

the penalty of his bonds, and, without hesitation or evasion, he assumed the burden; and, with very little of the contract price left, he went on and finished the work by his own labor, and at his own expense, and delivered the turnpike completed to the company. It is said he took a vow that he would eat no white bread till the road was done, and kept it, living on baked beans and brown bread. At that early time of his career, the arduous task made a fearful inroad upon what little property he had acquired, yet by industry and great economy he avoided failure, and subsequently he accumulated a comfortable property for himself and family.

In the first half of this century every town in Vermont, as well as in other States, was required by law to organize military companies, which were required to drill and to receive instruction in military tactics; and, of course, this required efficient officers for that purpose. The election to a military office, at that time, was esteemed a great honor, and it was only the men of marked ability in the town who could reach any important official position in those companies. Upon the organization of the military company in Peru, Mr. Dudley was elected its first captain, and served as such a good many years till he was promoted to the office of colonel, and at length brigadier-general of the brigade of Bennington County. He continued to serve in the militia of the State, through the war with England, 1812-15, taking part with it in the Plattsburg campaign. He resigned from the service about the year 1820. He was a strong and loyal friend of Madison, a strong republican, and advocated a vigorous prosecution of the war.

He was elected to the Vermont Assembly about the year 1810, and was re-elected successively for fifteen years. Afterwards, between 1835 and 1840, he was again elected for two or three years in succession.

When the population of the town became sufficient to warrant the enterprise of building a church, he began to agitate the subject. He not only brought the zeal of his earnest character to the subject, but contributed liberally to, and in fact headed, the movement, and caused the church to be built; and it served the purpose for religious worship a good many years. The building was erected in the centre of the town, on land reserved for the purpose by the original proprietors. It was the only meeting-house in town for a whole generation.