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CONNECTICUT QUARTERLY

An Illustrated Magazine



DEVOTED TO  
THE  
LITERATURE HISTORY, AND PICTURESQUE FEATURES  
OF  
CONNECTICUT



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### Note from the publisher

We at Between the Lakes Group are happy to make this article from Volume 2 of the *Connecticut Quarterly* available to you. We anticipate adding more material like this to the free material we are pleased to offer. Even though the article is short, we have added an index – as much to facilitate finding it on the world wide web as to use in actual perusal of the article.

If we detect sufficient interest in the subject matter, we will follow this article with a larger collection of Canaan history and ephemera. That would become our second CD-ROM of Canaan History. [Our first Canaan volume](#), republishing the considerably longer and more detailed, as well as earlier *Scrap Book of North Canaan* as well as some records of the Pilgrim Church, and some old and new photographs and some maps, is available via our website.

Please visit our website, located at <http://www.betweenthelakes.com>, and learn more about Canaan on the Canaan page, consider ordering our [Canaan CD-ROM](#), learn about the [iron industry](#) in Canaan, and examine our other offerings of the [history of Litchfield County](#) – and points beyond!

# The Connecticut Quarterly.

"Leave not your native land behind."—Thoreau.

## SECOND QUARTER.

Vol. II.

April, May, June, 1896.

No. 2.



### CANAAN.

BY MRS. MARY GEIKIE ADAM.

*Illustrated by Mrs. M. H. Kendall.*

In the beautiful valley of the Housatonic River, known to the Indians as the "Oosotonuc," lies the township of Canaan. What was once embraced in the ancient name, is now subdivided into Canaan, East Canaan, South Canaan, and Falls Village; perhaps Huntsville ought also to be included.

The town is bounded north by Massachusetts; west by the fair stream above mentioned; east by Norfolk; and south by Cornwall.

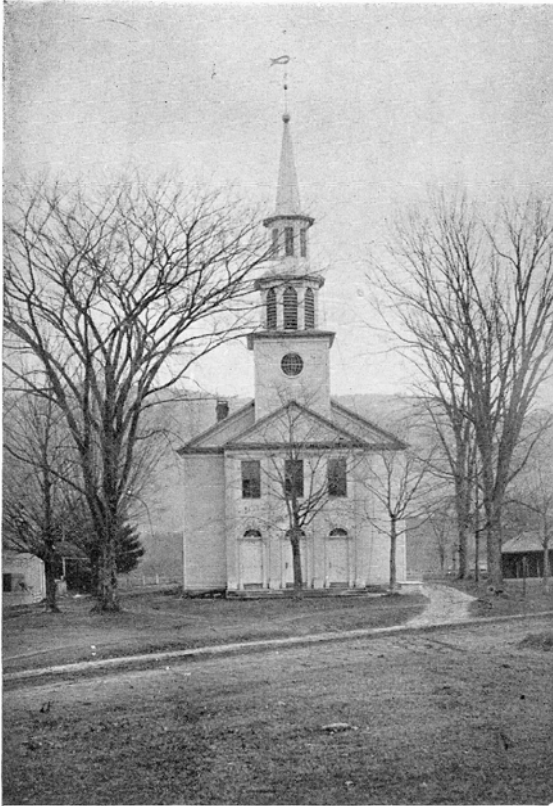
The township was sold at auction, in New London, January, 1738, and in May, 1740, the first settler arrived.

The name of this pioneer was Samuel Bryant. He came with an ox-team from Stamford, Ct., with John Franklin as teamster. Mr. Bryant had six sons; his seventh child, also a son, was the first white child born in this town. In June of the same year Daniel and Isaac Lawrence, with their families, came to spy out the land; they were soon followed by the Hewitts, and from that time the settlement of the town went on rapidly. In 1741 a church was formed in what is now South Canaan, and consisted of four persons,—Jacob Bacon and wife, Isaac Lawrence and wife.

