

The Totoket Historical Society, Inc.

Impressions of Northford

By

Judge John G. Phelen

Transcribed from The Meriden Morning Record of October/November 1922

By

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Introduction:

The following articles were clipped from The Meriden Morning Record of October/November 1922 and transcribed by Kenneth W. Cameron, Archivist and Historiographer, Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford, Connecticut.

There were apparently five articles comprising Judge G. Phelen's "Impressions of Northford" of which three had been transcribed by typewriter in 1961. Several portions of the articles appear to be missing. The typewritten manuscripts have now been scanned and digitally recorded by an optical character reader (OCR). The other two were photocopied but were not transcribed. I have transcribed those article and included them here. Unfortunately there is no date included on the Photostats.

Theodore Groom, Ph.D.  
Chairman, Technology  
Totoket Historical Society  
June, 2012

## Impressions of Northford

By Judge John G. Phelan

Meriden Morning Record  
October 24, 1922

The Record is indebted to Judge John G. Phelan for an article relating to his home town of Northford, which will prove interesting reading to the people of Wallingford and vicinity, as it contains a number of valuable suggestions, as well as historical data. It is proposed to run this story in about three installments, the first of which is herewith presented:

Last week was spent in my old home town amid the picturesque scenes of the beautiful valley that extends for ten miles under the shadow of Totoket, from North Branford to Northford and on to Durham.

Through Northford winds the state road connecting New Haven and Middletown. A true air line, not the false one followed by the Air Line railroad, and which was originally surveyed to go through Northford and Durham, but was through malign influence, diverted to East Wallingford and Middlefield.

Northford is bound to have a great future, for it is only a question of time when the motor "bus" will take the place of the present trolley car and will run on all our state roads.

Wallingford should wake up and get in touch with the future, and finish the connecting link of about two miles by building an asphalt road from where it leaves off just beyond the air line station, to the Northford line and that town would very rapidly finish it to the Middletown turnpike.

Thus our neighbor on the east would become a Wallingford suburb and trade would flow to us instead of to New Haven as it has for the past hundred years.

These thoughts occurred to me on my recent visit as I saw the volume of traffic through the valley at present, and in conversation with the people found they looked at the matter of seeing a market here as too much of a hardship with the present state of our roads.

Northford is an "Ultima Thule" as far as most of our citizens are concerned so through the kindness of The Record I am privileged to write a few facts of its

interesting history and thus get Wallingford acquainted with its neighbor of the past two hundred years, with, I hope, to the mutual advantage of both.

About four miles southeast, in an air line, lies the historic Pauge valley and nestled down in the shadow of Totoket mountains that form the eastern boundary is the village of Northford.

It was originally called Salem by the first settlers in 1720.

The land was laid out and the divisions made, probably as early as the year 1700. Why their designation, so agreeable both in its significance (peace) and in historical association, was set aside for the somewhat incongruous name "Northford" does not appear.

Farm river that runs the length of the town may in those early days have had considerable of a fording place down by the twin bridges for undoubtedly two hundred years has made quite a change in the size of the river as the diverting of the water supply to Wallingford has reduced the flow of that stream one-half within the running of the present generation.

The tradition is that the first settlers lived a sort of migrating sort of life, some time before their settlement in permanent dwellings, coming up from Branford and living in encampments from the opening of spring until the approach of winter.

They occupied "clearings" at the base of the mountain range near what is now called Mount Pisgah and in the vicinity of abundant supplies of pure cold water from a never-failing opening still held in high esteem.

Near this spring until a few years ago was pointed out the remains of a cellar supposed to be the site of the first permanent, dwelling place of a white man in the valley.

When I was a boy there were old men living who remembered numerous wigwams of Indians, some of which were inhabited by their dusky owners.

By the terms of the deed in which they sold their lands to the whites they were to be allowed for all time to hunt, fish, and cut basket timber and they for many years insisted on maintaining their rights in this part of Connecticut even

[one line indecipherable] they had migrated to other states.

