

HISTORY OF THE BUELL FAMILY

Written by Jeremiah Griffin Buell - February 1875.

As a fair mother when the day is o'er
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led.
And leaves his broken play-things on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Not wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which tho' more spendid may not please him more
So Nature deals with us and takes away
Our playthings one by one and by the hand
Leads us so gently that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends
The what we know.

Longfellow

The establishment of the Mayflower pilgrims at Plymouth anno domini 1620 was followed by sundry emigrations from the Fatherland. In 1630 a company was formed in England under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Wareham, and settled in Dorchester near Boston, Massachusetts. In this company of emigrants was William Buell, probably the common ancestor of all the Buell name in this country. In 1632 the settlers at Dorchester were visited by Wah-qui-ma-cut, an Indian chief, living at what is now the town of Windsor on the Connecticut River (in Indian pronounced Quin-nich-ti-cut) who invited them to establish an English settlement on the bank of his beautiful river.

The territory now forming the state of Connecticut being covered by the charter granted by King James I in 1620 to the Duke of Lenox and his associates, no settlement could be legally formed therein without permission from the General Court of Massachusetts. In 1633, permission being granted, a company was formed (William Buell being one of the company) and in October set out on their journey.

The company consisted of sixty persons, men, women and children. The journey was performed on foot, their route lay through a trackless wilderness. They passed through swamps and streams and over mountains, exposed by day and night to the storms of an inclement season and when their journey was accomplished an early winter set in with unusual severity. Their food through the winter consisted principally of wild game, malt, and acorns.

A short time before the company left Dorchester, a small vessel left Boston for Windsor with materials for a trading house, and passing up the Connecticut river arrived at Windsor about the same time as the land party.

A house was soon erected and fortified which was the first built by the pale faces in Connecticut. The Windsor records show that William Buell assisted in laying out the town and was one of the original proprietors of the township. William Buell and Miss Post were married at Windsor in 1640.

I must here fall back in my narrative. When the company assembled at the English port, they took passage in two vessels, which designed to accompany each other on the voyage. In the emigrating party was a family by the name of Post. In the confusion of a hurried departure, a girl of the Post family was placed in the wrong vessel. The vessel in which her parents sailed was lost, and William Buell and Miss Post were married ten years after they arrived in America.

Their children were two sons and five daughters:

| | | | |
|----------|------|-----------|------|
| Samuel | born | Sept. 1, | 1641 |
| Mary | " | Sept. 30, | 1642 |
| Peter | " | Aug. 19, | 1644 |
| Hannah | " | Jan. 8, | 1646 |
| Hepsibah | " | Dec. 11, | 1649 |
| Sarah | " | May 21, | 1653 |
| Abigail | " | Feb. 12, | 1655 |

William Buell was by profession and occupation an architect and house builder. The time of his death is unknown. Peter, the younger son of William removed to the town of Simsbury and was prominent in the business of the town and represented it twenty times in the Colonial Assembly. Samuel, the elder son married Deborah Griswold of Windsor, Sept. 13, 1662, In October 1663 the Colonial Assembly resolved that there should be a town at the mouth of the Hammonasset River on the shore of Long Island Sound. Twenty eight planters, Samuel being one of them, commenced said settlement. It was known in the early records as the Hammonasset Plantation.

The town was divided into 30 shares or rights, each settler being entitled to one right, one right being reserved for the first minister that should settle there, another right for the support of the minister forever, each right containing one thousand and twenty three acres.

The town was not surveyed into lots, as in modern times but into sixteen divisions, each settler having a proprietary interest in each division. A committee of three was chosen by the town and when a proprietor wanted a piece of land for his own use, or for the use of his children, or to sell to others, it was surveyed by the Committee and recorded in the town record.

Some of the land was subsequently sold to meet town expenses. Back of the settlement, the township extended more than nine miles over the hard, rocky hills, much of it unsuited to common agricultural purposes.

The settlement was formed near the Sound, on a level, fertile strip of land about a half or mile in width, the houses near each other so that the men might quickly unite their strength in case of an attack by the Indians.

Samuel was appointed Commissioner of the Peace soon after the settlement was made. In 1667 the name of the place was changed to Kenilworth after the English town in the County of Warwick, England, but by corrupt spelling or pronunciation, the name of Killingworth was finally adopted.

