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# The Wentworth Family

BY G. T. RIDLON, SR.

Extracted from  
SACO VALLEY SETTLEMENTS AND FAMILIES



CHARLES E. TUTTLE COMPANY: PUBLISHERS  
RUTLAND, VERMONT

# Introduction

## to family histories in Saco Valley Settlements

Saco Valley is a veritable treasureland of history. Its rich lodes have produced a wealth of American legend and tradition extending back more than 300 years.

The picturesque Saco River starts in North Central New Hampshire and winds southeasterly. It passes near Fryeburg, Maine, a beautiful resort area today, but where in 1725, Indians brought to a disastrous end Lovewell's expedition against them. Robert E. Peary, the famous Arctic explorer, lived in Fryeburg as a boy and surveyed in the area.

Saco, Maine, is equally famous. Located at the falls of the Saco River, opposite Biddeford, it was settled in 1631. A legislative and judicial "court," the first in Maine, was held in Saco in 1640. Saco suffered Indian raids in the 17th and 18th centuries, raids and massacres vividly described by G. T. Ridlon, Sr., author of the monumental work, *Saco Valley Settlements and Families*.

Ridlon had personal contact "with relatives whose mothers' slumber had been disturbed by the red man's startling war whoop." The author talked with men who had vivid recollections of the French War and the fall of Louisburg; his grandfather was acquainted with those who served as scouts against Pequawket Indians.

It is only natural, then, that a region so rich in the stuff that Americans cherish should yield noted personages and families, 128 of whom are included in Ridlon's immense work. This family history is reprinted from that work, and is representative of those noted families and sturdy pioneers who were so much in the mainstream of early American history.

Fortunate is the individual whose family tree was included in Ridlon's masterwork, "a conservatory of valuable data, rescued from scattered and frail documents and vanishing traditions of the Saco Valley."

The author has bequeathed rare and authentic Americana to the descendants of those families, who naturally take great pride in their heritage—and in their treasured genealogical heirloom.

## Wentworth Family.

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**Robert B. Wentworth**, son of Ebenezer and Jane Merrill, was born in Buxton, Me., Jan. 18, 1827. He lived on the homestead and attended district school until he was fifteen years of age; he then left home and entered a printing office in Portland, where he remained until he mastered the business. He continued working at his trade in various offices in the state until 1848, when he caught the western fever and migrated to the new and promising state of Wisconsin—admitted to the Union that year—and continued his residence there. He was state printer of Wisconsin from 1850 to 1852, and a member of the Legislature in 1857. He continued the printing business and published a newspaper in Juneau and Portage, Wis., until 1861, when, owing to ill health, he was obliged to leave his office for more active exercise in the open air. In 1862 he again established himself in business at Portage as a grain and lumber merchant and continued successfully for twenty-eight years. He is now occupied with his duties as president of the "Portage Hosiery Co.," and as vice-president of the "City Bank of Portage." Mr. Wentworth is a man of excellent business ability, conservative, and careful in his management. As a citizen he has manifested much public spirit being deeply interested in the development and welfare of his adopted state. He holds the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and has been called by them to serve in important positions. In politics, he is a firm Republican and outspoken respecting the great national issues of the day. As a son of old Buxton, he has done honor to his birth-place. Mr. Wentworth m. Miss Lydia H., dau. of the late Rev. John Pike, of East Fryeburg, Me., and has issue.