Northford like most of the towns of Connecticut was settled by Congregationalists and of those who entered into fellowship there is a distinct provision that the ministrations of the pulpit, shall be "Calvinistic" in their character, but their views of church orders were strictly congregational, implying their belief in the inherent power of the local church society.

It was not until June, 1750, that a regularly settled minister was ordained for the preaching of the gospel and a church formally instituted. It seems there was some diversity of views as to where the church edifice should stand and in 1746 application was made to the general court for the appointment of commissioners to "Locate a meeting house."

This was done and in due time the commissioners made their report and it voted: That said house of worship be erected in the highway, on the west side of the path, twenty rods north of Samuel Batholomew's house, the sills to enclose a walnut staddle thereon standing with a heap of stones around it.

This edifice erected was at first without a steeple, one was added in 1796, forty-nine years after the body of the church was built and a bell placed upon the deck, the same one used until the late church in 1847 was burned down a few years ago.

The first minister was the Rev. Warham Williams. His regular salary was to be yearly "200 ounces of good silver and twenty-five cords of wood."

According to the New England custom the day of his ordination was appointed a day of fasting and prayer as a suitable preparation for the event and Rev. Samuel Whittelsey of Wallingford was one of the preachers invited to preach on the occasion.

A somewhat strange vote was also passed, to wit - "That Isaac Ingraham, Paul Tyler and John Thompson shall be a committee to take care of the meeting house doors, ordination day, "to keep folks out." The following vote on the records is more easily understood. The parish had some land to let out to the highest bidder, so they passed a vote "That the committee shall get two quarts of rum to lot out the society land with."

Of course that was to make the bidding more spirited.

The first minister was a most interesting personage with a romantic and interesting family history behind him.

He was the grandson of the Rev. John Williams of Deerfield, Mass., who at its burning and the massacre of its inhabitants by the French and Indians in 1704 was with his wife taken prisoner.

Mrs. Williams who had but recently become a mother, had to witness the death of two of her children who with a black nurse were taken and killed before her door. She died on the second day of the march to Canada,

The awful story of the sufferings of the prisoners taken at Deerfield was a New England classic told with bated breath around the fireside of Massachusetts and Connecticut for generations.

Samuel Drake, the Indian historian, says of Mrs. Williams:

“In his interviews with the French Jesuits, he uniformly found them using every endeavor to convert him and others to their religion. However, most of the captives remained steady in the Protestant faith. In 1706 fifty-seven of them were by a flag ship conveyed to Boston. A considerable number remained in Canada, and never returned, among whom was Eunice Williams, daughter of the minister.

She became a firm Catholic, married an Indian by whom she had several children and spent her days in a wigwam, She visited Deerfield with her Indian husband dressed in Indian style and was kindly received by her friends. All attempts to regain her were ineffectual.”

The romantic story of Eunice Williams has been immortalized in poetry and prose but very few realize that Northford's first minister was so near a relation to the heroine of song and story, Eunice Williams.

## Impressions of Northford

Meriden Morning Record

by Judge John G. Phelan

Nov. 6, 1922

Following is another installment of the article written by Judge J. G. Phelan pertaining to his recent visit to Northford. Another installment will follow at an

early date.

The monument over the last resting place of Mr. Noyes bears in part the following inscription:

Mathew Noyes  
A member of the Corporation of  
Yale College and 48 years pastor  
of the Church in this place. Died  
Sept. 25, 1839, age 76 years

This is followed by a long epigraph telling of his many virtues and good qualities.

Mr. Noyes came from a long line of ancestors who were New England clergymen and one, a brother, preached for many years here in our own town.

Thirty-seven have represented the town in the three leading professions and among them, we of Wallingford have reason to be grateful to Dr. Benjamin F. Harrison, whose widow presented the town with the fine tract of land which is dedicated to his memory and is known as "Harrison Memorial park."

Doctor Jared Linsly was a great benefactor to his native town. He practiced in New York city and was among the leading physicians there for many years, being the family physician and personal friend of Commodore Vanderbilt and accompanying him in his private yacht in his trip around the world.

