HISTORY

OF

NORTH BENNINGTON

VERMONT

WALBRIDGE
THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT
OF
NORTH BENNINGTON
VERMONT

HAVILAND HAMLET—1761 to 1776
SAGE'S CITY—1776 to 1828
NORTH BENNINGTON—1828 to date

BY
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NORTH BENNINGTON, VERMONT

On January 3, 1749, parties, many of them from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, obtained a grant from the New Hampshire Governor, Benning Wentworth, Esq., in the name of King George II, of a township, six miles north of the Massachusetts line and twenty miles east of the Hudson.

The township remained an unbroken wilderness for thirteen years, although it was appropriated to be some time a town under the name of Bennington, in honor of the Christian name of the New Hampshire Governor.

Capt. Samuel Robinson, returning to his home in Hardwick, Massachusetts, from one of the campaigns of the Continental Army in the French War, mistaking his route, passed by accident this way; and impressed by the attractiveness of the country resolved to obtain others to join him and settle here.

His resolution was carried into effect. Others agreed to accompany him. They searched out the owners of the land; they purchased the rights of the original grantees, or of those to whom they had sold, and removed hither.

The land now occupied by the village of North Bennington was held under a title known as the Haviland Grant of the Walloomscoick Patent, by Joseph Haviland, who settled here in 1761 and built a house near the house now owned by William J. Harrington on West Street.

In 1776, Capt. Moses Sage, who was a native of Norwich, Connecticut, came to Bennington, settling in what is now North Bennington and built a house on the lot upon which the residence of G. B. Welling now stands. His business ability and energy soon made the place quite
prominent and so closely was he identified with its early growth that it came to be known solely by the name of Sage's City, which name it retained until 1828, when a post office was established here by the government, with Daniel Loomis as postmaster. From this date the post office name, North Bennington, gradually became that of the village and has long since been fully established.

The village of North Bennington, incorporated by special act of the legislature in 1866, is situated on the Rutland Railroad about a mile and a half east of the New York line, extending north to Shaftsbury.

From 1761 to 1776 the village of North Bennington was called Haviland Mills and the stream, Haviland Brook. After 1776 when Haviland was declared a Tory, the name of the village was changed to Sage's City, and the stream to Paran Creek.

The word “Paran” does not appear in the dictionary as an English word, but as a “Scripture proper name” and is used several times in the Old Testament as “Paran Wilderness,” “Paran Desert,” and “Paran Mountain,” descriptive of the wild.

There is no record of a person by the name of “Paran” living on the stream at that time, that is, in 1776, when the name was changed.

The creek certainly ran through a wilderness and the name “Paran” would have been appropriate.

This branch of the Walloomsack formerly called Haviland's Brook, now Paran Creek, runs through the village in a southerly direction, furnishing convenient water power which has long been used.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

About the year 1783 a grist mill, known for years as the Allen Mill, was built by Zebulon and Abial Allen at the head of Lake Paran. It continued to be operated until after 1800, when it was abandoned. About the year 1832 a flax mill was built here, which was used for a year or two when it was given up, this power afterwards being used for a number of years to grind squares.

At that time the highway from Haynes Corners ran directly by the mill, crossing the creek above the pond on a bridge; the remains of the piers are still standing. The highway continued north to Shaftsbury through the lane south of the Fred Smith residence, this lane being part of the highway. Besides the grist mill, flax mill, square shop and dwellings at this point, lime was manufactured and iron ore mined. It was quite a busy center until after 1840.

In 1811 an association of individuals residing principally in Bennington, Shaftsbury and Hoosac erected a cotton factory where the A. S. Payne Mills now stand. Later it became incorporated under the name of Paran Creek Manufacturing Company. Many years afterwards the property came into the hands of Asa Doty, who after carrying on the business for a considerable time sold it to P. L. Robinson. Because of a mistake in design the building was torn down and the timbers used in constructing the house now occupied by Mrs. H. C. Simmons.

A large factory was erected on the same site by Mr. Robinson. It was operated for a number of years as a cotton factory. Later it was owned by the Stark Paper Company and was leased and operated for a time by the A. W. Stockwell Company as a shirt factory; again by the E. Z. Waist Company, which occupied it until it was destroyed by fire October 18, 1913. The present build-
ings, now owned and operated by A. S. Payne, Inc., were built in 1919 and 1920.

In 1835 the names of Doty and Robinson appeared against the mill, from which it may be inferred that it was run by the two in partnership for a time.

In 1856 the mill opened under the name of Robinson and Parsons, later incorporated under title of Vermont Mills.

From 1811, when the first factory was built on the site now occupied by the A. S. Payne, Inc., Mill, to 1852, the time the railroad was built, forming the present pond, power was produced by a dam, several rods above the present one, near the McCarthy house. The water was carried to the mill wheel in an open ditch along the west bank of the stream.

It is of interest to note at this time that the east boundary line of the Haviland Grant ran north and south through the village, crossed Paran Creek near the mill now owned by A. S. Payne, Inc., followed the east bank of Paran Creek to the point where it entered the Wooloomsac River, thus dividing the village nearly in half.

The privilege now owned by W. R. White Estate as a grist mill was first used as a saw mill by E. M. Wellin. The mill yard, which was used for storing logs, occupied all the land where stores now stand, including the present park. Afterwards Jones & Richardson had a woolen factory on this privilege. This was destroyed by the flood in 1852. The present buildings were built and used to manufacture squares for a number of years. The business was afterwards removed to South Shaftsbury and is still carried on under the name of the Eagle Square Manufacturing Company. The buildings were then converted into a grist mill and were operated by the following men: John V. Colvin, Ruben Colvin, R. Colvin & Son, D. H. Colvin, Luther Dolph and W. R. White Estate, the present owner.

The privilege on the east side of the creek and north side of the highway was first built to grind squares. The privilege was next used as a flax mill by Daniel McCarthy; during the period from 1865 to 1872 by Russell & Colvin as a planing mill and wood-working shop; then by Surdam & White as a lens factory; and later by B. G. Surdam for a lens factory and H. T. Cushman for wood novelties and hat racks until it was burned in 1889. The present building was rebuilt at once and occupied by H. T. Cushman until he moved to his present quarters. It was then occupied by the H. S. Walbridge Company and later by A. S. Payne as a mirror-back factory. It is now used as a storage warehouse by the H. T. Cushman Company.

The building on the east side of the creek and on the south side of the highway was erected by Bronson Harmon and used by him to manufacture squares; later it was purchased by M. Wrisley and used as a wagon and blacksmith shop; still later it was purchased by H. S. Walbridge, refitted and used for two years by Surdam & White for the manufacture of lenses. From 1873 to 1911 it was used as a stereoscope manufacturing plant by the H. S. Walbridge Company. It was afterwards purchased by Elmer Johnson and operated by him for a short period as a brush factory. The property is now owned byGeo. H. Elwell, who has converted it into a saw mill and wood-working plant.

The Jane Christie House, which was destroyed by the flood of 1852 was situated between the Walbridge shops and the present J. G. McCullough engine house. Said engine house was built by P. E. Ball as a blacksmith shop and occupied as such until purchased by the village and converted into its present use.
Prior to 1777, Captain Sage, assisted by Haviland, built the grist mill which stood on the site where the Stark Paper Mill now stands. It was the duty of Captain Sage to act as commissary for the troops which were hastily gathered in the vicinity to oppose the force sent by Burgoyne to Bennington in August, 1777.

An important item of the rations furnished the troops was corn meal, which was ground at Captain Sage's mill by his wife. Captain Sage hauled the meal to the women of the vicinity, who baked the bread, and he then in turn collected the bread and delivered it to the soldiers.

Late in the afternoon of August 16, 1777, word was brought to Captain Sage of the arrival of Colonel Warner's regiment on the battlefield in a famished condition after a forced march from Manchester. The regiment was engaged in the fight with the British reinforcements just arrived on the battlefield under Colonel Breyman.

Having just distributed all the provisions he had among the men under General Stark, and their prisoners taken in the earlier fight, Captain Sage at his wife's suggestion improvised a supper for the men by requisitioning all the pots and kettles in the village and employing the women to make "hasty pudding" while the boys were milking the cows. Soon the pots of pudding and pails of milk were dispatched to the hungry men.

In the spring of 1805 Sage sold his mills and other property in the village to Daniel Rogers, from whom it was purchased by E. M. Welling. Mr. Welling used the privilege to operate a saw mill, grist mill and starch mill, until after the flood of 1852, when it was converted into a paper mill, at which time the old mill stones on which Captain Sage ground his corn for the troops were used by being broken in halves and the halves placed over the windows in the form of a semi-circle.

Prior to 1852 part of this privilege was used to operate the Rufus Bangs Square Factory which was situated west of the paper mill under the highway wall. This mill was destroyed by the flood in 1852 and never rebuilt.

In 1811 or 1812 William Cardell erected works for sawing marble where Cushman's Manufacturing Company now stands, and for several years carried on the business of quarrying and preparing it for market. The marble was, however, not of first quality and its manufacture was abandoned about the year 1816. The quarries were located on the farm now owned by William J. Davis of West Shaftsbury.

The site of Cardell's Marble Mill came into the possession of Mr. Truman Estes in 1825 and was occupied as a cotton factory. In 1832 this building was destroyed by fire and Mr. Estes replaced it with the present stone building. This plant was operated successively as a cotton factory by Estes, the Jacksons, Hall Brothers, Hall & Jones, H. D. Hall, and Worthington & Lyman. After lying idle for a number of years it has since 1892 been occupied by the H. T. Cushman Manufacturing Company, which enlarged the plant to the present proportions.

The privilege located on the H. C. White Company property was originally used as a machine shop, afterwards as a cotton mill, then by the Burden Iron Company of Troy, New York, to run machines to wash the iron ore mined in the west part of the town. While they operated the mines and washers they maintained a plank highway from the mines to what is now the H. T. Cushman property, a distance of about two miles. The property was purchased from Burden Iron Company by H. C. White and used as a stereoscope factory. The factory was destroyed by fire in 1887. The present plant was erected by
Mr. White and used for years in the manufacture of the White “Kiddy Kars.”

The mill privilege occupied by the late B. T. Henry as a grist mill was formerly used to operate a cotton factory for the manufacture of print cloth. During the early sixties Jerry Essex bought the privilege which then contained a small factory. He enlarged the same and manufactured cotton cloth until about 1878 or 1879, when it passed into the hands of the Thatchers of Boston, Massachusetts, who operated same until it was burned in February, 1881. Recently the property came into the possession of Hall McCullough.

H. C. Simmons, inventor of the Simmons heater, upon which a patent was granted in 1894, manufactured the boilers and assembled the heaters at his plant on upper Main Street until his death in November, 1918. Since that time the business has been carried on by his three sons under the firm name of H. C. Simmons Sons.

H. C. Simmons built the present boiler and heater plant in 1900 and the foundry in 1914. He also built in 1903 what is known as the Simmons Block on Main Street and now owned by Richard Dwyer. Since 1894 there have been installed between six and seven thousand Simmons heaters throughout the eastern part of the United States.

Among the other former manufacturing industries of this village, now extinct, was the N. Bennington Boot & Shoe Company, which in 1867 built a three-story and basement brick building on the lot now occupied by the McCullough Public Library. At the same time they built the row of brick houses on Greenwich Street for their employees. This factory they operated as a boot and shoe factory for several years. It was afterwards leased to several shoe concerns. This building was destroyed by fire on August 6, 1884, and never rebuilt.

The Unity Collar and Cuff Company commenced the manufacture of collars and cuffs in the Surdam Building above the freight depot. In 1898 they built a two-story factory on the lot now owned by W. R. White estate near the depot, which they occupied until it was destroyed by fire on May 9, 1902. This was never rebuilt.

