

OUR NEXT MEETING

MISS ALICE RAMSDELL

Fireplaces, Mantles and Coin, Silver Spoons
Berean Baptist Church, Harrisville, Rhode Island

Take Route 102 North, through Chepachet and Mapleville and at the end of the village, take the road on the left to Harrisville.

Tuesday Evening, June 28, 1966 — Eight o'clock

MAY MEETING

On May 24, 1966 we met in the auditorium of the Norwood Chevrolet Co., Post Road, Warwick, R. I. at 8 P. M.

Mr. S. Burton Mowry presiding.

Invocation was by Mr. Robert F. Spencer.

Minutes of the April Meeting were approved. Mrs. Mullins reported for Miss Spencer, treasurer, that the balance in the General Fund was \$585.84 and the Building Fund was \$1721.98.

It was voted to pay our dues (\$15.00) to The League of Rhode Island Historical Societies.

The recording secretary read the minutes of the March 9th Executive Board Meeting.

Count by towns showed 57 persons present.

Warming Pan collection was \$20.18.

Miss Mathewson read a paper prepared by Mrs. Robert N. Brayton about the town of Warwick.

Samuel Gorton, banished from Massachusetts, because of his difference with the authorities, came to Providence in the Pawtuxet section. Because of his beliefs he caused trouble there and in 1642 he and ten companions purchased Shawomet from Chief Miantonomi.

Disputes between Gorton and Massachusetts, which claimed this territory were settled about 1647 by the English Commission of Foreign Affairs. At this time to honor the Earl of Warwick the freemen renamed this area Warwick.

With the movement of more settlers into this section, the Indians became belligerent. King Phillip's War in which the Indians were defeated raged from 1675 thru 1676.

Samuel Gorton died in 1677.

The settlement of Apponaug was started in 1696. John Micarter who came from Providence started a gristmill here.

In 1730 a branch of the First Baptist Church erected a church on Meeting House Lane, later called Church St.

Growth and expansion in the town resulted in the western part being set off as the town of Coventry, in 1741.

The resentment of the Stamp Act levied on the colonists by England resulted in the burning of the Gaspee off Nanquid Point (Gaspee Point) on June 10, 1772.

Many cotton mills were established on the banks of the Pawtuxet, the first one in 1794.

Colonies at Oakland Beach, Buttonwoods and Rocky Point were well known as summer colonies but to-day most of the homes are permanent residences.

In 1828 when state law required towns to appoint school committees, Warwick established eleven school districts.

November 11, 1913 because of the growth of the town another part was set off as West Warwick. What was left of the original town became a city in 1931 and is the second largest city in Rhode Island.

Refreshments were served by Mr. and Mrs. Mowry.

Our speaker was Miss Helen Malmstead, State Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Her topic "What the Daughters Do". A few highlights from her talk: In 1890 the Sons of the American Revolution voted to allow women to join their order. On June 8, 1891 the DAR was

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incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and granted a charter by Congress, which President Grover Cleveland signed in 1896. The 75th Anniversary is being celebrated this year. There are 22 chapters with 900 members in Rhode Island.

Accomplishments of the DAR are many: the headquarters in Washington, D. C. encompasses a complete city block on which are three buildings; Memorial Continental Hall, the original building, houses the DAR Library and 28 period State Rooms; the Administration Building houses the offices, the Museum Gallery, a chapel and the Archives Room; and Constitution Hall, which has the largest auditorium in Washington. Eight million dollars is the value of the land on which these buildings stand.

They maintain two schools; one in Alabama enrollment of 656 pupils and one in South Carolina for 500 students. They also contribute to seven other schools.

Last year over \$50,000 was given for scholarships to aid American Indians. This is coordinated thru the American Indian Committee of our federal government.

Thousands of aliens are helped in preparing for naturalization tests by the DAR Manual for Citizenship.

A \$100.00 Savings Bond is given to a deserving girl in each of our 52 states and to a winning classman in each of our Federal Academies each year.

