous line kilns, which was used wherever bricks were laid in the country round about. This lime was of such excellent quality and durability that today it shows no signs of weakness in buildings which have stood for well over a century. The Bolton orchards, like Harvards, have always been a source of increasing revenue.

Bolton holds a place all her own in the ecclesiastical affair of this region, and was the first to oppose the tyrannical stand of the

clergy. The controversy was partly a personal warfare, but drew upon the sympathies of the people in the surrounding towns, who did not hesitate to take sides.

Reverend Thomas Goss, pastor of the Bolton church from 1741 until 1770, had lost the good will of many of his parishioners through his personal habits and through his tyranny in church matters. He would negative a vote of the entire parish or exclude persons from communion according to his whims; he shifted communion dates to suit himself. Several times he announced communion and then because he saw someone in the congregation whom he disliked he dismissed the congregation without the communion service.

A successor was chosen when Mr. Goss was dismissed, in 1771, and Reverend John Walley became pastor. He was acceptable to but a part of the parish. The town was divided into "Gossites" and "Walleyites" in a feud which left its imprint for generations. In the midst of this parish quarrel the country's war for Independence came on and the weight of greater anxieties buried for a time the church dispute. Mr. Walley remained as pastor until 1783.

Leominster, the third town to be set off was making rapid strides in its development towards the flourishing manufacturing city it was to become—destined to far outnumber the other Lancastrian towns. During the forty years before its incorporation it is always mentioned in the records as "the Additional Grant." Families of Joslins, Beamans, Sawyers, Houghtons, Osgoods, Carters, Whites, Whitcombs and Wilders had come up from Lancaster about 1725. Another decade and the village was ready to build a church and settle a minister, and then to ask for the separation which was granted by the courts and made them an independent town in 1740.

At the close of the Revolution, for which its full quota of men had been furnished, Leominster's skilled workmen turned their attention to the promotion of the town's industries, with such success that a great variety of articles came to be manufactured and sent all over the world. Three centers of water power furnished by the Nashua river were in use, besides other powers from the large brooks which are its tributaries. The Kendall paper mill, the first in Leominster, led to the development of this industry, which has made Fitchburg important today.

Forty years passed before the mother town had to give up more territory and then, as we have seen, the end of the war brought

many changes in the old town, and brought the three new towns into Worcester County.

The population of Lancaster after all its territorial losses was 1460: Harvard, 1387; Bolton, 856; Leominster, 1186, and "in the Gore adjoining," 27; Sterling, 1428; Boylston, and its precinct which was to become West Boylston, 841; Berlin, 512.

Ninety-five percent of the whole population of Massachusetts at the close of the Revolution was of English descent; a little over three and a half per cent were Scotch, and only one per cent were Irish, thus leaving a very small margin of other nationalities.

Slaves had never been listed as population even before their possession was forbidden by law in 1783. For a long time slavery had been considered unwise as well as immoral and slaves had very generally been freed or disposed of in Massachusetts.

CHAPTER XLV

The Important People in Lancaster at the End of the Colonial Period

UP TO THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION THE RULING SPIRITS IN Lancaster had been lineal descendants of the pioneers. Now at the close of the war not one of the leading citizens was of pioneer ancestry.

William Stedman was County Sheriff and was in Congress; General John and Judge Timothy Whiting, Sheriff William Greenleaf, Michael Newhall, Col. Edmund Heard, Ebenezer Torrey, Joseph Wales, Merrick Rice, Jonas Lane, John Maynard, Jacob Fisher, Eli Stearns and John Thurston were the ruling spirits, and all new-comers.

The town's venerable clergyman, Reverend Timothy Harrington, had become very feeble after his service of more than forty years, and he was soon to have a colleague. Reverend Nathaniel Thayer was chosen and soon began his ministry of forty-seven years.

Next in importance to the minister came Judge Sprague and Captain Samuel Ward.

Judge John Sprague came to reside in Lancaster in 1770 and at once became an influential citizen. He graduated at Harvard College in the class of 1765. He taught school in Roxbury and then began the study of medicine. He later moved to Worcester and there began the study of law in the office of Col. James Putnam. Eventually he came to Lancaster and opened an office in partnership with Abel Willard, of the prominent old Lancaster family. The Revolution interrupted this partnership as Abel Willard was a Loyalist and left Lancaster in 1775, never to return.

