

the record of organization is the following: "The Church of Christ from Hardwick, and the Church of Christ from Sunderland met together, and after prayer agreed upon and voted: "That said church from Hardwick and said church from Sunderland join together and become one body, or Church of Christ in Bennington. At the same time others united with the church who had come from other towns of Massachusetts and Connecticut. So far as the names have been preserved there was a total of fifty-seven members at its organization, showing there had been a large immigration up to this time.

A call was given Rev. Jedediah Dewey of Westfield, Mass., "to the work of the ministry among us," by the church and society, at a meeting May 24, 1763, and in the fall he removed here and became the pastor. In the meantime the church in Westfield joined with the church at Bennington by action of its delegates, on August 14, 1763, in council at Westfield, by solemn vote, signifying their consent to become one church under the pastoral charge of Rev. Jedediah Dewey. This action greatly strengthened the church, and in successive entries at short intervals, the records show frequent and oftentimes large additions to it. Rev. Dewey was respected and beloved by the people of the town, and is believed to have exerted a large influence in their secular as well as spiritual affairs.

As early as in October, 1764, a military company was formed in town, of which an authentic roll was found among the papers of the late Captain Elijah Dewey, as follows, viz.: "Muster roll of the first company of militia in the town of Bennington, organized October 24, 1764. Officers.—John Fassett, captain; James Breckenridge, lieutenant; Elisha Field, ensign. Warrant officers.—Leonard Robinson, first sergeant; Samuel Safford, second sergeant; Ebenezer Wood, third sergeant; Henry Wallbridge, fourth sergeant. Rank and file.—Benjamin Whipple, first corporal; John Wood, second corporal; Samuel Pratt, third corporal; Peter Harwod, fourth corporal. Music.—Benjamin Story, drummer. Military company, 1764.—Timothy Abbott, John Armstrong, Libbeus Armstrong, Samuel Atwood, John Burnham, W. N. Burnham, John Burnham, jr., David Barnard, Levi Castle, Nathan Clark, Nathan Clark, jr., Asa Clark, Nathan Clark, third, Isaac Clark, Cornelius Cady Johnson Cleveland, Robert Cochran, Samuel Cutler, Isaac Davis, Elijah Dewey, Enoch Eastman, David Fassett, John Fassett, second, Jonathan Fassett, Josiah Fuller, Thomas Henderson, Zachariah Harwood, Abraham Newton, George Pengry, Timothy Pratt, Silas Robinson, Moses Robinson, Joseph Richardson, Daniel Rood, Benajah Rood, David Safford, Joseph Safford, Johathan Scott, Matthew Scott, Moses Scott, Oliver Scott, Phineas Scott, Samuel Scott, John Smith, Daniel Scott, John Smith, jr., Joseph Smith, Thomas Smith, Elijah Story, Thomas Story, Samuel Stubbs, Joseph Wickwire, Samuel Wright.

"(Signed) SAMUEL ROBINSON, Clerk."

The above list is supposed to embrace all the able-bodied men then in town between the ages of eighteen and sixty.

From  
Sunderland  
Mass.

In the fourth volume of the "Documentary History of New York," at page 588, is a list of the persons settled in Bennington prior to June 1, 1765, prepared by recollection by Samuel Robinson, esq., in New York City, in December of that year, and furnished the governor of that province, Mr. Robinson being in New York as the agent of the settlers. This list contains the following names not found on the foregoing military roll, viz.: George Abbott, Hezekiah Armstrong, Elkanah Ashley, Benjamin Atwell, Benjamin Brownson, Eliphalet Collins, Rev. Jedediah Dewey, Jonathan Eastman, Barnabas Harman, Simeon Harman, Eleazer Harwood, Jacob Hyde, John Holmes, John Holmes, jr., Samuel Montague, Jedediah Merrill, John Pratt, Silas Pratt, Samuel Robinson, esq., Ebenezer Robinson, Joseph Rudd, Stephen Story, Gideon Spencer, Samuel Sweet, Benjamin Warner, Daniel Warner, Seth Warner, Benjamin Whipple. Of these Samuel Robinson, esq., Samuel Montague, and perhaps two or three others, were among the earliest settlers, but who from age or for other reasons had not been enrolled in the military company. The residue were doubtless new comers.

