

This was copied No 1. from the Congregational in the Church records. By E. E. Cory

A NARRATIVE relative to the early settlement of Putney, Vt., given by Mr. Asa Averill April 8, 1825, to the Rev. Elisha D. Andrews. Mr. Andrews states that Mr. Averill was then 85 years old, and in the perfect possession of all his faculties.

Mr. Averill was born June 3d, 1730, in Shirley, Mass. His father removed to Charlestown, N.H., called No 4, in the year 1744, when he was about four years old. They lived here about two years. The Cape Breton war coming on at that time, they took a canoe and removed to Northfield, Mass. At this time all the inhabitants on the river above Fort Dummer fled thru fear of the Indians. At Northfield they lived till the close of the Cape Breton war & after this, to wit, in the year 1751 they removed to Westminster, Vt.. At that time there were but two houses in Westminster, the one belonging to his father on the top of Willard's or Claps hill at the south end of the street, the other was below the hill on the meadow, and was unoccupied. In the house into which Mr. Averill moved there had been living 4 men a woman and 2 children. The men were Wm. Gould and his son John, Amos Carpenter, Atherton Chaffee. The same summer Wm. Gould & Carpenter went to Northfield and moved their families up. These were the only white persons that lived in Westminster till after the French war. The first white child born in Westminster was Anna Averill 1751, in the autumn.

After the capture of Mr. Johnson at Charlestown August 30, 1754, the people in Westminster went over to Walpole to Col. Bellows house, here they remained till October when they returned to Westminster where they remained till February 1755, when the Averill family removed to the Great Meadow in Putney. They together with the people on the meadow joined and built a fort near the ferry on the site of the house in which Col. Thomas White now lives.

There was a fort built in the center of the meadow in the place called fort Hill before the Cape Breton War, about the time the settlements were made in Walpole and Charlestown, N.H. Mr. Averill does not know by whom the fort was built or who inhabited it.

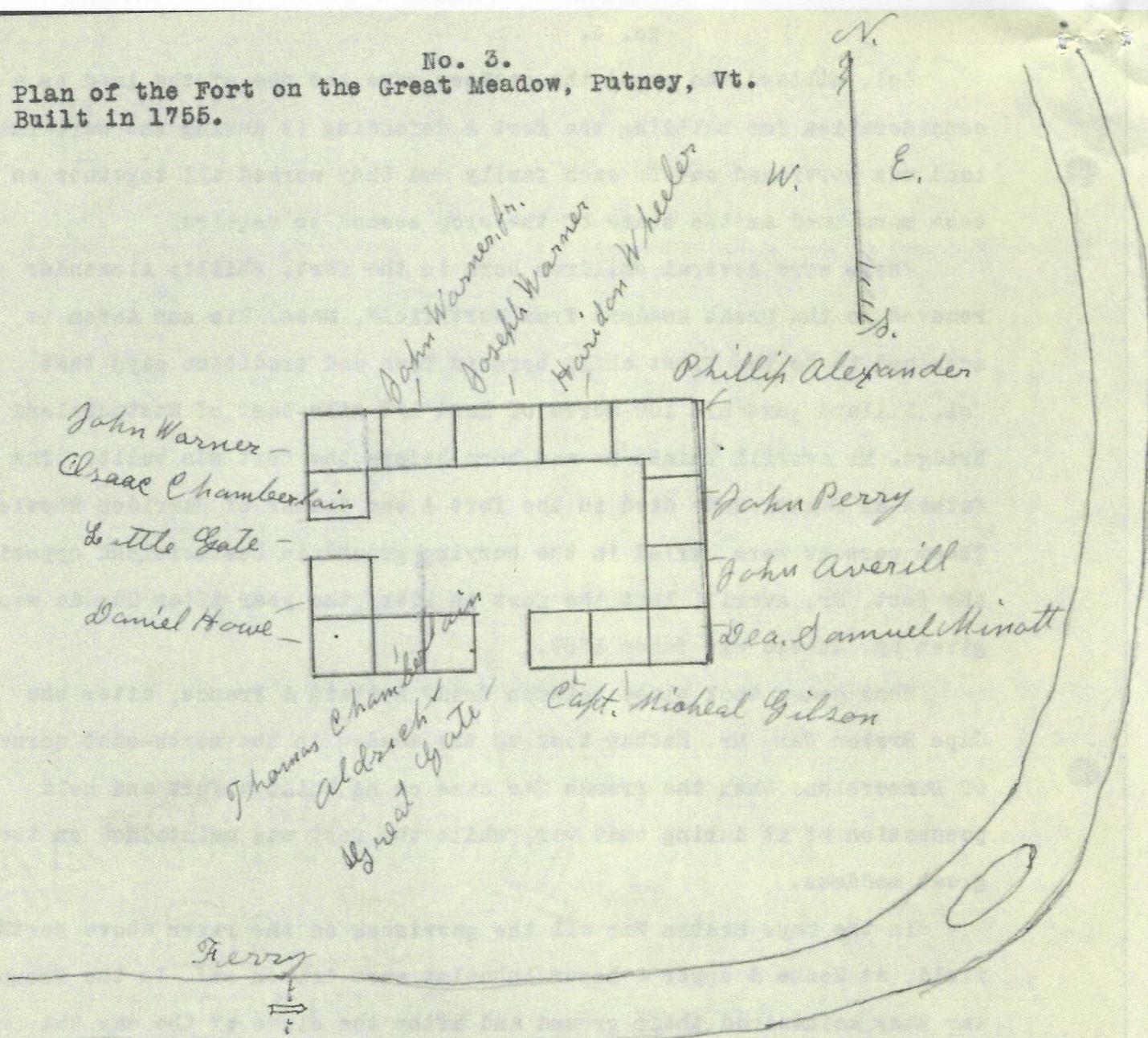
When he went to the Great Meadows it was gone to decay & mostly demolished. (He only knew the tradition that one Phips while hoing corn at the lower end of the Meadow near the brook that runs between the meadows and the hill, was discovered by a small party of Indians, who rushed off the hill seized him and carried him up upon the higher ground west of the meadows. He was left in care of two Indians while the main body were at a little distance. He took this opportunity to seize his hoe in the possession of the Indians, by which he knocked one or both of them down & run, but the Indians who were at a little distance saw him & shot him dead upon the spot.)

