

From Hemsted or Hempstead, lying between Great Samford and Bumsted Helion, in the county of Essex, forty-four miles from London, emigrated Robert Bedell and his wife Blanche, who, with a number of other English people, seated themselves, about the year 1644, on that part of Long Island, in New Netherland, to which they gave the name of the hamlet of their nativity.

On March 17, 1657, the freeholders of Hempstead chose Robert Bedell one of the five townsmen annually elected by them. During his lifetime he, and those of his descendants residing there, were prominent and zealous in furthering its interests. No less active in the management of its affairs are the present representatives of the family living in the town and village.

It would seem that John, the grandson of John the son of Robert and Blanche Bedell, settled about the middle of the eighteenth century in Dutchess County, where, on February 8, 1751, he was united in marriage to Althe van Nostrand, as is entered in the record-book of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church of Hempstead; the clergyman of that church having performed the ceremony while on a parochial visit to the members of his church settled in Rombout Precinct.¹

John Bedell, it further appears, became possessed of a tract of land bordering upon the Wiccopee, about two miles southeast of the site of Johnsville. Here he built himself a dwelling on the west bank of the stream running thence northward to the Fish Kill. Their house, fronting westwardly upon the road extending southward from Poughkeepsie along the sloping spurs of the Highlands, commanded a wide view of the numerous eminences which the bold range of mountains comprise. As disclosed by a deed, dated October 1, 1754, the farm of William van Wyck adjoined theirs on the east. Lying about two miles northeasterly was the Swartwout homestead, built by Justice Jacobus Swartwout, deceased in 1749.

On the death of Captain Frans de Lange, who had for many years commanded the militia of that part of Rombout Precinct, John Bedell was appointed his successor. About that time, as it is also said, Captain John Bedell reconstructed and enlarged his house at Fishkill Hook, and opened it as a wayside inn, which became a popular and widely-known hostelry. It is further related that, before the war of the Revolution, the militia of that part of Dutchess County were accustomed to assemble there yearly on the first Monday in June, and on two annually-appointed days in August, and on the first

¹The history and antiquities of the county of Essex [England], by Philip Morant, London, 1768, vol. ii., pp. 64, 67. The history and topography of the county of Essex, by Thomas Wright, 1836, vol. i., pp. 170, 172, 173, 237, 238; vol. ii., pp. 80, 67, 64. The visitation of Essex, 1558, pp. 24, 25, publication of the Harleian Society, 1878. Documents relating to the colonial history of the state of New York, vol. xiv., pp. 362, 363. Documentary history of New York, vol. i., p. 658. Hempstead town records. Records of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church of Hempstead, L. I.