

More About Elijah Boardman And His Son William Whiting Boardman From:

HISTORY
OF THE TOWNS OF
NEW MILFORD
AND
BRIDGEWATER,
CONNECTICUT,
1703-1882,

BY
SAMUEL ORCUTT,
AUTHOR OF THE HISTORIES OF TORRINGTON, WOLCOTT, AND DERRY, AND THE INDIANS OF THE
HOUSATONIC AND NAUGATUCK VALLEYS, CONNECTICUT.

^v
C
HARTFORD, CONN.:
PRESS OF THE CASE, LOCKWOOD AND BRAINARD COMPANY.
1882.

sion of his sagacious intellect and groping in the shadow land in which were blended the pictures of the past, the realities of the present and the anticipations of the future life, and in all them he was the same true-hearted, loving, and devout soul, doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.

For sixty-five years and more, he was known of all the inhabitants of the village, almost literally seen daily by almost all of its inhabitants, and was even recognized as a living example of benignity, uprightness, and truth, a witness for all goodness by his own example, against manifold influences and examples of a less elevated character. His influence was not limited to the village, but all over the surrounding hills and through the secluded alleys far and near the light of his pure life shone like a peaceful star serene and bright. All who knew him connected with his person many of the sayings in the Scripture about the truly good man, as finding in him their happiest illustration. In this way his presence was always a benediction, his life was a blessing, and his memory a perpetual inspiration to more than two generations.

Hon. Elijah Boardman, the third son of Sherman Boardman, and grandson of the Rev. Daniel Boardman, first minister in the town, was born in 1760, and was educated in his father's home and under the tuition of Rev. Nathan Taylor. When sixteen years of age, in March, 1776, by the consent of his father, he enlisted for one year in the Revolutionary War. The regiment in which he served was commanded by Col. Charles Webb, and was one of the sixteen regiments first raised by authority of the Continental Congress; the officers being commissioned by that Congress. The officers of the company to which he belonged were, Capt. Isaac Bostwick, Lieut. Kimball, Lieut. Elisha Bostwick, and Ens. Amos Bostwick, all except the first lieutenant being from New Milford. The first destination was Boston; from which they were sent to New York; in and about which place the regiment remained until the city was evacuated by the Americans in the month of October. Shortly before which event Mr. Boardman was seized with a dangerous illness, from which he had but partially recovered when the retreat of the army from the city seemed to render his situation hopeless. In this extremity, observing a

wagon to stop near the house in which he was, he, while the driver was momentarily absent, exerting the utmost effort of his wasted strength, succeeded in throwing himself into the wagon ; from which the heartless driver was about to eject him, when an officer passing ordered him to desist and suffer the sick man to ride as far as he, the wagoner, was going, which was to the neighborhood of King's bridge, where Mr. Boardman was left lying on the ground, incapable of further exertion. Here he was found by a neighbor of his father who had come to the city for the purpose of helping a sick relative home.³ He removed him to a place of safety where, leaving him, he returned home and gave immediate notice to his father, who hastened to his relief. He was brought home in a deplorable state of health ; from which, though he slowly recovered, he thought his constitution received such a shock as had an abiding effect.

In the autumn of 1777 he went on another tour for a few months with the militia to the Hudson River, in the defence of his country.

After being at home two years, attending to study and light work as he was able, he went as clerk into the store of Elijah and Archibald Austin, then prominent merchants in New Haven, and in the fall of the year 1781 he commenced business as a merchant at New Milford.

From 1782 to 1793 he and his brother Daniel conducted the store as partners ; then he continued it alone until 1812, from which time he was associated with Elijah Bennett until 1819, when the store was sold to Stanley Lockwood, and after that Mr. Boardman did not engage in mercantile business.

In September, 1795, Mr. Boardman became a member of the Connecticut Land Company, and as such, one of the purchasers of the Connecticut Western Reserve, now forming the northern part of the State of Ohio. That part of the purchase lying east of the Cuyahoga river was divided into townships, and a partition was made among the purchasers in May, 1799. By this partition Mr. Boardman and his immediate associates became entitled to two entire townships and the equalizing lots of land (as they were called) annexed thereto. His interest extended

³ It is possible this neighbor was Sylvanus Wheaton.

to somewhat more than half of each township; number one of the second range was named after him, Boardman, and number two of the sixth range was called Palmyra, with their respective equalizing annexations. Some years after the Land Company, having completed the survey of that part of their purchase lying west of the Cuyahoga, made, in the same manner as before, a partition among the purchasers. By this Mr. Boardman and his associates⁴ became the proprietors of the town of Medina, which afterwards was largely settled by families from Litchfield County, Conn., quite a number of families going from New Milford. In 1799, soon after the first partition, he went to Ohio, and spent much time there, in causing the two towns first named to be surveyed into lots, preparatory to a partition of them between himself and his immediate associate owners. This partition was made in 1800. After this he repeatedly went to Ohio, and spent a very considerable portion of the season of active business in attending to his concerns there. In the year 1823 he died there, on the 18th of August, and his body was brought to New Milford for interment.