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## CHAPTER VI

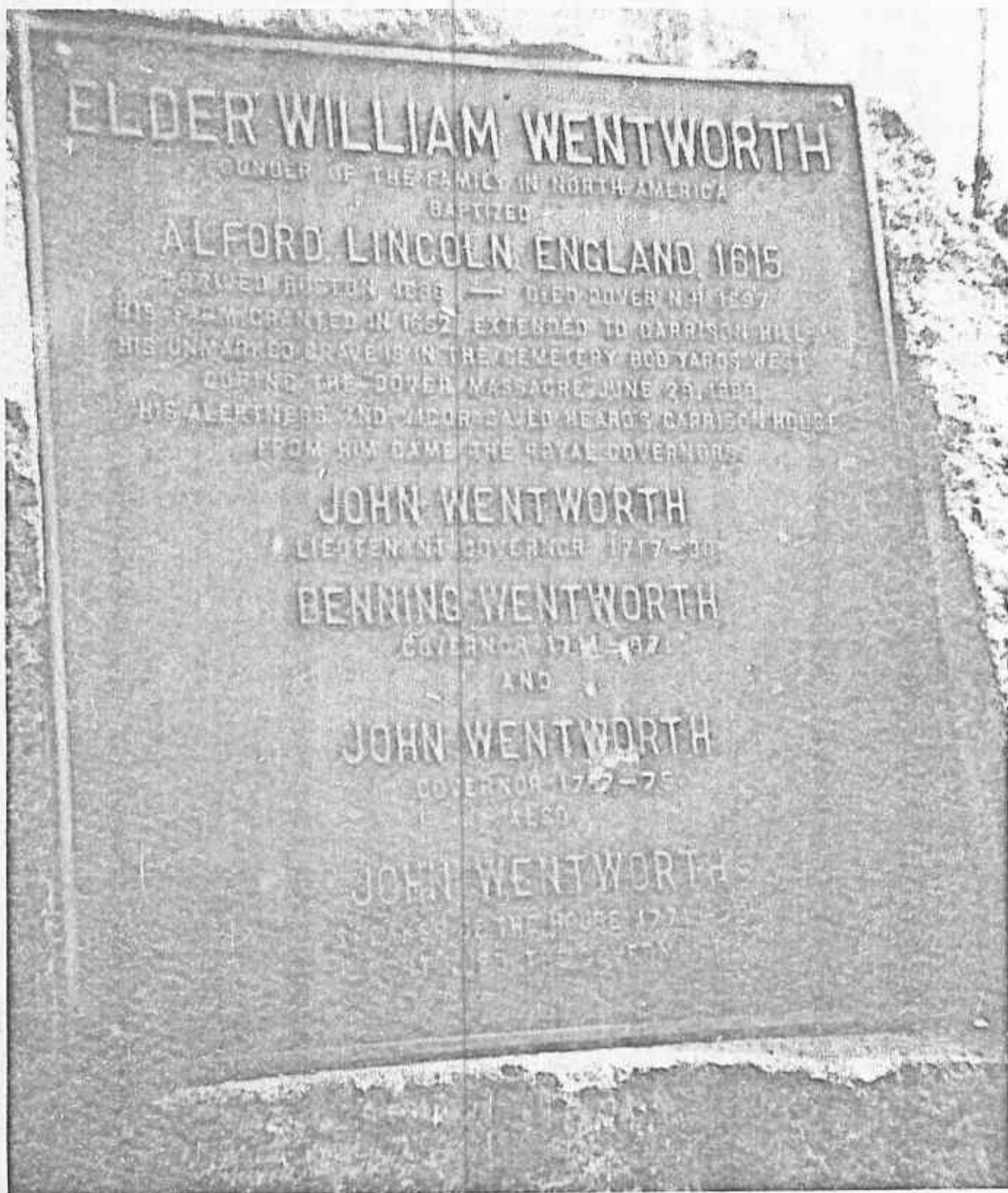
## THE COLONEL PAUL WENTWORTH MANSION, 1701

The man that founded the Wentworth dynasty that became important in the colonies before the Revolutionary War was Elder William Wentworth. He was born in England in 1617 and came to America in 1639.<sup>1</sup> The Elder William Wentworth built his garrison home in Rollinsford some several hundred yards from the intersection of Oak Street and Portland Avenue (Dover, N.H.). This garrison stood for several hundred years till it was burned on May 7, 1936.<sup>2</sup>

The ancestry of Elder William Wentworth is traced back to 1066, showing that he descended in a direct line from Rynold Wynterwado whose name appears in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book. The name was spelled Wentworth by the 12th century. The English geneology of this family shows a list of men of distinction. There is the first Earl of Strafford, the Wentworths of Wentworth Castle, Barons Raby, Vixcounts Wentworth, Earl of Strafford of the second creation; the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam and Richard Wentworth, who was Lord High Chancellor of England at the time of Edward III.

