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AN OLD LEDGER

PROPERTY OF

URIAH CHURCH JUNIOR

OF

MIDDLEFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

1823-1832

BY

Edward Church Smith

Lakewood, Ohio

1948

## AMBROSE CHURCH'S CARDING SHOP

Since the printing of the History of Middlefield, Mass. in 1924, the discovery of ancient account books in the attic of the Matthew Smith homestead has thrown new light on the history of woolen manufacture in that town. These two old ledgers, which belonged to Ambrose Church, son of the pioneer settler, William Church of East Haddam, Conn. show that while he built and operated one of the fulling mills, he was also the pioneer wool carder in town, having established his carding mill as early as 1808. In so doing he laid the foundation upon which his cousin, Uriah Church Jr., and his sons established their successful broadcloth industry.

The settlers in Western Massachusetts lived in a period of home industries, prominent among which were the spinning and weaving of wool into blankets, broadcloth, flannel and the like. The 1810 census shows that in Hinsdale, Peru and Washington townships in Berkshire County there were no fewer than two-hundred and forty-five looms, with an annual output of over 18,000 yards of woolen cloth. But the preparation of the raw wool for spinning was a tedious and time consuming operation when only hand-tools were available. So when a carding mill was not too far away, the farmers were very glad to let its machinery change the crude wool into soft rolls for the deft fingers at home which operated the spinning-wheels.

The dwellers in Middlefield were fortunate in having in their midst an ingenious and practical Connecticut Yankee, both millwright and manufacturer, machinist and carpenter, in the person of Ambrose Church. He saw the opportunity for service and profit in a carding mill, and set up his establishment in Blush Hollow on Factory Brook, which he operated from 1808 to 1815. And what a business he must have had. He included among his customers no fewer than 129 families in Middlefield alone, a number comprising nearly every family in the township. But what is of still greater interest is that during the War of 1812, when the demand for woolen goods, army blankets, uniforms and clothing in general was great because importations from abroad were cut off, Mr. Church did carding for many customers in the surrounding towns. There were sixty-seven families in Chester who brought their wool to him, fifty-two in Washington, twenty-three in Peru, fifteen in Worthington, ten in Becket, and seven in Hinsdale. Of the thirty-seven others whose homes have not been ascertained, some may have lived even farther away from Middlefield than Hinsdale. In all, the business covered three hundred and forty accounts as indicated by entries in Ledgers No. 2 and 3 alone, and how many more might be found in Ledger No. 1, could it be located, there is no telling. There were carding machines in many other towns at this period, so that either the excellence of Mr. Church's product or the low charge he asked for his work must have been a factor in building his business as well as the more convenient location of his plant.

One account with Uriah Church Jr. in Ledger 3, dated chiefly from February to September, 1813, covers lumber and shingles and labor on a fulling mill, in which enterprise Calvin Smith and his sons appear to have been partners, for a while, with Uriah. These entries appear to indicate 1813 as the year Uriah began his factory enterprise in Blush Hollow. Since Ambrose Church owned much land about the Lower Mill site, we judge his carding shop and fulling mill were located there, and that Uriah's fulling mill which Ambrose built in 1813 was located at the Lower Mill site on Factory Brook where the water power was excellent, and the chief cloth finishing operations were carried on for years, especially after the new factory building was built there in 1848.

(over)

Ambrose Church sold his carding and fulling mills to his cousin Uriah Church Jr. in 1815 as the War boom was waning, and moved to New York State. He left a notice asking his customers to pay their outstanding accounts to Captain Matthew Smith, and the records show a creditable response on the part of the Middlefield community.

Lakewood, Ohio

*Edward Church Smith*

August 12, 1950

*Follow this with chapter on Wash Church's  
Factory 1823-1835. entitled  
"An old ledger" es. 1948.*

AN OLD LEDGER

In the Fall of 1948 there came into the author's hands an ancient ledger, a century and a quarter old, once the property of Uriah Church, Junior, of Middlefield, Hampshire County, Massachusetts. Since its entries throw some light upon one period in the history of the Church woolen manufacturing industry at Blush Hollow in that town, the following discussion presents some facts which are established by the items found in this book.

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The authors of the History of Middlefield, Massachusetts, 1924, having printed their book before they discovered at the Smith Farm the ledgers of Ambrose Church which disclosed the business of his carding mill in Blush Hollow from 1809 to 1815, have since been endeavoring to learn the real story of Uriah Church Junior, who in 1813 became the next owner, not only of the carding shop but also of his cousin's fulling mill. Uriah had learned weaving, probably from his maternal grandfather, James Dickson, who also followed that trade, and during the War of 1812 made army blankets for the Government, weaving them at home, and having his his wool carded by Ambrose. By the end of the War, however, Uriah had formed a partnership, for Ambrose had an account with "U. Church Jr. & Smith" from February 1813 to April, 1814. The weight of evidence suggests that Calvin Smith Sr., Uriah's first cousin, once removed, may have been said partner. But the fact that Ambrose appointed Captain Matthew Smith, brother of Calvin, to collect money owed him when he moved to New York State, may indicate that Matthew had an interest in the business.