They erected the Memorial Bell Tower at Valley Forge, Penn., at a cost of one-half a million dollars, to mark that historic spot.

To answer the question posed by Miss Malmstead's topic, they work and work hard to preserve the past and have a deep obligation to the future.

Note: To the person who likes to drive along the pretty country roads of Western Rhode Island, and this goes for most of us, here is a story of a delightful spot which in passing one might take for granted that nothing much happened here. But if we will remember that our history is made up of many, many, many little things that went on in quiet places we will get a better picture of our past. Here is a story Mrs. Edwin Arnold wrote to give to the visitors to Hopkins Hollow on Coventry Day, June 5th, 1966. It is well worth passing on to you.

HOPKINS HOLLOW AND ROARING BROOK

This Hollow was a thriving community long before the village of Greene came into existence. It had a grist mill, saw mill, blacksmith shop, and store. At first the community

was known as Rice's Mills, but, at some later date, when the name of Rice disappeared and the Hopkins name predominated, the Hollow took on the Hopkins name, and it is still given this name on the maps.

The old Eight Rod Road through the southern part of the town of Coventry crossed the Hollow in front of where the little church now stands. This part of the road was abandoned some time ago, and the Hopkins Hollow Cemetery was enlarged to encompass part of the road. Although the Eight Rod Road was originally laid out to go straight through to the Connecticut line, there is no evidence that it ever did do so, — and in 1750 the road was relocated to go through the Hollow approximately as it does now, and then continuing on to the state line. By that time the grist mill and saw mill had been built and Richard Rice and his family were living in the Hollow.

In a deed dated March 20, 1741, Richard Rice purchased of Elisha Greene of Warwick, 360 acres, being the right No. 14 in the 17 Men's land, originally laid out to John Greene, Jr. when the land was surveyed several years earlier. The south boundary of the land was the West Greenwich line and the north line the Eight Rod Road. The north half of these 360 acres covers most of the present Hopkins Hollow, and Roaring Brook runs its course through the Hollow. It is the only name the brook has had, as far as it is known, and it is shown by that name on the plat made by William Greene, surveyor, in 1728. It could be that the brook was really roaring when surveyed, and it would seem logical as there is a drop of 70 feet in a little over a mile.

The exact date of the original grist mill is not known, but it seems quite certain that Richard Rice built his grist mill no later than 1741. An old record made in 1902 about the grist mill reads "Uncle Peleg (Andrews) bought the old Grist Mill in 1846 for \$1,000, then built the present Grist Mill and expended \$4,000 in that and the dam. In building the dam over, the old mud sill of the dam showed it to have been down then 125 years, showing the dam to have been but there at least in 1741".

That the saw mill was built soon afterwards can be verified by a deed when in 1745 Richard Rice sold 200 acres of his land and the deed reads "close by the west side of the saw mill dam".

The grist mill now standing is the one built by Peleg Andrews. The original grist mill was built lower in the brook, where a cut in the rock can now be seen, and the remains of an old dam. In an old history book (History of R. I. 1636-1878) there is a reference to the grist mill at Hopkins Hollow, earlier called Rice's Mills. The writer says: "This part of the town was settled by the Rices, who came from Warwick. Capt. Rice built a grist mill a few rods southeast of the present one, as also a saw mill. He erected the first house in this vicinity. The English government would not allow powder to be kept in the country, and the captain, in excavating for his mill, used to build fires upon the rocks, and suddenly cool them by throwing water upon them, and thus causing them to burst into pieces. In this way he sunk the wheelpit into the rock. This mill was torn down and another erected in its stead, which remained until removed to make room for the present mill, erected in 1847".