The turnpike between Boston and the Hudson passed through part of the town, so that portion of it soon became a center of various industries. One of the first, perhaps the first, nice house built was erected by Captain Isaac Lawrence in 1751; and it stands to-day, to all appearances as solidly as ever; it has been remodeled, and rejuvenated; but the old frame still carries the modernized superstructure, as proudly as when the workmen laid down their tools, more than a hundred and forty years ago.

The old well-scoop is still in use, if one prefers a draught from "the old oaken bucket," to one drawn from a modern faucet, equipped with the latest thing out in filters. For many years this house was used as a "Tavern," where the stages stopped,





EAST CANAAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

the town,—namely, 1741. . . . Then follows the age and death of the patriarch (at over 90) . . . It would seem as if they were buried there; and many people take that idea. It is odd to put a family record on a spot where it is sure to be trampled under foot."

When the disagreement came, between the mother country and her robust child—who could no longer be kept in swaddling bands—Canaan promptly responded, sending into the field many of her sons.

It must have been a stirring time, as troops were marched through the town; sometimes their own soldiers; at others mercenaries; and it is most interesting to follow, so far as we can, the footsteps of a few of our revolutionary heroes. To the northwest of the town there stands an old house, where lived and died the man for whom it was built,—Jonathan Gillette.



THE JONATHAN GILLETTE HOUSE.

as they passed through Canaan, towards Hartford, Poughkeepsie, and Albany.

Over the great front door still hangs the iron lantern frame, from which "the light of other days" used to shine, guiding the weary travelers to this welcome hostelry. Under this same door lies the broad stone doorstep, on which we can read the name of Captain Isaac Lawrence, his wife, and their eleven children,—seven sons and four daughters.

The taste for large families seems to have been handed down, among other good things, in this particular line, as in 1850 we find there were more than 600 descendants of this father in Israel. In Hawthorn's notes, 1838, we find these words: "At Canaan Conn., before the tavern, there is a doorstep two or three paces large in each of its dimensions; and on this is inscribed the date when the builder of the house came to

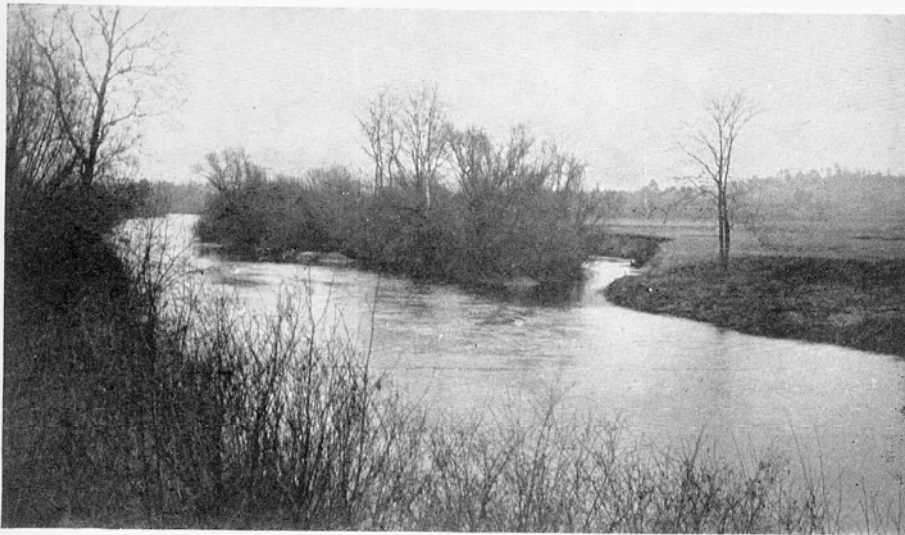


His father also, Jonathan Gillette, was already in the army, as captain of marines on an American man-of-war; dying in the service. The son enlisted, when but eighteen years of age, as a drummer boy, and was marched with his company towards New York. At Horseneck, near Greenwich, they were taken prisoners, and brought on to New York, where they were confined in the old



THE OLD DOUGLASS PLACE.

sugar-house; here he was kept for ten months. Gillette and three comrades, who enlisted with him, fared better than many of the prisoners, as he made himself



THE BROMFOXIT.

known to a Mr. Hutton, a warm friend of his father; who saw that they had food, and through whose good offices Gillette was eventually exchanged for an English soldier.