In any event, it is clear that Uriah Church began to expand his business, first by continuing to operate the carding shop and second by finishing home-woven cloth in his fulling mill, his plant probably being located in the Lower Factory Village where Ambrose owned land. The old Ledger appears to have come into use early in 1823, though it contains a few items referring to earlier transactions. Among these are entries brought from "Book B" and a few from "Book C." Some late totals are marked to be carried to "Book D", 1832 being the year of the latest entries. This book is identified by statements of settlements of accounts signed by Mr. Church and his creditors. The leaves of the book which number somewhat over 200 are 7-3/4" x 12-3/4", and are made of good heavy paper, with writing in good black ink. Most of the writing is in the same hand and fairly legible. The accounts are headed in large, well-formed lettering, very clear and better written than the entries below. Uriah, having been a school teacher could write well when he took time to do so.

This book throws very little light upon the earliest years, and we must hope for the discovery of Ledgers A and B, perhaps of C, to give us the real history of the period from 1813 to 1823. There is, however, one entry on page 23 on the Credit side of Uriah's account with Green H. Church, the builder, his own cousin. Under the year date of 1823 we find this:

"By his Acct. at sundry times building fulling mill,  
&c, &c, up to May 1, - - - \$ 361.53.

This structure may well be the old building which stood just south of Uriah's Upper Mill, which Oliver Church recalls thus in his Recollections:

"South of the factory and picker house (Upper Mill plant) was an old two-story building which was the original plant for roll making and cloth dressing, but at that time (his boyhood, 1830-40) was

SCENE IN FACTORY VILLAGE, MIDDLEFIELD, MASS.



This picture, enlarged from a "tintype" taken probably during the summer of 1871, shows in the background a building probably Uriah Church's Carding Shop and Fulling Mill, built about 1822. Beyond it appears his original Upper Mill with cupola, built by Green H. Church in 1823. These buildings were destroyed by fire in December, 1871

The building on the left is a double tenement, which stood nearly opposite the house of William D. Blush, occupied in 1870 by James T. Mecum and Dr. C.F. Starkweather. This building was swept away by the Flood of 1874, and never replaced. The driver of the wagon is John W. Crane, late of Springfield, Mass., who gave us this picture. He came from Washington, Mass., in 1866 to teach school in Blush Hollow.

used for a dye house and for scouring wool on the first floor, the second for storage. . The building was burned."

This building, the fulling mill, we suppose to be the one appearing in the background of the Scene in Factory Village shown on Page 2, with the original Upper Mill behind it. The fulling mill may have been burned when the Upper Mill was destroyed in December, 1871. Uriah may have transferred to this building the equipment in the plant he bought of Ambrose Church, further down stream. Oliver knew of but one carding machine there, together with the fulling mill.

Curiously enough, we discover in the Ledger a few items which indicate that Uriah Church owned or at least had some connection with or interest in a woolen mill in Hinsdale. Abner Wing had worked there for Uriah according to this entry:

"By use of Factory at Hinsdale, 1821, - \$ 6.05".

Frederic Curtiss had this in his favor on Nov. 12, 1823:

"By work and labor in Hinsdale Factory, - \$ 15.36."

There is a similar entry later for 24 days labor at \$20. Samuel Miller had Uriah in his debt in 1823 to the amount of \$25.81

"By his labor in making, mending and fixing things in the Hinsdale Factory."

But thus far we have not discovered the name of the firm involved.

Before the building of the Upper Mill in 1823, Mr. Church appears to have engaged in at least two kinds of woolen business. The first and probably the earlier was custom work for the farmers' families in the neighborhood, carding the wool raised on their farms, and finishing the homespun and home-woven cloth in his fulling and finishing operations. These latter treatments increase the density of the fabric, raised a nap by teaseling or brushing, and shearing, thus producing a smooth surface and luster. Dan Pease brought his wool, from 30 to 80 pounds at a time, to be carded at 8¢ per pound; wool was cleaned at 2¢ per pound. The cloth finishing operations are indicated in entries like these:

"To Fl Cl Drss Brown 10-3/4 yds @ 25¢"

which appears to mean fulling, cleaning or coloring, and dressing. One item reads clearly:

- "To fulling and dressing Smoke 8½ yds. @ 28¢" Some read
- "To Cl gray flannel 4½ yds. 17¢"
- "To Coloring and drssing Mix<sup>d</sup> Cloth, 10½ yds. @ 20¢"
- "To Cl 5½ yds yarn red"
- "Cl 4½ yds yarn green @ 20." There are many such entries.

Sometimes Cl stands for "cleaning", for it is evident that Uriah's equipment allowed him to run a sort of cleaning establishment at reasonable rates, judging by such entries as these:

- "Cl Cotton Stockings - \$ .83" "Cl 3 pr Stockings - \$.25"
- "Cl old gown - - .25" "Cl pr pantaloons - .25"

Some folks who did weaving and spinning at home did their own dyeing, buying their supplies from Uriah, at least in later years. They would obtain a few pounds of indigo to get a blue, madder for a red, logwood for black, as well as copperas, blue vitriol and something styled "Nic-

aragua.

But while Mr. Church carded wool and finished cloth for others, he also had weaving done for him by people in their own homes. Uncle Oliver tells of Isaac Gleason who lived at "Rock Edge", a hand loom weaver who worked with yarn and warp supplied him from the factory. His account in the Ledger starts in January, 1823, with an item for supplies from Book B amounting to \$1106.42, which had risen to \$1248.99 by June, 1824. Gleason evidently submitted his bill for weaving, and the settlement is worded thus:

"June 5, 1824. Then reconed and settled all accts. of every kind and nature from the beginning of the world up to this date and have agreed to balance and call the same even after he the said Gleason shall have wove four hundred yards B<sup>d</sup> Cloth for the said Church and done it in a workmanlike manner. Isaac Gleason Jr. Uriah Church Jr."