Samuel Buell died July 11, 1720. The children of Samuel and Deborah Buell were:

| | | |
|-----------|------|---------------|
| Samuel | born | July 20, 1663 |
| Deborah | " | Oct. 18, 1665 |
| Mary | " | Sept. 6, 1667 |
| John | " | Feb. 17, 1671 |
| Hannah | " | May 4, 1674 |
| William | " | Oct. 18, 1676 |
| David | " | Feb. 15, 1678 |
| Josiah | " | Mar. 17, 1680 |
| Mehitabel | " | Aug. 22, 1682 |
| Peter | " | Dec. 3, 1684 |
| Benjamin | " | 1686 |

Samuel married Judith Stevens. He was commissioned Captain in the local grain band. Children of Samuel and Judith Buell were:

| | | |
|-----------|------|----------------|
| Samuel | born | May 19, 1687 |
| Samuel | " | Mar. 8, 1690 |
| Josiah | " | Mar. 7, 1692 |
| Deborah | " | Jan. 24, 1694 |
| Mary | " | May 17, 1696 |
| Daniel | " | June 14, 1698 |
| Nathaniel | " | Sept. 29, 1700 |
| Lydia | " | Mar. 9, 1703 |
| Mehitabel | " | May 8, 1705 |
| Lucy | " | May 25, 1708 |
| Joseph | " | Aug. 24, 1710 |

Samuel Buell died Nov. 2, 1732. Judith Buell died Nov. 4, 1732, two days after the death of her husband.

I copy a part of his will, to learn from it his religious faith.

"In the name of the God. Amen. The 19th day of June anno domini 1728. I, Samuel Buell of Killingworth in the County of New London and Colony of Connecticut in New England, yeoman, being aged and decaying in nature, but of perfect mind and memory, thanks be given unto God. Therefore calling to mind the mortality of my body, and knowing that it is appointed unto all men once to die, do make this my last will and testament that is to say, principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hands of God that gave it, and my body I recommend to the Earth to be buried in decent X'ian manner nothing doubting that at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God. And touching such worldly estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me within this life, I give,

devise, and dispose of the same in the following manner and form. I give to my beloved wife, Judith, one third part of my personal and moveable estate to be at her disposal forever. I give and bequeath to my said loving wife Judith, all my housing, barn and orchard where I now dwell and all the land adjoining and all my upland and meadow in the neckfield. I also give my beloved wife Judith, one horse, two cows, two oxen, also my tools and utensils of husbandry, all which my will or meaning is, that she shall have the improvement of them during the time of her widowhood.

I give unto my son Samuel all my land lying in the old Saw Mill Pond in consideration of his Birth Right.

My will and meaning is that all my lands with the housing and barns be equally divided amongst my five sons to equalize among them with what they have already received as will by my book accounts show allowing my wife improvements as afore-said. I give to my two married daughters, Deborah and Mary also to my unmarried daughter, Mehitabel, each of them to receive half as much as each of my five sons to be received out of my moveables."

We find that Samuel gives his oldest son a larger portion than to the younger in consideration of his Birth Right. The English law of primogeniture and descent was never in full force in Connecticut but there were municipal regulations by which the eldest son received more than one equal share of the paternal inheritance.

The settlement of the town extended but slowly, the settlers remaining near the Sound.

In 1716 Daniel Buell, the 3rd son of Samuel 2nd and nine others settled in the central part of the township, which from this time was called North Killingworth. In 1720 Daniel received from his father a deed of land on which he had settled. I copy a few lines from the Deed.

"To all Christian people, to whom these presents shall come, I Samuel Buell of Killingworth in the County of New London, in the Colony of Connecticut for and in consideration of the love and good will and affection which I have, do bear toward my loving son, Daniel Buell, one half of the division of land that was laid out by my father in the hill called Roast Meat Hill in the town of Killingworth." The instrument ends as follows, "In whereof I have put my hand and seal this 12th day of December, in the 6th year of the reign of our sovereign Lord George, King of England."

Roast Meat Hill derived its name from this circumstance. Early in the settlement of the Hill, Daniel Buell killed a buck and roasted it whole and gave a feast to all the families in the settlement. The hill retains its early name to the present day.

Daniel built a house on his farm on Roast Meat Hill. I do not know the year, but think it might have been about 1730. The house was probably rather extra for the time. It was large, two stories high in front and with a long sloping roof in the rear. It was designed for a farm house and tavern.