In Joseph Willard's memoir of Judge Sprague he tells us that the Judge, "having purchased a small farm in the center of the town, labored upon it as a farmer; dismantled himself of his linen and ruffles and other appropriate habiliments, and assumed the garments of labor, which were then the checkered shirt and trousers."

After the war Judge Sprauge represented the town in the General

Court and later in the Senate. Soon he was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for Worcester County, and, in short, received all the honors his fellow townsmen had power to bestow.

As there were no law schools it was customary for young men to read law in the offices of established barristers, and many young men studied under the guidance of Judge Sprague.

At the convention for ratifying the Constitution of the United States in 1778, Judge Sprague voted for ratification, even though he had been instructed by the town to vote against it. He with Ephraim Wilder of Sterling, Samuel Baker of Bolton and David Wilder of Leominster were four of the seven men in Worcester County's fifty representatives who so voted, and thus brought honor to their towns. Again Judge Sprague was honored by being chosen a Presidential elector when Town, State and Nation voted unanimously for George Washington for President and John Adams for Vice-President of the United States.

Captain Samuel Ward, though now in the prime of life, had avoided a public career, although he might have had any position he desired. The war with England had seemed to him futile at the outset but he contributed in every way to the support of those who fought for it. He was not only respected but loved. As a merchant he had a wide acquaintance and to the end of his long life he never lost interest in all that was going on about him. His advice was sought by young and old and no account of him fails to mention his friendly smile nor of his keen ability to read character. His generosity to Lancaster is carried on by the bequests in his will.

Two brothers, Timothy and John Whiting had come to Lancaster to reside during the Revolution. Both were destined to hold important places. Both, as boys of eighteen and sixteen years had marched beside their father at the head of the Minute Men in April, 1775. Timothy succeeded his father as tavern keeper in a famous tavern on the Old Common. John Whiting was a favorite moderator at public meetings and usually was a member of the school committee. He had studied the Latin and French languages and won particular renown for his courtly manners. Long after his death "as polite as Squire Whiting" was a by-word. These brothers were Jeffersonian in politics, and as that policy was very unpopular here, they never won the high places in Lancaster for which they were fitted.

Dr. William Dunsmoor who had been not only town physician but the most prominent of Lancaster's patriots, died in 1784, and the two physicians succeeding him were Israel Atherton and Josiah Wilder, the former a graduate of Harvard College, the latter of Yale.

The arts were not wholly neglected in spite of the hard times for a Massachusetts Spy of this period printed the following notice: "The French Gentleman who taught Dancing and the FRENCH LANGUAGE grammatically, in Worcester the last winter and in Lancaster the spring ensuing, begs leave to inform the Publick that he has again opened a SCHOOL in LANCASTER, near the meeting House for the same purpose: Where he will pay the greatest attention to every Lady or Gentleman who will honour him with his or her presence."

CHAPTER XLVI

"The Old Order Changeth, Yielding Place to New"

ALTHOUGH THE OUTLOOK WAS GLOOMY AT THE END OF THE Colonial period, Lancaster did what she could to help by sending delegates to the county conventions who voted in favor of enactment of laws to alleviate the suffering of the people, and to relieve the farmers of their burden, by imposing excise and import duties. Now, after one hundred and forty years of struggle, the old town entered upon an era of prosperity of which she had only dreamed. She was the oldest and richest town in the County, and had already acquired a reputation which brought many scholarly men to her door.

Schools had necessarily suffered during the lean years of the war. The old grammar school, established by Col. Abijah Willard in 1762, had been taught up to the time of the Revolution by men who later became famous. Samuel Locke and Joseph Willard were teachers here and later presidents of Harvard College. Other instructors were Edward Bass, first Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts; Moses Hemenway, afterwards a distinguished clergyman at Wells, Maine; Gen. Joseph Warren of Bunker Hill fame; Dr. Israel Atherton, the first physician of liberal education in Worcester County; also Peter Green, a physician in the town for many years.

The town voted one hundred pounds for schools in 1784 and to begin to keep the schools "the year through." The names of "school dames" now appear for the first time in the records, and for the first time they divided the schools into districts, of which there were thirteen.