One John Burns, for whom Uriah paid "Mack & Cotton for a man to move your family to Hinsdale", seems to have been an agent for home weaving, and dealt with Job Robbins 2nd and John McStitt, and also did weaving himself. The product was either satinet - wool woven on a cotton warp - or broadcloth, the high grade, all-wool fabric. In addition to a hundred retail sales of satinet and broadcloth to individuals, and debited to the account of David Mack, Jr., there are similar items debited to Wing & Curtiss of Hinsdale, and Messrs. Josiah Bissell & Co. Fay & Curtiss had special orders manufactured for them, Frederic Curtiss evidently being a member of the firm. He was paid for work in the Hinsdale factory.

Just how much of an establishment Uriah Church Jr. had in Blush Hollow before he built his Upper Mill is hard to determine. Since that plant did not get into operation much before the spring of 1824, we have tried to discover who worked for him in the Hollow in the carding shop and fulling mill. On March 6, 1823 an account with one Daniel Miller is credited "By one years work - \$90.", which would indicate that he was employed at least as early as the spring of 1822. Lyman Spellman had both debit and credit items brought from Book B in June 1823. Amasa Little, who lived at Pelkey's, was credited with labor for Uriah for 10 mos. 20 days, from March 28, 1822 to March 24, 1823, - \$88.88, @ \$8.33 per month or approximately 33 cents per day. Wages rose to \$12. per month for him the next year. A Walter Smith, not yet identified, had a credit account of \$163.07 early in 1823, and was charged for 62 weeks and 5 days board, up to Oct. 18 of that year, so was employed as early as late summer of 1822. Weaving was one of his skills. A Silas Butler was employed and paid \$230 for one year's work on May 6, 1824, a high priced man. Nelson Cowing had a credit of \$52 after which is an item "By labor from March 1 1822 to March 1, 1823, \$104.02." During the next year and ten days he earned \$145.88. Abel Cheeseman Jr. who was owed \$62.88 when his account was opened was paid \$100 for one year's work (kind not specified) on Dec. 30, 1822, while for the following year he received \$125. Cheeseman had a long term of employment with the Churches, doing general work, chopping and hauling wood, running the company farm perhaps, and at times working for outsiders as this entry indicates:

"James Church Dr. 1824. To 1 day of Abel Cheeseman - \$ .58  
To A. Cheeseman 7 days work haying - 7.00

Mr. Cheeseman, who built and lived at the Cooley Graves place, in his later years was night watchman at the Lower Mill.

Another early employee who appears in the records as early as July, 1823 was Edward Morehouse, father of Pitt Morehouse, childhood playmate of Oliver Church. In November he had paid two months' house rent, and paid for keeping cow 8 weeks. He is debited for many accounts paid to various parties. His earliest labor is roping, then spinning sorting wool and the like. He was not living in Middlefield in 1820 but was enumerated among heads of households in 1830.

The history of the Upper Mill can be traced in several entries.

Nov. 1822	Selden Root	Cr.	By drawing timber 1 day	-	\$ .67
" "	" "	"	By two days work building dam	-	1.67
Feb'y. 1823	Adin Ingram	Cr.	By drawing stone for Factory		
" "			by the job	-	25.00
" "	Green H. Church.		By extra hewing timbers for		
" "			Factory	-	20.00
June 1823	Dudley Taylor	Cr.	By 11 days with oxen at work		
" "			digging Cellar to my Factory		13.75
" "	John Smith	Cr.	By labor of yourself & oxen		
" "			digging cellar to Factory		15.28
" "	Amos Briggs	Cr.	By 8½ days Mason work on		
" "			Factory Wall	-	11.67
" "	William Mahanna	Cr.	By days labor on Factory		
" "			cellar	-	-
" "	Green H. Church	Cr.	By finding yourself Spirits		
" "			building Factory	-	10.00
" "	" " "	"	By building Factory	-	435.00
" "	Walter Smith	"	By extra work in and about		
" "			the Factory and instructing		
" "			Alp. Smith in weaving Bd		
" "			Cloth	-	28.42
Aug. 1823	S. Squire.	Cr.	By bringing 738 feet boards		
" "			from Washington	-	2.12
March 1824	Joseph Little	Cr.	By his account for lumber for		
" "			the Factory last season	-	32.57
Dec. 1823	Ezra Cole	Cr.	By bringing 5 loads boards from		
" "			Hinsdale, Pittsfield and Dalton		8.33
" "	" " "	"	By bringing 1200 brick from Dalton		4.00
Sept. 1823	Dudley Taylor	Cr.	By 7 days work digging ditch and lev-		
" "			elling round factory	-	8.75
March, 1824	Silas Butler	Cr.	By your father bringing Looms		
" "			from Adams in 1823		7.00
Dec. 1823	Moses Barns	Cr.	By turning shaft for Water Wheel		.50

Mr. Church, of course, had to depend upon outside artisans to supply his machinery and supplies, as well as for special services of mechanics and machinists, as is indicated below:

1824	Almanzer Denslow	Cr.	By Bill Cards of this date	-	\$ 123.49
1823	Moses Barns	Cr.	By grinding knives	-	.50
1823	Abner Perry	Cr.	By two wing Gudgeons	-	21.96
1824	Josiah Pomeroy (Hinsdale)	Cr.	By fixing lathe for		
" "	" "	"	turning bobbins	-	2.00
" "	" "	"	By turning 2675 bobbins	-	17.38
1824	Eb <sup>d</sup> Kingsbury	Cr.	By making 5 pr jacks for B <sup>d</sup> Looms		
" "			and By making 120 teasel bands	-	15.00

In order to get a picture of Uriah's business up to 1832 we have made a detailed study of all the accounts in the Ledger and find the following information. Of accounts which cover the custom work of carding wool there are 101; accounts containing items for fulling,



coloring and finishing home-woven cloth - 126. Of the latter it is interesting to note that 64 percent of these accounts were with families in Middlefield; 9 percent in Peru, 7 percent in Hinsdale, and 6 percent in Becket. We must remember, however, that there were woolen factories in other towns, and that Amasa Blush, Mr. Church's next-door neighbor, had started his carding mill in 1815, had operated the Herrick fulling mill before that, and was weaving satinet before the Church Upper Mill was built. So Mr. Church had plenty of competition and probably was doing well to command as much business as the above figures indicate. The Ledger shows 89 accounts covering sales of his broadcloth and satinet in small amount for home use, 40 percent of these being to families in Middlefield, 10 percent to families in Chester, 10 in Hinsdale, 4.5 percent in Becket, 4.5 percent in Washington, and so on; the location of 20 percent of the purchasers has not been determined.

Accounts for weaving at home for Uriah appear to number at least six. Isaac Gleason Sr. and Jr. did their work at Rock Edge. John Burns, John McStitt and Job Robbins 2nd and Walter Smith are others. Increase and Alpheus Smith, sons of Rufus Smith who at one time lived at the George Bell place, were weaving in 1823, Walter having engaged to instruct Alpheus how to make broadcloth. He may have been an older brother. Jonathan C. Park did spinning for Uriah before the Upper Mill was built. Uriah was critical of their product, and penalized his operatives for poor work as the following entries indicate:

1825. John Burns. "Burns has wove for me from the beginning up to this date (May 3, 1825) in all 1679 yds. Sattinett, a part of which viz. 334½ yds wove by John McStitt was very badly done, and 455 yds. wove by Job Robbins 2nd was poorly done - for which I refuse to pay said Burns the price stipulated in my agreement with him of May 29, 1824."
1825. Salmon Bixbee. Dr. To damage for poor bobbing - \$ 28.95
1828. Isaac Gleason. Dr. To 2 holes in Gillett's Cloth  
weaving. - .50
- (Gillett was Isaac Jr. )

Before going into details let us review the general findings from the list of names appearing in the accounts which cover wages and employment in the Upper Mill, 1824 to 1832. The number of men, which had reached 12 when 1824 opened, rose to 15 after the plant was started that spring, three women being added to make a total of 18 during the summer. By the summer of 1825 five women were working while the total employed reached twenty. There was a slight tapering off during 1826, which terminated in a sudden shutdown, all the girls being laid off in December, and only one man, Abel Cheeseman, remaining on the payroll, perhaps as watchman. Business began to pick up, however, during the summer of 1827 and by January 1828 Uriah had ten men and three women. The year 1829 showed its maximum in the spring with 14 men and 3 women, while in the spring of 1830 there were 14 men and 5 women. The years 1831 and 1832 were comparatively quiet, the average being 9 men and 2 women.

How these employees were divided geographically is somewhat hard to determine. Of a total of 134 men, 33 appear to have lived in Middlefield, at least during their term of service, while 13 came from Chester, 8 from Hinsdale, 5 from Becket, 5 from Peru. But this must be a very incomplete picture for there are 60 whose origin is unknown. How they were divided as to kind of work is indicated by their credit accounts. Carding was usually a laborer's job, though occasionally paid by piece-work.

- 1824 Isaac Fellows Cr. By 3 months labor - \$ 18.00  
By carding three nights - 1.00

Spinning was of two kinds, of warp threads and of weft yarn called "filling" as indicated in these early items:

1824	Jonathan C. Park	Cr.	By spinning 5250 runs Wp	3.00	\$157.00
			By do 3100 runs filling	2.00	62.00
			When he did carding his account reads:		
			By Roping 55 lbs wool	3¢	1.65
			By cleaning wool $\frac{1}{2}$ day		.37

Men were employed for weaving, at least up to 1832, no accounts of women being marked with that service in this book. Of the total 93 accounts for factory men, 76 of them after the Upper Mill started running, fifty men served for periods shorter than one year, indicating a considerable labor turnover. While 12 were employed principally at spinning, forty-five did weaving at one time or another, like this:

1825	Increase Smith	Cr.	By weaving 548-3/4 yds B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	25¢	\$37.00
1826	"	"	Cr. By weaving 1744 yds B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	20¢	348.80
1827	John Carns	Cr.	By weaving 75-3/4 yds B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	16¢	12.12

Edward Morehouse, probably foreman, at 80¢ per day did much wool sorting:

1830	By sorting 11631 lbs wool	1 1/4¢ per lb.	\$145.49
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Here is an item for cloth finishing:

1823	Moses Barns	Cr.	By labor Shearing & napping cloths by the job as appears by the Bill	\$101.56
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For the women, their employment is indicated by the following entries:

1825	Hannah Parsons	Cr.	By 46 weeks & 4 1/2 days work	-	\$ 38.95
1825	Fanny Fanning	Cr.	By 24 weeks & 5 days work	-	20.70
"	"	"	By labor doing house work		
			8 weeks of the above time an allowance of 1/ per week	-	1.33
1826	Salome White	Cr.	By her labor, 30 weeks	-	30.00
1828	Susan Olds	Cr.	By shearing 464 yds B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	2 1/2¢	11.60
"	"	"	By 29 weeks & 2 days work	-	29.33

It will be seen that wages were not high as compared with present day levels, Hannah Parsons getting 13.4¢ per day, figuring 6 days per week. Fanny Fanning received 14¢ a day except when she did house work at 16.8¢ per day.