Rev. Albert Barnes was of Northford parentage. He was the author of "Barnes' Notes," a volume found in the library of all Congregational ministers and a terrible punishment to the bad boy who was condemned to read its dreary pages.

Epaphias Chapman and Dwight Baldwin were early missionaries among the Indians and at the Sandwich Islands respectively.

Rev. Samuel Whitney and the Rev. Eli Smith, the one in the Sandwich Island, the other in Syria, were prominent in early missionary work.

Up to 1763 our Congregational friends had the town to themselves but in December of that year a deed was given James Howd for land on which to build a church for the Episcopalians and as the church was already built or nearly so the parish dates its birth from that year. The original church edifice stood near the top of the hill in Northford center and that was a most sighty location. Doubtless Rev. Abias Jones visited that church in his peregrinations. We know he came here to preach. Of him the story is told of his driving his horse up to the church door. He always traveled horseback. He was duly waited upon by some of the flock, his horse taken and it being the season of Lent he was ask "if he would as is nsual, fast until after the service?" He replied, "Yes, but my horse is a Presbyterian so you can feed him now."

The church now occupied by the society was erected in 1845.

Last week the old barn near the rectory was torn down. In it was a "lost ornate octagonal pulpit that was recently doing duty in the church, Henry Hall [Hill? Hull?] the purchaser of the barn and contents, was quite anxious to know how old the pulpit was and no one in Northford could tell him anything about it.

He took the opportunity to have me see it and lo! And behold! I remembered when a small boy over sixty years ago seeing one of the finest wood workers in Connecticut at that time, Newell Palmer by name, making that pulpit!

The Episcopal rectory was built, for the Rev. Warham Williams about 1750 and was also occupied by Rev. Matthew Noyes [so for] about one hundred years, it was the Congregational parish house. It contains some fine paneling and a gem of a Colonial front staircase.

Bordering the fireplace in the two front rooms downstairs, are some genuine Delft tiles, illustrating Bible history with figures of the quaintest design ,

In the panel representing the "Judgment of Solomon" the infant child , thrown on the floor, looks like nothing human and it would seem a mystery why the two distracted looking finders should quarrel about its possession, also it vindicates the judgment



of Solomon that he ordered it "obliterated" as it were.

However, the persiflage aside,

they are very rare Delft and undoubtedly antedate the age of the house many years.

On the back of a panel in the closet door of the north front chamber appears painted 130 years ago the following, "Oct. Ye 2, 1792, this home was- painted by E. Jones."

Then Oct. 5, 1809 Jared Jessup claimed the honor and he must have done a good old fashioned job for the next claimant for the job was George Smith who, in April 1867 says on the panel he painted the house and so on down the generations when "Sam Hodgetts of Wallingford" in very ornate lettering inscribes his name in this hall of fame sometime in the seventies.

[what follows is photostated on the same sheet as the above, but does not seem to follow it coherently.]

When I was a little boy there lived in Northford an old gentleman named after this minister, Markham [ the author has earlier written "Markham" for "Warham" and this was corrected in pencil before photostating , In the present instance the name "Markham seems partly rubbed out but there is no substitution.] Williams Foot. He remembered him and said he was of noble and commanding figure, with high forehead and expressive countenance, and uniformly wore the long white wig of olden times when he appeared in the pulpit.

He spoke in a powerful voice and was greatly beloved by all who knew him.

Last week I visited the beautiful "God's Acre" in which for two centuries Northford has buried its dead. I stood before the memorial to this good man and copied from it the beautiful tribute engraved upon it:

"In memory of the Reverend Warham Williams, A.M. Pastor of the Church of Christ in Northford, and Fellow of Yale College in New Haven. Good natural abilities, a liberal. Education and a heart devoted to God and the good of mankind, qualified Mr. Williams for eminent usefulness.