The town voted to build a schoolhouse for a Latin Grammar School, in 1790. This was an advance over anything before attempted in education. It was built on a corner of the little common in front of the fourth church and "opposite Gen. Greenleaf's garden."

Taverns were more numerous than ever before. Joseph Fairbanks kept a tavern at "Deershorns," which section took its name from a trophy of Fairbank's marksmanship—the elk horns

THE OLD SWAN SWAMP, OFTEN REFERRED TO IN OLD DEEDS

The upheavals of the soil caused by the action of frost and water in the Intervale for untold years marks the location of the old Swamp. This is on the south side of the old Turnpike road.

which he had kept since boyhood, now placed upon the guidepost at the parting of the ways to Sterling. From that date the district has been called "Deershorns" instead of its earlier name "Sly Corner."

The Locke Tavern stood on the North side of the George Hill Road in New Boston (South Lancaster) on what has long been the site of the Nathaniel Thayer estate farm house. Probate Court was held in the Locke Tavern three days each year.

At the junction of the two roads that led from Lancaster to Sterling was the far-famed Gates Tavern. Here Hezekiah Gates and his son Thomas Gates kept an inn well into the next century.

There was at least one tavern on the East Neck run by Elisha White. It would seem that there must have been good old English names given to these old hostelries, but only one name has been found. The "Sun Tavern" is spoken of in the "Annals" of Lancaster but its location is not told.

At the foot of George Hill the Carter's tavern was opened to the public off and on, but the main line of travel was no longer by its door.

Another tavern was just north of the Brick Tavern location on the road to Shirley, and was opened soon after the close of the Revolution by Colonel Henry Haskell, a brave officer of Lancaster, who served throughout the war. The region around this tavern, now almost depopulated, then had inhabitants enough to fill two schoolhouses with children, as twenty-five families lived within a radius of a mile from this corner.

On the road to Leominster, Dr. James Carter had opened an inn in 1788 where he received patients and students to board, and retailed goods of various kinds. Although he did not have a college education and was rough and uncouth, he built up quite a practice in medicine and surgery. He also cared for the town's poor in a house across the road from his house which stood a little to the east of the present Town farm barn.

About a mile farther on towards Leominster was the Ballard tavern, owned by the family who gave the name to the hill when they came to Lancaster from Andover about 1730, and where Dea. Josiah Ballard and his son, Thomas, entertained travelers for fifty years.

A third inn on Ballard Hill between the two mentioned, was run by Maj. Gardner Wilder.

Jonas Wyman was the first inn-keeper in the present center of the town and his inn stood on the corner of Main Street where the Harvard road begins.

Lancaster was the end of the stage coach line and there was still no post office, so travelers and mail must put up here until taken to their destination by private conveyance and post riders. Jonathan Whitney who owned the "Boston, Concord and Lancaster mail line" sent the mail and chance passengers to Leominster and beyond.

There were two widely patronized stores in the town, one in New Boston owned by Captain Ward and the other on Bridecake Plain owned by Levi Wilder. Both sold goods imported from England and from the West Indies.

Nearly all of the men who owned retail stores were licensed to sell rum, and quite often turned landlord as well for a year or two.

The mechanics of Lancaster were widely known for their superior workmanship. There were blacksmiths, whitesmiths, tanners, fullers, hatters, wheelwrights, cobblers and coopers. Some became so expert at their trade that they came to be at the head of noted firms, such as John Bigelow, who, on Sundays, played the violin in the church choir, and on weekdays was a goldsmith. He became the head of an important firm of Boston jewelers.

There were several master-builders who had been through the long apprenticeship when everything that went into the finishing of a house was fashioned of rough lumber by hand. At the head of these master builders stood Eli Stearns, whose work can still be seen in some fine examples of Colonial architecture in the town.

The first collection of books for a public library was brought together by an association of citizens in 1790. Up to that time the books of the town had been mostly in the libraries of the ministers, physicians, and lawyers, although there were usually a few well-worn books in the homes. Since this time Lancaster has never been without a public library.

For the first time in the life of the town a new religion had taken its followers from the parish church. The cult known as "The United Society of Believers Commonly Called Shakers" was established just over the town line in Shirley in 1780. Many residents of the north part of Lancaster were drawn into the fold, especially around Ponikin Hill. Here many farms changed hands

and were turned over to a small colony of new comers from Reading when their former owners joined the Shakers.