Before coming to Dover, the Elder William Wentworth lived at Exeter and was associated with John Wheelwright as one of the "Exeter combination."<sup>3</sup>

William Wentworth became a member and a ruling Elder of the meeting house (First Church) at Dover Neck.<sup>4</sup> During the Indian attacks at Cochecho in Dover on June 28, 1689, the Elder William Wentworth was within the Heard garrison. He was awakened by a barking dog just as the Indians entered. He was still a strong man, then at the age of seventy-two. He pushed the Indians out forcibly and falling on his back, he braced his feet against the door of the fortification and held it shut until he had alarmed the people. The Indians fired two shots through the door, but both missed him. Because of him, the Heard garrison was saved. He died at the age of eighty years<sup>5</sup> in the year 1697.



**ELDER WILLIAM WENTWORTH**

FOUNDER OF THE FAMILY IN NORTH AMERICA  
BAPTIZED

**ALFORD LINCOLN ENGLAND 1615**

ARRIVED BOSTON 1638 — DIED DOVER N.H. 1697  
HIS GRAVE OPENED IN 1652 EXTENDED TO GARRISON HILL  
HIS UNPAID CO. GRAVE IS IN THE CEMETERY 800 YARDS WEST  
DURING THE DOVER MASSACRE JUNE 29, 1691  
HIS ALERTNESS AND COURAGE SAVED HEARD'S GARMENT HOUSE  
FROM HIM GAVE THE ROYAL GOVERNORS