“ As a tutor and Fellow of the College he was much esteemed by his pupils and the Republic of Letters. He was a bishop given to hospitality, laborious and faithful in his office, of sound mind, able in council, a friend to peace and order, greatly revered by his flock and highly respected by his Brethren and numerous acquaintances. In all his public obligations he acted with fidelity and in his family and through the course of his ministry approved himself MAN OF GOD.

“Amidst severe trials of his patience in his last sickness w’ri ch was long and painful his faith prevailed and in good hope of the Gospel Salvation he fell in sleep April 4, A.D. 1788 in the 63<sup>rd</sup> year of his age and the 38<sup>m</sup> year of his Ministry.”

This beautiful epitaph has for over one hundred and thirty years reminded thoughtless generations of a great and good man. “May his soul rest in peace.”

His successor was the Rev. Matthew Noyes , also a member of the corporation of Yale College, and forty-five years pastor of the church. He died September 25, 1839, aged 76 years. “Barber’s Historical Collection” published in the early thirties, says of Mr. Noyes:

“The first house of worship erected in this society is still standing, as is likewise the house of the first clergyman (Mr. Williams), and is now occupied by the Rev. Mr. Noyes, for a long period the minister of this parish, and considered to be one of the wealthiest clergymen in the state.”

Another installment of Judge Phelan’s article will be published at an early date.

## **Impressions of Northford**

by Judge G. Phelan

Meriden Morning" Record

Nov. 18, 1922

Following is another, installment of Judge Phelan's interesting paper on impressions of Northford, his home town, that he recently visited.

The Episcopal parish of St. Andrew's has not a settled clergyman at present and this beautiful old house is used as a social gathering place for the parrishioners and their friends.

In the past, some of the brightest minds in the Episcopacy have made their home in this old mansion. Notably in my memory as a boy I recall Pastor Davis, a fine dignified old gentleman who seemed to delight in theological argument with my father, who though a layman in the Catholic faith, seemed to be a worthy opponent as to the Apostolic succession, Transubstantiation and the intermediate state, etc.

Later came the Rev. Dr. Short, a fine writer and the author of many theological works and books on church instruction.

He had a very expensive library, was an enthusiastic botanist and found in the flora of Northford and vicinity numberless specimens of rare plants to add to his collections.

Those were halcyon days about this ancient mansion, for the good old doctor had a large and delightful family, so it was the center of social gatherings and no distinction of sect for they were too broadminded to be otherwise. Alas! this was nearly fifty years ago, and I am left almost alone to tell of the days that are sped "and the guests that have fled."

There is now on foot in Northford a movement to have a "Community house" open to all members of the community regardless of sect. A few weeks ago a "Community" fair was held for the purpose of raising funds for this purpose. It was quite successful and a substantial sum was raised as a beginning.

A movement of this kind has to have at its head men and women of the utmost tactfulness for if not the old social and religious feuds that are characteristic of most of our New England villages will come to the surface and block the best

However, through this community spirit, a fine granite boulder with a bronze tablet inscribed with the names of the brave men of Northford who served in all the wars of our country from the Revolution down to the present, is now on the Village green, an example to Wallingford and other towns that boast of more wealth and enterprise.

Once upon a time, before the town of Wallingford obtained possession of Paug pond and diverted its waters to the use of its citizens and before the miscalled Air Line railroad went out of its way to go through Middlefield by the way of East Wallingford, thanks to a powerful lobby in an "accommodating" legislature. Northford had a line of small factories along the Farm River that provided plenty of work for a numerous and contented population.

The inventive faculty of the old Yankee stock was at its height and here was the home of the celebrated Fowler family, noted through New England for its inventive genius and their natural endowment as mechanics of the highest grade.

Here in this valley was invented the machinery for the manufacture of wooden combs and wooden buttons that in years past sold by thousands of gross all over the country. Here Thaddeus Fowler invented the pin machine and made the first machine pin so that head and point were one piece of metal and not the head made separate and attached as in the pin of three quarters of a century ago.