WOOD ROAD ON TOM'S MOUNTAIN.

It seems that Jonathan Gillette senior, and this Mr. Hutton were Masons; and the grip of those sons of the square and compass proved a blessing to the boy, as it has to many another before, and since. After Gillette's release, he again enlisted; faring better, and serving till his company was disbanded.

Years afterwards, the old sugar-house was taken down,

and a patriotic gentleman looked up the surviving prisoners ; there were only ten living, and to each of them he sent a cane, with an ivory head, on which was engraved his name.

Those sticks were made from one of the beams of the old prison. The cane



MAIN STREET.

given to Jonathan Gillette is now in the possession of Mr. Henry Gillette of Hartford. The name of the donor was not known.

Some distance south of the "Gillette House" stands another landmark,—the "Old Douglass Place."



INTERIOR OF EAST CANAAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

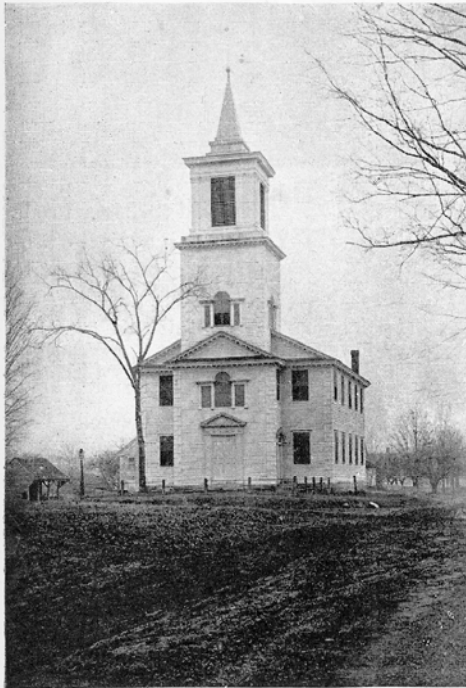


Here a company of Hessian soldiery were housed for some days, as they were marching from Boston to New York.

They were prisoners; and the huge fireplace is still in use, round which they sat, and in which they cooked their rations. The story is that some of them tried to es-



STREET VIEW.



SOUTH CANAAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

chief when he crossed the East River at midnight.

He was next at West Chester, N. Y., and was one of the guards over the ill-fated Major Andr , whose execution he witnessed. From there he went with Wayne to take Stony Point, and was again in Washington's command when he crossed the Delaware on Christmas night. McClary says, "After we

cape, were recaptured, and confined in the cellar.

There—so goes the tale—used to be seen in the stone walls staples to which the malcontents were fastened.

It may be that this last item is but legendary; no matter, Hessians and drummer boys are not the only links that bind the good old town of Canaan to the historic past.

From here also went to the front Nathaniel Stevens. He, with four brothers and a brother-in-law, Samuel McClary, were all soldiers during the revolution. McClary was a member of Sheldon's "Light-Brigade," which constituted General Washington's body-guard. McClary was mustered in at Boston, remaining there till it was evacuated. From there he went to Long Island with Washington, where they were defeated; and was one of those who accompanied the



CHRIST CHURCH.—EPISCOPAL.





INTERIOR CHRIST CHURCH.



ON MAIN STREET.

vens, who entered the service under the immediate command of General George Clinton.

In 1777 he was with General Putnam, and in 1780 was raised to the position of Deputy Commissary under General Washington. This responsible position he held until the dissolution of the commissary department in 1782. Colonel Stewart was commissary-general; and in his letter to Mr. Stevens,

May, 1775, and the next year served as commissary

crossed the river I rode near General Washington; he was quite silent, and very grave."