**JOHN WENTWORTH**

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR 1717-30

**BENNING WENTWORTH**

GOVERNOR 1741-47

AND

**JOHN WENTWORTH**

GOVERNOR 1752-75

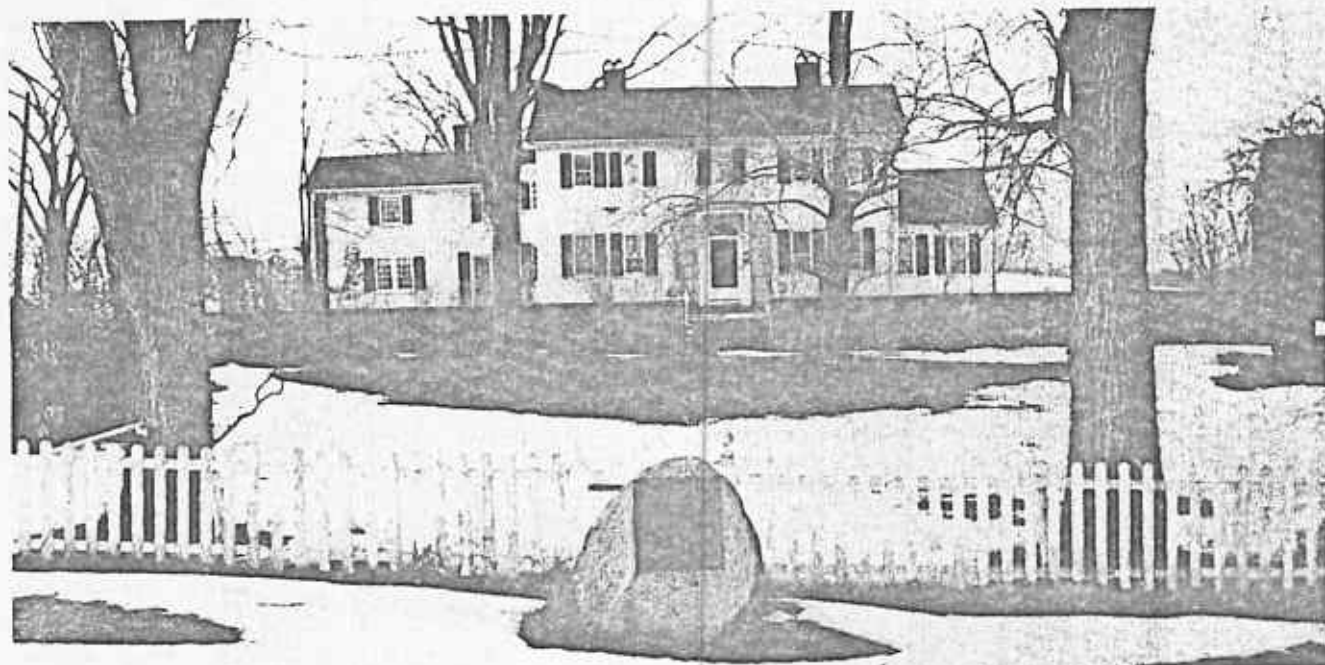
1780

**JOHN WENTWORTH**

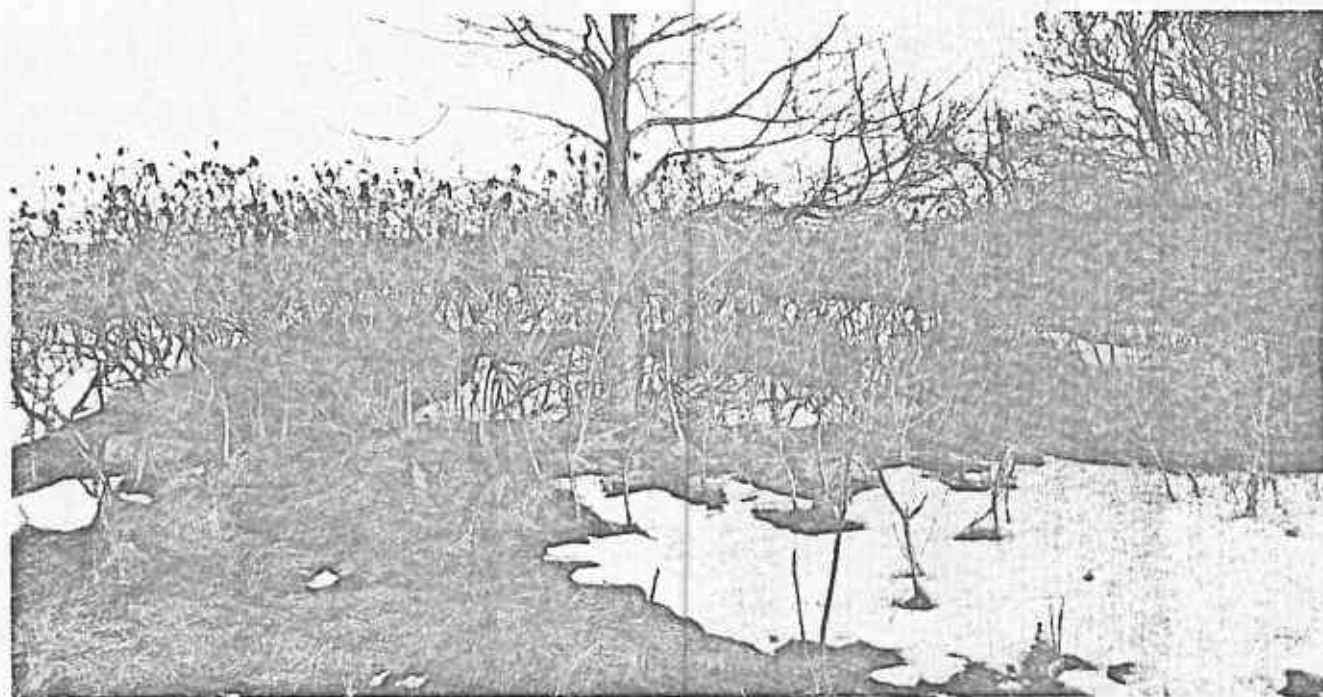
MEMBER OF THE HOUSE 1721-22

1723-24

The plaque of Elder William Wentworth, at Rollinsford, as it appears on the northerly side of Route 4 (Portland Avenue Turnpike) several hundred yards from the intersection of Portland Avenue and Oak Street near Dover, New Hampshire.



Above is the former residence of Bartholemew Wentworth, Jr., with the Elder William Wentworth plaque in front. In this home Ariocho Wentworth was born. It is located several hundred yards east of the intersection of Oak Street and Portland Avenue, in Rollinsford.