About the year 1800, Mr. Boardman became quite prominent as a politician in Connecticut. But having embraced the principles of the Democratic party, which was then, and for a considerable period of time after, in the minority in the State, he received no higher appointment than that of a member of the Lower House of the State Legislature, to which he was six times elected: May, 1803; October, 1803; May, 1804; October, 1804; May, 1805, and May, 1816. When the political party to which he was attached gained a partial ascendancy, he was elected, in May, 1817, and in May, 1818, an assistant, or member of the Upper House, as it was then styled. In May, 1819, when the New Constitution of the State of Connecticut went into operation, he was elected to the State Senate, and was continued a member of it, until elected to the Senate of the United States,

⁴ Mr. Boardman's immediate associates were: Homer Boardman, David S. Boardman, Stanley Griswold of New Milford, Elijah Wadsworth, Frederick Wolcott of Litchfield, and Zephaniah Briggs and Jonathan Giddings of New Fairfield. In 1786 the State of Connecticut reserved 3,500,000 acres of land in northwestern Ohio, which became known as the "Connecticut Western Reserve." This land was sold by Connecticut in 1795, for \$1,200,000; and of this sum Elijah Boardman and his associates took \$60,000.

in May, 1821. He occupied his seat in the United States Senate, during the two sessions of the Seventeenth Congress; and, having been elected for six years, he was a member of the Senate at the time of his decease in 1823.

From nature, education, and habit, he was emphatically a practical man in all respects. His business talents were uncommon; and his constancy in their exercise was rarely if ever surpassed. His natural temperament inclined him to hilarity, but his strictly moral and industrious habits so far repressed this natural propensity as to give him rather the appearance of gravity than of its opposite, in the latter period of his life. Yet his natural and acquired ease and urbanity render him a pleasing companion both to the grave and the gay.

He was baptized in infancy in the Congregational church, and confirmed, in the year 1816, by Bishop Hobart of New York, while temporarily officiating in the diocese of Connecticut.

In September, 1792, he married Mary Anna Whiting, the eldest daughter of the Hon. William Whiting of Great Barrington, Mass., who long survived him, and to them were born three sons and three daughters. She was a very excellent woman, and had in large degree the care and training of her children, since Mr. Boardman was many times absent three and four months at a time in Ohio attending to the interests of the land company, and was away on business as a merchant.

A memoir of her was written by her son-in-law the Rev. J. F. Schroeder, D.D.; a volume of nearly 500 pages; which is largely historical of the Boardman and Whiting families.

Judge William Whiting Boardman, son of the Hon. Elijah Boardman, was born, Oct. 10, 1794, in New Milford, and died in New Haven, Ct., Aug. 27, 1871, in the 77th year of his age. He attended school at Litchfield and Colchester academies, and was graduated at Yale College, in 1812; after which he studied law in Litchfield and Cambridge, Mass., and settled in his profession in New Haven. In 1824, he was elected Judge of Probate, and held the office five years. He represented New Haven at several sessions of the General Assembly, the last being in 1851. He was elected to fill a vacancy in the United States House of Representatives in the autumn of 1840,

and in 1841 was elected a member of the House and sat in Congress the two following years. In 1864, he was a member of the Common Council of New Haven City, and while continuing in that relation performed very acceptable and special service to the city.

He was a member of the Episcopal Church, and as such held several offices, which were made vacant by his decease, among which were: Warden of Trinity Church, New Haven; Trustee of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church; Trustee of Trinity College; Trustee of the Cheshire Academy; President of the Board of Bishops' Fund.

He was President of the Gas Light Company of New Haven, from its organization until his death; and was for a number of years President of the New Haven Water Company.

He married in 1857 Miss Lucy Hall of the town of Poland, Ohio, a union which proved most happy, and at his death he left a widow but no surviving children.

Rev. David Bostwick,⁵ son of Maj. John Bostwick, and grandson of the first John Bostwick in New Milford, was born, Jan. 8, 1721. At the age of fifteen years, he entered Yale College, and graduated after the usual course. It is believed that he studied theology with the Rev. John Graham of Southbury, Ct., and afterwards was a teacher in the Newark Academy in New Jersey. On the 9th of October, 1745, he was ordained pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Jamaica, Long Island, where he remained over ten years, with a favorable reputation and success.

In 1756, he was installed pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New York City, where he served with great acceptability, being more than an ordinarily eloquent preacher.

In 1760, Mr. Bostwick was unable for a time to preach in consequence of ill health, and he died in 1763, aged 43 years. He was the author of several publications. The degree of A.M. was conferred upon him by the New Jersey College in 1756, and he was one of the overseers of that institution from 1761 until his decease.

⁵ Sprague's Annals.