During the fifties, Warren Dutcher, who built the cobblestone house now occupied by Mrs. L. B. Newton, operated a factory for the manufacture of temples used on looms for weaving cloth. This factory was located on the lot near the depot and now occupied by the H. C. Simmons Sons as a storehouse. Mr. Dutcher invented the Dutcher temple in 1848 and it is still universally used on all looms. The machinery and business were afterwards moved to Hopedale, Massachusetts. The factory building is now the Simmons double tenement house on Main Street. Shortly after building the cobblestone house in 1848, Warren Dutcher raffled the house off, selling tickets at one dollar each. The house was won by Paul Shuffleton of Arlington, Vermont, who held a dollar ticket.

The building known as the soap factory situated above the Rutland Railroad freight house was built by Bennington and North Bennington parties to manufacture soap. It was used for that purpose for a number of years but is now used as a storehouse.

For several years, from 1865 to 1871, Levi Gould quarried blue stone from what was formerly the Bangs, now the Oatman property near the car barns. The quarry was where the house now stands. The stone for the schoolhouse foundation and also for other buildings here and elsewhere was taken from this quarry. Large quantities of heavy blocks were quarried and dressed on the ground and shipped to be used in building railroad bridge piers. Afterwards Gould built the brick house
over the quarry and graded the grounds. In 1876 Gould built the stone arch highway bridge spanning Paran Creek near the grist mill.

THE FLOOD OF 1852

On Wednesday afternoon, February 11, 1852, the village of North Bennington was visited by a destructive and terrible flood which swept away a large amount of property. The water, which did immense damage, broke from a pond just above the village, now known as the Big Pond or Lake Paran.

The dam was formed by the Western Vermont Railroad, which crosses the stream at this place, and was constructed of frozen dirt and mud dumped in as a fill for the grading of the track of the railroad. The dam was thirty to forty feet in depth. The water set back by this large dam covered thirty to thirty-five acres of land at a depth of from five to twenty-five feet.

On Wednesday morning water found its way through the mud and sand which had till then impeded it; and in spite of all efforts to hold the water back, it continued to work a larger passage until one o'clock in the afternoon when all efforts to staunch the flood ceased and in a short time the entire mass of water rushed through the opening it had formed and poured down upon the village below, carrying with its resistless current twelve to fifteen buildings, a woman and a child and every description of property. The avalanche of water followed the course of the river until it reached the heart of the village, where it spread across and down the streets, tearing buildings from their foundations and hurling them and their contents into the surging water that tore them to pieces with a power and velocity truly terrific.
Although notice of the impending danger was given to the citizens before the breaking of the dam, they had not prepared for so great a rush of water and ten or twelve families were driven from their buildings to witness the destruction of everything they owned in the world and to rejoice at their own deliverance from so fearful a death. When the current reached Truman Estes’ Stone Mill (Cushman’s Pond) it had gained such power and was confined in so narrow a space that its force was irresistible. Two double houses were carried away from here and not the slightest vestige left to mark their previous location. One of these houses was occupied by Mr. William Dutcher and Ansel Kane.

Mrs. Dutcher at the first alarm stepped out of the door to see how near the flood was, leaving her child, fourteen months old, sleeping in the cradle. Before she could return the house was floating on the fierce current. Mrs. Kane being in the house, floated off with it. The building held together until it went over or through the first dam below; here it careened and broke. Mrs. Kane having hold of the rafters threw herself upon the floating fragments and timbers floating past her. Upon these she supported herself until by almost superhuman effort she gained the shore nearly a mile from where she started, alive, but almost chilled through. The body of the child was found the next morning tangled in a fence about half a mile from where the house started.

The damage done by this sad occurrence could not be correctly estimated. However, it was not less than $50,000. Truman Estes lost to the amount of $15,000; E. M. Welling, Hawks, Loomis & Company, P. L. Robinson, Jones & Richardson lost a woolen factory and its contents. P. E. Ball, Doctors Bruce and Ranney, Mrs. Christy, Hiram McIntyre, Rufus Bangs, B. F. Fay,
George Clearwater, Charles Cameron, George Harwood, William Dutcher, Ansel Kane and John V. Colvin were among the principal losers.

The loss to the town by the destruction of the bridges, roads, etc., was large. The railroad company also lost a considerable amount. There was not a water privilege remaining in North Bennington. All the dams were gone and the wheels, factories and shops that were standing were filled with mud and water and were deserted.

Fragments of machinery, broken furniture, tattered remnants of clothing and articles of every description indiscriminately piled together marked the course of this disastrous flood through one of the most thriving villages in the State.

Paran Creek Mill, Mr. Wellings's stone grist mill, was submerged in part, its rooms filled and their contents—grain, flour, etc.—buried in sand and water. Jones & Richardson's woolen factory was parted and ruined, its machinery gone, no one knows where, and the stock on hand gone after the machinery. Bangs' square shop had vanished entirely. Ball's blacksmith shop, Jones', Wellings' and Estes' dams were gone, and the embankment so injured as to retard the progress of rebuilding.

The water entered the Hawks, Loomis & Co.'s store and hurled a safe weighing 400 or 500 pounds through a stout panelling of an enclosed desk and carried it to the opposite side of the room. The water also entered the room of P. L. Robinson, Esq., on the same floor, saturated his books, soaked his papers, ravaged his safe and left its insignia four or five feet from the floor on the walls of the room. Doctors Bruce and Ranney suffered severely.

During the early seventies water again commenced to find its way through the railroad embankment forming the dam at Lake Paran. Fearing a repetition of the disaster of 1852, the mill owners in conjunction with the railroad company, using a heavy pile driver, drove a double row of piles the entire length of the embankment from the west to the east end, using logs twenty feet long, fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter, taking two seasons to complete the work.

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

For many years church privileges were largely borrowed. On one hand was the First Church at Old Bennington, three and one-half miles away, and on the other hand the First Baptist Church, in Shaftsbury, a half mile north, known as the Elder Mattison Church. The meeting house stood a few rods north of our cemetery.

Like most of the meeting houses of that day there was no bell to denote the hour of service, but the people of Sage's City had an undeviating timepiece for church purposes in the person of Deacon Nathaniel Hall (father of the late Ex-Gov. Hiland Hall), who never forgot the appointments of the church, so when they saw "Uncle Natty," as he was called by all, coming with his wife in their two-horse wagon with extra seats, they knew it was time for church. He always went to meeting in a double wagon with extra seats to carry the aged and feeble who could not walk.

However, in 1844 a Baptist Church was organized in North Bennington and in 1845 a neat and convenient house of worship was erected in front of the McCullough residence. In 1865 the church was moved by Mr. Trenor Park to Church Street, which he opened for that purpose.

The Congregational Church was organized with twenty-one members May 21, 1868. The present church was erected of brick in 1873.
The Congregational Sunday School was held for a number of years prior to 1868 in the little stone building now part of the office of the H. T. Cushman Manufacturing Company. After the church was organized in 1868 it was held in the Bank Hall until the present edifice was erected.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, in Hinsdillsville, was organized in 1836, and built a little chapel just below the river bend on land leased from the Henry family. There was at that time quite a settlement at Irish Corners, now called Riverside, with a cotton factory, a tavern and a store. This chapel was supplied by preachers in connection with the Methodist Church in Hoosick and Bennington, the pastors were the Reverends Farr, Sherwood, Barber, Henry, Jones, Sage and Bowen.

In 1858 the Methodist denomination had outgrown the little chapel in Riverside so it was sold and moved into North Bennington and made into a residence, now owned and occupied by Harmon Saunders. The Methodists purchased the stone church, built in 1836 for a Presbyterian congregation, for their use and have held services there for the last seventy-eight years. Many often wonder why so nice a church should have been built in such a small settlement, but at the time it was built, Hinsdillville was a prosperous community with three cotton mills and many houses, while the village of North Bennington was only a community of fifty houses.

A Universalist Meeting House (the old Catholic Church) was erected in 1836. In 1849 it was purchased by the citizens and fitted up for an academy. It continued until November, 1870, when the North Bennington graded school district was organized. For about one year the graded school was kept in the academy building, the property then being sold to the Catholics for a church.

From 1854 to 1859 the Catholic people of North Bennington were attended from Rutland or went to Bennington for Mass. The first Mass was said for the North Bennington people at Daniel McCarthy’s house in 1854 and henceforth Mass was said monthly at Thomas Madden’s or Daniel McCarthy’s house until 1859. After that date the schoolhouses were used until 1870, when the Catholic Church people bought the academy building from the school district and rebuilt, enlarged and fitted it for divine worship.

The ground for the Catholic cemetery on Mechanic Street was purchased in 1903 by the Rev. Thomas Schaefer, the resident pastor at that time. Prior to this time the Catholic cemetery in Bennington was used by the members of this parish.

The blessing of the cemetery by the Rev. Charles H. Prevost took place on August 23, 1903, and the sermon on this occasion was preached by the Rev. J. J. Collins, S.J.

The new Catholic Church was built on Houghton Street in 1928.

The architect was John P. Heffernan, 175 High Street, Boston, Massachusetts. The general contractor was Fred S. Brennan Company, 40 Court Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

Ground was broken for the new church by the pastor, Rev. Thomas J. Burke, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 7, 1928. The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, August 12, 1928, by the Rev. James D. Shannon, P.R., of Bennington. The sermon on this occasion was preached by the Rev. J. J. O’Brien of Castleton.

The first Mass was said by the pastor on Sunday, December 23, 1928. The church was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. J. J. Rice, D.D., Bishop of Burlington, on Sunday, April 28, 1929. The sermon on this occasion was
preached by the Rev. Henry M. Burke of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

The Stations of the Cross were canonically erected by the pastor on Sunday, March 8, 1930. The present membership is 525. The total cost was $49,625.39.

CLERGYMEN

Baptist—1846

Rev. Justin A. Smith, first pastor, followed by Reverends Jones, Huntington, Hancock, Tucker, Burchard, Trover, Cady, Henry, Gilbert, Shepard, Tozer, Davis, Cooney, Colburn, Der Wacrer, Rawson, DeWolf, Weatherby and Maxwell.

Congregational—1868


Catholic—1854

The Rt. Rev. Louis DeGoesbriand (Bishop) said first Mass for North Bennington people in 1854. The Reverend Fathers Sweeney and Katlin of Troy, New York, and others said Mass monthly until 1859. From that time until 1885 North Bennington was attended from Bennington. The first resident pastor was the Rev. Charles E. Prevost, followed by the Rev. P. H. LaChance, the Rev. Thomas Sheaffer and the Rev. Thomas J. Burke.

Methodist—1858

Revs. James E. Bowden, McChesney, David Poor, George C. Thomas, H. Loveland, Carson Parker, William A. Miller, S. Clement, N. H. Davis, Charles B. Armstrong, Elam Marsh, G. Townsend, John S. Mott, J. E. Metcalf, J. C. Langford, Merrill Hitchcock, Wil-
The present school building was erected in 1870 at a cost of about $12,000 on School Street, which was newly opened for the purpose by the Hon. T. W. Park, who donated the lot for the building, dug the cellar and built the foundation. The grounds were graded and the trees set out by the Hon. C. G. Lincoln and the original fence was built by the Hon. Hiland Hall. These gifts made it possible for the district to build the school buildings at the low price of $12,000.

In 1878 the Shaftsbury district was annexed to the North Bennington graded school district. The building, which was considered of ample size when constructed, was then found to be too small to accommodate all the pupils. It was found necessary to increase its capacity by finishing off the basement into two rooms. This gave the needed room but not the best of sanitation. In 1898 an additional two rooms were added to the original building and a steam-heating system installed throughout the entire building. In 1930 it became necessary to again increase the class room facilities and over $50,000 was expended for construction and improvements. In 1936 the Nash building was purchased and equipped for the Agricultural Department.