The cellar remains of the Elder William Wentworth garrison and homestead, built in 1652, and located directly in back of the Bartholemew Wentworth, Jr. homestead above. The garrison stood for over two hundred years and was burned on May 7, 1936.

The name of Elder William Wentworth appears as one of the 34 signers of the "Exeter Combination", at the time Reverend John Wheelwright had been banned from Massachusetts. He drew a civil government called a "combination" and this was organized in Exeter in 1640. Wheelwright and others including Elder William Wentworth remained in Exeter until it submitted to the jurisdiction of Massachusetts on April 14, 1641, and formed a union with that Royal province. For the next 40 years Rev. Wheelwright went to Maine with some of his followers and Elder William Wentworth came to old Dover in the Rollinsford area to settle.<sup>6</sup> The name of Elder William Wentworth appears on the tax list of 1650 of old Dover "for the publick charges of the town". By this time he had built his garrison house and owned land in Rollinsford which was then part of Dover.<sup>7</sup>

The Elder William Wentworth married twice. His first wife was Elizabeth and in his advanced years he took a second wife "who was too young to be married". He had children from both wives.<sup>8</sup> The Elder William Wentworth had ten children who were born in the following order: Samuel, John, (who were both born in Exeter), and Gershom, Ezekiel, Paul, Sylvannus, Timothy, Elizabeth, Ephraim, and Benjamin (who were all born in Rollinsford).

His first son Samuel Wentworth had sixteen children and built the Vaughn(Wentworth) House in Portsmouth, N.H. One of Samuel's children, John Wentworth, became the first Royal Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Hampshire. Later, one of the children of the Lieutenant Governor, Benning Wentworth, became the Royal Governor of the Province of New Hampshire when it separated from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in 1741.

The Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Province of New Hampshire, John Wentworth, aforementioned, had another son, Mark Hunking Wentworth who also had a son named John. This latter John Wentworth was born in 1736 and became the last Royal Governor of the Province of New Hampshire.<sup>9</sup>

✓ Ezekiel (1651-1712), the fourth son of Elder William Wentworth, was born in Rollinsford and lived at Salmon Falls all his life. He and his wife, Elizabeth, gave birth to six children. Their second son was named Paul. He was born in 1678 and died on June 24, 1748.<sup>10</sup>

✓ Colonel Paul Wentworth was the second cousin of the Royal Governor, Benning Wentworth.<sup>11</sup>

Paul Wentworth was married to Abra Brown of Salisbury, Massachusetts, by Reverend Caleb Cushing on May 24, 1704. They had no children.<sup>12</sup>

One of the business ventures of Col. Paul Wentworth was a saw mill on the Salmon Falls river, where he cut and sawed timber, rafted down the Newichawannock (Salmon Falls) river, and sold it for local consumption and ship building in England. He became one of the wealthiest men of his time and a leader in church and state.<sup>13</sup>

His father, Ezekiel, owned a large amount of land in Salmon Falls. John Wentworth was only 23 years of age in 1701 when he built the famous "Colonel Paul Wentworth House".<sup>14</sup>

The house was located on what was later known as Dover Street and presently Church Street in Salmon Falls near the present location of St. Mary's Catholic Church. In 1704, when he was 26 years of age, he brought his bride home to live with him.<sup>15</sup>

The famous house of Colonel Paul Wentworth has remained in the Wentworth family for ten (10) full generations. It was a place of love and romance and still is.

Paul Wentworth built the house originally through ship's carpenters to please his future wife, Abra Brown. This house has been the center of many splendid social affairs. It was moved piece-by-piece by Frederick Blodgett, who is a direct descendent of the Wentworth family, who was then first Vice-President of the Boston National Bank and now retired. The house was moved from Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, to a 60 acre lot at Claybrook Road, Dover, Massachusetts, in 1936, and this was for his future bride, Alice Brace. The house was not changed at all, other than installing a heating system and electrical fixtures. The house was also insulated. The house remains substantially unchanged since it was originally built in 1701. It has the same colonial furniture and the same elegant taste of years gone by.