From this record we know there had been 3 mill buildings. The small building located between the present grist mill and the present blacksmith shop is thought of as the second grist mill, — and the heavy timbers and other details in the construction indicate it was once used as a grist mill. The present grist mill has been changed by various owners. It was probably powered by an overshot water wheel, — the flume then running directly into the mill, — when first built. According to men from the Curator's Staff of Old Sturbridge

Village, the present turbine wheel, having variable pitch blades, was probably installed somewhere around 1875. The mill was used to grind corn until about 40 years ago, by the late Rev. Charles Meader, when he lived here and was an Episcopal missionary in the Hollow. He sold the meal under the name of Roaring Brook. Old timers have told stories of bringing corn to the mill to be ground.

In 1792 Jeremiah Hopkins, Jr. and Elisha Hopkins, of West Greenwich, acquired one acre, "south of John Rice's saw mill" for a blacksmith shop. This was about where the present saw mill now stands, and the Hopkins family continued to own it until 1860. Beginning in 1820, by various transfers, the Hopkins family then acquired the sawmill from members of the Rice family. The History of Washington and Kent Counties relates: "The saw mill erected by Capt. Rice was replaced about 50 years ago by Jeremiah Hopkins and his son Samuel. Ambrose S. Hopkins bought out his father and brother and built another mill further down the stream". Just when the original saw mill disappeared is not known, but in a deed dated 1842 when Jeremiah Hopkins deeded the blacksmith shop to Ambrose Hopkins, it read "to a bound 12 feet south of where the old saw mill wheel formerly was". The saw mill built by the Hopkins family was sold in 1856. After that it had many owners, — sometimes four owning a quarter each. Old timers told of working in the mill, and the late Everett Hopkins always referred to it as the Bear Saw Mill, — saying it was once known by that name and the story told was that a bear wandered into the mill and tried to embrace the saw. Forty years ago the mill had disappeared and the site was filled in and graded to the Brook. About 1935, Edwin Arnold had the opportunity to purchase an old up-and-down saw mill in Hopkinton, Mass., — one that Henry Ford had tried to purchase without success. This saw was then removed from Hopkinton, and installed where the Hopkins blacksmith shop had stood, and across the brook from the original saw mill site. The building around the saw was built as quickly as the saw could saw out the lumber, and men could hew the timbers, from logs coming from trees on the property. At that time there were men living who knew the old ways of building.

At Hopkinton, Mass. there was also an old blacksmith shop, and Edwin Arnold decided to reproduce that also in Hopkins Hollow. The old blacksmith shop owned by the Hopkins family had been purchased by Wanton Matteson in 1870. He deeded it to his daughter, Hannah, wife of John Brown, — "land with a dwelling house, wagonshop, blacksmith shop, water power and other improvements". John Brown was a blacksmith, and his picture shows him looking the part of a blacksmith. He continued to use the blacksmith shop as long as he was able to. Apparently at one time there was also a shingle mill at the blacksmith site, and it is said coffins were made there. But 40 years ago the buildings were mostly collapsed, and the remains were taken down so the up-and-down saw mill could be placed there. There had been another blacksmith shop on the brook at one time, and it was here that John Brown worked when he first came to the Hollow as the husband of Hannah (Matteson) Brown. The foundation where it stood still shows along the brook, but the building was moved many years ago, — finally was attached to the barn at Roaring Brook Farm and is now the office of Edwin Arnold.

Attached to the grist mill buildings was an old building which had been used for storing ice. Here the Hopkinton blacksmith shop was rebuilt from pictures taken at the site.

To be continued next month

from Glasglow, and since there were no snuff mills in New England, Dr. Moffat acquired the services of a Scot millwright, Gilbert Stuart; hence, the Stuart name came to Saunderstown.

The mill was erected on the banks of a little stream known as Silver Spring. Called Mettatuxet by the Indians, the stream affords a fine smelting weir each spring during the herring run, the water actually turns silver with the flocking fish.