These were made in the old shop that still stands in a wrecked condition by the side of the state road about one-half a mile above the present Northford post office, He removed to Waterbury and afterward perfected this machine so now a coil of wire goes into one end of the machine and cones out at the other a paper of pins! A perforating machine was invented by Frederick Fowler that automatically seizes a sheet of metal and draws it through a series of punchers and delivers it a perforated sheet with holes of any given size and no burr upon them at all.

More of this article will be printed at an early date.

[However, this is the end of the Photostats that were given to me.]

The Rev. Kenneth W. Cameron  
Archivist and Historiographer  
Diocese of Connecticut  
Hartford, Conn.

## Impressions of Northford

Meriden Morning Record  
Date Unknown

Judge John G. Phelen

Continuing his story regarding Northford where he visited this summer, Judge John G. Phelen writes for the Record as follows:

The river machine starts a coil of wire on a big reel at one end of the machine and drops rivets of any desired size into a tub at the other. Tons and tons of rivets were made in the old shop after the pin business went to Waterbury. The hook and eye machine was perfected in Northford and tons of those useful little fasteners of my ladies dress were turned out and gave employment to all the country side, sewing on to cards at first, but later as a perforated card was invented, sticking on hook and eyes became a skilled occupation for all the adjoining towns and was quite a fashionable feminine accomplishment to acquire money

The manufacture of tinware was another busy industry and the fame of the ware made by the "Northford Manufacturing Co." was nationwide. Here the perambulating tin peddler would drive up his queer looking wagon and load up with all varieties of tin utensils from a wash boiler to a pepper box, from a japanned tin trunk to a most elaborate cash box, striped and ornamented in gold and colors, and all made from sheet tin from England, Wales or the Straits of Malacca, for this was years before tin plate became one of our "infant industries" and was amply protected by a tariff that at least made the tin plate barons rich "beyond the dreams od avarice." Part of the old "tin shop" is standing down on the flat just above Northford Center but most of the skilled workmen and workwomen that spent so many happy hours of their youth amid these pleasant surroundings are no more.

It used to be a great puzzle to strangers using the New Haven and Middletown Turnpike through Northford along in the seventies to see piled up in great heaps along side of the road fronting the factory of "The Pauge Manufacturing Co." thousands and thousands of cocoanuts. It surely did excite their curiosity to know why in an inland town over a thousand miles from the place of their growth this product of the tropics should be so abundant and be so carelessly stored that any wayfarers could help themselves. This was the era of the cocoanut dipper, the making of which was for some time a monopoly of Northford genius. At the beginning of this industry the meat of the nut was thought of no particular value, but the shell with the top cut off, duly polished, bound with a white metal band and a socket accurately riveted on the side containing a gracefully turned handle, made a most elegant dipper and for many years had quite a vogue. It would not rust like tin and people got the idea

that water never tasted so sweet as quaffed from a cocoanut dipper, even though the "old oaken bucket, the iron bound bucket," lost its prestige and in almost every water pail and hanging on every well curb was this product of the old factory in Northford.

Machinery for its manufacture was perfected there, so they could be made by the thousands and as the nut can take a beautiful polish in skilled hands, their manufacturer was a great success and they were sent out all over the world even going back to the countries they originally came from with the additions that Yankee ingeniousness had put on them to make them more useful. Up to this time the meat of the cocoanut had not been utilized and its usefulness as an article of food was not suspected. Experiments were made to extract the oil but there was at that time littler demand for it and it became, under any plans that were feasible for its preservation easily rancid. So further experiments were made on a small scale to grate it for the use of confectioners. The demand was limited and it easily soured, so another plan was adopted after some experimental work on a small scale by which the meat was grated, mixed with some sugar and dried in an oven. This proved successful and its use for pies, puddings, cakes etc. was immediately recognized so machinery was built for removing the hard brown outside skin, and grating the white in quantity, kilns were erected and large pans made for the drying and before long the business was in full blast and a market established so that "Maltby's desiccated Cocoanut" was known all over the country. Thus to Northford is due the invention of this delicious article of food and for some years it kept a large number of employees busy and cocoanuts used to be sent to Northford by the cargo. This was long before the United Fruit Company got a monopoly on the produces of neighboring tropical countries and before it was possible for large accumulations of capital to swallow up the business of the small manufacturers. This old factory is still standing and is used by The New Haven Brush Co.