The cost of moving the house from Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, to Dover, Massachusetts, and its reconstruction at the new site was \$36,000.<sup>16</sup>

In 1702, two men were killed by Indians near his home.<sup>17</sup> On another occasion, the home of Paul Wentworth was attacked by Indians, and his wife showed her prowess by defending herself with boiling soap and forced the Indians to flee. It is said



that she was captured on three occasions and taken to Canada from where she was ransomed by her rich husband. When the men were out on the fields, she would dress in masculine garb and take her place on patrol.<sup>18</sup>

On his land he built his own Episcopal Church to which he left 500 pounds, the principal of which was left in tact and the interest was to be used for the administration of the church. Little is known about this church except that it has been long gone and with it the 500 pounds.<sup>19</sup>

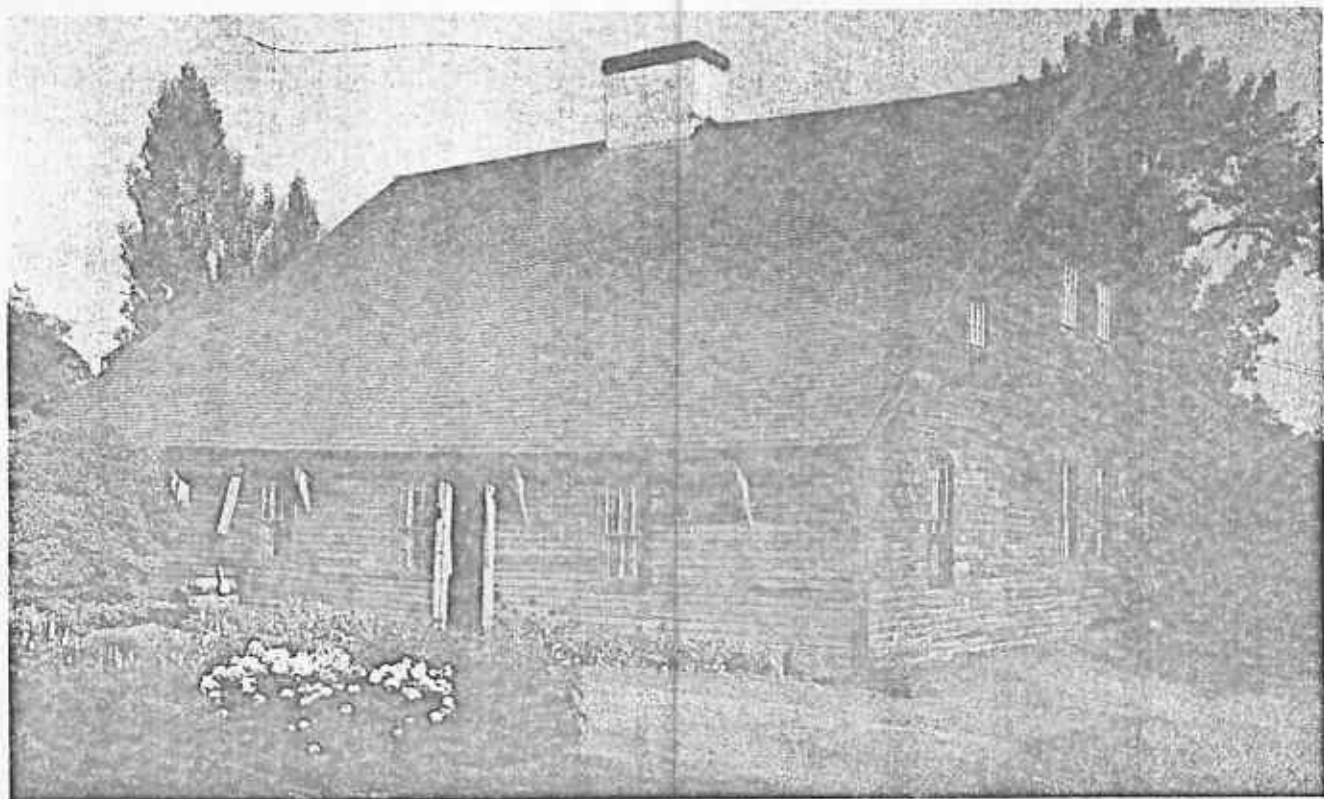
Colonel Paul was a slave holder and eleven were buried on his property in a private burying ground. The bodies have since been moved to the public cemetery at Rollinsford Junction.<sup>20</sup>

He served with the Second New Hampshire Regiment and was called Ensign Paul Wentworth between 1716 and 1717; Captain Paul Wentworth by 1727, and appointed Colonel shortly thereafter and was affectionately known as Colonel Paul Wentworth until the end of his life on June 24, 1748.

