gave us, heed the pure and noble examples they left us; and so be ready to hand all these blessings over, untarnished and improved, to those who shall come after us.

This has been a good day, a day of rejoicing, of happy meeting and greeting. But these festive hours must soon come to a close. Soon we separate, and go, some to our birth-place homes here in this good old town of Newfane, and some to the homes we have made in other towns and States,—never to return and meet all here again, as to-day. But if we are true to our mission here below, we may yet meet in that yonder world above, and have a reunion there, more lasting and glorious than earth can give.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

BY J. J. GREEN.

To me, it seems, that in order to understand and fully appreciate the history even of our own town, we must take it to a certain extent in connection with the contemporary history of the surrounding towns. Our several charters were all originally obtained from one governor, and the difficulties met and overcome in one town were common to all the towns; so that in celebrating the centennial of Newfane and making that the central theme, around which all things else cluster, we find the subject thoroughly permeated with interests whose ramifications extend throughout the county of Windham, and, we may say, the state and the nation. Else why do we find this multitude assembled, as by common consent, on this, the ninety-eighth birthday of John Bull's most noble daughter, that child, Miss Columbia, who, as you all know, was born into the family of nations a 13-pounder,

and has lived and grown as none other child ever did, until to-day her eagles cover the seas, her strong arm buoys up the young and steadies the aged to their final rest. Now from figures of speech, go with me to the recorded facts and figures of history; and know ye that the English began the first permanent settlement, within the present limits of Vermont, one hundred and fifty years ago, by the erection of Fort Dummer, in 1724, in the southeast corner of the present town of Brattleboro. Settlers established themselves across the river in Hinsdale at the same time. These people came from the province of Massachusetts, and for sixteen years there was a contest between the authorities of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in regard to the control of this territory. Finally, on the fifth of March, 1740, George the II decreed that the line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts should be surveyed in accordance with certain special instructions, and in 1741 the line was run by Richard Hazen, and found to leave Hinsdale and Fort Dummer to the north; whereupon the King recommended the assembly of New Hampshire to care for and protect the settlers about Fort Dummer. From this royal recommend, Gov. Wentworth naturally supposed that the King recognized the jurisdiction of New Hampshire as extending to the same point west as that of Massachusetts; namely, a point twenty miles east of the Hudson river; and accordingly on the application of Williams and sixty-one others, January 3, 1749, he chartered a township six miles square, in what he conceived to be the southwestern corner of New Hampshire. The town was named Bennington, in honor of Gov. Benning Wentworth. Bennington then is the first town in the State that ever received a royal charter. There is nothing in history to show that the original proprietors ever attempted to settle the town; but on the close of the French War in 1760, Capt. Samuel Robinson, while on his return from Lake George to Hoosac, lost his route and went down the Walloomscoik river instead of the Hoosac valley. He was so well pleased with the country that he went to Portsmouth the following winter and bought out the old proprietor, and began the settlement of the town June 18, 1761. Here, then, we find that Brattleboro is the

first town that was settled in Vermont, and Bennington the first one to hold a royal charter.

In following up this chain of historical facts, we find that Halifax is the first town within the limits of the present county of Windham that ever received a charter from the King. This charter is dated May 11, 1750. The town was first settled by Abner Rice, from Worcester County, Mass., in the summer of 1761. Wilmington is the second town in the county, chartered April 25, 1751; Marlboro, the third, chartered April 29, 1751; Westminster, the fourth, chartered November 9, 1752; Rockingham, the fifth, chartered December 28, 1752; Newfane the sixth. An application was made to Gov. Wentworth, by Abner Sawyer and others, on the eleventh day of April, 1753, for a charter of a township six miles square in that portion of the province of New Hampshire lying west of the Connecticut river. On the nineteenth day of June following, the town was chartered, to be known as the town of Fane. Townshend was chartered the next day after Newfane, June 20, 1753; Vernon, September 5, 1753. Dummerston was first chartered to Josiah Willard, December 23, 1753, and re-chartered by Gov. Tryon, in 1766. Brattleboro and Putney were both chartered December 23, 1753; Guilford, April 2, 1754; Grafton, April 6, 1754. Londonderry was chartered February 20, 1770. Athens was chartered May 2, 1780. Wardsboro was chartered to William Ward and others of Newfane, November 7, 1780, and divided into two sections, north and south Wardsboro; and in 1810 the south part was incorporated as the town of Dover. Jamaica was chartered November 27, 1780. Brookline was set off from Newfane and Putney in 1794, and was organized March 5, 1795, and was first represented in the legislature by Benj. Ormsbee, in 1823. We have not been able to find the exact date of the first charter of Whitingham.

