

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

CRAFTSBURY COMMON,

BY HORACE F. GRAHAM.

AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE

TOWN OF CRAFTSBURY, VT.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

To us, the year 1789 should be doubly memorable. For on the 30th of April of that year, the Inauguration of Washington as first President of the United States, marked the beginning of our present government and three weeks later, on the 21st of May, the first settlement was made in the town of Craftsbury.

Granted by the State, November 6th, 1780, to Timothy Newell and his associates and chartered, August 23rd, 1781, she was given the name of Minden and retained it until October 27th, 1790, when it was changed to Craftsbury in honor of Colonel Ebenezer Crafts.

Early in the summer of the year 1788, Col. Crafts opened a road from Cabot and began the clearing of a piece of land, on the Trout brook a little above the present mill of Luman F. Smith. Tradition has it that Col. Crafts then erected a house and saw mill and laid the foundation for a grist mill. This piece of land was known as the Mill Lot and was given to Crafts by the other Proprietors on condition that he build a saw mill in one year and a grist mill in two. It was not,

however, till the 21st of May, 1789, that the families of Nathan Cutler and Robert Trumbull arrived and located; Cutler on the farm lately owned by Hamilton Z. Harriman and Trumbull on the north side of the road, east of the old French farm, now owned by Judge Dutton. As the cold weather set in, Trumbull, falling sick, went with his family to Barnet for the winter and Cutler remained alone. Thus began the settlement of Craftsbury and of Orleans County. With spring Col. Crafts and Trumbull returned.

True to their New England instinct, first and foremost was the town meeting. The warning for this bears date February 24th, 1792, and is signed by John McDaniels, a Justice of the peace of Hyde Park. It was called at the house of Col. Crafts, March 15th, 1792, and the town was organized with Col. Crafts as Moderator, his son Samuel C., as Town Clerk, to which office he was elected annually until 1829. Crafts, Lyon and Cutler were chosen Selectmen and Joseph Scott, Sen. Constable. It was voted that all notifications for town meetings for the future be put up at the house of Col. Crafts until some more convenient place be appointed. The first Freeman's Meeting was held at the house of Col. Crafts, September 4th, 1792 and he was chosen to represent the town in the General Assembly that year to be held in Rutland.

At the March meeting of 1793, the first town Treasurer, Daniel Mason, and the first Grand Juror, Robert Trumbull, were elected. The town was divided into two highway districts, all lying east of the Trout brook to be one, and all on the west the other. The selectmen were directed to survey

by compass such roads as shall be thought necessary. By the 12th Article, it was voted that any person, after the present season, who shall attempt to drive an ox sled less than four feet wide in any public road in this town shall forfeit the sled to be sold at Public Vendue and the money so arising shall be given to the poor. At the adjourned meeting of June 16th, of that year, the selectmen reported that they had laid out a road from the abutment of the bridge on the Trout brook to the Greensboro line. This was the first highway. Before this there existed only a military road built from Peacham to Lowell in the latter part of the Revolution by Col. Hazen. This highway entered the town near what is now the East Village, crossed between the Hosmore Ponds and into Albany known then as Lutterloh. On June 24th, 1793, Col. Crafts was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention about to be held at Windsor. At the meeting of March 3rd, it was voted to expend 25 bushels of wheat in schooling the children and in 1796, a committee was appointed to select a spot for a schoolhouse and give an estimate of its cost. They reported that the location that seemed to them the most suitable was 40 rods north of the dugway on the road to Nehemiah Lyon's, and that they had set a stake there, and had estimated the cost at 90 dollars. This house was never built, but on October 24th, two school districts were erected, similar to the highway districts. Thus early was evinced that care for the cause of education which has been so prominent in the history of Craftsbury.

These meetings were held first at the house of Ebenezer Crafts and afterward at that of Joseph Scott until the free-

men's meeting of September, 1802, which was held at the Meeting house that had been erected at the Center, now known as the Common. Soon after the warnings were directed to be posted at said Center Meeting house instead of at Royal Corbin's mill.

At the first meeting of the proprietors held in Sturbridge, December 6th, 1787, Lot No. 7, in the 6th Range had been reserved for a meeting house plot, common, &c. Since that day the Common has been diminished in size either by sale in accordance with the vote of the proprietors or of the freemen in town meeting.

In 1795, Crafts, Cutler, and Samuel C. Crafts were appointed a committee to take charge of the Common and contrive some means for clearing it and were given power to lease the same. They seem to have done this for between that time and 1806, it had been cleared. At the meeting of March, 1807, a committee of four was appointed to lease it for three years on condition that it be leveled, the stumps taken out and the whole seeded down to grass. At the meeting of March 15th, 1836, Augustus Young, James A. Paddock and N. S. Hill were appointed Trustees to deed those portions of the Common now occupied by the Hotel and Store; before this the North end had been disposed of in like manner.