The coming of Mother Ann Lee and her followers raised a tempest in the three northern school districts of the town. Men left their wives and women their husbands to accept the celibate life of Shakers. Children were deserted or were taken into the custody of relatives in other towns. Efforts were made by the clergymen in the towns about to stop people from joining the community, but to no purpose. The Shakers believed they had been guided to stay in this very spot, and here they staid for more than 125 years.

No longer is the story of Lancaster the story of a colonial town, nor of the hardships and struggle of pioneers. The town had come into a place in the sun. Some of the ideas of the planters are no longer acceptable, but out of it all something strong and fine remained, and has been carried on in the lives of her children all over the land. Whatever may betide us in years to come, we will always hold on to the traditions of these early years which influenced the future of nine towns.

THE END

APPENDIX

Geology and Geography of Lancaster

When the pioneers came to Massachusetts they looked upon this part of the world as new country. Englishmen of that day knew little of races, religions, or civilizations other than their own. They were ignorant of geography and geology, but realized that they had been transplanted to conditions of great opportunity to satisfy their love of land. They had the courage and energy necessary to make these fertile valleys and broad uplands supply their needs. Just how long it had taken, or by what means these things had come to pass did not disturb their minds. They accepted conditions as they found them and believed that all was a part of the divine plan for their advancement, which without doubt it was, in a broader sense than they realized.

They did not know that the "new" country had been many thousands of years getting into its present form. That interesting feature of the landscape, the winding rivers and the intervales—the broad rich meadows which line their banks—simply furnished unusual planting places to the pioneers.

Geologists tell us that long, long ago the Nashua river followed a course very different from that of today. Fossils of animals of the Cretaceous period have been found in this region. The then lofty mountains gradually were worn away in many thousands of years of weathering in Nature's hands, and the valleys were filled. The surface became a peneplain (almost a plain) sloping away to the ocean.

A few monadnocks (hills of resistant rock standing in the midst of a peneplain) were left on the western horizon: Wachusett and Watatic mountains, Little Wachusett and Asnebumskit; and farther to the north, the higher mountain which was given the name of the formation, Monadnock.

In the succeeding geologic period—the Tertiary—, rivers crossed this peneplain and wore away the rocks into deep and well defined valleys. These ancient channels differed in some

cases from the present courses. The ancient channel of the Nashua river is believed to have cut through this Cretaceous peneplain making a rock gorge, buried under a drift terrace, of from 120 to 130 feet thickness, which lies at the bottom of Clamshell pond, in Clinton. An earlier course of the north branch of the river probably was directly eastward from North Leominster, past Shirley to Ayer.

Then came the Pleistocene or glacial epoch, when, in the far north the perennial accumulations of snow, piled into masses of glacier ice, descended from the Labrador center over valley, plain and hill until the vast sheets of ice topped the crests of New England's highest mountains. No peak is known to have risen above the huge plateau of ice thus formed which moved irresistibly forward to Long Island and the sea. This ice plain buried the highest peak of Wachusett Mountain 685 feet, and covered the summit of Monadnock to a depth of 374 feet.

Then came the melting and receding of the glaciers, when the glacial waters carried deposits of sand, gravel, rocks, clay, and sometimes berg-dropped boulders into queer earth formations, and filled up many hollows. It piled up in ridges which dammed river valleys to form lakes. These ridges were called moraines. Other low, camel-backed hills, chiefly of clay called drumlins; other rounded hills of assorted sands and gravels were called kames; and long, low, serpentine ridges of sand, gravel and pebbles called eskers.

While yet the outlets were blocked and there were no open channels, temporary lakes filled the river basins, and Lancaster was surrounded by the glacial Lake Nashua.

With the melting of the ice, the barriers retreated, leaving ponded waters, and also the stream channels through which the Nashua river and its tributaries flow. Wide flood plains were left in the valleys, one of which has been submerged by the Wachusett Reservoir.

Accumulations of drift were piled up by the over riding ice, which gouged the rocks in some places, and in others laid strata of clay, gravel and sand, which later—centuries later—were found useful.