Doctor Moffat removed himself to Newport where he reaped the harvests of his new venture, and Gilbert Stuart was left to tend the mill. Shortly after the mill and his house were built, Gilbert Stuart married Elizabeth Anthony of Newport, and on December 3, 1755, the young couple welcomed a new son, Gilbert Charles. The records of the Narragansett Church show that on "April 11th, 1756, being Palm Sunday, Dr. MacSparran read prayers, preached, and baptized a child named Gilbert Stuart, son of Gilbert Stuart the snuff grinder".

Dr. William Hunter frequented the Narragansett area to hunt, and perhaps on occasion, to engage in a little snuff sniffing at the mill. The doctor noticed young Stuart's talent for drawing when the boy was about thirteen and arranged for him to study at the Kay school in Newport. Gilbert Stuart studied under the Scotch painter Cosmo Alexander while in Newport, and in the fall of 1768, accompanied Alexander to the southern colonies and then to Scotland where Stuart was to study under Sir George Chambers. Shortly after arriving in Scotland, however, Cosmo Alexander died, and unfortunately, not long after that, Sir George was laid to rest, and Stuart returned to the Colonies.

In November, 1775, Stuart journeyed to England where he married Charlotte Coates of Reading. Of their dozen children only one is known to have pursued his father's occupation. Charles Stuart promised to become a fine landscapist, but he died before his career could really have begun.

While in England, Gilbert Stuart studied for a time under Benjamin West. Stuart's work soon became recognized by the Royal Academy, and he became sought after by the most distinguished of noblemen.

Stuart spent some time in Ireland living a royal life under the employment of the aristocracy. He decided to visit the Emerald Isle when offered a commission to paint the Duke of Rutland's portrait, but failed to produce a painting of this illustrious personage, Ireland's Lord Lieutenant, for Stuart arrived the day the Duke was buried.

Gilbert Stuart's greatest ambition was to do a portrait of George Washington, and this ambition "overcame all other entreaties, and seems to have been the greatest object of his mind". He returned to America and was commissioned by Washington. While painting the General, Stuart was asked to paint a portrait of the Duke of Kent in Halifax. The Duke was so eager to have his portrait done by Stuart that he was prepared to send a war-

ship for him, but Stuart was so engrossed in his painting of Washington that he declined the offer. Just before his death in July, 1828, Gilbert Stuart was requested by the Academy of Florence for a selfportrait — "the greatest compliment ever paid to an American artist" — but such was Stuart's way, he never even answered the letter.

HOPKINS HOLLOW AND ROARING BROOK

(Continued from last month)

Both Jeremiah Hopkins, Jr. and Elisha Hopkins married girls from the Rice family. Gradually the Rice name disappeared and ownership of most of the land came to the Hopkins family, — but not the grist mill property. George P. Hopkins, the son of Martha (Rice) and Elisha Hopkins, owned a great deal of land. He had a son who was a cripple, and it was for him that a store was started in the building now being renovated. But the son, George R. Hopkins died in 1855. Later the building was purchased by John Harris of Sterling, who ran the store for a while, until it was taken over by his son, James Harris. It continued as an old country store until around 1920.

Along with the disappearance of the names Rice and Hopkins has gone the disappearance of several houses, — mostly by fire. A look into the cemetery shows where many folks disappeared. The church next to the cemetery was built some time after 1853, and was deeded to the First Christian Society (of Rice City) in 1859. It is now the property of the Hopkins Hollow Cemetery Corporation, and no longer used as a church. A little old one room school house, in District No. 3, — that stood near the church, has also disappeared. There have been other industries in the Hollow, — acid works, clock and watch repairing and coffin making, — to say nothing of cider making. Today it is a quiet and pleasant Hollow, — but it has had its calamities, including the hurricane of 1938 and the fire of 1942, which took 2 houses. Because of the hurricane, the dam on Roaring Brook had to be raised to float the logs and from the trees felled by the hurricane. Although many things have changed and the names have disappeared, the ownership of the property on Roaring Brook belongs to descendants of Richard Rice, — the Arnold family.