North Bennington graded school district was established by a special act of the legislature in November, 1870, and comprised Districts Ten and Twelve in the town of Bennington. The first board of officers was as follows: Hon. Hiland Hall, moderator; Hon. George H. Simmons, clerk; John Healy, collector; Milo C. Huling, James H. Walbridge and J. C. Houghton, prudential committee; and C. E. Houghton, treasurer.

The first schools maintained in the new district were taught by Miss Walsh and Miss Culver. They were followed by the following principals: William W. Phillip, Elias W. Howe, W. W. Howe, Herman A. Dressel, Charles H. Phelps, Frank P. Davidson, J. Francis Allison, A. M. Jones, George H. McNeill, H. H. Kibby, E. Currie, Walter C. Wood, William R. Cook, Arthur Houston, D. S. Jones and the present principal, Harry Montague.

The first class to graduate from North Bennington High School was in 1879, and since that time there have been 520 students graduated including the class of 1937. At the present time there is a student enrollment of 384 with a faculty of fourteen.

Bennington College

Bennington College, established at North Bennington in 1932, occupies 140 acres of the Jennings estate and is a trend of experimentation in college education for women identified by the term "progressive" and has a curriculum especially adapted to the actual needs of women in the contemporary world. A plan has been developed for a four-year course leading to the A.B. degree, with a standard equal to those of the best American colleges for women.

Construction of buildings was started in August, 1931, and on September 6, 1932, actual instruction was begun, with a student body consisting of a freshman class of eighty-six and with a faculty of nineteen. The college entered upon its fourth year with a complete student body of 250 and a faculty of forty-two. Fifty-three students were graduated last June.

There are twelve student houses and the Commons building. A large barn on the estate has been remodeled.
into conference and classrooms, science laboratories, offices of administration and library at a cost of a million and a quarter dollars.

The instruction offered at the College falls into four broad fields: The arts, literature, social studies, and science. The following languages may be studied: French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek. The college year is divided into two residential terms each of four months' duration from September to Christmas and from Washington's birthday through part of June. There is also besides the two months' summer vacation a two months' winter recess. The president of Bennington College is Robert D. Leigh.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK

The First National Bank, organized January 4, 1864, with a capital of $500,000, was continued with that amount until 1882, when it was reduced to $150,000. Its present capital is less than one-third of the amount carried during the sixties and seventies.

The First National Bank was organized with the following officers: T. W. Park, president; C. E. Houghton, vice-president; and C. G. Lincoln, cashier.

The original board of directors was: Trenor W. Park, Calvin Park, Hiland Hall, J. C. Houghton, C. E. Houghton, Daniel McEwen and Charles Thatcher, Jr.

The presidents were: T. W. Park, J. G. McCullough, F. B. Jennings and Hall Park McCullough, and the cashiers were C. G. Lincoln, S. B. Hall and Ralph A. Jones, the present cashier.

The hotel barns formerly stood where the bank now stands and they were enclosed by a high picket fence which also enclosed most of the land between the square and the bank building.

Back in the early seventies a gang of five professional burglars attempted to loot the bank. They succeeded in blowing off the vault door and the outer door of the safe. They attempted to blow the inner door but the first blast failed to open it far enough for them to reach the money. On account of the neighbors being aroused by the noise of the explosions the burglars were frightened and decamped. There was said to be $80,000 in currency in the safe at the time. They left on a hand-car which they had waiting at the railroad crossing near the car barns.

THE McCULLOUGH LIBRARY

The McCullough Memorial Public Library, situated on the corner of Main and West Streets, was a magnificent gift of Mrs. J. G. McCullough to the village of North Bennington in memory of her husband, Ex-Governor J. G. McCullough. The building was designed by the same architect who designed the New York Cathedral. It is 33 by 52 feet, two stories and basement and has a capacity for 9,000 volumes. Work was commenced on the building June 7, 1920, and it was opened to the public August 24, 1921. A detailed description is unnecessary as the building and furnishings speak for themselves.

The North Bennington Free Library Association was organized and constitution and by-laws adopted March 28, 1900.

The library of North Bennington was started by Mrs. E. W. Howe and Mrs. W. G. Shaw by having a table of books in their own homes to loan. Later it was moved to rooms over the storehouse of the Shepard store and was moved from there to its present location.

Mr. J. Lawrence Aspenwall, the architect of the library, was the last surviving member of the original firm which built the New York Cathedral, Mr. Renwick, the head of the firm, being the one who designed it.
TWIN MANSIONS

The Park or McCullough Mansion was built by the Hon. T. W. Park in 1864 and 1865. When the house was nearly completed, the farm barns located south of the Hall house were burned. The wind was blowing strong toward the Hall house which caught fire several times as did the Park house. Both buildings were saved with great difficulty.

The Jennings stone house was built by the late F. B. Jennings in 1903 and 1904, on the site of the Bingham farm house which had been torn down some years before by Mr. Jennings and replaced by a large wooden structure.

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Some time about 1853 a man named Daniel Cady opened a printing office in what was the Morse building. He published a paper called The Battleground, its first issue appearing in August, 1853. The late Hiram Atkins of Montpelier, Vermont, was editor and printer and Franklin Scott, printer's devil and assistant printer. This paper was published during 1853, 1854 and 1855. Afterwards Mr. Atkins went to Bellows Falls, Vermont, and in 1863 to Montpelier and published the Montpelier Argus and Patriot until his death.

The Battleground was issued every Thursday. One Tuesday, Daniel O'Brien, local tailor, walked into the printing office and told Atkins he wanted his paper. Mr. Atkins informed him the paper was not issued until Thursday and that the only page printed at that time was the advertising page. Mr. O'Brien replied, "I just as soon have it, Mr. Atkins."

In 1896, George G. Blood opened a job printing office in the building now owned and occupied by John Morris.

Mr. Blood operated this office until 1897 and during that time published a daily paper first called The Echo, afterwards The North Bennington Times.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

At the general elections in the fall of 1874 the Hon. George H. Simmons of North Bennington was elected probate judge for the south shire of Bennington County, his term being the two years 1875-1876. During that time the probate office was located and court held in North Bennington.

The office and court room were located in the second story of the E. C. Houghton building, located on Main Street, at the south end of what is now the park, opposite the bank. W. B. Sheldon was registrar. During this period the legislature appropriated several thousand dollars to bring the books up to date, making it necessary to employ extra clerical help.

North Bennington has furnished the State two governors, the Hon. Hiland Hall and the Hon. John G. McCullough; seven state senators, the Hons. C. E. Houghton, Charles Thatcher, J. G. McCullough, E. D. Welling, H. T. Cushman, A. S. Payne and Dr. Edward Tobin; six town representatives to the legislature, the Hons. Hiland Hall, Dwight Corkin, Trenor W. Paris, M. C. Huling, Charles E. Welling and Dr. Edward Tobin. Her citizens have filled all the county and town offices in the gift of the people.

The Hon. Hiland Hall besides filling the position of governor of the State and representing the town in the legislature was state's attorney, member of Congress for ten years, bank commissioner, judge of the Supreme Court for four years, second comptroller of the United States
Treasury and land commissioner for California. He was also a delegate to the Peace Congress in 1861.

During the Civil War the village furnished her full quota of soldiers, many giving up their lives for the cause.

During the late Spanish War a large number of our boys went to the front. Among them, Lieut. Sanford Worthington and Lieut. William Spafford, the latter giving his life to his country.

During the late World War the North Bennington post office district furnished eighty-two men for the army and navy, a large proportion of them going to France. Two, Leonard H. Jennings and Bernis Powers, were killed in France.

Among the noted men who have resided in the village at different periods was Gen. Robert C. Schenck, a general in the Civil War and United States Minister to Great Britain from 1870 to 1876 under President Grant. General Schenck came to North Bennington to live on his return from Great Britain and occupied the brick house on West Street, owned at that time by S. B. Hall, now owned and occupied by Mrs. A. S. Hathaway.

RAILROADS

The Rutland Railroad, Rutland to North Bennington, was built under the name of the Western Vermont Railroad, starting at Rutland and building south.

At the same time they were building the Troy and Bennington Railroad north from Troy, New York.

Contract was let for building the Western Vermont Railroad October 2, 1850. Construction was commenced at once. Trains were run from Rutland to Arlington in 1851. First trains ran through to North Bennington in May, 1852. July 14, 1852, the Troy and Bennington Railroad completed their line from Troy to North Bennington, connecting with the Western Vermont at that place, completing the roads from Troy to Rutland.

The event was celebrated in North Bennington. All work stopped. Large crowds came in from the surrounding country and Bennington. There were bands, speeches, banquets, and the firing of 100 guns.

Saturday, December 18, 1852, regular passenger trains were put on between Troy and Rutland. From North Bennington to Troy the fare was fixed at one dollar.

The Western Vermont Railroad was operated by the original company for a short period, then completely reorganized. Afterwards it was leased to the Troy and Boston Railroad. They also had a lease of the Troy and Bennington Railroad from Hoosick Junction, New York, to the Vermont State line.

The Troy and Bennington Railroad operated this road until about 1866, when the Hon. T. W. Park of this village bought the controlling stock of the Western Vermont Railroad (state line to Rutland) and took it over. The Troy and Bennington immediately stopped running all trains on the Troy and Bennington branch, Hoosick Junction to the state line. This broke all railroad connections south from here. Bennington was the end of the division. Chatham division was not built at that time. Mr. Park commenced to build the Chatham division at once, but until it was completed, December 18, 1868, the only rail connection was via Rutland; freight (north, east and west) came that way. But all freight to and from Troy, Albany and New York and the south had to be hauled by teams to Hoosick and Hoosick Junction, New York.

Stages were put on between North Bennington and Hoosick Junction for passenger and express business. After a time the Troy and Bennington took freight at Walloomsac, New York, and put on a horse car from that
place to Hoosick Junction for passengers, extending this run later to the state line, both companies running trains, both passenger and freight, to the state line, stopping trains each side of the line, passengers tramping from one train to another over a long platform. Train service was morning and night. Through train service was resumed after several years.

From 1852, when the Western Vermont Railroad was completed, to about 1870 all engines on this line were wood burners instead of coal burners. Woodyards were maintained at different places along the line where trains stopped to take on wood, as engines were unable to carry a sufficient supply to make the run. During these years there was a very large woodyard at this place which covered all the ground from the freight depot to the highway running to Shaftsbury.

The railroad company had men with a power saw working here most of the time sawing wood and unloading cars of wood shipped here from along the line. At this time there was an engine house and turntable upon which to turn the engines and house same. After the Y was built about 1870 they were abandoned.

On October 15, 1885, what was known as the Burgess railroad bridge, a wooden structure spanning the highway and Walloomsac River about a mile and a half from the village, caught fire from a passing train. The North Bennington Fire Department responded to the alarm and went to the fire with engine and hose cart. The bridge fell as the fire engine was passing under the bridge. Two men, James Wardell and Robert Burke, were caught by the burning timbers and instantly killed, their bodies being destroyed by the fire. Oscar F. Coy and Edward Mooney succeeded in escaping from the wreck, but Coy was so badly burned that he lived but a short time, and

Mooney partly recovered, but died later from blood poisoning caused by his burns. The fire engine was destroyed.

In 1897 the trolley line from North Bennington to Bennington was commenced and was put into operation in February, 1898. The line to Hoosick Falls, New York, was opened for business July, 1898.

FAIRS

North Bennington Driving Club

In 1892 an association was formed and incorporated under the title of North Bennington Driving Club, with the following stockholding members:

J. H. Walbridge  G. D. Mattison
W. R. Worthington  P. W. Smith
H. C. Simmons  C. Galusha
H. C. White

April 1, 1892, the association leased, for three years, from George H. Elwell, a piece of land located on the north side of the highway, leading out of the village, known as Mechanic Street, opposite the Mrs. Arthur Bassett residence, which piece of land the association fitted up as a trotting course with the necessary fences, judges' stand, grandstand, sheds and other necessary buildings.