McClary was in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Valley Forge. Was present at the surrender of Cornwallis, and with General Washington through the entire war; being discharged at Newburgh 1783.

We must now return to Nathaniel Ste-



THE NATHANIEL STEVENS PLACE.

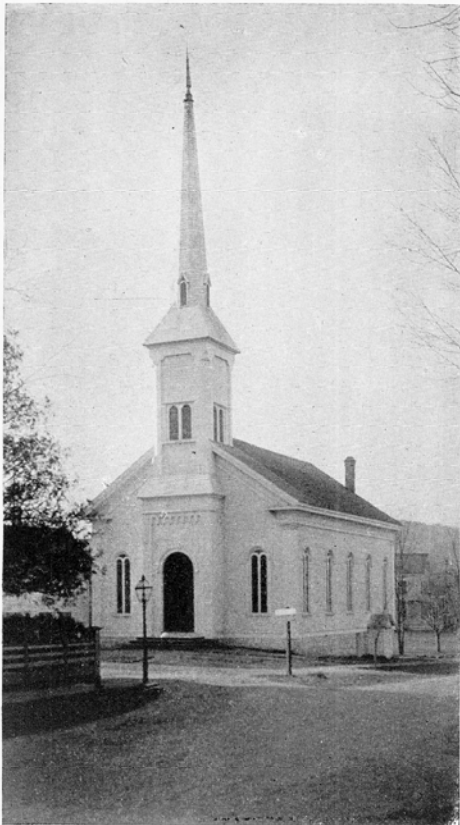
giving him the place of deputy, he says:

"I received yours of March 20th endorsing General Howe's, General Clinton's, General Schuyler's, and Mr. Fitch's letters; these weighty testimonials as to your fitness to serve the public are to me entirely satisfactory." Retiring from honorable service, Captain Stevens built the house now standing, in fine



UNION RAILROAD STATION.

repair, in East Canaan. It is one of our most attractive places, and stands to-day as a memorial of a bygone generation of patriots; also a witness to the thrift and sagacity of Captain Stevens' descendants, who honor themselves by honoring the memory of those who loved and served their country.



METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

On this same road, "East Canaan Street," stands another old time home, where Captain Edmund Dunning spent a long life. When but a boy of sixteen Dunning enlisted, and was soon afterwards detailed as assistant to General Washington's cook. Here he remained some time, and in after years delighted his family and neighbors with many anecdotes and personal recollections of those stirring times, and of Washington himself.

Whether he served in the army and was wounded is not remembered, but he was one of those who received a pension.

After the close of hostilities he was sent a commission as captain of the militia; it is signed by Connecticut's first Governor, Jonathan Trumbull, and bears date 1803.

Coming down this pleasant street, and following the windings of Canaan's picturesque stream, known to us as the "Blackberry," to the Indians as the "Bromfoxit," we pass a house where the great-granddaughter of Captain Gershom Hewitt lives.

This Captain Hewitt served under Colonel Ethan Allen, when Fort

Ticonderoga was surprised and taken, May 19, 1775.

Before the assault Hewitt entered the fort, as a spy.

He was dressed, and behaved like a simple countryman, looking for an aunt from "Varmount."





CANAAN FALLS.  
(In the Housatonic at Falls Village, South Canaan.)

CANAAN



His part was played so well that no suspicion was aroused. He was allowed to enter, and wander about at will; the soldiers even entertaining him, they were so amused by his simplicity.

He pretended never to have seen a cannon; asking what those long iron things with holes in the end were for. After getting all the information he could, he wandered out, in further quest for the missing "Aunt."

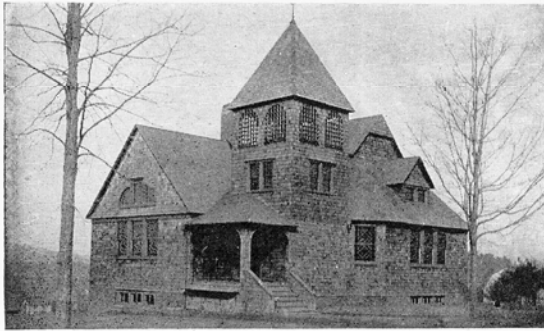
After the fort was taken the captain of the guard told Hewitt, that had he had the least idea who he was the day he entered the fort, he would have killed him.