During the first years of the history of the town the staple products were ashes and salts of ashes. A large per cent. of the taxes were paid in grain and this was almost wholly the medium of exchange. The farmer in those days did business on the credit system and in the fall turned over the products

of the farm to the merchant who in turn sent them to market.

Among the early merchants were Thos. Kingsbury, Dan'l Chamberlin, Benjamin Clark, George H. Cook, Hollis Allen, Thomas Tolman and Colonel Paddock. Daniel Davison and Doctor Scott fed the traveler and it is to be supposed warmed the cockles of his heart with good old New England rum. Tradition has it that Jesse Olds kept the first store and that it stood on the southeast corner of the old common on what was afterward known as the "Store lot."

In those early times large families were the order of the day and the settlers agreed with Goldsmith when he said: "I was ever of the opinion that the man who married and brought up a large family did more for the welfare of his country than he who only sat and talked of population."

Until the War of 1812, everything went on well but on the outbreak of hostilities a panic seized the settlers and a general flight took place. Many farms were abandoned and some of those who left never returned. With Macdonough's victory at Plattsburgh, September 11th, 1814, the feeling of security returned.

Although over fifty miles away, the sound of the cannonading was distinctly heard here. Some, thinking the battle was just beyond the Eden hills, set out on foot, through the woods for the scene of action. To this war went Captain Hiram Mason, William Hidden, known to us of the younger generation as "the General;" John Towle, of whom it has been said, "he was a friend to every man but himself;" Moses and Elias Mason, James Coburn, Amory Nelson and John Hadley.

On the 9th of June, 1816, occurred a very severe frost, followed by a heavy fall of snow which covered the ground to the depth of a foot. Not a single crop came to maturity. Corn rose to \$3.00 per bushel, and enduring the greatest suffering the settlers passed the winter of 1816-17.

In an article written about 1840, Craftsbury Common is described as consisting of some 30 houses, two churches, an academy, a schoolhouse, a town house, two stores, two hotels, two blacksmith shops, a tannery and a tin shop. It is hard for us to comprehend the Craftsbury of fifty years ago, occupying the first place in the County, with its June Trainings, its Celebrations, its Manufactures, its School and its commercial enterprise. It was not till 1818, that any settlement was made at the South Village. As business left the hills and sought the valleys, its rise began and still continues till now it holds the leading place in Town. To the War of the Rebellion she furnished 128 men at a cost of \$13,464.42. Besides this amount \$811.50 was raised by subscription to aid in procuring recruits. This added to the sum raised by taxation gives a total cost of \$14,275.92, giving an annual cost to the town of \$3,568.95.

Of these 128 men, 5 were killed in action, 6 died of wounds, 15 of disease, 5 in rebel prisons and one was killed by an accident.

Of the number that left us to preserve the Union one fourth never returned. Whether they found a resting place at last in their native town or fill a numbered grave in some Southern cemetery or are covered by a monument to the unknown dead let us do them honor, for they offered up their lives that we might become free and united.

At first Craftsbury formed a part of Chittenden County, afterwards of Caledonia, but soon the County of Orleans was erected which was composed of Eden, Hyde Park, Morrisville, and Wolcott, and its present towns. Courts were held alternately at Craftsbury Common and Brownington till 1816 when the Shire was moved to Irasburgh. While here they were held in a building known as the Old Court House, which stood a little south of the present academy. The County was organized at the house of Dr. Samuel Huntington in Greensboro and John Ellsworth was the first Chief Judge. On the 24th of March, 1800, the first County Court was held at Craftsbury. Timothy Hinman was the Chief Judge and Samuel C. Crafts and Jesse Olds of Craftsbury the assistants. Of these men the descendants of Hinman have become widely known. Jesse Olds was afterward Clerk of the town of Westfield and a very prominent man in the Valley. No one of these was educated to the Law. Besides the judges I have already mentioned Craftsbury furnished the first Sheriff, Joseph Scott; the first Judge of Probate, Ebenezer Crafts; and the first Treasurer, Royal Corbin.

Craftsbury in the 100 years of her existence has given the State one Governor; the Country one U. S. Senator, Samuel C. Crafts. Two Representatives in Congress, Samuel C. Crafts and Augustus Young. Time will permit only a brief mention of her leading men who have won distinction in the affairs of state, in the pulpit, in medicine, in the law and in the arts.