For three years the association held very successful horse fairs, races and other entertainments on the grounds which were largely attended, fast horses and owners coming from a distance to take part.

The Bennington County Agricultural Society, organized in 1848, held twelve annual fairs prior to 1860 in different parts of the county, two at least being held in Old Ben-
nington. September 26 and 27, 1860, they held their thirteenth annual fair in North Bennington.

The following was taken from a Banner editorial printed August 24, 1860:

“The work of preparing the grounds for the thirteenth exhibition to be given by the Bennington County Agricultural Society on the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh of September at North Bennington is progressing finely. The fence is being erected and everything we are confident will be done to render this the finest county exhibition in the State. Let everyone do his part and the exhibition will be a credit to the county and State.”

The Banner of October 5, 1860, gives a three-column editorial about the fair, publishing a long list of prize winners, naming residents from every town in the county and pronouncing the fair a great success.

In 1861 the Banner said that the Society had enlarged all the buildings, doubling the capacity of floral hall and greatly improved the grounds.

The Society held their thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth annual fairs, 1860 to 1865, on their grounds in North Bennington and then moved to Bennington and held a fair one year on the grounds now occupied by the Golf Club.

The fair was located on the grounds directly opposite the Bonyng race (now almost entirely built up with dwellings and stores) between the highway commencing at the railroad crossing near the carbarn, following the highway to the brook near the house of the late Ed. Eddy, all the land between the highway and the steam railroad track being utilized.

The grounds were fenced with the usual high board fence, and contained a half-mile race track and all the regular fair buildings. There was no other fair held in this vicinity at this time. It was a two-day fair, the first day given over to the exhibition of livestock.

The farms in this vicinity at that time were heavily stocked with blooded cattle, sheep and Morgan horses and all kinds of stock and the exhibit in this line was noted far and near.

The races were held on the second day and were usually between horses from the nearby towns, and while not so fast as at the present day, were exciting.

After the grounds were abandoned by the Society in 1865, they were used for ten years for local races, baseball and drill grounds for the local military company which the village supplied for several years after the Civil War, Edward C. Houghton, captain, and J. Watson, lieutenant.

BUILDINGS BURNED OR REMOVED

A double house, situated directly opposite the present McCullough farm house, destroyed by fire.

A three-tenement house, north of the H. T. Cushman stone residence, taken down.

House, directly back of the Thomas Powers house, near old Catholic Church, destroyed by fire.

Old Lacelle house, corner West and McCullough Streets, taken down.

House and two stores, Park lot, opposite bank, destroyed by fire.

House, situated between the brick house, corner Church and West Streets, and house formerly known as the O'Brien house, now owned by Hall McCullough, taken down.

A two-tenement house, on the north side of E. Z. or Mill Street, situated between mill and nearest house now standing, taken down.
The old Colvin farm house, situated southwest of the residence of E. D. Welling, between his house and railroad tracks, taken down.

The O'Brien building, situated between the Shepard brick store and building now owned by Thomas Horton, destroyed by fire.

A double tenement brick house, situated at east end of Greenwich Street, north side, where wood building now owned by Walter Cole stands, taken down and a four-tenement brick house on same lot, north side of Greenwich Street, directly back of the two tenement houses; this building was also taken down.

A factory building, known as the Surdam building, on Greenwich Street across railroad track from last house on south side of street, occupied by W. Marshall as repair shop, destroyed by fire.

The present brick depot was built in 1880. The former depot building was a wood affair standing where brick building now stands. It had a high wood platform around it and the branch from Bennington came in on south side of depot, so there were tracks on both sides of building.

On the lot now occupied by the McCullough Library building was originally located the oldest mercantile buildings in the village. On the corner (southeast) was the old Union store. On the north corner stood the O'Brien Clothing Store; both were on Main Street. Between the two were the usual horse sheds. Back of the Union store stood a story-and-a-half house. The Union store building was built by a stock or union company and occupied by them as a general country store for many years. It was used for several purposes later. When the North Bennington Boot and Shoe building was built on the same lot, the house was taken down. The Union store and O'Brien building were moved directly across the street. The

O'Brien building next to Shepard's store, now destroyed by fire. The old Union store building still stands, now occupied as a plumber's shop, owned by Thomas Horton, formerly owned by Dousenberry Hardware; E. M. Wrisley, hardware; N. Wilcox, shoe store; W. J. Toombs; C. Huling, boots and shoes; G. Ciocca, fruits.

FIRES

Shoe Factory, August 6, 1884

About 4.00 a.m., on the morning of August 6, 1884, the shoe factory situated on the lot now occupied by the Public Library, covering the entire lot, brick, three stories and basement, was discovered to be on fire. The fire started at the foot of the elevator shaft in the basement near the stairway.

A line of hose was laid from the Paper Mill fire pump and one from the hand engine, but the hose from the Paper Mill burst almost at once, delaying the water from that source until sound hose could be substituted. Another line of hose was laid from the Vermont Mills down Mill Street but the delay was fatal. The fire ran up the elevator shaft and stairway, spreading over the whole building and the building was completely destroyed in a short time in spite of the efforts of the firemen. The fire was confined to the shoe factory, although all the surrounding property was considerably damaged.

The two lower floors were occupied by C. O. Beede, working sole leather and employing about forty-five men. The two upper floors were occupied by N. F. Tucker, manufacturing a fine line of ladies' shoes, employing about thirty-five men and fifteen women. The loss was said to be over $150,000, partly covered by insurance. The building was owned by the North Bennington Boot and Shoe Company.
The most disastrous fire in the mercantile section of the village of North Bennington occurred on August 18, 1886, when the buildings covering the land opposite the bank, including all the park, extending north on Main Street to the Newton cobblestone house, were destroyed.

The fire caught about 6:00 p.m. in the building owned and occupied by P. H. McCarthy, which was situated on the lot now occupied by the Pano store. The village was without any fire protection, having lost her fire engine at the Burgess Bridge fire the previous year; an old hand rotary and the bucket brigade were the only resort.

The McCarthy building was a two-and-a-half story wood building and was soon a mass of flames. The next building on the south, or what is now part of the park, was a wood dwelling house connected with the drug store which came next. The house was occupied by Harry Cunningham, the druggist. Both buildings were soon destroyed. The E. C. Houghton General Store building came next, situated in the extreme south end of what is now the park, and was soon totally destroyed.

Back of the drug store was a barn, close to the house now owned by Frank Rich, then owned and occupied by W. R. White on Houghton Street. The barn was destroyed. The W. R. White house caught and the upper story was burned and the rest of the house badly damaged before the fire was brought under control. The barn directly north of White's house situated on Houghton Street was afire several times, but was saved with small damage. All this time the fire was burning north on Main Street.

The building next to the McCarthy building north was a two-story flat-roof building owned by George Walworth, with barber shop and store below and tenement upstairs occupied by the barber. This building was totally destroyed, also the Fenner building which came next, a large, wood building, two stories, situated on the lot now occupied by Richard Dwyer, a brick building. The first floor of this building contained stores, clothing and shoes. The upper story was used as a lodge room by Tucker Lodge, F. & A. M. The next building, the Newton cobblestone house, while it was afire several times, escaped. This fire caused the total destruction of six buildings, a barn and partly destroyed the W. R. White house. Bennington sent a hand fire engine but it came too late.

In 1889 the general store building, stock and tenement annex, owned by M. C. Huling and situated on the lot now occupied by the late Frank Powers, barber shop and residence and J. E. Powers' clothing store, was totally destroyed by fire. M. C. Huling was postmaster at that time, and the post office was in the store, and all mail, fixtures, cases, stamps and supplies were destroyed.

The Unity Collar and Cuff Company, March 9, 1902

About 3:30 a.m., Sunday morning, March 9, 1902, the two-story Unity Collar and Cuff Company factory, situated on Depot Street, was discovered on fire. There was no watchman and before the fire department could get a stream on the fire it was beyond control and the factory and contents were soon destroyed.

The building was built of wood in 1898. The loss was estimated at $50,000 and was insured for about $45,000. The property was owned by M. C. Huling, C. Floyd Huling, J. H. Walbridge, G. D. Mattison and A. M. Torrance. The company employed about 165 hands.

E. Z. Waist Company, October 18, 1913

Early in the afternoon of October 18, 1913, the building occupied by the E. Z. Waist Company, built by P. L.
Robinson for a cotton factory and operated by him as such under the title of Vermont Mill for a great many years, was destroyed by fire, including machinery and contents.

The building having been used for years as a textile factory was saturated with oil and although there was plenty of water and hose from the mill fire pump, the fire soon got beyond control, destroying besides the main mill all attached and nearby buildings, such as boiler house, engine house, machine shop, barns, storehouses and sheds. The building proper, which was owned by the Stark Paper Company, was three stories, 120 feet by 45 feet, and a two-story ell, 30 feet by 40 feet. The power was furnished by a 150-horsepower water wheel and a 150-horsepower Corliss engine.

The machinery and stock were owned by the E. Z. Waist Company, George W. and R. B. Clark of Hoosick Falls, New York, and F. E. Haight & Company of New York. They manufactured the well-known E. Z. knit waists for children and employed about 200 hands. The loss was partly covered by insurance.

Probably no village in the State has suffered more from floods and fire than North Bennington.

In 1852 practically every manufacturing plant, besides numerous stores and dwellings, were destroyed by flood, and since that time almost every manufacturing plant has been destroyed or partly so by fire, as follows:

The Estey Cotton Mills, on Cushman site, 1832.
North Bennington Boot and Shoe Company buildings, Library lot, August 6, 1884.
H. C. White Stereoscopes, H. C. White Company lot, February, 1887.

H. T. Cushman Novelties, Colvin building, Prospect Street, 1889.
B. G. Surdam Stereoscopes, Colvin building, Prospect Street, 1889.
Unity Collar and Cuff Company, Depot Street, March 9, 1902.
The E. Z. Waist Co., Mill Street (Vermont Mills building), October 18, 1913.
The Stark Paper Company, Paran Creek Mills, first fire, 1883.
The Stark Paper Company, Stateline Mills, first fire, February, 1884.
The Stark Paper Company, Stateline Mills, second fire, July, 1903.

The old Catholic Church, which partly burned in 1936, was an old landmark in the village of North Bennington. This building was erected for a Universalist meeting house in 1836, just 100 years ago. This church was served by the Reverends Leach, Ball and Skinner for thirteen years, and then it was purchased for a private academy with the following instructors in succession: Carpenter, Knight and Gould. Then it was purchased by the village school district and was taught by two women, Miss Walsh and Miss Culver.

During the past 164 years North Bennington has had its ups and downs—floods, fires and deaths have combined at different times in attempts to put it to sleep and wipe it off the map, at times the village barely surviving.
The village and outside districts probably reached its highest point in business and population from 1860 to 1875, and while it is a prosperous village today (1937),
it probably has less population and business than at that time.

The village contained at that time the following general stores: M. C. Huling, H. D. Hall (what is now Cushman office), Houghton & Loomis, R. L. Houghton, Thatcher & Welling, Mr. Allen, J. C. and H. C. Houghton, C. H. Thatcher and Son, J. O. Bangs, C. E. Houghton, E. C. Houghton, Bangs and Houghton, Hawks, and Martin Scott. The other business places were as follows: D. O’Brien, tailor; I. Surdam, furniture and undertaking; Houghton & Fenner, J. Fenner, H. D. Hall, W. J. Toombs, shoes and clothing; Mr. T. Gaul, jewelry; Koons-Hitchcock and Cunningham, drug store; two hotels, several livery stables, three or four wagon and blacksmith shops, hardware store, three tinware and stove stores, three harness shops, four lawyers (Hall, Ford, Sheldon and Scott), five doctors (Bruce, Koon, Ranney, Newton and Rogers).