Captain Hewitt used to tell the story of the surrender of Ticonderoga with great animation; and when he came to the place where Colonel Allen was asked by the British commander by what authority he demanded their surrender, and gave the fine reply: "In the name of the Great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress"—the old man would rise up, stamping his foot in excitement, while his voice rang out like a battle cry.

A brother of this Gershom Hewitt served as a private, and was killed in the massacre of Wyoming. In camp, field, and kitchen, as officers, and in the ranks, Canaan has had her full share of brave sons, who counted not their lives dear when the country they loved called them to fight her battles; dying if need be in her defense.

Doubtless there are other names deserving a place on the roll of honor; but even to mention them all is quite impossible; we can but pick a flower here and there, when the field is starred with blossoms.

Canaan was a place of many industries, in the long



PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

ago; let us bring some of those who were in the fore-front as business leaders into our lives again, for a few brief moments.

No doubt there are those still living who will remember "Ishams Woolen Factory," in East Canaan, where a superior quality of goods was made.

Besides this there was a cotton mill and puddling works, all of them doing a good business; though they were not obliged to resort to the various tricks of trade in vogue and on the increase to-day, forced in the hot-bed of competition.

Still following the windings of the bonny Bromfoxit, we come to one of the most interesting centers of activity in the town. Here was, for long years, a "slitting mill," in which "nail rods" were slit from bars of iron, and from which "wrought" nails were hammered.



THE EDMUND DUNNING PLACE.



SQUIRE FORBES.

The man who built and owned the slitting mill was Samuel Forbes; known far and near, for many years before his death, as "Squire Forbes;" a man of much enterprise, great business capacity and energy, also a man of sterling honesty and uprightness. When the slitting mill was built, there were but two others in the country: one near Boston, the other in Maryland.

The production of nail rods, in Canaan, brought much business into the place; men coming from all the "region round about" to purchase bundles of the rods.

In the old State prison of Newgate, hammering nails was one of the employments of the inmates, who were obliged, no doubt sorely against their will, to combine usefulness with punishment, so that even in those far-away days Canaan was doing her part to vary the monotony

of those who were retired from public life for longer or shorter periods.

Samuel Forbes was the pioneer iron-worker of this part of the state; discover-

ing and operating the mine in Salisbury (our neighbor), which bears the name of the "Forbes ore-bed" to this day. In Lakeville, two miles from Salisbury, he had a forge, where many cannon were cast during the revolutionary war, varying in size from four to forty-five pounds. In Canaan he had a forge and

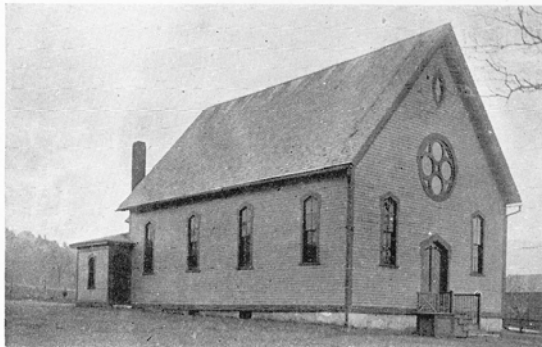


THE SQUIRE FORBES HOUSE.

anchor works; and it is tradition that part of the chain which was stretched across the Hudson, to prevent the ships of the enemy from ascending the river, was forged in Canaan by Squire Forbes. Many are the stories told about this busy worker of the past.

It is handed down in the family, that Benedict Arnold, passing through Canaan, at the head of some troops, and being weak from a recent wound, rested for a few days under the Squire's hospitable roof, rejoining his command later.