As aforementioned, Colonel Paul Wentworth was one of six children of Ezekiel Wentworth. One of Colonel Paul's brothers was Captain Benjamin Wentworth, born in 1691, who married Elizabeth Leight on September 23, 1717.<sup>21</sup> Captain Benjamin and his wife had four children, John, born March 30, 1719; Elizabeth, born February 15, 1721; Abigail, born February 12, 1723; and Mary, born July 29, 1725.<sup>22</sup> Captain Benjamin Wentworth lived on the New Hampshire side of Quamphegan, adjoining the Newichawannock (Salmon Falls) river, in the present town of Rollinsford near the bridge on the turnpike (Rt. 4 or earlier known as the Portland Avenue Turnpike) from Dover to South Berwick and was near or embraced the land of the late James Rollins.<sup>23</sup> Captain Benjamin Wentworth served as a selectman and a representative of the town of Dover from that part of Rollinsford and served in the town militia.<sup>24</sup>

Captain Benjamin Wentworth died in April of 1726. He and his brother Colonel Paul Wentworth dealt in land and timber in the area about Salmon Falls. When he died, his son John (later known as Colonel John Wentworth) was only 7 years of age.<sup>25</sup> His uncle Colonel Paul Wentworth brought the youngster up as his own child and made him the principal heir to his fortune; and the Wenworth Mansion was part of his inheritance.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1716 and 1740 Colonel Paul Wentworth served as a selectman for this Rollinsford area in the town of Dover. After the parish of Summerworth was organized he also served as



View from the North-West, on Original Site (1936)  
The Col. Paul Wentworth Mansion--1701--Salmon Falls, N.H.



View from the North-East, on Original Site (1936)

Wentworth

William Wentworth of Sprotborough, Yorkshire

His dau. Elizabeth m. William Levet. Ind. dated 13<sup>th</sup> VIII (1521)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
 DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATIONS AND TAXATION  
 Computation Sheet (Domestic <sup>BUSINESS</sup> {MANUFACTURING} Corporation)

1932  
 REVISION

Assessed by	Computed by	Billed by	Name of Corporation
Verified by	Checked by	Checked by	
	Date of Certification	Certificate Checked by	

**DO NOT CIRCULATE**

VALUATION OF CAPITAL STOCK

Valuation by	Checked by
Assets.....	
Liabilities.....	
Net Assets.....	00
X	

1. Value of capital stock				
2. Table A, Col. 2 (R.E.)				
3. " " " 7(Mtge.)				
4. Equity in Mass. real estate (2-3)				C
5. Table A, Col. 3 (Machinery used in conduct of business)				
6. Table A, Col. 4 (Motor Vehicles)				
7. Deductible Securities				
PROPERTY OUT				
8. Table C, Col. 2 (R.E.)				
9. " " " 3 (M.)				
10. " " " 4(Mdse.)				
11. " " " 5(O.T.)				
12. Total of 8 to 11				C
13. Table C, Col. 6(Mtge.)				
14. Equity in property out (12-13)				C
15. Table D (Cash, etc., out)				
16. Total Deductions (4+5+6+7+14+15)				C
17. Corporate Excess (1-16)				C
18. Tax on Corporate Excess at \$5 per \$1000				C
19. Sched. D, 8 or 19 (Mass. Income)				
20. 2 1/4% of same (Tax on Income)				C
21. Penalties				
22. Total Excise Tax (18+20+21)				C
23.				
24.				
25. 1/20 of 1% of Item 1 (C. S. Minimum Tax)				C
26. Mass. gross receipts				
27. 1/20 of 1% of same (Receipts Minimum Tax)				C
28. Penalties				
29. Total Excise Tax if minimum (25+28 or 27+28)				C
30.				
31.				

*The Orange County California Genealogical Society*

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