The Vermont Mills, where Payne’s Mill now stands, manufactured print cloth and employed about 180 hands. The Stone Mill (Cushman plant), print cloth, 125 hands; Essex, Irish Corners, print cloth, 85 hands; North Bennington Boot and Shoe Company, 135 men; Paran Creek and Sodom, paper mills, both running to capacity; Surdam and White, lens factory; Walbridge’s flax mills; planing mills manufacturing all kinds of building materials, stone quarries, and brick yards. All the brick used in shoe building, brick row and other brick buildings were made at a brick yard opposite the residence of Mrs. H. F. Lamb. Burdens’ iron mines, washers, furnaces, together with teams and teamsters by the hundred, double string of teams from mines to washer, from washer to cars at depot and furnace this side of South Shaftsbury gives one an idea of the industries of that period.

After the Burdens ceased operating the iron mines, washers and furnaces in the late sixties, George Swett of Troy, New York, carried on the business for a number of years, leasing the property from the Burdens.

Even the politics of town and county were run from here. The Dew or Do Drop Inn, located in the basement of the Wright building situated on the lot where the Richard Dwyer building now stands, was the political machine headquarters.

During the sixties and early seventies the village certainly reached the limit in more than one way. The village supported one church and ten saloons, with several more on the outskirts.

BANDS

While this village has had the usual number of bands the same as all villages and towns, it has had two bands that would have been a credit to any city.

In the fifties, before the Civil War, the Cross Band was considered the best in this section. They went to war almost as a unit.

When the Boot and Shoe Company’s factory was started in 1868, the help came largely from Greenwich, New York. The Greenwich Band was largely made up of boot and shoe makers and it came to North Bennington almost as a unit. It was organized here under the name of the Wales Cornet Band. Henry Wales was the leader. The band was constantly strengthened by the addition of new men until it became the best in the State. It was finely equipped, largely by the generosity of the Hon. T. W. Park, with the finest set of instruments and uniforms money could buy.
At a band tournament held in Albany, New York, with over 100 bands present, it won third place, the first two places going to larger bands.

MASONIC ORDER

Tucker Lodge No. 48, F. & A. M. was instituted January 12, 1860. There were fifteen members at the institution, Norman B. Loomis being the first worshipful master. Charter members were as follows:

Jacob Beeman
W. B. Wright
S. E. Littlefield
A. K. Parsons
Norman Millington
Nathan Bowen
Isaiah Mattison
G. S. Wright

N. B. Loomis
Alonzo Hindsill
P. E. Ball
Lucius G. Welch
Aaron Fox
O. F. Mattison
Richard R. Bruce

The temple building now occupied and owned by the Order was built in 1917-1918. The membership of the Lodge is now about 125.

Since the Lodge was instituted they have had five fires, four a complete loss, as follows:

Barck Wright building, September 28, 1874.
Fenner building, 1886.
Healy-McNamar building, 1889.
Simmons building, October 16, 1900.
A. N. Shepard building, partial loss.

CIRCUS

Among the events for which the village was responsible was the launching of a fully equipped one-ring circus. About 1869 a man by the name of George Boss moved to the village with his family. He was formerly connected with a large circus as a clown. He brought with him a large quantity of circus material. For a year or two he gathered more until he had a full equipment—tents, band wagons, instruments, uniforms and parade cars. He employed painters, sign writers and decorators all one winter, working on wagons and cars. He interested local capital, hired his troop of actors and band, and in the spring of 1871 gave his first show in this village to a packed house under the name of "The Old G. Boss Circus."

The show started at once to tour other towns of the county. After a short time the local men who had helped him financially withdrew their money, compelling Boss to sell his circus. It was merged with other smaller shows and taken over by a large corporation.

LIST OF POSTMASTERS FROM 1828—WHEN POST OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED IN NORTH BENNINGTON, VT.

Daniel Loomis  November 18, 1828
Charles E. Wright  October 11, 1833
William E. Hawks  April 1, 1839
Hiram R. Haswell  April 20, 1855
Charles E. Houghton  May 28, 1856
Charles E. Welling  January 4, 1864
Milo C. Huling  September 5, 1866
Charles E. Welling  September 17, 1866
with bunks as cells and plank doors with a few small holes bored in them to let in a little air but no light. The main room had a solid plank door with two small, narrow, grated openings so small a man could not get through them if not grated. There was no sash or glass for the opening and no way of heating the building.

After a number of years the people tore down the building, and since that time the village has been without a jail.

EARLY LAND RECORDS

Haviland

Version taken from “History of Hoosick Valley.”

Haviland Mills—Sage’s City—North Bennington was settled by Joseph Haviland. He owned a tract of the Walloomscoick Patent granted in 1739 which overlapped Bennington on the New Hampshire Grants, considerably east of the twenty-mile line to Haviland Brook, now Paran Creek, in North Bennington.

Before the Battle of Bennington, Joseph Haviland having been declared a Tory and his lands sequestered, the Council of Safety sold all of Haviland’s manor at auction to Moses Robinson, who sold part of the land to William Haviland, son of Joseph, and Moses Sage and James Rogers, sons-in-law to Joseph Haviland. The deeds were signed,

ROBINSON—Town of Bennington,
Province of New York.

It was claimed by New York and Haviland that ten years previous to the grant of the township of Bennington by Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire a Dutchman named Wallum had obtained from the Governor of New York a grant, covering nearly all of the same territory,
including what is now North Bennington, although he took no measures to occupy it. The grant was called Wallumoscault, the termination “chalk” meaning scrip or patent; this gave name to the stream passing through it; the orthography of which, in accordance with the pronunciation, was changed to Walloomscoick, afterward to Walloomsac. The river still has the Dutchman’s name. It was from this grant that Haviland purchased his lands.

Haviland was a Quaker. He came from New York Province and seems to be the only New York grantee to establish himself in the town of Bennington.

Further History of the Haviland Grant


After the conquest of New Netherlands (so-called by the Dutch) by the English, the name was changed to the Province of New York, after the King’s brother, the Duke of York, to whom the King, Charles the Second, granted the province.

The charter reads in part:

“Charles the Second by the Grace of God, granted to his dearest brother, James, Duke of York, all the lands from the west side of Connecticut River to the east side of the Delaware Bay.”

Signed, King Charles the Second.

As early as 1696, Governor Fletcher of the Province of New York granted a considerable portion of the present State of Vermont to Godfrey Dellius of Albany, New York.

The Earl of Bellamonte, who succeeded Fletcher as governor of New York, recommended the annulment of this grant. This was accordingly done by the assembly.

After the peace which followed the last French War, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire wrote to Governor Clinton of New York in regard to the boundary subject. Governor Clinton by the advice of assembly informed Governor Wentworth that the Province of New York was bounded on the east by the Connecticut River as per the letters patent from King Charles the Second to the Duke of York. Previous to receiving the reply from the governor of New York, Wentworth granted, January 3, 1749, to William Williams and sixty-one others a township six miles square which in allusion to his name was called Bennington.

Governor Wentworth informed Governor Clinton of this grant and promised to make no further grants of land in that territory until the question should be decided by the King. Both governors agreed. Notwithstanding this agreement the governor of New Hampshire, during the ensuing five years, continued to make grants on the west side of the Connecticut, amounting in all to fourteen towns in 1754.

After that as late as July 20, 1764, the King declared the western bank of the Connecticut River to be the boundary line between the Provinces of New York and New Hampshire, sustaining the New York claim.

In 1739, ten years prior to Governor Wentworth’s grant of Bennington to Williams (who never settled the land), the governor of New York had issued the Walloomscoick Patent covering the same territory. From the owners of this patent or grant, Joseph Haviland purchased his lands upon which he built his house in North Bennington and all deeds conveying parts of this land, for many years were signed Province of New York. (New York and New Hampshire were both English provinces with governors appointed by the Crown.) The contentions
between New York and the New Hampshire Grants con-
tinued for several years after the Revolutionary War, but
in 1791 the state lines were finally fixed by agreement
between New York and Vermont and Vermont was ad-
mittod to the Union of States.

Haviland

(Another version)

During the Revolutionary War, Joseph Haviland, who
held the title to Haviland grant of the Walloomscoick
Patent (lands) was charged with being a Tory. He
endeavored to protect his titles. He was tried and when
the matter was finally settled he was adjudged a Tory and
sentenced to prison and had his lands sequested.

Later at a further hearing it appeared that William
Haviland, Moses Sage and James Rogers were the real
owners of the land at the time it was sequestered and it
came into their possession. During this period Moses
Robinson, governor of Vermont, squatted on a portion of
this land, invited purchases, sold lots and farms, but was
evidently a little doubtful of his title as his deeds were
signed Robinson, Town of Bennington, Province of New
York.

Sage

Prior to 1776, Capt. Moses Sage, a native of Norwich,
Connecticut, settled in what is now North Bennington,
marched and built a house. He resided in Sage’s City
(North Bennington) until after 1811, over thirty-five
years, building mills, stores, shop and dwelling houses,
and acted as commissary to Stark’s troops at the Battle
of Bennington.

He soon made the place quite prominent by his busi-
ness ability and energy and so clearly was he identified

with its development that it early took the name of Sage’s
City, retaining that name until after 1828, over fifty
years. He bought out William Haviland’s interest before
1800 and became sole owner.

In 1800, Captain Sage established the first iron works
and forge in Vermont. The beds in Shaftsbury which
provided his ore began to peter out and Sage offered a
reward for the discovery of iron ore in this vicinity. A
deposit was found in the Shields District and in 1804
Captain Sage set up Vermont’s first blast furnace near
the new ore beds.

Some time after disposing of his furnace property in
1811, Captain Sage moved from North Bennington
(Sage’s City) to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he built
and operated the first blast furnace known to have ex-
isted in western Pennsylvania. Sage died and was buried
in Pittsburgh shortly after the completion of the furnace.

William Haviland was a son of Joseph Haviland, the
first settler. Capt. Moses Sage married Joseph Haviland’s
daughter, Mary Ann. Another daughter married Rogers.
Sage’s daughter, Mary, married Giles Olin, Jr., who was
born in Shaftsbury in 1781. Another of Sage’s daughters
married Reuben Colvin. Giles Olin’s daughter, Mary
Ann, married Martin Billings Scott (who in 1842 built
the house now owned by Mrs. Elmer Johnson).

The descendants of Haviland, Sage, Olin, Colvin and
Scott still continue to reside in this vicinity.

Russell Sage, the great financier and multi-millionaire,
is a direct descendant of this Sage family.

Colvin

It appears by the records that Reuben Colvin settled
in what is now North Bennington in 1769. His lands
included the present Colvin farm and all the land from
Bank Street along Main Street to the Shaftsbury line. He built the original Colvin homestead the same year on the lot near the residence of Mrs. E. D. Welling. The Colvin house was a little southwest of the Welling house near the old well. This house was taken down. Reuben Colvin was great-grandfather of the late Edmund Colvin.

Welling

Edward M. Welling, who was born in New Brunswick, Canada, came to North Bennington, Vermont, from Hoo- sick, New York, some time before 1823 and purchased all the land on the east side of Main Street to the Shaftsbury line, commencing in the south with what is now the Paran Creek Mills. Edward M. Welling moved his family here, including the late Hon. C. E. Welling, who was born in Hoosick, New York, about 1823. The estate has been in the Welling family ever since. The present owners are George B. Welling and Miss H. S. Welling, children of Charles E. Welling. The Wellings have resided here continuously over 100 years and during that time they have operated stores, saw mills, starch mills, paper mills, grist mills and were interested in the building and operation of the shoe factory and banks. Members of the family have represented the town and county in both branches of the legislature and have filled most of the town and village offices.