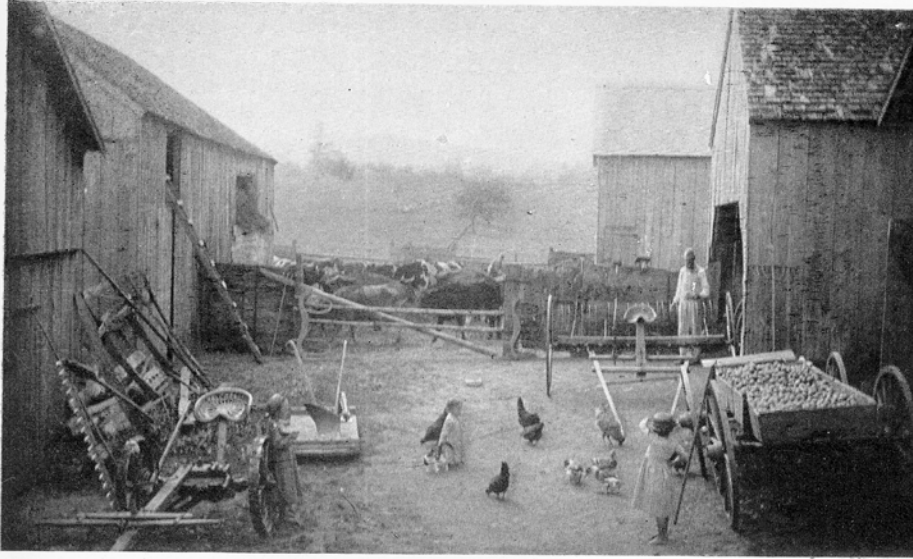
The house was on the turnpike, and a conspicuous place; it is wreathed in tradition and made interesting by story; but we are almost afraid



ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH.—ROMAN CATHOLIC.



to put on paper all the nice things that have been handed down as household treasures to the later generations, lest some genius for dates and statistics should arise, blowing aside the mists in which some of our legends may have taken form, and rudely depriving us of our inheritance of romance.



A FARM-YARD SCENE.

One man, very famous afterwards, was interested with Squire Forbes in the Salisbury ore-beds; and was also for a time his book-keeper.

This man was Ethan Allen, a native of Connecticut, destined to play so fine a part in the war of the revolution. It is sixty-eight years since Samuel Forbes slept with his fathers. And there are still three persons here who remember him distinctly.

"Time would fail me to speak of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson; of David also;" so we must turn from the past, laying our little memorial wreaths on the graves of those who are gone but not forgotten, though they have passed over to the majority, giving place to others, who are carrying on the interests of our busy town. In the war

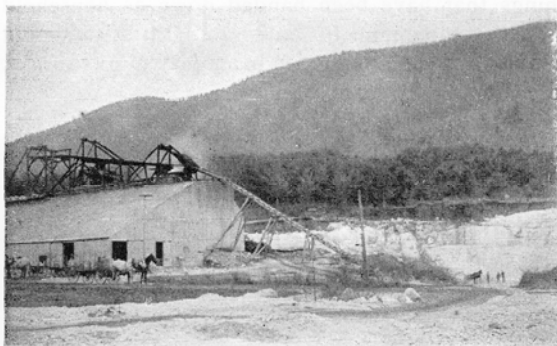


A LIME QUARRY.

of the rebellion Canaan responded nobly, giving freely to the country her bravest and best. Among the long list of honored dead, we name but two. Colonel David L. Cowles, who fell at Port Hudson.

This gallant soldier sent his dying message to those he loved: "Tell my mother, I died with my face to the enemy; Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." So passed from earth "a true patriot, a loving son, a brave officer, and a sincere Chris-

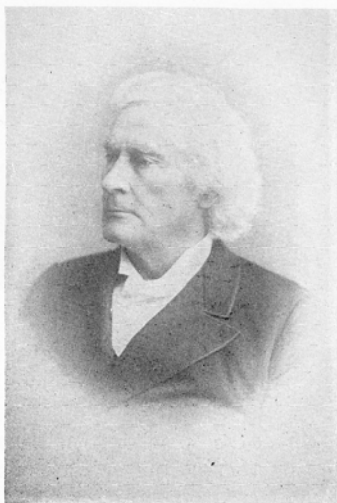




CANAAN LIME CO.'S KILN.