The deposits of clay thus formed in the north eastern section of Lancaster were used for more than a century in the making of brick, and are still exposed at the site of the former plant of the New England Brick Company, half a mile to the southwest of the

Still River station. Slate was cut for many years a mile or more west of the same location, while two miles to the south, not only brick making was carried on, but a pit of laminated clay was used for Fuller's earth, dug out and bagged by the family who owned the land for generations.

The finest example of glaciated ledges found in this region is in Clinton, where the creek crosses North Main Street, in what is known as the "Scrabble Hollow" district. This was laid bare in the flood of 1875, when Mossy Pond dam gave way and rushing waters tore their way through this district.

Examples of drift piled into smooth round or egg-shaped hills, with no out cropping rocks are in this area and add much to the beauty of the landscape. These drumlins, from the nature of their soil, were used for grass lands by the pioneers. What is often called Kilbourn Hill, in South Lancaster, and close to the foot of George Hill, is such a drumlin.

Geologists claim that probably nowhere in New England was the closing stage of the Pleistocene ice sheet more typically developed than in the Nashua Valley.

In the nine miles from Clinton to Shirley the river chose a course through a gorge then formed, bordered by terraces on the west of from 260 to 270 feet, and the course then chosen never has been changed for any great distance. This course gives it a unique place among the rivers of New England, as it is the largest stream east of the Hudson, and the Champlain Valley, flowing throughout the main part of its course in a northerly direction.

The slopes of the rock ridge upon which Lancaster stands are coated with sand and gravel up to about the lake level. An abandoned channel leaving a marshy sag, brought out the flat terrace of Pine Hill, which ends in an abrupt slope to the present river bed.

The building of the Wachusett dam and consequent filling of the reservoir, submerged a large territory in the southern part of the original land grant to Lancaster.

Nature took a hand at changing the topography in the region of West Boylston, on the evening of November 17, 1755.

An historian of West Boylston gives a description of "The Great Earthquake," which left traces visible to this day only in that part of West Boylston when the territory was in Holden. The location is near the present Holden line, on the Quinnepoxet river. Here a high-bluff of from fifty to eighty feet in height rose

from the river bank. After the earthquake the opening was but a few feet above the river banks, but on its other side it rose abruptly in some places to the height of seventy feet, thrown there by the quake. Although the effects of this earthquake were felt from Chesapeake Bay to Halifax, in no place did it leave such a mark as here in West Boylston. Trees and stumps were split and thrown some distance. In another part of the town several acres of land sunk several feet, one acre or more of this going down from forty to seventy-five feet.

This earthquake occurred in the same month as the convulsion which destroyed a large part of the city of Lisbon, in Portugal.

An interesting feature of the landscape in Lancaster is the winding river and its intervales—the broad, rich meadows which line its banks and which furnished such unusual planting fields to the pioneers. Spring rains filled the river to overflowing, and made great lakes over these intervales. While the damage by freshets to the poorly constructed early bridges was great and frequent, the value of the deposits left after the flood waters had subsided was inestimable for raising crops.

Historians regret the change from the early spelling of the name of the river, but more than a hundred years ago it often was spelled "Nashua" instead of the early "Nashaway."

The north branch of the river starts from springs in Ashburnham and also is an outlet for lake Wachusett, in Westminster. On its course through Fitchburg and Leominster it is widened by the waters from several little brooks.

The south branch, the first to be called the "Nashaway," rises on the east side of Mt. Wachusett,—an outlet from Rocky pond—and it also is fed from Quinapoxet pond in Holden. The streams from these two sources unite in West Boylston, flow north through Clinton and join the north branch just above the Center Bridge in Lancaster, from there the crooked river, flowing mainly northward, soon becomes the boundary between Lancaster and Harvard, and, in a winding course, finds its way to the Merrimack river in the city of Nashua, New Hampshire.

Much water from the upper reaches of the south branch has been diverted into the Wachusett Reservoir, and the once turbulent stream which furnished power for so many early mills, is now but a small, slowly flowing river.

The earliest maps show a large body of water extending from

Still River south to the swampy land north of the State Industrial School in Lancaster. This area was marked "Long Pond," and at the southern end was called "Swan Swamp." It is thought that the deposits of earth in the yearly freshets gradually filled the depression. From springs in this old swamp, the Still river, a small tributary, rises and, flowing through a corner of Bolton, enters the Nashua without touching the village of Still River.