The front door was honored with iron trimmings of English manufacture, but every other door in the house had a wooden latch and latch string. The windows were so high above the floor that it was difficult for children to look out of them. The house was painted red when new, but when I was a child not a vestige of paint could be seen, and it looked old and weather beaten. The location was good, said by some to be the most beautiful in town. From the house on the Highlands, five miles from the water's edge, we enjoyed a panoramic view of Long Island and Long Island Sound, as far as the eye could reach. I remember standing in the doorway and counting 42 vessels at one time.

In this house the children of my great grandfather Daniel and my grandfather Nathan were born and reared and here my parent's children were born: Daniel was appointed Captain of Militia in 1748. Daniel was elected Deacon of the Congregational Church in 1759. Daniel Buell and Elizabeth Post of Saybrook were married in 1722. Their children were:

Daniel
 Aaron
 Nathan
 Elizabeth
 Freelove
 Lucy

Daniel made his will Jan. 5, 1782. He died May 9, 1782 aged 84 years. I copy the Legatee part of his will:

"As to my eldest son, Daniel, late deceased and his two heirs, I have heretofore given to him and them by deeds of gift and demise, a full double portion of my estate.

"I give and bequeath to my son Aaron Buell and his heirs forever, all my wearing apparel and my walking stick with its silver head in addition to what I have heretofore given.

"I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth, now the wife of Josiah Hull, and her heirs forever, the feather bed and bedstead and covers which I usually sleep on with the bolster and pillows, thereunto belonging, also two of my best linen sheets, and two spotted coverlets commonly upon my bed, also my black trunk, two black chairs, a small square table, a cedar keller, one cedar barrel, one cedar pail, my best milk bowl, best candle stick, one case knife and fork, one trencher and one spoon, one foot glass, one pewter plate and also one iron kettle.

"I give and bequeath to my daughter Lucy, now the wife of Abner Parmalee, and to her heirs forever, my underbed in which I usually sleep, my black chest, two black chairs, one square table, second milk bowl, second best water pail, one cedar washing tub, second best pewter plate, one case knife and fork, one candle stick, one trencher, one pewter spoon, one foot glass, also one large iron pot, and one cedar barrel.

"I give and bequeath to my daughter Free love, now the wife of Jeremiah Nettleton and to her heirs forever, one feather bolster, one pillow, one blue coverlet, one pewter quart cup, also my largest pewter platter, one pink pewter basin, two pewter plates, one case knife and fork, one pewter spoon, and my smallest looking glass and also one small copper kettle and also one pair of linen sheets.

"I give and bequeath to my grandson Gurden Buell and his heirs forever, a certain tract of land lying in the town of Newport, and state of New Hampshire containing 100 acres, it being the first hundred acres which were laid out originally belonging to Moses Yeumiens and is situated at a place called the last mountain in said town. Also a small tract of land lying on the Ledge, north east of the Cream-pots, so called. I mean the whole of said tract more or less.

"I give and bequeath to my grandson Asa Buell and his heirs forever, the whole of my homestead, that is the lands and buildings and fruit trees, thereof, with the reserve only hereafter mentioned, and also my fire-lock and my saddle and bridle and my salt meadow.

"I give and bequeath to my grandson Nathan Buell and his heirs forever, the whole of the land, that may be hereafter laid out upon my right, which was originally the right of Moses Yeumiens, which lyeth in the state of New Hampshire, also the whole of my land lying in the Bear Swamp, also the whole of my land adjoining Abner Parmalee's homestead.

"I give and bequeath to my grandson Asa Buell all the land which I am now possessed of, which I purchased of Samuel Baker, also a small tract of woodland lying near Samuel Smith's grist mill.

"I give and bequeath to my daughter-in-law, Thankful Buell, the improvement of my lands and buildings and fruit trees as heretofore mentioned, during her present widowhood and all the north tier of lots on my Homestead, it being part of the lands which are willed to Asa Buell, also 1/3 of my orchard fruit, also the two west room of my now dwelling house with the chambers and with the cellar under them, also 1/4 of the barn, to be set off in the south west corner thereof.

"I also give and bequeath to my said daughter-in-law, Thankful Buell, and her heirs forever, all of my moveable estate, which is not given away by this will and I do hereby ordain and appoint my grandson Asa Buell of Killingworth to be executor and my daughter-in-law, Thankful Buell to be executrix of this my last will and testament."

Nathan the 3rd son of Daniel and Elizabeth Buell was born Sept. 24, 1728. He married Thankful Griffin in 1753 and remained on the homestead with his father. He died June 12, 1774 - aged 42 years. He left six children:

Gurden
Mary
Amanda
Asa
Sike
Nathan

Asa, the second son was born Jan. 10, 1760. He enlisted for 3 years service in the Continental army and was engaged in the battle of German-town and Monmouth. He was commissioned Captain in the Militia in 1795 and in 1802 was elected member of the state legislature.