Who were these folks who worked in the Upper Mill? The historians of the History of Middlefield have received criticism from certain quarters because in their stories of Middlefield citizens the factory folk in Blush Hollow appear, for the most part, to have been ignored. In explanation, the writer wishes to point out that this neglect was not intentional. When the authors of the History tackled their job they first covered the two hundred families of squatters, petitioners and settlers during the town's first three or four decades. Since this research was perforce carried on for a period of twenty years entirely as a hobby while the authors were engaged in earning their living, there came a day about 1923 when they and their advisers decided that if the Patrons were ever to see the work, it should be put into print at once. So in 1924 the manuscript was completed as quickly as possible, and a proper chapter upon the Hollow and its citizens was never written.

But to return to the immediate problem as to the identity of those

who worked for Uriah Church in his factory. A glance down the list of employees finds very few who were well known to the writer. They were for the most part American citizens, or English or Irish immigrants. The Germans and French Canadians had not yet arrived and only a few of the Irish had reached this region. Thus there are few if any by the names of Lathrop, Braithwait, Wilcox, Kershaw, Houck, Rowen, Pelkey, Vetter and Gorden, known to the family a few decades later. The data on hand concerning these may become available for a later chapter if account books covering their period are discovered to afford a proper study of the subject. One of the Irish, however, John Gardner a weaver who lived in a boarding house, was the man mentioned by Oliver Church in his Recollections, as having committed suicide by drowning in the millpond in 1830. An entry on his account records the fact, and loose in the Ledger were found a copy of a notice for the papers covering this event, and also an inventory of Mr. Gardner's personal effects.

The William Smith, whose death followed his fall into a boiling dye kettle, as told by Oliver Church, appears to have been a son of one John Smith of Blandford. He had worked as a laborer for nearly three months before the accident in in 1828. Sarah Ann and Maria Smith who worked at the Factory about that time were probably sisters of William. Amasa Little, who married Achsah Smith, lived at the Pelkey house, worked for Uriah off and on in 1822 to 1824, and probably had a hand in building the Upper Mill. During 1829 to 1831 he worked continuously at spinning. Later he moved to Windham, Ohio. Increase Smith, son of Rufus, worked for Uriah as a weaver for three years, 1823 to 1826, paying board during that time. John Everett Jr. did spinning from 1827 to 1832. Alonzo Thayer, who did labor besides weaving, seems to have operated a boarding house at times, as these items indicate:

1830	Alonzo Thayer	Cr. By boarding Olive Hamilton and Susan Olds up to March 27th next,	32 weeks	-	-	\$ 32.00
1829	Willard Simpson	Dr. To pd. Alonzo Thayer for your board		-	-	20.00

Thayer evidently lived in a house Uriah rented to him as did several others, as indicated by the following items:

1828	Alonzo Thayer	Dr. To house rent 10 months, 24 days	-	\$ 16.20
		Dr. To keeping cow 6 months	-	7.50

Perhaps Alonzo was allowed the use of a stall in the Company Barn. Edward Morehouse rented the south half of the "Second West Tenement" just north of the Upper Mill, where James T. Church and his bride began house-keeping in 1839. This house is shown in the picture entitled "Houses in Upper Village", on Page 190 in the History. Emily Bates was among the women weavers employed in the late 1830's, having come from Worthington at least as early as 1837 when she joined the Middlefield Congregational Church. She of course does not appear in the Ledger whose latest entries are in the year 1832. Another who had received mention (See History, Page 321) is "Capt" Paschal Bracket, who began working for Mr. Church in March, 1829, and was enumerated among the dwellers in the Hollow as late as 1860. Cyrus L. Cone, son of Uriah Cone who lived just north of the White Boarding House, was a weaver off and on from 1828 to 1831. The old Cone house became known as "The Old Boarding House" in later days, the white one being "The New Boarding House". Earlier, however, in the Upper Village, the boarding house was the two-story "First West Tenement" we remember, the second building west of the highway north of the Upper Mill. This building, with its lower story torn out, appears at the right in the lower Flood View on Page 209 in the History.