Hall Family

Thomas Hall settled in what is now North Bennington about 1780, purchasing the land now known as the Hall farm. This farm has remained in the Hall family to the present day.

Thomas Hall.
Nathaniel Hall.

Hiland Hall—son of Nathaniel.
Mrs. T. W. Park—daughter of Hiland.
Mrs. J. G. McCullough—daughter of Mrs. Park.
Hall Park McCullough—son of Mrs. McCullough.

The original farm has been increased by the purchase of surrounding farms at different periods. The members of this family have always taken an active part in the welfare, growth and advancement of the village. They opened roads, built churches, schoolhouses, factories (financed others), banks, owned and operated railroads and built others; built the Public Library and water works; gave the grounds and most of the buildings for the Soldiers’ Home in Bennington; built two mansions in this village, fine farm buildings, improved and beautified the land; helped the village build the highways and buy the fire engine; furnished the State two governors, congressmen and judge, state senators, town representatives and filled all town, village and school offices; were the head of all charitable movements.

The land upon which General Stark camped with his troops, August 15, 1777, the day before the battle, is now included in the Hall-McCullough farm, having been purchased by Governor McCullough.

For several years during the life of Mr. T. W. Park on the Hall farms he bred Morgan and other blooded horses of the purest blood and selected stock. At that time he built a one-half-mile track, directly back of the coach barns, for training purposes, employing professional trainers.
WATER WORKS AND SEWERAGE SYSTEM

From 1761 to 1923 the village depended for drinking water upon a few springs and wells. When the land was first settled and covered with forests, springs were numerous and good pure water was obtainable anywhere by digging shallow wells. But when the forests were cut it became necessary to dig through rock for the water. The deepest well, between eighty and one hundred feet, was on the Jennings place; and as they dug, the workmen, looking up from the bottom, could see stars in the daytime.

After 1880 power well-drilling machinery was introduced. Many old wells were sunk deeper and cased to keep out surface water, and many new ones were drilled, often at a depth of from 100 to 1,000 feet in order to secure sufficient water, and consequently at great expense.

When Mr. T. W. Park built the Park-McCullough house in 1864-65 he laid a two-mile pipe line to the cold spring in the Huntington district in Shaftsbury to supply the water for his house and farm buildings; and when Mr. F. B. Jennings built his residence on the Bingham farm he brought water from a small reservoir on the farm and had it pumped to the house by a windmill. In 1891, finding this supply inadequate, Mr. Jennings bought from George Elwell some springs about a mile and a half east of his home. The water was gathered in a reservoir and piped to the house and farm buildings. The supply, however, of both the Park and Jennings springs was limited.

About 1890 the town and the state board of health commenced testing the water from the different wells and springs. After the condemnation by the state board the village spent hundreds of dollars prospecting and sur-veying for water; but the nearest pure soft water found was five miles distant, and the engineers’ estimates were so high that the village was unable to finance the matter. Its charter allowed only a bond issue of 10% of the grand list, which was not sufficient to cover the cost.

The present entire water system was given to the village by Mrs. F. B. Jennings as a memorial to her husband, who had often spoken of his intention to do this. By this princely, magnificent gift of a system which the village would never have been able to build, Mrs. Jennings has brought health, happiness and protection to over 1,200 grateful people who, as well as their descendants and future residents of North Bennington, will cherish and bless her memory.

Frederic Beach Jennings was born at Old Bennington in 1833, his father being the Rev. Isaac Jennings, for thirty-five years pastor of the First Congregational Church of Old Bennington and author of “Memorials of a Century.” Mr. F. B. Jennings was for many years a member of the law firm of Stetson, Jennings & Russell at 15 Broad Street, New York. He married a daughter of Mr. Trenor W. Park. Her grandfather was the Hon. Hilan Hall, governor of Vermont, judge, congressman and historian; and her great-great-grandfather, Thomas Hall, settled in North Bennington in 1780. Mr. Jennings built the present residence of grey stone in 1903-04; and while he also had a house in New York, he always considered North Bennington his real home. After his death, in 1920, Mrs. Jennings had surveys made and in 1922 let the contract for the water system and for the memorial drinking fountain in the park. Work was at once begun and completed in the autumn of 1923.

The water is taken from Basin Brook, high up in the Green Mountains, five miles from the village limits, in
the town of Shaftsbury, northeast of North Bennington, where the upper reservoir is located. The water is carried in a six-inch pipe about three miles to the second reservoir on the Howard farm, east of the village of South Shaftsbury; then, in ten- and twelve-inch pipes, about two miles, to the village of North Bennington. It is distributed through about four miles of village streets in six- and eight-inch pipes, making a total pipe line of over nine miles, with many hydrants.

Mrs. Jennings' gift of the water system also provides that income from same in excess of operating expenses shall be applied to the sewer debt up to $30,000, and after that, excess income shall be used to benefit the village, under direction of the water commissioners.

The contractors were Long & Montagna of Leominster, Massachusetts. The village engineer was Henry P. Jones, Bennington, Vermont; the contracting engineer, Guy C. Chase, Fitchburg, Massachusetts; the water commissioners, Clarence W. White, chairman, E. D. Welling, Hall Park McCullough, Ralph Jones and Percy H. Jennings.

The sewer system was put in by the village at a cost of $55,000, was commenced in 1923 and finished in the spring of 1924. It is over four miles in length and discharges into the Walloomsac River at Hinsdillville. The sewer pipes were laid in ditches separate from the water pipes and were put in by the same contractors, Long & Montagna.

HENRYS AT RIVERSIDE—IRISH CORNERS

The Henry homestead was built by El Nathan Hubbell in 1769. It was a large frame structure of one and one-half stories with large chimney in the center.

After the Hubbell house had been successfully raised, Parson Dewey, who was present, suggested a wedding. A platform was improvised and Joseph Rudd and Sarah Story were married, Parson Dewey performing the ceremony.

The frame was raised the same day as the Col. Seth Warner house, situated a few rods south on the corner opposite the schoolhouse. The Warner house was destroyed by fire in 1858.

Col. Seth Warner was the captor of Crown Point, commander of the Green Mountain Boys in the repulse of Carleton at Longeneil and in the Battle of Hubbardton, and the associate of Stark in the victory at Bennington. He was distinguished as a successful defender of the New Hampshire Grants and for bravery, sagacity, energy and humanity.

The Henry house was remodeled in 1797 by Hon. William Henry, son of Lieut. William Henry, who took part in the Battle of Bennington, and has been owned and occupied from that time by the Henry family. After the death of B. T. Henry it was sold to Hall McCullough.

The bridge first built over the Walloomsac River near the house, where the present wooden covered bridge now stands, was the one where the New York sheriff and his posse were stopped by the Bennington militia in the contention over the New Hampshire Grants. Gov. Hiland Hall, in his history, says: "Here was born the future State of Vermont."
After 1797, at which time the Henry house was remodeled, it was run by members of the Henry family as a hotel and road house for a number of years.

Prior to the building of the steam railroad in 1852 all traffic from the north to New York, and the West was by teams and stages, passing directly by the Henry house and the hotel did a large business.

If the Henry house could talk, what a story it could tell. What sights it has witnessed. It was built in 1769, eight years before the Battle of Bennington, on the firing line of the clash between New York and the New Hampshire Grants.

On August 14 and 15, General Stark and his troops passed by this house on their way to meet the British. The victorious troops returned by the house with their long line of prisoners, captured guns and supplies. Here, also, lived Mary Henry (Howe Benning) while writing her many books.

Col. Seth Warner’s Green Mountain Boys passed their commander’s home which stood near by.

(Copied from “Hinsdale Genealogy”)

The following is from the pen of Lieut. Aaron Hubbell depicting a scene immediately preceding the Battle of Bennington, when the writer was about twenty years of age and a member of Capt. Samuel Robinson’s company of Vermont militia.

“To begin at the beginning:

“I was moving with Moses Hinsdale, August 13, 1777, at about three o’clock in the afternoon when Joseph Hinsdale came in great haste and told us that the British were on their march to Bennington, that we must leave our work immediately and assist him in moving his family and effects to some other place. We did so, and on our way we met Capt. Samuel Robinson, who had command of a company of militia. He told us we must be in Bennington the next morning before sunrise. We were there at the time mentioned. General Stark’s troops were coming at the same time. On the fourteenth I started with Captain Robinson’s company for the battle, as I supposed, but it did not take place until the sixteenth. We marched to the place where David Henry lived, and then halted, and were ordered to fell trees to stop the artillery of the enemy. I struck the first blow, and brought down the first tree to effect that object.

“Our next halt was at the road which leads from North Bennington, where we again felled trees and made our stand for other troops to come up and they came in goodly numbers.

General Stark and his troops with Captain Robinson’s company were ordered to hold ourselves—every man in readiness to go to battle the next morning, the fifteenth, which proved a very rainy day. This was a most providential circumstance for us, as we were greatly strengthened by a handsome acquisition to our numbers.”

Here the pen was dropped, probably to be taken up later on, but unfortunately this was never done.

Lieut. Aaron Hubbell, the writer, was a son of Elnathan Hubbell, who built and lived in the Henry house in Irish Corners at the time of the battle. The Hinsdales were his neighbors.

The World War was not the first time the Bennington boys met and defeated the Germans on the battlefield. At the Battle of Bennington the British forces were made up largely of German hirelings, supported by American Tories and Indians. Their commander was a German.
The Battle of Bennington was fought over eight miles from Old Bennington, where the monument stands (there was no village of Bennington at that time). North Bennington (at that time called Sage’s City) was within two and one-half miles of the battle ground, within sight of the field and sound of the guns. It contained, among other industries, a grist mill where the flour and meal were ground from which the women of Sage’s City made the bread, Johnny cake and hasty pudding for Stark’s troops.

This part of the town furnished Col. Seth Warner and Adjt. Ebenezer Walbridge of the Green Mountain Boys, Capt. Henry Walbridge, one of the three Bennington men killed in the battle, Lieut. William Henry Silas Walbridge, paymaster and commissary, and other Walbridges, Henrys, Colvins, Breckenridges and many others.

THE HINSDILLS AND HINSDILLVILLE

Members of the Hinsdill family came to Bennington from Canaan Corners, Connecticut, prior to the Revolutionary War, taking an active part in same.

The Hinsdills were early engaged in the manufacturing business. They were stockholders in the first woolen mill in America, erected in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1789. David Hinsdill was agent. In this mill was manufactured the cloth from which the inaugural suit of President Washington was made.

Ensign Joseph Hinsdill was associated with Gen. Ebenezer Walbridge in the erection and operation of the first paper mill in Vermont at Paper Mill Village (Bennington Falls) in 1786.

Deacon Stephen Hinsdill, the founder of Hinsdillville, was born in Bennington, February 12, 1787. He married Hannah Edgerston, January 18, 1807. He built and occupied the house now owned by E. J. Harte, situated on the east side of Paran Creek near the bridge, north side of the highway. He also built a store and two houses opposite his residence.

Prior to 1830 he built and operated four cotton mills on the Paran Creek at this point and continued to operate same until 1837. One mill, where the H. C. White Company mill now stands, received its power from the present pond. Another mill, situated on the north side of the bridge, obtained its power from a pond formed by a dam at that point. Two more mills were located on the banks of the Paran Creek where it discharges into the Walloomsac River. The power for one of these mills was taken from a pond formed by a dam across the Walloomsac River just above the mouth of the Paran Creek. The other factory at this point was run by power derived from water carried in a canal or ditch running parallel with the Walloomsac River to a point almost directly back of the residence of the late Miss Kate Griffin in Bennington Falls. The line and bank of the ditch or canal can be traced to this day along the side of the Walloomsac River to the Griffin residence.