On this site have been manufactured buttons, combs, cornshellers, axe halves, wooden handles of various kinds hooks and eyes, spoons, knives, forks and then in later years when the chromo and fancy visiting card craze swept over the country in the early eighties here the Stevens brothers had their card printing plant and used all kinds of domestic and foreign cards by the millions and sent them all over the world, the trade being sustained by newspaper advertising. Other Northford boys went into the business and the local post office from a little country office became a second class office with a salary that made it an object of political aspirations for those in the game. North thus became the center of the card printing business when during the presidency of Chester A. Arthur the Post Master General made a ruling whereby packages of printed cards were rated at twice the amount of postage hitherto charged, they with others in the business formed "The National Card Printer Association" met at "Hills

Homestead" at Savin Rock raised money enough to send a delegation with that old time astute lobbyist and politician Lynde Harrison to Washington, got Senator Joe Hawley interested had a hearing before the President and the Post Master General, proved to their satisfaction our business was an educational one and so the decision was reversed although it cost about eleven hundred dollars, for lobbying at Washington is a pretty costly business. However it paid the association, and I speak of this experience just to show the young men of today that the boys forty odd years ago knew the game of politics as well as they do today.

Farm river that furnished power for all those industries and for saw mills and grist mills galore in the olden times was known as Stony river which I think is a more descriptive name for it. In the good old days when anybody could fish its water without fear fo the New Haven Waltonian club it was posted as one of the best trout streams in Connecticut. Its waters were live with the lesser game fish and suckers, pickerel, eels, and roach were to be found in every deep hole. I wonder how many grey bearded "boys" remember the "Soap Hole" or "Dan's Hole" or "Dowds Hole" and last but not least the "old Swimming Hole" in Bela Foote's meadow where from the grassy bank we would dive into the deep water, and clad only in nature's garb disguise ourselves with the red and yellow clay that lined the river bank. Hh me! Those were the carefree days the man of seventy looks back to with a sigh.

All down along the road that leads to North Branford village the old farms that used to belong to descendants of the first settlers, the Fowlers, Dowds, Bunnells, Gidneys, Tylers, Palmers, etc. are now occupied mostly by the sons of sunny Italy and their numerous progeny. The old farms under their skilled management are renewing their youth and the only fault I heard found with the new owners was by a degenerate Yankee who said "They never know enough to stop work." The average Italian farmer is very approachable and I found the Northford representatives of the race no exception to the rule.

Another and final chapter of this article will be presented at a future date.

## Impressions of Northford

Meriden Morning Record

Judge John G. Phelen

Date unknown

Following is the final chapter in Judge Phelen's interesting paper relating to a recent visit in his old home town of Northford:

The every day person is not interested in the welfare of the foreigner and he is left a stranger in a strange land. He is not given the encouragement to better himself and his family and keeps in the background because he is afraid he is not welcome.

The Italian comes with the traditions of a country that has a leading place in the world. He is mindful of the contribution of Italy to civilization of such men as Dante, Raphael, Michaelangelo, Marconi and his memory is still filled with the thoughts of the beautiful cathedrals and Churches of his native land adorned with paintings and statuary that are the admiration of the world.

Northford is fortunate to have many of these people settling there and the second generations after the public school and the college have done their work will be a wonderful addition to the town.

Many years ago when I was a boy an old Italian named Di Patri came to live with his daughter who was married to well to do Yankee farmer. He was a very old man and had been a soldier under the Emperor Napoleon and had that enthusiastic admiration for the great Emperor, all his soldiers seemed, according to history, to have.

We boys used to listen to his marvelous tales of the wars "and moving incident by flood and field" with baited breath, but let some one whistle the old tune "Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine" and then would be given a demonstration of what the old soldier could do in the dancing line for he would move as gracefully and as lightly on his feet in time to the music as he had in the days past at Marengo and Austerlitz.