In the course of time the Nashua has changed its course through these alluvial lands, cutting new channels and leaving a number of "dead" river beds where it made a straighter course. Such is one between the main river and the Still river. During the World War, in 1918, it was utilized as a road bed for War Prison Camp, No. 1, when a hundred German prisoners of war were encamped on a strongly fortified peninsula, almost an island, formed by a bend in the Nashua river. Much of the land on both sides of the old turnpike traversing this intervale was covered with bunches of coarse grass and swamp mounds, never before turned over within the memory of anyone living. Under supervision of the Quartermaster Department of the United States Army, the German prisoners cultivated the intervale on the north side of the Turnpike. The land on the south side still shows its virgin soil raised in little mounds by the action of freshets and frosts for centuries. These unusual mounds often are believed, erroneously, to have been left from the days when Indians planted corn there. There, in the beginning was the "Swan Swamp" mentioned so often in the early records.

Lancaster lost many of its beautiful ponds in the divisions of the town. Bare Hill, the most beautiful of all, and Hell pond, supposedly so named because of its fathomless depth, went to Harvard. The two Washacum lakes went to Sterling; while Clinton took Mossy, Clamshell and Sandy ponds. Two small ponds, Gates' and West pond, went to Berlin and Bolton, while Leominster claims a part of White's pond, leaving, however, over eighty acres of it in Lancaster. A part of Turner's pond lies in Shirley, part in Lancaster.

Still old Lancaster retains five beautiful ponds in the north part of the town. The largest of the two Spectacle ponds is a beautiful body of clear water with pebbly bottom and deeply indented, wooded shores. Old surveys give it 113 acres of surface and give "Little Spectacle" thirteen. The two ponds are connected

when the water is high. Fed by springs from beneath, these ponds find an outlet by way of Canoe brook. This little stream flows southwest and on its course is joined by the outlet from Oak Hill pond and empties into the Nashua river a short distance above Ponikin. Oak Hill pond—lying to the southeast of the Spectacle ponds—is like a deep bowl, and until within a few years has never been reached by a road, and was practically unknown except to hunters and fishermen. An old map gives it as of fifteen acres area.

To the north of these ponds runs the old Union turnpike, and it is said that in the days when this road was the connecting link between Brattleboro, Vt., and Boston, passengers on the stage-coaches which traversed it could see these ponds and Fort pond, which lies a little to the north and which covers about one hundred acres. The land about these ponds has become so heavily wooded that their waters are nowhere visible from the highway.

Two miles to the east lies the magical Cumbery pond. Many strange stories have been told about it. It has no visible inlet or outlet. It is said to rise two feet before a storm and that it is not affected directly by rains or by the change of seasons. Levi Burbank, a native of this district, and a teacher all his life, made a close study of conditions and changes in this pond. He decided that its waters rose and fell in a succession of years—three years high and three years low. About twenty feet from the shore a distinct drop of temperature is noticed, and is due to a line of very cold springs.

Some distance away springs, coming with force out of the ground, form a little brook which carries into the Nashua river in the Shabikin district. It is thought that these springs may be fed underground from Cumbery. The beautifully wooded shores formerly surrounding the deep pure waters of this pond have been devastated by artillery fire from Fort Devens. Whether this will affect the singular phenomenon of the rising and falling of the water remains to be seen.

What is known as Cumbery brook has no relation to the pond, but may have been so called from the hill of the same name in this region. It rises from springs some distance to the southwest of the pond in the district once known as "Peachblow." It is a tributary of the Nashua, and at one time turned the wheels for a lead pencil factory on its course.

A number of small brooks traverse the town, finding their way

to the Nashua river. Wickapekit brook flowing down to the northeast from Sterling crosses the highway at the foot of the western slope of Ballard Hill. This brook is first mentioned in the town records in May, 1719, as the boundary of a highway, and is there spelled Wakapaket. It is mentioned many times in the records and seldom spelled the same way. The spelling Wickapekit seems to be preferred by Lancaster historians, but it is most often pronounced "Weekeepeekee."