Church at East Canaan, marrying for the second time in the town, and spending the last years of a busy life, as a resident, he can never be forgotten. It is a little more than two years since Dr. Eddy left us, answering to his name in the last great roll call.

Chaplain of the Second Connecticut Volunteers, he was taken prisoner after the first battle of Bull Run. Carried South, he was taken from place to place, till he had been an inmate, for longer or shorter periods, of *five* Confederate prisons. After twelve months of confinement he was most unexpectedly released. Worn and haggard though he was on his return, his magnificent physique gradually regained its wonted strength. Those who were privileged to



REV. HIRAM EDDY.



BARNUM-RICHARDSON CO.'S IRON FURNACE.

know him to the last felt, that even though the four score years were reached, "His sun had gone down while it was yet noon;" for "His eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated."

To-day, the chief industries of Canaan are iron and lime.

The Barnum-Richardson Company have three furnaces; and when all are in blast, the output is about 40 tons per day.

It is charcoal iron, and as the Salisbury ore is used, in part, the product is of very superior quality. One of the furnace buildings is seen in the illustration.

The lime business is carried on, at the present time, by five companies; of which Charles Barnes' Sons is the oldest.

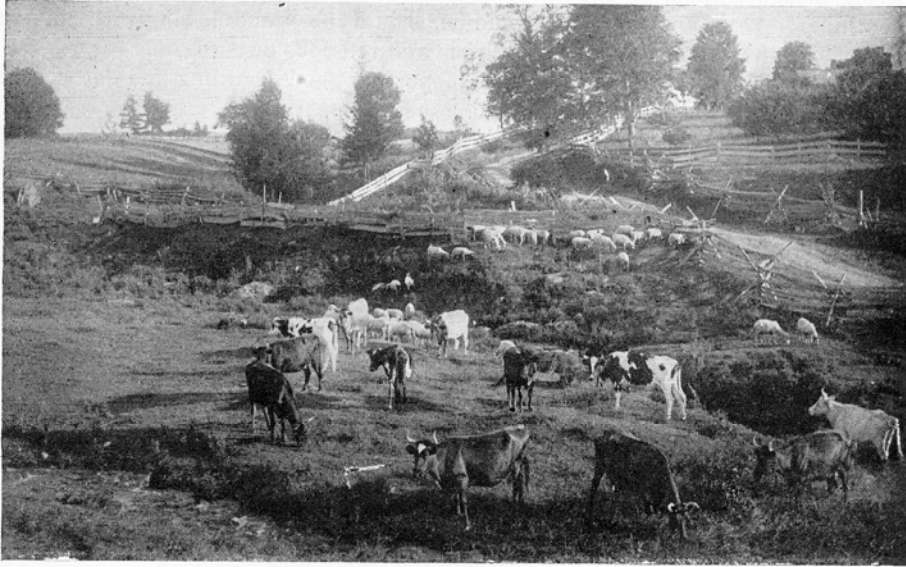
This firm has been in existence since 1840, and is well known in the state for the excellent quality of its lime. One of the recent companies

tian." The David L. Cowles Post of the G. A. R. in this town is a memorial to him, and the other brave men who answered their country's call. "Lord, keep their memories green."

Although the Rev. Hiram Eddy, D.D., was not a native of this town, he has been identified with us for so many years, that we must claim him as our own. For some years pastor of the Congregational

has an oil-kiln; and they each produce an article of fine quality; proved by the ready market which they all find.

It would seem that in this way, at least, Canaan does her part in cementing



A PASTURE SCENE.

the homes and hearthstones of her sons and daughters; and yet with humiliation, we see that her divorce court still has a full calendar.

