under the oak trees in the fall -- they called them partridges after English quail. There were plenty of trout in the brooks and so for the natives, the smallpox had decimated them. All the same, Mistress Elizabeth Saunders, Hester Wolcott's wife, must have dreaded the talk that went on through 1634; that became insistent in the spring of 1635, and ended in the summer by the decision to remove to the Valley.

New Massachusetts Bay wasn't a very pleasant place at that time. There were too many ministers there, and their weekly lectures had to be cut down in number. Governor Winthrop leaned too much on John Cotton's advice. Thomas Hooker couldn't agree with the notions of his colleagues. He saw no reason why a non-church member -- they were called unregenerates in those days -- could not bring his child to church for baptism. Mr. Warham, the Dorchester pastor, was much against the proposed removal. But matters came to a head rapidly. The Dorchester pioneers in the fall of 1635 had already begun a settlement at Windsor on the north side of the Rivulet and the Holmes people were much disturbed. Roger Ludlow had failed in election to office because of the newly invented census system. He had already gone to the Valley and had come back, probably with favorable reports given in his own impetuous fashion.

Henry Wolcott was not old by our standards but he was the senior of most of his colleagues. In 1635 he was 57. Thomas Hooker, the brains and leader of the removal, was 50. Roger Ludlow, the driving force in Dorchester for the plan, was 41. John Mason, the military captain and later the Commonwealth's General, was 36. John Winthrop, who blocked them all he could, was 49. John Winthrop, Jr., his son, the diplomat, both behind the scenes and on the stage, was 26.