Deacon Hinsdill built the stone church in 1836, also several houses in the lot south of the highway now used by the H. C. White Company as a lumber yard; one of the houses is still standing. He also owned two houses on the lot north of Hinsdillville church and all the houses on the road on the south side of the church, running west to the top of the hill; also several houses on the lane running north on the east side of the creek.

Deacon Stephen Hinsdill built the Mt. Anthony Seminary in Old Bennington in 1829. His son-in-law, Rev.
James Ballard, was principal of the school for several years.

In 1837 Stephen Hindsill moved with his family to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he built a woolen mill. He died in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 21, 1860.

There was another cotton factory operated at this time by a man by the name of Huntington at Riverside, Irish Corners.

During the years from 1827 to 1837 there was being operated seven cotton mills within a mile and one-half, six on the Paran Creek and one at Irish Corners—one each by Doty and Estes, four by Hindsill, and one by Huntington.

With Paper Mill Village one-half mile east with its paper mills, woolen factories, saw mills, grist mills and triphammer shop, this part of the town was certainly doing the business at this period.

After 1837 the manufacture of cotton goods was abandoned in Hindsillville. The mills fell into decay, some were burned, some taken down and what was left was washed away in the flood of 1852.

No other business was carried on at this point until after 1860, when the Burdens of Troy, New York, erected a dam where the H. C. White Company plant now stands to operate the washers to wash the iron ore mined in the west part of the town. The power was used to run the washers by the Burdens and afterwards by George Swett until 1872, after which time it remained idle until purchased on August 23, 1879, by Hawley C. White, who built a factory at that point to manufacture stereoscopes, writing desks and fancy boxes. In February, 1887, the buildings were destroyed by fire. They were rebuilt at once by Mr. White, who, shortly afterwards, incorporated under the title of H. C. White Company. They continued to manufacture lens, stereoscopes and projectors exclusively until about 1912. At about that time they invented and commenced to manufacture the famous "Kiddee Kars," the entire output of the plant being Kiddie Kars, wagons and other wheeled toys.

The factory has been constantly enlarged, covering at this time several acres of land with its buildings, sheds, lumber yards and tracks, practically all of the original Stephen Hindsill holdings in Hindsillville.

**WALBRIDGEVILLE—PAPER MILL VILLAGE—BENNINGTON FALLS**

These were names by which that section of the town was called at different periods; it was settled shortly after 1761 by the Walbridges, who came from Connecticut. It was the home of Gen. Ebenezer Walbridge, who returned from the Revolutionary War in 1786 and built what is now known as the Walbridge homestead, where he lived until his death in 1819. The homestead continued to be owned and occupied by the Walbridge family until 1922. It is now owned by Stewart.

**Biographical Sketch of Ebenezer Walbridge**

*Taken from Hiland Hall's "Early History of Vermont."

Ebenezer Walbridge was born at Norwich, Connecticut, January 1, 1738. Settled in the part of Bennington now known as Bennington Falls shortly after 1761, where he died October 3, 1819.

He was a lieutenant in Colonel Warner's regiment of Green Mountain Boys before Quebec in the winter of 1776, was an officer in the Battle of Bennington and was
colonel of the regiment of militia of that town and vicinity in 1781. He was with his regiment at Castleton in October, 1781, during the threatened invasion by St. Leger. He also commanded the troops before whom the militia of New York fled from Sanoick, the December following. He was afterwards brigadier-general.

He was two years a representative in the Assembly, and for eight years commencing in 1780 a member of the State Council.

He was an enterprising business man, erecting and putting into operation the first paper mill that was built in the State in 1784.

The water privilege at Bennington Falls was considered the best in the town, and was used from the first, prior to 1819, by the Walbridge and others to operate grist mills, paper mills, saw mills, and trip-roller shops. Shortly after that time a woolen mill was erected and operated by S. Walbridge and others.

Some time before 1840 Benton and Fuller erected a paper mill on the north side of the stream, where Fillmore & Slade's mill now stands. They manufactured the very finest quality of writing paper for a number of years, when the Bentons withdrew and the firm of Fuller, Parsons and Parker was formed and succeeded them.

In 1861 Mr. Parsons was elected first lieutenant of Company A, 4th Vermont Regiment. He served with honor until June 4, 1864, when he was instantly killed at the Battle of Cold Harbor while serving on the staff of General Brooks. The mill was destroyed by fire about 1864.

Later it was rebuilt by the Charles Barnes Company and used for the manufacture of twine and linen thread. They were succeeded by the Godfrey's in the same business, who operated the plant for a time and then removed the business and machinery to New Jersey. Sprague Brothers came next and manufactured pulp for several years and then moved to Middle Falls, New York.

They were followed by C. W. Roberts, also a manufacturer of pulp. Mr. Roberts, in company with L. A. Dolph, manufactured carpet sweepers, which, proving unprofitable, was shortly abandoned.

In the eighties William Campbell of Bennington purchased the property and built a new building designed for a knitting mill, but before being fully completed Mr. Campbell died and the knitting business was also abandoned.

In 1900 the property was purchased by Fillmore and Slade, who used it to manufacture pulp until 1904, when it was equipped to manufacture paper in conjunction with pulp. They operated the mill as such until 1908, when it was destroyed by fire. They rebuilt the mill at once of re-enforced, fireproof concrete, completing the same in 1909. They now manufacture a high grade of toilet paper, the United States Government taking almost the entire output. The plant is situated about two miles from the North Bennington depot.

VILLAGE STREETS

The Bennington map of 1835 shows North Bennington streets as follows:

West, Prospect, Main, Houghton and Factory Lane

West Street, commencing at Main, running west up the hill past the Knapp house to the road running from the Henry bridge at Irish Corners to Sodom, was opened by Joseph Haviland, the first settler, about 1761 or 1762.
Main Street

Opened before 1768, running from West Street due north, intersecting the east and west road from Shaftsbury to Hoosick at the cemetery. The First Baptist Church was erected at that point in 1769.

Prospect Street

Commencing at Main Street running southeast, crossing Paran Creek to Jennings Place (formerly called Bingham Place), following the present private driveway by the Jennings mansion and cottage to road running north and south past F. T. Huntington’s residence. Prospect Street was opened prior to 1781 as the Griswold house (the Jennings cottage) and Bingham’s house were built on this road in 1781.

The detour from the Jennings gate north of the estate passing in front of T. B. Brown’s place to the old highway east of Jennings cottage was built in 1897 and 1898.

Factory Lane—Now Called E. Z. or Mill Street

In 1811, when the cotton factory was erected on the site now occupied by the A. S. Payne Mill, a lane was opened from Main Street to the mill, upon which the owners erected the dwellings for their employees. This was a private road and so continued until 1857 and 1858, when the town built the bridge near the mill and opened the road to what is now Mechanic Street and that part of Mechanic Street running east past the Mahan and Bassett houses to the Overlea Inn. The balance of Mechanic Street from the southeast corner of the C. W. White lot to the junction with Prospect Street was opened in 1868 or 1870.

Prior to 1857, before the opening of Mechanic Street, the road west from the A. J. Mattison farmhouse (now the Overlea Inn) ran south of where the Bassett and Mahan houses now stand, directly to the Bingham house (Jennings) on Prospect Street, using the lane by Miss Dewild’s cottage. This road was opened prior to 1777.

Church Street

Opened in 1865 by the Hon. T. W. Park and at the time the Baptist Church was moved to its present location.

School Street

Opened in 1870 at the time the schoolhouse was built.

Pleasant Street

Opened part way in 1850 and 1851. The brick house at the foot of the street now owned by the Beagles was built in 1848 by A. B. Phillips, who at the same time built a bridge across Paran Creek to Estes’ Lane, now Water Street, the remains of the bridge piers now standing. Mr. Phillips used the bridge until after 1856, when he built the road to connect with Pleasant Street.

Estes Lane—Now Water Street

In 1825 Mr. Truman Estes erected a cotton mill where Cushman’s plant now stands. There was no road at that time below the paper mill. Estes opened a narrow street called Estes Lane from West Street to his mill.

The Lane commenced on West Street, running on the west side of what is now the driveway in front of the Catholic Church, to the mill. The church was not built until 1836. Years afterwards the town built the retaining wall from the paper mill to Cushman Pond, opening the road where it now runs. Estes built all the houses on the Lane north of the mill prior to 1832, also the house now owned by Mr. William Cushman, which Mr. Estes occupied as a residence until he built the stone house after 1833.
The road was later extended and other houses built below the mill. The town completed the balance of the road to the stone church prior to 1835.

**Houghton Street**

Opened prior to 1835 from Main Street opposite Bank Street, running northeast to Shaftsbury line, continuing from that point to the east and west road from South Shaftsbury over cemetery hill to Daily’s Corners. Houghton Street was opened by the State of Vermont as a cut-off to avoid cemetery hill by the stages and teams operating from points north through North Bennington and Irish Corners over the stone road to Troy, Albany and the South.

**Bank Street**

In 1851 James Elwell purchased from Sidney Colvin a lot on what is now Bank Street and shortly after erected a house and store thereon, opening the street from Main to a point opposite School Street. This house was the first built on the street and was afterwards owned by C. E. Houghton-Helen Cole and at present by E. L. White.

In 1853 and 1854 the street was opened from that point to Daily’s Corners and other houses erected, among them being the Sidney Colvin house built in 1855, now owned and occupied by his grandson, Albert Colvin.

**Park Street—From West Street in Front of McCullough Mansion, South to Irish Corners (Riverside)**

Prior to 1835 this was a private road to the Hall farmhouse, using what is now the cut-off passing Mrs. E. H. Johnson’s residence from West Street to the Hall house. The 1835 map shows that it stopped at that point. The map also shows that the road from the stone church in Hinsdillville running west up the hill to what is now the

Thomas Lisby house, turned north at that point and ran for a short distance toward the Hall farm road from West Street, which would indicate that the road was commenced about that time, 1835. The 1856 map shows the road complete from West Street to Riverside.

**Greenwich Street**

Opened by the North Bennington Boot and Shoe Company in 1868 at the time they built brick row. The Hawks Street extension of Greenwich Street to Bank Street was opened in 1900.

Hall Street, off from Church Street, was opened in 1922 by the North Bennington Realty Company, which contracted with the Kingsbury Construction Company to build ten residences. The houses were completed in the spring and summer of 1923, with sewer, water and electric lights.

**Honor Roll**

Civil War—1861-1865—Partial List of Soldiers and Sailors of North Bennington and Vicinity

- Erk. Cole
- Felix Cole
- John Corcoran
- Charles Danforth
- Linas Edgerton
- Oliver Green
- John Griffin
- Ned Griffin
- Hiram Hall
- Robert Hall
- Harry Homes
- William Howard
- John Hughes
- William Hurd
- Michael Hurley
- Patrick Hurley
- Michael Kelly
- John Layden
- Seth Lawrence
- George Love
- John H. Minott
- Richard Newman
- Silas Newman
- Thomas Newman
A. J. Noyes
West Noyes
William Palmer
Lieutenant Parsons
John Risen
Delbert Towsley
Leander Towsley

Linus Towsley
Col. James H. Walbridge
Warren Walbridge
John Watson
Richard Welsh
Mont Willis

Spanish-American War—1898—Partial List of Soldiers and Sailors of North Bennington and Vicinity

William Hall
William Kipp
Patrick McCarty

Ben Ripley
Lt. William Spafford
Lt. Sanford Worthington

World War—1917-1918—For the North Bennington Post Office District

Edward C. Austin
Earl Baker
Daniel Barber
Sanford Barber
William Barber
James Bassett
Charles Bazino
Frank Bevis
Clark Blake
George Bonner
Russell Bonynge
Floyd Bouplon
Carl Brown
Fred. J. Carry
Miss Winifred Casey
Arthur Cole
Walter Cole

Frederick Cushman
Joseph Dailey
William Dailey
Marvin Dedrick
Frank Driscoll
Martin Drury
Frank Dunham
John Flood
W. A. Flood, M.D.
Claude C. Foster
Harry Frurich
Michael Gilmore
William A. Gordon
Adelbert Green
Raymond Green
Charles Harlan
William Harlan

Ralph Haynes
Samuel Haynes
James Houston
William Howe
Walter Hurd
*Leonard Jennings
Myron H. Jones
John Kinney
William B. Kinney
William Knights
James T. Luke
Vincent McGovern
Walter Main
Harold Masefield
Park Mattison
Fremont H. Meerworth
George Millington
Frank J. Moon
Francis J. Mooney
Thomas Nash
Albert Noyes
Clarence Noyes
Earl Patten
Nelson Payne

* Died in service.