Such was Northford's first Italian and he left many descendants but there is not one left in the town, yet his daughter had eighteen children.

Northford has a very pleasantly plot of land used as a cemetery since about 1755. There are many interesting historical monuments within it confines and one, that of Col. William Douglas is especially interesting as he raised and commanded a regiment of over five hundred men in the towns of Branford, Wallingford and vicinity

From Northford in June of 1776 he led this regiment called the "Leather caps" to join Washington's army at New York. They were given first place in the Connecticut line and ever proved a terror to the enemy. They were actively engaged at the battles of Long Island, Harlem, White Plains, Phillip's Manor and New York. Death, wounds, thirst and exposure so diminished their



number that after three battles, of 553 only 224 were fit for duty. Colonel Douglas returned to Northford to die May 28<sup>th</sup> 1777 in the 36<sup>th</sup> year of his age. Colonel Douglas gave both life and property to his country. He furnished guns and other arms for his men and the expense was never refunded by the government. Visiting his resting place in this beautiful "God's Acre" one day last October I copied from the lowly brown stone that marks his grave this epitaph, the abundance of capitals used as in the old style:

A Gentlemen of good Abilities  
Generous Mind and Easy Manner  
Faithful in Business and friendship  
Active and brave in Defense of the  
Rights of his Country and Mankind

The portraits of Colonel Douglas that came down to us show him to have been a very handsome man and historians say that Washington regarded him as a bosom friend and greatly mourned his untimely death.

Down in the back part of the cemetery amid the brambles and briers stands a plain marble slab bearing this inscription.

Henry Leander Foot

Died Oct.2, 1850

A.E. 38

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance  
that Jesus Christ came unto the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."

When I was a little urchin I use to pass that stone in fear and trembling\_\_\_\_"to save sinners of whom I am chief." That seemed a horrible thing to put on a gravestone of a human being. Later in life I read the "Confession of Henry Leander Foot," in which he told of his life and the murder of his mother and niece. The old Foot house, until a few years ago stood in plain sight of where the murderer was buried and in fact he was seen pounding his mother on the head with a stone hammer by a man who was at the time building the stone wall that surrounds the graveyard. He had previously killed his fifteen year old niece Emily Cooper and hidden her body under a pile of brush. He intended to kill his mother and burn both bodies with the house, collect the insurance, \$450, and leave for parts unknown. The man who saw him attack his mother raised the alarm and seeing he was discovered, he ran into the cellar and cut a vein before he could be arrested. This happened in 1850, the same year the old couple were murdered on East Rock supposedly by James McCaffrey, but there

was nothing but circumstantial evidence in his case and it is a tradition that he suffered for another crime. They were both hung October 2, 1850 on the same scaffold by Sheriff Parmalee of Wallingford.

Foot, in his confession laid his downfall to the common use of liquor in his home when he was a youth. He enlisted for service in the Mexican War, got into a bad crowd and with the liquor habit already formed, his downfall was a matter of course.

The two crimes made a great sensation in Connecticut and the contrast in the way they went to their death was remarked. McCaffrey praying and protesting to the last his innocence. Foot, impenitent and blasphemous until his voice was stilled by death.

A man who tried to be his friend told me years after, this tale: "I went down to the New Haven jail the night before Foot's execution and was admitted to see him. He had no fear of death, nor of eternity, and his only regret was 'that he had to be hung with a damned Irishman.'" So we had in 1850 the same kind of men of whom the Ku Klux Klan is made up of.

Barber, in his "Historical Collections" says: "About a mile south easterly of the Northford church on Totoket mountain there is the appearance of having been at some remote period, some violent convulsion in nature, the rocks appear to have been thrown about in great disorder. Lead is said to have been found near this spot. It is said a mass of it was found by a person hunting near this place, at the time for the first settlement of the parish. He hung up a buck's horns to designate the spot but the place could not...?"