Here are some typical entries for board charged to employees:

1824	Daniel Moore	Dr.	To board 13 weeks	12/	\$ 25.00
1827	Franklin Clark	Dr.	To board 19 weeks up to 14th Inst		28.50
1830	Sam'l Featridge	Dr.	To board 12 weeks & 5 days	9/	19.10

There seem to be a number of instances where the person's account was debited for some cloth or goods from Uriah's stock or from David Mack Jr.'s store, and for which he paid by a few days work, like this:

1824	Julius Wares	Dr.	1 pc B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	- - -	\$ 3.50
"	"	Cr.	By 7 days work	4/	4.67
No indication that Wares was a regular employee.					
1825	Moody Johnson	Cr.	By 24 days labor of Marshall	-	6.48
1824	Seth Wait	Cr.	By labor of your son	-	19.70

Of course many familiar names, of regular residents of Middlefield appear on the accounts for custom work, carding and finishing, or for local sales of satinnet and broadcloth for family use. And a few of the young men from the farms in town and near by worked for a few weeks to pay for cloth or family supplies, or to earn cash when farm work was light. Thus we find mention of Pliney Ames of Becket; Champion Smith who lived in the Pelkey house worked before he was married for a few weeks; Job Robbins 2nd and Job Sr.'s son Samuel worked for a while. But the majority of the workers are unknown to us, and are not found in Vital Records of neighboring towns nor in family genealogies. Among the women, also, few names are familiar. One, Anna C. Adams who worked for a few weeks in 1825 and again the next year was indeed born in Middlefield but that is all we know about her. Chloe Wears was daughter of Elias Wears of Smith Hollow. Lydia Graves was daughter of Amasa Graves Jr. Susan Olds, daughter of Levi Olds who lived on the West Hill, worked for Mr. Church at four different periods between 1824 and 1830 and evidently learned to appreciate the meaning and value of money. She is, perhaps, best remembered for her grave in the Center Cemetery, where stands a rather imposing monument to Susan Gaylord, whose entire estate, it is said was spent for this memorial, to prevent any of her money getting into the possession of her Olds relatives.

Judging from some of these accounts very little currency changed hands, and then usually in small amounts. There was much barter or exchange of commodities, workers' accounts being debited for supplies from Uriah's stock in warehouse or store, or by a bill of goods from the store of David Mack Jr.

1824	Zenas Crane (Dalton)	Dr.	To 4 yds Sattinett	6/	\$ 4.00
"	"	Cr.	By 4 doz. Press papers		4.00
1824	Thomas Ward	Dr.	To Fl Cl Drss 23½ yds	1.7	3.99
"	"	Cr.	By 40 lbs. Pork	10	3.99
1831	Gaston Dickson	Dr.	To order on David Mack Jr.		5.00
"	"		To dipping 14 yds Cloth Blk		3.50- 8.50
"	"	Cr.	By 3 bbls. Soap		9.00
1823	Capt. Roger Moore (Southwick)	Cr.	By Cider to balance		15.11

Some of the prices in those days are shown below:

1824	James Miller	Dr.	9 lbs Butter	9	\$ .81
			1 Bbl flour		8.50
			1 bbl Cider		1.00
			5 Bush Potatoes	25	1.25
1824	Eli Crowell	Cr.	By 3 quarters of Veal		1.08
1826	James Cross	Cr.	By 34 lbs Mutton	3½	1.19

1824	Artemas T. Baird	Cr.	By 5 qts. oysters	\$ 1.67
1823	Preston Hunt (Becket)	Cr.	By Meat Barrels	5.00
1823	Moody C. Dustin	Cr.	By 591 lbs. Beef	22.16
1828	Edward Morehouse	Dr.	To 8-3/4 bls rye flour last summer	.22

The doctor, the tradesman and the tax collector received pay at the factory office for bills owed by employees and the items were debited to their accounts, as the following miscellaneous entries indicate:

1830	Betsey Hoskins	Dr.	Pd Dr. Warren	-	\$ .97
			To taking care &c in sickness		1.50
			To cash to app. bonnet		1.25
1828	James Flowers	Dr.	To keeping Child 8 days		1.33
1823	Edward Morehouse	Dr.	Pd John Dickson your taxes 1823		.91
1824	"	"	Pd Highway tax	-	.73
	"	"	Pd School tax	-	.30
1824	Lewis Taylor Jr.	Dr.	To work on highway by Cowing		.83
1825	Orrin Millard	Cr.	By working highway tax		3.38
1823	Walter Smith	Dr.	Pd Singing Subscription		.50
1830	Amelia Abbot	Dr.	To one singing book		.30
1824	Jonathan C. Park	Cr.	By Umbrella for Chloe Wares		2.00
1824	Isaac Gleason Jun.	Cr.	Pd Ambrose Meacham (Coffin)		2.00

This last item indicates the low price for coffins in those days. They were usually made by Gleason's next-door neighbor, William Leonard, as described by Oliver Church. Tradition tells, however, that the town was shocked when their sons paid \$9.00 apiece for the coffins supplied to bury Uriah Church Jr. and his wife, who died within a week of each other in 1851.

The workers in the Hollow used up much shoe leather as is indicated by these entries, and similar ones to be found on many pages:

1825	Mary Lyman	Dr.	To 1 pr Boots	10/6	\$ 1.75
1826	Sabrina Lyman	Dr.	To pr shoes		1.50
1827	Lewis Taylor Jr.	Cr.	By his acct for Shoemaking for my family since May 1826		9.49
		Cr.	By his Acct for Sundry of my workmen		10.41
1829	Philander Edwards	Dr.	Pd U. Gene mending shoes & leather		.50
1825	Ira Richards	Dr.	To mending boots		.37

Uriah Church Jr., like Oliver Blish and others did quite a livery business, renting out his oxen and horses, with or without carts and wagons. There are also accounts for carting and delivery of boxes of cloth, as these items show:

1824	Daniel Leach	Cr.	One horse, 2 journies to Northampton & one to Hinsdale & one to Chester.	2.00	.50
1826	Capt. Joseph Smith		Use horse and cutter to Lenox		.80
1826	Avery Herrick	Cr.	Waggon to Lee afr. Castings 15 miles		.60
1824	Ebenezer Simmons	Cr.	By Journey to Albany		12.00
1825	Luther Durant	Dr.	Pd E. Jones Jr. for carrying you to Northampton		1.17
1830	Thomas Vesper		To use Cattle to Pittsfield in March		.50

Promissory Notes were a common medium of exchange, and the endorsing of Uriah's notes served to close many an account.