When Mr. Averill moved on to the Great Meadow he found there Phillip Alexander, John Perry, & their families, also Michael Gilson, unmarried, his mother & two sisters. His mother afterwards married Deacon Minott. At this time, viz. in 1755 there were no other inhabitants in Putney, but the above mentioned, nor did any others move in except for the protection of the fort, till after the French war closed. Several joined the garrison from Westmoreland, viz. Mr. Aldrich, the father of the late Gen. Aldrich, Daniel Howe, Thomas Chamberlain, Joshua Warner & son Daniel Warner & son, Harridon Wheeler, and Samuel Minott. Towards the close of the French war these inhabitants went back to Westmoreland, except Mr. Minott. There were several houses built in the fort.

The fort was oblong about 120 X 80 feet, was built of yellow pine timber hewed six inches thick and laid up about 16 feet high, the houses were built against the wall with a single roof slanting up (called a salt box roof) to the top of the wall, the wall of the fort making the back wall of the house, and the houses all fronting the hollow square in the center of the fort.

Doctor Lord moved into the fort during the French war, also William Willard; at this fort there was in the summer season a garrison of about 12 soldiers from New Hampshire. A guard was kept while the men worked, and they carried their arms into the field, especially when they had news of Indians being near.

No. 3.
 Plan of the Fort on the Great Meadow, Putney, Vt.
 Built in 1755.



They had 2 watch towers, one on the north-east, and one on the south-west corners of the fort.

There was no open attack upon this fort, but the Indians were about it several times in the night, and once laid an ambush at the north end of the meadows while the men were gone to work on the Island, but having discovered signs of the Indians, they avoided them by taking a different course home, from which they came, by passing down the river in a their canoe.

The Great Meadows at the time Mr. Averill was there was not more than half cleared. The timber on the meadows was mostly yellow pine with here & there a white pine & white oak.

Col. Willard who owned the meadows gave the use of the land as a consideration for building the fort & defending it during the war. The land was portioned out to each family and they worked all together on each mans land as the state of the crop seemed to require.

There were several children born in the fort. Phillip Alexander removed to the Great Meadows from Northfield, Mass. His son Aaron is supposed to be the first child born in Town and tradition says that Col. Willard gave him 100 acres of land 1/2 mile east of Westmoreland Bridge. Mr Averill thinks he was born before the fort was built. The father of Daniel Howe died in the fort & the father of Harridon Wheeler. These persons were buried in the burying ground in Westmoreland opposite the fort. Mr. Averill left the fort in 1761, the year after Canada was given up. Quebec was Taken 1759.

When peace took place between Great Britain & France, after the Cape Breton War, Mr. Kathan took up the meadow in the north-east corner of Dummerston. When the French War came on he built a fort and held possession of it during that war, while the fort was maintained on the great meadows.

In the Cape Breton War all the garrisons on the river above Northfield, at Keene & upper & lower Ashuelot were driven off. In the French war they maintained their ground and after the close of the war the people flocked into the country in vast numbers.

End of Mr. Averill's Narrative.

All of the above was taken from the Congregational Church records, the plan of the fort, river, names etc. are just as Mr. Averill had them in his narrative.