The founder of the town, Col. Ebenezer Crafts, was born at Pomfret, Conn., in 1740. He graduated at Yale in the

class of 1759 and soon after married Mehitable Chandler, a lineal descendent of John Winthrop. Serving as a Captain in the Revolution till the evacuation of Boston, he was soon after elected Colonel of a regiment of cavalry and took part in quelling Shay's Rebellion. Removing to Vermont at the close of the War for Independence, he stamped his character upon the town and for twenty years was its patriarch, its friend and counsellor. His son, Samuel C. Crafts, was born in 1768 and graduated from Harvard in 1790 in the class with Josiah Quincy, the elder. Laying aside all thought of entering any of the professions, he shared with his father the trials and labor of a pioneer. For thirty-seven years he served as Town Clerk. He filled the office of Representative and served as Clerk of that body. He was a Chief Judge of the County, a member of the Council of Censors, a Representative in Congress, a Senator of the United States, a Governor of the State. While a member of the State Legislature he was Chairman of the Committee to decide upon a place for the State House. While in Congress he served on the Committee on Public Buildings during the rebuilding of the Capitol. At first his politics were those of Jefferson but in later life he was a follower of Clay. He left but one child, the wife of Nathan S. Hill of Burlington.

Joseph Scott, the father, served as Sheriff fourteen years, as Judge of Probate, as Representative, as a member of the Council of Censors. His son Joseph was Town Clerk for many years, a Representative and member of the Council of Censors and a man whom we all knew and loved.

Samuel Chandler Crafts.

" Born in Woodstock, Conn. October 6th., 1768, son of Col. Ebenezer Crafts; graduated at Harvard University in 1790; in 1791 settled in Craftsbury and was the Clerk of that town 1799 until March 1829, thirty years; delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1793, being the youngest member of that body and again in 1829 and was its President; Representative of Craftsbury in the General Assembly 1796, 1800, 1801, 1803 and 1805; Clerk of the House 1798 and 1799; Councillor in 1809 until 1813 and again in 1825 and 1826; Assistant Judge of Orleans County Court 1800 until 1810; Chief Judge 1810 until Dec. 1816 and again 1825 until 1828; Clerk of the Courts 1836 until 1838; Register of Probate 1796 until 1815; Member of Congress 1817 until March 1825; Governor 1828 until 1831; United States Senator Dec. 1842 until March 3rd. 1843 and Presidential Elector in 1840.

" In June 1802, while there were but few log huts on the site of the present City of Cincinnati, he commenced a tour of observation to the lower Mississippi and in company with Michaux the younger, made a botanical reconnaissance of the Valley of the Great West in canoes and arks"

He had the confidence of the people of Vermont to as large a measure as any other public man; was modest and unassuming in deportment and active in every good work, serving for many years as an office of State Benevolent Societies."

He died Nov. 9th., 1853 "

Drakes Dictionary of American Biography.

Among the men who for the first twenty years held the town offices were Ephraim Morse, Nehemiah Lyon, Samuel French, Daniel Mason, Daniel Davison, Arba Nelson, Seth Shaw, Leonard Holmes and Jesse Olds.

In later years ^{value} Alvan R. French filled the office of Assistant Judge, and was a Member of the Council of Censors. He was a man ^{with} of fine legal mind and sound judgment ~~and~~-fitted. *him for*
~~Though never admitted to the Bar he was~~ the counsellor and arbiter of his fellow townsmen ~~for many years,~~ *and a pattern for the youth*

William J. Hastings and Amasa P. Dutton have served as Assistant Judges and Representatives; Harvey Scott as Sheriff for eleven years; Augustus Young as State's Attorney; Judge of Probate, Senator and Representative in Congress. Royal Corbin and James A. Paddock as Judges of Probate; Nathan S. Hill as State's Attorney, and N. P. Nelson and J. W. Simpson as Representatives and Senators.

The first Postmaster of whom we have any record was Augustus Young.

Our first Physician was James A. Paddock, a brother of the mother of Governour Erastus Fairbanks, who came here in 1793 and married Augusta, daughter of Colonel Crafts. He died in 1809. One of his sons, James A., graduated at Burlington and for many years practised law and served as a Judge of the Supreme Court. Since then among our physicians, have been Doctor Scott, Ephraim Brewster, father and son, and Daniel Dustin whose sympathetic nature eminently fitted him for the profession he had chosen.

Among our poets were Elizabeth Allen, and Ellen Hall Phillips. Those who have won distinction abroad as musicians

what he meant

are Albert Whitney the instrumentalist, James Whitney the tenor and Ezra Bagley the cornetist.

The first woman to be admitted to the Bar in the U. S., Carrie Burnham Kilgore, was born and reared in Craftsbury. At her admission at Philadelphia, she received special commendation from the Court for the excellence of her examination.