1824 Nathaniel Eager (Worthington) Cr.	By endorsing on my note	\$33.36
1824 Amasa Little Dr.	To note on demand to balance	162.38
1825 Orrin Millard Dr.	To note for Cash at 90 days	3.50
1823 Abel Cheeseman Pd D. Mack Jr	your Note to Nial Little	20.51
1825 George McElwain Cr.	By endorsing on my Note under date July 26, 1824	20.00
1824 William Porter Dr.	To Note dated March 8, 1824 given for sundry articles of provisions bought of him at that time	11.65
1823 Samuel Miller Dr.	To note given to Charles Woodward given up	26.77
1823 Ambrose Church Dr.	To Note given up	20.22
1823 Moody C. Dustin Dr.	To Note payable in January	32.52
1824 Green H. Church Dr.	To Joseph Jennings's Note	3.75
1825 Fay & Curtiss Cr.	By endorsing on N.W. Fay's Note	23.86

Orders for cash or goods from stores frequently appear.

1826 Abraham Holland Dr.	To order on D. Mack Jr. for \$3 in Goods and \$108.38 Cash payable in 9 months	111.38
1823 Abner Perry Dr.	To order on Mack & Cotton	21.96
1823 Samuel Miller Dr.	To goods bought at D. Mack Jr.'s	7.99
1822 Gillett Gleason Dr.	To order on Mack & Morgan	39.25
1827 Dr. Joseph Warren Dr.	To order on D. Mack Jr. for goods	29.00
1828 Charles Campbell Dr.	To order on D. Mack Jr. for Cash	7.50

What did Uriah Church receive for his product? The following items cover sales to individuals for home use.

1822 James Church Dr.	3 yds coarse Sattinett	62½	\$ 1.87
1824 " " Dr.	5 yds B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	3.50	17.70
1823 Daniel Sibley Dr.	To 2½ yds Blue B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	5.00	11.25
1823 Alexander Ingham Dr.	To 3½ yds Blu B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	5.00	16.26
	To 4½ yds Gold Mix B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	4.00	18.00
1825 Orrin Millard Dr.	To 2½ yds Sattinett		2.50

Prices were lower later and when sold to dealers.

1831 Beach & Royce Dr.	To 12 yds Mix <sup>d</sup> B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	\$3	36.00
1827 Nelson Spencer Dr.	To 1½ B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	3	4.50
1825 Isaac Gleason Jr. Dr.	To 4½ yds Full <sup>d</sup> Cloth	1	4.50
1823 Wing & Curtiss	18 yds Blue B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	4	72.00
	27 yds Sattinett	85	22.95
	1 pc B <sup>d</sup> Cloth Gold Mix <sup>d</sup> 20-¾ yds		71.72

Clark & Bardwell of Washington, Mass. also sold Uriah's product.

In 1826 David Mack Jr. evidently acted as wholesaler for his goods, and the debit account shows shipments to several firms:

1826 To manufacturing	157½ yds Blue B <sup>d</sup> Cloth	-	\$ 275.27
	202½ do common	-	252.81
Sent to Gillman, Prichard & Co. Boston.			

Thus Mr. Church received \$1.75 per yard for the blue broadcloth, and \$1.25 per yard for the common. Some other firms mentioned are "Messrs Thos. Bulfinch & Co., Boston; Messrs. Pratt, Porter & Co., Hartford. By 1827, what Uriah received from David for the goods he handled had dropped to \$1.00 per yard. They dealt with  
Smith & Willard, Albany  
Azariah Smith, Manlius, N.Y.  
Smith & Atwell, Boston  
Sherry, Dutch & Co., Boston.  
Thomas Bucknell & Co., Boston.

One item on this account reads:

Nov. 27, 1827 Transporting 2 boxes to Northampton in a snow storm - - \$ 7.50

Another special transportation entry, perhaps connected with the building of the Upper Mill reads:

Oct. 1823. Selden Root Cr. By drawing timber up gulf hill \$.87

This looks like an emergency job, trying to get a load up the steep incline south of his home at the Alderman Place.

The folks in those days did not take things easily, but kept a sharp eye upon their transactions. Some kept accounts of their own and submitted them to Uriah, no details appearing in the Ledger; and they caught errors in the reckoning as these entries show:

1823	James Church	Cr.	By overcharged for carding wool -	\$ 2.48
1825	Dan Pease	Cr.	By overcharge for dressing Cloth-	.70
1824	Uriel Cone	Dr.	2-3/4 and 1 1/2 yds Satt. overlooked in last settlement	- 4.00
1823	Lyman Spellman	Dr.	To his overcharging me for carrying 1 Box Cloth to Red Hook and one for Amasa Blush he having charged the whole Acct to me when he ought to have charged \$6 to me and \$9 to Blush	- 9.00
1823	Calvin Hubbell	Dr.	To overcharged on 2 pr Morocco shoes	- .83

Many accounts close with the customary signed agreement like this:

June 23, 1831. The reconed and settled all Acct. between us from the beginning up to this date and hereby agree to call our respective accounts even and paid without a particular examination.

