

matic Fair grounds. Whether this be true or not, tradition picked out a most lovely and beautiful clearing for these pioneers to sleep in beneath the May sky of 1685.

The lots were laid out in three sections, one at Hither Place, one at Willimantuck and one at the Pondes, or what is now Mansfield Center. The first occupant of the lands was Johu Cates, an individual about whom there has been some mystery, more than has ever been satisfactorily explained. He came in 1689 and with his negro, Joe Ginne, erected a rude shelter which was afterwards converted into a dwelling with the assistance of Jonathan Ginnings, who was the first white man with a family in the town and to whom the first white child was born. Whatever Cates might have been before he came to Windham, he was a respectable citizen here, took some part, though never officially, in town affairs and was well thought of. His will gave some portion of his estate to the church and the town and his memory might well remain undisturbed by any futile attempts to discover whether he was a regicide, as some suggest, or merely an adventurer, who for personal reasons did not care to have his affairs in England known. After Cates, the settlers came in rapidly and in 1691 the inhabitants petitioned the General Court for a town grant, Joshua Ripley, John Cates, Jonathan Crane, Joseph Huntington, William Backus, Jeremiah Ripley, Jonathan Ginnings, Richard Heudee, John Backus and John Larabee being signers to the petition. The names have been familiar to the inhabitants of the town to this day. These petitioners were all residents of the Center.

Ponde Towne or Mansfield was settled almost contemporaneously with the Center, and for a few years the two sections lived together comfortably and with religious peace, but trouble over the church-going and ministerial privileges arose and in 1701 Mansfield went her own way as a separate town. The details of the steps that resulted in this division have been recently published and there is no time to go over them here. The incorporation of the