The French and English war broke out about this time and the Connecticut river valley and Lake Champlain were the two great natural highways for the marauding parties of both armies, so that to the usual dangers and hardships of pioneer life were added the terrors of Indian massacre and captivity. The result was that the original proprietors

of many of these towns never complied with the terms of their charter, and on the close of the war in 1760, new charters were issued to new proprietors. This town was re-chartered to Luke Brown and others, in 1761, and such was the demand for the unappropriated lands at this time, that Gov. Wentworth chartered more than sixty towns west of the Connecticut in 1761. The date of the settlement of Halifax has already been noted as began in 1761; and here let us add that Joseph Tyler and John Hazleton passed, as they supposed, through Fane in '61, and took up their lots in Townsend; but we learn from a descendant of Ebenezer Dyer that Hazleton actually settled within the limits of Fane, on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Polly Franklin and her sons. In 1763, Stockwell and Whitamore penetrated the wilderness of Marlboro each by himself. Whitamore, coming from Connecticut, entered the town on the south side; Stockwell, coming from Springfield, Mass., entered the town on the east side. For nearly a year these two families lived in entire ignorance of each other's presence, each supposing that their's was the only white family in town.

In the spring of 1766 Jonathan Park, then a young unmarried man, twenty-three years old, and Nathaniel Stedman, twenty-one (also a single man), started forth from Worcester County with axe, tinder box and kettle slung on their shoulders, to seek a home in the forests on the Hampshire grants. They made their halt in the township of Fane, selecting their lots on or near the top of the highest hill in the centre of the town. Stedman took up and cleared the farm that is to-day known as Nathan Merrifield's old farm. Park cleared what is known as old Newfane hill common. During this summer they occupied a cabin together on Stedman's lot,—and it would seem that sometime during this season, Ebenezer Dyer, a lawyer from Worcester County, who was out prospecting for a home, came to their camp and enquired the route to Hazleton's clearing. Dyer was a full blooded rebel, or anti-king's man. He came here a refugee from Worcester county, where he had lain in jail seven years for refusing to pay a royal fine of nine shillings. When an opportunity offered itself the

three men started out together to look for Hazleton's cabin. They came out on to the round top of the high hill just west of the present village of Fayetteville, and pointed out the course in a northeast line to the river. Stedman returned to their camp, and Park and Dyer descended into the valley and found the flats on which Fayetteville stands. Once in the valley, surrounded by the dense forest, their only course was to make the best of their route to the river; and this they reached on what is to-day best known as the Windham County fair ground farm. Dyer was so well pleased with the land that he marked the trees and selected this for his lot; and now being satisfied that they must be below Hazleton's, they followed up the river and found his clearing on what we know as the Franklin farm. It seems to be evident that these three men returned to Worcester County in the fall and spent the winter. In the spring of 1767, Park and Stedman returned, driving with them a pair of steers and a heifer for live stock. With reference to the exact time that Dyer moved his family into town, we have only been able to learn that Mrs. Dyer was the first white woman that ever spent the winter in town.

We may here relate an incident illustrating the hardships that these men endured. In order to winter their steers and heifer, they went out into the north part of the town, some five miles from their camp, to a natural meadow, now known as the Knowlton meadow, and cut and stacked swamp hay and built a shelter for their stock; and every day throughout that long, dreary winter, 1767-8, one or the other of these men plodded his way through the lone, dreary forest to feed their stock, and back to camp at night; and during the winter Park returned to Massachusetts, leaving Stedman alone in the forest with his stock to feed, for twenty-six days. In the summer of 1768 Park commenced his clearing in Fayetteville, and built the first framed house in town, covering the frame with hemlock bark. Stedman left the hill either then or soon after, and settled on the farm now owned and occupied by his grandson, W. A. Stedman. Stedman died in 1812, October 16, aged 67. Park lived to be 84, dying July 18, 1827. The remains of both these men are buried in our village cemetery; while

Mr. Dyer's dust lies sleeping on the bank, just outside the southeast corner of the fair ground, with no monument to mark the spot; consequently we are unable to ascertain his age or the date of his death.

There are twenty-two descendants of Jonathan Park now living in town; eight of Ebenezer Dyer's, and two of Nathaniel Stedman's; and it is to the oldest descendants of all these men that we are indebted for the above, and many more interesting facts that must of necessity be left out of this article.