Uriah Church Jr.  
Gaston Dickson

Some agreements are less formal, as:

Sept. 5, 1826. This Acct. is settled by calling all Acct. between James Meacham and myself equal.

U. Church Jr.

Febry. 14, 1826. It appears that in the above settlement there was a mistake and that the balance due John Smith Jr. was only six cents which I have this day paid him to which he agrees as witness our hands.

Uriah Church Jr.  
John Smith Jr.

There appear in the accounts a number of entries which indicate that Uriah could not always remember the details of the transaction, and had doubts about the proper figures. While Uriah, in most instances yielded to pressure, he indicated his position in the record:

1823	Green H. Church	Dr.	To 20 lbs 10 <sup>d</sup> nails (supposed) for Uriel Cone	\$ 1.70
1828	Elijah White	Cr.	By Acct supposed to be due Mr. White from me	6.39
1828	Amasa Graves	Cr.	By something else, I suppose, I know not what	2.40
1823	Adin Ingram	Dr.	Pd Jon. C. Park which he says ought to have been charged in the Acct of 5/ above	1.00

This Ledger, unfortunately, fails to give us any over-all picture of Mr. Church's business, how he stood at the end of each year, and whether he was really making money. Uncle Oliver Church, speaking of the years he knew, which must have been a decade or two later (for he was but a year old when this Ledger began to be used) said Uriah had trouble keeping out of the hands of the Sheriff. He never had enough capital to carry on the amount of business he aspired to handle, and so was constantly in debt. Some evidence for this may possibly be reflected by some figures found on a slip of paper loose in the Ledger, which in part read as follows:

"Am <sup>t</sup> due to my Workmen Jany. 3, 1831			
March 1			
60	Stiles Reynolds	2 months	\$ 40.00
43	Louis Parks	2-1/3 Month	23.00
81	Paschal Bracket	5-2/3 Month	58.00
66	Sam <sup>r</sup> Featridge	-	24.00
98	John Carns	- say	88.83
43	Cyrus Cone	- say	13.00
110	Gardner's Estate	- say	120.00
	Olive Hamilton		39.00
	Betsey Haskins		44.00
(etc.)		(etc. etc. 21 items)	-
<u>976</u>	say	\$1200	

A partial inventory appears on the back of this sheet:

"Amt of B<sup>d</sup> Cloths finished and unfinished on hand Jany. 3, 1831

6 pieces finished containing		117 yds.
58 pieces frmd (?) cont'g	1361 yds =	to 1089
73 pieces full <sup>d</sup> and partly finished	173 yds =	<u>1385</u>
		2591 yds.
31 ps in Looms and spun in yarn		
equal to -	775 yds flannel	= 620 yds.

The thirty-one pieces in looms may indicate that there were that many looms in the Upper Mill on the second floor.

Mr. Church, it appears, had some friction with his neighbor, Amasa Blush, who manufactured satinets. There is a tradition that Blush built his upper dam, which made the little pond opposite the residence of Sumner Church, of such a height that at high water the pond backed up so as slightly to impede the operation of Uriah's waterwheel at the Upper Mill. The Blushes at least in later years seemed to prefer to play the country gentlemen to devoting their energies to business, and were envious of the success achieved by the Churches. One item on Mr. Blush's account account reads:

1830 Amasa Blush Dr. To damaging garden - \$ 1.50

Another matter was more serious and they had to call in outside help to settle the matter:

1822	Amasa Blush	Mill Seat I bought of Pelton	\$ 50.00
1827	Amasa Blush	By overcharge for Mill Seat which I am to deduct agreeable to the award of an Arbitration consisting of Dea. John Newton, Calvin Smith and Capt. Dan <sup>r</sup> Root this day (April 27, 1827	29.00
		By cash awarded as above	15.40



It is hard to extract much of human interest from an account book. We note, however, reading between the lines, that one Lathrop Ladd of Chester was a laborer at Uriah's factory in the spring of 1824; also that about the first of the young women Mr. Church employed about April of that year was Hannah Parsons of Hinsdale. We judge that their acquaintance ripened into romance, for the Hinsdale Vital Records show that Lathrop married Hannah in that town in 1826.

The account we have presented represents but one episode in the career of a modest but energetic citizen of Middlefield, who was not only an excellent school teacher, a skillful manufacturer, a Justice of the Peace well read in the Revised Statutes, and a loyal supporter of his church, but was also his town's Representative to the General Court at Boston in 1845. The period covered by the Ledger, of course, was long before Sumner, Lyman, James T. and Oliver Church came into the firm of U. Church & Sons, and Sumner had not yet made his contribution of fabricating the Mountain Mills Gold Band Cloth which made the business prosperous in the years before the Civil War. Oliver Church says that at the time of Uriah Church Jr.'s death the business was of considerable importance to the community and town. "The visits from the Sheriff were quite too frequent for domestic peace and happiness. He, however, had good pluck and perseverance, and at his decease left a small estate for his children."

Lakewood, Ohio

*Edward Church Smith*

December 15, 1948

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References - History of Middlefield, Mass. Smith. 1924. Page 106-7  
142-149, 197, 279, 312, 437.

Ancestors and Descendants of Uriah Church Junior of  
Middlefield, Mass. Edward Church Smith. 1946.

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