Clarence Peters
Webb Phillips
*Bernice Powers
Michael Powers
Marion Rice
John Scarey
Frederick Simmons
Herman Simmons
William B. Simmons
Ransom Solomon
Leon C. Spencer
Willard H. Stewart
Clover Sweet
Linton Tefft
E. A. Tobin, M.D.
Alfred Wade
Henry B. Walbridge
Archie Weaver
Charles E. Welling
E. Leslie White
Holland White
Lewis White
Paul White
Waldo White

A FEW OF THE HOUSES, OWNERS AND BUILDERS

Main Street

Present Owners

Huling Est.
Mrs. E. D. Welling
W. R. White Est.
E. A. Tobin

Other Owners

M. C. Huling
E. D. Welling
Daniel Devlin
Norman Loomis

Builders

William E. Hawks
Norman Douglas
P. L. Robinson
Gardner S. Wright
Present Owners  |  Other Owners  |  Builders |
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Mrs. H. C. Simmons  |  H. C. Simmons  |  G. W. Simmons |
Mrs. L. B. Newton  |  L. B. Newton  |  Warren Dutcher |
Meagher Est.  |  Amelia Fuller  |  Levi Gould |
W. R. White Est.  |  G. S. Wright  |  N. Loomis |
Fred Babson  |  W. G. Shaw  |  Sam C. Loomis |
Hall McCullough  |  T. W. Park  |  William E. Hawks |
W. E. Green  |  Henry Rosier  |  Daniel O'Brien |
R. R. Dryer  |  Ella Thurber  |  Hiland Knapp |
Dr. J. B. Armstrong  |  Mrs. James Skinner  |  George Briggs |
George B. Welling  |  Charles Thatch  |  E. M. Welling |
Shepard (store)  |  Thatcher & Welling  |  E. M. Welling |
Percy (store)  |  Charles F. Houghton  |  P. L. Robinson |

Houghton Street

Mrs. Geo. F. Houghton  |  R. C. Houghton  |  Dwight Corkrin |
Mrs. Wm. Meagher  |  W. J. Toombs  |  Warren Dutcher |

Bank Street

E. L. White  |  C. E. Houghton  |  James Elwell |
Amy Surdam  |  B. G. Surdam  |  A. Safford |
E. G. Phillips  |  C. E. Houghton  |  Brad Sherwood |
Fred C. Mattison  |  E. C. Houghton  |  Charles Colvin |
C. Bonyange  |  Russell Fisk  |  A. Loomis |
Albert Colvin  |  Edwin Colvin  |  Sidney Colvin |
Andrew oatman  |  J. O. Bangs  |  Levi Gould |

Prospect Street

James McGovern  |  Mrs. S. E. Ranney  |  W. J. Watson |
Miss H. S. Welling  |  J. H. Walbridge  |  P. L. Robinson |
A. S. Payne  |  J. H. Walbridge  |  Levi Gould |
A. J. Nash  |  George Walworth  |  P. E. Ball |
George H. Elwell  |  Charles Thatch  |  Dr. Whipple |
Mrs. F. B. Jennings  |  Stone Mansion  |  F. B. Jennings |

Pleasant Street

James Morrissey Est.  |  G. S. Wright  |  Rufus Towsley |
Louis Lassour  |  Herbert S. Walbridge  |  H. S. Walbridge |
Mrs. Beagle  |  George Walworth  |  A. B. Phillips |
G. D. Mattison  |  O. F. Coy  |  A. B. Phillips |
Charles Corcoran  |  James Powers  |  Michael Madden |

Mechanic Street

C. W. White  |  Mansfield  |  C. W. White |
Burton Bromley  |  Hall Park McCullough  |  Edward Knapp |
Clifford Shepard  |  Edward McCullough  |  Mrs. Elmer Johnson |
Mrs. Nelson Dailey  |  E. T. Cushman  |  Mrs. A. S. Hathaway |

West Street

Mrs. J. G. McCullough  |  Mansion  |  Mrs. J. G. McCullough |
Hall Park McCullough  |  Hiland Hall  |  Mrs. Elmer Johnson |
Edward Knapp  |  Charles Knapp  |  Mrs. A. S. Hathaway |
Mrs. Elmer Johnson  |  J. G. McCullough  |  William Harrington |
Mrs. A. S. Hathaway  |  S. B. Hall  |  E. T. Cushman |
William Harrington  |  W. J. Toombs  |  H. T. Cushman |

Water Street

H. T. Cushman Co.  |  Henry Hall  |  Truman Estes |
William Cushman  |  H. T. Cushman  |  Truman Estes |
H. T. Cushman Co.  |  Conrad Hynick  |  Hiram Richardson |

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

From the time the railroad was completed in 1852 until after 1865 many of the county political rallies were held in North Bennington. During the presidential campaign of 1856 between James Buchanan, Democrat, and John C. Fremont, Republican, the Republicans held a rally flag raising and barbecue in this village. It was an all-day affair; in the forenoon raising of flag pole, music, fireworks and barbecue; in the afternoon speaking from a platform in what was then the Deacon Watson Grove, located on the west side of Prospect Street. It was a county affair, speakers from all parts of the State, New York City and Boston, with bands from Troy, New York, Rutland and Bennington. The speakers' platform was in the upper
part of the grove. After the speaking was well under way, the Democrats, under the leadership of John White and others, started a rally in the lower part of the grove, using the barbecue tables as a platform. John Cross, a Democrat speaker from Shaftsbury, started the show. Cross was a good speaker, with a loud, far-reaching voice. He was soon the whole show. He silenced the Republican big guns. The New York speaker had to quit. The Republicans, headed by the sheriff, Rufus Towsley, Surdam and other local leaders tried to expel Cross from the grounds. During the scuffle the stand was torn down, Cross was thrown to the ground. He climbed a tree, perched himself on a large limb and continued his speech. Rufus Towsley got an axe and chopped down the tree. Just as it was falling, Cross jumped to the ground, mounted the stump and finished his discourse.

The Republicans tried to drown him out with cannon and bands, but Cross finished and departed in peace.

The Democrats won; Buchanan was elected.

HISTORY OF THE NORTH BENNINGTON CEMETERY

Written a few years ago by the late Prof. Amos Draper of Washington, D. C., during a visit to the village.

Thickly situated at the head of the main street of the village, this ground lies wholly in Shaftsbury. Originally it was a very small plot which now forms the northwest corner. One of the first burials therein, if not the first, was that of Lieutenant Perry, 1775. This was eighteen years after the first house was built in the village.

In February, 1854, some of the leading villagers formed an association and later bought ground joining the old ground on the east and south and the owners of the old ground presently merged it in the new. This association has been actively maintained ever since by annual elections. Almost every prominent citizen of the village and its vicinity has served upon its board of officers. Hilland Hall so served in various capacities from 1855 to 1873.

For many years the ground was in the neglected and forlorn condition so often seen in New England graveyards, with leaning headstones, grass uncut, weeds and briars rampant—a sight from which the passerby painfully averted his eyes. In 1904, however, some public spirited ladies formed a committee and raised a fund to beautify and care for the ground. They and their successors have wrought wonders, converting the spot from an eye-sore to a place where order and beauty and neatness reign, so that, even if this were all, the eyes of the beholder now rest upon it with infinite satisfaction.

There are no people of wide fame lying there. Perhaps the most noted, both for character and service, was Isaiah Mattison, who preached the Gospel for forty years without a salary. For the rest, they are "the plain people"—all—but of such as make the sinew and the character of that which is best in American life. Here lie a country doctor or a lawyer or two; business men; tailors of every degree; soldiers that fell in the Civil War (and their ages cut upon the stone prove again the saying that that war was fought by boys); and here, with their wives, children and friends all about them and the green turf over all, "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

If then this is no place to sound the trumpet of fame, why should this article be written? That is now to be told. The writer knows not who chose this spot for the purpose to which it is devoted. Whoever he was, all who know the spot will agree that he deserves a monument for that choice alone, which seems now like an inspiration.
The hill is higher than one would think. From the mouth of Paran Creek, below Hindsdillville, two miles or more away, the ground rises, now gradually and now sharply, but always steadily, to the crown of this hill. Arrived there, a scene of rare attractiveness bursts upon the sight. It combines beauty and grandeur in almost equal proportions. Let the visitor face the northeast and turn slowly to the right. Before him Shaftsbury Mountain and the “White Rocks” soar into the heavens, blue in the distance, tree-clad to the summit, massive, imposing. To the south he fronts the battle monument, apparently on a level with it, and, to its right, the verdant, lofty, symmetrical cone of Mt. Anthony. To the west lies a noble forest, “Hall’s woods,” and, again to the right, the eye rests upon the high ground where the rustic Green Mountain Boys so valiantly breasted the trained invaders set in battle array. Thus the whole circumference of the horizon is spread before the eye, except a small arc on the north hidden by trees.

**COLONIAL HOME CHANGES HANDS**

*Isaiah Mattison Property in Shaftsbury Goes to Dr. Elizabeth McCullough*

The 110-year-old, twenty-three-room brick colonial home in Shaftsbury, on what is known as the Isaiah Mattison place, has been purchased by Hall Park McCullough of North Bennington from Jesse L. Dunham for his daughter, Dr. Elizabeth McCullough, who will use the property for a residence and office for the practice of medicine.

The sale, just announced in North Bennington, includes 100 acres of land. The property, while in Shaftsbury, is only half a mile from the bank corner in North Bennington.

Workmen are now renovating the interior of the house but, it is understood, the outside will not be altered. The house, long a landmark in the county, is one of the most attractive residences in southern Vermont.

All of the material used in the construction of the house by Mr. Mattison, more than 100 years ago, with the exception of the marble trim, was taken from the farm. The lumber was cut from trees on the property and bricks were modeled from clay found in one section of the farm.

A slab near the front chimney bears the date 1826, considered the date the construction of the house was completed. How long the construction took is unknown. There are four fireplaces in the house.

The Dunhams have owned the property for thirty-three years and have occupied the house for the last quarter of a century.
Henry B. Walbridge

Funeral services for Henry B. Walbridge of Union street, well-known local insurance man who died suddenly at Putnam Memorial Hospital Sunday night, were largely attended at Walbridge Funeral Home Wednesday afternoon.

The Rev. Richard Duncanson, associate pastor of the Second Congregational Church, officiated. The Rev. H. Glenn Payne, First Baptist Church past, also attended.

Mt. Anthony Lodge F. and A. M. with Worshipful Master Lawrence Kemmerer visited the funeral home Tuesday night for special services.

Cremation was in Troy, N. Y., and burial will be in the Walbridge family lot in Grand View Cemetery, North Bennington.

Out-of-town relatives at the service were included from Boston, Springfield, Mass.; Glens Falls, N. Y., and Hartford, Conn.