Now, although Fane is our central point, it becomes necessary, in order to clearly understand the whole chain of historical facts connected with its settlement and organization, to leave for a time the town itself, with its various personal reminiscences, and consider the contest between Gov. Tryon, of New York, and Wentworth, of New Hampshire, for the control of the territory between the Connecticut river and Lake Champlain. As early as 1763, Wentworth had chartered one hundred and thirty-eight towns west of the Connecticut, reserving unto himself five hundred acres of land in each town. He was thus fast becoming the wealthiest and largest land owner in the colonies. Gov. Tryon was much moved, and felt deeply aggrieved over Wentworth's financial success, and sought to claim this territory under an old patent granted by Charles II., to the Duke of York, in 1664, in which the Duke was to hold all of His Majesty's domain west of the Connecticut river and east of Delaware bay. The title was held to have become obsolete; whereupon Tryon forwarded a petition to the King, purporting to be signed by a large number of the settlers of the grants, in which they prayed the King to transfer the control of these grants to Gov. Tryon. The King and his council granted what they supposed was the request of His Majesty's loving and faithful subjects, and directed Wentworth to stop issuing charters west of the Connecticut river. The settlers on the grants were surprised to learn of the decree, but in no wise alarmed; for they supposed that inasmuch as they had received their charters from a royal governor and paid a royal price for their lands, that a change of governors would in no way affect the validity of their titles. Gov. Tryon and his

council, upon the confirmation of their title to the territory, held that he had always been the royal governor, and consequently, that all of Wentworth's charters were illegal and void. He demanded of the settlers that they should give up their original charters and re-purchase their lands under new charters given by his authority. On the third day of July, 1776, the colonial assembly of New York passed an act incorporating the county of Cumberland, with the county seat at Chester, which was afterwards changed to Westminster, where a court house and jail were built. The county of Cumberland embraced all of Windham and the greater part of the present county of Windsor, and one tier of towns on the east of Bennington County. It was twenty-six miles wide on the Massachusetts State Line, and seventy-five miles in length on the Connecticut river. Bennington was in Albany County, New York. Gov. Tryon set all the machinery of law and courts to work and backed the whole by the militia of New York, to carry out his demands and make the settlers pay for their lands under his charters. Against such proceedings in most of the towns they openly rebelled, and many were the scenes of personal violence, and the kidnapping and carrying to Albany jail of many a farmer, there to lie in durance vile a year or more, and have their property confiscated; all for the crime of defending the farms they had bought and paid for. Finally, driven to desperation, the settlers appointed Capt. Samuel Robinson to go to England, and lay a true statement of the case before the King; and on the twenty-sixth of June, 1767, he obtained an order from the King annulling the act incorporating the county of Cumberland; and on the twenty-seventh of July the King issued a special order, forbidding Tryon from chartering any more towns in this disputed territory. Tryon and his assembly paid no regard to the King's orders, but treated him as Congress sometimes treats our Presidents. They re-passed the act over his veto, February 20, 1778, and chartered Cumberland a second time, March 17, 1778.

Such was Tryon's determination to make the settlers acknowledge his authority and pay for their lands a second time, that the only course left for them was open defiance or base servility—and that was not in the blood of the Green

Mountain boys. They were a band of nature's noblemen, determined to do and die for each other. They resolved to submit no longer to any foreign governor, but to become an independent people from the Connecticut to Lake Champlain. Out of this fiery furnace, moulded by such heads and hands as Allen's and Baker's, came our glorious young Vermont. Bennington, Brattleboro, Guilford and Westminster were the theatres of warfare in Albany and Cumberland Counties; for you must bear in mind that the Westminster massacre was a fight with a sheriff's posse of Yorkers. Newfane, too, witnessed a personal battle between the surveyors and Ebenezer Dyer, who, when they came to run the line for the town lots, drove them off of his farm, and so effectually kept them off that they simply marked his place on the town plan "The Dyer lot." They were acting under the Tryon charter, granted May 11, 1772, to Walter Franklin and twenty others of New York city. May 12 he sold this charter to Luke Knowlton and John Taylor of Worcester County, Mass. May 17, 1774, the town was organized and held their first town meeting; and to-day we have met to commemorate their final organization. And inasmuch as Mr. Dyer's name has just come up, let me say in this connection, that in this year, 1874, Elihu Park, of Fayetteville, a grandson of Jonathan Park, has in his possession, and is to-day using for his books and papers, the original and identical desk that was on duty in lawyer Dyer's office more than one hundred years ago, in Worcester County, Mass.