

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF CAPT. RICHARD  
W. MUSGROVE**

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Autobiography of Capt. Richard W. Musgrove by Richard W. Musgrove

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PUBLISHED BY  
MARY D. MUSGROVE  
1921

While the early portion relates to father's boyhood and to incidents occurring in Bristol in those days, the sketch is devoted largely to events during his term of nearly four years in the Union Army. It was his intention to publish this autobiography during his lifetime, and in the manuscript there are many indications of paragraphs to be rewritten, with additions, and of statements to be verified. Although we have found it impossible to make all the additions which marginal notes indicate, we are endeavoring to publish it as nearly as possible as the author intended.

MARY D. MUSGROVE.

1891  
1892



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## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

I awoke to the realities of this mundane sphere in Bristol, N. H., on the 21st day of November, 1840. It was not an event of great moment to the world at large but to me it was an event of importance. I am told that my early years gave promise of no remarkable career in any respect and so I hope I have attained the full expectation of my friends.

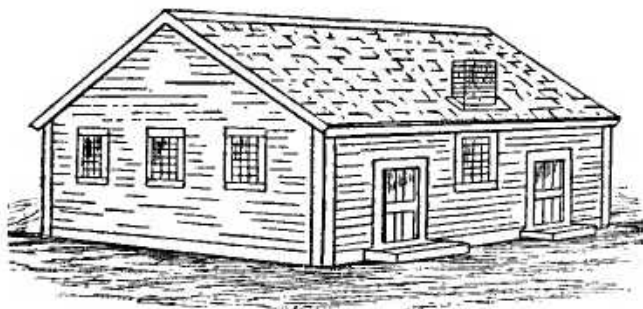
My recollections cover the time from 1843, when I stood by my mother's knees and listened to a discussion by her and the Rev. Nathaniel W. Aspinwall, about the Millerite craze that was then sweeping over the country, and about its disastrous effects on the churches in Bristol and the community in general. I did not take in the full scope of the discussion, but I clearly discerned that something terrible was abroad in the land, and, indeed, that a calamity had visited Bristol; and the picture then formed on the retina of my memory has remained with all its vivid colors through life.

The chief topic of discussion in those days was the immediate coming of Christ and the end of the world. Large numbers of people completely lost their reasoning powers. They not only believed in the end of the world at a time only a few months in advance, but they contended that a belief in this doctrine was essential to salvation when the end should come. Some went so far as to prepare robes in which to ascend to glory. The chief effect of this craze was to unfit people for the every-day work of life. Business was neglected, crops were left ungathered in the field, and many were brought to suffer for their improvidence. David Trumbull of Hill was one of the leading spirits in the Millerite craze in this section. In the fall of 1843 he had a large field of potatoes that he declined to dig because he should not need them. One day Hezekiah Sargent, a neighbor, asked permission to dig a few. "Yes," said Trumbull, "dig all you wish. I only want a few to last me the short time I shall stay here." Sargent gathered the crop. Time wore on and Trumbull needed more potatoes than he had put into his cellar and called on Sargent to help him out, when Sargent coolly replied he did not know as he had any to spare.

### Methodist Chapel and Church

Closely allied with this in point of time is my recollection of town meetings at the old Methodist chapel on the east side of North Main street at the base of Sugar hill. As my home was about midway between the chapel and Central Square, I could but notice the constant stream of humanity that travelled between the chapel and the square on election days, and my curiosity was rewarded with the information that after a ballot was deposited each man made a trip to the square for a drink. At that time liquors were sold in the grocery stores of the town, at the hotel, and in saloons.

I presume it was owing to home influences that I had a veneration for the old chapel and I wondered that so many of the boys delighted to club the old building, that some threw stones at the windows at every opportunity, and that one boy on a Fourth of July, to prove that



**Methodist Chapel built in 1814**

he could fire a piece of paper through an inch board, drove the wadding of his gun through one of the doors of the chapel.

This chapel under the hill was an ancient relic when I was a boy. I well remember its interior for I attended meetings and lectures there. Between the two doors, next to the front walls, were a few seats elevated above the rest, which accommodated the singers. When the people determined to modernize the chapel by heating it during service, a box stove was located between the front seats and the pulpit in the east end. A plank platform was hung from the ceiling over the singers' seats, and on this the chimney was built. A funnel extended from the stove to the chimney. There was then so little room above the heads of the singers that they had to move about cautiously, else their heads would come in contact with the stove pipe. The chapel had no gallery—there

was no room for one; the pulpit was reached by three or four steps only and there were no box pews, only common slips. The society was too poor to have these things, and so by force of circumstances the chapel was quite modern in some of its features.

When I was a boy the people had not ceased to talk of how Rev. George Storrs had been mobbed within the walls of this chapel because he dared to speak against slavery. Indeed the agitation of the question of slavery, increasing as it was year by year, would not let the recollection of such incidents die out, and what I heard about the doings of the mob made such an impression on my mind that it almost seems to me now that I was an eye witness of it, though it occurred three years before I was born.

After the Methodists ceased to use the chapel on the completion of the new chapel on Spring street in 1839, it was used by the Free Baptists for some years, and for lyceums, lectures, and, till 1853, by the town for town meetings. But the old chapel must go. Rev. Ebenezer Fisk bought it and the material went to help build the Free Baptist church which now stands on Summer street. I watched the tearing down of the venerable and venerated building with much interest. Among the workmen were the Nelson brothers, then in the prime of early manhood and I marveled at the exhibitions of strength as these young giants of the farm put their shoulders to the work. Now where the church once stood is the garden connected with the residence occupied for many years by Mr. and Mrs. E. K. Pray.

The immense Balm of Gilead tree that stands a few rods south of this site on the same side of the street was set out when I was a boy as I well remember, from the fact that I was given a shaking by the owner one day for presuming to lean against the sapling, and thus endanger its life.

I was a constant attendant at the Methodist chapel on Spring street when a boy. I usually sat on one of the front seats near the door, and in summer time was always barefooted. My view through the open door extended down the Pemigewasset valley, and the beautiful landscape spread out before me is more distinctly remembered now than any sermon of those days. I remember some Sunday school concerts of that period, in one of which twelve men represented Joseph and his brethren. Joseph was put into a pit, only there was no pit and so instead he was placed in the rear part of the stage in full view of the audience, and afterward sold to the Egyptians. At that concert I sang Coronation, and Hon. N. S. Berry, later the honored governor of the state, who presided, accompanied me, singing the base.

At that time a stage was built over the altar extending to the front seats. They were rough joists laid from the altar rail to the front seats,