In 1797, the Congregational Church was organized. It consisted of sixteen persons. Nehemiah Lyon was chosen Deacon and the Rev. Samuel Collins settled as pastor. Before Mr. Collins came I am told that a Mr. Holmes had preached to the people. Previous to this their old minister, Mr. Paine of Sturbridge, had visited them. A space was cleared upon the Common and there he preached to them from the text, "the wilderness shall blossom as the rose." Early the subject of building a Meeting house was agitated and at last it was voted to build one twenty by thirty with ten foot posts. This was done and it was occupied early in the year 1802. At a Parish meeting held in March 1801, it was voted to give Mr. Collins the same salary as Mr. Worcester in Peacham is receiving and this was done until 1804 when he was dismissed.

As the number of societies increased quite a strife arose among them for the possession of the meeting house and it was finally voted to allow the five denominations to use it one week each in rotation. At the raising of the present church in 1820, a Mr. Newell was killed and there being no minister in town a Mr. Aiken, a Baptist from Hardwick, was sent for to preach the funeral sermon. His text was, "if a beam fall upon a man and kill him the Lord hath sent it."

The suitability of the text aroused the wonder of the good deacons, who immediately began a search and not finding it visited Mr. Aiken and asked where the text was. He said, "I do not remember, gentlemen, but it is somewhere in Josephus."

From 1804 till 1822 the Congregationalists had no settled minister. During that time Salmon King and James Hobart held revivals. In 1822 came William Arms Chapin, the father of Miss Jane Chapin, the Missionary to China. In 1840, the Rev. Samuel R. Hall was installed, to whose care Craftsbury owes much both in the establishment of her Academy and the preservation of her history.

Fourteen years after followed the Rev. Austin O. Hubbard, next the Rev. L. I. Hoadley and then the Rev. E. P. Wild, D. D.

The Methodist Church was organized in 1818, under the auspices of such men as Wilber Fisk, the founder of the school and seminary at Middletown, and Lorenzo Dow. It was united in a circuit with several other towns till 1830 when it became a station of itself. Among its clergy have been, Schuyler Chamberlin, the Aspenwalls, Peter Merrill and many other good men.

A Baptist Society was formed in 1800 and Samuel Churchill was the first pastor. In 1816, Daniel Mason one of the early settlers was ordained pastor and so remained till 1828, when the church was disorganized.

In 1818, the Reformed Presbyterians of Craftsbury organized with 12 persons. It was not until 1833 that their first pas-

tor, Samuel M. Wilson, was called and ordained. Since then such men as Renwick J. Wilson, J. M. Armor and Archibald Johnson have been with them.

Among the disciples of Robert Raikes were Clarissa Clark and Lucy Corey, the founders and teachers of the Sunday School. Beside her labors here Clarissa Clark rode on horseback through the neighboring towns organizing and guiding the Sunday School.

Our Academy was organized in 1829 and the old brick building which stood north of the church was built in 1832. In 1868, a new house was erected on the site of the old Town House and destroyed by fire in 1879.

Among her teachers have been the Rev. S. R. Hall, the Rev. Charles Smith the present editor of the Vermont Chronicle, A. W. Wild, L. H. Thompson, John M. Dutton, Willard W. Miles, George W. Henderson and Leland E. Tupper all of whom achieved success in the pulpit or at the bar. Time would fail to enumerate the list of her pupils who have become famous in the affairs of life.

Our Lodge, Meridian Sun, No. 20, was the fifth one in the State and the first in the County to receive its charter. From it have sprung most of the lodges in this section of the country. During the dark days of Masonry fifty years ago, William Hidden was accustomed to walk to Burlington to attend the meetings of the Grand Lodge and thus he preserved its charter. It had before the separation of the Lodge at Greensboro, a membership of 150, but the founding of this and other lodges and the misfortunes of the last ten years have reduced it somewhat.

To the Scotch who have settled among us and produced such men as the late James W. Simpson, Craftsbury owes much of her intelligence and thrift.

Her freedom from the prejudices of creed and caste deserve special commendation.

In the brief time allotted me by the Committee in which to prepare and to deliver this address I have been compelled to pass over the names and work of many noble men and women but let us console ourselves with the thought that their memories and their deeds are cherished in the hearts of their descendents.

In 1791 Craftsbury had a population of 18; now it numbers 1400 with a Grand List of over \$6000. From one school district in 1796 she has increased to 14. Until 1795, she was the only town represented in the County.

As Sturbridge sent here one hundred years ago the flower of her youth so the Craftsbury of later years has sent her young men and women to the west to be the pioneers of that new country. Wherever they have gone they have carried with them the qualities that command success. To those of her children who are scattered abroad Craftsbury sends the assurance of her tender solicitude for their welfare and to those who celebrate with her today's Centennial, she extends a mother's welcome and bids them all honor the memory of her founders for their ability, their integrity, their private and public virtues.