Goodrich brook, widened to make "Four Ponds" in the Deershorns district, was one of the earliest to be used for power, when Thomas Sawyer, a son-in-law of John Prescott, set up his mill nearby. This brook was later used to turn the wheels of a little mill for the making of horn goods, a mile or more to the east on its course, and was again widened to make the two ponds at Fuller's Mill in the edge of Clinton.

Roper's brook, coming down from George Hill is widened in the intervale to form an artificial pond on the Nathaniel Thayer estate, and soon finds its way into the north branch of the Nashua.

Canoe Brook, which drains the waters of the Spectacle and Oak Hill ponds, furnished power for two important mill privileges two hundred years ago. The last to use it was a company for the manufacture of certain parts of shoes, in the late '70s of the last century, which gave the district the name "Shoeshank."

Old Lancaster lost its highest hills when Harvard took Bare Hill and Makamachekamuck, now called Prospect Hill; Bolton, the range connecting Bare Hill and Wataquadock. Sterling took Redstone and Justice Hills and Legate Hill went with Leominster.

George Hill remains the highest point in Lancaster, though from Ponikin Hill at the northeast there is an extensive view of the surrounding country. Assoatetick Hill lies in the northwest corner. George Hill is connected by a range of lesser hills with Ballard Hill, to the north. In the early days, two roads crossed over these two hills and found their way to Greenfield and Brattleboro, carrying on the post road from Boston to Lancaster.

By modern road construction the remaining hill roads are now hardly more than easy grades, but before the days of automobiles the road north to Shirley went up the very steep and sandy Babel Hill; the road from South Lancaster to the Center was steep on both sides of the bridge that connects them.

The unusual formation of the "Necke of Land," a long plateau

sloping gently away to the river on both sides, made an ideal setting for a township, and the unusual growth of elm, maple, walnut and buttonwood trees in the intervales adds much to the beauty of the landscape.

The northern part of Lancaster is an elevated plateau more than two miles wide from north to south, with some higher land at the west end, and falling to the river on the east. Much of this district has been taken by the United States Government, in connection with Fort Devens, and firing from heavy artillery has laid waste the homes of the families whose children filled two schoolhouses in the early part of the last century.

Extending about two miles along the river on the northeast border of the town is a peculiar gravelly formation known as Pine Hill. It is covered with stunted, scrubby trees and bushes. It is practically an island, as it is cut off from the west by swamps, from which two brooks flow, one to the northward and the other to the south into the Nashua river which washes its eastern base. Here on Pine Hill was once a small settlement around a "pock-house," when inoculation against smallpox first was undertaken; and here are some graves of unknown victims of the scourge. Only a few old cellar holes and scraggly rose bushes mark the early habitations.

Although most of Lancaster was heavily wooded, settlers, from the first, began to set out shade trees in front of their homes and along the highways. Many such trees, mostly elms, and famous for their great size, lined the road from the old Common to South Lancaster, and stood until near the beginning of the present century. Lancaster always has been famed for its beautiful trees. Elms—of which there are several varieties—hickory and button-wood trees dot the intervales, and a huge white oak stands beside the road from North Lancaster to Bolton. Many of the great trees suffered severely in an ice-storm in 1886 and again in 1921: still its beautiful shade trees are the pride of the town.

Many students of mineralogy visited Lancaster in former years to obtain specimens of andalusite, a reddish brown mineral extending in veins through white quartz or mica slate. When cut in cross sections it shows a cross. The mineral is found in but few other sections in the world. It is said that literally tons of these stones have been carried away from Lancaster.

In the region of Cumbery Pond is an old slate quarry, where

slates in use as early as 1752 were split and cut. After the Revolution great quantities of slate roofing were transported to Boston in ox-carts. The old State House and the old Hancock house and many other buildings in Boston were covered with Lancaster slate. The First Parish (Unitarian) church in Lancaster also is covered with the same material.

After the quarry had been worked for fifty years, other lighter slate came into the market and the Lancaster quarry was not worked again for more than fifty years. Then it was reopened in 1887 by a Welshman, who found the supply still abundant and the quality of the best. After a few years' quarrying it was again discontinued. The old quarry filled with water and remained so until 1934. Then operations were resumed and the slate taken in truck loads to Walpole, Massachusetts, there to be ground and used to cover a superior, fireproof shingle. The famous old slate quarry will soon be only a memory.

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LOTS

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