Connecticut is justly proud of her beautiful capitol at Hartford, and Canaan does not forget that the marble with which it is built came from one of her inexhaustible quarries.

The Bromfoxit or Blackberry river offers a fine water power; not to be despised even in these days of steam; and there are major and minor opportunities for the right man in the right place to make his mark. But should he be a misfit—"the round man, in the square hole"—even Canaan is powerless to aid. Lying on the junction of the Berkshire division of the



SQUIRE FORBES TOMBSTONE.

(The square block like a table.)

New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad and the New England division of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, the facilities for going and coming are excellent.

Our scenery is fine, the drives beautiful, as Mother Nature has been generous to Northern Connecticut. Canaan mountain, called by the Indians, Wangum, a



spur of the Green mountains, is interesting for the variety of its outline, and the beautiful sheet of water—Lake Wangum—lying on one of its summits.

We have four churches ; so there is no lack of variety in the theological feasts spread before all comers ; while the clerical exponents of the various creeds are living demonstrations of obedience to the divine command, "Let brotherly love continue." What an anomaly it would be, should the "land flowing with milk and honey" be the abiding place of fanaticism and religious discord.

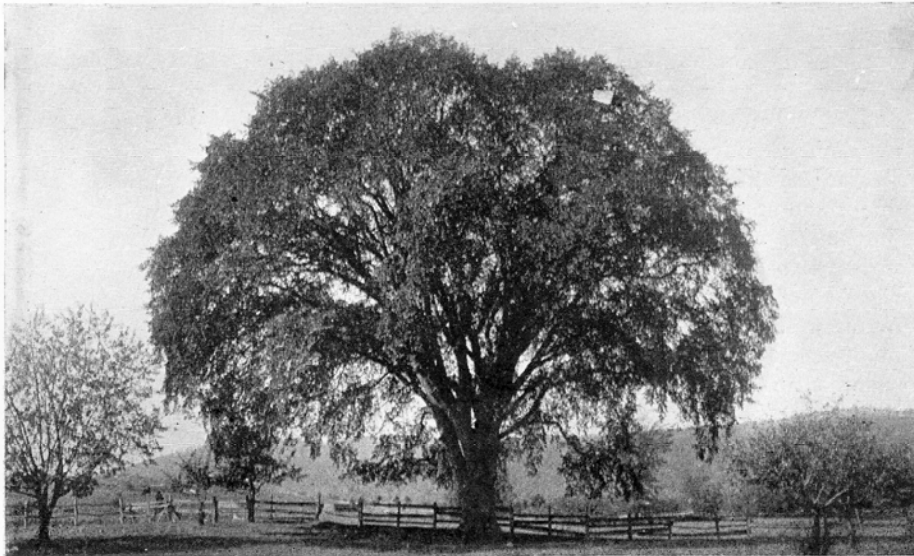
Although the towns about us are supporting good boarding and day schools, Canaan steps to the front again, in wholesome competition.

We have an excellent high school ; while the Canaan Academy for boys offers a home where parents can place their sons, finding the advantages of education are combined with other essentials for the proper development of mental and physical growth.

Another good gift from Dame Nature to our town is her water supply. The chemist of the State Board of Health last year made an analysis of some Canaan water, and the result was exceedingly pleasant reading to water-drinkers.

Our "Douglas Library," containing about three thousand volumes, would be a blessing to any town, and is appreciated by us and our neighbors ; especially since it has been so nicely housed in a building, all its own, provided by the generosity of one of our citizens. It is now free ; has a fund by which it is increased from year to year, so that there is no lack of mental food for those who are blessed with that kind of an appetite.

The writer of this paper is not a native of Canaan, so ought not to be accused of undue partiality, or of trying to produce on paper the Garden of Eden ; but if any one in quest of that favored spot will visit us, we hope they will feel constrained to exclaim, like the Queen of Sheba, as she saw the glory of Solomon's Court, "The half has not been told me."





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