On a petition of the settlers to the king, dated November, 1766, are found the following names not on either of the previous lists, viz.: "Joseph Barber, Robert Cochran, jr., Jonathan Carpenter, Nathaniel Dickenson, M.D., Stephen Fay, Nathaniel Holmes, Nathaniel Holmes, jr., Samuel Hunt, Elnathan Hubbell, Israel Hurd, Weight Hopkins, Stephen Hopkins, Daniel Mills, Joseph Robinson, Nathaniel Spencer, Henry Wallbridge, jr., Joseph Willoughby."

On a petition to the governor of New Hampshire, dated October, 1769, the following new names are found among the Bennington petitioners, viz.: "Ebenezer Allen, Cornelius Cady, jr., Reuben Colvin, Brotherton Daggett, Elijah Fay, Benjamin Fay, Joseph Fay, Nathaniel Fillmore, Jesse Graves, Simeon Harman, jr., Jacob Hyde, jr., Daniel Harman, Simeon Hathaway, Thomas Jewett, Ebenezer Lyman, Josiah Noble, Seth Porter, Joshua Reynolds, Jonathan Scott, jr., John Stewart, Azel Warren, Reuben Warner, Isaac Warren, Elijah Wood."

There were other inhabitants of the town whose names are not found on either of the foregoing petitions. The following are on the town records, viz.: "In 1768 Jonas Fay, Robert Cochran, second; in 1769 Samuel Herrick; in 1770 Ebenezer Walbridge; in 1771 Charles Cashman; in 1772 Elnathan Hubbell, jr., David Haynes, Moses Hurd, Roswell Mosely, and in 1774 Jesse Tinney, Zepheniah Branch, Benjamin Webb and Eleazer Hawks."

Many others were here prior to the commencement of the Revolution in 1775, among whom were the following: "Thomas Abel, Nathaniel Brush, Samuel Blackmer, Jeremiah and Calvin Bingham, John Brackett, Eleazer Edgerton, William Henry, Joseph Hinsdill, John Kinsley, and John Weeks. Besides these several of the sons of the early immigrants to the town had grown from childhood to manhood, and become active members of society,

viz.: The Robinsons, Staffords, Deweys, Harwoods, Hubbells, Harmans, Walbridges, and many others."

It will be necessary in order to understand the bearing of much that will follow in the part taken by the settlers in the difficulties with reference to their land titles, to give the situation somewhat at length. "The lands of the settlers had been granted by charters issued in the name of the king of Great Britain, purporting to be by his authority, and evidenced by the signature and seal of the governor of New Hampshire, one of his majesty's royal provinces, and the farms which they occupied had been fairly purchased and paid for. It was the doctrine of that day that the ungranted lands of the country belonged to the Crown, and as the lands in question were universally believed to be within the province of New Hampshire, it had not occurred to the purchasers that any question could arise in regard to their titles. Such question was, however, made, and the controversy which it produced was of a novel and interesting character.

The first public intimation given to the settlers that their claim under New Hampshire might be called into question was from a proclamation issued by Mr. Colden, lieutenant-governor of New York, on the 28th of December, 1763, in which he claimed jurisdiction, by virtue of an old grant to the Duke of York, of the territory to the north of Massachusetts, as far east as Connecticut River, and "commanding the sheriff of the county of Albany to return to him the names of all persons who had taken possession of lands under New Hampshire Grants."

To quiet the settlers and give encouragement to other emigrants, Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, issued a proclamation setting forth the right of New Hampshire to the lands, and recommending "to the several grantees and claimants under that government to be industrious in clearing and cultivating their lands agreeable to their respective grants," and commanding "all civil officers under that government to be diligent in exercising jurisdiction in their respective offices as far westward as grants of land had been made by the government of that province, and to deal with any person or persons that might presume to interrupt the inhabitants or settlers on said lands, as to law and justice appertained." This counter proclamation had its intended effect, and the settlements on the grants progressed with new vigor, that of Bennington not behind the others.

But the government of New York not choosing to rely upon the doubtful title which it had set up to those lands under the grant to the Duke of York, made application to the Crown for a confirmation of their claim. This application was said to have been supported by a petition purporting to be signed by a large number of the settlers on the New Hampshire Grants, (at this time there had been settlements in Arlington, Manchester, Pownal, and other towns in the vicinity, as also on the east side of the mountains) representing that it would be for their advantage to be annexed to the colony of New York; and