Asa Buell and Mercy Porter (born May 3, 1759) were married in Haddam, Connecticut by Rev. Mr. May on Dec. 30, 1784. Their children were:

| | | |
|------------------|------|----------------|
| Thankful | born | Jan. 22, 1786 |
| Daniel | " | Apr. 7, 1787 |
| Elizabeth | " | Sept. 6, 1788 |
| Asa Porter | " | Jan. 27, 1790 |
| Lucretia | " | Oct. 6, 1792 |
| Clorinda | " | July 26, 1794 |
| Wyllys | " | March 30, 1796 |
| Jeremiah Griffin | " | Jan. 11, 1798 |
| Heman Alden | " | July 31, 1800 |

Near the close of the last and early in the present century many were moved by an emigrating spirit and turned their eyes toward the western world. The state of Connecticut offered in market several tracts of land in western New York. Many townships owned by New England capitalists which they had purchased some years before at a few cents per acre, were offered for sale. The newspapers gave glowing descriptions of the western country, of its beautiful lakes, its noble rivers, its grand forests, its natural meadows and its fertile soil, that abundantly supplied the wants of the husbandman. Poets lent their aid, and sang in enchanting strains of the beauty and grandeur of the Genesee Country. I remember the closing stanza in one of the songs sung by the school children,

"And the little lambs, they skip and play,
On the pleasant plains of the Genesee"

Many left on horseback and on foot to explore, and making a favorable report a wide-spread emigrating spirit prevailed and soon thousands were leaving the rough and rocky hills of New England for the land of promise. Sylvanus Franklin who had married Elizabeth had a strong desire to try his fortune in the west.

In December 1805, my Father took Sylvanus, Elizabeth and their infant child and a few small boxes of goods in his sleigh starting westward and stopped in Gausrus settlement, town of Southhampton, near LeRoy, New York. My father purchased 200 acres two miles East of the present village on which was 22 acres of improved land, a log house with two rooms and a barn thatched with straw.

Mr. Franklin purchased fifty acres, five miles North of the village. My father returning to Killingworth prepared for moving west, by selling the old homestead ninety years after it was settled by his grandfather, Daniel, and disposed of a part of his effects at public auction. An ox cart heavily laden with boxes and house furniture was covered by an awning made of linen sheets sewed together to shield from the sunshine and storm.

The cart was drawn by two yoke of oxen and a horse for a leader, my father taking a good saddle horse for his own convenience. He took Daniel and Wyllys to work the farm and Lucretia for housekeeper. They left Killingworth in May 1806. The length of the journey was 400 miles. Nothing occurred to impede their progress until they reached the Genesee River 12 miles from their journey's end. The bridge over the river having fallen two days before they arrived, their progress was checked. There was a large accumulation of drift wood in one place which enabled people to cross on foot but no rack for carrying teams. The only craft on the river were Indian Canoes. The Indians offered to swim the horses and oxen and one cow which my father had purchased in Bloomfield, for \$8.00. Deeming the demand exorbitant, he obtained the services of an interpreter and appealed to Hot-Bread, the chief of the Canawarigus tribe. Hot-Bread said his Indians should swim the animals across for \$2.50 in sliver and a bottle of rum. Three Indians were placed in a canoe, two to paddle and one sitting in the stern holding a rope which was tied to the horns of an ox which was then driven into the water and guided to the western shore. All the animals were taken over in this manner. The cart was unloaded and separated into parcels and with the assistance of hired men the cart and cargo were carried over on the driftwood.

After a detention of two or three days, the journey was resumed and they soon reached their western home. My father purchased a span of horses and wagon in August, returned to Killingworth for the rest of the family. A cart drawn by 2 yokes of oxen was packed with chests, boxes and household furniture. Porter and a young man hired to go with us through the journey drove the team. Near the fore-end of the wagon was placed a provision chest, which gave a seat to father, Heman and myself. Farther back was a seat for Mother, Thankful and Clorinda. The rear part was filled with household effects. On the 18th day of Sept. 1806 we left the old family homestead on Roast Meat Hill and after a toilsome journey of 26 days our family reunited in our log cabin home. My father built a large farm house in 1811. Asa Buell died May 24, 1827. Mercy Porter Buell died Dec. 19, 1843.

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